

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 12, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 157 ~ 1 of 54

- [1- Upcoming Events](#)
- [2- Prairie Doc: "The Two Sides of Humanity in Medicine"](#)
- [3- Weekly Vikings Recap - Week 14](#)
- [4- We the People Column](#)
- [5- Coming Up on GDILIVE.COM](#)
- [6- Weather Pages](#)
- [13- Daily Devotional](#)
- [14- 2022 Community Events](#)
- [15- Subscription Form](#)
- [16- News from the Associated Press](#)

## Groton Community Calendar 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.

## Tuesday, Dec. 13

Senior Menu: Scalloped potato with ham, green peas, sunset salad, oatmeal raisin cookie, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Doughnuts.

School Lunch: Cheese burger bake, peas.

Emmanuel Lutheran council, 7 p.m.

Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

The Pantry, 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Conde UMC Advent Bible Study, 6 p.m.

## Wednesday, Dec. 14

Senior Menu: Tuna noodle casserole, peas and carrots, Swedish apple pie square, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Hash brown, pizza.

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



School Lunch: Turkey gravy over mashed potatoes, cranberries, fresh baked bun.

St. John's Bible Study, 2:45 p.m.; Confirmation, 3:45 p.m.; Advent Service, 7 p.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran Confirmation, 6 p.m.

Community Coffee Hour at Groton UMC, 9:30 a.m.; Confirmation, 4 p.m.; Gingerbread Bash, 5 p.m.; Christmas Caroling Event, 6:30 p.m.

## Thursday, Dec. 15

Senior Menu: Sloppy Joe on wheat bun, oven roasted potatoes, mixed vegetables, fruit sauce.

School Breakfast: Oatmeal with toppings.

School Lunch: Hamburgers, fires.

NEC Wrestling Tournament at Webster, 4 p.m.

JHGBB at Tiospa Zina (7th grade at 4 p.m. followed by 8th grade)

Boys Basketball hosts Sisseton, 6 p.m.

**OPEN:** Recycling Trailer in Groton  
The recycling trailer is located west of the city shop. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.

© 2022 Groton Daily Independent

## “The Two Sides of Humanity in Medicine”

Merriam-Webster defines humanity as “compassionate, sympathetic, or generous behavior or disposition.” It is also defined as “the quality or condition of being human.” The first definition is what people want in a health care provider. We all want to be taken care of by a caregiver who is compassionate, kind, sympathetic, and generous with their time and knowledge. Health care providers spend countless hours taking care of patients. In order to do this, at times we ignore our own needs for rest, sleep, and food. We recite mantras of “first do no harm” and “the patient comes first.” Many of us strive for this vision of the “perfect” provider or to be a “health care hero” as we were called during the pandemic.

Unfortunately, all health care providers are also the second definition. We are all human. That means we make mistakes. We get tired and hungry. We get angry or can be afraid. Despite being called heroes, we often do not feel heroic or even act heroic. We may say the wrong things in the wrong way. We could hurt patients with our words or actions. This is not done intentionally or with malice; it is a side-effect of the second definition, being human. Most health care providers desperately want to only be the first definition, yet it is easy to find examples of times that we have failed.

These two definitions do not need to be at odds with one another. The first one has been praised and encouraged to be shared by health care providers. The second definition has, until recent years, been suppressed. Each generation of health care providers strives to be better than the one before. Now there is specific training in medical school teaching how to admit mistakes that one has made and sincerely apologize. Medical students are not graded on just their knowledge of disease and ability to diagnose, they are also graded on their ability to communicate and interact with patients. The art of “bedside manner” is something that can be taught. However, it takes a career to truly refine that skill by making mistakes, identifying them, and learning to be better the next time.

Allowing health care providers to show both of our sides of humanity – the good and the bad – will allow for more trust and greater connection with the very people we are trying to heal. That connection will, in turn, heal the health care provider. This mutual healing will help us tap into the compassion, sympathy, and generosity that make us human and drew us to this profession in the first place. Together we can heal and be better, by seeing ALL of the humanity that we all share.

Jill Kruse, D.O. is part of The Prairie Doc® team of physicians and currently practices as a hospitalist in Brookings, South Dakota. Follow The Prairie Doc® at [www.prairedoc.org](http://www.prairedoc.org) and on Facebook featuring On Call with the Prairie Doc®, a medical Q&A show providing health information based on science, built on trust, broadcast on SDPB and streaming live on Facebook most Thursdays at 7 p.m. central.



Based on Science, Built on Trust



**Jill Kruse, DO**

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 12, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 157 ~ 3 of 54

## Weekly Vikings Recap - Week 14

By Jack & Duane Kolsrud

The Vikings fall to 10-3 on the season as they lose to the Detroit Lions, 34-23. It appears the Vikings will have to wait another week to clinch the NFC North.

From the start, the Vikings were outcoached in every aspect of the game. The Vikings' defense was horrendous the entire game, giving up a whopping 464 total yards. Sunday's game made it the fifth straight game that the Vikings' defense gave up 400 or more total yards of offense against their opponent.

The main issue for the defense seems to be the lack of aggressiveness. Often during Sunday's game, the Lions were able to convert their long third-down plays because of how far off the Vikings' cornerbacks covered the Lions' wide receivers. Usually, when cornerbacks play soft coverage, it means that no big plays will occur for an offense. That was the not case Sunday as the Vikings still managed to give up two 40+ yard touchdown receptions to Lions' wide receivers. I'm not sure if this is a talent issue for the Vikings or a coaching issue, but whatever it is, the Vikings need to fix it soon or it will be one-and-done for them in the playoffs.

Although the Vikings' offense played well overall, there were several mistakes head coach, Kevin O'Connell, made today that cost the Vikings a chance to win. The first mistake came at the end of the first half when the Vikings were trailing 14-7 and decided to run a trick play on first-and-goal. The play was designed to be a handoff to Dalvin Cook who would then throw a jump pass to Johnny Mundt in the endzone. I do not mind the play design itself, but I do mind the time at which it was called. As it was only the first down, the Vikings easily could have run some more "conservative" play calls before breaking out the trick play on third or fourth down.

The other mistake, in my opinion, was O'Connell's unwillingness to abandon the run early in the game. The Vikings came into the game missing both their starting center, Garrett Bradbury, and their left tackle, Christian Darrisaw. Because of this, the Vikings were only able to muster 22 total rushing yards, despite running the ball 17 times. Sunday's game should have been the type of game where Cousins threw the ball 50-55 times, not just 41 times like he threw today. Cousins was able to average over 10 yards per attempt and it was a mistake by O'Connell not to take advantage of that.

And, even the special teams seem to be outcoached Sunday. Not only did the Vikings' punt coverage team give up multiple long punt returns to the Lions, but they also gave up a crucial 42-yard run on a fake punt by the Lions. That fake punt might have taken the wind out of the sails of the Vikings' defense as they were unable to force the Lions to punt the ball the rest of the game.

Per usual, the one lone star for the Vikings was Justin Jefferson. Not only did Jefferson have 223 receiving yards on 11 catches, but he also managed to break the Vikings' record for receiving yards in a game, previously held by Sammy White. Jefferson now sits at 1,500 receiving yards on the season and has a shot to break Randy Moss's franchise record of 1,632 receiving yards in a Vikings season next week against the Indianapolis Colts.

Next week, the Vikings will host the Colts on a Saturday at noon. If the Vikings win, they will officially clinch the NFC North for the first time since 2017.

We the People

The South Dakota Humanities Council is making available a weekly column -- "We the People" -- that focuses on the U.S. Constitution. It is written by David Adler, who is president of The Alturas Institute, a non-profit organization created to promote the Constitution, gender equality, and civic education.



By David Adler

## Donald Trump's Call to Terminate the Constitution

As the entire world knows by now, former President Donald Trump, the presumptive leader of the Republican Party, has called for the "termination" of the Constitution to overturn the 2020 election. Trump's landmark demand, if implemented, would eviscerate the Constitution, American democracy and the rule of law.

Setting aside calls during the Civil War from Confederate leaders for the overthrow of the Constitution and the Union, no high-ranking American official, past or present, has ever sought the termination of the Constitution. No delegate to the Constitutional Convention ever urged the termination of the Constitution. No previous President has called for it. Certainly, no Supreme Court Justice has ever commanded it. In the annals of American legal history, Confederate officials and former President Trump are the sole occupiers of this platform.

President Trump's declaration represents a landmark of a different order than the landmark judicial decisions ordinarily reviewed in this space. But the potential legal significance of Trump's clarion call is as great as, or greater than, any ruling ever rendered by a court of law. As such, it requires attention. As a matter of law, readers might ask, is there a mechanism for the termination of the Constitution?

President Abraham Lincoln, a better judge of the founders' aims in creating the Constitution than his successors, confronted the issue in his magnificent First Inaugural Address, delivered on March 4, 1861. Seven southern states had seceded from the Union by the time he took the Oath of Office. Lincoln denied the claim that states might constitutionally secede from the Union, since the very act itself would violate the premise and promise of the Preamble that the Constitution was created to create a "more perfect Union."

Lincoln justly stated, "It is safe to assert that no government proper ever had a provision in its organic law for its own termination." The 16th President added, "Continue to execute all the express provisions of our National Constitution, and the Union will endure forever, it being impossible to destroy it except by some action not provided for in the instrument itself."

For Lincoln, secession, whether by one or several states, represented the destruction of the Union, and was thus "unlawful." The Union, he said, "is less perfect, having lost the vital element of perpetuity."

In this reasoning, Lincoln was closely following the landmark words of Chief Justice John Marshall, as set forth in *McCulloch v. Maryland* (1819): "The Constitution is intended to endure for the ages."

The Supreme Court, in *Texas v. White* (1869), agreed. Chief Justice Salmon P. Chase, appointed to the Court by Lincoln, held: "When these Articles (of Confederation) were found to be inadequate to the exigencies of the country, the Constitution was ordained 'to form a more perfect Union.' It is difficult to convey the idea of indissoluble unity more clearly than by these words. What can be indissoluble if a perpetual Union, made more perfect, is not." The Constitution, Chase wrote, is "indestructible."

Although the Constitution is indestructible, it is yet subject to amendments. The framers of the Constitution, aware of the limitations of their work, potential "errors," as James Madison described them in *Federalist Number 43*, sought protection for the citizenry in the form of Article V, the Amendatory Clause. This provision left to successive generations of Americans the opportunity to improve the Constitution in the name of creating a "more perfect Union."

The framers created the Amendatory Clause as the means for correcting "errors" in the original Constitution. They supplied no emergency power to overturn presidential elections, despite President Trump's

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 12, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 157 ~ 5 of 54

wishes. And they did not, as Lincoln concluded, place in the Constitution a mechanism or power "for its own termination."

As such, there are no legal grounds or principles within the architecture of the Constitution for the annulment, destruction or termination of the supreme law of the land, despite desperate motives harbored by desperate men. In 1796, President George Washington, who embraced principles of American Constitutionalism, reminded the citizenry of the importance of scrupulous adherence to constitutional principles.

The nation's first president stated, "If in the opinion of the people the distribution or modification of the constitutional powers be in any particular wrong, let it be corrected by an amendment in the way the Constitution designates. But let there be no change by usurpation; for though this in one instance may be the instrument of good, it is the customary weapon by which free governments are destroyed."

*David Adler is president of The Alturas Institute, a non-profit organization created to promote the Constitution, gender equality and civic education. This column is made possible with the support of the South Dakota Humanities Council, South Dakota Newspaper Association and this newspaper.*

# GDILIVE.COM

**School Board Meeting**  
Monday, Dec. 12, 2022, 7 p.m.

**Boys' Basketball**  
Thursday, Dec. 15, 2022  
Sisseton at Groton Area

**Junior Varsity Game starts at 6 p.m.**  
Sponsored by Hefty Seed

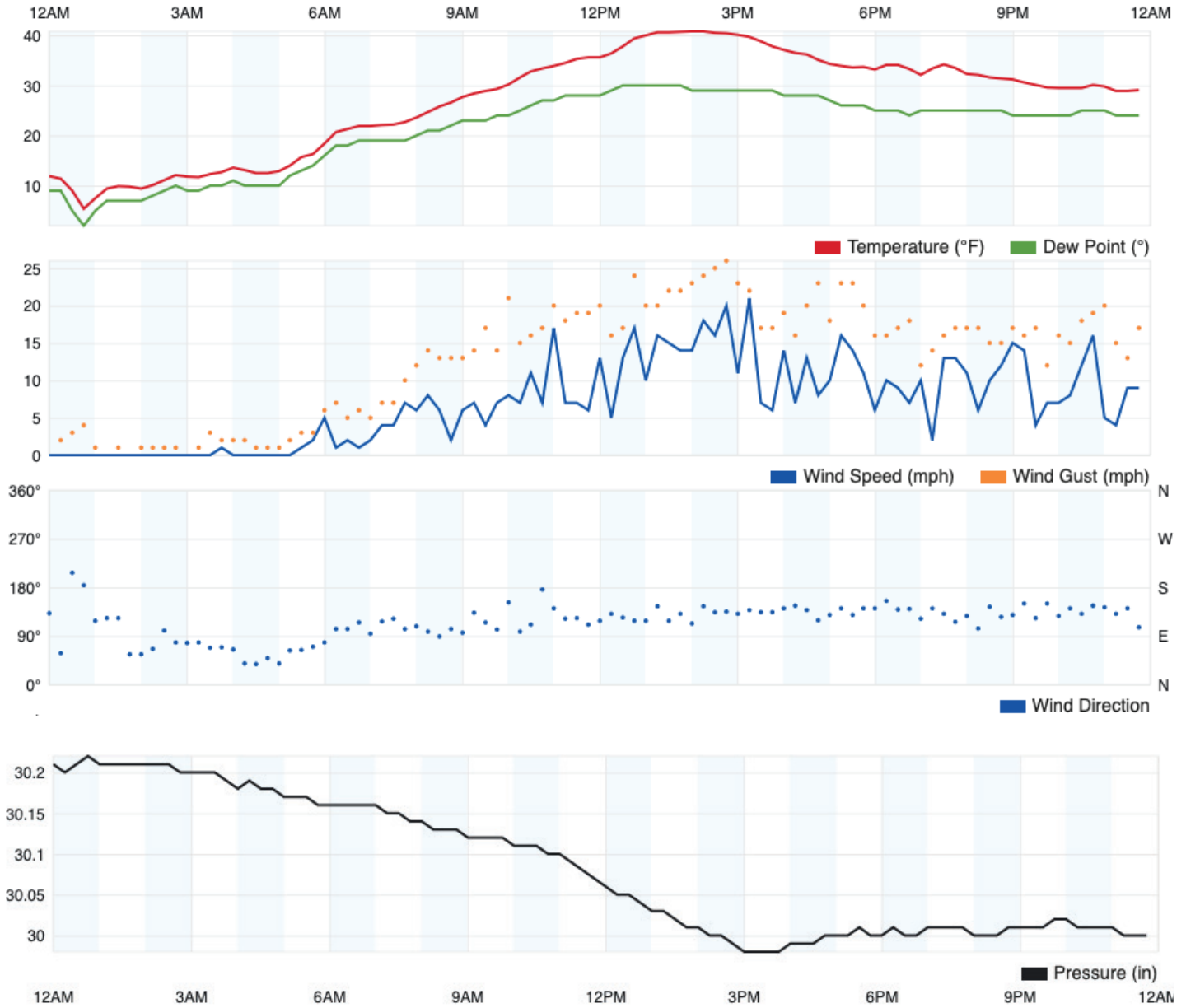
**followed by Varsity Game**  
Sponsored by  
Bary Keith at Harr Motors  
Bierman Farm Service  
Blocker Construction  
Dacotah Bank  
Groton Chamber of Commerce  
Groton Ford  
John Sieh Agency  
Locke Electric  
Spanier Harvesting & Trucking  
Bahr Spray Foam  
Thunder Seed with John Wheeting

Anyone wanting to sponsor a JV game, Call/Text Paul at 605-397-7460

# Groton Daily Independent

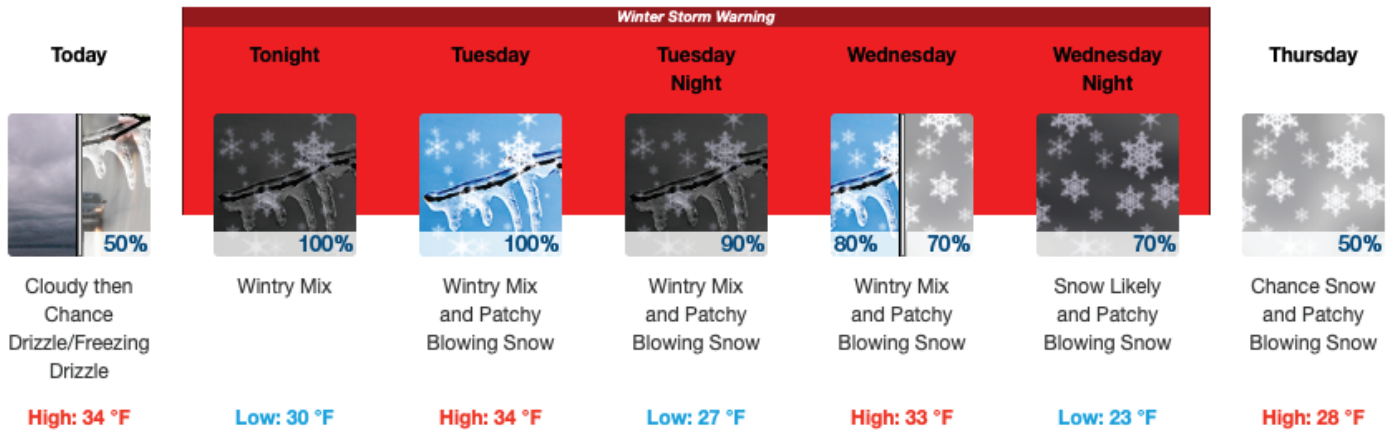
Monday, Dec. 12, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 157 ~ 6 of 54

## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



# Broton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 12, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 157 ~ 7 of 54



## Winter Storm Today Through Wednesday

December 12, 2022  
4:33 AM

### Key Messages

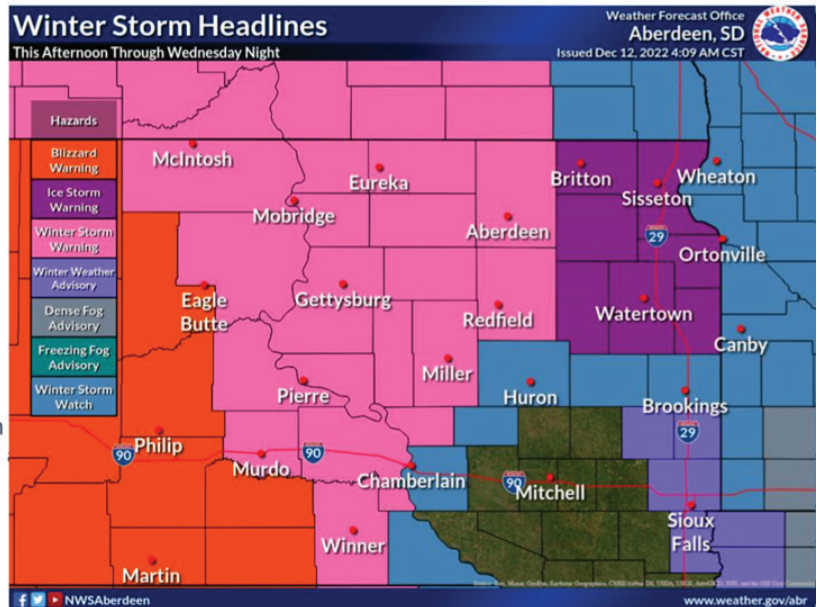
- Significant ice and snow accumulations possible
- Drizzle/Freezing Drizzle this afternoon transitioning to Rain/Freezing Rain and Snow tonight
- All Snow by Tuesday night. Snow/Blowing Snow Wednesday and Thursday

### NEW Important Updates

- Winter Storm Watch remains for Big Stone and Traverse counties. Watch has been upgraded to an Storm warning for northeastern South Dakota, and Winter Storm Warning elsewhere.

### Next Scheduled Briefing

- Monday afternoon



National Oceanic and  
Atmospheric Administration  
U.S. Department of Commerce

National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD

Still looking for a storm to produce a wide array of winter conditions across the region later today through mid week. Ice storm, winter storm and blizzard warnings have been issued across portions of the state.

# Broton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 12, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 157 ~ 8 of 54



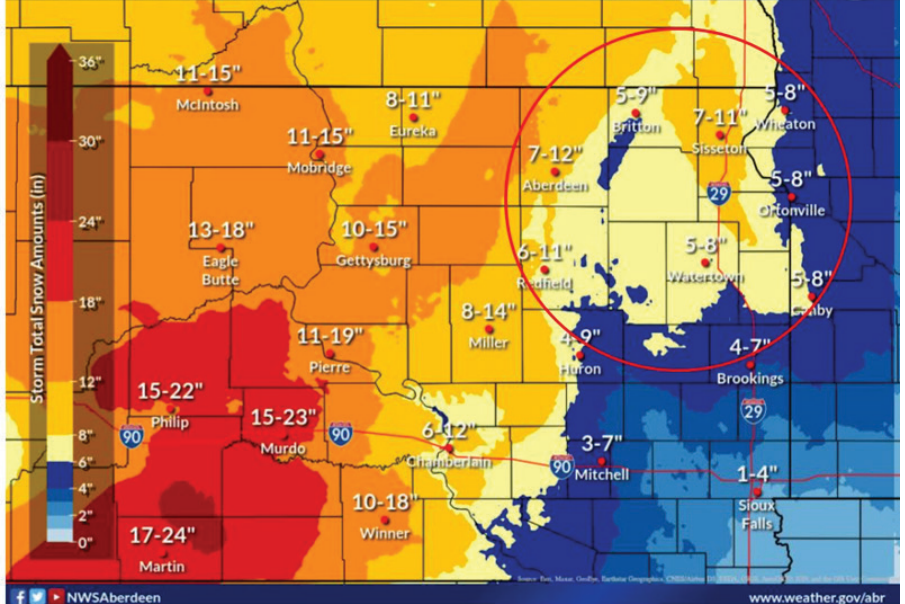
Potential Snowfall Accumulations Through 6 AM Thursday

December 12, 2022  
4:34 AM

## Expected Snowfall - Official NWS Forecast

Valid Mon 6:00PM through Thu 6:00AM CST

Weather Forecast Office  
Aberdeen, SD  
Issued Dec 12, 2022 2:18 AM CST



- Graphic: Snow accumulation potential **through 6 AM Thursday**
- **Additional** light amounts possible during the day Thursday
- Highlighted area represents **higher uncertainty** with mixed precipitation & near freezing temperatures



National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
U.S. Department of Commerce

National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD

Initial precipitation will be in the form of drizzle and freezing drizzle with temperatures near freezing Today and tonight, making for a difficult forecast. Tonight into Tuesday, anticipate a transition from mixed precipitation to snow, with increasing winds. Snow and blowing snow are expected to continue potentially into Thursday.

## Winter Storm Warning

**URGENT - WINTER WEATHER MESSAGE**

**National Weather Service Aberdeen SD**

**254 AM CST Mon Dec 12 2022**

Brown-

Including the city of Aberdeen  
254 AM CST Mon Dec 12 2022

...WINTER STORM WARNING IN EFFECT FROM 6 PM THIS EVENING TO 6 AM CST THURSDAY...

\* WHAT...Heavy mixed precipitation expected. Total snow accumulations of 6 to 12 inches and ice accumulations of two tenths to three tenths of an inch. Winds gusting as high as 40 mph.

\* WHERE...Brown County.

\* WHEN...From 6 PM this evening to 6 AM CST Thursday.

\* IMPACTS...Power outages and tree damage are likely due to the ice. Travel could be nearly impossible. Patchy blowing snow could significantly reduce visibility. The hazardous conditions could impact the morning or evening commute.

PRECAUTIONARY/PREPAREDNESS ACTIONS...

If you must travel, keep an extra flashlight, food, and water in your vehicle in case of an emergency.

The latest road conditions can be obtained by calling 5 1 1.



# Broton Daily Independent

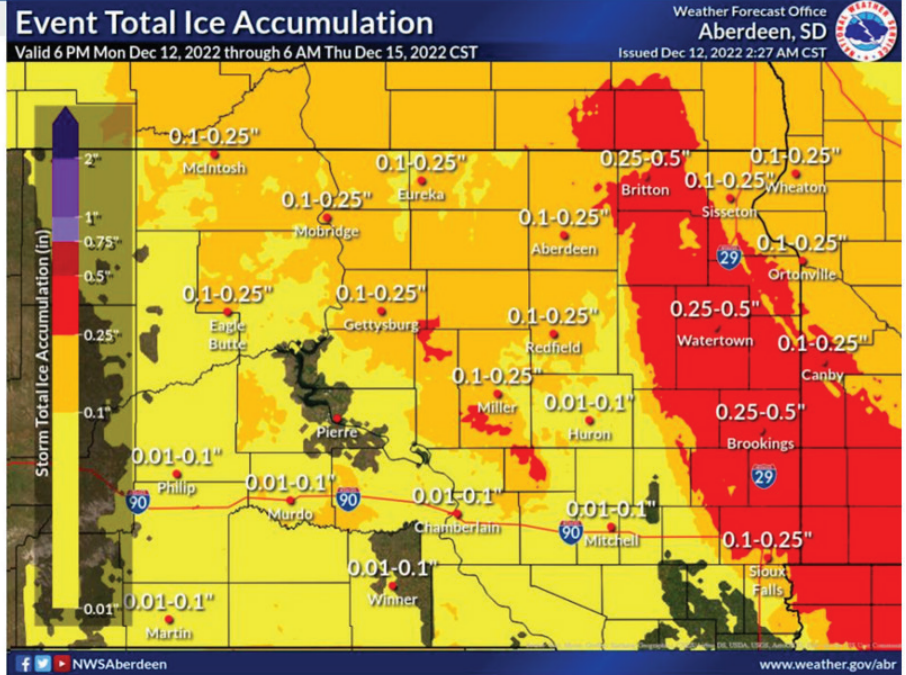
Monday, Dec. 12, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 157 ~ 9 of 54



## Potential Ice Accumulations

December 12, 2022  
4:34 AM

- Ice accumulations this afternoon and evening into mid day Tuesday.
- Main forecast challenge concerns temperatures while precipitation is falling with readings right around freezing.



National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD

Ice accumulations are expected to begin later today with pockets of freezing drizzle expanding and increasing in intensity and changing to freezing rain tonight into Tuesday. Uncertainty remains as to how long temperatures will warm above freezing today (limiting icing potential) or remain at or below freezing (more widespread icing potential), with the hardest hit areas potentially across the Sisseton hills region.

# Broton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 12, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 157 ~ 10 of 54



## Precipitation Types

December 12, 2022  
4:35 AM

	12/12 Mon				12/13 Tue				12/14 Wed											
	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am	3am	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am	3am	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm
Aberdeen	32%	47%	75%	85%	99%	99%	99%	99%	98%	98%	90%	90%	65%	65%	78%	78%	72%	72%	73%	73%
Britton		43%	72%	86%	96%	96%	98%	98%	99%	99%	95%	95%	74%	74%	80%	80%	71%	71%	76%	76%
Eagle Butte			63%	68%	93%	93%	97%	97%					94%	94%	95%	95%	85%	85%	75%	75%
Eureka	34%	40%	78%	87%	98%	98%	98%	98%	99%	99%	97%	97%	83%	83%	91%	91%	81%	81%	81%	81%
Gettysburg		36%	76%	84%	98%	98%	99%	99%	99%	99%	94%	94%	84%	84%	91%	91%	85%	85%	82%	82%
Kennebec		34%	82%	87%	98%	98%	99%	99%	97%	97%	88%	88%	84%	84%	91%	91%	92%	92%	87%	87%
McIntosh		30%	69%	75%	91%	91%	95%	95%	98%	98%			93%	93%	95%	95%	85%	85%	77%	77%
Milbank			52%	67%	87%	87%	97%	97%	99%	99%	90%	90%	59%	59%	62%	62%	60%	60%	66%	66%
Miller	40%	59%	81%	89%	99%	99%	99%	99%	98%	98%	86%	86%	69%	69%	81%	81%	85%	85%	86%	86%
Mobridge		31%	72%	79%	97%	97%	98%	98%	99%				87%	87%	93%	93%	83%	83%	78%	78%
Murdo			72%	76%	95%	95%	98%	98%					93%	93%	96%	96%	90%	90%	85%	85%
Pierre			73%	80%	96%	96%	98%	98%	98%	98%	94%	94%	89%	89%	94%	94%	90%	90%	83%	83%
Redfield	45%	65%	80%	87%	99%	99%	99%	99%	97%	97%	85%	85%	62%	62%	77%	77%	80%	80%	81%	81%
Sisseton			60%	75%	89%	89%	96%	96%	99%	99%	93%	93%	70%	70%	73%	73%	63%	63%	69%	69%
Watertown	33%	46%	68%	79%	95%	95%	99%	99%	97%	97%	83%	83%	50%	50%	60%	60%	65%	65%	70%	70%
Webster	35%	41%	68%	81%	96%	96%	99%	99%	98%	98%	89%	89%	59%	59%	72%	72%	69%	69%	73%	73%
Wheaton			47%	61%	75%	75%	89%	89%	98%	98%	96%	96%	72%	72%	66%	66%	49%	49%	60%	60%

\*Created: 3 am CST Mon 12/12/2022. Shows most impactful weather for the period beginning at the time shown. Weather symbols display where Probability of Precipitation > 30%.

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



National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
U.S. Department of Commerce

National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD

This is a tricky weather system with the potential for drizzle with temperatures right around freezing Today. Precipitation will change to rain and snow overnight, again with temperatures right around freezing. The transition to mostly snow will occur during the day Tuesday for most of the forecast area.

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 12, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 157 ~ 11 of 54

## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 41 °F at 1:50 PM**

**Low Temp: 5 °F at 12:45 AM**

**Wind: 28 mph at 3:05 PM**

**Precip: : 0.00**

Day length: 8 hours, 49 minutes

## Today's Info

Record High: 54 in 1924

Record Low: -28 in 1893

Average High: 30°F

Average Low: 9°F

Average Precip in Dec.: 0.23

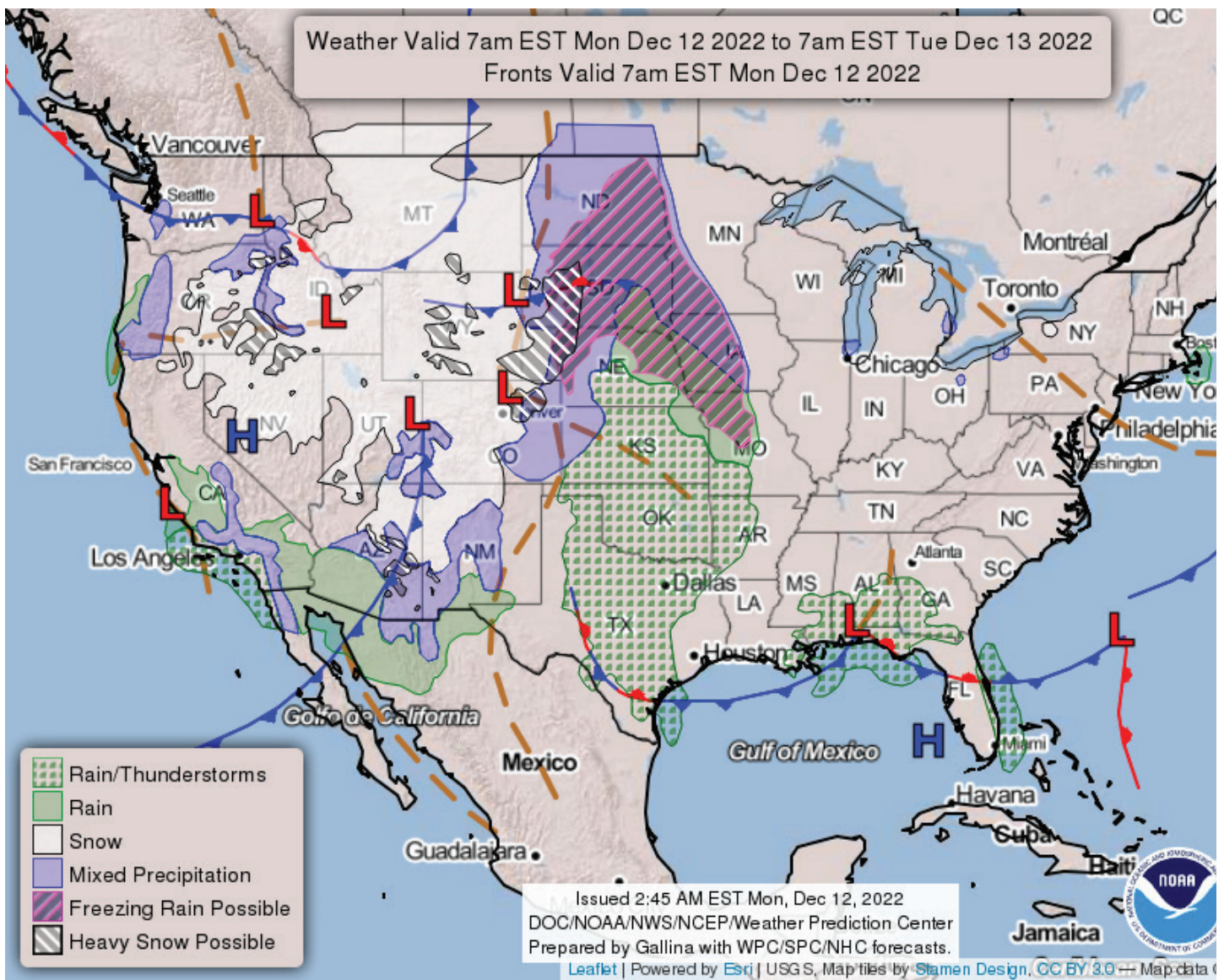
Precip to date in Dec.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 21.44

Precip Year to Date: 16.50

Sunset Tonight: 4:50:59 PM

Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:02:15 AM



# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 12, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 157 ~ 12 of 54

## Today in Weather History

December 12, 1968: An intense blizzard visited most of South Dakota and Minnesota on the 12th and 13th of December. The storm began in the western part of South Dakota on the morning of the 12th then spread into the eastern part of the state and west central Minnesota by that afternoon, where it continued into the morning of the 13th. Freezing rain preceded snow, and in west central Minnesota, with thunder and lightning as well. Winds of over 50 mph caused blowing and drifting snow, which occasionally reduced visibilities to near zero. Gusts reached 70 mph in many places. Temperatures were falling to near zero during the day also resulted in dangerously low wind chills, particularly in Minnesota. The eastern half of South Dakota into west central Minnesota experienced the most severe blizzard conditions. Many schools were closed, and most other activities were greatly curtailed.

Automobile accidents were numerous across the area. Multiple utility lines were downed, and power and telephone outages were numerous due to the high winds. Power outages from less than an hour up to 12 hours were common across Minnesota. Snowfall ranged from around one inch in western South Dakota, to five inches in eastern South Dakota, to five to ten inches in west central Minnesota. One death in South Dakota was attributed to the storm when a man died of exposure to the cold near Allen in southwest South Dakota. In Minnesota, one man was found frozen to death near his car after it had run into the ditch several miles northwest of Boyd in Lac Qui Parle County. Another man was killed by a train when his vehicle became stalled on a railroad crossing at Hancock. 5 inches of snow fell at Watertown, Sisseton, and Webster with 6 inches at Clear Lake.

December 12, 1967: From December 12th through the 20th, Flagstaff, Arizona, a series of snowstorms buries Flagstaff with nearly 85 inches of snow.

1882 - Portland, OR, was drenched with 7.66 inches of rain, a record 24 hour total for that location. (12th-13th) (The Weather Channel)

1960 - The first of three Middle Atlantic snowstorms produced a foot of snow at Baltimore MD. A pre-winter blizzard struck the northeastern U.S. producing wind gusts as high as 51 mph, along with 16 inches of snow at Nantucket MA, and 20 inches at Newark NJ. (David Ludlum)

1969 - The worst tornado of record for western Washington State tracked south of Seattle, traveling five miles, from Des Moines to Kent. The tornado, 50 to 200 yards in width, began as a waterspout over Puget Sound. One person was injured and the tornado caused half a million dollars damage. (The Weather Channel)

1988 - Cold arctic air spread from the Great Lakes Region to the Appalachian Region. Twenty-five cities, mostly in the northeastern U.S., reported record low temperatures for the date. The low of 12 degrees below zero at Albany NY was their coldest reading of record for so early in the season. Saranac Lake NY was the cold spot in the nation with a low of 28 degrees below zero. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - A winter storm produced snow from northern Mississippi to the Middle Atlantic Coast, with 10.5 inches reported at Powhatan VA. Heavy snow whitened the Black Hills of South Dakota, with 36 inches reported at Deer Mountain. Thirteen cities in the north central U.S., from Minnesota to Texas, reported record low temperatures for the date, including Duluth MN and Yankton SD with morning lows of 22 degrees below zero. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1995 - A severe coastal storm is blamed for five deaths and loss of power to over one million people in Oregon and Washington. Winds at Sea Lion Caves near Florence topped out at 119 mph before problems developed with the anemometer. In Newport, a gust of 107 mph occurred downtown, while Astoria and Cape Blanco also had gusts of over 100 mph. Astoria's air pressure dropped as low as 28.53 inches, an all-time record (and comparable to the central pressure of a Category 2 hurricane!). Gusts in the Willamette Valley exceeded 60 mph.

2008 - A significant ice storm wreaked havoc across New York and New England on December 12, disrupting electricity and leaving over 1 million homes and businesses without power. New Hampshire alone had as many as 320,000 residents without power, which according to reports it was described as the worst outages in 30 years (Reuters). Four fatalities were reported and parts of Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, and Maine declared a state of emergency (BBC News).

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 12, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 157 ~ 13 of 54

Daily Devotionals

## Seeds of Hope

### WHAT KIND OF DAY WILL IT BE?

As you look forward to Christmas, what special memories will you take from the day that will remain with you after it's over? Will it be a "horrible day," a "holiday" or a "holy day?"

For some, it will be a "horrible" day. It will be a day when families gather and feuds erupt, unwanted gifts are exchanged, stomachs are stuffed, alcohol generated hangovers will dull minds and memories, and promises to "never do this again" are made. Not ever!

Or, will it be a holiday? Families traveling many miles to get together to share problems and pains that brought them closer together, share joyous memories of special events that united them in love and laughter, introducing a new-born child or one who will soon be the next in-law uniting two "love-birds."

Would it not be special, however, if we made it a "holy day?" A day of worship and praise, a day when we set aside time to share and emphasize the gift of our new birth through Christ?

Paul wrote some inspiring words about the gift of our new birth made possible because of the birth of Jesus. "You have clothed yourselves with a brand-new nature that is continually being renewed as you learn more and more about Christ, who created this new nature within you."

This "new nature" means that it is possible for us to have a new life through His Son, our Savior, and the hope that one day we will be like Him and spend eternity with Him.

Prayer: We thank You, Lord, for the gift of Jesus Who gives us a new life and the promise of joy, peace, and presence that comes with the assurance of salvation. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Colossians 3:10 Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him.



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

Monday, Dec. 12, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 157 ~ 14 of 54

## 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

Monday, Dec. 12, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 157 ~ 15 of 54

## 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)



## News from the Associated Press

### **Authorities ID woman and girl killed when truck hits train**

HARRISBURG, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota State Patrol has identified the two people who died after a pickup truck collided with a train near Harrisburg.

The Patrol said Sunday that Jennifer Torgerson, 45, and Kaylee Torgerson, 12, both died at the scene of the crash about a mile south of Harrisburg Wednesday evening. The truck's driver, Philip Torgerson, 44, of Harrisburg, sustained life-threatening injuries and was flown by helicopter to a Sioux Falls hospital.

Authorities have said Philip Torgerson was driving west, but didn't yield at the railroad crossing and collided with the train. He could face charges, but the State Patrol is still investigating.

The train's operator, a 43-year-old Iowa man, was not hurt in the crash.

### **Oil spill in rural Kansas creek shuts down Keystone pipeline**

By JOHN HANNA, HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH, and JOSH FUNK Associated Press

TOPEKA, Kan. (AP) — An oil spill in a creek in northeastern Kansas shut down a major pipeline that carries oil from Canada to the Texas Gulf Coast, briefly causing oil prices to rise Thursday.

Canada-based TC Energy said it shut down its Keystone system Wednesday night following a drop in pipeline pressure. It said oil spilled into a creek in Washington County, Kansas, about 150 miles (240 kilometers) northwest of Kansas City.

The company on Thursday estimated the spill's size at about 14,000 barrels and said the affected pipeline segment had been "isolated" and the oil contained at the site with booms, or barriers. It did not say how the spill occurred.

"People are sometimes not aware of the havoc that these things can wreak until the disaster happens," said Zack Pistora, who lobbies the Kansas Legislature for the Sierra Club's state chapter.

Concerns that spills could pollute waterways spurred opposition to plans by TC Energy to build another crude oil pipeline in the Keystone system, the 1,200-mile (1,900-kilometer) Keystone XL, which would have cut across Montana, South Dakota and Nebraska. Critics also argued that using crude from western Canada's oil sands would worsen climate change, and President Joe Biden's cancellation of a U.S. permit for the project led the company to pull the plug last year.

In 2019, the Keystone pipeline leaked an estimated 383,000 gallons (1.4 million liters) of oil in eastern North Dakota.

Jane Kleeb, who founded the Bold Nebraska environmental and landowner rights group that campaigned against the Keystone XL, said there have been at least 22 spills along the original Keystone pipeline since it began service in 2010. She said federal studies have shown the type of heavy tar sands oil the pipeline carries can be especially difficult to clean up in water because it tends to sink.

"All oil spills are difficult, but tar sands in particular are very toxic and very difficult, so I'm awfully concerned," said Kleeb, who is also the Nebraska Democratic Party's chair.

But the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency said there were no known effects yet on drinking water wells or the public, and the oil didn't move from the creek to larger waterways. Randy Hubbard, the Washington County Emergency Management coordinator, said there were no evacuations ordered because the break occurred in rural pastureland.

TC Energy said it had set up environmental monitoring at the site, including around-the-clock air quality monitoring.

"Our primary focus right now is the health and safety of onsite staff and personnel, the surrounding community, and mitigating risk to the environment," a company statement said.

Oil prices briefly surged at midday Thursday amid news of the spill, with the cost of a barrel of oil for near-term contracts rising by nearly 5%, and above the cost of oil contracts further into the future. That typically suggests anxiety in the market over immediate supply.



# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 12, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 157 ~ 17 of 54

A U.S. Energy Information Administration spokesperson said the Keystone pipeline moves about 600,000 barrels of oil per day from Canada to Cushing, Oklahoma, where it can connect to another pipeline to the Gulf Coast. That's compared to the total of 3.5 million to 4 million barrels of Canadian oil imported into the U.S. every day.

Past Keystone spills have led to outages that lasted about two weeks, but this outage could possibly be longer because it involves a body of water, said analysts at RBC Capital Markets in a note to investors. Depending on the spill's location, it's possible that a portion of the pipeline could restart sooner, they said.

"It's something to keep an eye on," said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis at GasBuddy, which tracks gasoline prices. "It could eventually impact oil supplies to refiners, which could be severe if it lasts more than a few days."

The spill was 5 miles (8 kilometers) northeast of Washington, the county seat of about 1,100 residents. Paul Stewart, an area farmer, said part of it was contained on his land using yellow booms and a dam of dirt. The spill occurred in Mill Creek, which flows into the Little Blue River.

The Little Blue feeds the Big Blue River, which flows into Tuttle Creek Lake, north of Manhattan, home of Kansas State University. The EPA said the oil did not affect the Little Blue.

Dan Thalmann, publisher and editor of The Washington County News, a weekly publication, said crews were creating a rock path to the creek because recent rains made fields too soft to move in heavy machinery.

"Gosh, the traffic past my house is unbelievable — trucks after trucks after trucks," said Stewart, who took down an electric fence he'd finished putting up Wednesday, fearing it might be knocked down and dragged into a field.

Chris Pannbacker said the pipeline runs through her family's farm. She and her husband drove north of their farmhouse and across a bridge over Mill Creek.

"We looked at it from both sides, and it was black on both sides," said Pannbacker, a reporter for the Marysville Advocate newspaper.

Junior Roop, the sexton of a cemetery near the spill site, said people could smell the oil in town.

"It was about like driving by a refinery," he said.

## China to drop some travel tracking as it relaxes COVID rules

BEIJING (AP) — China planned to stop tracking some travel on Monday, potentially reducing the likelihood people will be forced into quarantine for visiting COVID-19 hot spots, as part of an uncertain exit from the strict pandemic policies that helped fuel widespread protests.

At midnight, the smart phone app that recorded a person's travel between cities and provinces will be disabled. Another app used to restrict the movement of those who test positive or enter an area with a recent outbreak remains in effect. They're part of a package of pandemic apps, some of which have also been used by local governments to suppress protests.

The move follows the government's dramatic announcement last week that it was ending many of the strictest measures, following three years during which it enforced some of the world's tightest virus restrictions. That included near-constant testing, open-ended lockdowns and requirements that a clean bill of health be shown to access public areas.

Last month in Beijing and several other cities, protests over the restrictions grew into calls for leader Xi Jinping and the Communist Party to step down — a level of public dissent not seen in decades.

While met with relief, the relaxation has also sparked concerns about a new wave of infections potentially overwhelming health care resources in some areas.

The easing of measures means a sharp drop in testing, but cases still appear to be rising rapidly. China reported 8,500 new infections on Monday, bringing the nation's total to 365,312 — more than double the level on Oct. 1. It has recorded 5,235 deaths — compared to 1.1 million in the United States.

China's government-supplied figures have not been independently verified and questions have been raised about whether the ruling Communist Party has sought to minimize numbers of cases and deaths.

Fever clinics at hospitals in Beijing received 22,000 patients on Sunday — 16 times higher than previous

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 12, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 157 ~ 18 of 54

week.

Following a rush last week to buy cold and flu medicine in many major Chinese cities, pharmacies in Hong Kong have reported a run on such medications by customers supplying relatives in mainland China, according to Lam Wai-man, chairman of the pharmacy trade association in the semi-autonomous southern Chinese city. Hong Kong has already lifted most of its COVID-19 restrictions.

"Everyone on the mainland wants to buy some pills to have in reserve at home," Lam said.

Alan Cheung, the owner of the Sands Medicine Shop in the Wan Chai district, said he was receiving around 10 inquiries about flu medication from mainland residents every day.

"Normally, no one would ask me about this kind of product," Cheung said.

The uncertainty and apparent growing number of cases have forced the cancellation of events from foreign embassy holiday parties to next spring's Formula One Chinese Grand Prix car race in Shanghai.

Xi's government is still officially committed to stopping virus transmission, the last major country to try. But the latest moves suggest the party will tolerate more cases without quarantines or shutting down travel or businesses as it winds down its "zero COVID" strategy.

Facing a surge in COVID-19 cases, China is setting up more intensive care facilities and trying to strengthen hospitals' ability to deal with severe cases. At the same time, part of the relaxation means the government will allow those with mild symptoms to recuperate at home rather than being sent to field hospitals that have become notorious for overcrowding and poor hygiene.

Reports on the Chinese internet, which is tightly controlled by the government, sought to reassure a nervous public, stating that restrictions would continue to be dropped and travel, indoor dining and other economic activity would soon be returning to pre-pandemic conditions.

China's leaders had long praised "zero COVID" for keeping numbers of cases and deaths much lower than in other nations, but officials have recently begun to talk about the virus as far less threatening and now say the most prevalent omicron variety poses much less of a risk.

Amid the unpredictable messaging from Beijing, experts warn there still is a chance the ruling party might reverse course and reimpose restrictions if a large-scale outbreak ensues.

Last week's announcement allowed considerable room for local governments to assign their own regulations. Most restaurants in Beijing, for example, still require a negative test result obtained over the previous 48 hours and rules are even stricter for government offices.

The change in policy comes after protests erupted Nov. 25 after 10 people died in a fire in the northwestern city of Urumqi. Many questioned whether COVID-19 restrictions impeded rescue efforts. Authorities denied the claims spread online, but demonstrators gave voice to longstanding frustration in cities such as Shanghai that have endured severe lockdowns.

The party responded with a massive show of force and an unknown number of people were arrested at the protests or in the days following.

The relaxation began shortly after — though the government had already announced its intention to begin opening up slowly, promising to reduce the cost and disruption after the economy shrank by 2.6% from the previous quarter in the three months ending in June.

Forecasters say the economy probably is shrinking in the current quarter. Imports tumbled 10.9% from a year ago in November in a sign of weak demand.

Some forecasters have cut their outlook for annual growth to below 3%, less than half of last year's robust 8.1% expansion.

## Young voters' enthusiasm for Democrats waned during midterms

By WILL WEISSERT and HANNAH FINGERHUT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Young voters who have been critical to Democratic successes in recent elections showed signs in November's midterms that their enthusiasm may be waning, a potential warning sign for a party that will need their strong backing heading into the 2024 presidential race.

Voters under 30 went 53% for Democratic House candidates compared with only 41% for Republican

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 12, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 157 ~ 19 of 54

candidates nationwide, according to AP VoteCast, a sweeping national survey of the electorate. But that level of support for Democrats was down compared with 2020, when such voters supported President Joe Biden over his predecessor, Donald Trump, 61% to 36%. And in 2018, when Democrats used a midterm surge to retake control of the House, voters 18 to 29 went 64% for the party compared with 34% for the GOP.

Biden's party nonetheless exceeded midterm expectations, holding the Senate and surrendering only a small Republican House majority. The president himself hailed young voter turnout as "historic." Still, the trend line for younger voters may be an early indicator of the Democrats' challenge to maintain the coalition of Black people, women, college-educated voters, city dwellers and suburbanites that has buoyed the party in the years since Trump won the White House.

Weakness in any part of that voting bloc could have implications during the next presidential race. Biden, who will be a few weeks shy of his 82nd birthday on Election Day 2024, says he intends to run again. Trump, 76, has already announced his candidacy.

"There might have been retrenchment in youth voters," said Michael McDonald, a political science professor at the University of Florida and an expert on voting and data.

McDonald cautioned against reading too much into what could be an anomaly. But he said the shift may have been fueled by issues like high inflation, which has hit young people especially hard since their wages are less likely to increase fast enough to keep pace with rising prices.

"Youngest people also have the weakest partisan attachments, so they can be more susceptible to partisan swings nationally," McDonald said. "There's no reason why Republicans can't rebound among younger people."

Indeed, VoteCast shows only about a quarter of Democrats under 30 say being a Democrat is "extremely" or "very" important to them, compared with roughly a third of older Democrats.

The data showed that voters under 30 did not support Democrats decisively enough to sway key races nationally, but the news wasn't all bad for the party. Midterm voters under 45 — an age bracket that includes Generation Z and millennials — backed Biden's party at rates that exceeded his 2020 support in races for governor of Pennsylvania, Michigan and Kansas, as well as the race for Senate in Pennsylvania.

Democratic Lt. Gov. John Fetterman beat Republican celebrity heart surgeon Dr. Mehmet Oz in Pennsylvania's Senate contest while getting 62% of the vote of those 18 to 44. That was slightly better than Biden's 56% with such voters in 2020. In the Pennsylvania governor's race, Democrat Josh Shapiro also won while outpacing Biden's support in 2020, earning 64% of that age group.

Kansas Gov. Laura Kelly won a second term by modestly outperforming 2020 margins with voters under 45 in the red state, 52% to Biden's 45%. Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer also commandingly secured reelection while garnering a somewhat larger percentage of the state's voters under 45 in 2022, 61%, than Biden did in 2020, 54%.

Michigan allows people to register to vote on Election Day, which prompted such long lines on college campuses that the last ballot cast at the University of Michigan came at 2:05 a.m.

But states allowing last-minute registration didn't lift Democrats everywhere. The party's candidates underperformed Biden's margins among voters under 45 in some key races, including in governors' races in New Hampshire and Nevada, which both allow registration through Election Day.

In Nevada's race for governor, Democratic incumbent Steve Sisolak was defeated with support for his party among voters under 45 at 54%, somewhat lagging Biden's 61% support in 2020. The same pattern occurred in New Hampshire: 43% for Democrat Tom Sherman vs. 59% for Biden. There, Republican Gov. Chris Sununu was easily reelected.

Cristina Tzintún Ramirez, president of NextGen America, a progressive organization that works to mobilize young voters, said the group contacted 90% of eligible voters between the ages of 18 and 35 in Pennsylvania, calling, texting or seeing them in person on college campuses. VoteCast showed that 34% of Pennsylvania voters ages 18 to 29 said they were exclusively contacted on behalf of the statewide Democratic candidates, more than older voters.

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 12, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 157 ~ 20 of 54

Tzintzún Ramirez said young voters reported being most concerned about the economy and racial justice, at least until after the Supreme Court overturned the landmark Roe v. Wade decision in June. After that, she said, "Abortion surged to the front."

VoteCast found that about half of young voters in some of the most competitive states said the Roe reversal had a major impact on their decision to turn out. In Michigan, where an amendment to constitutionally protect abortion rights in the state passed on Election Day, about half of voters under 45 said they were "angry" about Roe being overturned.

VoteCast found that 36% of all voters under 45 identify as progressive Democrats, compared with 20% of older voters. It also showed that younger voters — particularly those under 30 — were especially likely to say that immigrants help more than hurt the U.S. and that racism in the country is a very serious problem.

"For us, it's not just about a politician or a party," Tzintzún Ramirez said. "It's about delivering on a vision for our country that is more just and that will reflect the realities of a generation that is facing a climate crisis, growing racial injustice, runaway inequality and a democracy in decline."

Not being fully enamored with one party or the other also showed up in VoteCast results. Even in places where Democratic support among young voters was strong, voters 18 to 44 tended to be less enthusiastic about candidates they supported than older voters.

That was true in the swing states of Arizona, where Democrats won the Senate and governor's race, and in Wisconsin, where the party won the governorship but Republican Sen. Ron Johnson was reelected. And in Georgia, where Republican Gov. Brian Kemp was reelected but Democratic Sen. Raphael Warnock secured a second term in a runoff.

Santiago Mayer, a political science major at California State University, Long Beach who founded the student-led advocacy group Voters of Tomorrow, said those findings didn't surprise him given that young voters tend to be independent. But he also said many are also deeply progressive, which means that currently, "Republicans have declared war against Generation Z."

"Young voters are voting against Republicans, and Democrats are obviously the better option," said Mayer, 20, whose group used volunteers nationwide to call and text Georgia voters ages 18 to 29 some 2.5 million times. "But eventually, when we'll have two years when Republicans hopefully will transition back to sanity, the emphasis will be in getting elected officials that actually represent what Gen Z wants."

Among Fetterman voters in Pennsylvania, 57% of those ages 45 and older said they supported the Democrat enthusiastically, but only 43% of younger voters did. Of those under 45, the same number, 43%, backed Fetterman with reservations and 12% did so as they opposed the other candidates.

Despite a seeming youth voter enthusiasm gap, David Jackson, a Bowling Green State University professor whose research focuses on links between entertainment and political preferences, said that it was "way too early to say we've moved on from celebrity politics." He noted that "Hillbilly Elegy" author JD Vance was elected to the Senate from Ohio last month.

According to VoteCast, the youngest Ohio voters — those ages 18 to 29 — split about evenly for Vance and Democrat Tim Ryan, whereas voters ages 30 to 44 were more likely to back Ryan, at 58%.

Still, Jackson added that, as politics has gotten increasingly confrontational, voters are showing they are less inclined to fall deeply in love with candidates and instead are casting ballots more "from a self-defense standpoint."

"There's always been the assumption that younger people are more likely to be moved by celebrities," Jackson said. "But that's not necessarily the case since the rise of Trump, since he's been the ultimate celebrity candidate."

## Second Iranian detainee executed over alleged protest crime

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Iran on Monday executed a second prisoner detained and convicted amid nationwide protests challenging the country's theocracy, airing footage on state television it claimed shows him stabbing two security force members to death and running away.

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 12, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 157 ~ 21 of 54

The public hanging of Majidreza Rahnavard, less than a month after he allegedly carried out the fatal stabbings — purportedly angry about security forces killing protesters — shows the speed at which Iran now carries out death sentences handed down for those detained in the demonstrations the government hopes to put down.

Activists warn that at least a dozen people already have been sentenced to death in closed-door hearings. At least 488 people have been killed since the demonstrations began in mid-September, according to Human Rights Activists in Iran, a group that's been monitoring the protests. Another 18,200 people have been detained by authorities.

Iran's Mizan news agency, under the country's judiciary, alleged Rahnavard had stabbed two security force members to death Nov. 17 in the city of Mashhad and wounded four others. The agency said the execution took place on Monday morning, in public, in Mashhad.

Footage aired on state TV showed a man chasing another around a street corner, then standing over him and stabbing him after he fell against a parked motorbike. Another showed the same man stabbing another immediately after. The assailant, which state TV alleged was Rahnavard, then fled.

The Mizan report identified the dead as "student" Basij, paramilitary volunteers under Iran's Revolutionary Guard. The Basij (ba-SEEJ) have deployed in major cities, attacking and detaining protesters, who in many cases have fought back.

A heavily edited state television report aired after Rahnavard's execution showed clips of him in the courtroom. In the video, he says he came to hate the Basijis after seeing video clips on social media of the forces beating and killing protesters.

The Mizan report accused Rahnavard of trying to flee to a foreign country when he was arrested.

Mashhad, a Shiite holy city, is located some 740 kilometers (460 miles) east of the Iranian capital, Tehran. Activists say it has seen strikes, shops closed and demonstrations amid the unrest that began over the Sept. 16 death in custody of Mahsa Amini, a 22-year-old woman who had been detained by Iran's morality police.

Mizan said Rahnavard was convicted in Mashhad's Revolutionary Court. The tribunals have been internationally criticized for not allowing those on trial to pick their own lawyers or even see the evidence against them.

Rahnavard had been convicted on the charge of "moharebeh," a Farsi word meaning "waging war against God." That charge has been levied against others in the decades since the 1979 Islamic Revolution and carries the death penalty.

From Brussels, the European Union's foreign ministers expressed dismay at the latest execution. The bloc is to approve on Monday a fresh series of sanctions against Iran over its crackdown on protesters, and also for supplying drones to Russia for use in its war against Ukraine, the bloc's top diplomat said.

EU foreign policy chief Josp Borrell said he spoke to Iran's foreign minister regarding Tehran's response to the protests and the latest execution and that it was "not an easy conversation."

"We are going to approve a very, very tough package of sanctions," Borrell told reporters as he arrived to chair the ministerial meeting in Brussels. Finland's foreign minister said that he also called his Iranian counterpart.

German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock described the execution as "a blatant attempt at intimidation" of Iranians.

"We are making clear that we stand beside innocent people in Iran," Baerbock said as she arrived at the Brussels meeting. "A system that treats its people in this way cannot expect to continue to have halfway normal relations with the European Union."

Iran is one of the world's top executioners and typically executes prisoners by hanging. It executed the first prisoner detained during demonstrations last Thursday.

Amnesty International has said it obtained a document signed by one senior Iranian police commander asking that the execution for one prisoner be "completed 'in the shortest possible time' and that his death sentence be carried out in public as 'a heart-warming gesture towards the security forces.'"

Amid the unrest, Iran is also battered by an economic crisis that has seen the national currency, the rial,

drop to new lows against the U.S. dollar.

## Messi, Modric carry Argentina, Croatia into World Cup semis

By STEVE DOUGLAS AP Sports Writer

DOHA, Qatar (AP) — Tears are flowing from soccer's biggest superstars as they make emotional exits from what might be their last World Cup.

First it was Neymar. Then it was Cristiano Ronaldo. Could Lionel Messi be next?

Momentum is building behind Messi's push to cap his career with the biggest prize in the game. The 35-year-old Argentina playmaker has carried his team to the semifinals, almost in the same way Diego Maradona — the man with whom Messi is so often compared — led the South American nation to its second and most recent World Cup title in 1986.

Now in Argentina's way is Croatia, a country with a population of 4 million which is establishing a reputation as the most stubborn and durable of opponents while also boasting one of soccer's most graceful players in Luka Modric.

The teams go head to head at Lusail Stadium — also the venue for Sunday's final — in a meeting between the last two runners-up at the tournament: Argentina in 2014 and Croatia in 2018.

Argentina might have been expected to be in this position. The team arrived at the World Cup as the Copa America champion, on a 36-match unbeaten run and with Messi back in sublime form for Paris Saint-Germain.

There was much less noise around the Croatians, yet they keep on surprising just like four years ago when their run to the final included a 3-0 victory over Argentina in the group stage. They also reached the World Cup semifinals in 1998.

Both teams have come through uncomfortable moments. Argentina's darkest time was right at the start of the tournament, after a 2-1 loss to Saudi Arabia in what will go down as one of the World Cup's biggest upsets.

Inspired by Messi and one of the most fervent fan followings in Qatar, Argentina won its final two group games, ended up squeezing past Australia 2-1 in the round of 16 and then required penalties to get past the Netherlands in a wild quarterfinal match.

Messi now has four goals in the tournament in Qatar, leaving him one behind top scorer Kylian Mbappé. They are probably the two standout players at a World Cup that has seen many other top players live up to their lofty reputations.

Modric is a case in point.

He might not have scored a goal. He hasn't even had an assist. But don't underestimate the importance to Croatia of the little magician who keeps things ticking in midfield and manages to assert some control for a team which fights until the last minute.

In 2018, each of Croatia's knockout games went into extra time before the team lost to France in the final, and the same thing is happening in Qatar, with victories in penalty shootouts over Japan in the last 16 and Brazil in the quarterfinals.

Croatia looked more comfortable against Brazil than against Japan, which shows the team might be happier to invite pressure and choose its moments to break forward rather than control games and be more susceptible to the counterattack.

Containing Messi will be key and much of the responsibility there lies with holding midfielder Marcelo Brozovic, who protected Croatia's defense so well against Brazil.

Argentina will be without two players because of suspension: left back Marcos Acuña and right back Gonzalo Montiel. Acuña is the bigger miss, having impressed since coming into the team after the loss to Saudi Arabia, and he is likely to be replaced by Nicolás Tagliafico.

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 12, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 157 ~ 23 of 54

## Golden Globes, hobbled by scandal, set to announce noms

By JAKE COYLE AP Film Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — After scandal and boycott plunged the Hollywood Foreign Press Association into disarray and knocked the Golden Globes broadcast off television for a year, the annual film and television awards are set to announce nominations Monday.

Nominations to the 80th Golden Globe Awards will be announced 8:35 a.m. EST Monday by George and Mayan Lopez, who will read the nominees on NBC's "Today" show. The Globes will be telecast Jan. 10, with stand-up comedian Jerrod Carmichael hosting.

This year's show could be make-or-break for the Hollywood Foreign Press Association, the organization that puts on the Globes. A Los Angeles Times investigation in early 2021 found that the group then had no Black members, a revelation compounded by other allegations of ethical improprieties. Many stars and studios said they would boycott the show. Tom Cruise returned his three Globes.

With Hollywood spurning the Globes, NBC last year canceled the telecast that would have taken place in January. Instead, the Golden Globes were quietly held in a Beverly Hilton ballroom without any stars in attendance. Winners were announced on Twitter.

Now, the Globes are trying to mount a comeback. The biggest question surrounding the nominations Monday isn't who will be nominated but how will Hollywood respond. Will the usual press statements and social-media celebrations follow? Or will many take the lead of Brendan Fraser — a likely nominee this year for his performance in "The Whale" — who said he won't attend the Globes.

In 2018, Fraser said he was groped by Philip Berk, a longtime HFFPA member and former president of the organization, at an event in 2003. The HFFPA found that Berk "inappropriately touched" Fraser, but that it "was intended to be taken as a joke and not as a sexual advance."

"It's because of the history that I have with them," Fraser told GQ last month, explaining why he wouldn't attend. "And my mother didn't raise a hypocrite. You can call me a lot of things, but not that."

Over the last year and a half, the HFFPA has revamped its membership and enacted reforms designed to curtail unethical behavior. The group added new members, including six Black voting members.

In bringing the Globes back the air, NBC praised the HFFPA for its ongoing reforms but also reworked its contract. The network will broadcast the 2023 show in a one-year deal. It also shifted the telecast to a Tuesday, instead of the Globes' previous Sunday night perch.

Known for its boozy, celebrity-stuffed broadcast, the Globes have long ranked as one of the most-watched non-sporting live programs of the year. But ratings, as they have for most award shows, have slid for the Globes in recent years. The 2021 show, held amid the pandemic, was watched by 6.9 million, down from 18 million the year prior.

The HFFPA also sold the Globes earlier this year to Todd Boehly's Eldridge Industries, which has turned it from a nonprofit to a for-profit venture. The firm also owns Dick Clark Productions, which produces the Globes, and the award show's longtime home, the Beverly Hilton in Los Angeles.

For Hollywood studios, the Globes can be a useful marketing tool that helps drive audiences to awards contenders ahead of the Academy Awards, which this year will be held March 12. In the past year, no other awards body has emerged as a Globes replacement. And with modest ticket sales thus far for many of the fall's most acclaimed dramas, some in the industry will surely hope to see the Globes restored to their former luster.

This year, some of the favorites include the metaverse adventure "Everything Everywhere all at Once," Steven Spielberg's autobiographical "The Fabelmans" and Martin McDonagh's feuding friends drama "The Banshees of Inisherin." The year's biggest box-office hit, "Top Gun: Maverick," too, could be in the mix. Could Cruise be a nominee again?

## Peru president proposes moving up elections amid protests

By REGINA GARCIA CANO Associated Press

LIMA, Peru (AP) — Peru's newest president, Dina Boluarte, gave in to protesters' demands early Monday announcing in a nationally televised address that she will send Congress a proposal to move up elections.

Boluarte's decision came after thousands of demonstrators took to the streets around Peru for another day on Sunday to demand that she resign and schedule elections to replace her and Congress. The protests turned deadly, with at least two reported deaths in a remote community in the Andes, according to officials.

Boluarte said she will propose the scheduling of general elections for April 2024. That marks a reversal as she had previously said she should be allowed to hold the office for the remaining 3 1/2 years of her predecessor's term.

"My duty as president of the republic in the current difficult time is to interpret, read and collect the aspirations, interests and concerns, if not of all, of the vast majority of Peruvians," Boluarte said. "So, interpreting in the broadest way the will of the citizens... I have decided to assume the initiative to reach an agreement with the congress of the republic to advance the general elections."

Many of those demonstrating in the ongoing political crisis are demanding the release from custody of Pedro Castillo, the center-left president ousted Wednesday by lawmakers after he sought to dissolve Congress ahead of an impeachment vote.

The protests rocking Peru heated up particularly in rural areas, strongholds for Castillo, a former school-teacher and political newcomer from a poor Andean mountain district. Protesters set fire to a police station, vandalized a small airport used by the armed forces, and marched in the streets.

A 15-year-old boy died of an injury suffered during a protest in the remote Andes community of Andahuaylas, Congresswoman Maria Taipe Coronado said as she made an impassioned plea from the legislative palace for Boluarte to step down.

"The death of this compatriot is the responsibility of Mrs. Dina for not submitting her resignation," charged Taipe, who is affiliated with the party which helped Castillo and Boluarte to their election last year as president and vice president respectively before both were kicked out of that party. "Since when is protesting a crime?"

Taipe charged that authorities were using heavy-handed repressive tactics in quelling demonstrations. But it remains unclear how the boy was fatally injured, and state media reported a second death in the same community without giving details.

Anthony Gutiérrez, director of a local hospital, told a radio station that the second protester to die was an 18-year-old person. At least 26 people also were reported injured.

Hundreds of people also protested in Lima, the capital, where riot police used tear gas to push protesters back.

Boluarte, in her address to the nation, declared a state of emergency in areas outside Lima where protests have been particularly violent.

Boluarte, 60, was swiftly sworn in at midweek to replace Castillo, hours after he stunned the country by ordering the dissolution of Congress, which in turn dismissed him for "permanent moral incapacity." Castillo was arrested on charges of rebellion.

Castillo's failed move against the opposition-led Congress came hours before lawmakers were set to start a third impeachment attempt against him.

Scattered protests around the country have continued for days. Protesters have also setup roadblocks, leaving people stranded for hours.

On Saturday in Andahuaylas, 16 people were treated for concussions at a hospital, and one of those persons was reported in serious condition.

Boluarte has called for a time of national unity to heal from the latest upheaval. But many of those demonstrating in favor of Castillo have called her a "traitor."

"The life of no Peruvian deserves to be sacrificed for political interests," Boluarte tweeted hours before her address to the nation. "I express my condolences for the death of a citizen in Andahuaylas. I reiterate



my call for dialogue and to put an end to violence.”

Meanwhile, in Lima, hundreds of people again gathered outside the legislative palace on Sunday. Dozens of police officers in riot gear used tear gas against those gathered, while just inside the building, lawmakers were beginning a session. Police also chased and beat protesters as they ran from the scene amid clouds of gas.

Peru has had six presidents in the last six years, including three in a single week in 2020 when Congress flexed its impeachment powers.

The power struggle in the country has continued as the Andes region and its thousands of small farms struggle to survive the worst drought in a half-century. The country of more than 33 million people is also experiencing a fifth wave of COVID-19 infections — having recorded about 4.3 million infections and 217,000 deaths since the pandemic began.

## Dog therapy for kids facing the trauma of the war in Ukraine

By E. EDUARDO CASTILLO Associated Press

BOYARKA, Ukraine (AP) — Bice is an American pit bull terrier with an important and sensitive job in Ukraine — comforting children traumatized by Russia’s war.

The playful 8-year-old gray dog arrived on time this week to a rehabilitation center on the outskirts of the Ukrainian capital, ready to start his duties.

As Bice waited in a hallway, inside of what looked like a school classroom with paintings and some books, a dozen children were seated around a table listening to Oksana Sliepora, a psychologist.

“Who has a dog?” she asked and several hands raised at once while the space filled with shouts of “Me, me, me!”

One youngster said his dog was named Stitch; “Tank,” said another boy, adding that he has a total of five, but he forgot all their names. Everyone burst out laughing.

The seven girls and nine boys — ranging in age from a 2-year-old boy to an 18-year-old young woman — look at first like schoolchildren enjoying class. But they have particular stories: Some witnessed how Russian soldiers invaded their hometowns and beat their relatives. Some are the sons, daughters, brothers or sisters of soldiers who are on the front lines, or were killed on them.

They come together at the Center for Social and Psychological Rehabilitation, a state-operated community center where people can get help coping with traumatic experiences after Russia’s invasion in February. Staffers provide regular psychological therapy for anyone who has been affected in any way by the war.

In the past they have worked with horses, but now they are adding support from another four-legged friend: Canine therapy.

Located in Boyarka, a suburb around 20 kilometers (12 miles) southwest of Kyiv, the center was established in 2000 as part of an effort to give psychological support to people affected, directly or indirectly, by the explosion at the nuclear plant in Chernobyl in 1986.

Now it focuses on people affected by the war. These days, when some areas are without power after the Russian attacks to Ukrainian energy infrastructure, the two-story building is one of the few places with light and heating.

With the kids gathered, some wearing festive blue or red Christmas hats, Sliepora cagily asked if they wanted to meet someone. Yes, they did, came the response. The door opened. The faces of the children glowed. They smiled.

And in came Bice, the tail-wagging therapist.

Darina Korozei, the pooch’s owner and handler, asked the children to come one by one, to ask him to do a trick or two. He sat. He stood up on his hind legs. He extended a paw, or rolled over. Then, a group hug — followed by a few tasty treats for him.

For more than 30 minutes, Bice let everybody to touch him and hug him, without ever barking. It was as if nothing else mattered at that moment, as if there were nothing to worry about — like, say, a war ravaging their country.

This is the first time that Sliepora has worked with a dog as part of her therapies. But, she said, "I read a lot of literature that working with dogs, with four-legged rehabilitators, helps children reduce stress, increase stress resistance, and reduce anxiety."

The kids did not seem stressed out, but of course the reality is still out there.

She observed how some children are scared of loud noises, like when someone closes a window or when they hear the sound of a jet. Some drop to the floor or start asking whether there's a bomb shelter close.

Among the children were a brother and sister from Kupyansk, a city in the eastern region of Kharkiv, who witnessed Russian soldiers storming into their home with machine guns, grabbing their grandfather, putting a bag on his head and beating him, Sliepora said.

"Each child is psychologically traumatized in different ways," she said.

The moms of some of the kids remained almost all the time seated along one of the walls, watching and listening at distance. When Bice came, some took pictures of their children.

Lesya Kucherenko was here with her 9-year-old son, Maxim. She said she can't stop thinking about the war and what could happen to her oldest son, a 19-year-old paratrooper fighting in the town of Bakhmut in the the eastern Donetsk region — one of the most active fronts these days.

Maxim smiled as he plays with Bice, but he was always checking on his mom and turned his head around to see her every once in a while.

Kucherenko said sometimes she breaks into tears when thinking about her soldier son. Right before this session, she got a call from him. He told her that he was fine, and by just remembering that, she started crying. The next second, Maxim was there, asking why.

"You see? He's comforting me — not me him," she said.

As for the comforting canine, what's the best message that Bice offers the kids?

Owner Korozei needs to think for only a couple of seconds, and replies: "Freedom."

"Freedom from problems, and happiness," she adds.

## Fallout from LA racism scandal keeps shaking City Council

By MICHAEL R. BLOOD Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Two months after becoming entangled in a racism scandal that shook public trust in Los Angeles government, disgraced City Councilman Kevin de Leon has refused calls to resign and is attempting to rehabilitate his reputation as he faces a politically uncertain future.

De Leon, a former state legislator, is one of two council members who have resisted calls from President Joe Biden to step down, while continuing to collect annual salaries of nearly \$229,000 — among the most lucrative paydays for city council members in the nation.

The other is Councilman Gil Cedillo, who vanished from public view soon after the scandal over a leaked recording of racist insults emerged in October and has not attempted to return to City Hall meetings.

Cedillo lost a reelection bid earlier this year and his term expires Monday at 12:01 a.m.

Stripped of his ability to participate in council committees, facing widespread pressure to resign and after an extended absence from council meetings, de Leon has been maneuvering in public and private to emerge from political purgatory, despite being reviled by colleagues who say they cannot work with him.

His situation deteriorated Friday, when he scuffled with an activist who heckled him at a holiday toy giveaway that was partially captured on video and posted on Twitter. The confrontation left children at the event in tears.

Council President Paul Krekorian, who has called on de Leon to step down, said in a statement that the councilman, one of his staff members and a volunteer were attacked and he called it intolerable. The Los Angeles Times reported that activists said de Leon was the aggressor.

"This city has endured horrendous division and toxicity in recent months," Krekorian said. "We need to reject hatred in all of its forms and we need to reject the atmosphere of intimidation, bullying and threats."

De Leon appeared Friday at his first council meeting since mid-October, setting off a chaotic protest between competing factions in the audience. About a dozen protesters bellowed at de Leon to leave the

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 12, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 157 ~ 27 of 54

ornate chamber, while his supporters chanted "Kevin, Kevin."

Some council members walked out and police ejected two people, fearing they might fight.

"Leave, Kevin!" one protester shouted at de Leon. "This is why these meetings need to be shut down."

The scandal triggered the resignation in October of then-City Council President Nury Martinez and a powerful labor leader, Ron Herrera, along with calls from Biden and other elected officials for de Leon and others to resign.

The uproar was triggered by a leaked recording of crude, racist comments from a year-old meeting involving Martinez, Herrera, de Leon and Cedillo — all Latino Democrats — in which they plotted to expand their political power at the expense of Black voters during a realignment of district boundaries.

The once-a-decade redrawing of district lines can pit one group against another to gain political advantage in future elections.

The California Legislative Black Caucus has said the recording "reveals an appalling effort to decentralize Black voices during the critical redistricting process." A long line of speakers at Council meetings that followed said it echoed the Jim Crow era and was a stark example of "anti-Blackness."

De Leon has apologized repeatedly but said he will not resign. He argues that he wants to continue working on homelessness, fallout from the pandemic and the threat of evictions for renters in his district, which includes downtown Los Angeles and the heavily Latino Boyle Heights neighborhood.

There is no legal avenue for his colleagues to remove him — the council can only suspend a member when criminal charges are pending.

Krekorian, the council president, has said "the only way we can begin to heal as a city is for Mr. de Leon to take responsibility for his actions, accept the consequences and step down."

While de Leon has largely stayed away from City Hall, he has continued to quietly conduct business, including attending holiday events and meeting officials on pending homeless projects and illegal dumping problems.

With his appearance at the council meeting Friday, it's clear he is trying to gradually step back into the public sphere. Meanwhile, organizers behind an effort to recall him from office have been cleared to collect petition signatures needed to qualify the proposal for the ballot.

Council members also have received a spate of letters from people identifying as de Leon's constituents, defending him and urging the council to let him resume his duties. They also asked the council to refrain from any additional punishment, which is being considered and could include restricting de Leon's office funds.

Continuing fallout from the racism scandal is one challenge that will confront the city's new mayor, Democrat Karen Bass, when she takes office on Monday. Meanwhile, three other current or former Council members have been indicted or pleaded guilty to corruption charges.

## Missouri man seeks exoneration in murder; 2 others confessed

By JIM SALTER Associated Press

ST. LOUIS (AP) — A hearing begins Monday in a case that will decide if the conviction should be overturned for a Missouri man who has spent nearly three decades in prison for a murder that two other people later confessed to committing.

Lamar Johnson has long maintained his innocence, and St. Louis Circuit Attorney Kim Gardner is backing his request to vacate his conviction. However, the Missouri attorney general's office maintains Johnson was rightfully convicted in the 1994 slaying of 25-year-old Marcus Boyd and should remain in prison.

The hearing in St. Louis Circuit Court is expected to last up to five days.

Johnson was convicted in 1995 of fatally shooting Boyd over a \$40 drug debt and received a life sentence. Another suspect, Phil Campbell, pleaded guilty to a reduced charge in exchange for a seven-year prison term.

Johnson claimed he was with his girlfriend miles away when Boyd was killed. Years later, the state's only witness recanted his identification of Johnson and Campbell as the shooters. Two other men have since

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 12, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 157 ~ 28 of 54

confessed and said Johnson was not involved.

Gardner launched an investigation in collaboration with lawyers at the Midwest Innocence Project. Their investigation found misconduct by a prosecutor, secret payments made to witness, falsified police reports and perjured testimony.

The former prosecutor and the detective who investigated the case rejected Gardner's allegations.

Last week, Missouri Attorney General Eric Schmitt asked the court to sanction Gardner, accusing her of concealing evidence. Schmitt said Gardner's office failed to inform the attorney general's office of gunshot residue testing on a jacket found in the trunk of Johnson's car after his arrest. Schmitt's filing said the evidence was hidden "because it tends to prove that Johnson is guilty."

Gardner, a Democrat, responded by accusing Schmitt, a Republican, of grandstanding. She said the failure to turn over a lab report on the jacket was due to an overlooked email. She also called it irrelevant since the jacket was not used in the crime.

Johnson's claims of innocence were compelling enough to spur a 2021 state law that makes it easier for prosecutors to get new hearings in cases where there is new evidence of a wrongful conviction. That law freed another longtime inmate, Kevin Strickland, last year after a prosecutor told a court that evidence used to convict him had been recanted or disproven. He served more than 40 years for a Kansas City triple murder before a judge freed him.

## Free ride: DC unveils bold plan to boost public transit

By HOPE YEN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The COVID-19 pandemic laid bare for the District of Columbia and other major cities that public transit was a lifeline for essential workers and that even modest fares could be a burden to them. So the nation's capital is introducing a groundbreaking plan: It will begin offering free bus fares to residents next summer.

Other cities, including Los Angeles and Kansas City, Missouri, suspended fare collection during the height of the pandemic to minimize human contact and ensure that residents with no other travel options could reach jobs and services at hospitals, grocery stores and offices.

But D.C.'s permanent free fare plan will be by far the biggest, coming at a time when major cities including Boston and Denver and states such as Connecticut are considering broader zero-fare policies to improve equity and help regain ridership that was lost with the rise of remote and hybrid work. Los Angeles instituted free fares in 2020 before recently resuming charging riders. Lately LA Metro has been testing a fare-capping plan under which transit riders pay for trips until they hit a fixed dollar amount and then ride free after that, though new Mayor Karen Bass has suggested support for permanently abolishing the fares.

Analysts say D.C.'s free fare system offers a good test case on how public transit can be reshaped for a post-pandemic future.

"If D.C. demonstrates that it increases ridership, it reduces the cost burden for people who are lower income and it improves the quality of transit service in terms of speed of bus service, and reduces cars on the road, this could be a roaring success," said Yonah Freemark, a senior research associate at the Urban Institute. "We just don't know yet whether that would happen."

The \$2 fares will be waived for riders boarding Metrobuses within the city limits beginning around July 1. In unanimously approving the plan last week, the D.C. Council also agreed to expand bus service to 24 hours on 12 major routes downtown, benefiting nightlife and service workers who typically had to rely on costly ride-share to get home after the Metro subway and bus system closed at night.

A new \$10 million fund devoted to annual investments in D.C. bus lanes, shelters and other improvements was also approved to make rides faster and more reliable.

"The District is ready to be a national leader in the future of public transit," said D.C. Councilmember Charles Allen, who first proposed free fares in 2019 and says the program can be fully paid-for with surplus D.C. tax revenue. Roughly 85% of bus riders are D.C. residents. The Metro system also serves neighboring suburbs in Maryland and Virginia.

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 12, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 157 ~ 29 of 54

About 68% of D.C. residents who take the bus have household incomes below \$50,000, and riders are disproportionately Black and Latino compared with Metrorail passengers, according to the council's budget analysis.

Not everyone is a fan.

Peter Van Doren, a senior fellow at the D.C.-based Cato Institute, said the plan risks high costs and mixed results, noting that the opportunity to improve ridership may be limited because bus passengers have been quicker to return to near pre-pandemic levels. He said government subsidies to help lower-income people buy cars would go farther because not everyone has easy access to public transit, which operates on fixed routes.

"The beauty of automobiles is they can go anywhere and everywhere in a way that transit does not," he said. "We don't know the subset of low-income people in D.C. where transit is a wonderful option as opposed to not such a wonderful option."

The council's move, which will be finalized in a second vote later this month, came over the concerns of D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser, who supports the concept of free fares but raised questions about the \$42 million annual cost over the long term. "District residents and taxpayers will have to pay for this program," she wrote in a letter to council members. "Our neighbors, Virginia and Maryland, should absorb some of these costs as their residents will benefit from this program as well."

Allen also had proposed a \$100 monthly transit benefit for D.C. residents to access the Metrorail system, but shelved the plan until at least fall 2024 due to the \$150 million annual estimated cost. He described free bus fares as a "win-win-win" for the District because they will help the transit system recover and offer affordable, green-friendly travel while boosting economic activity downtown.

The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, which currently faces a budget deficit of \$185 million, part of which it attributes to fare evasion, praised the plan as "bold." It said it looked forward to working with the city council, mayor and regional stakeholders "toward our goal of providing more accessible and equitable service for our customers."

Nationwide, while transit ridership has returned to about 79% of pre-pandemic levels, that figure varies widely by region. In New York City, for instance, MTA chief executive Janno Lieber has suggested that city and state government step up to pay for trains and buses more like essential public services, such as a fire department, citing millions of transit riders he believes may never come back. In 2019, fares made up over 40% of total transit revenue there but have since slid to 25%, leading to an anticipated \$2.5 billion deficit in 2025 along with the risk of soon using up the transportation authority's federal COVID relief funds.

In D.C., where bus fares amount to a modest 7% of total transit operating revenues, the transit agency may be able to more easily absorb losses from zero fares, said Art Guzzetti, the American Public Transportation Association's vice president of mobility initiatives and public policy. He noted savings for city taxpayers from speeding up boarding, which could allow for more routes and stops, as well as reducing traffic congestion and eliminating the need for transit enforcement against fare evaders.

Currently, D.C. bus ridership stands at about 74% of pre-pandemic levels on weekdays compared to 40% for Metrorail.

Still, free fares can be a tough choice for cities. "If the consequence of a zero-fare program is you have less funds to invest in frequent service, then you're going backwards," Guzzetti said.

In Kansas City, which began offering zero-fares for its buses in March 2020 and has no planned end date, officials said the program has helped boost ridership, which has risen by 13% in 2022 so far compared with the previous year. The free fares amount to an \$8 million revenue loss, with the city paying for more than half of that and federal COVID aid covering the rest through 2023, said Cindy Baker, interim vice president for the Kansas City Area Transportation Authority, who describes the program as a success.

The program has eliminated altercations between passengers and bus drivers over fares, although there have been more instances of passenger disputes due to an increase in homeless riders, according to the agency. Baker said the transit agency has been adding security in response to some rider complaints.

Ché Ruddell-Tabisola, director of government affairs for the Restaurant Association Metropolitan Washington, cheered free fares as a much-needed economic boost, showing D.C.'s commitment to the well-being

of late-night bartenders and restaurant workers needing an affordable way home.

"A lot of industries have moved on from the pandemic, but for D.C.'s bars and restaurants, the pandemic is still happening everyday," he said, citing the effects of hybrid work, inflation, gun violence and other factors that have hollowed out the downtown. "Anything that helps encourage diners to get to downtown D.C. and enjoy the world-class dining and entertainment we have is a great thing."

## 2nd Oath Keepers Jan. 6 sedition trial to get underway

By MICHAEL KUNZELMAN and ALANNA DURKIN RICHER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — After securing seditious conspiracy convictions against two leaders of the Oath Keepers, the Justice Department will begin Monday to try to make its Capitol riot case against four others affiliated with the far-right extremist group.

Opening statements are expected in Washington's federal court less than two weeks after Stewart Rhodes, the founder of the Oath Keepers, and Kelly Meggs, who led its Florida chapter, were convicted of seditious conspiracy for what prosecutors described as a violent plot to overturn President Joe Biden's victory.

The defendants facing jurors in the latest trial are Joseph Hackett, of Sarasota, Florida; Roberto Minuta of Prosper, Texas; David Moerschel of Punta Gorda, Florida; and Edward Vallejo of Phoenix. They are charged with several other felonies in addition to seditious conspiracy.

While the Rhodes' and Meggs' verdicts were a major victory for the Justice Department, three of their co-defendants were acquitted of seditious conspiracy. The major question in the next trial is whether prosecutors will be convince jurors to convict lower-level defendants of the Civil War-era offense.

Seditious conspiracy can be difficult to prove, especially when the alleged plot is unsuccessful. Rhodes and Meggs were the first people in decades found guilty at trial of the charge, which carries up to 20 years in prison.

Thomas Caldwell, of Berryville Virginia; Jessica Watkins of Woodstock, Ohio; and Kenneth Harrelson of Titusville, Florida, were acquitted of sedition. But all five defendants in that case were convicted of obstructing Congress' certification of Biden's electoral win, which also calls for as many as 20 years behind bars.

Prosecutors will try to convince jurors that Minuta, Moerschel, Vallejo and Hackett plotted with Rhodes and others to use force to stop the transfer of presidential power from Donald Trump to Biden. Authorities say the plot came to a head on Jan. 6, 2021, when Oath Keepers stormed the Capitol alongside hundreds of other angry Trump supporters.

In Rhodes' case, prosecutors spent weeks arguing they were not whipped into an impulsive frenzy by Trump on Jan. 6 but came to Washington intent on keeping Trump in power at all costs. Authorities say the Oath Keepers discussed their plans in encrypted chats for weeks before the riot and stashed weapons at a nearby Virginia hotel in case they were needed to support their plot.

But while investigators combed through thousands of messages sent by Rhodes and his co-defendants, none specifically spelled out a plan to attack the Capitol itself. Defense attorneys emphasized that fact throughout the trial to argue there was never any plot. They said the Oath Keepers didn't come to Washington for violence but to provide security for people like Trump ally Roger Stone at events before the riot.

Authorities say Hackett and Moerschel were part of the first group of Oath Keepers along with Meggs and Watkins that pushed into the Capitol in military-style stack formation. Minuta later joined a second "stack" that forced its way inside as police desperately tried to defend the building, prosecutors say.

Vallejo is accused of helping coordinate the quick reaction force teams in Virginia that authorities say were ready to rush a cache of weapons into the capital city if necessary. The weapons were never deployed.

Prosecutors say that on the morning of the riot, Vallejo and another quick reaction force team member discussed the possibility of "guerrilla war" and "armed conflict."

"It's a do or die situation. Because if we walk away from this, and we don't have any effectual change as a result, then we might as well just give up. We're done. We're done. If we don't do something now, we're done," Vallejo said on the podcast, according to authorities.

Three other Oath Keepers have pleaded guilty to seditious conspiracy and agreed to cooperate with investigators in the hopes of getting a lighter sentence. But they were never called by prosecutors to the witness stand in Rhodes' case. It's unclear why prosecutors didn't have them testify and whether they might take the stand in the latest trial.

Another sedition trial is also expected to begin later this month against former Proud Boys national chairman Enrique Tarrio and other leaders of that extremist group.

## Paul Silas, 3-time NBA champion, longtime coach, dies at 79

By TIM REYNOLDS AP Basketball Writer

Basketball taught Paul Silas how to be patient.

As a player, he waited 10 years before winning his first championship. As a coach, he waited 15 years for a second chance at running a team. As a father, he waited 20 years before seeing his son get a chance to lead a franchise.

"I always tried to remain positive," Silas said in 2013, "and I think it usually worked out."

Silas — who touched the game as a player, coach and president of the National Basketball Players Association — died, his family announced Sunday. Silas, whose son, Stephen Silas, is coach of the Houston Rockets, was 79.

"He combined the knowledge developed over nearly 40 years as an NBA player and coach with an innate understanding of how to mix discipline with his never-ending positivity," Charlotte Hornets chairman Michael Jordan said. "On or off the court, Paul's enthusiastic and engaging personality was accompanied by an anecdote for every occasion. He was one of the all-time great people in our game, and he will be missed."

Silas' daughter, Paula Silas-Guy, told The New York Times that her father died Saturday night of cardiac arrest. The Boston Globe first reported Silas' death.

"We mourn the passing of former NBA All-Star and head coach Paul Silas," NBA Commissioner Adam Silver said. "Paul's lasting contributions to the game are seen through the many players and coaches he inspired, including his son, Rockets head coach Stephen Silas. We send our deepest condolences to Paul's family."

Tributes began arriving quickly. Pregame moments of silence were held in New Orleans, Philadelphia, New York and Houston among other places, and Phoenix Suns coach Monty Williams and Charlotte coach Steve Clifford were among those who spoke at length about Silas' role on their careers.

"For my family, he's a god. He's larger than life," Clifford said.

Paul Silas began his career as a head coach with a three-year stint leading the then-San Diego Clippers starting in 1980. After spending more than a decade as an assistant, he returned to being a head coach and spent time with the Charlotte Hornets, the New Orleans Hornets, the Cleveland Cavaliers and the Charlotte Bobcats.

He took four of those teams to the playoffs, winning exactly 400 games — 387 in the regular season, 13 more in the postseason.

"Probably one of the greatest human beings I've ever been around," LeBron James told Spectrum SportsNet after he and the Los Angeles Lakers defeated Detroit on Sunday night. "The start of my journey in this league started with him. His command, his principles, his attention to detail, his love for family ... to hear that news was very sad."

The Rockets played host to Milwaukee on Sunday night, winning 97-92. It was not immediately clear how long Stephen Silas would be away from the team; the Rockets are having assistant coach John Lucas lead the team on an interim basis while the Silas family grieves.

"His engaging presence and huge personality inspired legions of NBA players and coaches," the Cavaliers said of Paul Silas in a team-released statement. "We send our deepest condolences to the Silas family and everyone that loved him. Rest in power Coach!"

Stephen Silas got into the NBA world when his father was coaching in Charlotte, starting as an advance scout and eventually serving as an assistant on his father's staff with the Hornets in 2000. It took Stephen Silas two decades to get a chance to be a head coach, that coming when Houston hired him in 2020.

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 12, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 157 ~ 32 of 54

"My dad, obviously, he was my No. 1 mentor, someone who I could lean on, ask questions and he asked questions of me," Stephen Silas said in a 2021 documentary produced by the Rockets about his coaching journey. "He really valued my opinion, which was kind of weird to me, me being so young and not having much experience."

Stephen Silas persevered for a long time before getting his big chance. He saw his father wait a long time for the job he wanted as well. Paul Silas was fired by the San Diego Clippers in 1983 and wouldn't have a head coaching opportunity again until 1999 — coming when Dave Cowens, for whom Paul Silas was an assistant, stepped down in Charlotte after a 4-11 start to the shortened 1998-99 season.

"I stayed positive. I had a positive attitude," Paul Silas told the Rotary Club of Charlotte while giving a speech there in 2013. "Even though I couldn't get the job, I said, 'No, I'm not going to be negative. I'm going to be positive.'"

Eventually, Silas would take over in Cleveland. He got there in 2003, the same year the Cavaliers drafted James.

"I coached LeBron for two years, his first two years, and LeBron was unbelievable," Paul Silas said. "At 18 years old, he knew about Bill Russell, he knew about a lot of players who came through that most players his age don't even know. And he understood the game."

In time, James would become a champion. It took Paul Silas a few years to get to that level as a player as well.

He was a five-time All-Defensive team selection who averaged 9.4 points and 9.9 rebounds in 16 seasons with the St. Louis and Atlanta Hawks, Phoenix, Boston, Denver and Seattle. Silas won two titles with the Celtics — the first coming in his 10th season as a player — and claimed a third with the SuperSonics. At 36, he was then the NBA's oldest player when he retired. And as the union president, Silas oversaw a time where rosters grew, salaries rose and benefits improved.

"Respected by all those who encountered him throughout the NBA, we are grateful for his contributions to the game across a lifetime in basketball," the Suns said Sunday.

Paul Silas played his college basketball at Creighton, averaging 20.5 points and 21.6 rebounds in three seasons. He was voted into the College Basketball Hall of Fame in 2017.

Said Bluejays coach Greg McDermott: "His illustrious career as a player and coach will be matched by few."

## 'I want to talk': Griner opened up during her long trip home

By SEUNG MIN KIM Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — WNBA star Brittney Griner didn't want any alone time as soon as she boarded a U.S. government plane that would bring her home.

"I have been in prison for 10 months now, listening to Russian. I want to talk," Griner said, according to Roger Carstens, the special presidential envoy for hostage affairs, who helped secure the basketball star's release and bring her back to the U.S. last week.

She then asked Carstens, referring to others on the plane: "But, first of all, who are these guys?"

"And she moved right past me and went to every member on that crew, looked them in the eyes, shook their hands and asked about them, got their names, making a personal connection with them," Carstens recalled in an interview on CNN's "State of the Union." "It was really amazing."

Ultimately, Griner spent about 12 hours of an 18-hour flight talking with others on the plane, Carstens said. The two-time Olympic gold medalist and Phoenix Mercury pro basketball star spoke about her time in the Russian penal colony and her months in captivity, Carstens recalled, although he declined to go into specific details.

"I was left with the impression this is an intelligent, passionate, compassionate, humble, interesting person, a patriotic person," Carstens said. "But above all, authentic. I hate the fact that I had to meet her in this manner, but I actually felt blessed having had a chance to get to know her."

Although Griner is undergoing a full medical and mental evaluation, Carstens said she appeared "full of energy, looked fantastic."



# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 12, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 157 ~ 33 of 54

Griner, 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.

President Joe Biden announced on Thursday that the U.S. had secured Griner's release. In exchange, the administration offered Russia the release of notorious arms dealer Viktor Bout, who had been 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.

But the U.S. was unable to secure the freedom of Paul Whelan, who has been held in Russia for nearly four years. Administration officials have stressed repeatedly that they are still working to release Whelan, whom Russian officials have jailed on espionage charges that both his family and the U.S. government say are baseless.

"They hold Mr. Whelan differently because of these espionage charges," John Kirby, a spokesman for the National Security Council, said Sunday on ABC's "This Week." "So we're working through that now. We are now more informed, clearly having gone through this process over the last few months. We're more informed. We have a better sense of the context here, where the Russia's expectations are and we're just going to keep working on it."

Carstens, the U.S. government's top hostage negotiator, said "there's always cards" to play in securing an offer for Whelan and said he spoke with the jailed American on Friday.

"Here's what I told him. I said, 'Paul, you have the commitment of this president. The president's focused. The secretary of state's focused. I'm certainly focused, and we're going to bring you home,'" Carstens said. "And I reminded him, I said, 'Paul, when you were in the Marines, and I was in the Army, they always reminded you, keep the faith.' And I said, 'Keep the faith. We're coming to get you.'"

## **NASA Orion capsule safely blazes back from moon, aces test**

By MARCIA DUNN AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — NASA's Orion capsule made a blisteringly fast return from the moon Sunday, parachuting into the Pacific off Mexico to conclude a test flight that should clear the way for astronauts on the next lunar flyby.

The incoming capsule hit the atmosphere at Mach 32, or 32 times the speed of sound, and endured reentry temperatures of 5,000 degrees Fahrenheit (2,760 degrees Celsius) before splashing down west of Baja California near Guadalupe Island. A Navy ship quickly moved in to recover the spacecraft and its silent occupants — three test dummies rigged with vibration sensors and radiation monitors.

NASA hailed the descent and splashdown as close to perfect, as congratulations poured in from Washington..

"I'm overwhelmed," NASA Administrator Bill Nelson said from Mission Control in Houston. "This is an extraordinary day ... It's historic because we are now going back into space — deep space — with a new generation."

The space agency needed a successful splashdown to stay on track for the next Orion flight around the moon, targeted for 2024 with four astronauts who will be revealed early next year. That would be followed by a two-person lunar landing as early as 2025 and, ultimately, a sustainable moon base. The long-term plan would be to launch a Mars expedition by the late 2030s.

Astronauts last landed on the moon 50 years ago. After touching down on Dec. 11, 1972, Apollo 17's Eugene Cernan and Harrison Schmitt spent three days exploring the valley of Taurus-Littrow, the longest stay of the Apollo era. They were the last of the 12 moonwalkers.

Orion was the first capsule to visit the moon since then, launching on NASA's new mega moon rocket from Kennedy Space Center on Nov. 16. It was the first flight of NASA's new Artemis moon program, named after Apollo's mythological twin sister.

"From Tranquility Base to Taurus-Littrow to the tranquil waters of the Pacific, the latest chapter of NASA's journey to the moon comes to a close. Orion back on Earth," announced Mission Control commentator

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 12, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 157 ~ 34 of 54

Rob Navias.

While no one was on the \$4 billion test flight, NASA managers were thrilled to pull off the dress rehearsal, especially after so many years of flight delays and busted budgets. Fuel leaks and hurricanes conspired for additional postponements in late summer and fall.

In an Apollo throwback, NASA held a splashdown party at Houston's Johnson Space Center on Sunday, with employees and their families gathering to watch the broadcast of Orion's homecoming. Next door, the visitor center threw a bash for the public.

Getting Orion back intact after the 25-day flight was NASA's top objective. With a return speed of 25,000 mph (40,000 kph) — considerably faster than coming in from low-Earth orbit — the capsule used a new, advanced heat shield never tested before in spaceflight. To reduce the gravity or G loads, it dipped into the atmosphere and briefly skipped out, also helping to pinpoint the splashdown area.

All that unfolded in spectacular fashion, officials noted, allowing for Orion's safe return.

"I don't think any one of us could have imagined a mission this successful," said mission manager Mike Sarafin.

Further inspections will be conducted once Orion is back at Kennedy by month's end. If the capsule checks find nothing amiss, NASA will announce the first lunar crew amid considerable hoopla in early 2023, picking from among the 42 active U.S. astronauts stationed at Houston's Johnson Space Center.

"People are anxious, we know that," Vanessa Wyche, Johnson's director, told reporters. Added Nelson: "The American people, just like (with) the original seven astronauts in the Mercury days, are going to want to know about these astronauts."

The capsule splashed down more than 300 miles (482 kilometers) south of the original target zone. Forecasts calling for choppy seas and high wind off the Southern California coast prompted NASA to switch the location.

Orion logged 1.4 million miles (2.25 million kilometers) as it zoomed to the moon and then entered a wide, swooping orbit for nearly a week before heading home.

It came within 80 miles (130 kilometers) of the moon twice. At its farthest, the capsule was more than 268,000 miles (430,000 kilometers) from Earth.

Orion beamed back stunning photos of not only the gray, pitted moon, but also the home planet. As a parting shot, the capsule revealed a crescent Earth — Earthrise — that left the mission team speechless.

Nottingham Trent University astronomer Daniel Brown said the flight's many accomplishments illustrate NASA's capability to put astronauts on the next Artemis moonshot.

"This was the nail-biting end of an amazing and important journey for NASA's Orion spacecraft," Brown said in a statement from England.

The moon has never been hotter. Just hours earlier Sunday, a spacecraft rocketed toward the moon from Cape Canaveral. The lunar lander belongs to ispace, a Tokyo company intent on developing an economy up there. Two U.S. companies, meanwhile, have lunar landers launching early next year.

## 3 bald eagles die, 10 sick after eating euthanized animals

INVER GROVE HEIGHTS, Minn. (AP) — At least 13 bald eagles were likely poisoned by scavenging the carcasses of euthanized animals that were improperly dumped at a Minnesota landfill, and three of the majestic birds have died.

The Minneapolis Star Tribune reports that state and federal wildlife officials are investigating after the eagles were found this month near the Pine Bend Landfill in the Minneapolis suburb of Inver Grove Heights.

Ten of the birds are in intensive care at the University of Minnesota Raptor Center. The center's executive director Victoria Hall said she is optimistic those birds will recover.

Hall said when the eagles were found some of them were lying motionless, face down in the snow, and Raptor Center workers weren't sure if they were still alive. Veterinarians suspect that the eagles that died had eaten part of a carcass of an animal that had been euthanized with pentobarbital, and investigators confirmed that some euthanized animals had been brought to the landfill on Dec. 2.

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 12, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 157 ~ 35 of 54

Hall said animals that have been chemically euthanized are supposed to be disposed of in such a manner that other animals can't scavenge on them.

Of the 11 eagles that were brought to The Raptor Center, three also had lead poisoning and one eagle that was found to have bird flu died. Two other eagles were found dead near the landfill.

A fund has been set up to help pay for the eagles' care.

## With suspect in custody, spotlight returns to 1988 bombing

By ADAM GELLER AP National Writer

The announcement Sunday that a Libyan man suspected in the 1988 bombing of a passenger jet has been taken into U.S. custody put the spotlight back on the notorious terrorist attack and longstanding efforts to pursue those responsible.

The suspect, Abu Agila Mas'ud Kheir Al-Marimi, is accused of building the bomb that destroyed a Pam Am flight over the Scottish town of Lockerbie. The attack killed all 259 people aboard the plane and 11 on the ground. The majority of those killed were Americans.

Thirty-four years later, the public's memories of the attack have largely faded, despite developments in the case that have intermittently returned it to the headlines. Here's a look back:

### HOW DID THE LOCKERBIE ATTACK HAPPEN?

On Dec. 21, 1988, a bomb planted aboard Pam Am Flight 103 exploded less than half an hour after the jet departed London's Heathrow airport, bound for New York.

The attack destroyed the jet, which was carrying citizens of 21 countries. Among the victims were 190 Americans. They included 35 students from Syracuse University in upstate New York who were flying home after a semester abroad. To this day, the bombing remains the deadliest terrorist attack ever carried out on British soil.

Investigators soon tied the bombing to Libya, whose government had engaged in long-running hostilities with the U.S. and other Western governments. About two years before the attack, Libya was blamed for the bombing of a Berlin disco that killed three, including two U.S. soldiers, and injured dozens of others.

### WHO WAS HELD RESPONSIBLE?

In 1991, the U.S. charged two Libyan intelligence officers with planting the bomb aboard the jet. But the country's leader, Col. Moammar Gadhafi, refused to turn them over. After long negotiations, Libya agreed in 1999 to surrender them for prosecution by a panel of Scottish judges sitting in the Netherlands.

One of the men, Abdel Baset Ali al-Megrahi, was convicted and given a life sentence. The other, Lamem Khalifa Fhimah, was found not guilty. Scottish officials released Al-Megrahi on humanitarian grounds in 2009 after he was diagnosed with prostate cancer. He died in Libya in 2012.

The families of those killed, meanwhile, brought suit against the Libyan government, demanding the regime be held accountable. In 2003, Libya agreed to a settlement, formally accepting responsibility for the bombing, renouncing terrorism and paying compensation to the families.

Despite a rapprochement with the U.S. government, the pursuit of others responsible for the bombing largely stalled, until after Ghaddafi was ousted from power in 2011.

### WHAT LED INVESTIGATORS TO MAS'UD?

After Ghaddafi's fall, Mas'ud, a longtime explosives expert for the country's intelligence service, was taken into custody by Libyan law enforcement. In 2017, U.S. officials received a copy of an interview with Mas'ud done by Libyan authorities soon after his arrest.

In that interview, U.S. officials said, Mas'ud admitted to building the bomb used in the Pan Am attack and working with the two men charged earlier to plant it on the plane. He said the operation had been ordered by Libyan intelligence and that Ghaddafi had thanked him and others after the attack, according to an FBI affidavit.

In late 2020, the U.S. Justice Department announced charges against Mas'ud. With Mas'ud in Libyan custody, though, his prosecution remained largely theoretical. U.S. and Scottish officials pledged to work for his extradition, so that he could be tried.

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 12, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 157 ~ 36 of 54

It was not clear Sunday how Mas'ud was taken into U.S. custody. He would be the first to appear in an American courtroom for prosecution of the attack.

## Storm blowing through California dumps snow in Sierra

SOUTH LAKE TAHOE, Calif. (AP) — Heavy snow fell in the Sierra Nevada as a winter storm packing powerful winds sent ski lift chairs swinging and closed mountain highways while downpours at lower elevations triggered flood watches Sunday across large swaths of California into Nevada.

More than 250 miles (400 km) of the Sierra from north of Reno south to Yosemite National Park remained under winter storm warnings either until late Sunday or early Monday.

The Heavenly ski resort at Lake Tahoe shut down some operations when the brunt of the storm hit Saturday. The resort posted video of lift chairs swaying violently because of gusts that topped 100 mph (161 kph), along with a tweeted reminder that wind closures are "always for your safety."

To the south, Mammoth Mountain reported that more than 20 inches (51 cm) of snow fell Saturday, with another 2 feet (.6 meters) possible as the tail end of the system moved through the eastern Sierra.

The UC Berkeley Central Sierra Snow Lab in Soda Springs, California reported Sunday morning that more than 43 inches (110 cm) had fallen in a 48-hour span.

A 70-mile (112-km) stretch of eastbound U.S. Interstate 80 was closed Saturday "due to zero visibility" from the northern California town of Colfax to the Nevada state line, transportation officials said. Chains were required on much of the rest of I-80 and other routes in the mountains from Reno toward Sacramento.

Many other key roads were closed because of heavy snow, including a stretch of California Highway 89 between Tahoe City and South Lake Tahoe, the highway patrol said.

The U.S. Forest Service issued an avalanche warning for the backcountry in the mountains west of Lake Tahoe where it said "several feet of new snow and strong winds will result in dangerous avalanche conditions."

Gusts up to 50 mph (80 kph) that sent trees into homes in Sonoma County north of San Francisco on Saturday could reach 100 mph (160 kph) over Sierra ridgetops on Sunday, the National Weather Service said.

Heavy rain was forecast through the weekend from San Francisco to the Sierra crest with up to 2 inches (5 cm) in the Bay Area and up to 5 inches (13 cm) at Grass Valley northeast of Sacramento.

Warnings and watches were also up across Southern California, as heavy rain caused localized flooding in greater Los Angeles.

"Significant travel delays possible with accumulating snow on several mountain roads. This could include the Tejon Pass and Grapevine area of Interstate 5," the National Weather Service's LA-area office said in a statement.

Forecasters in Arizona issued a winter storm watch for northern and central Arizona beginning Sunday evening for areas above 5000 feet (1,525 meters) including Flagstaff, Prescott and the Grand Canyon, where icy temperatures and up to a foot of snow was predicted.

As the storm exits the U.S. West, it will push across the country and reach the Plains by mid-week, bringing significant rain and below-average temperatures, said Marc Chenard, meteorologist at the National Weather Service at the national center in College Park, Maryland.

"It will be a busy week while this system moves across the country," Chenard said Sunday.

## Tensions run high in north Kosovo as Serbs block roads

By SYLEJMAN KLLOKOQI and LLAZAR SEMINI Associated Press

PRISTINA, Kosovo (AP) — Tensions were high in northern Kosovo on Sunday, with Serbs blocking roads as shots and explosions rang out and the Serbian president warned that Serbian troops are ready to defend their "homeland" if peace doesn't prevail.

The roads in Serbia's former province of Kosovo, which proclaimed independence in 2008, were blocked with heavy vehicles and trucks a day after Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic said he would ask the NATO-led peacekeeping force in Kosovo to permit the deployment of 1,000 Serb troops in the Serb-populated

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 12, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 157 ~ 37 of 54

north of Kosovo, saying they are being harassed there.

The roadblocks, which Serbs say were erected to protest the recent arrest of a former Kosovo Serb police officer, came despite the postponement of the Dec. 18 municipal election opposed by Kosovo Serbs.

"Kosovo reduced tensions by postponing local elections," said German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock on Sunday.

"Recent rhetoric from Serbia did the opposite. Suggesting sending Serbian forces to Kosovo is completely unacceptable. So are the latest attacks on EULEX," she said.

Vucic said Sunday after a meeting of Serbia's top security body that he will do everything to preserve peace, but that the army is ready to protect the minority Serbs in Kosovo.

"We have taken certain measures to protect our homeland," Vucic told Serbia's state RTS television. "I have issued orders and the National Security Council has accepted them. I am very proud of our soldiers and policemen. Before they receive orders ... we will try for a million times to preserve peace," he said.

Kosovo Prime Minister Albin Kurti accused Belgrade of trying to destabilize Kosovo. He said Serbia also is trying to bring an end to the EU-mediated dialogue on normalizing bilateral ties and take it to the United Nations Security Council, where Belgrade hopes to get support from Russia and China.

Kurti called on Kosovo's Serbs "to distance themselves from the criminal groups and Vucic's regime that is funding them and looking for a war."

The European Union rule of law mission, known as EULEX, reported that a stun grenade was thrown at an EULEX reconnaissance patrol overnight. There were no injuries or damage.

EULEX, which has some 134 Polish, Italian and Lithuanian police officers deployed in the north, called on "those responsible to refrain from more provocative actions" and said it urged the Kosovo institutions "to bring the perpetrators to justice."

European Union's high representative, Josep Borrell, said the EU "will not tolerate attacks on EULEX or use of violent, criminal acts in the north."

"Barricades must be removed immediately by groups of Kosovo Serbs," he said on Twitter. "Calm must be restored ... all actors must avoid escalation."

Unidentified masked men were seen on the Serb barricades that blocked main roads leading to the border with Serbia, as Kosovo authorities closed two border crossings to all traffic and pedestrians.

An increased presence of Kosovar Albanian police in areas with a mixed population, as well as more international police and soldiers, were seen in the north on Sunday.

Serbia and Kosovo have intensified their war of words in recent days.

Vucic said Saturday that he would formally request permission from the NATO-led KFOR mission in Kosovo to deploy Serbian troops in northern Kosovo, while conceding that the request probably wouldn't be granted.

Serbian officials claim a U.N. resolution that formally ended the country's bloody crackdown against majority Kosovo Albanian separatists in 1999 allows for some 1,000 Serb troops to return to Kosovo. NATO bombed Serbia to end the war and push its troops out of Kosovo, which declared independence in 2008.

The NATO-led peacekeepers who have been deployed in Kosovo since the 1998-99 war would have to give a green light for Serb troops to go there. That's highly unlikely because it would de-facto mean handing over security of Kosovo's Serb-populated northern regions to Serbian forces — a move that could dramatically increase tensions in the Balkans.

"We do not want a conflict. We want peace and progress but we shall respond to aggression with all our powers," Kosovar Prime Minister Albin Kurti posted on social media.

Kurti told the European Union and the United States that they should "punish" Serbia for orchestrating the violence to "destabilize Kosovo."

Tension in the north has been high this week ahead of the polls initially planned for Dec. 18. They have now been postponed to April 23 in an attempt to defuse the situation.

The election was due after ethnic Serb representatives resigned their posts in November to protest a decision by Kosovo's government to ban Serbia-issued vehicle license plates.

Tensions have simmered in Kosovo ever since it proclaimed independence from Serbia, despite attempts

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 12, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 157 ~ 38 of 54

by EU and U.S. officials to defuse them. Serbia, supported by its allies Russia and China, has refused to recognize Kosovo's statehood.

Both Serbia and Kosovo want to join the EU but Brussels has warned they must resolve their dispute and normalize relations to be eligible for membership in the bloc.

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg has said that the NATO-led mission in Kosovo "remains vigilant."

## It's all downhill for 300 skiing Santas, a Grinch and a tree

NEWRY, Maine (AP) — A bunch of Santa lookalikes took to the ski slopes to spread some seasonal cheer on Sunday.

More than 300 jolly ol' elves — all dressed in red — dashed together down a mountain with white beards and Santa hats flapping in the breeze at the Sunday River ski resort in Maine. A skiing Grinch and a skiing Christmas tree joined the party.

It wasn't exactly a winter wonderland — there was little natural snow. The snow-making machines at Sunday River produced enough of the fluffy stuff for the annual tradition. Santa Sunday has grown in popularity over more than two decades, raising \$7,500 this year for a local charity.

## Pioneering Black feminist Dorothy Pitman Hughes dies at 84

By JOCELYN NOVECK AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Dorothy Pitman Hughes, a pioneering Black feminist, child welfare advocate and lifelong community activist who toured the country speaking with Gloria Steinem in the 1970s and appears with her in one of the most iconic photos of the second-wave feminist movement, has died. She was 84.

Hughes died Dec. 1 in Tampa, Florida, at the home of her daughter and son-in-law, said Maurice Sconiers of the Sconiers Funeral Home in Columbus, Georgia. Her daughter, Delethia Ridley Malmsten, said the cause was old age.

Though they came to their feminist activism from different vantage points — Hughes from her community-based work and Steinem from journalism — the two forged a powerful speaking partnership in the early 1970s, touring the country at a time when feminism was seen as predominantly white and middle class, a divide dating back to the origins of the American women's movement. Steinem credited Hughes with helping her become comfortable speaking in public.

In one of the most famous images of the era, taken in October 1971, the two raised their right arms in the Black Power salute. The photo is now in the National Portrait Gallery.

Hughes, her work always rooted in community activism, organized the first shelter for battered women in New York City and co-founded the New York City Agency for Child Development to broaden childcare services in the city. But she was perhaps best known for her work helping countless families through the community center she established on Manhattan's West Side, offering day care, job training, advocacy training and more.

"She took families off the street and gave them jobs," Malmsten, her daughter, told The Associated Press on Sunday, reflecting on what she felt was her mother's most important work.

Steinem, too, paid tribute to Hughes' community work. "My friend Dorothy Pitman Hughes ran a pioneering neighborhood childcare center on the west side of Manhattan," Steinem said in an email. "We met in the seventies when I wrote about that childcare center, and we became speaking partners and lifetime friends. She will be missed, but if we keep telling her story, she will keep inspiring us all."

Laura L. Lovett, whose biography of Hughes, "With Her Fist Raised," came out last year, said in Ms. Magazine that Hughes "defined herself as a feminist, but rooted her feminism in her experience and in more fundamental needs for safety, food, shelter and child care."

Born Dorothy Jean Ridley on Oct. 2, 1938, in Lumpkin, Georgia, Hughes committed herself to activism at an early age, according to an obituary written by her family. When she was 10, it said, her father was nearly beaten to death and left on the family's doorstep. The family believed he was attacked by the Ku Klux Klan, and Hughes decided to dedicate herself to helping others through activism.

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 12, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 157 ~ 39 of 54

She moved to New York City in the late 1950s when she was nearly 20 and worked as a salesperson, nightclub singer and house cleaner. By the 1960s she had become involved in the civil rights movement and other causes, working with Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X and others.

In the late 1960s, she set up her West 80th St. Childcare Center, providing daycare and also support for parents.

"She realized that child-care challenges were deeply entangled with issues of racial discrimination, poverty, drug use, substandard housing, welfare hotels, job training and even the Vietnam War," Lovett wrote last year.

It was at the center that Hughes met Steinem, then a journalist writing a story for New York Magazine. They became friends and, from 1969 to 1973, spoke across the country at college campuses, community centers and other venues on gender and race issues.

"Dorothy's style was to call out the racism she saw in the white women's movement," Lovett said in Ms. "She frequently took to the stage to articulate the way in which white women's privilege oppressed Black women but also offered her friendship with Gloria as proof this obstacle could be overcome."

In the early 1970s Hughes also helped found, with Steinem, the Women's Action Alliance, a broad network of feminist activists aiming to coordinate resources and push for equality on a national level. Though Hughes was often said to have also co-founded Ms. Magazine with Steinem in the same era and biographer Lovett says she helped inspire the idea, she did not have a formal role with the magazine.

"It was our difference in experience that made us good lecture partners," Steinem noted. She recalled also collaborating with Hughes on protesting so-called "welfare hotels" in New York for poor families in the 1970s. "Dorothy was key to exposing living conditions there," Steinem said. "She truly was a great community activist."

By the 1980s, Hughes had moved to Harlem and opened an office supply business, Harlem Office Supply, the rare stationery store at the time that was run by a Black woman. But she was forced to sell the store when a Staples opened nearby, part of President Bill Clinton's Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone program.

She would remember some of her experiences in the 2000 book, "Wake Up and Smell the Dollars! Whose Inner-City Is This Anyway!: One Woman's Struggle Against Sexism, Classism, Racism, Gentrification, and the Empowerment Zone."

Hughes was portrayed in "The Glorias," the 2020 film about Steinem, by actor Janelle Monáe. She is survived by three daughters: Malmsten, Patrice Quinn and Angela Hughes.

## Arizona Gov. Ducey stacks containers on border at term's end

By ANITA SNOW and ROSS D. FRANKLIN Associated Press  
SAN RAFAEL VALLEY, Arizona (AP) —

Work crews have steadily erected hundreds of double-stacked shipping containers topped by razor wire along Arizona's remote eastern boundary with Mexico in a bold show of border enforcement by Republican Gov. Doug Ducey even as he prepares to leave office.

Until protesters slowed, then largely halted the work in recent days, Ducey pressed forward over the objections of the U.S. government, environmentalists and an incoming governor who has called it a poor use of resources.

Democratic Gov.-elect Katie Hobbs said last week she was "looking at all the options" and hasn't decided what to do about the containers after her Jan. 5. inauguration. She previously suggested the containers be repurposed as affordable housing, an increasingly popular option for homeless and low-income people.

"I don't know how much it will cost to remove the containers and what the cost will be," Hobbs told Phoenix PBS TV station KAET in an interview Wednesday.

Federal agencies have told Arizona the construction on U.S. land is unlawful and ordered it to halt. Ducey responded Oct. 21 by suing federal officials over their objections, sending the dispute to court.

Environmental groups say the containers could imperil natural water systems and endanger species.

"A lot of damage could be done here between now and early January," said Russ McSpadden, a South-

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 12, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 157 ~ 40 of 54

west conservation advocate for the Center for Biological Diversity who has regularly traveled to the site since late October.

Ducey insists Arizona holds sole or shared jurisdiction over the 60-foot (18.2 meter) strip the containers rest on and has a constitutional right to protect residents from "imminent danger of criminal and humanitarian crises."

"Arizona is going to do the job that Joe Biden refuses to do — secure the border in any way we can." Ducey said when Arizona sued the U.S. government. "We're not backing down."

The federal agencies want Ducey's complaint dismissed.

Border security was a focus of Donald Trump's presidency and remains a potent issue for Republican politicians. Hobbs' GOP rival, Kari Lake, campaigned on a promise to dispatch the National Guard to the border on her first day in office. Texas Republican Gov. Greg Abbott, recently reelected to a third term, has pushed to keep building Trump's signature wall on the mostly private land along his state's border with Mexico and has crowdsourced funds to help pay for it. He also has gotten attention for busing migrants to Democratic-led cities far from the southern border, including New York City, Chicago, Philadelphia and Washington, D.C.

Ducey's move comes amid a record flow of migrants arriving at the border. U.S. border officials have stopped migrants 2.38 million times in the fiscal year that ended Sept. 30, up 37% from the year before. The annual total surpassed 2 million for the first time in August and is more than twice the highest level during Trump's presidency, in 2019.

Ducey's container wall effort began in late summer in Yuma in western Arizona, a popular crossing point, with scores of asylum-seekers arriving daily and often finding ways to circumvent the new barriers. The containers filled areas left open when Trump's 450-mile (724 km) border wall was built. But remote San Rafael Valley — the latest construction site — is not typically used by migrants and was not contemplated in Trump's wall construction plan. McSpadden said he has not seen migrants or Border Patrol agents there, just hikers and backpacking cyclists.

The construction there stretches from oak forests in the Huachuca foothills southeast of Tucson and across the valley's grasslands. As of the middle of last week, cranes had transported more than 900 blue or rust-colored metal containers down a dirt road freshly scraped into the landscape, then double stacked them up to 17 feet (5.2 meters) high alongside waist-high vehicle barriers of crisscrossed steel. Workers bolted the containers together and welded sheet metal over gaps.

Still, yawning gaps remain in the new container wall, including an open space of several hundred yards (meters) on terrain far too steep to place the containers. In some low lying wash areas there are gaps nearly three feet (1 meter) wide.

Environmental activists demonstrating at the Cochise County site in the past week largely stopped the work in recent days by standing in front of construction vehicles. One recent day, a dozen demonstrators sat atop stacked containers or in camp chairs near tents and vehicles where they sleep.

The work in Yuma cost about \$6 million and wrapped up in 11 days with 130 of the containers covering about 3,800 feet (about 1,160 meters). The Bureau of Reclamation told Arizona it violated U.S. law by building on federal land. The Cocopah Indian Tribe also complained the state did not seek permission to build on its nearby reservation.

The newer project is far larger, costing some \$95 million and using up to 3,000 containers to cover 10 miles (16 km), in Arizona's southeastern Cochise County. The U.S. Forest Service also told Arizona to halt its work in the Coronado National Forest, and recently alerted visitors to potential hazards posed by construction equipment involved in the state's "unauthorized activities."

The Center for Biological Diversity has sided with the federal government's position that the construction violates U.S. law.

While Ducey's lawsuit does not address environmental concerns, groups like the center say the work in the Coronado National Forest imperils endangered or threatened species like the western yellow-billed cuckoo and the Mexican spotted owl, as well as big cats including the occasional ocelot.

The biologically diverse region of southeastern Arizona is known for its "sky islands," or isolated mountain



ranges rising over 6,000 feet (1,828 meters) above "seas" of desert and grasslands. Wildlife cameras in the region regularly photograph black bears, bobcats, ringtails, spotted skunks, white-nosed coatis and pig-like javelina.

McSpadden said the work has toppled oak and juniper trees and he's found spools of razor wire and other construction debris on national forest land.

Environmentalists warn of the dangers of placing the containers atop a watershed of the San Pedro River that floods during the monsoon season each summer. Just south of the border lies a protected area called Rancho Los Fresnos, home to the beaver, a threatened species in Mexico.

Biologist Myles Traphagen of Wildlands Network told a briefing on border issues last month that much damage caused during the Trump administration's border wall construction was never fixed. Last year, he mapped the Arizona and New Mexico sections of that border wall to highlight damaged areas. A report this year highlights areas the group considers priorities for reconstruction.

Dynamite blasts forever reshaped the remote Guadalupe Canyon in Arizona's southeast corner. Towering steel bollards closed off wildlife corridors, preventing animals like tiny elf owls, pronghorns and big cats from Mexico to cross into the U.S. to hunt and mate.

## Hospitalizations signal rising COVID-19 risk for US seniors

By CARLA K. JOHNSON and LAURA UNGAR Associated Press

Coronavirus-related hospital admissions are climbing again in the United States, with older adults a growing share of U.S. deaths and less than half of nursing home residents up to date on COVID-19 vaccinations.

These alarming signs portend a difficult winter for seniors, which worries 81-year-old nursing home resident Bartley O'Hara, who said he is "vaccinated up to the eyeballs" and tracks coronavirus hospital trends as they "zoom up" for older adults, but remain flat for younger folks.

"The sense of urgency is not universal," said O'Hara of Washington, D.C. But "if you're 21, you probably should worry about your granny. We're all in this together."

One troubling indicator for seniors: Hospitalizations for people with COVID-19 rose by more than 30% in two weeks. Much of the increase is driven by older people and those with existing health problems, said Dr. Rochelle Walensky, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The numbers include everyone testing positive, no matter why they are admitted.

When it comes to protecting seniors, "we're doing a terrible job of that in this country," said Dr. Eric Topol, head of Scripps Research Translational Institute.

As nursing home leaders redouble efforts to get staff and residents boosted with the new vaccine version, now recommended for those 6 months and older, they face complacency, misinformation and COVID-19 fatigue. They are calling on the White House for help with an "all hands on deck" approach.

Clear messages about what the vaccine can do — and what it can't — are needed, said Katie Smith Sloan, president of LeadingAge, which represents nonprofit nursing homes.

Breakthrough infections do not mean the vaccine has failed, she said, but that false perception has been hard to fight.

"We need to change our messaging to be accurate about what it does, which is prevent serious illness and hospitalization and death," Sloan said. "This virus is insidious, and it just keeps popping up everywhere. We just need to be real about that."

Problems include unwarranted hesitance to prescribe the antiviral pill Paxlovid quickly in the elderly, which prompted five major medical societies to hold a web-based educational session for doctors, "Vax & Pax: How to Keep Your Patients Safe This Winter."

Easing restrictions, broader immunity in the general population and mixed messages about whether the pandemic is over have softened the sense of threat felt by younger adults. That may be a welcome development for most, but the attitude has seeped into nursing homes in troubling ways.

Getting family consent for vaccinating nursing home residents has become more difficult, nursing home leaders say. Some residents who can give their own consent are declining the shots. Only 23% of nursing

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 12, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 157 ~ 42 of 54

home staff are up to date on COVID-19 vaccinations.

Cissy Sanders of Austin, Texas, met multiple obstacles trying to get a booster for her 73-year-old mother, who is in a nursing home. No booster clinic was scheduled. The facility told her they couldn't find a vaccinator. So she made plans to take her mom to Walgreens later this month.

"I'm concerned about the uptick in hospitalizations and deaths among seniors, and concerned about the lack of urgency at my mother's nursing home in getting the residents and staff vaccinated" with the latest booster, she said.

Staff and visitors are potential entry points to nursing homes for the virus. The best facilities use a multi-layered approach, protecting residents with masks, screening questions, temperature checks and enhanced infection control.

"What we've learned during COVID is that the rate of spread is dependent on the community rate of spread," said Tina Sandri, CEO of Forest Hills of D.C., a nursing home in the nation's capital. "I feel safer in my building than anywhere else, including the grocery store."

Meanwhile, hospitals across the country are seeing an influx of senior patients that Topol calls "pretty alarming." Nationally, the rate of daily hospital admissions for those 70 and older with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 rose from 8.8 per 100,000 people on Nov. 15, to 12.1 per 100,000 people on Dec. 6, according to statistics from the Department of Health and Human Services. In California and New York, Topol said, hospitalizations for seniors with COVID-19 have already surpassed those during spring and summer omicron waves.

At NYU Langone Health, chief hospital epidemiologist Dr. Michael Phillips said a growing number of seniors are being admitted to his hospital with COVID-19. But the biggest increase he's seen is in the emergency department, "which is very, very busy" with COVID-19, as well as flu patients.

Dr. Wesley Long, a pathologist at Houston Methodist in Texas, said his hospital has also seen an increase in COVID-19 admissions over the last couple of weeks — and many of the patients are seniors with other health problems. Some are admitted for different illnesses and test positive for COVID-19 in the hospital. The good news? "We haven't seen an increase in ICU admissions," he said.

The new combination booster shot, which targets both omicron and the original coronavirus, provides protection against one of the main omicron variants pushing up cases lately: BQ.1.1, which is especially adept at escaping immunity.

"But our booster rates among seniors are pathetically low," Topol said, with only about a third getting the shot.

Long said health care providers at Houston Methodist promote the booster "every chance we get." But they don't administer it to people hospitalized with COVID-19, who are generally told to wait three months after being infected to get it.

Phillips also urges people to get their boosters, especially if they are at risk of serious illness or planning to spend time with someone who is. He said they see many more hospitalizations among people who are unvaccinated.

Deaths, like hospitalizations, are now rising.

The ultimate worry is that more seniors will die. Last spring and summer, death rates declined overall as more people gained protection from vaccination and prior infection. But the share of COVID-19-related deaths for the oldest old — adults 85 and older, who make up 2% of the population — grew to 40%.

Over the course of the pandemic, 1 in 5 COVID-19 deaths was among those who were in a long-term care facility.

Dr. Walid Michelen, chief medical officer for seven nonprofit nursing homes operated by the Archdiocese of New York, said Americans need to continue taking the pandemic seriously.

"It's not going away. It's here to stay," he said. "We're going to get a new variant, and who knows how aggressive that variant is going to be? That keeps me up at night."

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 12, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 157 ~ 43 of 54

## Free for a month, Kherson still toils to clear Russian traps

By INNA VARENYTSIA and JAMEY KEATEN Associated Press

KHERSON, Ukraine (AP) — A hand grenade jerry-rigged into the detergent tray of a Kherson home's washing machine. A street sign maliciously directing passers-by toward a deadly minefield. A police station that allegedly housed a torture chamber but remains so booby-trapped that demining crews can't even start to hunt for evidence.

Sunday marks exactly one month since Russia's troops withdrew from Kherson and its vicinity after an eight-month occupation, sparking jubilation across Ukraine. But life in the southern city is still very far from normal.

The departing Russians left behind all sorts of ugly surprises, and their artillery continues to batter the city from new, dug-in positions across the Dnieper River. The regional administration said Saturday that shelling over the past month has killed 41 people, including a child, in Kherson, and 96 were hospitalized.

Residents' access to electricity still comes and goes, although water is largely connected, and indoor heating has only very recently been restored — and only to about 70-80% of the city — after the Russians last month blew up a giant central heating station that served much of the city.

For authorities and citizens, sifting through the countless headaches and hazards left behind by the Russians, and bracing for new ones, is a daily chore.

On Friday alone, according to the local affiliate of public broadcaster Suspilne, Russian forces shelled the region 68 times with mortars, artillery, tank and rocket fire. Meanwhile, in the last month, a total of 5,500 people have taken evacuation trains out, and work crews have cleared 190 kilometers (115 miles) of road, Suspilne reported.

When aid trucks arrived a month ago, war-weary and desperate residents flocked to the central Svoboda (Freedom) Square for food and supplies. But after a Russian strike on the square as a line of people queued to enter a bank in late November, such large gatherings have become less common and aid is doled out from smaller, more discreet distribution points.

Regional officials say some 80% of Kherson's pre-war population of about 320,000 fled after the Russians moved in, days after their invasion began on Feb. 24. With some 60,000-70,000 residents remaining, the city now has a feel of a ghost town. Those who remain mostly keep indoors because they're cautious about making forays into the streets.

"Life is getting back to normal, but there is a lot of shelling," said Valentyna Kytayska, 56, who lives in the nearby village of Chornobaivka. She lamented the nightly "Bam! Bam!" and the unsettling uncertainty of where the Russian ordnance may land.

Normal is a relative term for a country at war. There's no telling whether what Russia insists on calling a "special military operation" will end in days, weeks, months or even years.

In the meantime, painstaking efforts go on to establish a better sense of normalcy, like clearing the mess and mines left behind by the Russians, in tough wintertime weather.

"The difficulties are very simple, it's the weather conditions," said one military demining squad member, who goes by the nom de guerre of Tekhnik. He said some of their equipment simply doesn't work in frost conditions "because the soil is frozen like concrete."

The deployment of additional teams could help ease the heavy workload, he said. "To give you an idea, during the month of our work, we found and removed several tons of mines," said Tekhnik, adding that they focused only on about 10 square kilometers (about 4 square miles).

In Kherson's Beryslavskiy district, a main road was blocked off with a sign reading "Mines Ahead" and rerouting passersby to a smaller road. In fact, it was that side road which was mined, and cost the lives of some military deminers. A few weeks later, four police officers were also killed there, including the police chief from the northern city of Chernihiv, who had come down to help Kherson regain its footing.

The general state of disrepair of weather-beaten roads helped the outgoing Russians disguise their deadly traps: Potholes, some covered with soil, provided a convenient place to lay mines. Sometimes, the Russians cut into the asphalt to make holes themselves.

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 12, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 157 ~ 44 of 54

Demining squads go slowly house-to-house to ensure it's safe for owners or previous residents to return. Experts say a single home can take up to three days to be cleared.

One crew turned up a hand grenade in one house, stuffed into a washing machine — the pin placed in such a way that opening the detergent tray would set off an explosion.

The city's main police station, where detainees were reportedly tortured, is packed with explosives. When demining squads tried to work their way in, part of the building exploded — so they've shelved the project for now.

Longer term questions remain: Kherson sits in an agricultural region that produces crops as diverse as wheat, tomatoes, and watermelon — a regional symbol. The fields are so heavily mined that about 30% of arable land in the region is unlikely to be planted in the spring, Technik the deminer said. A cursory look reveals the tops of anti-tank mines poking up in the fields.

Even so, after a night of shelling from Friday evening into Saturday, Kherson resident Oleksandr Chebotariov said life had been even worse under the Russians for himself, his wife and 3-year-old daughter.

"It's easier to breathe now," the 35-year-old radiologist said — only to add: "If the banging doesn't stop before the New Year, I'm going on vacation."

## Ronaldo says his dream of winning World Cup has 'ended'

By STEVE DOUGLAS AP Sports Writer

DOHA, Qatar (AP) — Cristiano Ronaldo said in a cryptic social media post that his dream of winning the World Cup with Portugal has ended, while stopping short of announcing his retirement from international duty.

The 37-year-old Ronaldo left the field in tears after Portugal lost 1-0 to Morocco in the quarterfinals on Saturday.

In his first comments after the elimination, Ronaldo said Sunday that it was "time to take stock" without saying explicitly if he wants to carry on being available for Portugal after 19 years in the national team.

"There's no point in reacting rashly," Ronaldo wrote on Instagram. "I just want everybody to know that a lot has been said, a lot has been written, a lot has been speculated about, but my dedication to Portugal has never wavered for an instant.

"I've always been just one more (Portuguese) fighting for everyone's goal. I would never turn my back on my teammates or my country."

Ronaldo, who is the all-time leading scorer in men's international soccer with 118 goals, said putting Portugal "on the highest level in the world" was his biggest dream.

"In my five appearances at World Cups over 16 years, always playing alongside great players and supported by millions of Portuguese, I have given my all," he wrote. "I left everything I had on the pitch. I'll never shrink from a battle and I have never given up on that dream.

"Unfortunately, that dream ended yesterday."

Ronaldo said he would now "let everyone draw their own conclusions."

"For now. There's not much else to say. Thank you, Portugal. Thank you, Qatar. The dream was beautiful as long as it lasted."

The next major tournament is the European Championship in 2024. The next World Cup will be held in the United States, Canada and Mexico in 2026, by which time Ronaldo will be 41 years old.

Ronaldo is without a club after leaving Manchester United during the World Cup in the wake of an explosive interview before the tournament when he criticized the manager, board and his teammates at the English club.

His only goal at the World Cup was a penalty against Ghana in Portugal's opening group game. He became the first male player to score at five World Cups.

Ronaldo started on the bench for Portugal's games in the last 16 — a 6-1 victory over Switzerland — and the quarterfinals.

Before the game against Morocco, Portugal coach Fernando Santos denied reports Ronaldo threatened to leave the World Cup after being told he wasn't going to be in the starting lineup against Switzerland.

## Church officials clear Chicago priest Pflieger of abuse claim

CHICAGO (AP) — A prominent Roman Catholic priest known for his activism has been reinstated as leader of his Chicago parish after being cleared by church officials of allegations that he sexually abused a minor decades ago.

The Chicago Archdiocese released a letter Saturday saying that a review board found “no reason to suspect” that the Rev. Michael Pflieger was guilty of the allegations. Pflieger had stepped away from his duties as pastor of St. Sabina Church in October during the review.

Cardinal Blase Cupich said in the letter that he recognizes the “great toll” Pflieger’s absence had on the parish and said “I am committed to do everything possible to see that his good name is restored.”

In October, a man in his late 40s said through an attorney that Pflieger abused him twice in the late 1980s during choir rehearsals in the St. Sabina rectory. That claim was similar to other allegations Pflieger faced last year involving two brothers than 40 years ago, of which he was also cleared by the archdiocese.

Pflieger, 73, denied the abuse allegations and spoke briefly before parishioners at a Saturday evening Mass about his reinstatement.

“This has been very painful,” Pflieger said. “Thank you for your love, for your support and your prayers.”

Pflieger, who is white, leads a Black church in Chicago’s largely Black and low-income Auburn Gresham neighborhood. His activism captured the attention of film director Spike Lee, who based a character played by actor John Cusack in the 2015 film “Chi-Raq” on Pflieger.

Pflieger has made national headlines for his activism on an array of issues — calling for gun control and better schools and jobs, opposing cigarette and alcohol advertising, taking on drug dealers and stores that sell drug paraphernalia, and leading countless protests. He has been sued for his activism and once said it “has resulted in jealousy, attacks and hate.”

Attorney Eugene Hollander, who filed the latest abuse allegation against Pflieger, said his client is “incredibly hurt” by the archdiocese’s decision.

Hollander also represented the two men who came forward in 2021 with sexual abuse allegations. He said they had voluntarily submitted polygraph tests supporting their claims before the archdiocese determined their allegations were unfounded.

“In combination with the brothers’ claims and their evidence, and my current client’s claim, we had a staggering amount of evidence,” Hollander said.

The decisions will send a “deep chilling effect and strongly discourage victims of sexual abuse to come forward,” Hollander said.

“Obviously the St. Sabina community really strongly rallied around Father Pflieger, and I think it’s very unfortunate that it’s kind of turned a blind eye to the sexual abuse allegations,” Hollander said.

## Facing COVID surge, China expanding hospitals, ICUs

By JOE McDONALD Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — Facing a surge in COVID-19 cases, China is setting up more intensive care facilities and trying to strengthen hospitals as it rolls back anti-virus controls that confined millions of people to their homes, crushed economic growth and set off protests.

President Xi Jinping’s government is officially committed to stopping virus transmission, the last major country to try. But the latest moves suggest the ruling Communist Party will tolerate more cases without quarantines or shutting down travel or businesses as it winds down its “zero-COVID” strategy.

A Cabinet meeting called Thursday for “full mobilization” of hospitals including adding staff to ensure their “combat effectiveness” and increasing drug supplies, according to state media. Officials were told to keep track of the health of everyone in their area aged 65 and older.

It isn’t clear how much infection numbers have increased since Beijing last week ended mandatory testing as often as once a day in many areas. But interviews and social media accounts say there are outbreaks in businesses and schools across the country. Some restaurants and other businesses have closed because too many employees are sick.

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 12, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 157 ~ 46 of 54

The virus testing site in Beijing's Runfeng Shuishang neighborhood shut down because all its employees were infected, the neighborhood government said Saturday on its social media account. "Please be patient," it said.

Official case numbers are falling, but those no longer cover large parts of the population after mandatory testing ended Wednesday in many areas. That was part of dramatic changes that confirmed Beijing was trying gradually to join the United States and other governments that ended travel and other restrictions and are trying to live with the virus.

On Sunday, the government reported 10,815 new cases, including 8,477 without symptoms. That was barely one-quarter of the previous week's daily peak above 40,000 but only represents people who are tested after being admitted to hospitals or for jobs in schools and other higher-risk sites.

Shaanxi province in the west has set aside 22,000 hospital beds for COVID-19 and is ready to increase its intensive care capacity 20% by converting other beds, the Shanghai news outlet The Paper reported, citing Yun Chunfu, an official of the provincial health commission. Yun said cities are "accelerating the upgrading" of hospitals for "critically ill patients."

"Each city is required to designate a hospital with strong comprehensive strength and high treatment level" for COVID-19 cases, Yu was cited as saying at a news conference.

China has 138,000 intensive care beds, the general director of Bureau of Medical Administration of the National Health Commission, Jiao Yahui, said at a news conference Friday. That is less than one for every 10,000 people.

Health resources are distributed unevenly. Hospital beds are concentrated in Beijing, Shanghai and other cities on the prosperous east coast. Thursday's Cabinet statement told officials to make sure rural areas have "fair access" to treatment and drugs.

China's controls kept its infection rate low but crushed already weak economic growth and prompted complaints about the rising human cost. The official death toll is 5,235, compared with 1.1 million for the United States.

China's official total case count of 363,072 is up nearly 50% from the Oct. 1 level after a rash of outbreaks across the country.

Protests erupted Nov. 25 after 10 people died in a fire in Urumqi in the northwest. Internet users asked whether firefighters or people trying to escape were blocked by locked doors or other anti-virus measures. Authorities denied that, but the disaster became a focus for public anger.

Xi's government promised to reduce the cost and disruption 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.

Forecasters say the economy probably is shrinking in the current quarter. Imports tumbled 10.9% from a year ago in November in a sign of weak demand. Some forecasters have cut their outlook for annual growth to below 3%, less than half of last year's robust 8.1% expansion.

It isn't clear whether any of the changes were a response to the protests.

In a show of official confidence, the No. 2 leader, Premier Li Keqiang, was shown by state media meeting with leaders of the International Monetary Fund and other financial institutions without masks last week in the eastern city of Huangshan. Earlier, Xi skipped a photo-taking session with Russian and Central Asian leaders during a summit in Uzbekistan in September at which the others wore no masks.

Still, health experts and economists say "zero COVID" is likely to stay in place at least through mid-2023 because millions of elderly people need to be vaccinated before restrictions that keep most visitors out of China be lifted. The government launched a campaign last week to vaccinate the elderly, a process that might take months.

Experts warn there still is a chance the ruling party might reverse course and reimpose restrictions if it worries hospitals might be overwhelmed.

Meanwhile, experts cited by state media called on the public to reduce the strain on hospitals by treating mild COVID-19 cases at home and putting off treatment for less serious problems.

Patients are standing in line for up to six hours to get into fever clinics. Accounts on social media say some hospitals turn away patients with problems deemed not serious enough to need urgent treatment.

"Blindly going to the hospital" is depleting resources and might delay treatment for serious cases, "resulting in serious risk," the vice president of Ruijin Hospital in Shanghai, Chen Erzhen, told The Paper.

"We recommend trying to manage health at home," Chen said. "Leave medical resources for people who really need treatment."

## Shoppers, workers clash over post-pandemic expectations

By ANNE D'INNOCENZIO AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Before the pandemic, Cheryl Woodard used to take her daughter and her friends to eat at a local IHOP in Laurel, Maryland after their dance practice. But now they hardly go there anymore because it closes too early.

"It is a little frustrating because it's not as convenient as it used to be," said Woodard, 54, who also does most of her shopping online these days instead of in person because of stores limiting their hours.

Before the pandemic, consumers had gotten accustomed to instant gratification: packages and groceries delivered to their doorstep in less than an hour, stores that stayed open around the clock to serve their every need.

But more than two and a half years later in a world yearning for normalcy, many workers are fed up and don't want to go back to the way things were. They are demanding better schedules, and sometimes even quitting their jobs altogether.

As a consequence, many businesses still haven't been able to resume the same hours of operations or services as they continue to grapple with labor shortages. Others have made changes in the name of efficiency. For instance, Walmart, the nation's largest retailer and private employer, announced this past summer it doesn't have any plans for its supercenters to return to its pre-pandemic 24-hour daily operations.

IHOP says a vast majority of its locations have returned to their pre-pandemic hours and some have even expanded them. But others, like the Laurel location that Woodward used to frequent, have indeed cut back.

The changes are creating a disconnect between customers who want to shop and dine like they used to during pre-pandemic times and exhausted employees who no longer want to work those long hours — a push-pull that is only being heightened during the busy holiday shopping season.

"Nobody is winning," said Sadie Cherney, a franchise owner with three resale Clothes Mentor boutiques in South Carolina. "It is so demoralizing to see that you are falling short on both ends."

Across all industries, the average number of hours worked per week per worker totaled 34.4 hours in November, unchanged from February 2020, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. But for the retail industry, it slipped 1.6% to 30.2 hours per week during the same period. Hours worked at restaurants were down by similar amount in October, according to the most recent data.

Meanwhile, the National Restaurant Association's most recent monthly survey of 4,200 restaurant operators conducted in early August found that 60% of restaurants reduced hours of operation on the days they were open, while 38% closed on the days they would normally be open compared to right before the pandemic. And a report published by food and beverage research firm Dataessential showed the average U.S. restaurant as of October was open around six fewer hours per week than in 2019 — a 7.5% decline.

Cherney noted her stores returned to pre-pandemic hours last year but with the worsening labor shortages and higher labor costs, she has struggled to keep those same hours this year.

Her store in Columbia is open one hour later, but she had to offer wage increases to her workers. For her two other locations in Greenville and Spartanburg, hours have been reduced for personal shopping appointments throughout the week, and no longer accept second-hand clothing from shoppers on Sundays.

Cherney noted customers often complain about long waits to process their second-hand offerings, while her staff is overextended because they're working 20% more than what they would like. The end result: Cash flow and profitability have both taken a hit.

Mani Bhushan, owner of Taco Ocho, a taco restaurant with four locations in the Dallas area, still struggles

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 12, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 157 ~ 48 of 54

to hire cooks at his McKinney location, which opened in July 2021. He said many workers can't afford to live in this upscale suburb and have to travel from elsewhere. Several times a week he's had to close the location early — something he has never had to do in the 40 years he has worked in the business.

Even when Bhushan is able to keep his normal hours of operation, he still has to cut off online orders earlier in the day and the service is not up to par with his other locations.

"I am a perfectionist," he said. "I am not happy. But I can't fix it right now."

The worker shortages should remain acute into next year even as several big tech companies have reduced staff or have frozen corporate hiring. The economy added 263,000 jobs while the unemployment rate remained at 3.7% in November, still near a 53-year low, according to the Labor Department. And while U.S. job openings dropped in October from September, the number ticked up 3% in retail.

For mall operator Taubman Centers, which manages or leases 24 premier centers in the U.S. and Asia, many stores are opening later than its centers to save on employee costs, according to Bill Taubman, president and chief operating officer. However, he said that causes frustration among customers who go to the mall thinking the store where they want to shop will be open.

Vicky Thai, a 27-year-old studying to be a physician's assistant in West Hartford, Connecticut, said she's often frustrated over the waits to get served at restaurants and stores. She recalled a recent restaurant experience where it took a long time just to get some water; at a local clothing store, she spent 30 minutes in line to buy an item because of staffing shortages.

But for every frustrated customer, there is a frustrated worker. Artavia Milliam, 39, of Brooklyn, New York, is a visual merchandiser at H&M in Times Square. She said she spends more of her time helping out on the sales floor than updating the mannequins because of the shortage of staff.

"It can get overwhelming," she said. "Everyday, I encounter someone who is rude."

## With NYC plan for mentally ill, hospitals face complex task

By JENNIFER PELTZ and BOBBY CAINA CALVAN Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — New York City's latest plan to keep mentally ill people from languishing in public is billed as a common-sense strategy to get them help.

By encouraging police officers and city medics to take more psychologically disturbed people to hospitals, even if they refuse care, Mayor Eric Adams says he's humanely tackling a problem instead of looking away. But his policy will have to navigate a legal challenge and a cool reception from some city lawmakers. In emergency rooms, psychiatrists must determine whether such patients need hospitalization, perhaps against their will.

It's no simple decision.

"Some people come in and they are very agitated, and they need to be restrained as soon as they walk into the emergency room. ... But there are also people who come in and they're very calm and quiet, but they just tried to kill themselves two hours ago," says Dr. Joel A. Idowu, who chairs the psychiatry department at Richmond University Medical Center on Staten Island.

"A person who's stable now might become unstable tomorrow," he said.

Adams, a police-captain-turned-politician, announced the plan in late November. The first-term Democrat has focused on what he views as restoring a sense of safety and civic functionality disrupted during the coronavirus pandemic. Among other things, less crowded streets and subways brought new visibility to the people living on them, some of them mentally ill.

Under state law, police can compel people to be taken to hospitals for evaluation if they appear to be mentally ill and their behavior poses a substantial risk of physical harm to others or themselves.

That's often interpreted to mean people who are violent or suicidal. But Adams said he's using room within the law to address people "whose illness is endangering them by preventing them from meeting their basic human needs."

The mayor cites "a moral obligation to help them get the treatment and care they need," but civil liberties organizations and mental health advocacy groups decry his response as draconian, blinkered and legally



# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 12, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 157 ~ 49 of 54

suspect. Critics rallied outside City Hall this week and have asked a federal judge to halt the policy; a hearing is scheduled Monday.

It comes amid efforts around the U.S. to separate mental health treatment from law enforcement, including the new nationwide 988 mental health emergency hotline and moves in New York and other cities to handle at least some crisis calls with behavioral health professionals instead of police.

"We need to make mental health care like medical care, a health issue responded to and treated by the people with the right training, at the right time, in the right places," said American Psychiatric Association President Dr. Rebecca Brendel. She maintains that using law enforcement authorities to respond to mental health crises unfairly criminalizes the mentally ill.

Adams said officers will have access to real-time input from mental health professionals and will strive to persuade people to accept help voluntarily. His administration has stressed that while police can send someone to a hospital, it's up to doctors whether the person needs to stay there or can be safely released for outpatient care.

The complexity, and stakes, became tragically clear when a Rochester, New York, family called 911 in March 2020 about a loved one who was behaving erratically and saying he wanted to die. Once at a hospital, Daniel Prude calmly and appropriately answered questions and said he wasn't suicidal or homicidal, according to a psychiatrist's grand jury testimony. The hospital released him.

Hours later, police found Prude running in Rochester's snowy streets. Officers eventually held him down until he stopped breathing; he was taken off life support days later.

In general, when a patient arrives for emergency psychiatric evaluation, the first step is to ascertain whether a medical problem or drug use is causing the person's behavior. If not, psychiatrists assess the patient partly by observing and asking questions. But they also seek information from loved ones, prior mental health providers and anyone else who can shed light.

"You can't just go with what you see or what the patient has told the nurse," because the person may be unable or unwilling to give a complete picture, says Dr. Madhu Rajanna, the interim chief of psychiatry at St. John's Episcopal Hospital on New York City's Rockaway Peninsula.

Staffers might need to calm combative patients — St. John's says it doesn't use restraints for that purpose and rarely employs sedatives — or discern whether cooperative patients who insist they're feeling better are truly well enough to leave.

St. John's emergency room usually is evaluating eight to 10 psychiatric patients at any given time, and each is supposed to be either admitted or released within 24 hours. (Some other hospitals can hold people for 72 hours for observation in specialized psychiatric emergency programs.)

Rajanna and emergency medicine chair Dr. Leigha Clarkson said St. John's 43 adult psychiatric beds are generally sufficient, though the hospital tries to release people swiftly once it's safe.

Citywide, however, Adams' new policy could test capacity after hundreds of psychiatric beds were converted for COVID-19 cases. The state recently pledged 50 new psychiatric beds, and Adams promised "to find a bed for everyone that needs" one.

It's possible many people won't. Richmond University Medical Center's psychiatric emergency program, for instance, discharges about 3/4 of patients after assessment, Idowu said.

Deciding whether patients stay or go "can be anxiety-provoking sometimes. Because it's not perfect," he said, but the goal is that "you don't leave anything to chance."

## Election nonprofit that drew GOP ire in 2020 renews grants

By HARM VENHUIZEN Associated Press/Report for America

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — A nonprofit group that became a point of controversy for distributing hundreds of millions of dollars in election grants during the 2020 presidential campaign is releasing a fresh round of money to local election offices, including in states where Republican lawmakers tried to ban the practice.

The Chicago-based Center for Tech and Civic Life has released only general details about how much money each office will receive or what it will fund.

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 12, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 157 ~ 50 of 54

It has said 10 county and municipal election offices will be part of the first group to receive grant money under the center's U.S. Alliance for Election Excellence, which has \$80 million to hand out over the next five years, with few restrictions.

Conservatives took aim at the center during the last presidential race after it gave local election offices around the country more than \$350 million, almost all of it donated by Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg. Opponents termed the grants "Zuckerbucks" and claimed they were an attempt by the billionaire to tip the vote in favor of Democrats, although there was no evidence to support that.

Much of the earlier money went to election offices in urban areas that have traditionally supported Democrats, but the center pointed out that it gave funding to every office that requested it – nearly 2,500 in all. The center previously said the current round of grant funding will not include money from Zuckerberg.

The center did not initially disclose the amounts each jurisdiction would be eligible to receive, but it posted a range of figures two weeks after the initial announcement in response to questions from The Associated Press.

Grant amounts will vary based on the size of each jurisdiction, from \$50,000 for those with fewer than 5,000 registered voters to \$3 million for those with more than 1 million voters. The first offices will receive grants over a two-year period leading up to the 2024 presidential election, said Tiana Epps-Johnson, the center's executive director.

The money comes with almost no restrictions on how it can be spent. Election officials said they hope to use the grants for everything from improving websites to recruiting poll workers and building larger, more secure office spaces.

The center's hesitancy to disclose details about its renewed efforts has drawn criticism from the same conservative groups that opposed its work in 2020.

"It seems like this entire process will occur behind the scenes with no guardrails or transparency, furthering the concerns of voters over undue influence on the conduct of elections," said Hayden Dublois, a researcher at the conservative Foundation for Government Accountability.

The center's grants will not fund offices in any of the more than 20 states where Republicans enacted laws since 2020 that ban private funding for elections, but it will go to offices in some states where Democratic governors vetoed bans passed by Republican-controlled legislatures. That includes Michigan, North Carolina and Wisconsin.

Dublois said he was skeptical of the list of jurisdictions the center chose to support. The center declined to provide specific details about how it selected members of the alliance.

"It seems most of the targets for the alliance are geared towards blue states, with some Democratic strongholds in swing states included, as well," he said, voicing concerns that increased funding could boost Democratic turnout.

Five of the selected jurisdictions lean Republican, but they make up only a fraction of the total population in the more Democratic jurisdictions.

The initial election offices selected are: Contra Costa and Shasta counties in California; Greenwich, Connecticut; Kane and Macoupin counties in Illinois; Ottawa County, Michigan; Clark County, Nevada; Brunswick and Forsyth counties in North Carolina; and Madison, Wisconsin.

In Wisconsin, a perennial political battleground where former President Donald Trump has sought to decertify the results of the 2020 presidential election, Republican lawmakers tried to work around Democratic Gov. Tony Evers' veto power this spring by proposing an amendment to the state constitution that would ban private funding for elections. The proposal passed the Legislature but would need a second consecutive approval in 2023 before it could be put to a statewide vote.

Madison Deputy Clerk Jim Verbick said he saw joining the alliance as a way to stay current on how other election officials are operating. He said his office will consider accepting grants and wasn't worried about the city's involvement drawing backlash.

"The issue has gone to the courts, and the courts have repeatedly said there was nothing wrong with the grants," he said.

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 12, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 157 ~ 51 of 54

Top Wisconsin Republicans said they believe the program has partisan aims.

"This is just liberals telling other liberals they are doing a good job," said Assembly Speaker Robin Vos, the state's top Republican. "Cities like Madison and Milwaukee continue to try to find ways to only engage with and turn out certain voters."

The center and participating election officials have stressed that the alliance's work is nonpartisan, but the lack of publicly available details about how they selected the offices and how the money will be used has fed conservatives' concerns.

"Our citizens should have peace of mind that the outcomes of elections are not affected by the flow of private money into election administration," said Assembly Speaker Pro Tem Tyler August, Vos' second in command who sponsored the proposed amendment to ban election grants.

In Michigan, more than 460 election offices accepted grants from the center in 2020. The state now has constitutional protections for private grants thanks to a voting-related ballot initiative voters passed in November.

Opponents such as Jamie Roe of Secure MI Vote criticize what they see as special interest groups trying to influence elections. The group pushed unsuccessfully for private funding to be outlawed.

"The elected officials and the clerks in Michigan need to know that they're going to be held accountable," Roe said. "They should be very careful about what sort of agreements they enter into with special interests."

Two recipients stand out: deeply Republican Shasta County in the rural, far northern part of California and Democratic-leaning Clark County in Nevada. Both have been on the front lines of election conspiracies.

Clark County, home to nearly three-quarters of registered voters in the presidential battleground state, has been the target of false claims that the 2020 presidential election was rigged to favor Democrats. County spokesperson Dan Kulin said the county's handling of mail ballots likely contributed to its selection. It's the only jurisdiction in the alliance with enough registered voters to be eligible for up to \$3 million in grants.

Several Republican groups in the state did not respond to phone calls and emails.

Shasta County has been roiled by far-right politics since the 2020 presidential election. Election workers have been followed while delivering ballots and monitored by trail cameras outside their office, The Los Angeles Times reported. County Clerk Cathy Darling Allen said she has feared for the safety of her staff. The Shasta County elections office received \$95,000 from the center in 2020 and now is eligible for \$1.5 million.

"The doubts about election administration that have been sown on social media particularly have been troubling and difficult to quash," Darling Allen told the AP.

She said she hopes to present the county's participation in the alliance early next year to the board of supervisors, where far-right candidates secured four of the five seats in November's election.

One of the newly elected supervisors, Kevin Crye, said he had concerns about "who and how our electoral process can possibly be manipulated," but declined to elaborate.

## Biden aims to narrow trust gap with US-Africa leaders summit

By AAMER MADHANI, FARAI MUTSAKA and MOGOMOTSI MAGOME Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden is set to play host to dozens of African leaders in Washington this week as the White House looks to narrow a gaping trust gap with Africa — one that has grown wider over years of frustration about America's commitment to the continent.

In the lead-up to the three-day U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit that begins Tuesday, Biden administration officials played down their increasing concern about the clout of China and Russia in Africa, which is home to more than 1.3 billion people. Instead, administration officials tried to put the focus on their efforts to improve cooperation with African leaders.

"This summit is an opportunity to deepen the many partnerships we have on the African continent," White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said when asked about the shadow that China and Russia cast on the meetings. "We will focus on our efforts to strengthen these partnerships across a wide range of sectors spanning from businesses to health to peace and security, but our focus will be on Africa next

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 12, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 157 ~ 52 of 54

week.”

To that end, White House officials said that “major deliverables and initiatives” — diplomatic speak for big announcements — will be peppered throughout the meetings. The White House previewed one major summit announcement on Friday, saying that Biden would use the gathering to declare his support for adding the African Union as a permanent member of the Group of 20 nations.

The summit will be the biggest international gathering in Washington since before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Local officials are warning residents to brace for road blocks and intensified security as 49 invited heads of states and leaders — and Biden — whiz around the city.

Talks are expected to center on the coronavirus, climate change, the impact of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine on Africa, trade and more, according to White House officials. Biden is set to deliver remarks at a U.S.-Africa business forum, hold small group meetings with leaders, host a leaders’ dinner at the White House and take part in other sessions with leaders during the gathering.

Biden has spent much of his first two years in office trying to assuage doubters on the international stage about American leadership after four years of Donald Trump’s “America First” foreign policy. With this summit — a follow-up to the first such gathering held eight years ago by President Barack Obama — Biden has an opportunity to assuage concerns in Africa about whether the U.S. is serious about tending to the relationship.

Biden’s effort to draw African nations closer to the U.S. comes at a complicated moment, as his administration has made plain that it believes that Chinese and Russian activity in Africa is a serious concern to U.S. and African interests.

In its sub-Saharan Africa strategy unveiled in August, the Biden administration warned that China, which has pumped billions into African energy, infrastructure and other projects, sees the region as an arena where Beijing can “challenge the rules-based international order, advance its own narrow commercial and geopolitical interests, undermine transparency and openness.”

The administration also argues that Russia, the preeminent arms dealer in Africa, views the continent as a permissive environment for Kremlin-connected oligarchs and private military companies to focus on fomenting instability for their own strategic and financial benefit.

Still, administration officials are emphasizing that concerns about China and Russia will not be central to the talks.

“The United States prioritizes our relationship with Africa for the sake of our mutual interests and our partnership in dealing with global challenges,” Molly Phee, assistant secretary of state for African affairs, told reporters before the summit. “We are very conscious, again, of the Cold War history, we’re conscious, again, of the deleterious impact of colonialism on Africa, and we studiously seek to avoid repeating some of the mistakes of those earlier eras.”

The administration has been disappointed that much of the continent has declined to follow the U.S. in condemning the Russian invasion of Ukraine, but Biden is not expected to dwell on differences publicly.

The president is expected to participate with leaders in a session on promoting food security and food systems resilience. Africa has been disproportionately impacted by the global rise in food prices that has been caused in part by the drop in shipments from major grain exporter Ukraine.

“One of the unique aspects of this summit is the collateral damage that the Russian war has inflicted on Africa in terms of food supply and the diversion of development assistance to Ukraine. The opportunity costs of the invasion have been very high in Africa,” said John Stremlau, a visiting professor of international relations at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg.

Four countries that were suspended from the African Union — Guinea, Sudan, Mali and Burkina Faso— were not invited to the summit because coups in those nations led to unconstitutional changes in power. The White House also did not invite the East African nation of Eritrea; Washington does not have full diplomatic relations with the country.

Biden’s decision to invite several leaders to the summit who have questionable records on human rights and democracy is looming large ahead of the gathering.

Equatorial Guinea was invited despite the State Department stating that it held “serious doubts” about last month’s election in the tiny Central African nation. Opposition parties “made credible allegations of

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 12, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 157 ~ 53 of 54

significant election-related irregularities, including documented instances of fraud, intimidation, and coercion," according to the department. Election officials reported that President Teodoro Obiang's ruling party won nearly 95% of the vote.

Zimbabwe, which has faced years of U.S. and Western sanctions over poor governance, human rights abuses and widespread corruption, also was invited.

President Emmerson Mnangagwa, who seized power from longtime ruler Robert Mugabe in 2017, has sought to cast himself as a reformer, but local and international human rights campaigners accuse him of repression that is just as bad or even worse than Mugabe's.

Although Mnangagwa enjoys cozy relations with China and Russia, as did Mugabe, he has also sought to make friends with the U.S. and other Western countries in an effort to bolster his legitimacy.

In a national address that he delivered in November in a new Chinese-gifted multimillion-dollar parliament building, Mnangagwa held out the invitation to the U.S.-Africa summit as a sign of his administration's success. He said the southern African country welcomed the invitation, but he also called for the "unconditional" removal of sanctions that he blames for Zimbabwe's debilitating economic woes.

"Emphasis remains on dialogue," Mnangagwa said.

Ethiopia received an invitation even though Biden late last year announced he was cutting out the country from a U.S. trade program, known as the African Growth and Opportunity Act, over Ethiopia's failure to end a war in the Tigray region that led to "gross violations" of human rights. A peace deal was signed last month, but implementation faces major challenges such as the continued presence of troops from neighboring Eritrea.

Analysts say that African leaders will be looking for Biden to make some major commitments during the summit, including announcing his first presidential visit to sub-Saharan Africa, efforts to bolster the continent's economy through private sector investment and trade and more.

Perhaps most importantly, it could be an opportunity for Biden to demonstrate that Africa is more than a battleground in its economic and military competition with Beijing and Moscow.

"I do strongly believe that the United States is still seen as a superpower from the African perspective, but most African leaders do not want to align with its promotion of democracy," said Abraham Kuol Nyuon, a political analyst and associate professor of political science at the University of Juba in South Sudan. "They need the support of America but not the system of America."

## Today in History: December 12, Paris climate accord adopted

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Monday, Dec. 12, the 346th day of 2022. There are 19 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 12, 2015, nearly 200 nations meeting in Paris adopted the first global pact to fight climate change, calling on the world to collectively cut and then eliminate greenhouse gas pollution but imposing no sanctions on countries that didn't do so.

On this date:

In 1787, Pennsylvania became the second state to ratify the U.S. Constitution.

In 1870, Joseph H. Rainey of South Carolina became the first Black lawmaker sworn into the U.S. House of Representatives.

In 1913, authorities in Florence, Italy, announced that the "Mona Lisa," stolen from the Louvre Museum in Paris in 1911, had been recovered.

In 1915, singer-actor Frank Sinatra was born Francis Albert Sinatra in Hoboken, New Jersey.

In 1917, during World War I, a train carrying some 1,000 French troops from the Italian front derailed while descending a steep hill in Modane (moh-DAN'); at least half of the soldiers were killed in France's greatest rail disaster. Father Edward Flanagan founded Boys Town outside Omaha, Nebraska.

In 1977, the dance movie "Saturday Night Fever," starring John Travolta, premiered in New York.

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 12, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 157 ~ 54 of 54

In 1985, 248 American soldiers and eight crew members were killed when an Arrow Air charter crashed after takeoff from Gander, Newfoundland.

In 1995, by three votes, the Senate killed a constitutional amendment giving Congress authority to outlaw flag burning and other forms of desecration against Old Glory.

In 2000, George W. Bush became president-elect as a divided U.S. Supreme Court reversed a state court decision for recounts in Florida's contested election. The Marine Corps grounded all eight of its high-tech MV-22 Osprey tilt-rotor aircraft following a fiery crash in North Carolina that killed four Marines. (The Osprey program was revived by the Pentagon in 2005.)

In 2010, the inflatable roof of the Minneapolis Metrodome collapsed following a snowstorm that had dumped 17 inches on the city. (The NFL was forced to shift an already rescheduled game between the Minnesota Vikings and New York Giants to Detroit's Ford Field.)

In 2019, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson led his Conservative Party to a landslide victory in a general election that was dominated by Brexit.

In 2020, thousands of supporters of President Donald Trump gathered in Washington for rallies to back his desperate efforts to subvert the election that he lost to Joe Biden; sporadic fights broke out between pro-Trump and anti-Trump demonstrators after sundown, and four people were taken to the hospital with stab wounds. Charley Pride, the son of sharecroppers in Mississippi who became the first Black member of the Country Music Hall of Fame, died in Dallas at 86 from what a spokesman said were complications from COVID-19. John le Carre, the former spy whose novels defined the Cold War espionage thriller, died in England at the age of 89.

Ten years ago: North Koreans danced in the streets of their capital, Pyongyang, after the regime of Kim Jong Un succeeded in firing a long-range rocket in defiance of international warnings. Pope Benedict XVI sent his first tweet from his new account; it read, "Dear friends, I am pleased to get in touch with you through Twitter. Thank you for your generous response. I bless all of you from my heart."

Five years ago: Democrat Doug Jones won Alabama's special Senate election over Republican Roy Moore, who had denied accusations of sexual misconduct with teenage girls that allegedly took place when he was in his 30s; it was the first Democratic Senate victory in Alabama in a quarter-century, and came despite an endorsement of Moore by President Donald Trump. San Francisco Mayor Ed Lee, the city's first Asian-American mayor, died at the age of 65 after collapsing while grocery shopping.

One year ago: Despite critical acclaim and two years-worth of anticipation, Steven Spielberg's lavish "West Side Story" revival made little noise at the box office, with just \$10.5 million in ticket sales on its opening weekend. Veteran anchor Chris Wallace announced at the end of his "Fox News Sunday" program that he was leaving Fox News after 18 years; CNN then announced that he was joining its new streaming service.

Today's Birthdays: Former TV host Bob Barker is 99. Basketball Hall of Famer Bob Pettit is 90. Singer Connie Francis is 85. Singer Dionne Warwick is 82. Rock singer-musician Dickey Betts is 79. Hall of Fame race car driver Emerson Fittipaldi is 76. Actor Wings Hauser is 75. Actor Bill Nighy (ny) is 73. Actor Duane Chase (Film: "The Sound of Music") is 72. Country singer LaCosta is 72. Gymnast-turned-actor Cathy Rigby is 70. Singer-musician Sheila E. is 65. Actor Sheree J. Wilson is 64. Pop singer Daniel O'Donnell is 61. International Tennis Hall of Famer Tracy Austin is 60. Rock musician Eric Schenkman (Spin Doctors) is 59. Author Sophie Kinsella is 53. News anchor Maggie Rodriguez is 53. Actor Jennifer Connelly is 52. Actor Madchen Amick is 52. Actor Regina Hall is 52. Country singer Hank Williams III is 50. Actor Mayim Bialik is 47. Model Bridget Hall is 45. Actor Lucas Hedges is 26. Actor Sky Katz is 18.