

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 1 of 88

- [1- Upcoming Events](#)
- [2- New Year's Ad: Dacotah Bank](#)
- [2- New Year's Ad: Doug Abeln Seed Co.](#)
- [3- Frost Family donates hockey pucks](#)
- [3- Opening day at skating rink](#)
- [5- GBB beat Waverly-South Shore](#)
- [6- South Dakota Average Gas Prices](#)
- [7- Drought Monitor](#)
- [8- SD Search Light: Crisis care centers to seek aid from state lawmakers in 2023](#)
- [10- SD Search Light: Noem goes against board, victims' families and review process to reduce prison sentences](#)
- [13- SD Search Light: Drug crimes, violent crimes drop for 2021 in South Dakota](#)
- [14- SD Search Light: Transgender employee at center of contract controversy pledges to fight on](#)
- [17- Weather Pages](#)
- [22- Daily Devotional](#)
- [23- 2022 Community Events](#)
- [24- Subscription Form](#)
- [25- Lottery Numbers](#)
- [26- News from the Associated Press](#)



Groton Community Calendar

Saturday, Dec. 31

Wrestling Invitational at Webster, 9:30 a.m.
Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Catholic: SEAS Confession, 3:45-4:15 p.m.; SEAS Mass, 4:30 p.m.

Sunday, Jan. 1

Emmanuel Lutheran Worship with communion, 9 a.m.; No Sunday School or Choir.
United Methodist: Conde worship with communion, 8:30 a.m.; Coffee hour, 9:30 a.m.; Groton worship with communion, 10:30 a.m.
Groton CM&A: Sunday School at 9:15 a.m., Worship Service at 10:45 a.m.
Catholic: SEAS Confession, 7:45-8:15 a.m., SEAS Mass, 8:30 a.m.; Turton Confession, 10:30-10:45 a.m.; Turton Mass, 11 a.m.

Monday, Jan. 2

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

Tuesday, Jan. 3

Senior Menu: Meatballs, mashed potatoes and gravy, carrots and peas, mixed fruit, whole wheat bread.

Basketball doubleheader in Groton with Warner: Girls JV at 4 p.m. followed by Boys JV, Girls Varsity and Boys Varsity.

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

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

Emmanuel: Executive Committee Meeting, 7 p.m.
City Council Meeting, 7 p.m.

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

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

© 2022 Groton Daily Independent

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 2 of 88

**WELL WISHES &
BLESSINGS**
for a great NEW YEAR



DACOTAH BANK

7 East US Hwy 12 | GROTON | (605) 397-2711

Doug Abeln Seed Company

*Be rooted in
2023 with seeds
of success!*

2023

Doug Abeln ~ 605/380-0200

Latham
HI-TECH SEEDS

BECK'S

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 3 of 88



The Chris and Sam Frost family donated a box of 25 hockey pucks to the Groton Skating Rink. Pictured are their children: Kinsey, Huntley, Tenley and Tanner Frost. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



The Groton Skating Rink officially opened for the season on Friday. Some of the first day skaters were Teagan Hanten, Emery Blackwood and Emerly Jones. (Photo Courtesy Bruce Babcock)

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 4 of 88



Granddaughter Emery Blackwood, and her grandfather, Bruce Babcock, enjoying the sunny winter day on the ice. (Photo courtesy Bruce Babcock)



Hudson McGannon, Sam Crank, and Rylan and Emery Blackwood take time out for a photo at the Groton Skating Rink. (Photo by Bruce Babcock)



Hudson McGannon and Rylan Blackwood try their hockey skills on opening day. (Photo by Bruce Babcock)

Lady Tigers win big over Waverly-South Shore

The Groton Area Lady Tigers powered in 67 points to defeated Waverly-South Shore in action played Friday at the Groton Area Arena. It was the most points scored while Coach Matt Locke has been the head coach. It was a balanced scoring attack as only Gracie Traphagen, who returned to the floor after being out from an injury for a couple of games, led the Tigers with 14 points.

Groton Area led at the quarterstops at 28-4, 44-7, 54-8 and 67-9. In addition, Traphagen had five rebounds, two assists and two steals. Brooke Gengerke had nine points, four rebounds and three assists. Kennedy Hansen had nine points and two assists. Jerica Locke had nine points, three rebounds, three assists and five steals. Sydney Leicht had eight points, two rebounds and five steals. Jaedyn Penning had six points, three rebounds and three assists. Brooklyn Hansen had three points, one assist and two steals. Laila Roberts had two points, one rebound and one steal. Talli Wright had two points, two rebounds and one assist. Rylee Dunker had two points, one assist and one steal. Mia Crank had two points and one steal. Aspen Johnson had one point, one rebound and one steal. Faith Traphagen had four rebounds, two assists and four steals. Emily Clark had two rebounds. Elizabeth Flihs also saw some playing time.

Waverly-South Shore had 25 turnovers, 22 of which were steals. The Coyotes had nine team fouls which allowed the Tigers to make five of 10 free throws for 50 percent. Groton Area had seven team fouls that allowed Waverly-South Shore to make two of six free throws.

The Tigers made 28 of 53 field goals for 53 percent and two of 10 three-pointers for 20 percent. The Coyotes made three of 10 shots for 30 percent.

Jolene Krantz led the Coyotes with five points while Carlee Mushitz had three and Dashaya Koch had one point.

Groton Area won the junior varsity game, 40-4. Jaedyn Penning led the Tigers with eight points while Mia Crank had six, Brooklyn Hansen had five, Faith Traphagen and Talli Wright each had four points, Laila Roberts, Kella Tracy and Elizabeth Flihs each had three points and Kennedy Hansen and Rylee Dunker each had two points.

Both games were broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM. The junior varsity game was sponsored by Bob and Ginny Neisen. The varsity game was 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.

- Paul Kosel

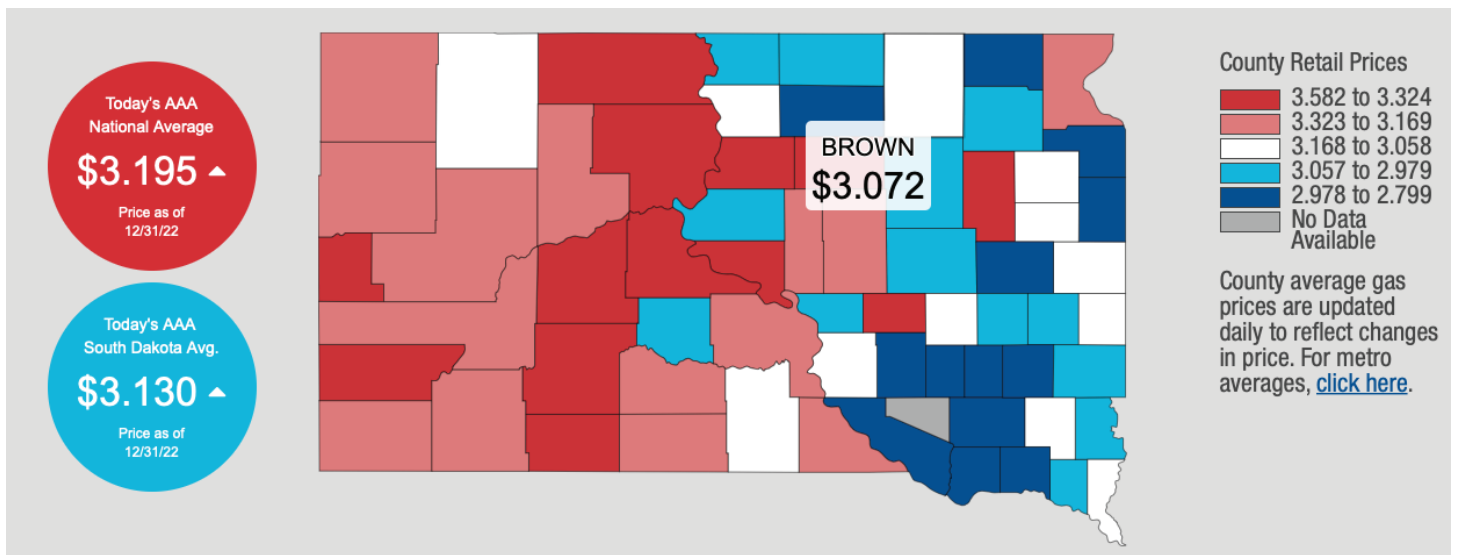
Broton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 6 of 88

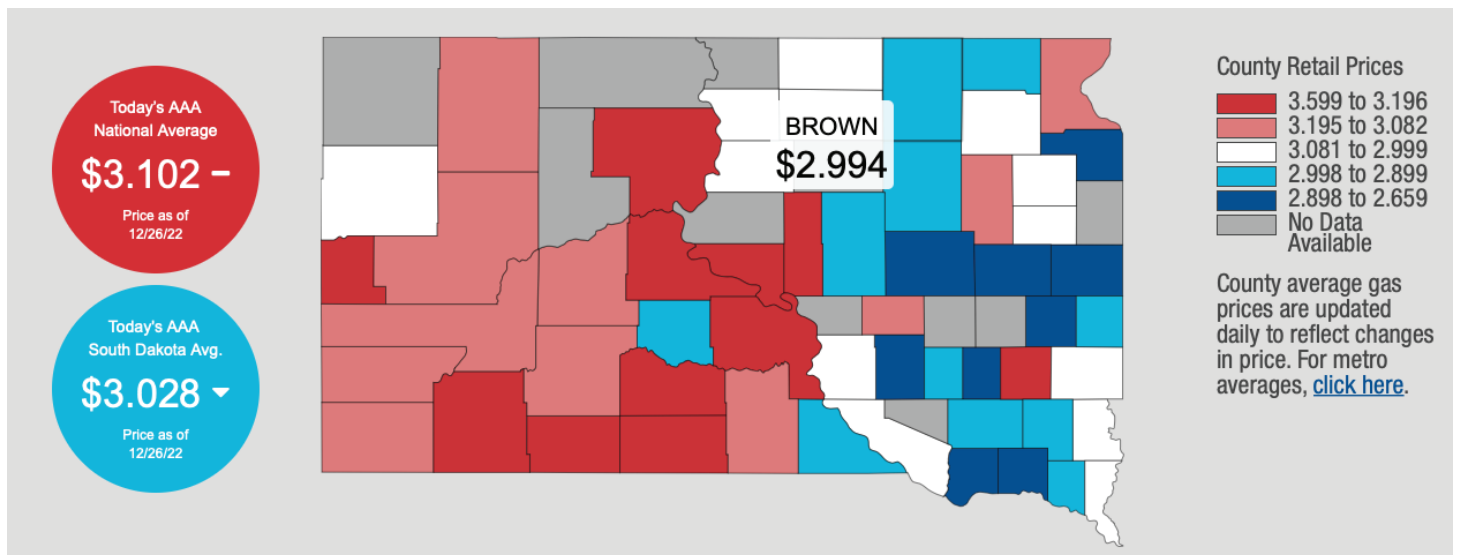
South Dakota Average Gas Prices

	Regular	Mid-Grade	Premium	Diesel
Current Avg.	\$3.130	\$3.286	\$3.766	\$4.304
Yesterday Avg.	\$3.110	\$3.271	\$3.736	\$4.296
Week Ago Avg.	\$3.053	\$3.238	\$3.693	\$4.428
Month Ago Avg.	\$3.411	\$3.551	\$4.049	\$4.888
Year Ago Avg.	\$3.158	\$3.270	\$3.631	\$3.460

This Week



Last Week



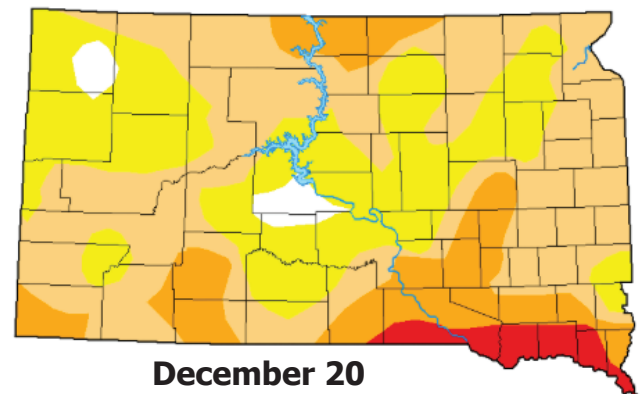
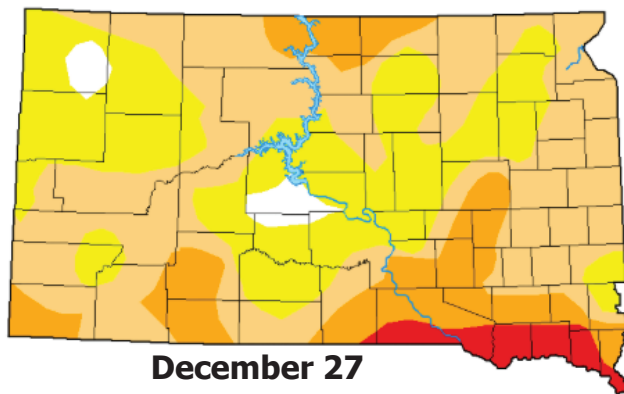
Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 7 of 88

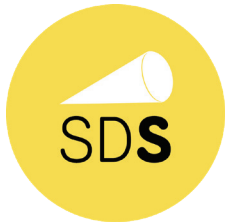
Drought Classification



Drought Monitor



Most of the High Plains region received less than half an inch of precipitation. Pockets of half to 1 inch of precipitation were found over North Dakota and the mountains of Colorado and Wyoming. The precipitation was above normal in parts of all of the High Plains states, but late December is in the dry season for much of the region and normals are low. With the entire region experiencing a deep freeze this week, little change was made to the USDM depiction. The exception was Colorado, where D0 expanded in south central counties due to low snowpack and 1- to 4-month precipitation deficits, and D0-D1 contracted in north central counties based on precipitation surpluses at the 1-week to 3-month time scales.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Crisis care centers to seek aid from state lawmakers in 2023 **State, federal funds used to help build centers for emergency de-escalation**

BY: JOHN HULT - DECEMBER 31, 2022 5:30 AM

Three crisis care centers in South Dakota that got a boost from federal funding are likely to seek additional state money for ongoing operations, and that could spark debate among legislators.

The centers in Rapid City, Yankton and Watertown will help locals avoid trips to the state-run Human Services Center (HSC) in Yankton, the only state-run psychiatric hospital in South Dakota. They will serve those in active crisis who've expressed suicidal thoughts, often after situational stressors like the end of a romantic relationship, the loss of a loved one or the loss of a job.

Many of those individuals wind up at HSC, even though most "crisis" situations can be de-escalated in hours or days with the aid of a trained counselor. In Sioux Falls, the county's mobile crisis team consistently de-escalates more than 90% of its crisis calls inside the home.

The HSC is equipped for crisis stabilization, but the facility is staffed for higher-level mental health issues.

Lawmakers allocated funding for the crisis care projects in 2021, then tacked on another \$15 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding during the 2022 session.

In her Dec. 6 budget address, Gov. Kristi Noem said the decision to support the centers in previous sessions should be met by a commitment to continued support.

"You built the buildings – now we need to fund the operations," she said. "My budget proposes \$5.6 million in ongoing funding to these regional facilities to get these individuals the help that they need sooner. It will not only be better care, it will also be more efficient and cost-effective than what we are doing today."

Some lawmakers may bristle at such a request, however. Rep. Chris Karr, R-Sioux Falls, led the Appropriations Committee for six sessions and frequently clashed with the administration over the question of "one-time funding" for a worthy project versus ongoing funding, especially when the one-time funding comes from the federal government.

"That's kind of the thing we always fear a little bit," said Karr, who's still a member of the Appropriations Committee. "You're asking for one-time dollars. What's the ongoing commitment? Is there going to be one?"



Lt. Gov. Larry Rhoden speaks about Pivot Point, a crisis stabilization center set to open in 2023 in Rapid City. (Photo

courtesy of Pennington County Sheriff's Office)

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 9 of 88

Centers serve recognized need

The state is not the only funding source for the crisis care centers, which are classified as "Appropriate Regional Facilities (ARF)" in federal funding nomenclature.

An ARF is essentially a facility that keeps people in crisis out of jails or more severe, restrictive and expensive placements.

"We don't want any of these folks in the jail," said Helene Duhamel, a Rapid City lawmaker whose full-time job is communications for the Pennington County Sheriff's Office. "We don't have space, it's too expensive, and it's not appropriate for somebody that's in a mental health crisis and hasn't done anything wrong."

Community leaders and law enforcement officials in South Dakota and advocacy organizations across the U.S. have long been interested in advancing such a model. Many have backed it with cash.

Rapid City's Pivot Point was the benefactor of \$4.6 million in ARPA dollars earlier this year, for example, but there were other sources. The facility, which will be handed off to Pennington County on Christmas Eve, also secured funding from local partners like Monument Health and national organizations like the Helmsley Foundation, which will contribute \$4 million to the facility's ongoing operations for the first three years.

Pivot Point is located near the Pennington County Jail and the county's Care Campus, which does handle addiction and mental health crises, but only allows for stays of up to 24 hours.

With its eight recliner-type chairs for stays up to 24 hours and 16 beds for stays up to five days, the new facility expands the options for Pennington County, according to Amy Iverson, a former state Department of Social Services official who now serves as director of Behavior Management Systems, the organization that will operate the facility.

"They come in, get an assessment, really determine what's going on with that person, and we get them connected to whatever resource they might need, whether that's a connection to outpatient counseling services, or other things in the community," Iverson said.

In Watertown, the Human Services Agency is adding four beds for crisis care. That nonprofit raised money for the crisis stabilization area of its new facility, being rebuilt at an estimated cost of \$7.5 million, from the city, Codington County and local banks.

Its share of this spring's ARPA allocation was \$3.5 million, "with an additional \$1 million being added to support construction and service delivery."

Watertown's counselors will use techniques for de-escalation similar to those used by the mobile crisis team in Sioux Falls, said Kari Johnston, executive director of the Human Services Agency. In that city, contractor Southeastern Behavioral Health has a group of on-call counselors tasked with responding to calls at the request of officers. That approach keeps those in crisis in their homes, but it requires a staff footprint large enough to peel off counselors for in-home visits.

"We don't have enough staff to be able to maintain (a mobile crisis team)," said Johnston, but the new Watertown center will offer de-escalation services similar to those employed by the mobile crisis team in Sioux Falls.

In Yankton, the ARPA funding went to an existing facility. Lewis & Clark Behavioral Health got \$232,938 in ARPA dollars for six months of crisis stabilization operations.

Future funding sources unclear

The question of ongoing funding looms large for Iverson and Johnston.

As the Watertown project inched closer to reality, Johnston said, "that's been the question: how are we going to fund this?"

Could a fee-for-service model help fill the gaps? Perhaps additional county funding could cover operations, particularly if the new model saves money long-term for counties in each ARF's region.

"Certainly, we will do a better job of coordinating care for people," Iverson said. "There should be savings."

The level of savings is unclear, though, as are the usage rates Pivot Point might see as the years pass and counties become more familiar with it.

"Once this is available, more people are probably going to start accessing this type of a service," Iverson said. "And so people that maybe got nothing will now be willing to come and get some help."

Cost sharing could involve multiple counties and a share from the state, Iverson said, who said the facilities are advantageous for both. Start-up funds are in place, but there are questions about the long term.

"Probably some kind of a joint funding would be ideal, whether that happens or not ...boy, I couldn't say. I don't have a crystal ball."

At least a few lawmakers are likely to have pointed questions about the centers. The talk of ongoing funding in Noem's budget address was "disappointing" to Rep. Karr, the former Appropriations Committee chair.

"There was never a conversation about ongoing commitment, where we're going to fund them and operate them," said Karr, who will remain on the Appropriations Committee for the 2023 session, which begins Jan. 10. "It was about building them for the communities."

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

Noem goes against board, victims' families and review process to reduce prison sentences

Four convicts served less than a year on drug crimes; three committed manslaughter

BY: SETH TUPPER - DECEMBER 30, 2022 4:25 PM

When Gov. Kristi Noem reduced seven prisoners' sentences recently, she overruled the Board of Pardons and Paroles in one case, went against some victims' family members she hadn't contacted, and may have violated her own executive order.

The governor issued the sentence reductions, called "commutations," on Christmas Eve. A news release said all seven people are paroled for the rest of their terms, with electronic monitoring, supervision by parole officers and the threat of a return to prison for any parole violations.

"These seven individuals have each earned a second chance," Noem said in the news release. "Each of these individuals has demonstrated a low risk of recidivism."

The news release named the seven people but said nothing about their criminal records. Court documents show that three of them committed manslaughter seven or more years ago. The other four were all more recently convicted of drug-related crimes and sent to prison this year on multi-year sentences. The commutations collectively eliminated at least 74 years of future prison time.

The release did not explain how Noem came to focus on seven people from a state prison population of roughly 3,400, or what process Noem used to consider the commutations.

Order delegates process to board

The state constitution gives the governor open-ended authority to issue commutations on her own, but a state law offers an alternative method. That law says the governor may issue an executive order delegating applications to the Board of Pardons and Paroles for its review and recommendation.

Noem issued such an order in 2019, her first year in office. South Dakota Searchlight found no indication the order has been amended or rescinded.

The order says, "All applications for executive clemency, whether it be designated a 'pardon,' a 'commutation,' a 'reprieve,' or a 'remission of a fine or forfeiture' shall be addressed to and initially reviewed and heard by the Board of Pardons and Paroles." The order further directs the board to forward its recommendations to the governor for her review.

In six of the seven recent commutations, it's unclear whether the applications went to the board. South Dakota Searchlight could not find a record of the six cases coming before the board during the past year. Noem's spokesman, Ian Fury, did not respond to multiple phone messages and emails this week.

Messages to the executive director of the Board of Pardons and Paroles, Val McGovern, and the spokesman for the Department of Corrections, Michael Winder, also went unreturned. An attorney for the Depart-

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 11 of 88

ment of Corrections intervened Wednesday by email to say the Searchlight's messages are being treated as public records requests, and the requests are under review.

Noem overrules board

In one of the seven commutation cases, public records show the Board of Pardons and Paroles denied commutation applications from Tammy Kvasnicka in 2018 and again earlier this year. Until her commutation, Kvasnicka had been in prison 12 years on a 60-year sentence, with 22.5 years suspended by a judge, after causing a 2010 fatal traffic crash in Sioux Falls. Kvasnicka was under the influence of alcohol at the time and driving the wrong way on an interstate.

"To my knowledge, we looked at Tammy Kvasnicka and recommended not granting a commutation at this time," said Gordy Swanson, member of the Board of Pardons and Paroles. "I don't recall looking at any of the other ones."

Other board members did not return messages or declined to comment.

Minnehaha County State's Attorney Daniel Haggar now leads the office that prosecuted Kvasnicka. He said the Noem administration contacted the office prior to the commutation to seek contact information for the family of Kvasnicka's victims (one man died in the car crash, and others were injured). Haggar said his office assisted with the request, but he does not know what family members said to administration officials.

The Dakota Scout, a newspaper and website based in Sioux Falls, cited "sources within the Department of Corrections and former inmates at the Women's Prison in Pierre" in a report stating Kvasnicka had worked at the Governor's Mansion while incarcerated. The Dakota Scout also noted that Kvasnicka has an unresolved charge for driving under the influence.

More manslaughter commutations

On Christmas Eve, Kvasnicka was one of three people convicted of manslaughter who received a commutation from Noem. Another is Connie Hirsch, who had served 12 years of a 35-year sentence for fatally shooting her husband, Jerold Hirsch, in 2010 at a home east of Pierre.

Connie Hirsch's defense attorneys said at the time that there was evidence Jerold Hirsch physically abused his wife, and the judge acknowledged that evidence, according to news reports about the sentencing. But the judge imposed a sentence harsher than the one called for in a plea agreement. According to news accounts, the judge described the crime as "cold-blooded murder" and cited evidence that Connie Hirsch shot Jerold Hirsch in the back of the head while he slept.

Jerold Hirsch's adult daughter, Sandra Lopez, a step-daughter to Connie Hirsch, said the Governor's Office did not communicate with her about the commutation.

Lopez said she fears for her own safety with Connie Hirsch out of prison: "Who's to say she wouldn't go buy a gun again and try to off me now?"

Lopez is angry she did not have an opportunity to oppose the commutation. Notice to the victim is required in applications that receive a hearing before the parole board.

"I don't feel she deserves a second chance," Lopez said of Connie Hirsch. "My dad doesn't get a second chance."

The third manslaughter convict to receive a commutation from Noem was Whitney Turney, who had served six years of a 25-year sentence with five years suspended by a judge. In court documents, an investigator in the case said Turney stabbed her boyfriend Calvin "C.J." Shields to death with a knife in 2015 during a fight in Oacoma, stashed the body under a bridge and hid the knife. Turney accepted a plea agreement that dismissed a murder charge in exchange for her guilty plea to manslaughter.

Shields' brother, Glenn Shields, provided a statement to South Dakota Searchlight on behalf of his family. "It was quite the gut check when I first heard," Glenn Shields said of the commutation news. "My heart sank and my stomach was in knots. I couldn't comprehend the decision."

He acknowledged the governor's right to grant a commutation but said he wished the Governor's Office would have communicated with the family. He said the family did not receive any notification that Turney's sentence would be reduced.

"Whitney Turney might've been a star inmate while she was in prison," Glenn Shields said. "But that

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 12 of 88

doesn't mean she's going to be a star civilian."

Four had served nine months or less

The Board of Pardons and Paroles requires its applicants to be two years beyond their sentencing date to be eligible for a commutation. But none of the prisoners who benefited from Noem's remaining four Christmas Eve commutations had served more than nine months of their multi-year prison sentences. All four were convicted of drug-related crimes.

Danielle Blakney was sent to prison in September and served about three months of an eight-year sentence (with four years suspended by the judge) before her commutation. A law enforcement officer in Lawrence County found marijuana, methamphetamine and drug paraphernalia in Blakney's vehicle during a 2021 traffic stop for expired license plate tags.

The judge's sentencing order said Blakney had proven through past actions "that she is not a candidate for probation and needs a structured environment to continue her necessary sobriety." The judge also wrote that Blakney "has a long criminal history involving a prior drug distribution."

Meanwhile, court records show separate, pending charges of domestic abuse and intentional damage to property against Blakney in Lawrence County, where she's scheduled for a hearing on Wednesday.

The remaining three commutations were for:

Britni Goodhart, who was arrested with methamphetamine in 2020 in Milbank, was sentenced to probation in 2021, absconded and missed probation appointments, and was resentenced this past March to five years in prison with two years suspended.

Jamie Bosone, who was arrested this past April in Davison County with fentanyl and marijuana, and was sentenced this past August to five years in prison with one year suspended by a judge who wrote that Bosone was unsuited for probation because her "addiction is so extreme, her elderly mother and tender-aged child were exposed to extremely dangerous conditions," and "she used a sophisticated method to obtain, process and possess dangerous drugs."

Jerome Ferguson, who was arrested in 2021 in Davison County with marijuana and methamphetamine, received a sentence of probation, violated that probation by missing an appointment with Court Services and failing to successfully complete treatment programs, and was resentenced this past April to five years in prison with two years suspended.

South Dakota Searchlight attempted to contact defense attorneys and prosecutors involved in all seven of the cases for which Noem issued a commutation.

Scott Bratland, who represented Britni Goodhart in the criminal case for which she received a commutation, declined to comment. No other defense attorneys responded to messages.

Most of the prosecutors have also been unresponsive. Davison County State's Attorney Jim Miskimins, whose office prosecuted two of the seven people who received reduced sentences, declined to say whether he had any communication with the Noem administration about the matter. He also declined to express any opinion on the commutations.

"Judges impose sentences, and there are boards as well as the governor that have other functions that they're able to legally take at other junctures," Miskimins said. "So based on that legal structure, it is what it is. I do my job and let other people do their jobs."

Seth is editor-in-chief of South Dakota Searchlight. He was previously a supervising senior producer for South Dakota Public Broadcasting and a newspaper journalist in Rapid City and Mitchell.

Drug crimes, violent crimes drop for 2021 in South Dakota State level data has limitations, but offers insight on long-term trends

BY: JOHN HULT - DECEMBER 30, 2022 2:47 PM

Drug arrests have dropped 25% in South Dakota over the past five years.

That's one of the major takeaways from "Crime In South Dakota 2021," the annual report from the state Attorney General's Office that aims to compile arrest reports from all state law enforcement agencies. The 2021 report includes data from 101 agencies, representing 91% of the state's police departments, sheriff's offices and other agencies.

The report shows a drop in arrests for murder, rape, burglary and an overall drop in arrests for major crimes of 5% compared to 2020, with slight increases in juvenile arrests, a 21% increase in minor crimes and a 12% increase in drunken driving arrests.

The report's introductory notes say that technical issues delayed the report's publication, and that a software error affected overall arrest numbers. Its conclusions, however, square with reports from some local agencies and nationwide figures that showed a spike in crime in 2020 and a drop the following year.

For some crimes, the boomerang effect of the first and second pandemic years put arrest numbers for 2021 more in line with figures from 2019. Kidnapping arrests went from 144 in 2019 to 168 in 2020, then back to 140 for 2021. Several other arrest figures dropped below pre-pandemic levels. Rape arrests fell to 448 from a 2020 high of 499. In 2019, South Dakota's law enforcement agencies recorded 490 arrests for rape.

Division of Criminal Investigation Director Chad Mosteller said he couldn't offer an explanation for the long-term reduction in drug arrests, especially considering the high-profile nature of the state's drug problems. Just weeks ago, the state recorded its largest-ever seizure of fentanyl, a synthetic opioid stronger than comparable narcotics.

"It is a trend that is interesting, because we know we have drug problems in South Dakota. We're making arrests on those every day," Mosteller said.

Trend tracking is the report's primary purpose, he said. Arrests rise or fall in a given year for a variety of reasons, like a global pandemic or changes to the definitions of certain crimes, such as when the South Dakota Legislature voted to classify choking incidents as aggravated assault in 2013. But Mosteller said trends over time help law enforcement decide where to focus their efforts and resources in the future.

"It's multiple fronts, looking at this data and making decisions based on their needs and being proactive," he said.

The report has its limitations. Beyond the missing data from 9% of local agencies, it does not include arrests from tribal areas outside the state's jurisdiction.

Another thing the report can't help citizens understand is what local trends might be present in a particular community. It also doesn't include numbers for 2022, a year all but over when the report was released this week. Sioux Falls Police Chief Jon Thum told Pigeon 605 in September that crime trends in 2022 "picked up right where 2020 left off."

The Sioux Falls Police Department's own annual report doesn't show a five-year decline in drug arrests, but it doesn't show a long-term upward trend, either. Narcotics cases stood at 2,992 in 2017 in Sioux Falls. The high water mark was 2020, with 3,043 cases. In 2021, the number stood at 2,658.

What has jumped are figures for the amount of drugs involved in those cases. The SFPD seized nearly 130 pounds of methamphetamine in 2021. In 2017, the figure stood at just over 11 pounds.

Figures for fentanyl were even more stark. The SFPD made its first seizures of that drug in 2019, collecting about 48 grams. In 2021, officers seized 2,028 grams.

More troubling for Minnehaha County State's Attorney Daniel Haggar, whose office prosecutes the lion's share of Sioux Falls crimes, are arrests for violent crimes. Aggravated assault cases jumped from less than 400 in 2019 to more than 500 in the two years that followed, and his office continues to see more violent cases.

"We're seeing a shift to more violent crime. Less crime without victims, more crimes with victims," Hag-

gar said.

Mosteller pledged to move through 2022 data and release "Crime in South Dakota 2022" much more quickly. Work to improve data collection and agency engagement for the next report, which the DCI director said will come in the first half of next year, has already begun.

"It's about reporting this information and making sure that each one of these entities are reporting the data so we can have that complete picture," Mosteller said. "When you're dealing with incomplete data, it's hard to make the best decisions."

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

Transgender employee at center of contract controversy pledges to fight on

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER - DECEMBER 30, 2022 10:00 AM

Jack Fonder trusted his doctor. He'd spent years under her care, and she understood his medical history.

But that changed when he transitioned.

"It was one of the worst experiences I've ever had," he recalled.

Fonder is a transgender man – a person whose gender identity is as a man, but was assigned female sex at birth.

While his doctor hadn't done it intentionally, she repeatedly used his deadname, or birth name, in conversation. The doctor also misgendered him by referring to him as a woman instead of a man during the visit, he said. The missteps grinded against Fonder.

He realized quickly that he had to find a different care provider – one who wouldn't make him feel insignificant and ignored. Someone he could trust again.

That experience isn't unique in the LGBTQ community. It's difficult for people in the community to find mental and physical health care providers who support them.

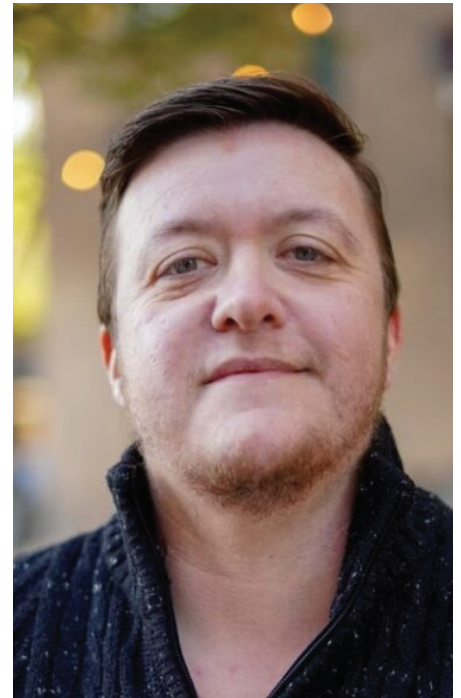
"If you don't have the words to express that or if your mental health is already at a point where you're barely hanging on by a thread, those kinds of things can send you over the edge," Fonder said. "It can make people not want to go back to the doctor at all."

That's why Fonder is the community health worker for The Transformation Project, a Sioux Falls-based transgender advocacy group. He helps members in the LGBTQ community connect with health care professionals and social services so it's easier for them to get the care they need and avoid harmful health experiences.

But earlier this month, Gov. Kristi Noem abruptly terminated a contract from the state Department of Health that secured funding for Fonder's position. The Transformation Project plans to sue the state for alleged civil rights violations related to the cancellation.

No referrals, just resources

The nonprofit was awarded about \$136,000 in federal funds to hire and train a community health worker



Jack Fonder is the community health worker for The Transformation Project in Sioux Falls. He was hired in September 2022. (Courtesy of

Jack Fonder)

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 15 of 88

to help connect members of the LGBTQ community to physical and mental health care. The funds, dispensed by the state, were earmarked by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control for the hiring of community health workers to serve rural areas and marginalized communities.

The Transformation Project's executive director, Susan Williams, said in an open letter that the group was in compliance with contract terms, though a letter from the state Department of Health announcing the terminated contract listed several alleged breaches of contract.

Noem's spokesman Ian Fury told a conservative news outlet the reason the contract was canceled was because "South Dakota does not support this organization's efforts and state government should not be participating in them."

News of the terminated state contract ambushed Fonder. While it was upsetting for the LGBTQ community and for The Transformation Project, the unexpected announcement also threatened his livelihood and the livelihood of his spouse and children who rely on his employment.

"I'm just here trying to live life, raise my family and be a contributing member of society," Fonder said. "To have these constant attacks, it does feel very personal when you're part of the community they want to attack."

The role of the community health worker at The Transformation Project is not political. Fonder acts as a liaison to help connect LGBTQ people with resources and re-establish trust with health care providers so they can maintain their mental and physical health. He does not formally refer people for services, he emphasized.

"I'm not a doctor. I'm not a professional in the health care system whatsoever. I am a person who can connect you to resources – I can't refer someone for surgery or hormones," he said. "I can give you a list of doctors you can talk to for whatever you need, but not specifically for those things because we're not trained to do that. We just want to get people healthy, happy and provide them resources they need."

Program reached 10 people before starting

The Transformation Project has been an outspoken advocacy group for transgender youth in South Dakota, as the demographic faces discrimination and hostility, leading to depression, isolation and suicidal thoughts, experts say.

For example, 80% of LGBTQ youth report they've experienced discrimination for their sexual orientation or gender identity, according to The Transformation Project. 53% of LGBTQ youth in South Dakota have seriously considered suicide in the past year, and 19% report attempting suicide in the same timeframe, which is higher than South Dakota youth overall. About 75% of LGBTQ youth also report experiencing anxiety and 58% report symptoms of depression.

While the three-year-old organization has tried to help provide resources to LGBTQ people, The Transformation Project didn't have a dedicated position to handle the demand, said Susan Williams, executive director. Having a dedicated community health worker helps reach a larger number of people.

Even before receiving his certification as a community health worker in mid-December, word had spread about Fonder's role, and he was able to connect about 10 people to physical and mental health resources.

"I know a lot of people who went through transition and didn't have services to help. It makes it harder and can be life-threatening," Fonder said, adding that the people he's helping are "just barely getting through each day."

Several of the people Fonder has connected with are college students, Williams said.

"They had some really challenging interactions with classmates because they are transgender, and are dealing with some mental health challenges as a result of that," Williams said in an email. "He connected them to mental health resources, arranged transportation for them since they don't have a car here, and he will continue to work with them to make sure they're getting the support they need."

Fonder added that he's known people who have died because they didn't have the right health care support and their situation was "too much" for them to handle on their own. He doesn't want that to happen again.

"I think a lot of this is, yes, we are serving the LGBTQ+ community, but if you take this away, we're just serving people," Fonder said. "I'm doing the same work as a community health worker at a hospital or

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 16 of 88

with helping immigrants. We're focused on different communities, but we're still helping people."

Strengthening all community services

Fonder also connects community members with social services, such as food banks, homeless shelters and employment centers.

He not only educates people in the LGBTQ community about services, but acts as a liaison and educator for organizations by offering information about the LGBTQ community. His role helps to identify gaps in public services as well.

"There are places in the Sioux Falls community that aren't aware of what it means to be transgender or part of the LGBTQ+ community, and because of that people don't feel safe utilizing those services," Fonder said. "Not everybody who needs to go to a homeless shelter is straight. Everybody needs access to the same kinds of services."

The Transformation Project has announced its intention to retain Fonder in his role despite the loss of funding. It has set up an online fundraiser that asks the public to "raise \$105,000 to cover the funding shortfall that was created."

"We're still going to push forward, continue to do the work and push harder," Fonder said. "We're not going to give up or back down, because our community needs us to be here and fighting for them."

The organization is planning to open a community center in 2023, which will offer a space for the LGBTQ community to gather and host public health events. There is \$75,000 already raised for the project, and a fundraising campaign will begin in early 2023.

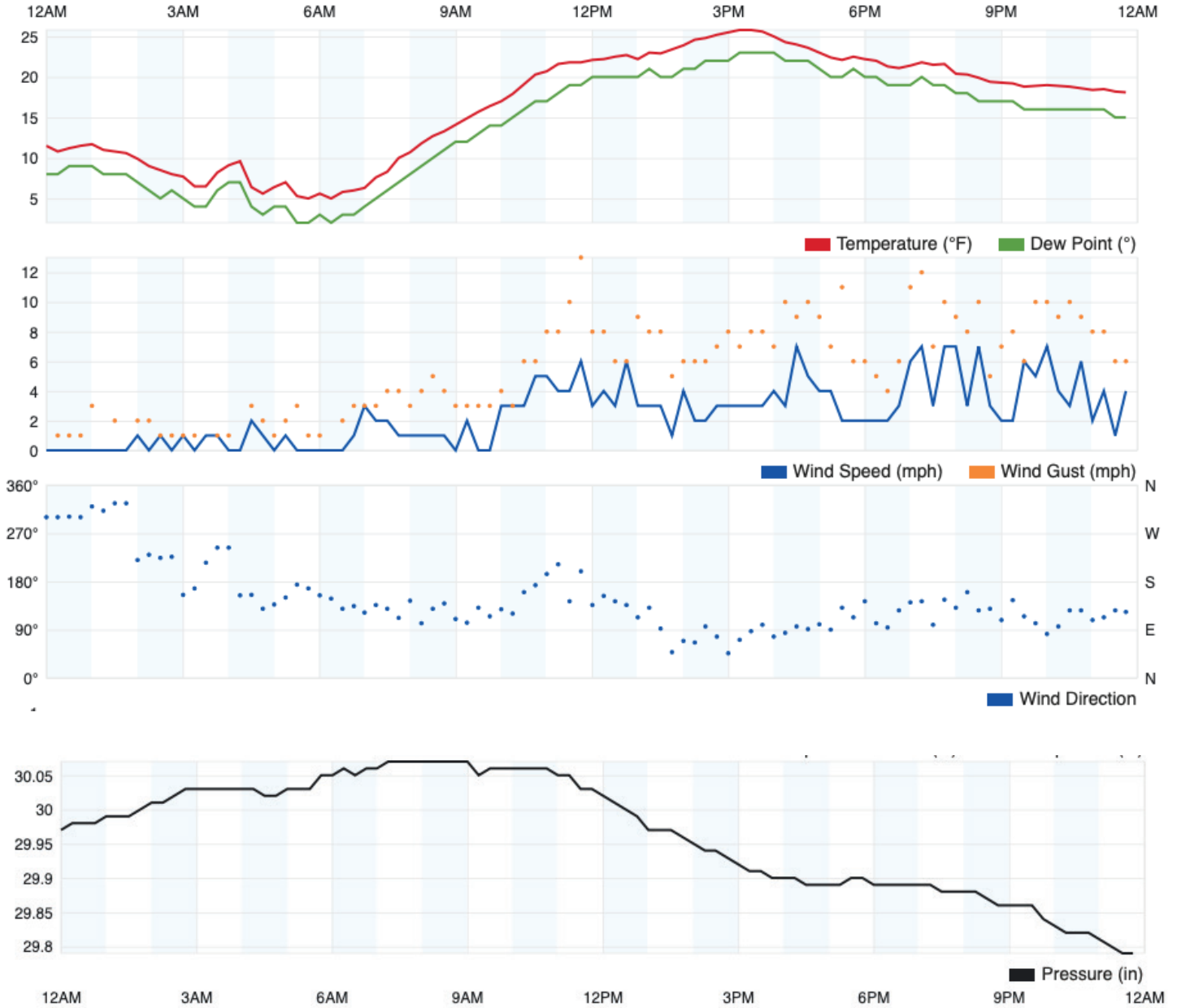
"I think the community health worker program is going to lead to better things in the community," Fonder said, "not just for programs in the LGBTQ+ community, but for everybody that lives here."

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

Groton Daily Independent

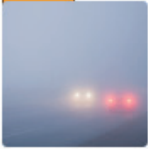






Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 17 of 88

Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 18 of 88

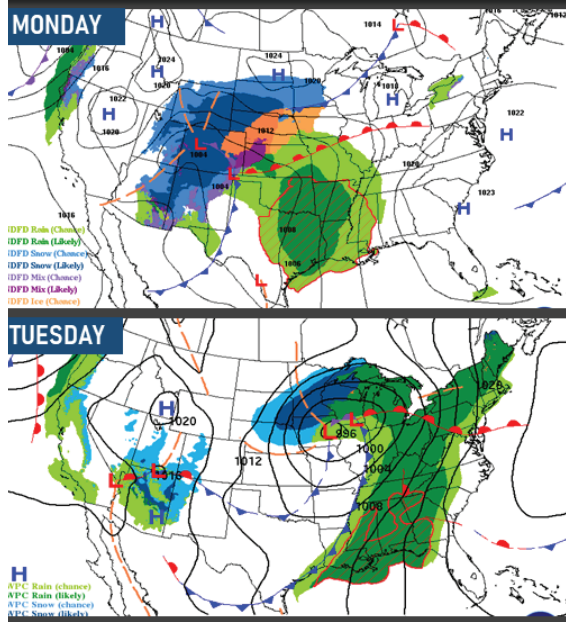
Today	Tonight	New Year's Day	Sunday Night	Monday	Monday Night	Tuesday
						
Dense Freezing Fog and Areas Fog	Patchy Fog then Mostly Cloudy	Partly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy	Chance Snow	Chance Snow	Slight Chance Snow then Mostly Cloudy
High: 22 °F	Low: 10 °F	High: 22 °F	Low: 11 °F	High: 21 °F	Low: 11 °F	High: 17 °F

WINTER STORM AHEAD

Updated: 12/31/2022 1:35 AM

Monday and Tuesday of Next Week

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
WEATHER.GOV/SIOUXFALLS







FORECAST KEY POINTS

- ✓ Precipitation begins Monday in the form of a wintry mix and/or snow
- ✓ Uncertainty remains in the storm track which will determine precipitation type and amount at any one given location
- ✓ While not as windy as previous storms, some blowing/drifted snow is possible
- ✓ Travel impacts appear likely Monday and Tuesday

CONTINUE TO MONITOR THE FORECAST FROM A RELIABLE SOURCE

Published on: 12/31/2022 at 1:36AM

The Outlook Ahead

	SAT	Hi: 30-39° A Few Flurries Possible?
	SUN	Hi: 29-38° Increased Clouds
	MON	Hi: 25-34° Wintry Mix to Snow
	TUE	Hi: 21-29° Accumulating Snow

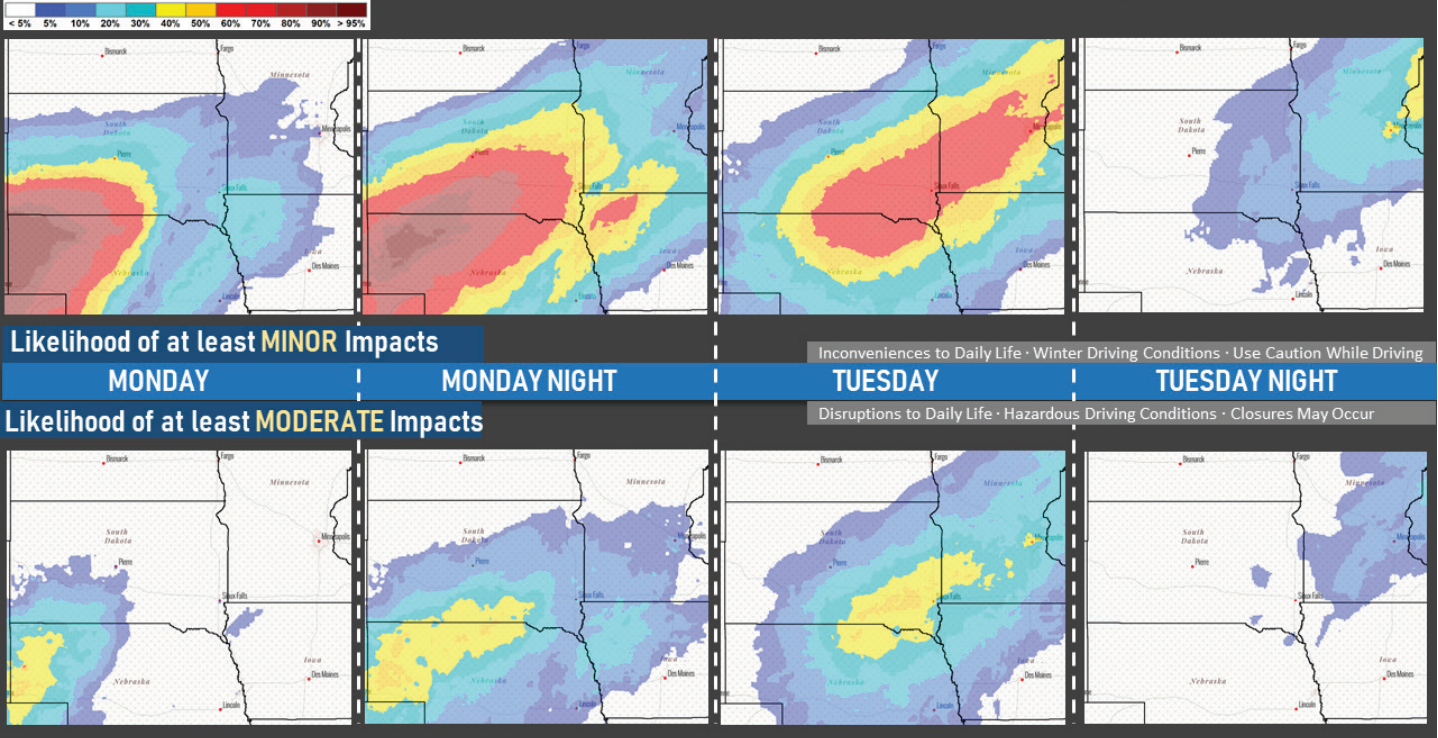
The year will finish out on a quiet note with a mix of sun and clouds today and perhaps a few stray flurries. Clouds will be on the increase for New Year's Day ahead of our next winter storm for Monday and Tuesday of next week. Precipitation may start off as a wintry mix in some locations Monday, including the potential for some freezing rain, before switching to snow by Monday night and Tuesday. It's important to note that there remains a large amount of uncertainty in the storm track which will ultimately determine the precipitation type and amount at any one given location. As the storm comes ashore the western US, model guidance should begin to show a clearer picture so be sure to monitor the latest forecast.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 19 of 88

WINTER STORM IMPACT TIMELINE

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
WEATHER.GOV/SIOUXFALLS



Published on: 12/31/2022 at 5:17AM

Those with travel plans early next week will want to continue to monitor the latest forecast. A wintry mix may begin by Monday with the peak of travel impacts expected Monday night and Tuesday.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 20 of 88

Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 25.8 °F at 3:15 PM

Low Temp: 5 °F at 5:45 AM

Wind: 13 mph at 11:45 AM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 8 hours, 50 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 47 in 1999

Record Low: -39 in 1967

Average High: 24°F

Average Low: 4°F

Average Precip in Dec.: 0.61

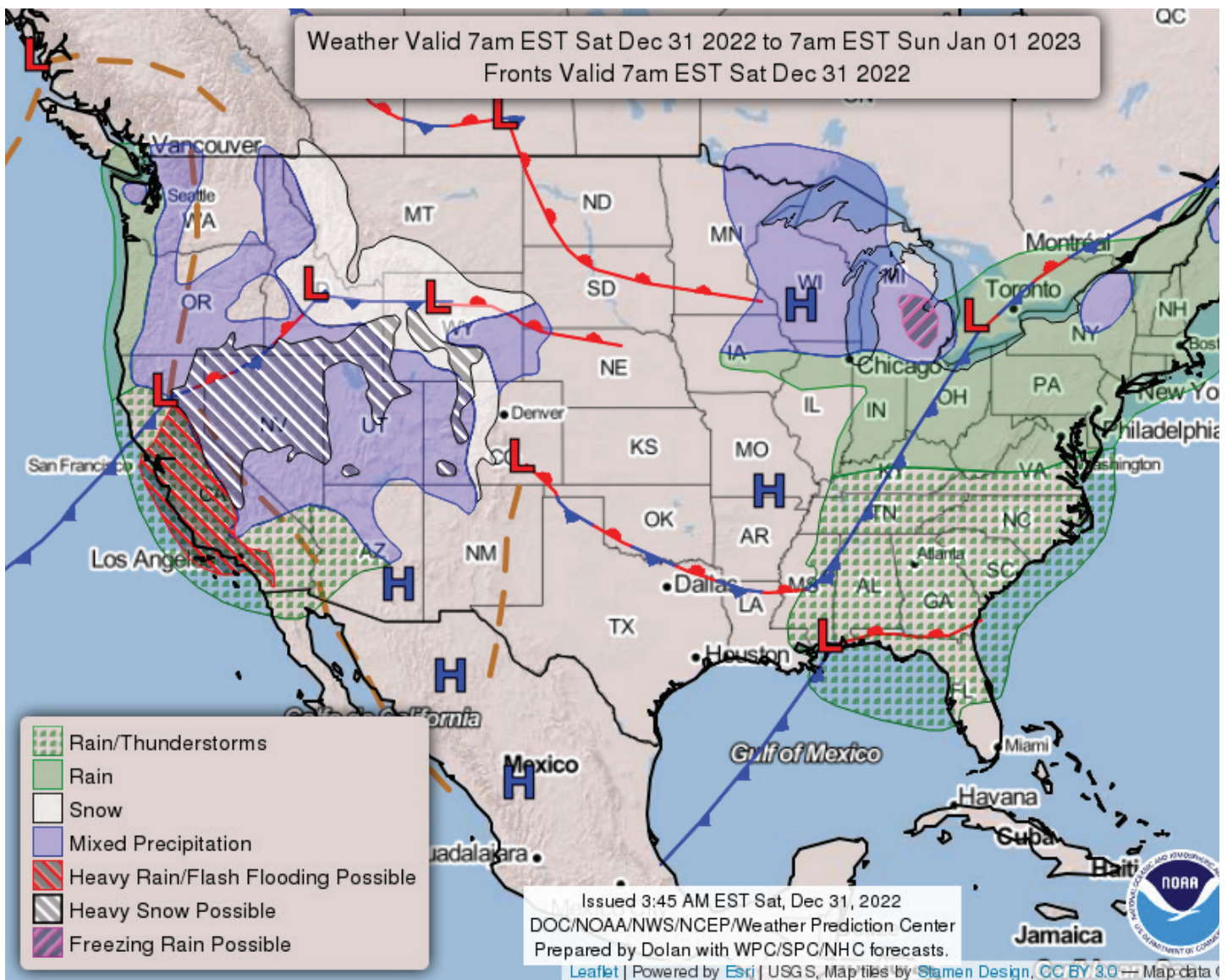
Precip to date in Dec.: 2.82

Average Precip to date: 21.82

Precip Year to Date: 20.32

Sunset Tonight: 5:00:34 PM

Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:10:28 AM



Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 21 of 88

Today in Weather History

2010: An area of low pressure moved across the Northern Plains on New Year's Eve bringing widespread heavy snowfall along with blizzard conditions. Bitter cold northwest winds of 25 to 40 mph combined with additional snowfall of 6 to 10 inches brought reduced visibility to near zero across much of the region. This storm was the second blizzard in two days across the area. The blizzard conditions continued into early New Year's Day. Both Interstates 29 and 90 were closed from the 31st until Sunday, January 2nd. There were several stranded motorists along Highway 83 with five people being rescued. The total snowfall amounts from the two storms ranged from 6 to 15 inches across the region.

The two-day snowfall amounts included 6 inches at Eagle Butte; 7 inches at Doland; 8 inches at Mobridge and Gann Valley; 9 inches at Castlewood; 10 inches at Murdo, Clark, Ipswich, Kennebec, and Watertown and 11 inches at Clear Lake and Bryant. Locations with a foot or more of snow included 12 inches at Aberdeen, Gettysburg, Highmore, Milbank, Mission Ridge, and Bowdle; 13 inches at Eureka, Pierre, Onida, and Blunt; 14 inches at Mellette, Sisseton, Victor, and Roscoe with 15 inches at Britton, Webster, and Redfield. The snowfall began between 6 am and noon CST on the 31st and ended between 4 am and 11 am CST on January 1st.

1876: A heavy snowstorm hit southern Arkansas, with amounts well over 20 inches in places. 28 inches was reported near Warren, and 24–28 inches was reported at Arkansas City.

1882: Downtown San Francisco saw 3.5 inches of snow.

1890: According to the National Meteorological Library and Archive from the United Kingdom, during December 1890, Westminster, England saw zero hours of sunshine.

1917 - The temperature at Lewisburg, WV, plunged to 37 degrees below zero to set a state record. (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders - 1987)

1929 - Greenland Ranch, in Death Valley, California, went the entire year without measurable precipitation. (The Weather Channel)

1933: During the last week of December, a series of winter storms pounded the mountainside with 12 inches of rain near Los Angeles. More rain occurred on New Year's Eve, including 4.86 inches in downtown Los Angeles. The 4.86 inches is currently the fourth most rainfall to occur in one day in downtown Los Angeles since 1877. Around midnight, hillsides in at least three mountain locations collapsed sending millions of tons of mud and debris into the Crescenta Valley neighborhoods below. Crescenta Valley is a few miles north of Los Angeles. This mudslide destroyed more than 400 homes. Following the disaster, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the County of Los Angeles built a flood control system of catch basins, and concrete storm drains, designed to prevent a repeat of the 1934 disaster.

1941 - Snow which began on New Year's Eve became a major blizzard on New Year's Day, burying Des Moines, IA, under 19.8 inches of snow in 24 hours, an all-time record for that location. (The Weather Channel)

1947 - A late afternoon tornado touched down 10 miles north of Shreveport LA, and dissipated south of El Dorado AR. The tornado, as much as 400 yards in width, killed 18 persons. It damaged or destroyed two thirds of the structures at Cotton Valley LA. (The Weather Channel)

1962 - Perhaps the worst blizzard in the history of the state of Maine finally came to an end. The storm produced 40 inches in 24 hours at Orono, and a total of 46 inches at Ripogenus Dam. Gale force winds produced snow drifts twenty feet high around Bangor. A disastrous icestorm was over Georgia and South Carolina. It ravaged the two states for days causing more than seven million dollars damage. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1967: The kickoff temperature for the NFL Championship Game between the Dallas Cowboys and the Green Bay Packers was -13°F with a wind chill of -36°F. This game is known as the "Ice Bowl."

2000: The "Snow Bowl" was played between Mississippi St and Texas A&M at Independence Stadium in Shreveport, Louisiana. Snow began about a half hour before kickoff and didn't stop until well after the bowl game.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 22 of 88

Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

LOOKING FOR GOD IN 2023

"You chart the path ahead of me and tell me when to stop and rest. Every moment you know where I am." Psalm 139:3

"The Lord says, "I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you." Psalm 32:8

"Because of Christ, we have received an inheritance from God, for He chose us from the beginning and all things happen just as He decided years ago." Ephesians 1:11

"The Lord will work out His plans for my life – for Your faithful love, O Lord, endures forever. Don't abandon me, for You made me!" Psalm 138:8

"Seek His will in all you do and He will direct your paths." Proverbs 3:6

Prayer: Grant us wisdom, give us faith, increase our trust, and watch over us each day, Father, as we seek Your plan for our lives. May we follow You always. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scriptures For Today: Psalm 139:3; Psalm 32:8; Ephesians 1:11; Psalm 138:8; Proverbs 3:6



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

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 23 of 88

2022-23 Community Events

- 07/21/2022: Pro Am Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
07/22/2022: Ferney Open Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 9am Start
07/24/2022: Moonlight Swim at the Swimming Pool 9-11pm for 9th grade to age 20
07/27/2022: Golf Fundraiser Lunch at Olive Grove Golf Course 11a-1pm
08/05/2022: Wine on Nine at Olive Grove Golf Course 6pm
08/12/2022: GHS Basketball Golf Tournament
No Date Set: Groton Firemen Summer Splash Day 4-5pm GHS Parking Lot
09/10/2022: Lions Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
09/11/2022: 6th Annual Doggie Day at the Swimming Pool 3-5pm
09/11/2022: Couples Sunflower Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 10 a.m.
09/02-04: Groton Airport Fly-In/Drive-In, Groton Municipal Airport
10/01/2022: Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm
10/07/2022: Lake Region Marching Band Festival 10am
10/31/2022: Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm (working day on or closest to Halloween)
10/31/2022: United Methodist Church Trunk or Treat 5:30-7pm
11/13/2022: Snow Queen Contest
11/19/2022: Legion Post #39 Turkey Party 6:30pm (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)
11/24/2022 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm (Thanksgiving)
12/03/2022 Tour of Homes & Holiday Party at Olive Grove Golf Course
12/10/2022: Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services 9am-12pm
01/29/2023 Groton Robotics Pancake Feed, 10am-1pm, Community Center
01/29/2023 85th Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm (Last Sunday of January)
04/01/2023 Lion's Club Easter Egg Hunt 10am Sharp at the City Park (Saturday a week before Easter)
04/22/2023 Firemen's Spring Social at the Fire Station 7pm-12:30am (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
04/23/2023 Princess Prom 4:30-8pm (Sunday after GHS Prom)
05/06/2023 Lion's Club Spring Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm (1st Saturday in May)
05/29/2023 Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services (Memorial Day)
07/04/2023 Firecracker Couples Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 9am Registration, 10am Start (4th of July)
07/09/2023 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm (Sunday Mid-July)
09/09/2023 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
10/31/2023 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm (working day on or closest to Halloween)
10/31/2023 United Methodist Church Trunk or Treat 5:30-7pm
11/23/2023 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm (Thanksgiving)

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 24 of 88

The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

Subscription Form

All prices listed include 6.5% Sales Tax

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

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

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City _____

State, Zip Code _____

E-mail _____

Phone Number _____

Mail Completed Form to:

Groton Independent

P.O. Box 34

Groton, SD 57445-0034

or scan and email to paperpaul@grotonsd.net

Groton Daily Independent

www.397news.com

Subscription Form

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

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

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City _____

State, Zip Code _____

Phone Number _____

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

E-mail _____

Password _____

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

paypal.me/paperpaul



Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 25 of 88



WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:
12.30.22

1 3 6 44 51 7

MegaPlier: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$785,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[GAME DETAILS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
12.28.22

2 10 21 44 45 7

All Star Bonus: 5x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$32,440,000

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 48 Mins 4
Secs

[GAME DETAILS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
12.30.22

8 13 35 42 47 1

TOP PRIZE:
\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 18 Mins 4
Secs

[GAME DETAILS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
12.28.22

2 7 9 15 22

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$263,000

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 48 Mins 4
Secs

[GAME DETAILS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
12.28.22

4 10 14 41 56 16

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 47 Mins 4
Secs

[GAME DETAILS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
12.28.22

26 32 38 45 56 1

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$246,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 47 Mins 4
Secs

[GAME DETAILS](#)

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 26 of 88

News from the Associated Press

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

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

Mega Millions

01-03-06-44-51, Mega Ball: 7, Megaplier: 3

(one, three, six, forty-four, fifty-one; Mega Ball: seven; Megaplier: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$785,000,000

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: 246,000,000

Friday's Scores

The Associated Press

BOYS PREP BASKETBALL=

Beresford 74, Parker 51

Campbell County, Wyo. 48, Bridgewater-Emery 46

Canistota 63, Freeman 43

Clark/Willow Lake 68, Wessington Springs 35

Colome 70, Potter County 49

Dakota Valley 90, Chamberlain 54

Elk Point-Jefferson 68, Waconia, Minn. 54

Elkton-Lake Benton 68, Lyman 51

Faith 61, Dupree 28

Faulkton 69, Mitchell Christian 62

Harding County 85, Edgemont 18

Harrisburg 66, Sioux Falls Roosevelt 51

Hill City 73, Philip 61

James Valley Christian 69, Burke 33

Lemmon 58, Newell 14

Lennox 66, Madison 32

Lower Brule 75, Howard 56

McCook Central/Montrose 58, Corsica/Stickney 35

Northwestern 79, Wilmot 39

Parkston 71, Centerville 46

Pierre 61, Spearfish 43

Platte-Geddes 58, Sisseton 29

Rapid City Stevens 60, Rapid City Central 37

Redfield 53, Crazy Horse 37

Sanborn Central/Woonsocket 53, Langford 44

St. Thomas More 56, Aberdeen Central 46

Sturgis Brown 53, Douglas 38

Tea Area 72, Marshall, Minn. 44

Thunder Basin, Wyo. 54, Mitchell 45

Vermillion 58, West Central 50

Wolsey-Wessington 64, Highmore-Harrold 36

Yankton 76, Brookings 39

Chadron Rotary Tournament=

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 27 of 88

Championship=

Custer 52, Chadron, Neb. 38

Sacred Hoops Tournament=

Ipswich 67, McIntosh 20

Lakota Tech 57, Mobridge 50

GIRLS PREP BASKETBALL=

Aberdeen Central 44, Worthington, Minn. 37

Aberdeen Roncalli 57, Webster 32

Beresford 58, Parker 57, OT

Brookings 63, Yankton 40

Dakota Valley 68, Wessington Springs 57

Deubrook 51, Hill City 41

Douglas 38, Sturgis Brown 28

Dupree 52, Faith 48

Estelline/Hendricks 52, Langford 29

Freeman 51, Colman-Egan 39

Groton Area 67, Waverly-South Shore 9

Hamlin 39, St. Thomas More 34

Harding County 44, Edgemont 30

Newell 50, Lemmon 41

Northwestern 52, Wilmot 28

Parkston 71, Centerville 46

Pierre 57, Spearfish 44

Potter County 61, Ipswich 43

Sioux Falls Lincoln 35, Moorhead, Minn. 26

Sioux Valley 54, Corsica/Stickney 32

Sisseton 57, Chamberlain 28

St. Michael-Albertville, Minn. 54, Sioux Falls Jefferson 45

St. Michael-Albertville, Minn. 54, Sioux Falls O'Gorman 45

Stanley County 48, Herreid/Selby Area 44

Tea Area 56, Campbell County, Wyo. 53

Thunder Basin, Wyo. 54, Mitchell 45

Vermillion 43, West Central 32

Viborg-Hurley 74, Wall 36

Wagner 68, Avon 32

Chadron Rotary Tournament=

Custer 34, Chadron, Neb. 25

Sacred Hoops Tournament=

Ipswich def. St. Francis Indian, forfeit

Lakota Tech 70, Mobridge 45

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

Alfalfa sprout recall tied to salmonella outbreak expanded

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — A Nebraska company on Friday expanded a recall of alfalfa sprouts after more than a dozen cases of salmonella were linked to the food.

SunSprouts Enterprises doubled its recall that was first announced Thursday, Nebraska health officials said. The 1,406 pounds (638 kilograms) of raw sprouts were distributed in 4-ounce and 2.5-pound (113-

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 28 of 88

gram and 1.13-kilogram) packages to food service and grocery customers in the Midwest between late November and mid-December.

The recalled sprouts have best-by dates between Dec. 10, 2022, and Jan. 7, 2023.

People who have the sprouts are advised to dispose of them.

Nebraska health officials said there have been 16 confirmed cases of people becoming ill.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention noted 15 confirmed cases of people getting sick, including two who were hospitalized. The CDC says eight cases were reported in Nebraska, six in South Dakota and one in Oklahoma. The differing number of cases provided by the two agencies could not immediately be reconciled.

The CDC said there likely are many more cases among people who didn't seek medical care.

SunSprouts is based in Fremont, Nebraska.

Salmonella bacteria causes sometimes bloody diarrhea, fever and stomach cramps. People with weakened immune systems, young children and older adults are especially susceptible to developing severe illnesses.

Revelers throng to New Year's parties after COVID hiatus

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP) — With countdowns and fireworks, revelers in major city centers across the Asia-Pacific region were ushering in the first new year without COVID-19 restrictions since the pandemic began in 2020.

While COVID-19 continues to cause death and dismay, particularly in China, which is battling a nationwide surge in infections after suddenly easing anti-epidemic measures, countries had largely lifted quarantine requirements, restrictions for visitors and relentless testing that had limited travel and places people can go to.

Celebrations are being held at the Great Wall in Beijing, while in Shanghai authorities said traffic will be stopped along the waterfront Bund to allow pedestrians to gather on New Year's Eve. Shanghai Disneyland will also hold a special fireworks show to welcome 2023.

On the last day of the year marked by the brutal war in Ukraine, many in the country returned to capital Kyiv to spend New Year's Eve with their loved ones. As Russia attacks continue to target power supplies leaving millions without electricity, no big celebrations are expected and a curfew will be in place as the clock rings in the new year. But for most Ukrainians being together with their families is already a luxury.

Still wearing his military uniform, Mykyta gripped a bouquet of pink roses tightly as he waited for his wife Valeriia to arrive from Poland on platform 9. He hadn't seen her in six months. "It actually was really tough, you know, to wait so long," he told The Associated Press after hugging and kissing Valeriia.

The couple declined to share their family name for security reasons as Mykyta has been fighting on the frontlines in both south and east Ukraine. Valeriia first sought refuge from the conflict in Spain but later moved to Poland. Asked what their New Year's Eve plans were, Valeriia answered simply: "Just to be together."

Concerns about the Ukraine war and the economic shocks it has spawned across the globe were felt in Tokyo as well, where Shigeki Kawamura has seen better times but said he needs a free hot meal this New Year's.

"I hope the war will be over in Ukraine so prices will stabilize," he said. "Nothing good has happened for the people since we've had Mr. Kishida," he said, referring to Prime Minister Fumio Kishida.

"Our pay isn't going up, and our condition is worsening. The privileged may be doing well, but not those of us, who are working so hard," Kawamura said.

He was one of several hundred people huddled in the cold in a line circling a Tokyo park to receive free New Year's meals of sukiyaki, or slices of beef cooked in sweet sauce, with rice.

"I hope the new year will bring work and self-reliance," said Takaharu Ishiwata, who lives in a group home and hasn't found lucrative work in years.

Besides the sukiyaki box lunches, volunteers were handing out bananas, onions, cartons of eggs and small hand-warmers at the park. Booths were set up for medical and other consultations.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 29 of 88

Kenji Seino, who heads the meal program for the homeless Tenohasi, which means "bridge of hands," said people coming for meals were rising, with jobs becoming harder to find after the coronavirus pandemic hit, and prices going up.

More than 1 million are expected to crowd along Sydney's waterfront for a multi-million dollar celebration based around the themes of diversity and inclusion.

Organizers have said a rainbow waterfall will be a prominent feature of the New Year's Eve party. More than 7,000 fireworks will be launched from the top of the Sydney Harbour Bridge and a further 2,000 from the nearby Opera House.

It is the "party Sydney deserves," the city's producer of major events and festivals Stephen Gilby told The Sydney Morning Herald.

"We have had a couple of fairly difficult years; we're absolutely delighted this year to be able to welcome people back to the foreshores of Sydney Harbor for Sydney's world-famous New Year's Eve celebrations," he said.

In Melbourne, Australia's second largest city, organizers have arranged for a family-friendly fireworks display along the Yarra River as dusk falls before a second session at midnight.

The Pacific nation of Kiribati was the first country to greet the new year, with the clock ticking into 2023 one hour ahead of neighbors including New Zealand.

In Auckland, large crowds gathered below the Sky Tower, where a 10-second countdown to midnight preceded a fireworks display.

The celebrations in New Zealand's largest city were well-received after COVID-19 forced them to be canceled a year ago.

Benedict XVI, first pope to resign in 600 years, dies at 95

By NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, the shy German theologian who tried to reawaken Christianity in a secularized Europe but will forever be remembered as the first pontiff in 600 years to resign from the job, died Saturday. He was 95.

Pope Francis will celebrate his funeral Mass in St. Peter's Square on Thursday, an unprecedented event in which a current pope will celebrate the funeral of a former one.

Benedict stunned the world on Feb. 11, 2013, when he announced, in his typical, soft-spoken Latin, that he no longer had the strength to run the 1.2 billion-strong Catholic Church that he had steered for eight years through scandal and indifference.

His dramatic decision paved the way for the conclave that elected Francis as his successor. The two popes then lived side-by-side in the Vatican gardens, an unprecedented arrangement that set the stage for future "popes emeritus" to do the same.

A statement from Vatican spokesman Matteo Bruni on Saturday morning said that: "With sorrow I inform you that Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI died today at 9:34 in the Mater Ecclesia Monastery in the Vatican. Further information will be released as soon as possible."

The Vatican said Benedict's remains would be on public display in St. Peter's Basilica starting Monday for the faithful to pay their final respects. Benedict's request was that his funeral would be celebrated solemnly but with "simplicity," Bruni told reporters.

He added that Benedict, whose health had deteriorated over Christmas, had received the sacrament of the anointing of the sick on Wednesday, after his daily Mass, in the presence of his longtime secretary and the consecrated women who tend to his household.

The former Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger had never wanted to be pope, planning at age 78 to spend his final years writing in the "peace and quiet" of his native Bavaria.

Instead, he was forced to follow the footsteps of the beloved St. John Paul II and run the church through the fallout of the clerical sex abuse scandal and then a second scandal that erupted when his own butler stole his personal papers and gave them to a journalist.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 30 of 88

Being elected pope, he once said, felt like a "guillotine" had come down on him.

Nevertheless, he set about the job with a single-minded vision to rekindle the faith in a world that, he frequently lamented, seemed to think it could do without God.

"In vast areas of the world today, there is a strange forgetfulness of God," he told 1 million young people gathered on a vast field for his first foreign trip as pope, to World Youth Day in Cologne, Germany, in 2005. "It seems as if everything would be just the same even without him."

With some decisive, often controversial moves, he tried to remind Europe of its Christian heritage. And he set the Catholic Church on a conservative, tradition-minded path that often alienated progressives. He relaxed the restrictions on celebrating the old Latin Mass and launched a crackdown on American nuns, insisting that the church stay true to its doctrine and traditions in the face of a changing world. It was a path that in many ways was reversed by his successor, Francis, whose mercy-over-morals priorities alienated the traditionalists who had been so indulged by Benedict.

Benedict's style couldn't have been more different from that of John Paul or Francis. No globe-trotting media darling or populist, Benedict was a teacher, theologian and academic to the core: quiet and pensive with a fierce mind. He spoke in paragraphs, not soundbites. He had a weakness for orange Fanta as well as his beloved library; when he was elected pope, he had his entire study moved — as is — from his apartment just outside the Vatican walls into the Apostolic Palace. The books followed him to his retirement home.

"In them are all my advisers," he said of his books in the 2010 book-length interview "Light of the World." "I know every nook and cranny, and everything has its history."

It was Benedict's devotion to history and tradition that endeared him to members of the traditionalist wing of the Catholic Church. For them, Benedict remained even in retirement a beacon of nostalgia for the orthodoxy and Latin Mass of their youth — and the pope they much preferred over Francis.

In time, this group of arch-conservatives, whose complaints were amplified by sympathetic U.S.-based conservative Catholic media, would become a key source of opposition to Francis who responded to what he said were threats of division by reimposing the restrictions on the old Latin Mass that Benedict had loosened.

Like his predecessor John Paul, Benedict made reaching out to Jews a hallmark of his papacy. His first official act as pope was a letter to Rome's Jewish community and he became the second pope in history, after John Paul, to enter a synagogue.

In his 2011 book, "Jesus of Nazareth," Benedict made a sweeping exoneration of the Jewish people for the death of Christ, explaining biblically and theologically why there was no basis in Scripture for the argument that the Jewish people as a whole were responsible for Jesus' death.

"It's very clear Benedict is a true friend of the Jewish people," said Rabbi David Rosen, who heads the interreligious relations office for the American Jewish Committee, at the time of Benedict's retirement.

Yet Benedict also offended some Jews who were incensed at his constant defense of and promotion toward sainthood of Pope Pius XII, the World War II-era pope accused by some of having failed to sufficiently denounce the Holocaust. And they harshly criticized Benedict when he removed the excommunication of a traditionalist British bishop who had denied the Holocaust.

Benedict's relations with the Muslim world were also a mixed bag. He riled Muslims with a speech in September 2006 — five years after the Sept. 11 attacks in the United States — in which he quoted a Byzantine emperor who characterized some of the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad as "evil and inhuman," particularly his command to spread the faith "by the sword."

A subsequent comment after the massacre of Christians in Egypt led the Al Azhar center in Cairo, the seat of Sunni Muslim learning, to suspend ties with the Vatican, which were only restored under Francis.

The Vatican under Benedict suffered notorious PR gaffes, and sometimes Benedict himself was to blame. He enraged the United Nations and several European governments in 2009 when, en route to Africa, he told reporters that the AIDS problem couldn't be resolved by distributing condoms.

"On the contrary, it increases the problem," Benedict said. A year later, he issued a revision saying that if a male prostitute were to use a condom to avoid passing HIV to his partner, he might be taking a first

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 31 of 88

step toward a more responsible sexuality.

But Benedict's legacy was irreversibly colored by the global eruption in 2010 of the sex abuse scandal, even though as a cardinal he was responsible for turning the Vatican around on the issue.

Documents revealed that the Vatican knew very well of the problem yet turned a blind eye for decades, at times rebuffing bishops who tried to do the right thing.

Benedict had firsthand knowledge of the scope of the problem, since his old office — the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, which he had headed since 1982 — was responsible for dealing with abuse cases.

In fact, it was he who, before becoming pope, took the then-revolutionary decision in 2001 to assume responsibility for processing those cases after he realized bishops around the world weren't punishing abusers but were just moving them from parish to parish where they could rape again.

And once he became pope, Benedict essentially reversed his beloved predecessor, John Paul, by taking action against the 20th century's most notorious pedophile priest, the Rev. Marcial Maciel. Benedict took over Maciel's Legionaries of Christ, a conservative religious order held up as a model of orthodoxy by John Paul, after it was revealed that Maciel sexually abused seminarians and fathered at least three children.

In retirement, Benedict was faulted by an independent report for his handling of four priests while he was bishop of Munich; he denied any personal wrongdoing but apologized for any "grievous faults."

As soon as the abuse scandal calmed down for Benedict, another one erupted.

In October 2012, Benedict's former butler, Paolo Gabriele, was convicted of aggravated theft after Vatican police found a huge stash of papal documents in his apartment. Gabriele told Vatican investigators he gave the documents to Italian journalist Gianluigi Nuzzi because he thought the pope wasn't being informed of the "evil and corruption" in the Vatican and that exposing it publicly would put the church on the right track.

Once the "Vatileaks" scandal was resolved, including with a papal pardon of Gabriele, Benedict felt free to take the extraordinary decision that he had hinted at previously: He announced that he would resign rather than die in office as all his predecessors had done for almost six centuries.

"After having repeatedly examined my conscience before God, I have come to the certainty that my strengths due to an advanced age are no longer suited" to the demands of being the pope, he told cardinals.

He made his last public appearances in February 2013 and then boarded a helicopter to the papal summer retreat at Castel Gandolfo, to sit out the conclave in private. Benedict then largely kept to his word that he would live a life of prayer in retirement, emerging only occasionally from his converted monastery for special events and writing occasional book prefaces and messages.

Usually they were innocuous, but one 2020 book — in which Benedict defended the celibate priesthood at a time when Francis was considering an exception — sparked demands for future "popes emeritus" to keep quiet.

Despite his very different style and priorities, Francis frequently said that having Benedict in the Vatican was like having a "wise grandfather" living at home.

Benedict was often misunderstood: Nicknamed "God's Rottweiler" by the unsympathetic media, he was actually a very sweet and fiercely smart academic who devoted his life to serving the church he loved.

"Thank you for having given us the luminous example of the simple and humble worker in the vineyard of the Lord," Benedict's longtime deputy, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, told him in one of his final public events as pope.

Benedict inherited the seemingly impossible task of following in the footsteps of John Paul when he was elected the 265th leader of the Church on April 19, 2005. He was the oldest pope elected in 275 years and the first German in nearly 1,000 years.

Born April 16, 1927, in Markt Am Inn, in Bavaria, Benedict wrote in his memoirs of being enlisted in the Nazi youth movement against his will in 1941, when he was 14 and membership was compulsory. He deserted the German army in April 1945, the waning days of the war.

Benedict was ordained, along with his brother, Georg, in 1951. After spending several years teaching theology in Germany, he was appointed bishop of Munich in 1977 and elevated to cardinal three months later by Pope Paul VI.

His brother Georg was a frequent visitor to the papal summer residence at Castel Gandolfo until he died in 2020. His sister died years previously. His "papal family" consisted of Monsignor Georg Gaenswein, his longtime private secretary who was always by his side, another secretary and consecrated women who tended to the papal apartment.

Despite rhetoric, Greek-Turkish armed conflict seen remote

By ELENA BECATOROS and SUZAN FRASER Associated Press

ATHENS, Greece (AP) — Even by the standards of Turkey's and Greece's frequently strained relations, it was a remarkable escalation. Speaking to youths in a Black Sea town, Turkey's president directly threatened his country's western neighbor: Unless the Greeks "stay calm," he said, Turkey's new ballistic missiles would hit their capital city.

Recep Tayyip Erdogan's comment on an otherwise unremarkable December weekend followed repeated threats and warnings in recent months: Alleged violations of international treaties by Greece could throw the sovereignty of many inhabited Greek islands into doubt. Turkish troops, Erdogan warned on several occasions, could descend on Greece "suddenly one night."

The striking rhetoric has led to questions about the reasons behind it, and whether it could be a prelude to more alarming developments, including potential armed conflict between Turkey and Greece, both NATO members.

Both countries face national elections in the first half of 2023, which is likely to ramp up the rhetoric still further, and Russia's war in Ukraine has demonstrated that an invasion of a smaller European country by a larger neighboring power is no longer unthinkable.

But analysts on both sides of the Aegean Sea are cautious, noting an escalation in verbal barbs but still assessing a military conflict between neighbors Greece and Turkey as unlikely.

Traditional adversaries, the countries are no strangers to tension. Mock dogfights by fighter jets over the Aegean have taken place for decades as the two sides disagree on the limits of Greece's national airspace.

They are at loggerheads over a broad variety of other issues, including the ethnically divided island of Cyprus, maritime boundaries in the Mediterranean Sea and territorial claims in the Aegean Sea, through which their joint border runs. In 2021, Turkish and Greek warships shadowed each other and briefly collided during a heated dispute over exploration rights to potential offshore energy reserves.

Greece and Turkey have come close to war three times in the past half-century. The most recent was in January 1996, when a last-minute U.S. intervention averted an armed conflict over an obscure pair of uninhabited islets named Imia in Greek and Kardak in Turkish.

Few people in either country had ever heard of them before. But the tensions led to a dramatic military buildup in the Aegean and a Greek navy helicopter crash that killed three officers.

Even in the run-up to that crisis, the rhetoric, particularly from Turkey, was not as bellicose as it is now.

"It is unprecedented. This hasn't happened before," said Constantinos Filis, an international relations professor who directs the Institute of Global Affairs at the American College of Greece. "We're talking of nearly 2 1/2 months where we have nearly daily statements by Turkey against Greece. This hasn't happened before in duration, and I certainly don't remember there having been such direct threats."

The factors fueling the escalation are complex. Along with the approach of elections, they include strains in Turkey's relations with the United States and its exclusion from a fighter jet purchasing program among others, analysts say.

The U.S. removed Turkey from a program to produce F-35 fighter jets in 2019 after Ankara bought a Russian-made S-400 missile defense system, which Washington said was a threat to the stealth fighter jets. Ankara has since requested new F-16 jets and kits to modernize its existing fleet, but that purchase would require approval from the U.S. Congress.

Greece has lobbied Washington to block its larger, more powerful neighbor from purchasing F-16s while also pursuing its own military procurement and modernization program, which includes new fighter jets and new warships currently being built.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 33 of 88

Speaking in the northern Turkish city of Samsun earlier this month, Erdogan said Turkey has begun making its own short-range ballistic missiles, which, he said, was "frightening the Greeks."

"(The Greeks) say 'it can hit Athens,' said Erdogan. "Of course it will. If you don't stay calm, if you try to buy things from the United States and other places (to arm) the islands, a country like Turkey ... has to do something."

"I think Erdogan's (missile) statement is his way of telling Greece that actually there is no (military) balance, that Turkey is still superior and therefore Greece should act very cautiously," Ozgur Unluhisarcikli, director of the German Marshall Fund's Ankara office, said. "Nevertheless, if you take him at his word, it is a threat and should have no place in Turkish-Greek relations."

Unluhisarcikli said that apart from reminding Greece of Turkey's military capabilities, Erdogan also hopes his tough words will help him in the presidential and parliamentary elections currently scheduled for June.

In power since 2003, Erdogan is seeking a third term in office as president amid an economic crisis and skyrocketing inflation that has eaten away at earnings and put even basic necessities out of reach for many.

Unluhisarcikli thinks threatening Greece will not make much of a difference in the races. "Past elections and also the polls suggest that national rhetoric does help a little bit in the beginning, but the impact is short-lived," he said. "Its impact is not even nearly comparable to the economic situation."

Filis agreed the Turkish elections were among the reasons for Erdogan's verbal escalation. But, he noted, it was the first time Greece appeared so prominently in public discourse in the lead-up to a national vote.

Ankara recently has focused on the militarization of the Greek islands in the eastern Aegean Sea, saying international treaties prohibit the presence of armed forces. Greece counters that it is adhering to the treaties and needs to defend the islands against a potential attack from Turkey, which maintains a sizable military force on its nearby coast.

Turkey "is building a story, a narrative, so it can (potentially) attribute its own aggressive act against Greece to legitimate self-defense," Filis said, a tactic that "has many similarities with what Russia did and is doing in Ukraine."

Still, chances of open conflict — or of an accident or military incident triggering an unplanned escalation — remain slim, both analysts agreed. An armed conflict is "still a very, very low probability," Unluhisarcikli said, noting that past accidents, such as collisions between navy vessels or jet crashes during island patrols, had not led Turkey and Greece to war.

A military incident or conflict "is a scenario that doesn't have much probability," said Filis. "But the climate that the Turkish leadership is cultivating could make something like that easier."

N. Korea fires 3 missiles amid tensions over drone flights

By HYUNG-JIN KIM Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea fired three short-range ballistic missiles toward its eastern waters in its latest weapons display on Saturday, a day after rival South Korea conducted a rocket launch related to its push to build a space-based surveillance to better monitor the North.

Tensions between the rival Koreas rose this week when South Korea accused North Korea of flying five drones across the tense border for the first time in five years and responded by sending its own drones toward the North.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a statement it detected the three launches from an inland area south of Pyongyang, the North's capital, on Saturday morning. It said the three missiles traveled about 350 kilometers (220 miles) before landing in the waters between the Korean Peninsula and Japan. The estimated range suggests the missiles tested could target South Korea.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff called the launches "a grave provocation" that undermines international peace. It said South Korea maintains a readiness to "overwhelmingly" deter any provocation by North Korea.

The U.S. Indo-Pacific Command said the launches highlight "the destabilizing impact" of North Korea's unlawful weapons programs and that the U.S. commitments to the defense of South Korea and Japan "remain ironclad." Earlier Saturday, Japan's Defense Ministry also reported suspected ballistic missile fir-

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 34 of 88

ings by North Korea.

South Korea's military on Monday scrambled warplanes and helicopters, but they failed to shoot down any of the North Korean drones before they flew back home or vanished from South Korean radar. One of the North Korean drones traveled as far as northern Seoul, triggering security jitters among many people in the South.

South Korea still flew three of its surveillance drones across the border on Monday in an unusual tit-for-tat. South Korea on Thursday staged large-scale military drills to simulate shooting down drones.

South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol has called for boosting his country's air defense network and vowed to sternly deal with provocations by North Korea.

Since taking office in May, Yoon's government has expanded regular military drills with the U.S. in the face of increasing North Korean nuclear threats. North Korea has called such drills an invasion rehearsal and argued its recent missile tests were its response. But some experts say North Korea is using the South Korea-U.S. training as a pretext to modernize its arsenal and increase its leverage in future dealings with the U.S.

Before Saturday's launches, North Korea had already test-fired more than 70 missiles this year. Many of them were nuclear-capable weapons designed to attack the U.S. mainland and its allies South Korea and Japan.

Later Saturday, senior diplomats from South Korea, Japan and the United States jointly denounced the North's launches after a phone call. They agreed to reinforce their deterrence against North Korea and work together to achieve the North's denuclearization, according to the South Korean and Japanese foreign ministries.

On Friday, South Korea test-launched a solid-fueled rocket, a type of a space launch vehicle that it plans to use to put its first spy satellite into orbit in coming years.

Defense officials said it was a follow-up test of the country's first successful launch of a solid-fuel rocket in March. The unannounced launch triggered a brief public scare of a UFO appearance or a North Korean missile.

North Korea is also pushing to acquire its first military surveillance satellite. Earlier this month, it said it used two old missiles as space launch vehicles to test a camera and other systems needed for a spy satellite and later released low-resolution satellite photos showing South Korean cities.

Some South Korean experts said the North Korean satellite imagery was too crude for military reconnaissance purposes and that the North Korean rocket launches were likely a disguised test of missile technology. Infuriated over such an assessment, Kim Yo Jong, the powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, issued crude insults against unidentified South Korean experts. She also dismissed doubts over North Korea's intercontinental ballistic missile technology and threatened to conduct a full-range ICBM test.

This week, North Korea is under a major ruling party meeting in Pyongyang to review past policies and policy goals for 2023. It's highly unusual for North Korea to test-launch a missile when it holds a key meeting.

In an indication that the plenary meeting of the Workers' Party was being wrapped up, the North's state media reported Saturday that its powerful Politburo decided to complete the draft resolution of the plenary meeting.

Some observers said North Korea will likely publish details of the meeting on Sunday, which would carry Kim Jong Un's vows to expand his nuclear arsenal and introduce sophisticated weapons in the name of dealing with what he calls U.S. hostility.

Mega Millions jackpot climbs to \$785M after no big winner

The first Mega Millions drawing of the new year will be a big one as no one won Friday night's estimated \$685 million jackpot.

The top prize increased to \$785 million ahead of the next drawing Tuesday night.

No ticket purchased for the lottery matched all six numbers drawn Friday night, Mega Millions said in a

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 35 of 88

statement early Saturday.

The numbers selected Friday were: 1, 3, 6, 44, 51 and gold Mega Ball 7.

The jackpot has grown so large thanks to long odds of one in 302.6 million that have resulted in 22 straight drawings without a big winner.

The estimated \$785 million prize is for a winner who chooses to be paid through an annuity, with annual checks over 29 years. Nearly all winners opt for cash, which for the next drawing would be an estimated \$395 million.

The jackpot is the largest since a \$2.04 billion Powerball prize was won Nov. 8 in California. A winner hasn't been announced for that record-setting payout.

"On only three previous occasions has the Mega Millions jackpot gone beyond \$700 million, and all three times those rolls continued on past \$1 billion," Mega Millions said.

Mega Millions is played in 45 states as well as Washington, D.C., and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Black support for GOP ticked up in this year's midterms

By AYANNA ALEXANDER and GARY FIELDS Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Black voters have been a steady foundation for Democratic candidates for decades, but that support appeared to show a few cracks in this year's elections.

Republican candidates were backed by 14% of Black voters, compared with 8% in the last midterm elections four years ago, according to AP VoteCast, an extensive national survey of the electorate.

In Georgia, Republican Gov. Brian Kemp more than doubled his support among Black voters to 12% in 2022 compared with 5% four years ago, according to VoteCast. He defeated Democrat Stacey Abrams both times.

If that boost can be sustained, Democrats could face headwinds in 2024 in Georgia, Wisconsin, Michigan and Pennsylvania, where presidential and Senate races are typically decided by narrow margins and turning out Black voters is a big part of Democrats' political strategy.

It's too early to tell whether the 2022 survey data reflects the beginnings of a longer-term drift of Black voters toward the GOP or whether the modest Republican gains from an overwhelmingly Democratic group will hold during a presidential year. Former President Donald Trump, who has announced his third run for the presidency, received support from just 8% of Black voters in 2020, according to VoteCast.

The survey from this year's midterms also found that Republican candidates in some key states improved their share of Latino voters, so any sustained growth in the share of Black voters would be critical.

A variety of factors might play into the findings, including voter turnout and candidate outreach. Yet some Black voters suggest they will be sticking with Republicans because they said the party's priorities resonate with them more than those of Democrats.

Janet Piroleau, who lives in suburban Atlanta, left the Democratic Party in 2016, during Trump's first run for office, and now votes Republican. That includes this year, when she voted for Kemp in his victory over Abrams.

Piroleau said she felt Democrats were pushing for more reliance on government programs. "That bothered me," she said.

"For me, it was about being accountable and responsible and making your own decisions, and not depending on the government to bail you out," Piroleau said.

April Chapman, who lives in metro Atlanta, is among the Black voters who favored Kemp and other Republican candidates.

Like Piroleau, Chapman cited issues such as immigration, border security and the economy as important in deciding to become a Republican a decade ago. But the 43-year-old mother said her main break with the party is over education.

She said she felt Democrats were trying to control what her children should be exposed to and how they should be educated.

"For our family, the government educational system was not the best option," Chapman said.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 36 of 88

Camilla Moore, chair of the Georgia Black Republican Council, said a large percentage of the voters Kemp won in the Black community “were actually Black Democrats.” Those voters made decisions based on Kemp’s performance in addressing issues they care about, Moore said.

Her group also suggested that the Kemp campaign advertise on Black radio and “expend a little more effort in some areas that were a little uncomfortable.”

The results in Georgia, she said, could be replicated elsewhere with the right candidates.

“It’s not going to work for everybody,” Moore said. “It does work for those Republicans who have demonstrated that they truly are a senator for all or a governor for all.”

Abrams’ campaign office and Fair Fight Action, which was founded by Abrams, did not answer repeated phone or email messages.

The VoteCast findings underscore a dynamic that Black activists and community leaders have long sought to convey — that Black voters are not a monolith and that the Democratic Party should not take them for granted.

Nationally, Republicans worked during the midterms cycle to try to shift a share of Black voters to their side. The GOP conducted business roundtables, prayer gatherings, food drives and school choice events to hear the kinds of priorities in Black communities that might influence their voting, said Janiyah Thomas, a communications strategist and former Black media affairs manager at the Republican National Committee.

Thomas, who recently voted Republican, added that her disagreement with the Black Lives Matter movement encouraged her switch.

Gloria J. Browne-Marshall, a professor at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York and the author of a book on the voting rights movement, said Black voters need to hear from Democrats about why their vote is important and what the party will do for them.

She said the message is particularly important for younger voters, who “went out in the street and risked their lives for police reform” after the killing of George Floyd in 2020. They also want voting rights protected but got neither at the federal level during President Joe Biden’s first two years in office.

“Instead, we get Juneteenth, and I don’t remember who asked for Juneteenth,” Browne-Marshall said, referring to the new federal holiday that commemorates the end of slavery in America.

W. Franklyn Richardson, chair of the board of trustees of the Conference of National Black Churches, acknowledged that not all Black community priorities are met by Democrats but said the party is more likely to address those needs than Republicans.

“We have to pick the best of the two,” and continue pushing, he said.

For James W. Jackson, the choice was to switch to the Republican Party after he decided its values better aligned with his.

The pastor at Fervent Prayer Church in Indianapolis said he was a Democrat initially because it was the party of his father and many prominent Black leaders.

Not everyone sees a noteworthy shift of Black voters away from Democrats and toward Republicans. Ron Daniels, president of the Institute of the Black World 21st Century, said his question isn’t about what Democrats have failed to do, but rather what they have accomplished and not been more vocal about.

The agenda Biden has pursued since taking office “was fairly explicit about a number of key issues that relate to Black people. The problem is that because there is a hesitancy and a concern about whether or not white voters will be turned off,” Democrats have not promoted those moves, Daniels said.

Biden, he noted, named Kamala Harris as vice president, nominated Ketanji Brown Jackson to the U.S. Supreme Court and appointed Lisa Cook to the Federal Reserve. He also noted the impact of the American Rescue Plan on Black business owners.

“The fact of the matter is, they’re not talking about the tangible things that happened,” Daniels said.

The higher percentages of Black voters casting ballots for Republicans this year also may not suggest greater and more durable support for the GOP, said Derrick Johnson, NAACP president and CEO.

He noted that African Americans are a diverse voting group with varying concerns and priorities, and are attracted to specific candidates because of that. NAACP focus groups found that inflation, student loan

debt and violence prevention were among Black voters' top concerns. Candidates who speak to those concerns will be heard, he said.

"That's what democracy should be — an opportunity to have choices among candidates," Johnson said. "But that is not to suggest the national (Republican) party platform is more reflective of the needs and interests of African Americans as a whole."

Barbara Walters, news pioneer and 'The View' creator, dies

By FRAZIER MOORE AP Television Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Barbara Walters, the intrepid interviewer, anchor and program host who blazed the way as the first woman to become a TV news superstar during a career remarkable for its duration and variety, has died. She was 93.

ABC broke into its broadcast to announce Walters' death on air Friday night.

"She lived her life with no regrets. She was a trailblazer not only for female journalists, but for all women," her publicist Cindi Berger also said in a statement, adding Walters died peacefully at her New York home.

An ABC spokesperson did not have an immediate comment Friday night beyond sharing a statement from Bob Iger, the CEO of ABC parent The Walt Disney Company.

"Barbara was a true legend, a pioneer not just for women in journalism but for journalism itself," Iger said.

During nearly four decades at ABC, and before that at NBC, Walters' exclusive interviews with rulers, royalty and entertainers brought her celebrity status that ranked with theirs, while placing her at the forefront of the trend that made stars of TV reporters.

Late in her career, she gave infotainment a new twist with "The View," a live ABC weekday kaffee klatsch with an all-female panel for whom any topic was on the table and who welcomed guests ranging from world leaders to teen idols. With that side venture and unexpected hit, Walters considered "The View" the "dessert" of her career.

A statement from the show said Walters created "The View" in 1997 "to champion women's voices."

"We're proud to be part of her legacy," the statement said.

Walters made headlines in 1976 as the first female network news anchor, with an unprecedented \$1 million salary that drew gasps. Her drive was legendary as she competed — not just with rival networks, but with colleagues at her own network — for each big "get" in a world jammed with more and more interviewers, including female journalists following in her trail.

"I never expected this!" Walters said in 2004, taking stock of her success. "I always thought I'd be a writer for television. I never even thought I'd be in front of a camera."

But she was a natural on camera, especially when plying notables with searing questions.

"I'm not afraid when I'm interviewing, I have no fear!" Walters told The Associated Press in 2008.

In a voice that never lost its trace of her native Boston accent or its substitution of Ws-for-Rs, Walters lobbed blunt and sometimes giddy questions, often sugarcoated with a hushed, reverential delivery.

"Offscreen, do you like you?" she once asked actor John Wayne, while Lady Bird Johnson was asked whether she was jealous of her late husband's reputation as a ladies' man.

In May 2014, she taped her final episode of "The View" amid much ceremony to end a five-decade career in television (although she continued to make occasional TV appearances). During a commercial break, a throng of TV newswomen she had paved the way for — including Diane Sawyer, Katie Couric, Robin Roberts and Connie Chung — posed for a group portrait.

"I have to remember this on the bad days," Walters said quietly, "because this is the best."

Her career began with no such inklings of majesty.

Walters graduated from Sarah Lawrence College in 1943 and eventually landed a "temporary," behind-the-scenes assignment at "Today" in 1961. Shortly afterward, what was seen as the token woman's slot among the staff's eight writers opened. Walters got the job and began to make occasional on-air appearances with offbeat stories such as "A Day in the Life of a Nun" or the tribulations of a Playboy bunny. For the latter, she donned bunny ears and high heels to work at the Playboy Club.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 38 of 88

As she appeared more frequently, she was spared the title of "Today' Girl" that had been attached to her predecessors. But she had to pay her dues, sometimes sprinting between interviews to do dog food commercials.

She had the first interview with Rose Kennedy after the assassination of her son, Robert, as well as with Princess Grace of Monaco and President Richard Nixon. She traveled to India with Jacqueline Kennedy, to China with Nixon and to Iran to cover the shah's gala party. But she faced a setback in 1971 with the arrival of a new host, Frank McGee, who insisted she wait for him to ask three questions before she could open her mouth during interviews with "powerful persons."

Although she gained celebrity status in her own right, the celebrity world was familiar to her even as a little girl. Her father was an English-born booking agent who turned an old Boston church into a nightclub. Lou Walters opened other clubs in Miami and New York, and young Barbara spent her after-hours with regulars such as Joseph Kennedy and Howard Hughes.

Those were the good times. But her father made and lost fortunes in a dizzying cycle that taught her success was always at risk of being snatched away, and could neither be trusted nor enjoyed.

Sensing greater freedom and opportunities awaiting her outside the NBC studio, she hit the road to produce more exclusive interviews, including with Nixon chief of staff H.R. Haldeman.

By 1976, she had been granted the title of "Today" co-host and was earning \$700,000 a year. But when ABC signed her to a \$5 million, five-year contract, she was branded the "the million-dollar baby."

Reports failed to note her job duties would be split between the network's entertainment division and ABC News, then mired in third place. Meanwhile, Harry Reasoner, her seasoned "ABC Evening News" co-anchor, was said to resent her salary and celebrity orientation.

It wasn't just the shaky relationship with her co-anchor that brought Walters problems.

Comedian Gilda Radner satirized her on "Saturday Night Live" as a rhotacistic commentator named "Baba Wawa." And after her interview with a newly elected President Jimmy Carter in which Walters told Carter "be wise with us," CBS correspondent Morley Safer publicly derided her as "the first female pope blessing the new cardinal."

It was a period that seemed to mark the end of everything she'd worked for, she later recalled.

"I thought it was all over: 'How stupid of me ever to have left NBC!'"

But salvation arrived in the form of a new boss: ABC News president Rooney Arledge moved her out of the co-anchor slot and into special projects. Meanwhile, she found success with her quarterly primetime interview specials. She became a frequent contributor to newsmagazine "20/20," and later co-host. A perennial favorite was her review of the year's "10 Most Fascinating People."

By 2004, when she stepped down from "20/20," she had logged more than 700 interviews, ranging from Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher and Moammar Gadhafi, to Michael Jackson, Erik and Lyle Menendez and Elton John. Her two-hour talk with Monica Lewinsky in 1999, timed to the former White House intern's memoir about her affair with President Bill Clinton, drew more than 70 million viewers.

Lewinsky tweeted that she had lunch with Walters a few years ago where "of course, she was charming, witty and some of her questions were still her signature interview style."

A special favorite for Walters was Katharine Hepburn, although a 1981 exchange led to one of her most ridiculed questions: "What kind of a tree are you?" (Walters would later object that the question was perfectly reasonable within the context of their conversation).

Walters did pronounce herself guilty of being "dreadfully sentimental" at times and was famous for making her subjects cry, with Oprah Winfrey and Ringo Starr among the more famous shedders.

But her work also received high praise. She won a Peabody Award for her interview with Christopher Reeve shortly after the 1995 horseback-riding accident that left him paralyzed.

Walters' first marriage to businessman Bob Katz was annulled after a year. Her 1963 marriage to theater owner Lee Guber, with whom she adopted a daughter, ended in divorce after 13 years. Her five-year marriage to producer Merv Adelson ended in divorce in 1990. Walters wrote a bestselling 2008 memoir "Audition," which caught readers by surprise with her disclosure of a "long and rocky affair" in the 1970s

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 39 of 88

with married U.S. Senator Edward Brooke.

Walters' self-disclosure reached another benchmark in May 2010 when she made an announcement on "The View" that, days later, she would undergo heart surgery. She would feature her successful surgery — and those of other notables, including Clinton and David Letterman — in a primetime special.

Walters is survived by her daughter, Jacqueline Danforth.

"I hope that I will be remembered as a good and courageous journalist. I hope that some of my interviews, not created history, but were witness to history, although I know that title has been used," Walters told the AP upon her retirement from "The View." "I think that when I look at what I have done, I have a great sense of accomplishment. I don't want to sound proud and haughty, but I think I've had just a wonderful career and I'm so thrilled that I have."

Arrest of suspect in killings 'a relief' to Idaho campus

By REBECCA BOONE, MARC LEVY and MIKE BALSAMO Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — The fatal stabbings of four students at the University of Idaho shook the college town of Moscow, a small community nestled in the rolling agricultural hills of the Palouse region that hadn't seen a murder for five years.

The Nov. 13 slayings seemed to mystify police, adding to the tension in town as the weeks went by without a break in the case. Then on Friday a suspect was arrested more than 2,500 miles (4,000 kilometers) away in Pennsylvania.

Bryan Christopher Kohberger, 28, was taken into custody in the early morning by the Pennsylvania State Police at a home in Chestnuthill Township, authorities said. Latah County, Idaho, Prosecutor Bill Thompson said investigators believe Kohberger broke into the students' home "with the intent to commit murder."

DNA evidence played a key role in identifying Kohberger as a suspect in the killings and authorities were able to match his DNA to genetic material recovered during the investigation, a law enforcement official said. In recent days, federal investigators had been watching Kohberger.

Kohberger is a Ph.D. student in the Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology at Washington State University, which is near the University of Idaho. He also is a teaching assistant for the university's criminal justice and criminology program, according to a WSU's online directory.

Federal and state investigators are now combing through Kohberger's background, financial records and electronic communications as they work to identify a motive and build the case, the law enforcement official said. The investigators are also interviewing people who knew Kohberger, including those at WSU, the official said.

The official could not publicly discuss details of the ongoing investigation and spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

Kohberger is being held without bond in Pennsylvania and will be held without bond in Idaho once he is returned, Thompson said. The affidavit for four charges of first-degree murder in Idaho will remain sealed until he is returned, the prosecutor said. He is also charged with felony burglary in Idaho. An extradition hearing is scheduled for Tuesday.

The students — Kaylee Goncalves, Madison Mogen, Xana Kernodle and Ethan Chapin — were stabbed to death at a rental home near campus in Moscow, a town of about 25,000 people near the Washington state border.

Moscow Police Chief James Fry said investigators are still looking for a weapon. He was emotional as he announced the arrest at a news conference Friday, calling the victims by their first names.

Tips began pouring in after law enforcement asked the public for help finding a white Hyundai Elantra sedan seen near the home around the time of the killings.

In addition to the DNA evidence, authorities also learned Kohberger had a white Hyundai Elantra, the official who spoke anonymously said.

No lawyer for Kohberger was listed in court documents and phone calls to the county public defender's office went unanswered Friday.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 40 of 88

WSU and UI are partners in several academic programs and students sometimes attend classes and seminars or work at the neighboring schools. That doesn't appear to be the case with Kohberger: University of Idaho President Scott Green wrote in a memo to students and employees on Friday evening that the Idaho school had no record of him.

In the memo, Green said the arrest was "the news we have been waiting for."

Green said he was grateful for the law enforcement agencies, including the Idaho State Police troopers who were brought in to help patrol the university and the community in the weeks after the stabbings.

"The crime has nevertheless left a mark on our university, our community and our people," Green wrote. Counseling services would remain available to students throughout the winter break and after classes resume on Jan. 11, he said.

Kohberger graduated from Northampton Community College in Pennsylvania with an associate of arts degree in psychology in 2018, said college spokesperson Mia Rossi-Marino. DeSales University in Pennsylvania said that he received a bachelor's degree in 2020 and completed graduate studies in June 2022.

Goncalves, 21, of Rathdrum, Idaho; Mogen, 21, of Coeur d'Alene, Idaho; Kernodle, 20, of Post Falls, Idaho; and Chapin, 20, of Conway, Washington, were members of the university's Greek system and close friends. Mogen, Goncalves and Kernodle lived in the three-story rental home with two other roommates. Kernodle and Chapin were dating and he was visiting the house that night.

Autopsies showed all four were likely asleep when they were attacked. Some had defensive wounds and each was stabbed multiple times. There was no sign of sexual assault, police said.

Shanon Gray, an attorney representing Goncalves's father, Steve Goncalves, said law enforcement officials called the family Thursday to let them know about the arrest, but gave no additional information about how or why they believe he might be connected to the killings.

Ben Roberts, a graduate student in the criminology and criminal justice department at WSU, described Kohberger as confident and outgoing, but said it seemed like "he was always looking for a way to fit in."

"I had honestly just pegged him as being super awkward," Roberts said.

Roberts started the program in August — along with Kohberger, he said — and had several courses with him. He described Kohberger as wanting to appear academic.

"One thing he would always do, almost without fail, was find the most complicated way to explain something," he said.

Safety concerns had also led UI to hire security to escort students across campus.

"To describe it as a relief is pretty much spot on," said Brian Wolf, a UI sociology professor who specializes in criminology and social control. "It's still somber, because we lost four members of our University of Idaho family, but it's safe to say we will probably all sleep better tonight."

South Asian eateries try 'going local' as recovery strategy

By VINEETA DEEPAK Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — Hotels and restaurants across South Asia have had to adapt and reimagine dining out since the pandemic ripped through the region, forcing many out of business.

Those that have survived are tapping local sources and going online.

In India, from hole-in-the-wall casual eateries to fine dining, restaurants were devastated by lockdowns and virus outbreaks, with millions losing their jobs since COVID-19 hit in early 2020.

In neighboring Sri Lanka, where the tourism-driven economy also has been hammered by political upheavals and shortages, the situation remains dire.

Saman Nayananda, a food and beverage manager at a hotel chain in the Sri Lankan capital Colombo, says going local for food sourcing and menu offerings is vital.

Nayananda, who was in New Delhi recently for the South Asian Food for Thought festival, survived a devastating tsunami in 2004 that killed 230,000. He lived through a prolonged civil war that ended in 2009 and witnessed the aftermath of deadly 2019 Easter terrorist attacks. After every calamity, the economy managed to get back on its feet.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 41 of 88

The struggle to recover for the nation of 22 million is infinitely tougher given Sri Lanka's troubles with debt, fuel and food shortages, said the 50-year-old hospitality industry veteran.

"We had lot of challenges, including raw materials and the transport problems. A year after COVID, all hotels started food delivery. We were slowly recovering and then this economic crisis came. We ran out of both imported and local materials. Again back to zero," said Nayanananda, who lost his job at a tourist resort in 2020 as everything shut down.

"We recovered from terrorism, from the tsunami, but this crisis, it has broken the middle class," he said. With food inflation at 70% and hard currency to buy from abroad in short supply, going local both in terms of food sourcing and menu offerings is the only option.

"We came out with the concept of grow and sell. We replaced imported production with local production, coming up with innovative food items," he said, mentioning dishes using locally grown sweet potatoes, cassava, yams and cowpeas, or black-eyed peas.

Across the region, hotels and restaurants are finding past business models obsolete. That's forcing a reset in strategies as investments recover to meet rising demand from hungry diners eager to eat out again.

India's food services market is expected to grow to \$79 billion by 2028 from \$41 billion in 2022, according to a report by the Francorp and restaurantindia.in. But the sector will still face supply delays or shortages, the report says.

Maneesh Baheti, founder and director of the South Asian Association for Gastronomy, said that the pandemic has raised awareness about health concerns and food sourcing, leading the industry to adopt more sustainable practices.

That includes offering dishes made with locally sourced ingredients.

"Eating fresh local produce according to season, returning to diets rich in nuts, legumes and green leafy vegetables, are trends that are here to stay as they engage customers who are now a health conscious-aware segment with deep pockets," Baheti said.

"The entire food industry has realized the importance of promoting better health and the potential of wellness-based menus," Baheti added. "Eating local and eating fresh also helps in reducing the carbon footprint since the dependence on transportation and refrigeration reduces the emission of green house gases," he said.

As the food services industry rebuilds itself, restaurant owners say some practices born out of necessity during the pandemic can offer a way forward.

Many urban communities are experimenting with plant-based diets and growing farm produce on their rooftops and in backyards.

Siddharth Bandal, a partner at the Hideaway café and bar in the western Indian state of Goa, said they've learned to be nimble enough to adapt to changing customer behavior.

"It possibly made the sector stronger by exposing the weak spots and the industry has shown its resilience by adapting quickly. The pandemic made everyone more alert about hygiene. There is a renewed focus on guest experience and the eateries are evolving as they respond to the shift towards healthier food," Bandal said.

In Colombo, Nayanananda began cycling to work and growing food at home after markets ran dry and it became difficult to feed his family of four.

In Sri Lanka and elsewhere in Asia, a wave of COVID-19 infections in China after it dropped its pandemic controls has revived worries over the risk of a return to shutdowns and other restrictions. But Nayanananda says he's hopeful.

"What is important is to learn to live with what we have in our hands," he said.

Barbara Walters, dead at 93, was cultural fixture, TV icon

By FRAZIER MOORE AP Television Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Barbara Walters was that rarest of TV personalities: a cultural fixture.

For more than a half-century, she was on the air, placing in front of her audience world figures, big shots

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 42 of 88

and celebrities whose names and faces might have changed from year to year. But hers never did.

She first found her way to prominence in a visually oriented business where, typically, women were adornments or otherwise secondary.

And there she stayed, stayed so long and reliably she came to serve as a trusted reference point: What Barbara thought, what she said and, especially, what she asked the people she interviewed.

"I do think about death," she told The Associated Press in 2008 as she was closing out her eighth decade. But if death got the last word, Walters had the nation's ear in the meantime, she made clear, with amusement, as she recalled the zany Broadway hit "Spamalot," based on a Monty Python film.

"You know the scene where they're collecting dead bodies during a plague, and there's a guy they keep throwing in the heap, and he keeps saying, 'I'm not dead yet'? Then they bash him on the head, and he gets up again and says, 'I'm not dead yet!'"

"He's my hero," Walters said with a smile.

Walters, whose death at age 93 was announced Friday, was a heroic presence on the TV screen, leading the way as the first woman to become a TV news superstar during a career remarkable for its duration and variety.

Late in her career, she gave infotainment a new twist with "The View," a live ABC weekday kaffee klatsch with an all-female panel for whom any topic was on the table and who welcomed guests ranging from world leaders to teen idols. A side venture and unexpected hit, Walters considered "The View" the "desert" of her career.

Walters made headlines in 1976 as the first female network news anchor, with an unprecedented \$1 million salary that drew gasps.

During nearly four decades at ABC, and before that at NBC, Walters' exclusive interviews with rulers, royalty and entertainers brought her celebrity status that ranked with theirs, while placing her at the forefront of the trend in broadcast journalism that made stars of TV reporters and brought news programs into the race for higher ratings.

Her drive was legendary as she competed — not just with rival networks, but with colleagues at her own network — for each big "get" in a world jammed with more and more interviewers, including female journalists who followed the trail she blazed.

"I never expected this!" Walters said in 2004, taking measure of her success. "I always thought I'd be a writer for television. I never even thought I'd be in front of a camera."

But she was a natural on camera, especially when plying notables with questions.

"I'm not afraid when I'm interviewing, I have no fear!" Walters told the AP in 2008.

In a voice that never lost its trace of her native Boston accent or its substitution of Ws-for-Rs, Walters lobbed blunt and sometimes giddy questions, often sugarcoated with a hushed, reverential delivery.

"Offscreen, do you like you?" she once asked actor John Wayne, while Lady Bird Johnson was asked whether she was jealous of her late husband's reputation as a ladies' man.

In May 2014, she taped her final episode of "The View" amid much ceremony and a gathering of scores of luminaries to end a five-decade career in television (although she continued to make occasional TV appearances). During a commercial break, a throng of TV newswomen she had paved the way for — including Diane Sawyer, Katie Couric, Robin Roberts and Connie Chung — posed with her for a group portrait.

"I have to remember this on the bad days," Walters said quietly, "because this is the best."

Her career began with no such signs of majesty.

Walters graduated from Sarah Lawrence College in 1943 and eventually landed for a "temporary," behind-the-scenes assignment at "Today" in 1961.

Shortly after that, what was seen as the token woman's slot among the staff's eight writers opened. Walters got the job and began to make occasional on-air appearances with offbeat stories such as "A Day in the Life of a Nun" or the tribulations of a Playboy bunny. For the latter, she donned bunny ears and high heels to work at the Playboy Club.

As she appeared more frequently, she was spared the title of "Today' Girl" that had been attached to her token female predecessors. But she had to pay her dues, sometimes sprinting across the "Today" set

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 43 of 88

between interviews to do dog food commercials.

She had the first interview with Rose Kennedy after the assassination of her son, Robert, as well as with Princess Grace of Monaco, President Richard Nixon and many others. She traveled to India with Jacqueline Kennedy, to China with Nixon and to Iran to cover the shah's gala party. But she faced a setback in 1971 with the arrival of a new host, Frank McGee. Although they could share the desk, he insisted she wait for him to ask three questions before she could open her mouth during joint interviews with "powerful persons."

Although she grew into a celebrity in her own right, the celebrity world was familiar to her even as a little girl. Her father was an English-born booking agent who turned an old Boston church into a nightclub. Lou Walters opened other clubs in Miami and New York, and young Barbara spent her after-hours with regulars such as Joseph Kennedy and Howard Hughes.

Those were the good times. But her father made and lost fortunes in a dizzying cycle that taught her success was always at risk of being snatched away, and could neither be trusted nor enjoyed. She also described a "lonely, isolated childhood."

Sensing greater freedom and opportunities awaited her outside the studio, she hit the road and produced more exclusive interviews for the program, including Nixon chief of staff H.R. Haldeman.

By 1976, she had been granted the title of "Today" co-host and was earning \$700,000 a year. But when ABC signed her to a \$5 million, five-year contract, she was branded the "the million-dollar baby."

Reports failed to note her job duties would be split between the network's entertainment division (for which she was expected to do interview specials) and ABC News, then mired in third place. Meanwhile, Harry Reasoner, her seasoned "ABC Evening News" co-anchor, was said to resent her salary and celebrity orientation.

"Harry didn't want a partner," Walters summed up. "Even though he was awful to me, I don't think he disliked me."

It wasn't just the shaky relationship with her co-anchor that brought Walters problems.

Comedian Gilda Radner satirized her on the new "Saturday Night Live" as a rhotacistic commentator named "Baba Wawa." And after her interview with a newly elected President Jimmy Carter in which Walters told Carter "be wise with us," CBS correspondent Morley Safer publicly derided her as "the first female pope blessing the new cardinal."

It was a period that seemed to mark the end of everything she'd worked for, she later recalled.

"I thought it was all over: 'How stupid of me ever to have left NBC!'"

But salvation arrived in the form of a new boss, ABC News president Roone Arledge, who moved her out of the co-anchor slot and into special projects for ABC News. Meanwhile, she found success with her quarterly primetime interview specials. She became a frequent contributor to ABC's newsmagazine "20/20," and in 1984, became co-host. A perennial favorite was her review of the year's "10 Most Fascinating People."

By 2004, when she stepped down from "20/20," she had logged more than 700 interviews, ranging from Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher and Moammar Gadhafi, to Michael Jackson, Erik and Lyle Menendez and Elton John. Her two-hour talk with Monica Lewinsky in 1999, timed to the former White House intern's memoir about her affair with President Bill Clinton, drew more than 70 million viewers and is among history's highest-rated television interviews.

A special favorite for Walters was Katharine Hepburn, although a 1981 exchange led to one of her most ridiculed questions: "What kind of a tree are you?"

Walters would later object that the question was perfectly reasonable within the context of their conversation. Hepburn had likened herself to a tree, leading Walters to ask what kind of a tree she was ("Oak" was the response). Walters did pronounce herself guilty of being "dreadfully sentimental" at times and was famous for making her subjects cry, with Oprah Winfrey and Ringo Starr among the more famous tear shedders.

But her work also received high praise. She won a Peabody Award for her interview with Christopher Reeve shortly after the 1995 horseback-riding accident that left him paralyzed. But the interview Walters singled out as her most memorable was with Bob Smithdas, a teacher and poet with a master's degree who had been deaf and blind since childhood. In 1998, Walters profiled him and his wife, Michelle, also

deaf and blind.

Walters wrote a bestselling 2008 memoir "Audition," which caught readers by surprise with her disclosure of a "long and rocky affair" in the 1970s with married U.S. Sen. Edward Brooke, a Republican from Massachusetts who was the first Black person to win popular election to the U.S. Senate.

"I knew it was something that could have destroyed my career," Walters said shortly after her book's publication.

Walters' self-disclosure reached another benchmark in May 2010 when she made an announcement on "The View" that, days later, she would undergo heart surgery. She would feature her successful surgery — and those of other notables, including Clinton and David Letterman — in a primetime special, "A Matter of Life and Death."

Walters' first marriage to businessman Bob Katz was annulled after a year. Her 1963 marriage to theater owner Lee Guber, with whom she adopted a daughter, ended in divorce after 13 years. Her five-year marriage to producer Merv Adelson ended in divorce in 1990.

Walters is survived by her daughter, Jacqueline Danforth.

"I hope that I will be remembered as a good and courageous journalist. I hope that some of my interviews, not created history, but were witness to history, although I know that title has been used," she told the AP upon her retirement from "The View." "I think that when I look at what I have done, I have a great sense of accomplishment. I don't want to sound proud and haughty, but I think I've had just a wonderful career and I'm so thrilled that I have."

Another woman files sex abuse lawsuit against Cosby, NBC

By DAVE COLLINS Associated Press

A woman who alleges Bill Cosby drugged and sexually assaulted her in 1986 sued the comedian-actor, NBCUniversal and other companies Friday in New York, where five other women filed a similar lawsuit earlier this month.

Stacey Pinkerton says she was a 21-year-old flight attendant and model that year when she claims Cosby drugged her at a restaurant in Illinois and took her back to a hotel room in Chicago. The lawsuit alleges Cosby "engaged in forced sexual intercourse" with her while she was incapacitated from the drugs.

The lawsuit comes more than a year after Cosby left prison after his 2018 sexual assault conviction in Pennsylvania was overturned. Earlier this year, a Los Angeles jury awarded \$500,000 to a woman who said Cosby sexually abused her at the Playboy Mansion when she was a teenager in 1975.

Pinkerton says the alleged assault came after she had met Cosby in New York and he promised to help her career. She says she had a role in an episode of "The Cosby Show" on NBC, but did not appear in the final edit.

Months after the alleged assault, Pinkerton said Cosby invited her to his show at a Chicago theater, where she claims he forcefully kissed and touched her.

"Cosby engaged in the same or similar pattern of conduct with his victims," Pinkerton's lawsuit says, "including expressing interest in advancing their careers, giving them roles on The Cosby Show, using The Cosby Show and its filming locations as a means to access, isolate, sexually harass, and sexually assault women, using drugs to incapacitate his victims, and forcibly engaging in sexual acts with them without their consent."

The lawsuit alleges that NBC, Kaufman Astoria Studios and Carsey-Werner Television should have known Cosby was a danger to women and failed to protect Pinkerton from him.

Cosby spokesperson Andrew Wyatt said Friday night that Cosby "continues to vehemently deny all allegations waged against him and looks forward to defending himself in court."

"As we have always stated, and now America can see, this isn't about justice for victims of alleged sexual assault, it's ALL ABOUT MONEY," Wyatt wrote in an email to The Associated Press. "We believe that the courts, as well as the court of public opinion, will follow the rules of law and relieve Mr. Cosby of these alleged accusations."

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 45 of 88

Representatives of NBCUniversal, Kaufman Astoria Studios and Carsey-Werner Television did not immediately respond to requests for comment Friday night. All three companies were involved in the production of "The Cosby Show," Pinkerton's lawsuit said.

The lawsuits by Pinkerton and the five other women were filed under New York's one-year window for adults to file sexual abuse complaints for allegations that had fallen outside the statute of limitations to sue.

Cosby served nearly three years in prison before the Pennsylvania Supreme Court overturned his conviction, finding that he gave incriminating testimony in a deposition about the encounter only after believing he had immunity from prosecution. The trial judge and an intermediate appeals court had found no evidence of such immunity.

Seven other accusers received a settlement from Cosby's insurers in the wake of the Pennsylvania conviction over a defamation lawsuit they had filed in Massachusetts. Their lawsuit said that Cosby and his agents disparaged them in denying their allegations of abuse.

Storm brings flooding, landslides across California

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — Landslides of rock and mud closed roadways Friday across California as heavy rains kicked off what will be a series of storms poised to usher in the new year with downpours and potential flooding across much of the state and multiple feet of snow in the Sierra Nevada.

The atmospheric river storm, a long and wide plume of moisture pulled in from the Pacific Ocean, began sweeping across the northern part of the state Friday and was expected to bring more rain through Saturday, according to the National Weather Service in Sacramento.

A winter storm warning was in effect into Sunday for the upper elevations of the Sierra from south of Yosemite National Park to north of Lake Tahoe, where as much as 5 feet (1.5 meters) of snow is possible atop the mountains, the National Weather Service said in Reno, Nevada.

A flood watch was in effect across much of Northern California through New Year's Eve. Officials warned that rivers and streams could overflow and urged residents to get sandbags ready.

Landslides already had closed routes in the San Francisco Bay Area, between Fremont and Sunol, as well as in Mendocino County near the unincorporated community of Piercy and in the Mendocino National Forest, where crews cleared debris into Friday night.

Humboldt County, where a 6.4 magnitude earthquake struck on Dec. 20, also saw roadways begin to flood, according to the National Weather Service's Eureka office. A bridge that was temporarily closed last week due to earthquake damage may be closed again if the Eel River, which it crosses, gets too high, officials said.

It was the first of several storms expected to roll across California over the next week. The current system is expected to be warmer and wetter, while next week's storms will be colder, lowering snow levels in the mountains, said Hannah Chandler-Cooley, a meteorologist at the National Weather Service in Sacramento.

The Sacramento region could receive a total of 4 to 5 inches (10 to 13 centimeters) of rain over the span of the week, Chandler-Cooley said.

The California Highway Patrol reported some local roads in eastern Sacramento were under water and impassable at times on Friday. By nightfall, nearly 5 inches (12.7 centimeters) of rain had fallen over the past 24 hours in the Sierra foothills at Blue Canyon about 70 miles (112 kilometers) northeast of Sacramento, the weather service said.

Sacramento's fire officials planned to broadcast evacuation announcements from a helicopter and a boat along the American River — a spot where many unhoused people live in encampments — to warn of flooding.

A winter storm warning was in effect through 4 a.m. Sunday for much of the Sierra, including the high-elevations around Lake Tahoe where more than a foot of snow was expected near the shores at an elevation of about 6,200 feet (1,889 meters) and up to 5 feet (1.5 meters) above 8,000 feet (2,438 meters) with winds gusting up to 100 mph (160 kph) over ridgetops.

"Strong winds could cause tree damage and lead to power outages and high waves on Lake Tahoe may

capsize small vessels," the weather service in Reno said.

Avalanche warnings were issued in the backcountry around Lake Tahoe and Mammoth Lakes south of Yosemite.

On the Sierra's eastern front, flood watches and warnings continue into the weekend north and south of Reno, Nevada, where minor to moderate flooding was forecast along some rivers and streams into the weekend.

At Susanville, California about 85 miles (137 kilometers) north of Reno, the Susan River was forecast to rise from about 5 feet (1.5 meters) Friday to a foot (30 centimeters) above the flood stage of 12 feet (3.6 meters) by Saturday morning, causing moderate flooding that could affect some homes, roads and bridges, the National Weather Service said.

In Southern California, moderate-to-heavy rain was forecast for Saturday. The region will begin drying out on New Year's Day and the Jan. 2 Rose Parade in Pasadena should avoid rainfall.

Heavy showers are forecast for Tuesday or Wednesday, the National Weather Service in Oxnard said.

The rain was welcomed in drought-parched California, but much more precipitation is needed to make a significant difference. The past three years have been California's driest on record.

Court: Abortion doctors can't be charged under Arizona law

By JACQUES BILLEAUD Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — An Arizona court has ruled that abortion doctors cannot be prosecuted under a pre-statehood law that criminalizes nearly all abortions yet was barred from being enforced for decades.

But the Arizona Court of Appeals on Friday declined to repeal the 1864 law, which carries a sentence of two to five years in prison for anyone who assists in an abortion and provides no exceptions for rape or incest.

Still, the court said doctors can't be prosecuted for performing abortions in the first 15 weeks of pregnancy because other Arizona laws passed over the years allow them to perform the procedure, though non-doctors are still subject to be charged under the old law.

"The statutes, read together, make clear that physicians are permitted to perform abortions as regulated" by other abortion laws, the appeals court wrote.

The pre-statehood law, which allows abortions only if a patient's life is in jeopardy, had been blocked from being enforced shortly after the U.S. Supreme Court issued its 1973 Roe v. Wade decision guaranteeing women a constitutional right to an abortion.

But after the Supreme Court overturned the landmark decision in June, Attorney General Mark Brnovich asked a state judge to allow the law to be implemented.

The Arizona Court of Appeals said it wasn't viewing the pre-statehood law in isolation of other state abortion laws, explaining that "the legislature has created a complex regulatory scheme to achieve its intent to restrict — but not to eliminate — elective abortions."

In a statement, Brittany Fonteno, president and chief executive of Planned Parenthood Arizona, said the decision means a state law limiting abortions to 15 weeks into a pregnancy will remain in place.

"Let me be crystal clear that today is a good day," Fonteno said. "The Arizona Court of Appeals has given us the clarity that Planned Parenthood Arizona has been seeking for months: When provided by licensed physicians in compliance with Arizona's other laws and regulations, abortion through 15 weeks will remain legal."

The appeals court rejected Brnovich's claim that doctors could be prosecuted under the pre-statehood law, saying the attorney general's argument ignores the Legislature's intent to regulate but not eliminate abortions and violates due process by promoting arbitrary enforcement.

"Brnovich's interpretation would not merely invite arbitrary enforcement, it would practically demand it," the appeals court wrote.

The attorney general's office didn't immediately respond to a request for comment on the decision, which was released late Friday afternoon. In a tweet, Attorney General-elect Kris Mayes, a supporter of

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 47 of 88

abortion rights, said she agreed with the ruling that doctors cannot be prosecuted for performing the procedure in the first 15 weeks of pregnancy and vowed "to continue to fight for reproductive freedom."

Abortion providers stopped providing the procedure in the state after Roe was struck down, restarted in mid-July after a "personhood" law giving legal rights to unborn children was blocked by a court, and stopped them again when a Tucson judge allowed the 1864 law to be enforced.

Planned Parenthood Arizona, the state's largest provider of abortions, restarted abortion care across the state again after Brnovich's office agreed in another lawsuit not to enforce the old law at least until next year.

A Phoenix physician who runs a clinic that provides abortions and the Arizona Medical Association also had filed a separate lawsuit that sought to block the territorial-era law, arguing that laws enacted by the Legislature after the Roe decision should take precedence and abortions should be allowed until 15 weeks into a pregnancy.

Brnovich sought to place that lawsuit on hold until the Court of Appeals decides the Planned Parenthood case. In an agreement with the abortion doctor and the medical association, he said he would not enforce the old law until at least 45 days after a final ruling in the original case.

A law enacted by the Legislature this year limits abortions to 15 weeks into a pregnancy, well before the 24 weeks generally allowed under the Roe decision that was overruled by the U.S. Supreme Court in June.

After the Roe decision was overturned and the issue of abortion was left up to the states, bans went into effects in some states.

Abortion is considered illegal at all stages of pregnancy, with various exceptions, in 13 states: Alabama, Arkansas, Idaho, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, West Virginia and Wisconsin.

Bans in Arizona, Montana, North Dakota, Ohio, South Carolina, Utah and Wyoming are also not in effect, at least for now, as courts decide whether they can be enforced.

Trump's returns shed light on tax offsets, foreign accounts

By MICHAEL R. SISAK, JILL COLVIN and CHRIS RUGABER Associated Press

Democrats in Congress released thousands of pages of former President Donald Trump's tax returns Friday, providing the most detailed picture to date of his finances over a six-year period, including his time in the White House, when he fought to keep the information private in a break with decades of precedent.

The documents include individual returns from Trump and his wife, Melania, along with Trump's business entities from 2015-2020. They show how Trump used the tax code to lower his tax obligation and reveal details about foreign accounts, charitable contributions and the performance of some of his highest-profile business ventures, which had largely remained shielded from public scrutiny.

The disclosure marks the culmination of a yearslong legal fight that has played out everywhere from the presidential campaign to Congress and the Supreme Court as Trump persistently rejected efforts to share details about his financial history — counter to the practice of transparency followed by all his predecessors in the post-Watergate era. The records release comes just days before Republicans retake control of the House and weeks after Trump announced another campaign for the White House.

The records show how Trump limited his tax liability by offsetting his income against corporate losses as well as millions of dollars in business expenses, asset depreciation and other deductions.

While Trump paid \$641,931 in federal income taxes in 2015, the year he began his campaign for president, he paid just \$750 in 2016 and 2017, according to a report released last week by Congress' nonpartisan Joint Committee on Taxation. He paid nearly \$1 million in 2018, but only \$133,445 in 2019 and nothing in 2020, the year he unsuccessfully sought reelection.

The records also detail Trump's foreign holdings.

Trump, according to the filings, reported having bank accounts in China, Ireland and the United Kingdom in 2015 through 2017, even as he was commander in chief. Starting in 2018, however, he only reported an account in the U.K. The returns also show that Trump claimed foreign tax credits for taxes he paid

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 48 of 88

on various business ventures around the world, including licensing arrangements for use of his name on development projects and his golf courses in Scotland and Ireland.

In several years, Trump appears to have paid more in foreign taxes than he did in net U.S. federal income taxes, with income reported in countries including Azerbaijan, China, India, Indonesia, Panama, the Philippines, St. Martin, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates.

The documents also show that Trump's charitable donations often represented only a sliver of his income. In 2020, the year the coronavirus ravaged the economy, Trump reported no charitable donations at all. In 2019 and 2018 he reported writing checks for about \$500,000 in donations. In earlier years the numbers were higher — \$1.8 million in 2017 and \$1.1 million in 2016.

It's unclear whether the reported sums included Trump's \$400,000 annual presidential salary, which he had said, as a candidate, that he would forgo and which he claimed he donated to various federal departments.

Jeff Hoopes, an accounting professor at the University of North Carolina's Kenan-Flagler Business School, described Trump's returns as "large and complicated" with "hundreds of entities scattered all over the globe."

He noted that many of those entities are slightly unprofitable, which he described as "pretty magical as far as the tax code."

"It's hard to know if someone's really bad at business or really good at tax planning, because they both look like the same thing," he said.

Daniel Shaviro, a taxation professor at New York University, cited the large financial losses from so many of Trump's businesses, despite their often healthy sales, as something that should raise suspicions from auditors. "There's fishy looking stuff here."

Shaviro also cited examples of suspicious or sloppy math even in smaller businesses, such as an aviation firm dubbed "DT Endeavor I LLC," which in 2020 reported both sales and expenses of \$160,144. Such exact matches are unusual, Shaviro said. Yet the form also reported an \$18,923 loss.

"The return doesn't say, 'Guess what? I'm committing fraud,'" Shaviro said, "but there are red flags."

The release marks the latest setback for Trump, who has been mired in investigations, including federal and state inquiries into his efforts to overturn the 2020 election. The Department of Justice also has been investigating reams of classified documents found at his Mar-a-Lago club and possible efforts to obstruct the investigation.

In a statement Friday, Trump lashed out at Democrats and the Supreme Court for the release.

"It's going to lead to horrible things for so many people," he said. "The radical, left Democrats have weaponized everything, but remember, that is a dangerous two-way street!"

He said the returns demonstrated "how proudly successful I have been and how I have been able to use depreciation and various other tax deductions" to build his businesses.

The returns were released by the House Ways and Means Committee, which held a party-line vote last week to make the returns public after years of legal wrangling.

The returns detail how Trump used tax law to minimize his liability, including carrying forward massive losses from previous years. Trump said during his 2016 campaign that paying little or no income tax in some years "makes me smart."

In 2020, more than 150 of Trump's business entities listed negative qualified business income, which the IRS defines as "the net amount of qualified items of income, gain, deduction and loss from any qualified trade or business." In total for that tax year, combined with nearly \$9 million in carryforward loss from previous years, Trump's qualified losses amounted to more than \$58 million.

Another of Trump's money losers: the ice rink his company operated until last year in New York City's Central Park. Trump reported a total of \$2.6 million in losses from Wollman Rink over the six years made public. The rink, an early Trump Organization jewel run through a contract with New York City's government, reported a loss of \$1.3 million in 2015 despite taking in \$9.3 million in revenue, according to the tax returns. The rink turned a \$298,000 profit in 2016, but was back to melting cash in each of the next four years.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 49 of 88

"Trump seems to be creating huge losses that are suspicious or questionable under current law," said Steven Rosenthal, a senior fellow at the Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center, who said he had spent 20 years preparing taxes for corporations and wealthy individuals and "never saw anyone lose money as regularly and as large as Trump lost money year after year."

"To me, Trump's business operations were phenomenally unsuccessful and I struggle to figure out how much of it is attributable to Trump's unluckiness as a businessman and how much of it is attributable to Trump's inflation," he said.

Aspects of Trump's finances had been shrouded in mystery since his days as an up-and-coming Manhattan real estate developer in the 1980s.

Trump, known for building skyscrapers and hosting a reality TV show before winning the White House, did offer limited details about his holdings and income on mandatory disclosure forms and financial statements he provided to banks to secure loans and to financial magazines to justify his ranking on lists of billionaires.

Trump's longtime accounting firm has since disavowed the statements, and New York's attorney general has filed a lawsuit alleging Trump and his Trump Organization fraudulently inflated asset values on the statements. Trump and his company have denied wrongdoing.

In October 2018, The New York Times published a Pulitzer Prize-winning series based on leaked tax records that contradicted the image Trump had tried to sell of himself as a self-made businessman. It showed that Trump received a modern-day equivalent of at least \$413 million from his father's real estate holdings, with much of that money coming from what the Times called "tax dodges" in the 1990s.

A second series in 2020 showed that Trump paid no income taxes at all in 10 of the previous 15 years because he generally lost more money than he made.

In its report last week, the Ways and Means Committee indicated the Trump administration may have disregarded a requirement mandating audits of a president's tax filings.

The IRS only began to audit Trump's 2016 tax filings on April 3, 2019 — more than two years into his presidency — when the Ways and Means chairman, Rep. Richard Neal, D-Mass., asked the agency for information related to the returns.

Every president and major-party candidate since Richard Nixon has voluntarily made at least summaries of their tax information available to the public.

Idaho college killings suspect is criminology PhD student

By MARC LEVY, REBECCA BOONE and MIKE BALSAMO Associated Press

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) — A 28-year-old criminal justice graduate student was arrested in eastern Pennsylvania on Friday as a suspect in the mysterious stabbing deaths of four University of Idaho students last month, authorities said.

DNA evidence played a key role in identifying Bryan Christopher Kohberger as a suspect in the killings, and officials were able to match his DNA to genetic material recovered during the investigation, a law enforcement official said. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to publicly discuss details of the ongoing investigation.

The students — Kaylee Goncalves, Madison Mogen, Xana Kernodle and Ethan Chapin — were stabbed to death at a rental home near campus in Moscow, Idaho, sometime in the early morning hours of Nov. 13.

Moscow Police Chief James Fry said Kohberger attends Washington State University, which is only a few miles across the state line from Moscow.

Investigators are still looking for a weapon, Fry said at a press conference. He was emotional as he announced the arrest, calling the victims by their first names.

The killings initially confounded law enforcement and shook the small farming community of about 25,000 people, which hadn't had a murder for five years. But tips began pouring in after law enforcement asked the public for help finding a white Hyundai Elantra sedan seen near the home around the time of the killings.

In addition to the DNA evidence, authorities also learned Kohberger had a white Hyundai Elantra, the official who spoke anonymously said. In recent days, federal investigators had been watching Kohberger

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 50 of 88

and arrested him early Friday morning at a home in Chestnuthill Township, Pennsylvania.

Federal and state investigators are now combing through his background, financial records and electronic communications as they work to identify a motive and build the case, the official said. The investigators are also interviewing people who knew Kohberger, including those at Washington State University, the official said.

During the press conference, Latah County Prosecutor Bill Thompson said investigators believe Kohberger broke into the students' home "with the intent to commit murder." He is being held without bond in Pennsylvania, and will be held without bond in Idaho once he is returned, Thompson said. The affidavit for four charges of first-degree murder in Idaho will remain sealed until he is returned, as required by state law.

Kohberger is also charged with felony burglary in Idaho, Thompson said. An extradition hearing is scheduled for Tuesday.

Kohberger just completed his first semester as a PhD student in the Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology at Washington State University. He is also a teaching assistant for the university's criminal justice and criminology program, according to WSU's online directory. University police assisted Idaho law enforcement in executing search warrants at Kohberger's campus apartment and office, the university said. WSU officials did not immediately respond to a request for comment about Kohberger's work as a teaching assistant.

"This horrific act has shaken everyone in the Palouse region," said WSU provost Elizabeth Chilton in a prepared statement, referring to the scenic rolling hills surrounding both universities. "We will long feel the loss of these young people in the Moscow-Pullman community and hope the announcement today will be a step toward healing."

WSU and UI are partners in several academic programs, and students sometimes attend classes and seminars or work at the neighboring schools. That doesn't appear to be the case with Kohberger: University of Idaho President Scott Green wrote in a memo to students and employees on Friday evening that the Idaho school had no record of him.

Kohberger graduated from Northampton Community College in Pennsylvania with an associate of arts degree in psychology in 2018, said college spokesperson Mia Rossi-Marino. DeSales University in Pennsylvania said that he received a bachelor's degree in 2020 and completed graduate studies in June 2022.

Goncalves, 21, of Rathdrum, Idaho; Mogen, 21, of Coeur d'Alene, Idaho; Kernodle, 20, of Post Falls, Idaho; and Chapin, 20, of Conway, Washington, were members of the university's Greek system and close friends. Mogen, Goncalves and Kernodle lived in the three-story rental home with two other roommates. Kernodle and Chapin were dating and he was visiting the house that night.

Autopsies showed all four were likely asleep when they were attacked. Some had defensive wounds and each was stabbed multiple times. There was no sign of sexual assault, police said.

Police said Thursday the rental home would be cleared of "potential biohazards and other harmful substances" to collect evidence starting Friday morning.

Shanon Gray, an attorney representing Goncalves's father, Steve Goncalves, said law enforcement officials called the family last night to let them know about the arrest, but gave no additional information about how or why they believe he might be connected to the murders.

Ben Roberts, a graduate student in the criminology and criminal justice department at WSU, described Kohberger as confident and outgoing, but said it seemed like "he was always looking for a way to fit in."

"I had honestly just pegged him as being super awkward," Roberts said.

Roberts started the program in August — along with Kohberger, he said — and had several courses with him. He described Kohberger as wanting to appear academic.

"One thing he would always do, almost without fail, was find the most complicated way to explain something," he said. "He had to make sure you knew that he knew it."

Ethan Chapin's family emailed a statement after the press conference. "We are relieved this chapter is over because it provides a form of closure. However, it doesn't alter the outcome or alleviate the pain," the family wrote. "We miss Ethan, and our family is forever changed."

The case enticed online sleuths who speculated about potential suspects and motives. Safety concerns

also had the university hiring an additional security firm to escort students across campus and the Idaho State Police sending troopers to help patrol the city's streets.

Kohberger was arrested in eastern Pennsylvania in the Pocono Mountains. No lawyer for Kohberger was listed in court documents and phone calls to the county public defender's office went unanswered Friday.

Venezuelan opposition strips Guaidó of 'presidential' role

By CAMILLE RODRIGUEZ MONTILLA and MANUEL RUEDA Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) — For three years, Juan Guaidó led the Venezuelan opposition's efforts to bring about new elections and remove socialist President Nicolás Maduro.

But on Friday, dozens of politicians who once backed Guaidó voted in favor of removing the 39-year-old engineer and replacing his U.S.-supported "interim government" with a committee to oversee presidential primaries next year and protect the nation's assets abroad.

The vote reflects a changing balance of power within the opposition, which is trying to find new ways to connect with voters ahead of the nation's 2024 presidential election.

Three of Venezuela's four main opposition parties backed the proposal to remove Guaidó, who was supported only by his own Popular Will party.

After the vote, Guaidó said the move would create a "power vacuum" that could encourage more foreign nations to recognize the Maduro administration.

"If there is no interim government, who will they recognize in its place," he said. "Today we have jumped into the abyss. And given up on an important tool in our struggle."

Guaidó's opponents said new ways of connecting with voters should be found. The interim government has no sway over local institutions and is unable to provide basic services, with some Venezuelans mocking it as a "fake" government.

"It's with a heavy heart that I make this vote," said Luis Silva, a member of the Democratic Action party who participated in the online session for the vote. "We haven't been able to come up with a unanimous decision, but we need to look for new strategies."

Daniel Varnagy, a political science professor at Simon Bolivar University in Caracas, said the opposition had generated high expectations under Guaidó's leadership but then failed to keep its promises to people yearning for a change in Venezuela's governance.

"He promised to cease (Maduro's) usurpation, lead a transition and organize fair elections, and none of that happened," Varnagy said.

Guaidó rose to leadership of the opposition in 2019 when he was president of the then opposition-controlled legislature, which had begun its five-year term in 2015 after what many observers considered Venezuela's last fair elections. It was the last institution not controlled by Maduro's socialists.

The National Assembly argued Maduro won his second presidential term illegally in 2018 because his main rivals were banned from running. So the opposition legislators created an "interim government," headed by Guaidó, that was meant to last until Maduro stepped down and free elections could be held.

Guaidó organized protests in Venezuela, snuck out of the country for an international tour and was recognized as the nation's legitimate leader by the United States and dozens of European and Latin American governments that rejected Maduro's rule.

His interim administration was also given control of Venezuelan government assets abroad that had been frozen, including Citgo, the Houston-based oil refiner.

But the Guaidó-led opposition failed to win over the Venezuelan military or the nation's courts to its side, while Maduro's administration faced down street demonstrations and tightened its grip even more on the South American nation.

The failure to drive out Maduro frustrated Venezuelans, who are struggling with high inflation, food shortages and the lowest wages in South America — hardships that prodded millions of people to migrate in recent years.

In a poll taken by Venezuela's Andres Bello University in November, only 6% of Venezuelans said they

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 52 of 88

would vote for Guaidó if he participated in presidential primaries next year while a few other opposition leaders got bigger numbers.

Guaidó's influence has also diminished since late 2020, when the National Assembly that elected him as interim president was replaced by new legislators chosen in elections boycotted by opposition parties.

Many members of the 2015 National Assembly are now in exile, but they continue to claim to be Venezuela's legitimate legislative branch and hold online meetings in which they make decisions on issues involving the "interim government."

On Friday, 72 of the 109 former legislators who participated in the online session voted in favor of a measure calling for replacing Guaidó's interim administration with a committee made up of several opposition leaders.

S&P 500 closes out dismal year with worst loss since 2008

By DAMIAN J. TROISE and ALEX VEIGA AP Business Writers

Wall Street capped a quiet day of trading with more losses Friday, as it closed the book on the worst year for the S&P 500 since 2008.

The benchmark index finished with a loss of 19.4% for 2022, or 18.1%, including dividends. It's just its third annual decline since the financial crisis 14 years ago and a painful reversal for investors after the S&P 500 notched a gain of nearly 27% in 2021. All told, the index lost \$8.2 trillion in value, according to S&P Dow Jones Indices.

The Nasdaq composite, with a heavy component of technology stocks, racked up an even bigger loss of 33.1%.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average, meanwhile, posted an 8.8% loss for 2022.

Stocks struggled all year as inflation put increasing pressure on consumers and raised concerns about economies slipping into recession. Central banks raised interest rates to fight high prices. The Federal Reserve's aggressive rate hikes remain a major focus for investors as the central bank walks a thin line between raising rates enough to cool inflation, but not so much that they stall the U.S. economy into a recession.

The Fed's key lending rate stood at a range of 0% to 0.25% at the beginning of 2022 and will close the year at a range of 4.25% to 4.5% after seven increases. The U.S. central bank forecasts that will reach a range of 5% to 5.25% by the end of 2023. Its forecast doesn't call for a rate cut before 2024.

Rising interest rates prompted investors to sell the high-priced shares of technology giants such as Apple and Microsoft as well as other companies that flourished as the economy recovered from the pandemic. Amazon and Netflix lost roughly 50% of their market value. Tesla and Meta Platforms, the parent company of Facebook, each dropped more than 60%, their biggest-ever annual declines.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine worsened inflationary pressure earlier in the year by making oil, gas and food commodity prices even more volatile amid existing supply chain issues. Oil closed Friday around \$80, about \$5 higher than where it started the year. But in between oil jumped above \$120, helping energy stocks post the only gain among the 11 sectors in the S&P 500, up 59%.

China spent most of the year imposing strict COVID-19 policies, which crimped production for raw materials and goods, but is now in the process of removing travel and other restrictions. It's uncertain at this point what impact China's reopening will have on the global economy.

The Fed's battle against inflation, though, will likely remain the overarching concern on Wall Street in 2023, according to analysts. Investors will continue searching for a better sense of whether inflation is easing fast enough to take pressure off of consumers and the Fed.

If inflation continues to show signs of easing, and the Fed reins in its rate-hiking campaign, that could pave the way for a rebound for stocks in 2023, said Jay Hatfield, CEO of Infrastructure Capital Advisors.

"The Fed has been the overhang on this market, really since November of last year, so if the Fed pauses and we don't have a major recession, we think that sets us up for a rally," he said.

There was scant corporate or economic news for Wall Street to review Friday. That, plus the holiday

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 53 of 88

shortened week, set the stage for mostly light trading.

The S&P 500 fell 9.78 points, or 0.3%, to finish at 3,839.50. The index posted a 5.9% loss for the month of December.

The Dow dropped 73.55 points, or 0.2%, to close at 33,147.25. The Nasdaq slipped 11.61 points, or 0.1%, to 10,466.48.

Tesla rose 1.1%, as it continued to stabilize after steep losses earlier in the week. The electric vehicle maker's stock plummeted 65% in 2022, erasing about \$700 billion of market value.

Southwest Airlines rose 0.9% as its operations returned to relative normalcy following massive cancellations over the holiday period. The stock still ended down 6.7% for the week.

Small company stocks also fell Friday. The Russell 2000 shed 5 points, or 0.3%, to close at 1,761.25.

Bond yields mostly rose. The yield on the 10-Year Treasury, which influences mortgage rates, rose to 3.88% from 3.82% late Thursday. Although bonds typically fair well when stocks slump, 2022 turned out to be one of the worst years for the bond market in history, thanks to the Fed's rapid rate increases and inflation.

Several big updates on the employment market are on tap for the first week of 2023. It has been a particularly strong area of the economy and has helped create a bulwark against a recession. That has made the Fed's job more difficult, though, because strong employment and wages mean it may have to remain aggressive to keep fighting inflation. That, in turn, raises the risk of slowing the economy too much and bringing on a recession.

The Fed will release minutes from its latest policy meeting on Wednesday, potentially giving investors more insight into its next moves.

The government will also release its November report on job openings Wednesday. That will be followed by a weekly update on unemployment on Thursday. The closely-watched monthly employment report is due Friday.

Wall Street is also waiting on the latest round of corporate earnings reports, which will start flowing in around the middle of January. Companies have been warning investors that inflation will likely crimp their profits and revenue in 2023. That's after spending most of 2022 raising prices on everything from food to clothing in an effort to offset inflation, though many companies went further and actually padded their profit margins.

Companies in the S&P 500 are expected to broadly report a 3.5% drop in earnings during the fourth quarter, according to FactSet. Analysts expect earnings to then remain roughly flat through the first half of 2023.

U.S. stock markets will be closed Monday in observance of the New Year's Day holiday.

Cristiano Ronaldo makes big-money move to Saudi Arabian club

LONDON (AP) — Cristiano Ronaldo completed a lucrative move to Saudi Arabian club Al Nassr on Friday in a deal that is a landmark moment for Middle Eastern soccer but will see one of Europe's biggest stars disappear from the sport's elite stage.

Al Nassr posted a picture on social media of the five-time Ballon d'Or holding up the team's jersey after Ronaldo signed a deal until June 2025, with the club hailing the move as "history in the making."

"This is a signing that will not only inspire our club to achieve even greater success but inspire our league, our nation and future generations, boys and girls to be the best version of themselves," the club wrote.

It also gives the 37-year-old Ronaldo a massive payday in what could be the final contract of his career. Media reports have claimed the Portugal star could be earning up to \$200 million a year from the deal, which would make him the highest-paid soccer player in history.

Ronaldo said in a statement that he was "eager to experience a new football league in a different country."

"I am fortunate that I have won everything I set out to win in European football and feel now that this is the right moment to share my experience in Asia," the forward added.

While the signing is a massive boost for Middle Eastern soccer, it will also fuel the debate about Saudi

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 54 of 88

Arabia using so-called "sportswashing" to boost the country's image internationally. Saudi Arabia's sovereign wealth fund owns Premier League team Newcastle, and the country is considering a bid to host the 2030 World Cup.

Ronaldo had been a free agent after his contract was terminated by Manchester United following an explosive TV interview in which he criticized manager Erik ten Hag and the club's owners after having been repeatedly benched and even temporarily suspended by the club.

He is also coming off a disappointing World Cup where he was benched in the knockout rounds and left the field in tears after Portugal lost in the quarterfinals to Morocco.

And after a storied career that saw him win the Champions League with both United and Real Madrid, along with league and cup titles in England, Spain and Italy, he will now seemingly see out the last years of his career far away from the spotlight of top European soccer.

While Saudi Arabia earned its biggest international soccer win ever at the World Cup in Qatar last month when it beat eventual champion Argentina in its first group-stage game, the domestic league has few other stars and is not watched by a major international audience.

UN seeks court opinion on 'violation' of Palestinian rights

By EDITH M. LEDERER Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The U.N. General Assembly has asked the U.N.'s highest judicial body to give its opinion on the legality of Israeli policies in the occupied West Bank and east Jerusalem.

The Assembly voted by a wide margin, but with over 50 countries abstaining, on Friday evening to send one of the world's longest-running and thorniest disputes to the International Court of Justice, a request promoted by the Palestinians and opposed vehemently by Israel.

While the court's rulings are not binding, they influence international opinion. It last addressed the conflict in 2004, when the Assembly asked it to consider the legality of an Israeli-built separation barrier.

Palestinian Ambassador Riyad Mansour thanked countries that backed the measure.

"We trust that regardless of your vote today, if you believe in international law and peace, you will uphold the opinion of the International Court of Justice, when delivered," Mansour said, going on to urge countries to "stand up" to Israel's new, hard-line government.

Israel didn't speak at the Assembly, which voted during the Jewish Sabbath. In a written statement beforehand, Ambassador Gilad Erdan called the measure "outrageous," the U.N. "morally bankrupt and politicized" and any potential decision from the court "completely illegitimate."

Israel captured the West Bank, east Jerusalem and Gaza Strip in the 1967 Mideast war. The Palestinians seek all three areas for an independent state.

Israel considers the West Bank to be disputed territory and has built dozens of settlements that are now home to roughly 500,000 Jewish settlers.

It also has annexed east Jerusalem and considers the entire city to be its capital. An additional 200,000 Israelis live in settlements built in east Jerusalem that Israel considers to be neighborhoods of its capital. Palestinian residents of the city face systematic discrimination, making it difficult for them to build new homes or expand existing ones.

The international community overwhelmingly considers the settlements to be illegal. Israel's annexation of east Jerusalem, home to the city's most sensitive holy sites, also is not internationally recognized.

Israel withdrew from Gaza in 2005. Two years later, the Hamas militant group seized control of the territory from the forces of internationally recognized President Mahmoud Abbas.

Friday's resolution asked the International Court of Justice, commonly known as the world court, to issue an advisory opinion on the legal consequences of

It also asked the court to look at the legal consequences of Israeli measures it said are "aimed at altering the demographic composition, character and status of the Holy City of Jerusalem."

And it asks for an opinion on how all Israeli policies affect the legal status of its occupation, "and what are the legal consequences that arise for all states and the United Nations from this status."

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 55 of 88

The vote was 87-26, with 53 abstentions. It followed approvals of the draft resolution in the assembly's budget committee earlier Friday and in the Special Political and Decolonization Committee on Nov. 11.

Israel carried out widespread behind-the-scenes lobbying efforts against the measure and decried the Assembly for voting after the Sabbath began Friday evening.

Ahead of the vote, outgoing Prime Minister Yair Lapid personally contacted about 60 world leaders while figurehead President Isaac Herzog spoke to many counterparts, according to an Israeli diplomatic official who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was discussing private diplomatic efforts.

The United Nations has a long history of passing resolutions critical of Israel, and Israel and the U.S. accuse the world body of being unfairly biased.

Israel has accused the Palestinians, who have nonmember observer state status at the United Nations, of trying to use the U.N. to circumvent peace negotiations and impose a settlement.

The Palestinians say that Israeli officials, especially incoming Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, are not serious about seeking peace as they continue to expand settlements on occupied lands. The last round of substantive peace talks broke down in 2009.

Before the Nov. 11 committee vote, Erdan told U.N. diplomats that approving the resolution would destroy "any hope for reconciliation" with the Palestinians and perpetuate the conflict.

He warned that involving the court "in a decades-old conflict only to dictate one side's demands on the other ensures many more years of stagnation" and give the Palestinians "the perfect excuse to continue boycotting the negotiating table to perpetuate the conflict."

After that committee vote, Mansour said "our people are entitled to freedom," stressing that "nothing justifies standing with Israeli occupation and annexation, its displacement and dispossession of our people."

The court is expected to solicit opinions from dozens of countries before issuing its opinion months from now. Israel has not said whether it will cooperate.

It is not the first time the world court has been asked to weigh in on the conflict.

In 2004, the court said that a separation barrier Israel built was "contrary to international law" and called on Israel to immediately halt construction.

Israel has said the barrier is a security measure meant to prevent Palestinian attackers from reaching Israeli cities. The Palestinians say the structure is an Israeli land grab because of its route through east Jerusalem and parts of the West Bank.

Israel has ignored the 2004 ruling, and Friday's resolution demands that Israel comply with it, stop construction of the wall and dismantle it. It says Israel should also make reparations for all damage caused by the wall's construction, "which has gravely impacted the human rights" and living conditions of Palestinians.

The request for the court's advisory opinion is part of a wide-ranging resolution titled "Israeli practices and settlement activities affecting the rights of the Palestinian people and other Arabs of the occupied territories."

Brian May: Knighthood comes with 'a little bit more clout'

By LIZZIE KNIGHT Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Queen guitarist Brian May is now a "Sir."

May, who also has a doctorate in astrophysics and is an animal welfare advocate, received a knighthood Friday as part of the U.K.'s annual New Year's Honors list. The Queen guitarist, who was honored for services to music and charity, said he hopes the knighthood will give him "a little bit more clout."

"Maybe a few more people will listen to me than would otherwise, you know, if it's Sir Brian on the phone," said May, who spoke to The Associated Press via Zoom from his house in Windlesham, Surrey.

He was among hundreds of artists, community leaders and athletes who were recognized on the first such list to be signed off by King Charles III.

May has campaigned against badger culling and fox hunting through an animal welfare group he founded in 2010 — named Save Me after the 1980 Queen song. Some animals he's rescued over the years were released onto his land.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 56 of 88

"I've felt for a long time that we had this false idea that humans are the only important species on the planet, and I don't think an alien visitor would view it that way. I think every species and every individual has the right to a decent life and a decent death. That's kind of where I come from," he said.

He acknowledged that he already had "a certain amount of power in the world, mainly because of music, obviously," which allowed him to go into other areas, such as astrophysics and do work in stereoscopy, or 3D imaging. He received his doctorate from Imperial College, London in 2007.

"I do a lot in that area now, which I think is in its way a great service to mankind," May said. "I give them stereoscopy and they give me the chance to play in nice observatories all around the world, you know — but also the animals."

Knights are addressed as "sir" or "dame," followed by their name. It also means May's wife of 22 years, Anita Dobson, may use the title of Lady May.

"She's thrilled to bits. Yes, yes, she's very happy about that. Yes, Lady Anita will be enjoying it," said May, "and it's a thrill to me to be able to kind of confer that on her. It makes me feel proud that she gets an honor beside me because God knows I wouldn't be here without her."

Queen guitarist, women's soccer team top UK honors list

By JOANNA KOZLOWSKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Those at the forefront of the U.K.'s response to Russia's war in Ukraine joined Queen guitarist Brian May and a fashion designer dubbed "the mother of the miniskirt" on the country's New Year's Honors list on Friday.

Artists, community leaders and members of England's award-winning women's soccer team were also among the more than 1,100 people included in this year's list, the first to be signed off by King Charles III.

May, who is also an animal welfare campaigner, was appointed a knight bachelor for his services to music and charity. The former Queen guitarist, who also holds a doctorate in astrophysics, said he regarded his new title as "a kind of commission to do the things one would expect a knight to do — to fight for justice, to fight for people who don't have any voice."

Mary Quant, the 92-year-old designer best known for popularizing the miniskirt during the 1960s, received the U.K.'s top honor for her services to fashion. Quant's appointment to the Order of the Companions of Honor, a special status held by no more than 65 people at any one time, came seven years after she was made a dame — the female equivalent of a knight — in recognition of her designs.

Artist Grayson Perry, known for his tapestries and ceramics, was also knighted for services to the arts.

Elsewhere, diplomats shaping the U.K.'s response to the war in Ukraine were recognized, with damehoods for the ambassadors to both Kyiv and Moscow, and a British Empire Medal (BEM) for a campaigner who led donation drives for Ukrainian refugees.

Nanny Louenna Hood, 37, who raised more than 160,000 pounds through online auctions, said she was "completely stunned" to be recognized.

"I started the campaign, but I would never have been able to do it without the community," she said.

Half of this year's honors went to women, including members of the England soccer team that won the 2022 Women's European Championship and the first woman to lead a major U.K. bank.

England captain Leah Williamson received an OBE, while teammates Lucy Bronze, Beth Mead and Ellen White were all made MBEs.

Alison Rose, the chief executive of banking group NatWest and the first woman to run one of the U.K.'s largest banks, was also awarded a damehood.

U.K. monarchs have awarded honors as part of orders of chivalry since the Middle Ages. In modern times, nominations are submitted to the government's Cabinet Office and vetted by a committee before being passed on to the prime minister and the monarch for approval.

Others honored this year included those campaigning for environmental and climate change action, youth engagement and combating discrimination. Britain's chief rabbi, Ephraim Mirvis, who received a knighthood, was among several Jewish community leaders to be recognized.

Ginni Thomas says she regrets post-election texts to Meadows

By MARY CLARE JALONICK and LISA MASCARO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Virginia Thomas, the wife of U.S. Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas, says she regrets sending texts to then-White House chief of staff Mark Meadows after the 2020 election, telling the House Jan. 6 committee that “I would take them all back if I could today.”

Thomas — known as Ginni — is a longtime conservative activist. In a transcript of the interview released by the panel on Friday, she told investigators she was “emotional” after the election when she sent several texts to Meadows urging him to stand firm with then-President Donald Trump as he falsely claimed that there was widespread fraud in the election.

In the texts, she bemoaned the state of American politics and called the election a “heist.” Thomas told the panel she still feels there were election irregularities, but she does believe that Joe Biden is the president of the United States.

“You know, it was an emotional time,” Thomas told the committee. “I’m sorry these texts exist.”

The nine-member panel sought Thomas’s interview, and she appeared voluntarily. While Thomas urged Meadows to act, and she is married to one of nine Supreme Court justices who were at the time reviewing Trump’s election challenges, investigators did not believe she played a major role in Trump’s efforts to overturn the election or his inaction as the violent insurrection unfolded. Her name does not appear once in the committee’s final report released last week.

Still, the committee sought to speak to her as it built a comprehensive account of the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection and the weeks beforehand. The committee’s chairman and vice chairwoman, Democratic Rep. Bennie Thompson of Mississippi and Republican Rep. Liz Cheney of Wyoming, said the panel wanted to speak to her after her name came up in communications with other witnesses.

Thomas’ attorney Mark Paoletta said in a statement Friday that her absence from the report was a conclusion that “was obvious from the beginning” and that her post-election activities were “minimal and mainstream.”

In the interview, Thomas characterized herself as an “instigator” of Groundswell and other conservative advocacy groups that have met weekly as a coalition for years. She and her husband are longtime associates of conservative lawyer John Eastman, an architect of the scheme to have several 2020 battleground states send alternative electors for Trump, rather than Biden.

Thomas said that while she was interested in pursuing claims of voter fraud, she had largely stepped aside during the aftermath of the election because she felt her presence as the wife of Justice Thomas often “chilled” the discussion. She insisted she operated separately from her husband.

“It’s laughable for anyone who knows my husband to think I could influence his jurisprudence,” she said. “The man is independent and stubborn.”

Thomas said throughout the interview that she still had concerns about election fraud, but offered little evidence. Pressed by the investigators about her post-election efforts to challenge the election results, Thomas demurred.

When the panel told her that Trump-aligned attorney Cleta Mitchell testified under oath that Thomas had asked her about potential fraud in Georgia’s elections, Thomas said she could not recall the conversation.

“I don’t have any memory of it,” Thomas told investigators. “Anything I was doing was looking for fraud and irregularities in the election, not to overturn it.”

Multiple times, the lawmakers delved more pointedly into Thomas’s responses — and she had few specifics to offer in return.

“I think I understood you to say you never saw any list of fraud or irregularities,” Cheney asked her at one point.

“Right,” Thomas responded. “I know. I wasn’t very deep.”

“But you’re confident there was fraud and irregularities?” Cheney continued.

“I was hearing it, Congresswoman, from a lot of people I trust,” Thomas said.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 58 of 88

Cheney asked Thomas if she was aware that Trump's own advisers, attorney general and others had told him there was no fraud that would change the outcome of the election.

"That was news to me, Congresswoman," Thomas replied.

Cheney asked when she became aware of that.

"I think sometime after this committee started its work," Thomas replied.

But Thomas said even if she had been aware, it wouldn't change her views. "I just think there's still concerns," Thomas said, while also acknowledging that Biden is the president.

Over and again, the panel confronted Thomas with her own words, including a text to Meadows a week after the election in which she suggested attorney Sidney Powell "will help the cavalry come and fraud exposed and America saved." Powell was behind some of the most outrageous claims by Trump's allies, including that foreign countries were hacking voting machines.

Thomas explained to investigators that at the time she didn't really know Powell, and as she learned more in the weeks to come, "I kind of got off that train."

She also told investigators she reached out to Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner as she tried to encourage the defeated president's team to investigate potential voter fraud after the 2020 election.

"I was trying to buck him up and encourage him to stand firm until all the evidence is in," Thomas told investigators she wrote to Kushner in an email.

At one point, she did elicit sympathy from the investigators.

"I think it might be a unanimous view of everyone on this call and in this room that I don't know how many of you would want your texts to become public on the front page of The Washington Post," Thomas said, referring to the first reports of her communications.

"I understand that," said California Rep. Adam Schiff, a Democratic member of the committee. "And I'm sure you're right, no would like to see their personal texts in the newspaper."

Even Mississippi lawmaker feels strain of Jackson water woes

By MICHAEL GOLDBERG Associated Press/Report for America

JACKSON, Miss. (AP) — In Mississippi's capital city, where intermittent periods without running water have become a fact of life for residents, a new disruption to the long-troubled water system persists just days before lawmakers are set to arrive for the state's 2023 legislative session.

Amid frigid weather that upended infrastructure across the Deep South, pipes in Jackson broke and the city's water distribution system failed to produce adequate pressure. Crews have spent days working to identify leaks, but pressure still hasn't been fully restored and a boil water notice remained in place Friday.

City leaders said the water system remains vulnerable to weather-related disruptions, and Jackson-area legislators face the prospect of returning home from the Capitol building each evening without access to water in their homes.

Democratic state Rep. Ronnie Crudup Jr., who has represented south Jackson since 2019, was preparing for the Legislature's upcoming return to session on January 3. Then, on Dec. 24 — just three months after a breakdown in Jackson's water system left many in the city of about 150,000 without water to drink, cook, bathe and flush toilets — it happened again.

On Christmas Eve, after the last of Crudup's running water went down the drain, his spirits sunk along with it.

"I'm normally very optimistic in pretty much all situations, but this latest water situation is getting the best of me," Crudup wrote in a Dec. 26 social media post. "Y'all pray for me and my Jackson neighbors. I know if I'm struggling, others are also."

Local officials are contending with an "old, crumbling system that continues to offer challenge after challenge," said Jackson Mayor Chokwe Antar Lumumba. The city's latest water woes follow a 2021 winter storm that left people without running water for days after pipes froze. The water system partially collapsed again in late August after flooding overwhelmed one of the city's water treatment plants.

In early September, Crudup could have often been seen handing out cases of bottled water as the late

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 59 of 88

summer sun baked the parking lot of the New Horizon Church, which his father, Rev. Ronnie Crudup Sr., founded in 1987. His t-shirt of choice during those long afternoons was emblazoned with the motto he applied to the task at hand: "Embrace the grind."

On September 15, water pressure was restored to most of the city and the citywide boil water notice was temporarily lifted, only for issues to resume three months later. Crudup began to feel the burden of successive periods in which a basic necessity became a scarce resource for his family and his constituents.

"As a man, how am I to take care of my family in the midst of this? As a political leader, how do I serve my constituents? All of my feelings were internalized and I didn't have any method of getting all that out," Crudup told The Associated Press.

After Crudup's brother saw his Dec. 26 social media post, he picked up the phone with a set of questions. "Why are you frustrated? Why are you feeling this way?" Crudup recounts his brother asking. "By him asking the right questions, I was able to talk myself through it."

Crudup said he wants Jackson's residents, some of whom spent the Christmas holiday looking for a place to shower, to avoid what he called "internalizing the burden." At New Horizon Church, Crudup works closely with his father, and together they've talked through the strain of seeing their neighbors at the mercy of an unreliable water system.

"You've got a lot of children who aren't brushing their teeth and all these other things. Particularly dealing with a lot of the least of these who don't have the kind of resources he or I, or other people have, it weighs on him," Crudup Sr. said. "And we do talk about that."

The \$600 million in federal money that Jackson is set to receive for its water system has the potential to "revitalize a whole lot of the economic circumstances," that have hindered necessary structural repairs, Crudup Sr. said.

Ted Henifin, the manager appointed by the U.S. Department of Justice to help fix the long-troubled water system, said he intends to make substantial progress over a one-year period on a list of projects that will protect the city from future disruptions.

As the wait for a reliable system continues, Crudup Jr. said he will encourage Jackson residents to talk through their frustrations with one another.

"People are really stepping in to help their neighbors, not only physically but mentally," he said. "We know there will be better days ahead, it's just about making it through this last point."

Officials say Bolsonaro may have left Brazil for Florida

By CARLA BRIDI and DIANE JEANTET Associated Press

SAO PAULO (AP) — The office of Brazil's vice president says he has become acting president, an indication that President Jair Bolsonaro has left the country and will break tradition by skipping the inauguration Sunday of his political nemesis, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva.

The press office of Bolsonaro's vice president, Gen. Hamilton Mourão, confirmed to journalists he was acting as president. The handoff of power to the vice president occurs whenever Brazil's president travels abroad.

The Friday edition of the official gazette said that Bolsonaro is headed to Florida, and that several officials were given permission to accompany "the future ex-president" to Miami between Jan. 1 and Jan. 30, to offer "advice, security and personal support."

According to flight tracking websites, the Brazilian military's official airplane left the capital, Brasilia, around 2 p.m. for Orlando.

In Bolsonaro's absence, it is not clear who will hand over the presidential sash to Lula on Sunday. Mourão's press office said that is not part of the vice president's duties.

Bolsonaro has remained mostly silent since losing the election Oct. 30. But a few hours before reports of his departure, he addressed the country as president on his social media.

At times on the verge of tears, the far-right politician said he wasn't able to find a legal alternative or enough support to change the course of history and prevent his departure from office.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 60 of 88

"How difficult it has been to stay quiet for two months, working to find alternatives," he said. "If you're upset, put yourself in my place. I gave my life to this country."

Bolsonaro also condemned a recent bomb threat in Brasilia, saying it was not the time to attack people, but rather to try to build an opposition against the future government.

"We lost a battle, but we will not lose the war," he said. "The world does not end on Jan. 1."

A crowd of supporters stood outside the presidential residence in a pouring rain listening for a sign from their leader, and many were left disappointed. Some shouted the words "traitor" and "coward." One woman cried.

Since his electoral loss, some of Bolsonaro's most die-hard supporters have been camping outside military buildings in Brasilia and elsewhere in the country, asking for the armed forces to intervene. Many believed election results were fraudulent or unreliable, and hoped Bolsonaro would somehow remain in power.

Others have blocked roads and highways, or set buses and trucks on fire. Police are also investigating the attempted invasion of the federal police's headquarters in Brasilia earlier this month, and said most of the 32 individuals they are looking for have had contacts with the Brasilia pro-Bolsonaro encampment.

Brazil mourns Pelé, who made every part of the country proud

By DAVID BILLER and DIANE JEANTET Associated Press

Bocaina de Minas, BRAZIL (AP) — Down a dirt road in the mountains of Minas Gerais, Pelé's home state, Jorge Tavares received the news of the star's death from a 4 a.m. newscast.

As a boy, Tavares and his cousins listened to Pelé's World Cup games on the radio. His dazzling performance inspired them to play a game they had never seen, at first using a ball of socks and string.

"He leaves a legacy, a person of color who was crowned king of soccer, and he also brought a lot of peace outside Brazil," Tavares, a 67-year-old school-van driver, said at the barbed-wire fence outside his home. "He represented Brazil to everyone abroad."

With Pelé's death, Brazilians have lost a piece of their hearts.

On Rio de Janeiro's Ipanema beach, the news broke when Paulo Vinicius was playing soccer with his 9-year-old nephew.

"Pelé represents the best of Brazil: its people, its working class," said Vinicius, 38, a physical-education instructor. "Pelé gives a sense of identity to the Brazilian people."

Roseli Augusto, 55, was at her little bar in the mountains of Minas Gerais when she heard the news.

"Pelé is an idol, the best player in the world," said Augusto. She recalls her father taking a bus to the coastal city of Santos to watch Pelé play. "Many kids, many players, were inspired by him. He is our biggest sports idol."

As a girl, Lucia Cunha listened to Pelé's World Cup exploits while huddled around a radio with her siblings. She read about him in newspapers used to wrap bread.

"He was a symbol of soccer, a great player, a simple, humble person, a person of God, a good person, who did everything that he could," Cunha said.

In Santos, Nicolas Oliveira, 18, was outside the stadium along with about 200 other people. Oliveira said that even replays of Pelé's sensational playing make him swell with emotion.

"Pelé is a Black man from the interior of Minas Gerais state," Oliveira said. "I'm here because of what he did, for the soccer he played, for the soccer he improved and for the future players he helped mold and inspire."

Everton Luz, a 41-year-old lawyer, was crying outside the hospital with a Santos club flag wrapped around him. He had come directly from work to pay tribute to the player whose performances had electrified his own dad, and prompted decades of stories.

Luz recounts those stories to his own two children, and shows them videos of the idol. He recalled seeing Pelé in person once, watching a game at a stadium.

"We managed to get close to his box, and he waved goodbye," Luz said. "He was an example of the Brazilian, of what we could become."

Divisive social media star Andrew Tate detained in Romania

BUCHAREST, Romania (AP) — Andrew Tate, a divisive social media personality and former professional kickboxer, was detained in Romania on charges of human trafficking and rape, an official said Friday.

Tate, a British citizen who previously was banned from various social media platforms for expressing misogynistic views and hate speech, was detained late Thursday along with his British brother Tristan in the Ilfov area north of Romania's capital, Bucharest. Two other suspects, who are Romanian, were also in custody.

All four will be held for 30 days during an investigation after a judge extended their initial detention period of 24 hours, said Ramona Bolla, a spokesperson for Romanian anti-organized crime agency DIICOT. Bolla said the decision wasn't final and that all four suspects have already appealed the extension, which is unlikely to be heard in court before next week.

DIICOT said in a statement late Thursday that the four suspects in the case were arrested on charges of being part of an organized crime group, human trafficking and rape.

The agency said the British citizens recruited women who were subjected to "acts of physical violence and mental coercion," sexually exploited by group members and forced to perform pornographic acts intended to reap "important financial benefits."

The statement didn't name the Tate brothers. Photographs published by Romanian media outlets appeared to show Tate being led away in handcuffs by masked law enforcement officers.

DIICOT said it identified six people who were sexually exploited by the organized criminal group, and that five homes were raided on Thursday.

On Friday, Andrew Tate, who is known to express various conspiratorial views, tweeted that "The Matrix sent their agents," without elaborating.

Earlier this week, Tate posted a video on Twitter of a mountainous region of Romania, the Eastern European country where he is reported to have lived for the last five years.

Tate also was embroiled this week in a war of words with 19-year-old climate activist Greta Thunberg after he tweeted a picture of himself standing next to a Bugatti and bragged that he owned 33 cars.

Police said that 11 luxury cars were discovered in the raids that were owned or used by the suspects.

Video footage from the police raid accompanying the anti-organized crime agency's statement shows several blurred-out sports cars, wads of cash and a handgun.

Bolla, from DIICOT, refuted widespread claims in the media that an address brandished on a pizza box that featured in a video posted by Andrew Tate on Twitter earlier this week led authorities to his arrest. She said the claims are "funny, but no."

Report: 'Human error' helped spur wrong ballots in Nashville

By JONATHAN MATTISE Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — Nashville election officials made erroneous updates to voter lists for last month's election and failed to follow steps to make sure they were accurate, leading more than 430 Tennessee voters to cast ballots in the wrong races, the state's elections coordinator determined in a review released Friday.

A report by state Elections Coordinator Mark Goins cited "human error" as a main cause of the problem in Nashville. The Davidson County Election Commission confirmed in the report that more than 3,000 voters were assigned to one or more of the incorrect districts. Hundreds cast wrong ballots before the issue was flagged.

The contests affected included state legislative races and congressional races, in which Republican state lawmakers had just carved the left-leaning city three ways during once-a-decade redistricting early this year, cutting in and out of some neighborhoods. Republicans ultimately succeeded in their map-drawing push to flip a Democratic seat, contributing to the GOP takeover of the U.S. House of Representatives.

The report determined that none of the errors were egregious enough to affect any of the races in which

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 62 of 88

erroneous ballots were cast.

Goins' report says the root cause of the issues was that Nashville election officials made updates to voter files after the city's IT GIS division had used geocoding, a computerized process to compare voter addresses to new district boundaries. Geocoding can be done multiple times in the process, the report says, and the commission did not verify its changes through a final round of geocoding by the IT GIS division, which a commission staff member declined to have done in March after election officials had made thousands more manual edits.

During the early voting period for the Nov. 8 election, The Associated Press first reported Nov. 1 that Nashville voters were being given ballots for incorrect congressional and statehouse races, leading officials to scramble to fix voters' districts. Trying to correct the problem under a tight timeframe as early voting wrapped up on Nov. 3 led to over-corrections, the report states.

The mistakes spurred a lawsuit, which ended in an agreement with elections officials that allowed people who voted in the incorrect district to cast a provisional ballot, but it would only be opened if an election was contested. Paper ballots were also available for people who showed up at the polls and thought their voting machine ballot was wrong.

The errors rekindled anger from critics in the city, including Democrats, over how Republicans redrew the congressional map.

On Election Day, 117 of the 437 voters identified as voting in a wrong race during early voting showed up to vote on a provisional ballot, the report states. The report doesn't dive into the prospect of incorrect district assignments during the primary election in August, which occurred before the mapping errors were identified.

Goins recommended that counties with their own GIS resources should use them to validate their data, but they should also have them validated by the state comptroller's geocoding to promote uniform results.

"The issues in Davidson County were the unfortunate combination of human error and failure to follow all steps to ensure changes were made accurately," Goins wrote. "I am confident that through the election commission's continued work with Metro IT Services, as well as assistance from the Comptroller's office, they can prevent similar issues in future elections."

The report also shows how intricately the lines were drawn during redistricting, as political districts at times split voting precincts and divided one apartment complex. Local election officials indicated they would need to go physically to some places to figure out someone's correct district, the report says.

In a statement Friday, Davidson County election administrator Jeff Roberts said the report shows "redistricting is a complex process."

Roberts said working with Nashville's IT services and the comptroller's office "will provide data analysis and validation by multiple independent staff, preventing similar issues in future elections."

The findings also document communication problems. For instance, a map that the city IT GIS department sent to local election officials made it hard to see where Congressional District 7 was marked and switched the labeling within sections of a precinct from what local election officials previously used. That left 1,029 voters in wrong districts in one precinct, the report says.

One local election staffer admitted it was his error in making manual edits in another precinct to "clean up splits with small populations," which the report says resulted in 1,544 wrongly assigned voters.

In Nashville, only four local election commission workers primarily worked on the redistricting process, the report says.

"The standard throughout the process should be that if you are in doubt, seek more guidance," Goins wrote.

Mass shootings compound loss felt by marginalized groups

By SHARON JOHNSON Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Pulse was more than a safe space for Brandon Wolf and his friends. The nightclub was a haven for members of Orlando, Florida's LGBTQ community — a place to be themselves without fear.

"It's probably the first place I ever held hands with somebody I had a crush on," Wolf said. "Without

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 63 of 88

looking over my shoulder first, it's one of the first places I ever wore my skinniest pair of jeans without being afraid of what someone might call me."

On June 12, 2016, a gunman targeting the club's patrons killed 49 people there, including two of Wolf's best friends, and wounded 53. "It's left such a hole in our hearts," Wolf said.

After mass shootings, the loss felt by marginalized groups already facing discrimination is compounded. Some public health experts say the risk for mental health issues is greater for these groups — communities of color and the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community among them.

The trauma is especially acute when the shootings happen at schools, churches, clubs or other places that previously served as pillars of those communities — welcoming and accepting spaces that are difficult to replace due to a lack of resources or the sociological and historical impact they have had.

"Folks from marginalized communities are already dealing with the burden of ... discrimination and racism ... and the emotional toll that they take," said Dr. Sarah Lowe, a professor with the Yale School of Public Health and a clinical psychologist who has researched the long-term mental health consequences of mass shootings and other traumatic events. "All these other stressors can not only increase risk for mental health problems following a mass shooting, but they also increase risk for further loss of resources."

As a result, there is the potential for members of such marginalized communities to leave or for the community itself to shut down, said Alan Wolfelt, a grief counselor and educator at the Center for Loss and Life Transition in Fort Collins, Colorado.

"That is why it is vital to support these communities, acknowledge their grief openly and honestly, and then help them rebuild their community in terms of meaning and purpose while realizing they have been totally transformed," said Wolfelt, who provides mental health services and education for individuals and communities that have experienced loss.

Club Q, a gay nightclub in Colorado, says it will eventually reopen at the same location, but with a new design and a permanent memorial, to honor five people killed last month in a targeted shooting. Club Q was a sanctuary for the LGBTQ community in the mostly conservative city of Colorado Springs, patrons said.

Pulse will not reopen. The site where it operated is now a memorial, and supporters plan to convert it into a permanent museum. The club's closure has deeply scarred the LGBTQ community, which has tried to "re-create the sense of belonging" that Pulse had, Wolf said.

"I live next to a few other LGBTQ establishments and those are really important, but there was something truly special about Pulse and the community that we were able to create here," he said. "For communities like ours, safe spaces are lifelines. They're the refuges we carve out in a world that threatens violence against us every time we walk out the door."

In some cases, traumatic events threaten basic necessities for marginalized groups, increasing the risk for mental health issues, said Lowe, the clinical psychologist.

Tops Friendly Market in Buffalo, New York, was closed for two months after 10 Black shoppers and workers were fatally shot during a racist rampage. During that time, there was no grocery store on the East Side.

Mother Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, South Carolina, was founded in 1816 and became a pillar of the African American community in the state's Lowcountry region.

On June 17, 2015, a self-avowed white supremacist who targeted a Bible study at the church killed nine Black congregants. One of the victims was minister Myra Thompson, sister of South Carolina State Rep. JA Moore.

"My sister was a servant to the other parishioners at the church, and she dedicated a lot of her life and her love to serving others through the church," Moore said.

The church reopened for Sunday services four days after the massacre. It was important to send a message, he said.

"Even seven years later, the church is still resilient and still rebuilding and still serving," Moore said. "I think the message that reopening up after such a horrific event is the story of African Americans in this country, the history of this country, where no matter our trauma and our pain and the horrors that we have to endure, we recognize that it's an obligation as Americans to continue to push forward."

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 64 of 88

Wolf, now 34, has also pushed forward. Following the shooting at Pulse, he became an advocate and activist for the LGBTQ community and now works as press secretary for Equality Florida.

He said Orlando nonprofit organizations that support the LGBTQ community have expanded their services, and other LGBTQ-owned bars and restaurants have grown their customer base. Wolf believes the city has become more inclusive since the shooting.

"While I think there's a hole and there will always be something missing where Pulse used to be, I also think it's beautiful that we've chosen to take the important components of what made Pulse, Pulse, and infuse them into every which way we live our lives in this city," he said.

Drawing nears for \$685 million Mega Millions prize

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — The Mega Millions jackpot increased to \$685 million ahead of Friday night's drawing, giving lottery players a chance to ring in the New Year with an even larger bonus in their bank account.

There have been 21 straight drawings without a jackpot winner thanks to stiff odds of one in 302.6 million. That has allowed the top prize to grow steadily larger, week after week.

The estimated \$685 million prize is for a winner who chooses to be paid through an annuity, with annual checks over 29 years. Nearly all winners opt for cash, which for Friday night's drawing would be an estimated \$347.8 million.

The jackpot is the largest since a \$2.04 billion Powerball prize was won Nov. 8 in California. A winner hasn't been announced for that record-setting payout.

Mega Millions is played in 45 states as well as Washington, D.C., and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Evidence of Russian crimes mounts as war in Ukraine drags on

By MICHAEL BIESECKER and ERIKA KINETZ Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Ten months into Russia's latest invasion of Ukraine, overwhelming evidence shows the Kremlin's troops have waged total war, with disregard for international laws governing the treatment of civilians and conduct on the battlefield.

Ukraine is investigating more than 58,000 potential Russian war crimes — killings, kidnappings, indiscriminate bombings and sexual assaults. Reporting by The Associated Press and "Frontline," recorded in a public database, has independently verified more than 600 incidents that appear to violate the laws of war. Some of those attacks were massacres that killed dozens or hundreds of civilians and as a totality it could account for thousands of individual war crimes.

As Karim Khan, chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court in The Hague, told the AP, "Ukraine is a crime scene."

That extensive documentation has run smack into a hard reality, however. While authorities have amassed a staggering amount of evidence — the conflict is among the most documented in human history — they are unlikely to arrest most of those who pulled the trigger or gave the beatings anytime soon, let alone the commanders who gave the orders and political leaders who sanctioned the attacks.

The reasons are manifold, experts say. Ukrainian authorities face serious challenges in gathering airtight evidence in a war zone. And the vast majority of alleged war criminals have evaded capture and are safely behind Russian lines.

Even in successful prosecutions, the limits of justice so far are glaring. Take the case of Vadim Shishmarin, a baby-faced 21-year-old tank commander who was the first Russian tried on war crimes charges. He surrendered in March and pleaded guilty in a Kyiv courtroom in May to shooting a 62-year-old Ukrainian civilian in the head.

The desire for some combination of justice and vengeance was palpable in that courtroom. "Do you consider yourself a murderer?" a woman shouted at the Russian as he stood bent forward with his head resting against the glass of the cage he was locked in.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 65 of 88

"What about the man in the coffin?" came another, sharper voice. A third demanded the defense lawyer explain how he could fight for the Russian's freedom.

The young soldier was first sentenced to life in prison, which was reduced to 15 years on appeal. Critics said the initial penalty was unduly harsh, given that he confessed to the crime, said he was following orders and expressed remorse.

Ukrainian prosecutors, however, have not yet been able to charge Shishmarin's commanders or those who oversaw him. Since March, Ukraine has named more than 600 Russians, many of them high-ranking political and military officials, as suspects, including Minister of Defense Sergei Shoigu. But, so far, the most powerful have not fallen into Ukrainian custody.

"It would be terrible to find a scenario in which, in the end, you convict a few people of war crimes and crimes against humanity who are low-grade or mid-grade military types or paramilitary types, but the top table gets off scot-free," said Philippe Sands, a prominent British human rights lawyer.

Throughout the war Russian leaders have denied accusations of brutality.

Moscow's U.N. ambassador, Vassily Nebenzia, said no civilians were tortured and killed in the Kyiv suburb of Bucha despite the meticulous documentation of the atrocities by AP, other journalists, and war crimes investigators there.

"Not a single local person has suffered from any violent action," he said, calling the photos and video of bodies in the streets "a crude forgery" staged by the Ukrainians.

Such statements have been easily rebutted by Ukrainian and international authorities, human rights groups and journalists who have meticulously documented Russian barbarity since the Kremlin ordered the unprovoked invasion in February.

Part of that effort, the AP and Frontline database called War Crimes Watch Ukraine, offers a contemporaneous catalog of the horrors of war. It is not a comprehensive accounting. AP and Frontline only included incidents that could be verified by photos, videos or firsthand witness accounts. There are hundreds of reported incidents of potential war crimes for which there was not enough publicly available evidence to independently confirm what happened.

Still, the resulting database details 10 months of attacks that appear to violate the laws of war, including 93 attacks on schools, 36 where children were killed, and more than 200 direct attacks on civilians, including torture, the kidnapping and killing of civilians, and the desecration of dead bodies. Among Russia's targets: churches, cultural centers, hospitals, food facilities and electrical infrastructure. The database catalogs how Russia utilized cluster bombs and other indiscriminate weapons in residential neighborhoods and to attack buildings housing civilians.

An AP investigation revealed that Russia's bombing of a theater in Mariupol, which was being used as a civilian shelter, likely killed more than 600 people. Another showed that in the first 30 days after the invasion, Russian forces struck and damaged 34 medical facilities, suggesting a pattern and intent.

"That's a crime against the laws of war," said Stephen Rapp, a former U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for War Crimes. "Once somebody's injured, they're entitled to medical care. You can't attack a hospital. That's the oldest rule we have in international law."

Experts say Russia under President Vladimir Putin has repeatedly ignored the rules established by the Geneva Conventions, a series of treaties that dictate how warring countries should treat each other's citizens, and the Rome Statute, which established the International Criminal Court and defined specific war crimes and crimes against humanity.

"These abuses are not the acts of rogue units; rather, they are part of a deeply disturbing pattern of abuse consistent with what we have seen from Russia's prior military engagements — in Chechnya, Syria, and Georgia," said Beth Van Schaack, the U.S. Ambassador at Large for Global Criminal Justice, speaking earlier this month at the International Criminal Court in The Hague, Netherlands.

This story is part of an AP/FRONTLINE investigation that includes the War Crimes Watch Ukraine interactive experience and the documentary "Putin's Attack on Ukraine: Documenting War Crimes" on PBS.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 66 of 88

Short of a regime-toppling revolution in Moscow, however, it is unlikely Putin and other high-ranking Russians end up in court, whether in Ukraine or the Hague, experts say.

And even as a chorus of global leaders have joined Ukrainians in calling for legal action against the architects of this war, there is disagreement about the best way to do it.

The International Criminal Court has been investigating potential war crimes and crimes against humanity in Ukraine. But it cannot prosecute the most basic offense, the crime of aggression – the unjust use of military force against another nation — because the Russian Federation, like the United States, never gave it authority to do so.

Efforts to plug that loophole by creating a special international tribunal for the crime of aggression in Ukraine have been gaining momentum. Last month, the European Union threw its support behind the idea.

Some human rights advocates say a special tribunal would be the smartest way to proceed. Sands, the British human rights lawyer, said prosecuting Russia before such a tribunal would be a “slam dunk.”

“You’d need to prove that that war is manifestly in violation of international law,” he added. “That’s pretty straightforward because Mr. Putin has set out the reasons for that war, and it’s blindingly obvious that they don’t meet the requirements of international law.”

But Khan, the chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, has opposed the creation of a special tribunal, calling it a “vanity project.”

“We are an international court,” Khan told AP and Frontline in July. “We’ve been accepted, of course, by the Security Councilors as legitimate. They’ve used this court in terms of referrals. And I think we should focus on using this court effectively.”

Whatever happens on the international stage, the vast majority of cases will be heard within Ukraine itself.

The daunting task of turning Ukraine’s beleaguered prosecutorial service into a bureaucracy capable of building sophisticated war crimes cases falls on Yurii Bielousov.

When he was offered the job of leading the war crimes department in the prosecutor general’s office, Bielousov knew it would be tough. Just how tough became clear after Russians pulled out of Bucha last spring, leaving behind a crime scene strewn with the decomposing bodies of more than 450 men, women and children.

Bucha was the first complex case picked up by Bielousov’s prosecutors, and it quickly became one of the most important. No one in Ukraine had ever dealt with something of that scale before.

“The system was not in collapse, but the system was shocked,” Bielousov said. “OK, OK, let’s go everyone, and just try to do our best.”

Ukraine has five different investigative agencies, each assigned legal responsibility for different kinds of crimes. The crimes in Bucha cut across all those categories, tangling the bureaucracy. That has only made building tough cases even harder.

Despite the setbacks and hurdles, Bielousov says his prosecutors remain focused on gathering evidence that will stand up in domestic and international courts. He says he is also focused on another goal -- compiling an incontrovertible record of Russia’s savagery that the world cannot ignore.

Yulia Truba wants the same thing. Her husband was one of the first men Russian soldiers tortured and killed in Bucha. She said she wants to establish a single, shared truth about what happened to her husband

“Russia won’t recognize this as a crime,” Truba said. “I just want as many people as possible to recognize it was a real murder and he was tortured. For me, this would be justice.”

At top of opera, Yoncheva worries about classical music

By RONALD BLUM Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Sonya Yoncheva, a soprano at the top of her profession, worries about classical music.

“My son, if I ask him, he always says, ‘I want to be like Ronaldo.’ And later, if I ask my girl, she will say, ‘I want to be Lady Gaga and Beyoncé,’” the Bulgarian singer explained ahead of Saturday’s new production premiere of Giordano’s “Fedora” at the Metropolitan Opera. “They really don’t associate with the classical music artists. Times are changing.”

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 67 of 88

In a bid to shape projects and bolster opera's audience, Yoncheva is launching her own record label.

A Sony Classical artist since 2013, Yoncheva is releasing "The Courtesan" on her own SY11 Productions label, recorded with conductor Marco Armiliato, tenor Charles Castronovo and Italy's Orchestra dell'Opera Carlo Felice Genova. It will launch on Amazon on Feb. 9.

In a time of dwindling classical sales and releases, she was able to choose the selections and even the cover photo, matters subject to a collaboration on Sony recordings.

"I never really had the chance to guide my project from first step to the last step," she said. "They were always a very good team with me, but I never felt free."

In the first close-to-normal season since the pandemic's onset, Yoncheva sings a revival of Bellini's "Norma" at the Met starting Feb. 28, then has role debuts as Maddalena di Coigny in Giordano's "Andrea Chénier" at Milan's Teatro alla Scala on May 3 and Cio-Cio-San in Puccini's "Madama Butterfly" at the Vienna State Opera on June 23.

"She is one of our most important artists," Met general manager Peter Gelb said. "She's a wonderful actress and a great singer. She is the kind of the artist that the Met needs more than ever these days as we try to make opera more appealing to a broader audience. It's extremely challenging because the core opera audience is much smaller than it once was."

Born in Plovdiv, Bulgaria, on Christmas Day 1981, Yoncheva attended William Christie's "Jardin des Voix" in 2007 and moved to Switzerland to enroll at the Conservatoire de Musique de Genève.

"I wanted to come to the States, but I never managed to have a scholarship," she said. "At the time, a salary of a normal Bulgarian person was \$60 per month, so when you compare this to what has to be paid in a university in the States, it's just insanely expensive, so for this reason I had to choose Europe. Someone gave me a little envelope with the name of the high school in Geneva, and this person told me 'You should go there,' and I said OK."

In 2010, she became the first woman to win Plácido Domingo's Operalia competition, and she went on to debuts at the Met and Royal Opera (2013), Vienna State Opera (2014), Milan's Teatro alla Scala and Paris (2017).

Yoncheva starred in Claus Guth's 2017 Paris production of Puccini's "La Bohème," infamously relocated to a space shuttle.

"This was such a nightmare," she said, laughing, "but many people are still talking about it."

She has become more discerning with directors.

"Maybe they will have a concept, OK, but I want them to believe in that and to be honest with it and to explain to me why," she said. "I must believe in it, and sometimes what is happening is that themselves, they don't believe it and then they do it to provoke."

David McVicar is directing "Fedora" in his 13th Met production — a future staging of Ponchielli's "La Gioconda" is planned — in a fairly traditional mounting. Yoncheva made her role debut at La Scala on Oct. 15 in a modern-dress production directed by Mario Martone, and she worried about being heard.

"The stage director decided to leave the whole stage empty. Me and Roberto Alagna, we were struggling the whole night to find the Punto Callas, Punto Caballé, Punto Tebaldi, Punto I don't know whom," Yoncheva said, referring to the so-called preferred stage spots of Maria Callas, Montserrat Caballé and Renata Tebaldi decades earlier.

"I finished the production and I said 'Oh, my God! What am I going to do at the Met?' because the Met is maybe three times bigger than La Scala," Yoncheva said. "I immediately called David, I said, 'Please tell me there are some walls.' And he said yes. He showed me pictures, and I was reassured."

Her male lead at the Met is tenor Piotr Beczala. They have worked together for a decade.

"Our voices are pretty similar," Beczala said. "I am coming from the lyric corner and she's coming from the lyric corner, arriving now for a little more spinto repertory."

While the Met dropped plans to present Yoncheva in John Corigliano's "The Ghosts of Versailles" and "Madama Butterfly," she has committed to a new production of Verdi's "Un Ballo in Maschera (A Masked Ball)" and revivals of Tchaikovsky's "Pique Dame (The Queen of Spades)" and Cherubini's "Medea" in Italian.

She lives outside Geneva with her husband, conductor Domingo Hindoyan, whom she met in school.

They are kept busy by 8-year-old son Mateo and 3-year-old daughter Sofia, with the entire family traveling to New York for her extended stay.

Yoncheva's daughter looks at her career somewhat differently than the opera audience.

"I ask her what daddy does and she starts to conduct," Yoncheva said. "And then I ask her what mommy does, and she says, 'Oh, mommy, she's Elsa from 'Frozen' — because I'm dressed like a princess and I sing."

Afghan refugees in US face uncertainty as legislation stalls

By FARNOUSH AMIRI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Congress has failed so far to create a path to residency for Afghans who worked alongside U.S. soldiers in America's longest war, pushing into limbo tens of thousands of refugees who fled Taliban control more than two years ago and now live in the United States.

Some lawmakers had hoped to resolve the Afghans' immigration status as part of a year-end government funding package. But that effort failed, punting the issue into the new year, when Republicans will take power in the House. The result is grave uncertainty for refugees now facing an August deadline for action from Congress before their temporary parole status expires.

Nearly 76,000 Afghans who worked with American soldiers since 2001 as translators, interpreters and partners arrived in the U.S. on military planes after the chaotic withdrawal from Afghanistan in August 2021. The government admitted the refugees on a temporary parole status as part of Operation Allies Welcome, the largest resettlement effort in the country in decades, with the promise of a path to a life in the U.S. for their service.

Mohammad Behzad Hakkak, 30, is among those Afghans waiting for resolution, unable to work or settle down in his new community in Fairfax, Virginia, under his parole status. Hakkak worked as a partner to the U.S. mission in Afghanistan as a human rights defender in the now-defunct Afghan government.

"We lost everything in Afghanistan" after the Taliban returned to power, he said. "And now, we don't know about our future here."

For the past year, a bipartisan group of lawmakers, backed by veterans organizations and former military officials, has pushed Congress to pass the Afghan Adjustment Act, which would prevent the Afghans from becoming stranded without legal residency status when their two years of humanitarian parole expire in August 2023. It would enable qualified Afghans to apply for U.S. citizenship, as was done for refugees in the past, including those from Cuba, Vietnam and Iraq.

Supporters of the proposal thought it might clear Congress after the November election because it enjoys overwhelming bipartisan support. But they said their efforts were thwarted by one man: Republican Sen. Chuck Grassley of Iowa, the top Republican on the Senate Judiciary Committee, which oversees immigration issues.

"We've never seen support for a piece of legislation like this and it not pass," said Shawn Van Diver, a Navy veteran and head of #AfghanEvac, a coalition supporting Afghan resettlement efforts. "It's really frustrating to me that one guy from Iowa can block this."

Grassley has argued for months that the bill as written goes too far by including evacuees beyond those "who were our partners over the last 20 years," providing a road to residency without the proper screening required.

"First of all, people that help our country should absolutely have the promise that we made to them," Grassley told The Associated Press. "There's some disagreement on the vetting process. That's been a problem and that hasn't been worked out yet."

Proponents of the legislation reject those concerns. More than 30 retired military officers, including three former chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, wrote Congress saying the bill not only "furthers the national security interests of the United States," but is also "a moral imperative." The White House also has called for passage.

Biden's press secretary, Karine Jean-Pierre said, in mid-December that it is "important to take care of Afghan allies who took care of us."

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 69 of 88

The proposal, if passed, would provide a streamlined, prioritized adjustment process for Afghan nationals who supported the U.S. mission in Afghanistan. The Homeland Security Department would adjust the status of eligible evacuees to provide them with lawful permanent resident status after they have had rigorous vetting and screening procedures. It also would improve and expand ways to protection for those left behind and at risk in Afghanistan.

"The Afghan refugees are a very high priority and had some good Republican support, but unfortunately, the Republican leadership blocked it," Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., recently told reporters. "These are people who risked their lives for our soldiers and for our country, and we should be rewarding them as we have done in the past."

Several congressional aides explained the holdup on the bill by pointing to a seven-page, single-spaced letter, obtained by The Associated Press, that Grassley's office circulated to all 50 Republican senators in August. The memo outlined his issues with the proposal, resulting in months of back-and-forth negotiation as the sponsors of the bill tried to address them.

U.S. national security and military officials have outlined the stringent screening process that evacuees went through before arriving on American soil. Those security screenings, conducted in Europe and the Middle East, included background checks with both biographic information and biometric screenings using voiceprints, iris scans, palm prints and facial photos.

But Republicans say the vetting system is not fail-safe. They pointed to a September report from Homeland Security's inspector general that said at least two people from Afghanistan who were paroled into the country "posed a risk to national security and the safety of local communities."

As a result, mandatory in-person interviews for all Afghan applicants were written into the bill as well as requirements that relevant agencies brief Congress on proposed vetting procedures before putting them in place.

Despite strengthening the vetting process over months of negotiations, the bill never made it out of the Judiciary Committee and failed to win inclusion in the just-passed \$1.7 trillion government funding bill.

Sen. Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn., was one of the lead sponsors of the bill. "If this is what we do when they come to our country, and we don't have their backs," she said, "what message are we sending to the rest of the world who stand with our soldiers, who protect them, who provide security for their families?"

But Klobuchar and the lead Republican co-sponsor, Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, pledged to bring the bill back up again in the new session of Congress starting in January.

"This is the right thing to do," Graham, an Air Force veteran, told the Senate recently. "There's no other ending that would be acceptable to me."

He added: "The people who were there with us in the fight, that are here in America, need to stay. This will be their new home."

Most people in the United States appear to share that sentiment.

A survey from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research taken the month after the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan found that 72% of respondents regarded giving the Afghans refuge from any Taliban retaliation as a duty and a necessary coda of the nearly 20-year war.

Aaron Judge is AP male athlete of year after setting HR mark

By MIKE FITZPATRICK AP Baseball Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Aaron Judge has always stood out.

With the imposing size and muscular frame of an NFL tight end or NBA power forward, the 6-foot-7, 282-pound New York Yankees slugger towers over teammates and opponents on the diamond.

Never more so than in 2022.

After hitting 62 home runs to break an American League record that lasted six decades, Judge has been voted The Associated Press Male Athlete of the Year by a panel of 40 sports writers and editors from news outlets across the country.

The outfielder edged Los Angeles Angels two-way star Shohei Ohtani, last year's winner, in voting an-

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 70 of 88

nounced Friday. Stephen Curry of the NBA champion Golden State Warriors finished third.

Judge joins an esteemed fraternity of honorees that includes Jesse Owens, Muhammad Ali, Wayne Gretzky and Michael Jordan. Among the former Yankees to win were Joe DiMaggio, Mickey Mantle and Roger Maris — the man who established the previous AL mark of 61 homers in 1961.

"Wow. That's incredible," Judge said of his selection. "All these other great athletes that not only impacted the game and their sport, but also impacted their communities and the culture in the sports world and outside the sports world. So getting a chance to be amongst that list is an incredible honor."

Judge hit 16 more homers than any other big league player, the largest gap since Jimmie Foxx hit 58 for the Philadelphia Athletics in 1932 and Babe Ruth had 41 for the Yankees.

And while Barry Bonds holds the major league record of 73 home runs in a season for San Francisco in 2001 during baseball's steroid era, the achievement by Judge had some fans celebrating what they view as baseball's "clean" benchmark.

Maris' mark had been surpassed six times in the National League — but all those players were ultimately stained by steroids. Mark McGwire hit 70 homers for St. Louis in 1998 and 65 the following year. Sammy Sosa had 66, 65 and 63 for the Chicago Cubs during a four-season span starting in 1998.

McGwire admitted using banned steroids, while Bonds and Sosa denied knowingly using performance-enhancing drugs. Major League Baseball didn't begin testing with penalties for PEDs until 2004.

"It's an incredible feat," Yankees owner Hal Steinbrenner said.

Judge's astounding season was about more than just power, though.

Partly because of injuries to teammates, the rocket-armed right fielder shifted to center much of the season and provided his usual strong defense in both spots. With the Yankees missing DJ LeMahieu at the top of the lineup, Judge batted leadoff at the end of the regular season — which also maximized his plate appearances while pursuing Maris' record.

He even stole 16 bases, seven more than his previous career high.

"He's everything," Yankees manager Aaron Boone said. "An amazing two-way player, one of the great players in our sport. He's an ambassador for the game."

With a bright, toothy smile that he can't hold back at times, the 30-year-old Judge led the majors in runs (133), on-base percentage (.425), slugging percentage (.686), OPS (1.111), extra-base hits (90) and total bases (391). He tied for the big league lead with 131 RBIs and finished second in the AL with a .311 batting average, falling a few points short of a Triple Crown.

And not to be overlooked, No. 99 in pinstripes played in 157 of 162 regular-season games, carrying the Yankees to their second AL East title in 10 years.

"That's one of the things I love about Aaron: He's a gentle giant in his interactions with people and kids and whoever, he's kind and gentle, but he is going to rip your heart out between the lines," Boone said. "He plays the game with energy, but with a coolness and a swagger and an intensity."

Judge easily beat out Ohtani, the pitching and hitting phenom, in AL balloting to become the tallest MVP in major league history.

Without a doubt, it was one of the greatest individual seasons in baseball annals. All while playing for a new contract and shouldering the enormous weight of chasing Maris in the second half.

"I don't think there's one person that didn't marvel at that," Steinbrenner said. "It's amazing. Because it wasn't just the pressure of the home run chase. It was the pressure of, you know, what's to come?"

Just before opening day, Judge declined New York's offer of \$213.5 million over seven years (2023-29) and bet big on himself. He became a free agent in November and cashed in, getting a \$360 million, nine-year contract to re-sign with the Yankees — the third-largest deal in baseball history.

Once it was done, he was appointed the team's 16th captain, and first since Derek Jeter retired following the 2014 season.

"Everything about him just screams out leader," Jeter said. "And everyone says the exact same thing."

Judge hit his 62nd home run in the penultimate game of the season Oct. 4 at Texas. With opponents pitching carefully to him, his only homer in the previous 13 games came when he matched Maris on Sept. 28 in Toronto. No. 60 came on Sept. 20 against Pittsburgh.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 71 of 88

As he approached the record, MLB Network cut in for live coverage of Judge's at-bats. Fans stood up when he stepped to the plate, going quiet on each pitch while taking photos and video with their cellphones.

"That was a weird experience," Judge said, chuckling. "Definitely a different scene. But glad I finally got past it. It was definitely a relief."

After the Yankees won a playoff round, Judge went 1 for 16 and the team was swept in the ALCS by the World Series champion Astros. The four-time All-Star has never reached the Series, and New York hasn't won a pennant since 2009.

"There's a lot of unfinished business here," he said.

Back in 2017, Judge slammed 52 homers to set a rookie record that was soon broken.

Now with the record and big contract, all eyes will be watching his encore in 2023.

"You never know. Maybe 62 is my floor," Judge said of expectations. "Maybe I've got a little bit more in the tank."

EPA finalizes water rule that repeals Trump-era changes

By JIM SALTER and MICHAEL PHILLIS Associated Press

ST. LOUIS (AP) — President Joe Biden's administration on Friday finalized regulations that protect hundreds of thousands of small streams, wetlands and other waterways, repealing a Trump-era rule that federal courts had thrown out and that environmentalists said left waterways vulnerable to pollution.

The rule defines which "waters of the United States" are protected by the Clean Water Act. For decades, the term has been a flashpoint between environmental groups that want to broaden limits on pollution entering the nation's waters and farmers, builders and industry groups that say extending regulations too far is onerous for business.

The Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of the Army said the reworked rule is based on definitions that were in place prior to 2015. Federal officials said they wrote a "durable definition" of waterways to reduce uncertainty.

In recent years, however, there has been a lot of uncertainty. After the Obama administration sought to expand federal protections, the Trump administration rolled them back as part of its unwinding of hundreds of environmental and public health regulations. A federal judge rejected that effort. And a separate case is currently being considered by the Supreme Court that could yet upend the finalized rule.

"We have put forward a rule that's clear, it's durable, and it balances that protecting of our water resources with the needs of all water users, whether it's farmers, ranchers, industry, watershed organizations," EPA Assistant Administrator for Water Radhika Fox told The Associated Press.

The new rule is built on a pre-2015 definition, but is more streamlined and includes updates to reflect court opinions, scientific understanding and decades of experience, Fox said. The final rule will modestly increase protections for some streams, wetlands, lakes and ponds, she said.

The Trump-era rule, finalized in 2020, was long sought by builders, oil and gas developers, farmers and others who complained about federal overreach that they said stretched into gullies, creeks and ravines on farmland and other private property.

Environmental groups and public health advocates countered that the Trump rule allowed businesses to dump pollutants into unprotected waterways and fill in some wetlands, threatening public water supplies downstream and harming wildlife and habitat.

"Today, the Biden administration restored needed clean water protections so that our nation's waters are guarded against pollution for fishing, swimming, and as sources of drinking water," Kelly Moser, senior attorney for the Southern Environmental Law Center's Clean Water Defense Initiative, said in a statement.

Jon Devine, director of federal water policy for the Natural Resources Defense Council, called repealing the Trump-era rule a "smart move" that "comes at a time when we're seeing unprecedented attacks on federal clean water protections by polluters and their allies."

But Republican Sen. Shelley Moore Capito called the rule "regulatory overreach" that will "unfairly burden America's farmers, ranchers, miners, infrastructure builders, and landowners."

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 72 of 88

Jerry Konter, chairman of the National Association of Home Builders, struck a similar note, saying the new rule makes it unclear if the federal government will regulate water in places such as roadside ditches and isolated ponds.

A 2021 review by the Biden administration found that the Trump rule allowed more than 300 projects to proceed without the federal permits required under the Obama-era rule, and that the Trump rule significantly curtailed clean water protections in states such as New Mexico and Arizona.

In August 2021, a federal judge threw out the Trump-era rule and put back in place a 1986 standard that was broader in scope than the Trump rule but narrower than Obama's. U.S. District Court Judge Rosemary Marquez in Arizona, an Obama appointee, said the Trump-era EPA had ignored its own findings that small waterways can affect the well-being of the larger waterways they flow into.

Meanwhile, Supreme Court justices are considering arguments from an Idaho couple in their business-backed push to curtail the Clean Water Act. Chantell and Michael Sackett wanted to build a home near a lake, but the EPA stopped their work in 2007, finding wetlands on their property were federally regulated. The agency said the Sacketts needed a permit.

The case was heard in October and tests part of the rule the Biden administration carried over into its finalized version. Now-retired Justice Anthony Kennedy wrote in 2006 that if wetlands "significantly affect the chemical, physical, and biological integrity" of nearby navigable waters like rivers, the Clean Water Act's protections apply. The EPA's rule includes this test. Four conservative justices in the 2006 case, however, said that federal regulation only applied if there was a continuous surface connection between wetlands and an obviously regulated body of water like a river.

Charles Yates, attorney for the libertarian group Pacific Legal Foundation, said the new rule shows the importance of the Supreme Court case since the definition for WOTUS "shifts with each new presidential administration."

"Absent definitive guidance from the Supreme Court, a lawful, workable, and durable definition of 'navigable waters' will remain elusive," Yates said in a statement.

The Biden rule applies federal protections to wetlands, tributaries and other waters that have a significant connection to navigable waters or if wetlands are "relatively permanent." The rule sets no specific distance for when adjacent wetlands are protected, stating that several factors can determine if the wetland and the waterway can impact water quality and quantity on each other. It states that the impact "depends on regional variations in climate, landscape, and geomorphology."

For example, the rule notes that in the West, which typically gets less rain and has higher rates of evaporation, wetlands may need to be close to a waterway to be considered adjacent. In places where the waterway is wide and the topography flat, "wetlands are likely to be determined to be reasonably close where they are a few hundred feet from the tributary ...," the rule states.

Fox said the rule wasn't written to stop development or prevent farming.

"It is about making sure we have development happening, that we're growing food and fuel for our country but doing it in a way that also protects our nation's water," she said.

Pain, few gains for investors as markets slumped in 2022

The Associated Press undefined

Investors found few, if any, places to safely put their money in 2022, as central banks in the U.S. and around the globe raised interest rates for the first time in years to fight surging inflation, stoking fear of a global recession.

Uncertainty about how far the Federal Reserve and other central banks would go in the fight against inflation sparked a return of volatility. Large swings in stocks were common on Wall Street as the Fed raised its key interest rate seven times and signaled more hikes to come in 2023.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine and China's strict COVID-19 policies also contributed to inflation and roiled the global economy as well as markets in Asia, Europe and the U.S.

On Wall Street, the benchmark S&P 500 index had its worst start to a year since 1970. By June, the index fell into a bear market, a drop of more than 20% from the record high set in early January. The en-

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 73 of 88

ergy sector was the lone winner, benefitting from a spike in oil and gas prices. Technology stocks tumbled after leading the market during the pandemic.

Borrowing money got more expensive. The 10-year Treasury yield, which influences rates on mortgages and other loans, soared, reaching 4.22% in October after starting the year at 1.51%.

Still, climbing yields in the U.S. and abroad sent prices for older bonds already in investors' portfolios sharply lower. The rout in bonds was particularly painful for fixed-income investors.

Cryptocurrency investors weren't spared either. Bitcoin shed more than half its value and a number of high-flying companies wound up in bankruptcy court.

— Alex Veiga

Here's a look back on the key events in markets for 2022:

INFLATION AND THE FED

Inflation was the dominant global economic theme this year. Gasoline prices in the U.S. reached \$5 a gallon. Companies either raised prices, or kept prices steady but put less in each package. Europe feared running short of natural gas and prices there rose more than in the U.S.

Central banks' response to inflation overshadowed financial markets in 2022 and could very well do so again next year. As the year began, officials at the Federal Reserve had accepted that inflation was not a temporary phenomenon. Russia's invasion of Ukraine only made things worse by sending energy and food prices soaring.

Still, it wasn't until March, when the U.S. government said inflation had approached 8%, that the Fed acted — too little, too late for some pundits and economists. As the year went on the Fed got more aggressive, eventually raising rates seven times by a total of 4.25 percentage points.

Inflation in the U.S. appears to have peaked at 9.1% in June. By year-end, there were hopeful signs as prices for goods fell and rents started declining. But tough inflation talk from the Fed at its last meeting of the year took the steam out of what had been a fourth-quarter rally for stocks.

— Chris Rugaber

For full coverage of the global economy, go to <https://apnews.com/hub/economy>

THE BEAR ROARS

Wall Street's brutal year left few stocks unscathed, and the vast majority fell into a bear market under the weight of fast-rising interest rates.

After peaking on the very first trading day of 2022, it took about six months for the S&P 500 to drop more than 20%. The biggest losers were the stocks that had performed the best in the rally that followed the coronavirus crash.

Back then, high-growth tech stocks roared the highest thanks to the juice provided by super-low interest rates. But in the cold light of 2022, those stocks suddenly looked the most expensive and the most vulnerable as the Fed hiked interest rates to their highest level in 15 years.

The pain did not discriminate much, though. Seven out of 10 stocks in the S&P 500 fell in 2022, as of Dec. 21. Many analysts expect more pain in early 2023 before things get better.

— Stan Choe

To see AP's full coverage of the markets, go to: <https://apnews.com/hub/financial-markets> and <https://apnews.com/hub/off-the-charts>

BOND MARKET BLUES

It was one of the worst years in history for bond investors.

Decades-high inflation meant the fixed payments coming from bonds in the future won't buy as many groceries, gallons of gasoline or whatever else is rising in price.

The Federal Reserve's decision to raise interest rates also hammered bond prices. Because newly issued bonds were paying more in interest, the older bonds sitting in many investors' portfolios were suddenly much less attractive because of their lower yields.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 74 of 88

The largest bond fund by assets, one from Vanguard that tracks the broad market, had lost 12.5% in 2022, as of Dec. 20. That's by far its worst year since its inception in 1987.

Historically bonds have held up better than stocks during downturns, offering some cushion for investors, but both tumbled in 2022.

— Stan Choe

HOUSING MARKET SLUMPS

As 2022 began, the nation's housing market was still running red hot.

House hunters competed for the fewest homes for sale in more than two decades, fueling bidding wars that pushed prices sharply higher. The average rate on a 30-year mortgage was slightly above 3%, near historic lows.

Then mortgage rates started to climb, spurred by expectations of higher interest rates as the Federal Reserve began raising its short-term lending rate in a bid to tame inflation. By October, the average rate on a 30-year home loan soared above 7%, a 20-year high.

Higher mortgage rates combined with still-rising home prices make it difficult for many would-be buyers to afford a home. Sales of previously occupied U.S. homes saw their biggest sales slump in more than a decade.

— Alex Veiga

IS TESLA ON AUTOPILOT?

You can't blame Tesla shareholders for feeling jilted.

CEO Elon Musk took over Twitter and appears consumed with turning around the social media company. With Musk's focus diverted, Tesla shares have lost more than half their value. And Tesla's dominance of the market for electric vehicles is waning.

Most of Musk's wealth is tied up in Tesla stock, which started falling in April when he disclosed a stake in Twitter. The collapse in the stock price has bumped Musk into second place on Forbes' list of the world's wealthiest people, behind cosmetic magnate Bernard Arnault.

After buying Twitter in October, Musk has cut half its staff and picked fights with public officials and others.

— Tom Krisher

For full coverage of Elon Musk, Twitter and Tesla, go to <https://apnews.com/hub/twitter-inc>

CONSUMERS FEEL THE PINCH

The highest inflation in four decades is hitting consumers right in their wallets.

Households — especially at the lower end of the income spectrum — are likely depleting savings built up during the pandemic, with more pain to come should the economy tip into a recession. Credit card debt ballooned and rents rose in 2022, although there are signs housing costs will be coming down. While President Biden promised student borrowers relief of up to \$20,000 this year, that debt cancellation policy is tied up in the courts.

Wages went up, although not at the same pace as inflation. Aggressive rate hikes by the Federal Reserve have pushed up the cost of borrowing money. But while the average rate on a credit card rose to 16.3% in August from 14.5% at the start of the year, according to the government, the average rate for a savings account is still just 0.2%; it's 0.9% for a one-year CD.

— Cora Lewis

For full coverage personal finance got to <https://apnews.com/hub/financial-wellness> and <https://apnews.com/hub/personal-finance>

UKRAINE WAR IMPACT

Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February sent prices soaring for the commodities the world runs on: oil, natural gas, and wheat.

European prices for natural gas rose to 17 times their prewar levels after Russia choked off most supplies

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 75 of 88

over the war. The result was an energy crisis that pushed inflation to record levels and left governments and utilities scrambling to find alternative supplies of gas ahead of winter heating season.

Global oil prices spiked as Western buyers shunned Moscow's crude, sending Brent to over \$120 per barrel in May. Europe banned most Russian oil imports in December and the Group of Seven democracies imposed a \$60 per barrel price cap on Russian exports.

Meanwhile record wheat prices spurred disastrous food inflation in poor countries.

By year end, lower prices for oil, natural gas and electricity had provided a bit of relief for drivers and homeowners.

To see full coverage of the Russia-Ukraine war, go to <https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine>

CHINA DITCHES ZERO COVID

China's economic growth and stock market slid in 2022 under pressure from pandemic controls and corporate debt, prompting the ruling Communist Party to ease off anti-disease restrictions and try to revive a struggling real estate industry.

The world's second-largest economy shrank by 2.6% in the three months ending in June compared with the previous quarter after Shanghai and other industrial centers shut down for up to two months to fight outbreaks.

Forecasters say annual growth might fall below 3%, among the lowest in decades. To cut the economic drag, the ruling party ended testing for millions of people and stopped requiring supermarkets and other businesses to track the health of employees and customers. Beijing also tried to revive real estate, China's biggest economic driver, by lending more to apartment buyers while trying to prevent a renewed rise in borrowing by developers.

— Joe McDonald

To see full coverage of developments in China, go to <https://apnews.com/hub/china>

CRYPTO'S WILD RIDE

The year began with bitcoin above \$45,000 and the crypto industry making further inroads among politicians and mainstream financial institutions. As 2022 ends, bitcoin is below \$17,000, the industry's "savior" is in jail and Washington is fighting over how to regulate crypto.

With the steady, steep decline of crypto prices in the background, the dominoes began to fall with the collapse in May of Terra, a so-called stablecoin. Investors lost tens of billions of dollars and a number of crypto companies faced financial ruin. In stepped Sam Bankman-Fried, the young founder of crypto exchange FTX, who bailed out crypto lender BlockFi and crypto firm Voyager, earning him comparisons to the original J.P. Morgan.

Those plaudits evaporated when FTX unraveled in November. Questions about its financial strength prompted customers to request large withdrawals. Overwhelmed and, it turns out, underfunded, FTX filed Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection on Nov. 11. Bankman-Fried was arrested in the Bahamas and U.S. prosecutors hit him with an eight-count indictment.

— Ken Sweet

To see AP's full coverage of the cryptocurrency industry, go to: <https://apnews.com/hub/cryptocurrency>

THE STREAMING WARS

Netflix, Warner Bros. Discovery and other big entertainment companies tumbled in 2022 as streaming services struggled amid increased competition and rising inflation stifled advertising spending.

Streaming services had to contend with a return to normal for many people who had been stuck at home because of lockdowns or other restrictions during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. The sheer number of streaming options also left companies in a fierce fight for viewers' attention.

Streaming giant Netflix lost about half of its value after a steep drop in viewers in the year's first half. Disney felt the pinch from lower advertising revenue, but the diversified entertainment giant's stock held up better than most competitors.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 76 of 88

Warner Bros. Discovery also struggled with advertising revenue, and it axed several films including "Batgirl" as it shifted strategy and looked to trim costs.

— Damian Troise

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

By The Associated Press undefined

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

Combination COVID and flu test does not prove they are the same virus

CLAIM: An at-home rapid test that can detect both the coronavirus and influenza A and B is proof that COVID-19 and flu are the same disease.

THE FACTS: The flu and the coronavirus are distinct viruses, and the product in a photo circulating on social media tests separately for each. U.S. COVID-19 cases have again spiked in tandem with influenza. But in recent days, some social media users have pointed to a photo of an at-home test kit that can detect influenza A and B and COVID-19, incorrectly suggesting it shows that the coronavirus pandemic is just another wave of seasonal flu. But the kit in the photo tests for each virus separately, and medical experts confirmed they are distinct viruses that are detected differently. Instructions for the test show it comes with a cartridge that contains two "specimen wells," one to check for COVID-19 and the other to check for influenza. Users are instructed to swab their nostrils, insert the swab into a test liquid, then put drops of the liquid into each well. Different lines will show up on the test strip in each well depending on what the user tests positive for. The test, sold under the name Fanttest, has been approved by the agency that regulates medical therapies for use in Australia, but it is not available in the U.S. Thomas Denny, a professor of medicine and chief operating officer of Duke University's Human Vaccine Institute, said rapid antigen tests are developed by using a "recombinant protein" that mimics a specific virus. Before such tests are authorized for use, they are measured for sensitivity and specificity, Denny said. Specificity refers to ensuring the tests provide positive results for the given virus, and not for samples from uninfected people or those infected with a different virus. It's common for antigen tests to check for multiple things simultaneously, said Dr. Benjamin Neuman, chief virologist at Texas A&M's Global Health Research Complex. The proteins usually targeted by COVID-19 and flu tests, respectively, "have nothing in common," making a two-in-one antigen test possible. In May, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration authorized a triple testing kit for COVID-19, influenza A and B and RSV, but those results must still be processed at a lab. It is possible to be infected with both COVID-19 and the flu simultaneously.

— Associated Press writer Graph Massara in San Francisco contributed this report with additional reporting from Angelo Fichera in Philadelphia.

No, COVID-19 vaccines aren't gene therapy

CLAIM: The COVID-19 vaccines "are a gene therapy, NOT a vaccine."

THE FACTS: The COVID-19 vaccines do not change a person's genes, as gene therapy does, experts say. False claims that the vaccines alter humans' DNA have circulated since before their debut in late 2020. In recent days, social media posts have shared a claim that the vaccines are "gene therapy" — which involves modifying a person's genes to treat or cure a disease. The posts point to a clip of Dr. Robert Malone — a vocal critic of the COVID-19 vaccines who did early research on mRNA technology — speaking about the shots at an event in early December. In the clip, Malone is asked whether the vaccines are actually a form of gene therapy. "As I've said repeatedly, it came out of a gene therapy research program," Malone responds. "These and the adenoviral vectors are absolutely gene therapy technology applied for the purpose of eliciting an immune response." A tweet sharing the clip claimed: "The shots are a gene therapy, NOT a vaccine." But Dr. Louis Picker, a professor and associate director of the Vaccine and Gene Therapy

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 77 of 88

Institute at Oregon Health & Science University, said there are major differences between the vaccines and gene therapy. "The point of gene therapy is to go in and change the actual coding in the DNA of a person's cells." Picker said gene therapy is "very different than just injecting RNA in a carrier that is designed to be picked up, expressed and elicit an immune response." The COVID-19 vaccines from Pfizer and Moderna use mRNA to instruct cells to make a protein from the coronavirus and trigger an immune response. The Johnson & Johnson vaccine uses a modified adenovirus, a cold virus, to elicit an immune response. But none of the vaccines can alter humans' DNA. Michael Barry, a Mayo Clinic researcher who studies gene therapy and vaccines, said in an email that tools used for those vaccines have a relationship to gene therapy technology — but that does not mean the vaccines are actually gene therapy. Specifically, lipid nanoparticles, used to transport the mRNA in the vaccines, stem from a tool developed originally for gene therapy, he said. The adenovirus vectors used in the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine were also previously researched for gene therapy. "Gene therapy intends to provide long-lasting protein expression to fix a broken gene and its broken protein," Barry added. "Vaccines intend a short burst of protein expression to stimulate the immune system." Malone did not return a request for comment.

— Angelo Fichera

EU not imposing a "personal carbon credit" system

CLAIM: The European Union is working to create a "personal carbon credit" system in which individuals pay directly for the greenhouse gases they produce.

THE FACTS: Spokespersons for the EU's legislative and executive offices say there has been no consideration of setting up such a system. Social media users have been spreading false claims about new developments announced this month regarding the EU's climate change efforts. Many of the users are sharing a conservative website article claiming the regional trade bloc has taken the "first steps" toward imposing a "personal carbon credit system" in which every citizen will have to pay for their carbon emissions. But European leaders have proposed no such requirements on individual citizens nor are they considering it, according to officials and experts. "There has been no decision to set-up a personal carbon credit system," Thomas Haahr, a spokesperson for the European Parliament, the legislative arm of the 27-member union, wrote in an email. Ana Crespo Parrondo, a spokesperson for the European Commission, the EU's executive branch, concurred, providing a list of about seven items the two sides have agreed upon on for its "Fit For 55" legislative package, which is meant to help the region reach its target for cutting greenhouse gas emissions by 55% by 2030. Among them is a deal reached this month to revise regulations for the energy and industrial sectors. The agreement would speed up the phase-out of free allowances under the emissions trading system for the industries in order to encourage companies to aggressively cut the pollutants they release into the atmosphere. It would also extend the emissions system to the transportation and building sectors, a move that would likely raise the price of gasoline, natural gas and other fossil fuels. In addition, the two sides agreed to develop a tax on foreign companies seeking to import products that don't meet the region's climate-protection standards. Sanjay Patnaik, an expert in EU climate change policy at the Brookings Institution, a Washington, D.C., think tank, said the trade bloc has been focused on these kinds of industry-wide regulations, not ones directly imposed on individuals. Michael Pahle, a researcher at the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research in Germany, agreed, adding that the likelihood of companies passing on higher fuel costs to consumers from the planned emissions regulations isn't the same as implementing a personal carbon credit system.

— Associated Press writer Phil Marcelo in New York contributed this report.

Hooters says it is not closing for a millennial-friendly rebrand

CLAIM: Hooters is shutting down and rebranding.

THE FACTS: The posts are misrepresenting a 2017 article that discussed some U.S. locations closing between 2012 and 2016, as well as changes the company made to its menu and decor more than a decade ago. A misleading claim spread on social media Wednesday that Hooters, the restaurant famous for its

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 78 of 88

scantly-clad waitresses, is shutting down and rebranding due to changing millennial tastes. But Stephen Brown, a Hooters spokesperson, told The Associated Press that the casual dining chain has no plans to change up its image. "There is no validity to this story," he wrote in an email, adding, "Our concept is here to stay." The company also refuted the claim via one of its Twitter accounts. In a follow-up post, the Twitter account that first spread the false claim cited an August 2017 article from Complex, which discussed some locations closing and menu changes in prior years, but did not say the entire chain was closing nor rebranding as the posts suggest. The Complex article discussed a report that there had been a 7 percent drop in Hooters locations from 2012 to 2016. It also noted that the chain updated its menus and decor in 2012 "in an attempt to attract younger patrons and female customers," and earlier that year had opened a new chain called Hoots, which features Hooters' popular chicken wings without waitresses in tight tops. The article simultaneously discussed a then-new study from Pornhub that found its millennial users were less likely to search for breast-related terms. But while the article tied the two things together, the study had nothing to do with the restaurant, nor the changes that had been made before its release.

— Associated Press writer Melissa Goldin in New York contributed this report.

2023 public domain debuts include last Sherlock Holmes work

WASHINGTON (AP) — Sherlock Holmes is finally free to the American public in 2023.

The long-running contested copyright dispute over Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's tales of a whipsmart detective — which has even ensnared Enola Holmes — will finally come to an end as the 1927 copyrights expiring Jan. 1 include Conan Doyle's last Sherlock Holmes work.

Alongside the short-story collection "The Case-Book of Sherlock Holmes," books such as Virginia Woolf's "To The Lighthouse," Ernest Hemingway's "Men Without Women," William Faulkner's "Mosquitoes" and Agatha Christie's "The Big Four" — an Hercule Poirot mystery — will become public domain as the calendar turns to 2023.

Once a work enters the public domain it can legally be shared, performed, reused, repurposed or sampled without permission or cost. The works from 1927 were originally supposed to be copyrighted for 75 years, but the 1998 Copyright Term Extension Act delayed opening them up for an additional 20 years.

While many prominent works on the list used those extra two decades to earn their copyright holders good money, a Duke University expert says the copyright protections also applied to "all of the works whose commercial viability had long subsided."

"For the vast majority—probably 99%—of works from 1927, no copyright holder financially benefited from continued copyright. Yet they remained off limits, for no good reason," Jennifer Jenkins, director of Duke's Center for the Study of the Public Domain, wrote in a blog post heralding "Public Domain Day 2023."

That long U.S. copyright period meant many works that would now become available have long since been lost, because they were not profitable to maintain by the legal owners, but couldn't be used by others. On the Duke list are such "lost" films like Victor Fleming's "The Way of All Flesh" and Tod Browning's "London After Midnight."

1927 portended the silent film era's end with the release of the first "talkie" — a film with dialogue in it. That was "The Jazz Singer," the historic first feature-length film with synchronized dialogue also notorious for Al Jolson's blackface performance.

In addition to the Alan Crosland-directed film, other movies like "Wings" — directed by William A. Wellman and the "outstanding production" winner at the very first Oscars — and Fritz Lang's seminal science-fiction classic "Metropolis" will enter the public domain.

Musical compositions — the music and lyrics found on sheet music, not the sound recordings — on the list include hits from Broadway musicals like "Funny Face" and jazz standards from the likes of legends like Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington, in addition to Irving Berlin's "Puttin' on the Ritz" and "(I Scream You Scream, We All Scream for) Ice Cream" by Howard Johnson, Billy Moll and Robert A. King.

Duke's Center for the Public Domain highlighted notable books, movies and musical compositions enter-

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 79 of 88

ing the public domain — just a fraction of the thousands due to be unleashed in 2023.

BOOKS

- "The Gangs of New York," by Herbert Asbury (original publication)
- "Death Comes for the Archbishop," by Willa Cather
- "The Big Four," by Agatha Christie
- "The Tower Treasure," the first Hardy Boys mystery by the pseudonymous Franklin W. Dixon
- "The Case-Book of Sherlock Holmes," by Arthur Conan Doyle
- "Copper Sun," by Countee Cullen
- "Mosquitoes," by William Faulkner
- "Men Without Women," by Ernest Hemingway
- "Der Steppenwolf," by Herman Hesse (in German)
- "Amerika," by Franz Kafka (in German)
- "Now We Are Six," by A.A. Milne with illustrations from E.H. Shepard
- "Le Temps retrouvé," by Marcel Proust (in French)
- "Twilight Sleep," by Edith Wharton
- "The Bridge of San Luis Rey," by Thornton Wilder
- "To The Lighthouse," by Virginia Woolf

MOVIES

- "7th Heaven," directed by Frank Borzage
- "The Battle of the Century," a Laurel and Hardy film directed by Clyde Bruckman
- "The Kid Brother," directed by Ted Wilde
- "The Jazz Singer," directed by Alan Crosland
- "The Lodger: A Story of the London Fog," directed by Alfred Hitchcock
- "Metropolis," directed by Fritz Lang
- "Sunrise," directed by F.W. Murnau
- "Upstream," directed by John Ford
- "Wings," directed by William A. Wellman

MUSICAL COMPOSITIONS

- "Back Water Blues," "Preaching the Blues" and "Foolish Man Blues" (Bessie Smith)
- "The Best Things in Life Are Free," from the musical "Good News" (George Gard "Buddy" De Sylva, Lew Brown, Ray Henderson)
- "Billy Goat Stomp," "Hyena Stomp" and "Jungle Blues" (Ferdinand Joseph Morton)
- "Black and Tan Fantasy" and "East St. Louis Toodle-O" (Bub Miley, Duke Ellington)
- "Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man" and "Ol' Man River," from the musical "Show Boat" (Oscar Hammerstein II, Jerome Kern)
- "Diane" (Erno Rapee, Lew Pollack)
- "Funny Face" and "S Wonderful," from the musical "Funny Face" (Ira and George Gershwin)
- "(I Scream You Scream, We All Scream for) Ice Cream" (Howard Johnson, Billy Moll, Robert A. King)
- "Mississippi Mud" (Harry Barris, James Cavanaugh)
- "My Blue Heaven" (George Whiting, Walter Donaldson)
- "Potato Head Blues" and "Gully Low Blues" (Louis Armstrong)
- "Puttin' on the Ritz" (Irving Berlin)
- "Rusty Pail Blues," "Sloppy Water Blues" and "Soothin' Syrup Stomp" (Thomas Waller)

Brazil will have first Indigenous woman chief for key post

By FABIANO MAISONNAVE undefined

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP) — Brazil's President-elect Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva announced Thursday that Sônia Guajajara will head up a new Ministry of Indigenous Peoples, with a mandate to oversee policies ranging from land demarcation to health care.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 80 of 88

Guajajara was elected to Congress in October. She is widely known as the leader of the main umbrella group for Brazil's many Indigenous tribes and is a member of the Amazon Guajajara. This year she made Time Magazine's annual list of the world's 100 most influential people.

"This is more than a personal achievement," Guajajara said. "It is a collective achievement of the Indigenous peoples, a historic moment of reparation in Brazil." The creation of the ministry is "a confirmation of Lula's commitment to us," she said in a tweet.

Lula promised to create the Indigenous cabinet department during his presidential campaign. On Jan. 1 he returns to power, having previously governed Brazil from 2003 to 2010.

The appointment of Guajajara to such a post marks a 180 degree turn from Brazil's current government. Outgoing president Jair Bolsonaro, defeated in October, is an opponent of Indigenous rights and land with a record of racist statements. In 1998, when he was still a fringe lawmaker, he spoke in Brazil's Congress praising the U.S. Cavalry for having "decimated its Indians" and regretted Brazil had not done the same.

Bolsonaro's promises to develop the Amazon and his defanging of environmental law enforcement led to a surge of illegal loggers, miners and land robbers into Native territory in Brazil. According to local Indigenous organizations, some 20,000 illegal gold miners now operate illegally in Yanomami tribal territory alone.

Guajajara fiercely opposed attempts to legalize these policies, and that opposition was largely successful. She also experienced the murders in 2019 and 2020 of five fellow tribe members who fought against illegal loggers.

After the official announcement of her appointment and 15 others in the capital of Brasilia Thursday, several Indigenous organizations, among them the Coordination of the Indigenous Organizations of the Brazilian Amazon, congratulated her in social media for the nomination.

An organization of officials who work in Indigenous affairs also congratulated the future minister and the Indigenous social movement in general for the nomination.

The lands where Brazil's Indigenous peoples live constitute one of the world's most important carbon sinks. The Amazon rainforest acts as a buffer against climate change by absorbing large amounts of carbon dioxide.

About 13% of Brazil's territory is demarcated as Indigenous areas, roughly the size of Colombia. Most of it is in the Amazon and covered by tropical rainforest.

Jan. 6 takeaways: Final revelations from investigation

By MARY CLARE JALONICK, ERIC TUCKER and JILL COLVIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Destroyed documents. Suggestions of pardoning violent rioters. Quiet talks among cabinet officials about whether then-President Donald Trump should be removed from office.

Interview transcripts released by House investigators in recent days — more than 100 so far — give further insight into the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection and the weeks leading up to it, as Trump tried to overturn his defeat in the presidential election. The nine-member committee conducted more than 1,000 interviews, and the lawmakers are gradually releasing hundreds of transcripts after issuing a final report last week. The panel will dissolve on Tuesday when the new Republican-led House is sworn in.

While some of the witnesses were more forthcoming than others, the interviews altogether tell the full story of Trump's unprecedented scheming, the bloody chaos of the attack on the Capitol and the fears of lawmakers and the Republican former president's own aides as he tried to upend democracy and the popular will.

Some highlights from the interview transcripts released so far:

WHITE HOUSE AIDE TELLS ALL

Previously little-known White House aide Cassidy Hutchinson drew national attention when she testified in a surprise hearing this summer about Trump's words and actions around the Jan. 6 attack — his rage after security thwarted his efforts to go to the Capitol that day with his supporters and how he knew that some of his supporters were armed.

The committee has so far released four of her closed-door interviews, revealing new details about what

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 81 of 88

she said she observed in her time as an aide to then-White House chief of staff Mark Meadows. Among other revelations, Hutchinson told the committee she had seen Meadows burning documents in his office fireplace "roughly a dozen times" after the 2020 election.

She said she didn't know what the documents were or whether they were items that legally should have been preserved. A spokesman for Meadows declined to comment.

Hutchinson also spoke at length about her moral struggles as she decided how much to disclose — even doing research on Watergate figures who similarly testified about working in President Richard Nixon's White House.

"My character and my integrity mean more to me than anything," Hutchinson says she decided, returning to the committee with a new lawyer in June after three previous interviews.

PARDONS FOR EVERYONE?

After the insurrection, Trump floated the idea of a blanket pardon for all participants, but the White House counsel at the time, Pat Cipollone, discouraged the idea, according to testimony from Johnny McEntee, an aide who served as director of the presidential personnel office and was interviewed by the panel in March.

Trump then asked about limiting pardons to only those people who entered the Capitol but who did not engage in violence, but that idea was also met with some pushback, McEntee recalled. He said Trump appeared persuaded by the advice and said he was not aware that the idea ever came up again.

Separately, McEntee said that Rep. Matt Gaetz, R-Fla., told him he was seeking a preemptive pardon from Trump as he faced a federal child sex trafficking investigation. Gaetz did not receive such a pardon and has not faced any charges in connection to the probe.

Hutchinson testified that Meadows' office became so inundated with pardon requests at the end of Trump's term that some turned to Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner to help facilitate.

THE 25TH AMENDMENT

The panel interviewed several of Trump's Cabinet secretaries about discussions of invoking Section 4 of the 25th Amendment — the forceful removal of Trump from power by his own Cabinet. While some acknowledged it had been discussed, it appears that it was never a likely scenario.

Former Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin says he spoke fleetingly with then-Secretary of State Mike Pompeo about the idea after the insurrection.

"It came up very briefly in our conversation," Mnuchin testified in July. "We both believed that the best outcome was a normal transition of power, which was working, and neither one of us contemplated in any serious format the 25th Amendment."

Army Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told the committee he witnessed a brief conversation between the two Cabinet secretaries in the White House and heard the phrase "25th Amendment." His transcript has not yet been released, but investigators quoted Milley's interview to both Pompeo and Mnuchin in their interviews.

Pompeo told the committee he didn't recall the conversation. "I would have viewed someone speaking about the potential of invoking the 25th Amendment as just absolutely preposterous," he said.

Vice President Mike Pence later dismissed the idea in a letter to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., saying the mechanism should be reserved for when a president is medically or mentally incapacitated.

Pence chief of staff Marc Short told the panel he thought the talk was "a political game." The process would have taken weeks to play out, he said, and Democrat Joe Biden was set to be inaugurated Jan. 20.

TRUMP FAMILY TESTIFIES

The committee interviewed two of the former president's children, Donald Trump Jr. and Ivanka Trump, about their conversations with their father during the Jan. 6 attack and in the days before and after.

Trump Jr. did not answer many of the committee's questions, frequently saying he did not recall events or conversations. He did explain why he texted Meadows the afternoon of Jan. 6, as the attack was unfolding, to say that his father needed to "condemn this s---" immediately and that Trump's tweets had not been strong enough. "My father doesn't text," Trump Jr. said.

Ivanka Trump, who was in the White House with her father on Jan. 6, was also vague in many of her

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 82 of 88

answers. She spoke with the committee about working with her father to write his tweets that day, encouraging him to make a strong statement as the rioters broke into the Capitol. And she testified that she heard Trump's side of a "heated" phone call with Pence that morning as her father tried to encourage Pence to object to the congressional certification that day. Pence refused to do so.

She also testified that she received a call and a text from Republican Sen. Susan Collins of Maine, who was in the Capitol as it was under siege. Collins told her that "the president needs to put out a very strong tweet telling people to go home and to stop the violence now."

'GIVE ME FIVE DEAD VOTERS'

Trump lawyer Christina Bobb testified that Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, a top ally of Trump, asked some of the former president's advisers for evidence of fraud so he could "champion" it after the election. Trump falsely claimed there had been widespread fraud, despite court rulings and election officials in all 50 states who said otherwise.

Graham told lawyers he would love to support the cause.

"Don't tell me everything because it's too overwhelming," Bobb quotes Graham as saying. "Just give me five dead voters; give me, you know, an example of illegals voting. Just give me a very small snapshot that I can take and champion."

He did nothing with the information he was given, Bobb said. Graham voted on Jan. 6 to certify Biden's presidential election win.

NATIONAL GUARD FRUSTRATION

The mob that stormed the Capitol would have faced a much harsher law enforcement response had it been comprised mostly of African Americans, testified retired Army Maj. Gen. William Walker, who led the D.C. National Guard at the time. Walker is now the House sergeant at arms.

"I'm African American. Child of the sixties," Walker testified. "I think it would have been a vastly different response if those were African Americans trying to breach the Capitol. As a career law enforcement officer, part-time soldier ... the law enforcement response would have been different."

The National Guard didn't arrive at the Capitol for several hours, leaving overwhelmed police officers at the mercy of the violent mob as Pentagon officials said they were sorting out the necessary approvals. More than 100 officers were injured, many seriously, as Trump's supporters beat them and ran over them to get inside.

Walker expressed deep frustration with the delays and says he even considered breaking the chain of command and sending the troops with authorization. Lawyers advised him strongly not to do so, he said.

He said he didn't think the holdup was because the insurrectionists were mostly white.

"I don't think race was part of the military's decision paralysis," he said in his April interview, adding, "I think they just didn't want to do it."

EXTREMIST GROUP LEADERS

Proud Boys leader Enrique Tarrío asserted his 5th Amendment right against self-incrimination in response to some questions, with his attorney at times telling investigators his client did not belong to the extremist group, whose associates are now facing rare sedition charges in a federal case prosecuted by the Justice Department. But Tarrío himself told investigators he took the title of chairman.

Tarrío, who had been released from jail on the eve of the insurrection, wasn't present for the attack. But prosecutors claim he kept command over the Proud Boys who attacked Congress and cheered them on from afar. Proud Boys were some of the first rioters to break through the Capitol perimeter.

He told the panel that the first degree of membership in the Proud Boys is "that you are a Western chauvinist" and that you "refuse to apologize for creating the modern world."

Tarrío met Stewart Rhodes, the founder of the extremist group Oath Keepers, in a garage the night of Jan. 5, ahead of the attack. "I still don't like Stewart Rhodes," Tarrío said.

Rhodes, who was also interviewed by the panel, was convicted in November of seditious conspiracy for what prosecutors said was a plot for an armed rebellion to stop the transfer of presidential power. They said Rhodes rallied his followers to fight to defend Trump and discussed the prospect of a "bloody" civil war.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 83 of 88

In his February testimony to the panel, Rhodes spoke at length about his views of the world but declined to answer any questions about his involvement on Jan. 6 and amassing weapons. He said he feels like a political prisoner.

"I feel like a Jew in Germany, frankly," Rhodes told the committee.

Putin, Xi vow closer ties as Russia bombards Ukraine again

By FELIPE DANA Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese leader Xi Jinping vowed Friday to deepen their bilateral cooperation against the backdrop of Moscow's 10-month war in Ukraine, which weathered another night of drone and rocket attacks following a large-scale missile bombardment.

Putin and Xi made no direct mention of Ukraine in their opening remarks by videoconference, which were broadcast publicly, before going into private talks. But they hailed strengthening ties between Moscow and Beijing amid what they called "geopolitical tensions" and a "difficult international situation," with Putin expressing his wish to extend military collaboration.

"In the face of increasing geopolitical tensions, the significance of the Russian-Chinese strategic partnership is growing as a stabilizing factor," said Putin, whose invasion of a neighboring country has been stymied by fierce Ukrainian resistance and Western military aid.

The Russian leader said he expected Xi to visit Moscow in the spring. Such a trip "will demonstrate to the whole world the strength of the Russian-Chinese ties on key issues, will become the main political event of the year in bilateral relations," he said.

Putin said military cooperation has a "special place" in the relationship between their countries. He said the Kremlin aimed to "strengthen the cooperation between the armed forces of Russia and China."

Xi, in turn, said through a translator that "in the face of a difficult and far from straightforward international situation," Beijing was ready "to increase strategic cooperation with Russia, provide each other with development opportunities, be global partners for the benefit of the peoples of our countries and in the interests of stability around the world."

In its report on the meeting, Chinese state broadcaster CCTV described the events in Ukraine as a "crisis." The term marked a departure from China's usual references to the "Ukraine situation," and the change may reflect growing Chinese concern about the direction of the conflict.

"Xi Jinping emphasized that China has noted that Russia has never refused to resolve the conflict through diplomatic negotiations, for which it (China) expresses its appreciation," CCTV reported.

Ties between Moscow and Beijing have grown stronger since Putin sent his troops into Ukraine on Feb. 24. Just last week, Moscow and Beijing held joint naval drills in the East China Sea. Putin and Xi also spoke by video link last December.

China, which has promised a "no limits" friendship with Russia, has pointedly refused to criticize Moscow's actions in Ukraine, blaming the U.S. and NATO for provoking the Kremlin, and has blasted the punishing sanctions imposed on Russia.

Russia, in turn, has strongly backed China amid the tensions with the U.S. over Taiwan.

Russia and China are both facing domestic difficulties. Putin is trying to maintain domestic support for a war that has lasted longer than anticipated, while a surge in COVID-19 cases has overwhelmed hospitals in China.

In Ukraine, authorities reviewed the toll from a widespread Russian missile attack on power stations and other vital infrastructure Thursday that was the biggest such bombardment in weeks. Four civilians were killed during the barrage, according to Kyrylo Tymoshenko, the deputy head of the Ukrainian president's office.

The General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine said in its Friday morning update that Russian forces had unleashed a total of 85 missiles and 35 airstrikes on targets across Ukraine in the previous 24 hours. Russia also launched 63 attacks from multiple launch rocket systems, the military report said.

Following the first waves of missiles on Thursday morning, Russian forces attacked Ukraine with Irani-

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 84 of 88

an-made Shahed-131/136 drones on Thursday night and early Friday, all of which were shot down, the Ukrainian air force said.

Some were aimed at Kyiv, Mayor Vitali Klitschko said Friday. Of seven exploding drones launched against the Ukrainian capital, two were shot down on the approach to the city and five over Kyiv itself, according to Klitschko.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in his nightly video address that Russia hasn't abandoned plans to capture all of Donetsk, aiming to accomplish the goal by New Year's Day. Zelenskyy also warned Ukrainians there could be another widespread air assault.

"There are two days left in this year. Perhaps the enemy will try once again to make us celebrate the New Year in the dark. Perhaps, the occupants are planning to make us suffer with the next strikes on our cities," he said. "But no matter what they plan, we know one thing about ourselves: we will survive. We will. We will drive them out. No doubt about it. And they will be punished for this terrible war."

Alena Verbitskaya, presidential commissioner for the protection of the rights of defenders of Ukraine, said Friday that 3,392 Ukrainian servicemen are now in Russian captivity. Another 15,000 people are classified as missing, he told Germany's RedaktionsNetzwerk.

Curry, Henry, Kupp, Judge among most bet-on athletes of 2022

By WAYNE PARRY Associated Press

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. (AP) — Did you win money betting on Saint Peter's, the longest-of-longshots men's college basketball team that got to the Elite Eight in the national championship tournament this year?

If so, you've got plenty of company.

According to DraftKings sportsbook, customers won more money betting on Saint Peter's than on any other team in 2022. And the Peacocks' 67-64 victory over Purdue on March 25 was the top-winning game for customers at BetMGM.

Did you lose money betting on the New York Yankees, Green Bay Packers or the Alabama Crimson Tide? Plenty of others did too.

Several of the nation's leading sportsbooks provided year-end data to The Associated Press giving a look at how people bet in 2022. None would provide actual dollar figures, terming that proprietary information.

Other moneymakers for DraftKings included North Carolina, Gonzaga, Kansas and Providence in the NCAA tournament; and the San Francisco 49ers, Minnesota Vikings and Washington Commanders in the NFL.

Big money-losers for DraftKings customers included the defending Super Bowl champion Los Angeles Rams, who did not even qualify for the playoffs in an injury-marred 2022 season; the Denver Broncos, a trendy pre-season Super Bowl pick whose trade for veteran quarterback Russell Wilson has backfired in a 4-11 season so far; the struggling Tom Brady-led Tampa Bay Buccaneers; Brady's former team, the New England Patriots; the Miami Dolphins; and the NBA's Golden State Warriors and Brooklyn Nets.

In terms of the total amount of money wagered, Golden State's Steph Curry was the most bet-on player of 2022 for DraftKings, followed by the Rams' Cooper Kupp, the reigning Super Bowl MVP; the Yankees' Aaron Judge, the American League MVP; the Tennessee Titans' Derrick Henry; Kansas City Chiefs tight end Travis Kelce; the Dallas Mavericks' Luka Doncic; The Milwaukee Bucks' Giannis Antetokounmpo; the Denver Nuggets' Nikola Jokic; Cincinnati Bengals wide receiver Ja'marr Chase, and the Boston Celtics' Jayson Tatum.

In terms of the sheer number of bets, Titans running back Derrick Henry was first, followed by Kelce and Cleveland Browns running back Nick Chubb. Others on the list included New York Giants running back Saquan Barkley, Indianapolis Colts running back Jonathan Taylor and Las Vegas Raiders wide receiver Davante Adams.

The most bet-on players for customers of Caesars Sportsbook were Curry; Doncic; Bengals quarterback Joe Burrow; Tatum, and Rams quarterback Matthew Stafford.

Caesars' most bet-on teams were the Yankees; Warriors; Los Angeles Dodgers; New York Mets and Phoenix Suns.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 85 of 88

At BetMGM, the most bet-on players were Judge, Curry and Doncic.

Houston mattress dealer and big-time gambler Jim McIngvale, also known as "Mattress Mack," had two huge wins with Caesars this year: betting \$3 million on the Houston Astros to win the World Series at 10-1 odds for a \$30 million payout, and winning nearly \$8 million betting on Kansas to win the NCAA basketball tournament.

At BetMGM, the most bet-on players were Judge, Curry and Doncic. McIngvale also hit for \$10 million on an Astros World Series bet with BetMGM.

A World Cup soccer game in which the U.S. beat Iran 1-0 was the third-most profitable game for customers this year at BetMGM.

Games that turned out best for BetMGM — but not their customers — were led by the Sept. 12 revenge game between the Seattle Seahawks, who had just traded Wilson, and the Denver Broncos, the team that acquired him. They also did well on a 49ers-Packers playoff game, the Georgia-Alabama college football championship game and a Bengals-Titans playoff game.

That sportsbook also paid out big bets on the Super Bowl including million-dollar bets on the Rams to score more points than the Bengals in the first and fourth quarters.

As it was with most sportsbooks, the Super Bowl was the most bet-on game of the year at PointsBet, followed by the Bengals-Chiefs AFC conference championship game; the Oct. 10 Raiders-Chiefs game; the Sept. 9 season opener between the Rams and the Buffalo Bills, and the Dolphins-Bengals game on Sept. 29.

FanDuel, the official odds provider for The Associated Press, did not provide similar data for 2022.

'You've got to deliver': Democrats take charge in Michigan

By JOEY CAPPELLETTI and SARA BURNETT Associated Press

LANSING, Mich. (AP) — Democrats will be in charge of Michigan's state government for the first time in nearly 40 years come January, raising progressive hopes of undoing decades of Republican-backed measures and advancing an agenda that includes restrictions on guns and help for the working poor.

With control of the state House and Senate and the governor's office, Democrats also will face a test of whether their party can deliver on years of promises in a swing state where they must appeal to more than just their base. Their performance could have wider consequences in 2024 for the presidential battleground state: The way voters feel about two years of Democratic control may be a factor in which party's candidate they want in the White House.

"The most important thing is actually delivering," said Democratic Rep. Elissa Slotkin, who won reelection to her central Michigan district in one of the country's most competitive U.S. House races. "You can say what you want all day long. You can have an agenda on a piece of paper. But in Michigan, you've got to deliver something."

Full Democratic control will begin a new challenge for the party and Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, a close ally of President Joe Biden who has been mentioned as a future White House candidate.

Whitmer, who resoundingly won reelection last month, must now balance the enthusiasm of a newly powerful Democratic caucus with the need to maintain support from moderate and independent voters when the Legislature is up for grabs again in two years.

"We're mindful that people are watching. What happened here in Michigan's only happened four times in 130 years," Whitmer said during a recent meeting with reporters. "There are a lot of eyes on us. It's our job to make sure that we stay focused on what matters to Michiganders, not what national pundits are interested in."

Pressure from lobbyists and special interest groups already is immense, and Democratic caucus members are having internal debates about how to proceed, said Rosemary Bayer, a Democratic state senator first elected in 2018. She and others already have tried to lower some expectations and focus on passing legislation that has widespread appeal across the state.

"We can't do everything at once," she said. "We don't want to scare everybody."

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 86 of 88

Bayer's district includes Oxford, the community outside Detroit where a 15-year-old gunman killed four people and injured others at the local high school in 2021. Bayer is now leading the charge for increased gun restrictions, but said she expects to begin by asking lawmakers to approve measures that voters have been asking for and can accept, based on polling reviewed by the party.

That likely means legislation to require background checks for nearly all gun purchases, gun storage laws and a red flag law that bars people deemed to be a danger to themselves and others from having a firearm.

"That's what people are comfortable with. That's what they've been asking for," Bayer said. "We have to help everybody understand that if we don't do this correctly and we end up scaring the crap out of everybody, we get nothing done."

Republicans have warned that the Democrats' agenda will be bad for the state's economy. One of the biggest battles is expected to be over a right-to-work law approved by Republicans about a decade ago that allowed workers covered by union contracts to not pay dues.

The law is seen as weakening organized labor financially and politically. Labor unions, among Democrats' biggest supporters, have been pushing to repeal it. Business groups and the GOP say doing so would hurt the state's recovery from the pandemic.

John Sellek, a Republican consultant who advised GOP state House speakers and was state director for Mitt Romney's 2012 presidential campaign, cautioned Democrats that the last time the party controlled both chambers of the Legislature and the governor's office, in 1983, it was short-lived. After a tax increase was passed, two Democratic senators were recalled, and the GOP returned to power.

Like that time, Democrats now will have a slim majority. They will hold 56 of 100 seats in the House, all of which are up for reelection in two years, and 20 of 38 in the Senate.

"There's going to be a ton of pressure on the governor in how she handles this," Sellek said. "It is not a science, it's an art."

Whitmer and other Democrats have said they expect to pursue tax credits, education changes and action on climate change.

The Legislature also will work to put in place two ballot measures that voters overwhelmingly approved in November. One expands voting access, allowing nine days of early in-person voting for the first time in the state. The other enshrines the right to an abortion in the state constitution and eliminates a ban on the procedure that was approved in 1931. Whitmer sued to stop the ban from taking effect after the U.S. Supreme Court in June overturned the Roe v. Wade ruling from 1973 that legalized abortion nationwide.

Democrats also control the statewide offices of attorney general and secretary of state. Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson plans to ask the Legislature to impose stricter penalties for harassing election workers and spreading misinformation about voting.

Michigan could be the focus of even more attention than usual in the next election cycle. The Democratic National Committee's rule-making arm voted to move Michigan up in the party's presidential primary calendar for 2024. If the full DNC approves the plan, as expected, Michigan would be the fifth state to vote in the primary process and the first contest in the Midwest.

That may not matter much if Biden runs again, as he has indicated he will. If he opts out, it could raise the stakes for Whitmer, who has insisted she will not forgo serving a second term to run for president. U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg, who ran for president in 2020 and is considered a likely future White House contender as well, moved to northern Michigan this year to be closer to his husband's family.

State Sen. Mallory McMorrow, who received national attention after a viral speech on the state Senate floor in April, said what Michigan Democrats are able to accomplish could stand in contrast with Washington, which will have divided government with the GOP holding a slim House majority.

"It feels like Michigan is going to be a real opportunity to signal to the rest of the country what it looks like when Democrats are in charge," McMorrow said.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 87 of 88

Today in History: December 31, Clemente dies on aid flight

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Saturday, Dec. 31, the 365th and final day of 2022.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 31, 2019, the health commission in the central Chinese city of Wuhan announced that experts were investigating an outbreak of respiratory illness and that most of the victims had visited a seafood market in the city; the statement said 27 people had become ill with a strain of viral pneumonia and that seven were in serious condition.

On this date:

In 1879, Thomas Edison first publicly demonstrated his electric incandescent light by illuminating some 40 bulbs at his laboratory in Menlo Park, New Jersey.

In 1904, New York's Times Square saw its first New Year's Eve celebration, with an estimated 200,000 people in attendance.

In 1951, the Marshall Plan expired after distributing more than \$12 billion in foreign aid.

In 1972, Major League baseball player Roberto Clemente, 38, was killed when a plane he chartered and was traveling on to bring relief supplies to earthquake-devastated Nicaragua crashed shortly after takeoff from Puerto Rico.

In 1974, private U.S. citizens were allowed to buy and own gold for the first time in more than 40 years.

In 1978, Taiwanese diplomats struck their colors for the final time from the embassy flagpole in Washington, D.C., marking the end of diplomatic relations with the United States.

In 1985, singer Rick Nelson, 45, and six other people were killed when fire broke out aboard a DC-3 that was taking the group to a New Year's Eve performance in Dallas.

In 1986, nearly 100 people were killed when fire broke out in the Dupont Plaza Hotel in San Juan, Puerto Rico. (Three hotel workers later pleaded guilty in connection with the blaze.)

In 1987, Robert Mugabe (moo-GAH'-bay) was sworn in as Zimbabwe's first executive president.

In 1995, the syndicated comic strip "Calvin and Hobbes," created by Bill Watterson, came to an end after a 10-year run.

In 1999, Russian President Boris Yeltsin announced his resignation (he was succeeded by Vladimir Putin).

In 2020, authorities arrested a suburban Milwaukee pharmacist suspected of deliberately ruining hundreds of doses of coronavirus vaccine by removing them from refrigeration. (Steven Brandenburg, an admitted conspiracy theorist who believed vaccines were the product of the devil, would be sentenced to three years in prison.) Britain completed its economic break from the European Union.

Ten years ago: Racing the clock, the White House reached a New Year's Eve accord with Senate Republicans to block across-the-board tax increases and spending cuts in government programs due to take effect at midnight. Private recreational marijuana clubs opened in Colorado, less than a month after Gov. John Hickenlooper signed into law a constitutional amendment allowing recreational pot use.

Five years ago: New Yorkers endured the second-coldest New Year's Eve celebration on record; the temperature in the city was 10 degrees Fahrenheit as a glittering crystal ball dropped with a burst of confetti and dazzling fireworks in Times Square. Bitterly cold temperatures spread across the Deep South; the dangerous temperatures would grip wide areas of the U.S. from Texas to New England for days. The Cleveland Browns joined the 2008 Detroit Lions as the only teams in NFL history to go 0-and-16, losing to the Pittsburgh Steelers 28-24.

One year ago: Betty White, a television mainstay for more than 60 years who brought a combination of sweetness and edginess to shows including "The Mary Tyler Moore Show" and "The Golden Girls," died less than three weeks before she would have turned 100. Flight cancellations surged again on the last day of 2021, with airlines blaming it on crew shortages related to the spike in COVID-19 infections. A crowd that was limited to about 15,000 because of the coronavirus pandemic cheered the annual New Year's Eve ball drop in New York City's Times Square. Although stocks slipped on the last day of the year, they still

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Dec. 31, 2022 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 176 ~ 88 of 88

ended 2021 with some big gains; the S&P 500 was up 26.9% for the year.

Today's Birthdays: TV producer George Schlatter is 93. Actor Sir Anthony Hopkins is 85. Actor Sarah Miles is 81. Actor Barbara Carrera is 81. Rock musician Andy Summers is 80. Actor Sir Ben Kingsley is 79. Producer-director Taylor Hackford is 78. Fashion designer Diane von Furstenberg is 76. Actor Tim Mattheson is 75. Pop singer Burton Cummings is 75. Actor Joe Dallesandro is 74. Rock musician Tom Hamilton (Aerosmith) is 71. Actor James Remar is 69. Actor Bebe Neuwirth is 64. Actor Val Kilmer is 63. Singer Paul Westerberg is 63. Actor Don Diamont is 60. Rock musician Ric Ivanisevich (Oleander) is 60. Rock musician Scott Ian (Anthrax) is 59. Actor Gong Li is 57. Author Nicholas Sparks is 57. Actor Lance Reddick is 53. Pop singer Joe McIntyre is 50. Rock musician Mikko Siren (Apocalyptica) is 47. Donald Trump Jr. is 45. Rapper PSY (Park Jae-sang) is 45. Rock musician Bob Bryar is 43. Rock musician Jason Sechrist (Portugal. The Man) is 43. Actor Ricky Whittle is 43. Republican Sen. Josh Hawley of Missouri is 43. Actor/singer Erich Bergen is 37. DJ/vocalist Drew Taggart (The Chainsmokers) is 33. U.S. Olympic beach volleyball gold medalist Alix Klineman is 33. U.S. Olympic gold medal gymnast Gabby Douglas is 27.