

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 188 ~ 1 of 78

- [1- Upcoming Events](#)
- [2- Week set aside to honor high school athletic officials](#)
- [2- Football co-op allowed to return to nine-man play](#)
- [3- Rules adopted for first season of girls' softball](#)
- [3-SDHSAA begins classification, calendar study](#)
- [3- Conde National League](#)
- [4- GDLIVE.COM: DH at Tiospa Zina](#)
- [5- GDILIVE.COM: Elementary Christmas Program](#)
- [6- Johnson Leads Bill to Cap Supreme Court Justices at Nine](#)
- [6- Gov. Noem Announces Bill to Recognize Out-of-State Licenses](#)
- [7- South Dakota State announces fall 2022 Dean's List](#)
- [8- South Dakota teachers, school counselors go above and beyond with professional certifications](#)
- [9- Ten \\$1,000 Scholarships Now Open to Midwest High School Seniors](#)
- [10- Groton Robotics Tournament Summary - Saturday, January 7th](#)
- [13- SD News Watch: Teacher shortage worsens in South Dakota due to politics, low pay and lack of respect](#)
- [18- Getting Out of a Rut by Bryan Golden](#)
- [19- SD Arts Column](#)
- [20- GROW South Dakota receives a grant from NeighborWorks America to help increase support for community-building activities and organizations](#)
- [21- SD Searchlight: Gender Identity Summit closed to media, public](#)
- [22- SD Searchlight: Republican lawmaker files bill to ban ranked choice voting](#)
- [23- Weather Pages](#)
- [27- Daily Devotional](#)
- [28- 2023 Community Events](#)
- [29- Subscription Form](#)
- [30- Lottery Numbers](#)
- [31- News from the Associated Press](#)



“Just don't give up trying to do what you really want to do. Where there's love and inspiration, I don't think you can go wrong.”

ELLA FITZGERALD

Groton Community Calendar

Thursday, Jan. 12

Senior Menu: Roast pork, mashed potatoes with gravy, Cauliflower and broccoli, apple sauce, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Oatmeal with toppings.

School Lunch: Hamburgers, fries.

Basketball Double Header at Tiospa Zina: Girls JV at 5 p.m. followed by Boys JV, Girls Varsity and Boys Varsity.

Friday, Jan. 13

Senior Menu: Chili, corn bread, coleslaw, pears.

School Breakfast: Cereal.

School Lunch: Pizza, cooked carrots.

Elementary Christmas Concert, 2:30 p.m. (re-scheduled from Dec. 22)

Saturday, Jan. 14

Wrestling at Potter County Tournament, 10 a.m.
Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

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

CLOSED! Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

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

© 2023 Groton Daily Independent

Week set aside to honor high school athletic officials

By Dana Hess

For the S.D. Newspaper Association

PIERRE — A week set aside for the appreciation of game officials is part of an effort to inspire sportsmanship in high school athletics. The South Dakota High School Activities Association board of directors found out about those efforts at its meeting Wednesday.

Officials' Appreciation Week will be held in South Dakota high schools Jan. 22 through Jan. 28 according to SDHSAA Assistant Executive Director Jo Auch. A similar appreciation week was held earlier in the school year for fall sports.

"Our officials really appreciate that," Auch said. "Things like that go a long way."

Auch said appreciation activities can include certificates from the school, posters or a note from the team.

SDHSAA has made an increase in sportsmanship a goal for the year. According to Auch, schools all over the state are doing their part to increase sportsmanship. She noted particular programs at Groton and Dakota Valley.

"I think it's having a positive impact," said SDHSAA Executive Director Dan Swartos, who noted sportsmanship efforts by home teams to welcome their opponents.

—30—

Football co-op allowed to return to nine-man play

By Dana Hess

For the S.D. Newspaper Association

PIERRE — The South Dakota High School Activities Association board of directors tried to side-step a scheduling nightmare Wednesday while allowing a football cooperative to switch from 11-man football to nine-man.

Dakota Hills Football Cooperative, consisting of the schools of Waubay, Summit and Wilmot, requested the change. Part of the cooperative's proposal was that it would be ineligible for the 2023-2024 playoffs.

After participating in 11-man football last season, Summit Superintendent Mike Schmidt told the board that to save the cooperative's football program it would need to switch to nine-man football.

"We have a lot of parents who are concerned," Schmidt said, noting that the cooperative fielded a team of mostly underclassmen with just one senior and three juniors. With mostly younger players, the co-op found itself, in one contest, down 70-0 at halftime.

"We're playing a junior varsity team against Aberdeen Roncalli or Deuel," Schmidt said. "I'm going to tell you, we will have a program if it's nine-man."

Football schedules are set up in a two-year cycle. Schmidt said he knew a change at this point would be a logistical problem for the association.

"We'd have to do every schedule over," said SDHSAA Assistant Executive Director Randy Soma of the 11B and nine-man schedules. "It affects everybody."

The board unanimously allowed Dakota Hills to drop down to nine-man, but without changing the schedule. It will be up to the cooperative, with the help of the association, to find open dates when they can play other nine-man teams. The association will also help the cooperative's scheduled 11-man opponents find teams to fill out their schedules.

—30—

Rules adopted for first season of girls' softball

By Dana Hess

For the S.D. Newspaper Association

PIERRE — A game hasn't been played yet by the newly SDHSAA-sanctioned softball teams, but the South Dakota High School Activities Association board of directors spent some time on Wednesday ensuring that there were rules in place for the proper stoppage of play.

SDHSAA Assistant Executive Director Jo Auch presented the board with the rules, all of which were unanimously approved.

The board approved a 10-run rule after five innings and a 15-run rule after three innings. That rule applies to regular and postseason contests.

A variety of rules were approved for when play is suspended because of weather or darkness after five innings. "If you play less than five you have to come back and finish," Auch said.

Another rule adopted by the board says that if a game is tied at the end of seven innings, each team will begin their next inning with a runner at second base.

The board also adopted the double first base rule which allows for a larger base for athlete safety.

—30—

SDHSAA begins classification, calendar study

By Dana Hess

For the S.D. Newspaper Association

PIERRE — The South Dakota High School Activities Association is embarking on a two-fold mission to study its classification system as well as the calendar it uses for scheduling high school activities.

"Our goal would be to have a report ready for our June meeting," SDHSAA Executive Director Dan Swartos told the board of directors.

At Wednesday's meeting, the board approved the make-up of the two committees. Each will have an administrator and athletic director from Class AA, Class A and Class B schools as well as a speech/debate/theater representative and a Native American representative.

The classification committee will also have a music representative. The calendar committee will have an orchestra/band representative as well as a vocal representative.

SDHSAA last had a calendar study in 2016.

Conde National League

Jan. 9 Team Standings: Braves 9, Tigers 8, Pirates 7, Giants 6, Cubs 4, Mets 2

Men's High Games:

Ryan Bethke 210, 209; Chad Furney 192; Butch Farmen 191.

Men's High Series: Ryan Bethke 600, Chad Furney 476, Russ Bethke 463

Women's High Games: Sam Bahr 170, Michelle Johnson 160, Vickie Kramp 150

Women's High Series: Michelle Johnson 453, Sam Bahr 440, Vickie Kramp 426

GDILIVE.COM

Basketball Double Header

Thursday, Jan. 12

Groton at Tiospa Zina



Livestreaming

Girls JV Game at 4 p.m.

Sponsored by Larry & Val Flihs

Followed by Boys JV Game

Sponsored by Mike & Dawn Imrie

followed by Girls then Boys Varsity Games

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

GDILIVE.COM

Friday, Jan. 13, 2:30 p.m.
Groton Area Elementary

Christmas Program

Groton Elementary Music Presents:

A Visit from St. Nicholas

Directed by Scott Glodt

Speaking roles by the 5th Grade Class
Original poem by Clement Clarke Moore

Junior Kindergarten & Kindergarten: Santa Claus is Coming to Town (J. Fred Hoots and Havin Gillespie)
1st Grade: Up on the Housetop (Benjamin Hanby)
2nd Grade: Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer (Johnny Marks)
3rd Grade: Jolly Old St. Nicholas (James R. Murray)
4th Grade: Christmas Time is Here (Vince Guaraldi)
5th Grade: Oh Christmas Tree (Ernst Anshutz)
JK-5th Grade: We Wish You a Merry Christmas (English Carol)

Thank You's

- To all the parents that care for these talented children.
- To Mike Nehls and the custodial staff for all their assistance.
- To Desiree Yeigh for running the sound system and her continuous support.
- To the wonderful Elementary staff who are always willing to lend a helping hand.
- To the administration, the school board, and all of you for your continued support of music education in our school!
- It is truly a blessing to work with so many wonderful kids and adults. I hope you enjoy the performance!

Johnson Leads Bill to Cap Supreme Court Justices at Nine

Washington, D.C. – Today, U.S. Representative Dusty Johnson (R-S.D.) re-introduced his Keep the Nine constitutional amendment (H.J.Res.8) to limit the number of Justices on the U.S. Supreme Court at nine.

“Recent years have brought more calls to pack the Court or expand the Court,” said Johnson. “This is a terrible idea. As defenders of the Constitution, the Supreme Court’s check on the Executive and Legislative branches is essential to keeping our government free and fair. Turning the Supreme Court into a political football will erode public trust in our institutions and nullify intentions set by our Founding Fathers. Capping the Supreme Court at nine Justices will protect the integrity of the Supreme Court.”

“I applaud Rep. Johnson’s leadership for the nonpartisan “Keep Nine” effort to permanently protect the independence of the Supreme Court from efforts to manipulate the number of Justices for political advantage. Rep. Johnson’s efforts in Congress are a key reason more than 1000 elected officials nationwide have endorsed the commonsense “Keep Nine” Amendment to preserve the current number of nine Justices. Polling shows that an overwhelming majority of voters would support this Amendment. Every elected official who says they oppose Court packing should support this measure to make sure it can never happen,” said Paul Summers and Stephen Rosenthal, Co-Chairs of Keep Nine Coalition, former Attorneys General of Tennessee, Virginia.

“The National Federation of Republican Women, representing 65,000 grass-roots women across the country, strongly supports the Keep Nine Amendment. No Party should be allowed to tip the balance of power to its advantage by increasing the size of the U.S. Supreme Court. Americans have long recognized court-packing as a dangerous manipulation that would undermine confidence in the fairness and impartiality of the Court and upset the essential checks and balances that protect our liberties,” said Eileen Sobjack, President, National Federation of Republican Women.

Johnson’s House Joint Resolution has more than 90 cosponsors and is supported by the Keep Nine Coalition, National Federation of Republican Women, and Association of Mature American Citizens.

Gov. Noem Announces Bill to Recognize Out-of-State Licenses

PIERRE, S.D. – Governor Kristi Noem and legislators announced legislation to recognize out-of-state licenses for nearly every profession.

“South Dakota’s economy has been booming, but our workforce has been experiencing some growing pains,” said Governor Kristi Noem. “We still have 23,000 open jobs in the state, and this legislation will help us fill them.”

The prime sponsor of the legislation will be Senator Jim Stalzer (R-11).

“A great deal of benefits come from growing our workforce and increasing the number of licensed professionals in our state,” Said Senator Stalzer. “This bill will allow our boards and commissions discretion to streamline the licensing and certification process for professionals who are making South Dakota their new home.”

Other states that have implemented this reform have seen a dramatic impact on their workforce almost immediately. Arizona’s workforce grew by about 5,000 since their law was implemented according to data collected by the Common Sense and Goldwater Institutes.

In 2019, Governor Noem signed HB 1111 to provide fast-track occupational licenses for military personnel and spouses. In 2021, she signed HB 1077 to recognize out-of-state licenses for healthcare professions.

Governor Noem discussed this proposal during her State of the State Address.

South Dakota State announces fall 2022 Dean's List

BROOKINGS, SD (01/11/2023)-- More than 3,200 students were recognized for their outstanding academic performance over the fall 2022 semester at South Dakota State University by being named to the dean's list.

To earn dean's list distinctions in SDSU's colleges, students must have completed a minimum of 12 credits and must have earned at least a 3.5 GPA on a 4.0 scale. Students with F, I, U, RI or RU grades are not eligible regardless of system term GPA attained. Note that this report includes courses that were taken at other South Dakota institutions this term. A minimum of 12 credits within the 100-699 course range must be taken. A student who passes pregeneral education courses may still qualify, if the student has 12 other credits that do fall within the 100-699 range.

Overall, 3,230 students from 34 states and 20 foreign nations are on the list. Nearly 1,400 students received a 4.0 and those are indicated with an asterisk.

Congratulations to these distinguished scholars on earning this academic achievement.

Tessa Erdmann * of Groton, South Dakota, in SDSU's College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences

Trista Keith of Groton, South Dakota, in SDSU's College of Pharmacy and Allied Health Professions

Tanae Lipp of Groton, South Dakota, in SDSU's College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

Allyssa Locke of Groton, South Dakota, in SDSU's College of Education and Human Sciences

Hailey Monson of Groton, South Dakota, in SDSU's College of Nursing

Sage Mortenson of Groton, South Dakota, in SDSU's College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences

AnneMarie Smith * of Groton, South Dakota, in SDSU's College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

Emily Thompson * of Groton, South Dakota, in SDSU's College of Education and Human Sciences

Erin Unzen * of Groton, South Dakota, in SDSU's College of Education and Human Sciences

South Dakota teachers, school counselors go above and beyond with professional certifications

PIERRE, S.D. – Fifteen South Dakota teachers and school counselors earned or renewed national certifications in 2022, demonstrating advanced knowledge and skill in their professions.

Teachers achieve National Board Certification through a rigorous, performance-based, peer-reviewed assessment of a teacher's pedagogical (teaching) skills and content knowledge. The certification process takes one to three years to complete. While licensing standards set the basic requirements to teach in a state, National Board Certified teachers demonstrate advanced teaching knowledge, skills, and practices similar to the certifications earned by experts in law and medicine. South Dakota's 2022 recipients of National Board Certification include:

- Summer DeCosse, Generalist/Early Childhood, Sioux Falls School District
- Amanda Sonne, Literacy: Reading-Language Arts/Early and Middle Childhood, Mitchell School District
- Carol Whalen, Generalist/Early Childhood, Pine Ridge School

Ten teachers renewed their National Board Certificate:

- Robin Beck New, Exceptional Needs Specialist/Early Childhood through Young Adulthood, Pierre Indian Learning Center
- Amy Berke, Literacy: Reading-Language Arts/Early and Middle Childhood, Rapid City Area Schools
- Lindsey Brewer, Mathematics/Adolescence and Young Adulthood, Huron School District
- Kelsey Buchholz, English Language Arts/Adolescence and Young Adulthood, Garretson School District
- Carrie Larson, English Language Arts/Adolescence and Young Adulthood, Bennett County School District
- Kathryn Lee-Swank, Literacy: Reading-Language Arts/Early and Middle Childhood, Rapid City Area Schools
- Sara Lorensberg, Mathematics/Early Adolescence, Northeast Educational Services Cooperative
- Kathryn Ann Meyer, Generalist/Early Childhood
- Monica Pickard, Music/Early and Middle Childhood
- **Anne Zoellner, Literacy: Reading-Language Arts/Early and Middle Childhood, Groton Area School District**

The National Certified School Counselor certification recognizes counselors who demonstrate specialized knowledge and skills in school counseling. This certification shows that one has met national standards of practice through rigorous education, experience, and supervision. The following school counselors reported to the South Dakota Department of Education that they became National Certified School Counselors in 2022:

- Abby Danko, Baltic School District
- Krista Groeneweg, Harrisburg School District

South Dakota teachers who earn National Board Certification receive \$2,000 per year for five years, with \$1,000 paid by the South Dakota Department of Education and \$1,000 paid by the teacher's school district. The department will also reimburse fees personally paid by teachers and school counselors, upon their achievement of national certification. As long as funds are available, the department will also pay National Certified School Counselors \$1,000 annually for five years.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 188 ~ 9 of 78

Ten \$1,000 Scholarships Now Open to Midwest High School Seniors High school seniors from six Midwest states have a chance to earn the scholarships

WEST DES MOINES, IOWA (Jan. 10, 2023) — High school seniors from Illinois, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, South Dakota and Wisconsin now have a chance to receive one of 10 college scholarships worth \$1,000. Registration is open now through April 28, 2023. Parents are also now able to register their student.

High school seniors or their parents may register for the ISL Midwest Senior Scholarship at www.IowaStudentLoan.org/Midwest. ISL Education Lending will award \$1,000 scholarships to 10 students whose names are randomly drawn after the registration period. There are no financial need, grade point average or class rank requirements. The ISL Midwest Senior Scholarship can be used at any eligible institution in the United States.

Registered participants also receive emails highlighting financial literacy tips, such as the importance of early career and college planning and ways to reduce student loan indebtedness.

“Student loan debt is a huge concern for new college students,” said Steve McCullough, president and CEO of ISL Education Lending. “As a nonprofit, we provide tools and resources to help high school seniors plan so they can reduce the amount of debt they need to take on while achieving their education goals. Students sign up for a chance at a \$1,000 scholarship, and we take that opportunity to share information with them about our free resources.”

The ISL Midwest Senior Scholarship is open to legal U.S. citizens who are seniors at a high school in one of the qualifying states during the 2022–2023 school year and who intend to attend college, either virtually or physically, in fall 2023. It is a no-purchase-required program, and full rules and details are available at www.IowaStudentLoan.org/Midwest.

Additional Resources Available

In addition to offering student loans, ISL Education Lending has other resources for families planning for college and for students who intend to pursue advanced degrees. The Parent Handbook consists of valuable tips to help families of students in sixth through 12th grades prepare for success in college and other postsecondary options. Parents of students in eighth through 12th grades can also sign up to receive twice-monthly emailed tips on academic, college and career planning through the Student Planning Pointers for Parents program. The College Funding Forecaster helps families understand the total cost of four years of college based on a freshman-year financial aid offer. Information about these resources is available at www.IowaStudentLoan.org/SmartBorrowing.

#

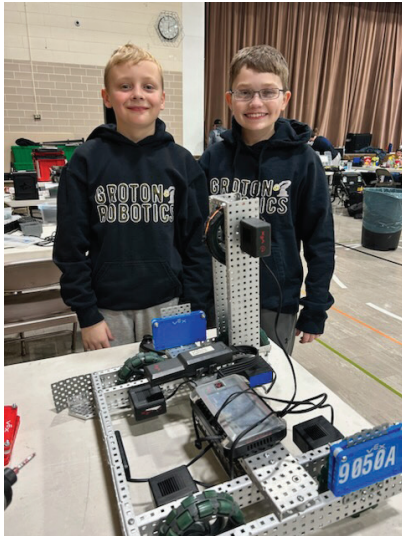
About ISL Education Lending

Established in 1979 as Iowa Student Loan Liquidity Corporation, a private, nonprofit organization, ISL Education Lending helps students and families obtain the resources necessary to succeed in postsecondary education. ISL has helped nearly 400,000 students pay for college, offering student loans and other products under the name ISL Education Lending. The organization, based in West Des Moines, Iowa, also provides an array of borrower benefits, financial literacy tools and community reinvestment programs, including support for free college planning services for students and their families. For more information, visit www.IowaStudentLoan.org.

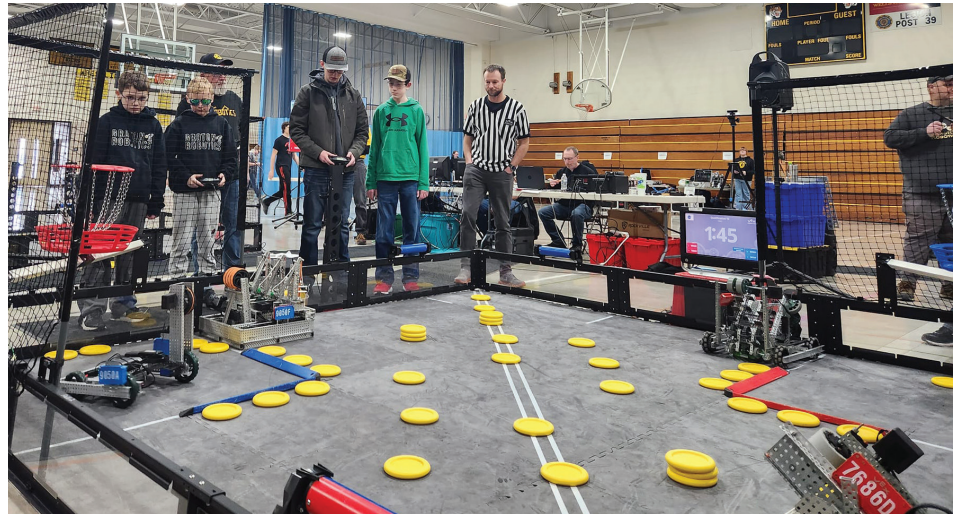
Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 188 ~ 10 of 78

Groton Robotics Tournament Summary - Saturday, January 7th



G-Force 9050A- first year 6th graders -Connor Kroll and Grant Cleveland poise with 9050A. (Picture courtesy robotic parent)



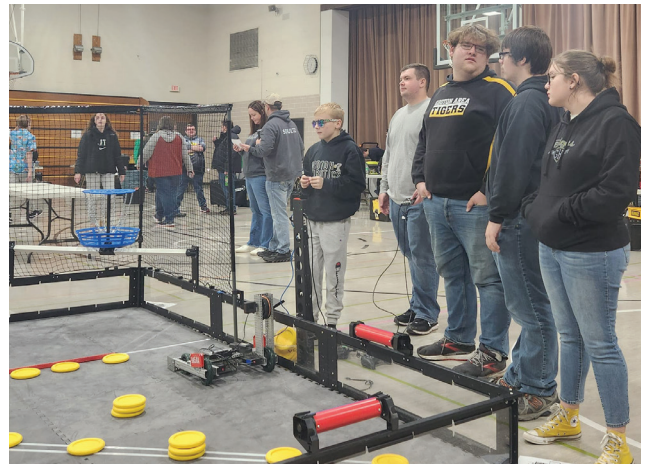
Gear Heads 9050B-Ethan Clark and Jack Dinger driving their robot trying to turn a roller to their alliance color. (Picture courtesy robotic parent)

Groton Area hosted its annual robotics tournament on Saturday, January 7th. Six towns competed: Mitchell (5), Harrisburg (4), Sioux Falls (1), Britton-Hecla (1), Valley City, ND (1) Groton(4). Groton Teams included: Galaxy 9050E-Logan Clocksene, Axel Warrington, Corbin Weismantel, Kianna Sanders. Gear Heads 9050B-Seniors-Ethan Clark, Jack Dinger. Gladiators 9050F-Garrett Schultz, Bradyn Wienk, not present: De Eh Tha Say. G-Force 9050A-(6th grade- Connor Kroll, Grant Cleveland, not present: Lincoln Shilhanek, Logan Olson)

The competition started off with 28 qualifying matches, each team competing seven times. At the end of the 28 qualifying matches against 16 teams Gladiators 9050F ranked 8th, Galaxy 9050E-9th and Gear Heads 9050B-10th, Galaxy 9050E-11th, G-Force 9050A-12th.

Anyone who has organized an event knows how much planning and work goes into it. Groton Robotics is blessed with exceptional parents that rolled up their sleeves Friday night to help set up and came back on Saturday morning ready to jump in. The robotic kids also contributed a lot of their time with setting up and taking down the field and gym. Truly a learning experience in assembly that comes with a lot of frustration in unknown territory.

A famous quote: 'Volunteers don't necessarily have the time; they just have the heart.' Volunteers are the magical ingredient to the success of an event! Aberdeen 3M continues to support Groton Robotics every year by providing volunteer judges. Teams have the opportunity to receive a JUDGES, DESIGN, and EXCELLANCE award based on engineering notebooks, team interviews, sportsmanship, and robot design. If a team wins one of these awards it qualifies them to head down to the national tournament in Council Bluffs, Iowa. Thank you to 3M employees: Kyle Weber-Head Judge, Josh and Jeannie Hadler, TJ Schaefer, Jonathon Bartlett, and Tyson Remy.



G-Force 9050A-Connor Kroll and Galaxy 9050E-Corbin Weismantel, Axel Warrington, Kianna Sanders waiting for a match to start. (Picture courtesy robotic parent)

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 188 ~ 11 of 78

Huge thank you to our other batch of volunteers Ryan Tupper (Head Referee-Mitchell), Dan Rosenbaum, Daniel Shine, Jakob Hughes, Gentry Gauder and Brody Sombke.



Reluctantly posing for a picture- Volunteer moms: Laura Clark, Gretchen Cleveland and Liz Bahr. (Picture courtesy Melissa Schultz)

These guys were a very integral part of scorekeeping, assisting with refereeing, running the skills field and helping with miscellaneous technical tasks.

What started out as a well-oiled machine Saturday morning had a little unexpected technical glitch that bumped the tournament about an hour behind schedule. Like it or not, life runs on technology and when it's down life stops in its tracks. The stress and pressure falls on the tech crew to get it up and running again. Thank you to our lead tech guy Weston Dinger and crew for keeping it together and troubleshooting through the unpredictable world of technology.

G-Force 9050A- Special shout out to Connor Kroll and Grant Cleveland! Although they did not receive an award the 3M Judges wanted to note how impressed they were during the interview. At the time of the interview Connor was the only one from his team working on the robot and getting ready to run his first match as other team members were sick or had prior obligations. 9050A, still mainly used as a 'push bot' to play defense, but also able to turn rollers and score points by pushing disks in 'low goals', unfortunately their day ended in the quarter finals.

Gear Heads 9050B ran into random miscellaneous difficulties that all added up to just having a rough day and did not make it past the quarter finals. During one match a wire got wound around a wheel causing driving issues. Gear Heads is working on another robot between tournaments focusing more on getting points with their End Game expansion mechanisms.

Galaxy 9050E constructed a new robot for this tournament, but after running it found out they had to make some more adjustments before the next tournament in a couple weeks. They were able to make some adjustments to it throughout the day and got their 'End Game' expansion feature to work, but also did not advance further than the quarter finals.

Gladiators 9050F had some bad luck with the 'End Game'



Gear Heads 9050B-Ethan Clark and Jack Dinger driving their robot trying to turn a roller to their alliance color. (Picture courtesy robotic parent)



Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 188 ~ 12 of 78

expansion going off too soon, but did make it to the semi-finals. Hoping to work on the robot again between games and try another attempt at earning their way to the finals.

Tournament champions were from Mitchell(Vexinators) and Harrisburg(KnotBot). Runner ups will also advance and earn their spot at the national robotic tournament in Council Bluffs, Iowa. Congratulations to our runner up teams from Mitchell(Kinetic Energy) and Harrisburg(Capten).

Groton's next robotic tournament will be in Valley City, North Dakota on Saturday, January 28th.

PANCAKE FEED! Groton Robotics will be teaming up with Groton Lions Club for the Annual Pancake feed on Carnival of Silver Skates Sunday, January 29th at the Groton Community center, typically starting at 10:00 am - free will donation.

For more information check out the vex VRC robotics website, download the VEX via app and follow Groton Tiger Robotics on Facebook. Thanks to all who support Groton Robotics!

Commonly used VEX Robotic Definitions:

Alliance - A pre-assigned grouping of two (2) Teams that are paired together during a given Match.

Autonomous Period - A time period (15 seconds) during which Robots operate and react only to sensor inputs and commands pre-programmed by the Students into the Robot control system.

Controlled Period - A time period (1 minute 45 seconds) during which Drive Team Members operate their Robot via remote control.

Endgame Covering: 'As the clock winds down, it's time for the Endgame. At the end of the Match, Alliances will receive a 3-point bonus for each tile their Robots are Covering. So, during the last 10 seconds of the Match, there are no horizontal expansion limits.' Imagine casting out your fishing pole like as far out as you can get it! Now imagine lines being shot off robots to cover as many tiles as necessary!

Low Goal - A region of the field where Robots can Score Discs(1 point/disk). The Low Goal is defined as the space in each corner of the field directly beneath each High Goal, bordered by white tape lines, the field perimeter, and the Barrier. The white tape lines and Barrier are considered part of the Low Goal, and the color of the Barrier indicates which Alliance receives points for Discs Scored in that Low Goal.

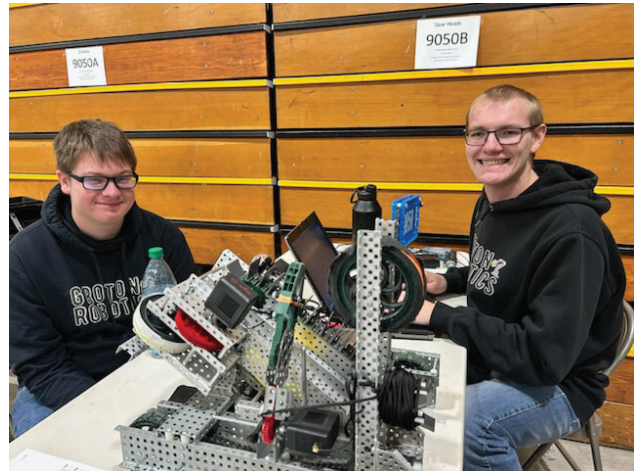
Source: VEX ROBOTIC SPIN-UP

2022-2023 Manual



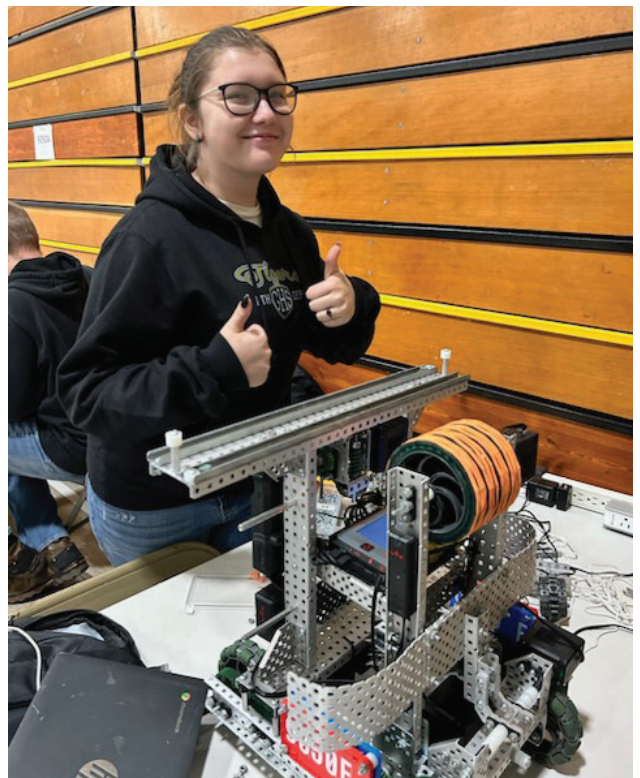
Galaxy 9050E-Logan Clocksene, Axel Warrington, and Corbin Weismantel before a match. (Picture courtesy

robotic parent)



Gear Heads 9050B Seniors Jack Dinger and Ethan Clark working on some programming in the pits with 9050B. (Picture

courtesy robotic parent)



Kiana Sanders and 9050E hanging out in the pits. (Picture courtesy robotic parent)

Submitted by Groton Robotics

Teacher shortage worsens in South Dakota due to politics, low pay and lack of respect

Stu Whitney

South Dakota News Watch



"An element of trust and respect has been lost [for teachers] ... we need to respect their profession by encouraging them to stay here and reward them for their efforts. Being ranked 50th in teacher pay is not exactly a badge of honor."

-- Rep. Linda Duba, D-Sioux Falls

Concern over the future of the teaching profession in South Dakota has led to more aggressive efforts by education officials to train and inspire a new generation of classroom leaders, with particular emphasis on elementary school classrooms.

The push comes as kindergarten through 12th grade teacher shortages worsen across the state, a trend driven by below-average salaries and dissatisfaction in the teaching ranks following the difficulties of the COVID-19 pandemic

and the recent politicization of social studies standards and crackdown on so-called "inherently divisive" or race-based curricula under Gov. Kristi Noem.

Noem proposed a 5% increase in state aid to education for the 2024 fiscal year as part of her \$7.2 billion budget plan, on the heels of a 6% increase in 2023.

That would put \$24 million in new money into public schools for the 2023-24 school year, 44% less than the nearly \$43 million in new funding allocated in the 2022-23 school year, according to the Associated School Boards of South Dakota. School districts can determine how much to allocate for salaries, but the money is also needed for expenses such as utility costs, food services, transportation, technology and extracurricular activities.

State Rep. Linda Duba, D-Sioux Falls, who serves on the House Appropriations Committee, told News Watch that she plans to work with fellow legislators to push for more education funding in the 2024 budget to help recruit and retain teachers and meet the demands of inflation. The former teacher expressed concern for the profession amid the current political and cultural climate in South Dakota.

"An element of trust and respect has been lost," Duba said. "There are a lot of like-minded folks who understand what undervaluing teachers and setting low-budget targets has done to state education over the last four or five years. The chickens have come home to roost."

There were 176 statewide teacher openings at the end of December 2022, compared to 111 at the end of December 2021, a result of teacher retirements but also a rise in K-12 enrollment in South Dakota from 128,000 to 141,000 students over the past decade. The current openings include 36 in special education and 34 in elementary education.

The state's largest school district, Sioux Falls, had 25 open teaching positions in June 2022, according to Assistant Superintendent Jamie Nold, and administrators are still working to fill several positions for the second semester, which begins Jan. 17.

"We're getting calls from schools looking for teachers in the middle of the year," said Amy Schweinle, dean of the University of South Dakota School of Education. "That hasn't really happened in years past. These are unprecedented times, and it seems like elementary education is one of the biggest needs."

Administrators say chronic vacancies can erode the educational experience due to schools having to combine classrooms (increasing student-to-teacher ratio) or hire less-qualified applicants to fill positions.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 188 ~ 14 of 78

Sioux Falls has dealt with some classroom openings by hiring long-term substitute teachers or bringing back retired teachers to fill the void, Nold said. If the current teacher workforce and student population trends hold true, the student-to-teacher ratio could rise to 20:1 by 2025, above the target ratio of 14:1 in South Dakota.

While learning loss from pandemic-related remote classes and teacher shortages is still being assessed for statewide trends, the congressionally mandated National Assessment of Educational Progress sheds some light on the problem. According to the NAEP's Nation's Report Card, South Dakota Grade 4 test scores for math and reading in 2022 were down slightly from 2019, with no significant difference in science. In Grade 8, math scores were down slightly from 2019, and there was no significant difference in reading and science.

Wade Pogany, executive director of the Associated School Boards of South Dakota, said the number of statewide teacher vacancies is greater than 2015, when then-Gov. Dennis Daugaard formed the Blue Ribbon Task Force that spurred a legislative effort to reform the school funding formula and support teacher salary increases with a half-penny sales tax increase.

Despite those efforts, South Dakota's average teacher salary of \$49,547 currently ranks 50th in the nation, according to the National Education Association, well below the national average of \$65,293 and neighboring states Minnesota (\$66,561), Wyoming (\$60,234), Iowa (\$58,831), Nebraska (\$56,463), North Dakota (\$54,837) and Montana (\$53,133). South Dakota ranks 39th in per-student state spending at \$11,102, according to the NEA.

The Sioux Falls schools increased the average teacher salary within the district from \$53,200 to \$57,160 over the past year to try to attract and retain employees, as well as seeking to expand benefits and insurance programs. Some of the top school districts in average teacher pay according to the South Dakota Teacher Compensation Review Board's 2021 report were Brandon Valley (\$73,177), Yankton (\$72,687), Huron (\$66,723) and Mitchell (\$66,555).

But with the national inflation rate at 7.1%, administrators are concerned about their ability to offer competitive salaries to retain skilled teachers or recruit recent college graduates who can make as much as \$10,000 more annually by taking a teaching job across the state border.

Asked if the teacher shortage will lead Noem to call for a reexamination of school funding akin to Daugaard's Blue Ribbon Task Force in 2015, Duba said: "No, I do not. It's been glaringly apparent the last four years of her administration that teacher pay is not a priority. It's important to keep in mind that teachers are professionals, and we need to respect their profession by encouraging them to stay here and reward them for their efforts. Being ranked 50th in teacher pay is not exactly a badge of honor."

Pathway program helps boost teacher pipeline

While much attention is focused on the demand side of the teacher shortage issue, universities and K-12 administrators are searching for ways to ensure a future supply of teachers at a time when many faculty members are expressing frustration with the state of education.

A survey by the American Federation of Teachers released in January 2022 found that 55% of the 3,600 members polled are thinking about leaving the profession earlier than they had planned, almost double the percentage from two years earlier. Reasons cited included burnout, general stress from the pandemic,



Roosevelt High School senior Dashawn Sykes works with Oscar Howe Elementary students as part of his Teacher Pathway training in Sioux Falls. Sykes has plans to become a math teacher.

Photo: Courtesy of Sioux Falls School District

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 188 ~ 15 of 78



"In our own state, too many leaders have sown seeds of distrust, fear, and cynicism in our public education system and its teachers, which hurts recruiting and retention."

-- Gina Benz, English teacher at Roosevelt High School in Sioux Falls

low pay and lack of respect from the public. Eighty percent said that unfulfilled job openings have led to more work for the educators who remain.

Gina Benz, an English teacher at Roosevelt High School in Sioux Falls, cited the political and cultural landscape in South Dakota as one of the reasons for teacher disenchantment, drawing a distinct difference from now and when she entered the profession two decades ago after graduating from the University of Sioux Falls.

"While many people become teachers because they value the leadership and creativity of the profession, political leaders find more ways to standardize education, making the profession like an assembly line for robots rather than a mentorship for humans," Benz said. "In our own state, too many leaders have sown seeds of distrust, fear, and cynicism in our public education system and its teachers, which hurts recruiting and retention."

As part of the Teacher Pathway program in Sioux Falls, which started in 2018, Benz aims to encourage a new generation of educators by putting high school students on an earlier path to earning a teaching degree and entering the workforce, preferably in their home state. The partnership with University of South Dakota is open to juniors and seniors and includes about 140 students who shadow and assist teachers at elementary schools and earn college credits at an affordable rate.

And starting in the fall of 2023, USD will offer its elementary education degree at the USD-Sioux Falls satellite campus to accommodate students who might not be in position to pursue a traditional college experience in Vermillion.

One of the goals is to make the profession more accessible to minority or nontraditional students who can help make the district's teacher pool more reflective of the demographic makeup of its student body. Student enrollment in Sioux Falls is 58% white, 14.7% Hispanic and 12.5% Black, compared to a faculty that is roughly 95% white.

A study by Johns Hopkins University in 2018 showed that Black students who had just one Black teacher by third grade were 13% more likely to enroll in college, while those who had two Black teachers were 32% more likely to enroll. The research also showed that Black teachers are more likely than white teachers to have higher expectations for Black students.

"What we've been doing as a state hasn't filled our teacher pipeline needs," said Jay Perry, vice president of USD-Sioux Falls and a former policy advisor for the South Dakota Board of Regents. "Sioux Falls is working to grow their own teachers from inside their district, with demographics that are unique within South Dakota to Sioux Falls. It's an effort to identify potential teachers early that they think will want to come back and teach, as opposed to what they have been doing, which is you have a job opening and you post it, and you hope somebody will take it."

Sioux Falls seeks diversity in teaching ranks

Ana Rodriguez Garcia wasn't certain about her career plans when she signed up for the Teacher Pathway program as a Roosevelt High School student in 2019. She had some friends who had taken the class and she liked Benz as a teacher, so she decided to give it a try.

Her indecision lingered as she and her Pathway classmates learned about the history of education, lesson planning, classroom culture and grading practices. There was even a shadow of doubt when Rodriguez Garcia started getting field experience with first- and second-grade classes at Oscar Howe Elementary once a week in 2020, right before the pandemic hit.

"It was difficult to know whether I could present myself as a good role model to students, especially ones that young," she said.

But something clicked when she started one-on-one sessions in the hallway with students, using sight

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 188 ~ 16 of 78

words to help their reading and flashcards for basic math equations, developing a personal connection and seeing signs of progress.

"Once I got to know the students, I sort of figured out that I could do it," said Rodriguez Garcia. "I have the passion for teaching, and I love being around kids."

She graduated in 2020 and is now a junior at USD, majoring in elementary education and Spanish and working part time as a paraprofessional at Austin Elementary School in Vermillion.

Having gone through the Sioux Falls school district without learning from a Hispanic teacher, Rodriguez Garcia knows the importance of students having positive role models with similar backgrounds and experiences – and, in some cases, the same language. Her plan after studying abroad in Spain and graduating in 2025 is to return to Sioux Falls and perhaps teach at the district's Sonia Sotomayor Spanish Immersion Elementary School.

"Growing up, I never had a Hispanic teacher around," said Rodriguez Garcia, 20. "I was always around white teachers, and I loved them all very much, but seeing somebody who has the same color or background really helps to show that you're able to reach that level yourself. A big factor for me was that I started meeting teachers who were more diverse, and it helped convince me that I could be a teacher and be that role model for kids, so they don't feel left out."

Seeking avenues for next generation of teachers

The South Dakota Teacher Compensation Review Board, formed at the recommendation of the Blue Ribbon Committee, found in its 2021 report that the number of statewide unfulfilled teacher vacancies was higher than the previous four years, with the lack of qualified applicants a cause for concern.

"In the past, schools would receive many applications for open teaching positions, particularly at the elementary level," the report read. "In recent years, the number of applicants for open positions have been in the single digits for districts of all sizes and locations. This indicates that, while the number of certified teachers is increasing, the pipeline to fill school district positions is smaller than ideal."

Jim Holbeck, Harrisburg superintendent until his retirement in 2019, was well aware of that trend and worked for several years with school districts such as Tea and Dell Rapids to explore solutions. Everything came back to the notion that they needed to inspire and train prospective teachers among the high school ranks who could then end up working as South Dakota educators.

The man Holbeck entrusted to carry out the mission was Travis Lape, innovative programs director in Harrisburg, who started a South Dakota chapter of Educators Rising, a national network that provides hands-on experience and training to high school students interested in becoming teachers.

Since forming in 2017, Educators Rising South Dakota has developed chapters in 35 schools with more than 300 students involved. The organization stages recruitment events with colleges such as Dakota Wesleyan University and Black Hills State University and hosts a leadership conference with motivational speakers, breakout sessions and other activities meant to spark interest in education as a career.

"I grew up in Marion in a class of 27 kids, and I was one of a couple kids who went into teaching," said Lape. "We weren't sitting around at the lunch table talking about becoming teachers, because that wasn't the cool thing. Now we bring kids to college campuses and they're surrounded by a hundred other kids in a high-energy environment, and they're thinking, 'Whoa, I might need to take a look at this as a profession.'"

Rachael Spencer, a 2022 graduate of Brandon Valley High School, was inspired by attending a presentation on special education at an Educators Rising event and wants to teach deaf education, whether in South



Ana Rodriguez Garcia went through the Teacher Pathway program at Roosevelt High School and is now a junior at the University of South Dakota, majoring in elementary education and Spanish while working part time as a paraprofessional at Austin Elementary School in Vermillion. Photo: Courtesy of Ana

Rodriguez Garcia

Broton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 188 ~ 17 of 78

Dakota or elsewhere. Her connection to a high school classmate who is hearing impaired motivated her to continue her American Sign Language studies.

"It's important to understand that there doesn't have to be a boundary between those with hearing and those with hearing loss," Spencer said during a speech she gave at a national Educators Rising conference in Washington D.C. "Our expectations and our hopes for others can go a long way."

Spencer joined several Brandon Valley classmates in signing a "Future Teachers Pledge" in the spring of 2022 and she's now a freshman at Augustana University, adding to a future pipeline that educators hope will brighten the future of the profession in South Dakota.

Lape said that increasing teacher pay is an important part of the process, but other avenues should be explored, such as developing a teacher academy or offering grants to elementary education majors who pledge to stay in South Dakota to teach, similar to the Dakota Corps and Freedom scholarship programs.

"One thing we need to think about is, are teaching salaries ever going to be where we want them to be or where they should be?" Lape said. "I don't know in my lifetime if that's ever going to be the case. So what are other ways we can think about boosting the profession and reducing the amount of debt on our teachers? One way is to continue to give money to the top end of the profession, to those veteran teachers to keep them there, but on the recruiting side, maybe turn to lowering the debt load coming out of college to help pave the way for a new generation of teachers working and staying in South Dakota."

— This article was produced by South Dakota News Watch, a non-profit journalism organization located online at SDNewsWatch.org.



Rachael Spencer (right) signs her Future Teachers Pledge along with Brandon Valley High School classmates in May of 2022. Spencer is now at Augustana University with plans to become an educator for the deaf. Photo: Courtesy Jill Meier, Brandon Valley Journal



ABOUT STU WHITNEY

Stu Whitney is an investigative reporter for South Dakota News Watch. A resident of Sioux Falls, Whitney is an award-winning reporter, editor and novelist with more than 30 years of experience in journalism.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 188 ~ 18 of 78

You Do Make a Difference

By Bryan Golden

Getting Out of a Rut

It's so easy to get into a rut yet difficult to get out. A rut is a regular habit, pattern, or expectation. There is a certain degree of comfort associated with being in a rut. It is consistent, familiar, and safe. We can fall into a rut unintentionally without realizing it.

Although dwelling in a rut can induce feelings of frustration and dissatisfaction, not all people are unhappy being in one. There are those who are happy and satisfied with a regular, dependable pattern. If you are happy with your circumstances -- great. But if you want to break out of a routine, this article is for you.

Any aspect of your life has the potential to fall into a rut. If it does, you have the power to pull yourself out. Ruts are an insidious trap because it's easier to stay in familiar territory than to venture out into the unknown.

How do you know if you're in a rut? An unending routine, a job without any perceivable chance of change, or a situation that appears to have no potential for change are all situations that qualify.

Pay attention to your feelings, they can identify a rut. Are you bored, frustrated, or apathetic? Do you feel a lack of excitement or challenge? Is it tough getting started each day? Do you lack motivation? Some or all of these emotions may be indicative of a rut.

You can get used to being in a rut and accept it as an inevitable part of life. Once this happens, your drive and ambition begin to wane. Getting out of a rut can then seem unattainable. The good news is that a rut doesn't have to be permanent and you possess the ability to get yourself out. The key to extricating yourself is being proactive and taking initiative.

You can't get out of a rut by waiting for things to change. A rut will only become deeper with the passage of time. Only you can change your situation. To do so you need to recognize that you are in a rut, have a desire to get out, and be willing to put in the effort necessary to do so.

Once you have decided to get out you are ready to begin. You can't just jump out of a rut, you have to climb out one step at a time. It took time to get in and it will take time to get out. Unrealistic expectations create frustration and may cause you to abandon your efforts altogether.

Climbing out necessitates changing engrained habits. You want to take small successful steps that will motivate you to keep going. So, pick something that is relatively easy to alter and not overwhelming. Some ideas: take a different route to work, do something different during lunch, vary your daily schedule, or change your evening routine. No aspect is too insignificant.

The goal is to build confidence in your ability to successfully make changes. With each successful alteration you make, you will be building strength to tackle bigger challenges. It's the same process as getting into shape physically. You start out with easy exercises and make them more challenging as you get stronger.

As your confidence builds you can tackle bigger ruts. Every aspect of your life has the potential for adjustment. If you believe you are stuck in a rut and can't get out, you are right. If you believe you can get out of any rut, you are also right. The choice is yours, get started today.

Bryan is the author of "Dare to Live Without Limits." Contact Bryan at Bryan@columnist.com or visit www.DareToLiveWithoutLimits.com Copyright 2023 Bryan Golden

Governor's Awards spotlight South Dakota's arts excellence

On February 15, Governor Noem will present the biennial Governor's Awards in the Arts, sponsored by the South Dakota Arts Council and Arts South Dakota. You can read about the 2023 recipients and their outstanding contributions to the arts in our state at www.ArtsSouthDakota.org. Each is an inspiring example for all of us, many demonstrating a lifetime of commitment to creativity, cultural enhancement and sharing the arts with students, audiences and fellow citizens.

Arts South Dakota and the South Dakota Arts Council have made it a priority to honor arts community leaders. For over a half-century, the biennial award presentations have given our governors the opportunity to acknowledge the value and vitality of the arts in South Dakota. The stories of the Governor's Awards recipients are often a history of the growth of our state's cultural heritage and a reminder that dedicated arts supporters can positively impact the world around them.

Most importantly, the Governor's Awards in the Arts shine an inspirational spotlight on the actions of our fellow South Dakotans. From honoring individual artists to our arts organizations, the vital efforts that build, enhance and share our state's vibrant arts community are recognized. The people and organizations chosen for these honors are our neighbors, friends, teachers and fellow artists. Each biennial award has myriad nominations—a wealth of worthy recipients—each of whom has made our state stronger and richer. The recipients show us what we can achieve through our own contributions to the arts in South Dakota.

Please visit www.ArtsSouthDakota.org and read the stories of this year's Governor's Awards in the Arts recipients: Brian Bonde (Sioux Falls), Cory Knedler (Vermillion), S.D. Nelson (Arizona), Warrior's Work & Ben West Gallery (Hill City), Dallas Chief Eagle (Martin), and Stephen & Catherine Thurman (Sioux Falls). Congratulate them if you have the opportunity—each has truly made a difference for our state.



**By Jim Speirs, Executive
Director,
Arts South Dakota**

GROW South Dakota receives a grant from NeighborWorks America to help increase support for community-building activities and organizations

Sisseton, SD – Northeast South Dakota Community Action Program (dba GROW South Dakota) received a \$100,000 comprehensive community development grant from NeighborWorks America to help people experience better outcomes to advance communities through housing or economic development. GROW South Dakota successfully impacts rural communities through an inclusive comprehensive approach by working with residents to address community needs.

GROW South Dakota is a member of the national NeighborWorks network. The grant will be used to develop leaders, support community-building activities and organizations, and build partnerships. Support may include presentations on needs identified, resident leadership development, housing resources, peer-to-peer collaboration, and grant research and assistance.

“We are excited to expedite this opportunity as it will strengthen our South Dakota communities through a commitment to grow assets to meet the needs of our residents and communities,” stated Lori Moen, GROW South Dakota Chief Operating Officer.

“Communities are facing challenges, such as access to affordable housing, addressing health disparities or creating economic opportunity,” said Paul Singh, NeighborWorks America’s vice president of Community Initiatives, “and NeighborWorks America believes the best approach to help solve them is a comprehensive one. In order to be equitable and sustainable, residents and local stakeholders need to be the ones to drive

In its fiscal year 2022, NeighborWorks America awarded nearly \$1.7 million in grants to 26 NeighborWorks network organizations to incorporate a comprehensive community development approach into their work and help produce a meaningful change for their communities. Comprehensive community development is a resident-led approach focused on a place that aims to improve lives and strengthen communities. meaningful change in their neighborhoods and create vibrant local communities that offer people equitable opportunities to thrive.”

For more information about Northeast South Dakota Community Action Program (dba GROW South Dakota), go to www.growsd.org. For more information about NeighborWorks America go to NeighborWorks.org.
#####

GROW SOUTH DAKOTA is an Equal Opportunity Lender, Provider, and Employer. Complaints of discrimination should be sent to: USDA, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave SW, Washington DC 20250-9410.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Gender Identity Summit closed to media, public

Row over health care training event sparked controversy, contract cancellation, harassment

BY: JOHN HULT - JANUARY 11, 2023 3:06 PM

The third annual Gender Identity Summit in Sioux Falls will be closed to the media and the public, organizers said Wednesday.

The summit is set to begin Friday morning. The agenda includes sessions on understanding gender identity, implicit bias, gender affirming care and creating a gender inclusive practice.

Paul Heinert of Sanford Health said Wednesday that the training event is only open to paid, registered guests.

"Sanford Health is dedicated to providing exceptional health care for all, including transgender and gender expansive individuals," Heinert wrote in an email to South Dakota Searchlight. "This optional, educational opportunity with a strong focus on mental health will help providers better care for the unique needs of these patients, increasing inclusivity in the health care setting and improving health outcomes."

The summit factored into a recent controversy sparked by an inquiry from a conservative media outlet to Gov. Kristi Noem last month.

Summit co-sponsors The Transformation Project had been awarded a federally funded contract for a community health worker in 2022, but Noem spokesman Ian Fury told the outlet that Noem was unaware of the contract award. Her office canceled that contract and ordered a review of other state contracts – a move that drew the promise of a civil rights lawsuit from former U.S. Attorney Brendan Johnson, who said his firm Robins Kaplan will carry the case at no cost to The Transformation Project.

In a statement released after the contract cancellation, Executive Director Susan Williams said the group had been barraged with "non-stop harassing phone calls – including, sadly, death threats to our staff."

On Wednesday, Williams told South Dakota Searchlight that the first two summits drew no backlash from the community. The issues that have emerged this year, she wrote, are a direct response to the article published last month about it in the conservative media outlet.

The group continues to get "hate mail each day and harassment on the phone," she said, and the death threat was reported to the Sioux Falls Police Department.

"The Summit has been the topic of chatter nationwide in specific news sectors and on sites like gab.com and 4chan.com, and for those reasons, appropriate security measures were taken for the day of the Summit," Williams wrote in an email. "We are extremely disappointed by the events that have occurred in the last few weeks, but we are really looking forward to the event, and we know it will be incredibly meaningful to all who attend."

The community health worker hired under the now-canceled grant, Jack Fonder, remains on staff. In the absence of the federal grant funding, the group has built a fundraising page to cover the cost of his position.

The group will see further financial support this month from Sno Jam Comedy Festival, a three-day event that draws comics from across the country to Sioux Falls and donates proceeds to charity. In August, festival organizers chose The Transformation Project and the Compass Center in Sioux Falls as the 2023 beneficiaries.

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

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 188 ~ 22 of 78

Republican lawmaker files bill to ban ranked choice voting

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - JANUARY 11, 2023 1:59 PM

A lawmaker who hopes to be the next chairman of the South Dakota Republican Party, state Sen. John Wiik, R-Big Stone City, wants to ban ranked choice voting.

Ranked choice voting refers to any voting system in which voters rank their choice of candidate by ordered preference. Those rankings are used to determine a winner in the event no candidate wins a majority of ballots on which they appear as voters' first preference.

"This is my last term and there have always been bills coming up for ranked choice voting," Wiik said. "Now that we've seen it in an election cycle in other states, I never want to see it in South Dakota."

Wiik pointed to Alaska as an example of a state that experienced difficulties, but he did not elaborate about what those difficulties were.

Voters in Alaska used ranked-choice voting for the first time during the 2022 midterm election. Democrat Mary Peltola defeated Republican former governor Sarah Palin and others for a U.S. House seat.

Proponents say ranked choice voting allows the will of the majority to emerge, and legislators should not limit voters' options.

"South Dakota Democrats stand for freedom and local control," said state Sen. Reynold Nesiba, D-Sioux Falls, who opposes Wiik's bill. "Local governments should be able to arrange themselves however they want."

Proponents also say ranked-choice voting can eliminate the need for runoff elections. That saves money for jurisdictions and reduces the number of times voters have to cast ballots, according to Nesiba.

Wiik introduced his bill to ban ranked choice voting Wednesday. It has not yet been assigned to a committee or scheduled for a hearing.

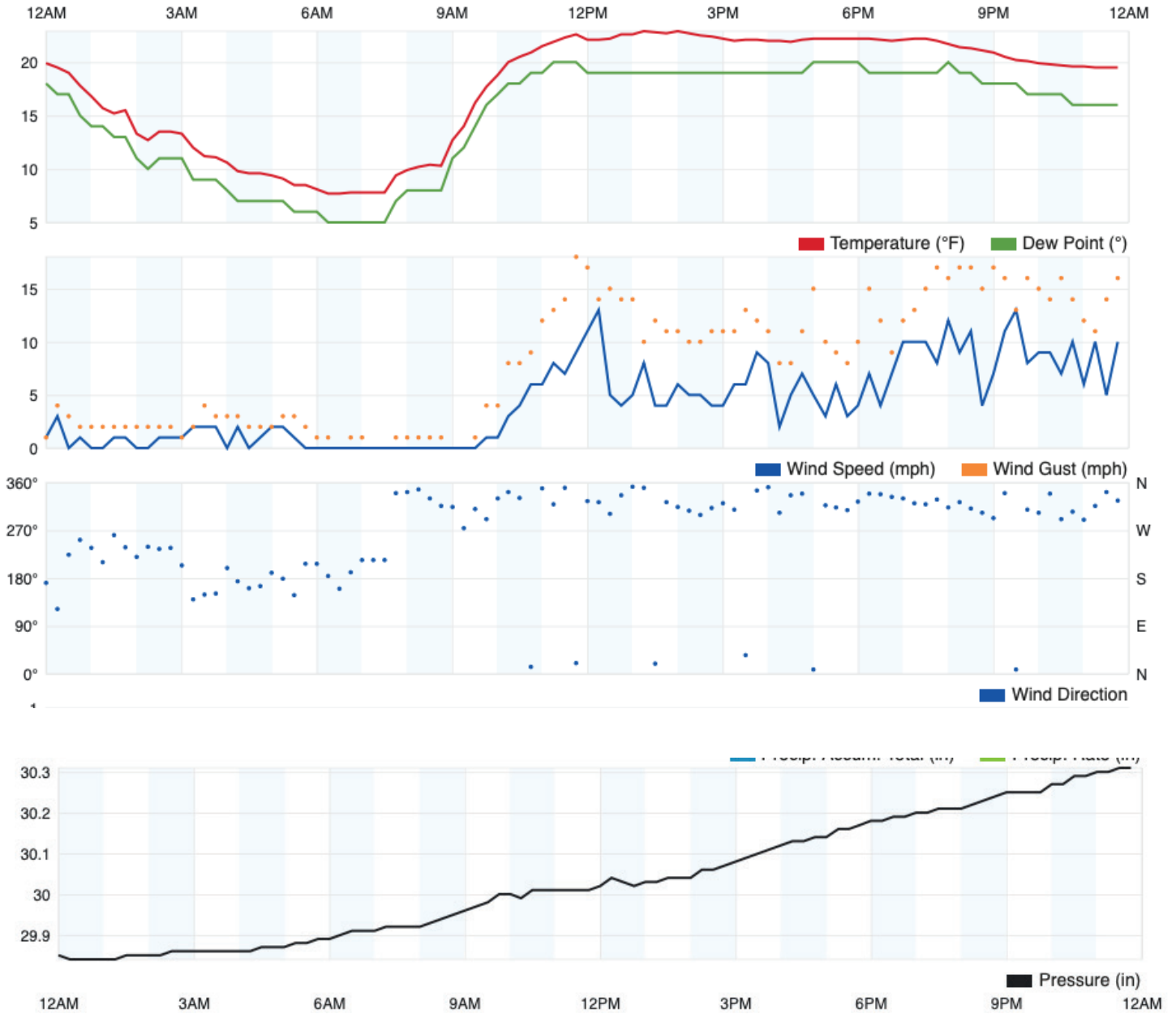
Wiik is running for chairman of the state Republican Party against former legislator Thomas Brunner. Party officials will choose a chairman at a meeting this weekend in Pierre.

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

Groton Daily Independent








Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 188 ~ 23 of 78

Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



Groton Daily Independent

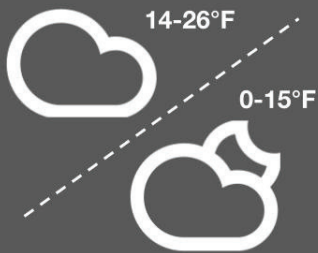
Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 188 ~ 24 of 78

Today	Tonight	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday
						
Chance Flurries	Mostly Cloudy then Patchy Fog	Patchy Fog then Partly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Cloudy	Partly Sunny
High: 21 °F ↓	Low: 3 °F	High: 22 °F	Low: 15 °F	High: 33 °F	Low: 22 °F	High: 33 °F



January 12, 2023 2:57 AM
www.weather.gov/abr

Today & Tonight



Cloudy skies will remain today, with some breaks possible tonight

Patchy fog possible for portions of the area tonight

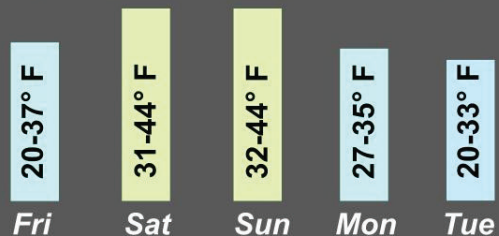


Next 5 Days

There will be a **warming trend into the weekend**, before a cold front moves through later on Sunday and brings temperatures back towards more normal values for next week.

Limited precipitation expected. Monday has the best chance, but the system track looks to stay mainly to the southeast of the area.

High Temperatures



The sky will be cloudy again today, with temperatures a little cooler than yesterday. Expect a warming trend into the weekend, before temperatures return to more normal values for next week.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 188 ~ 25 of 78

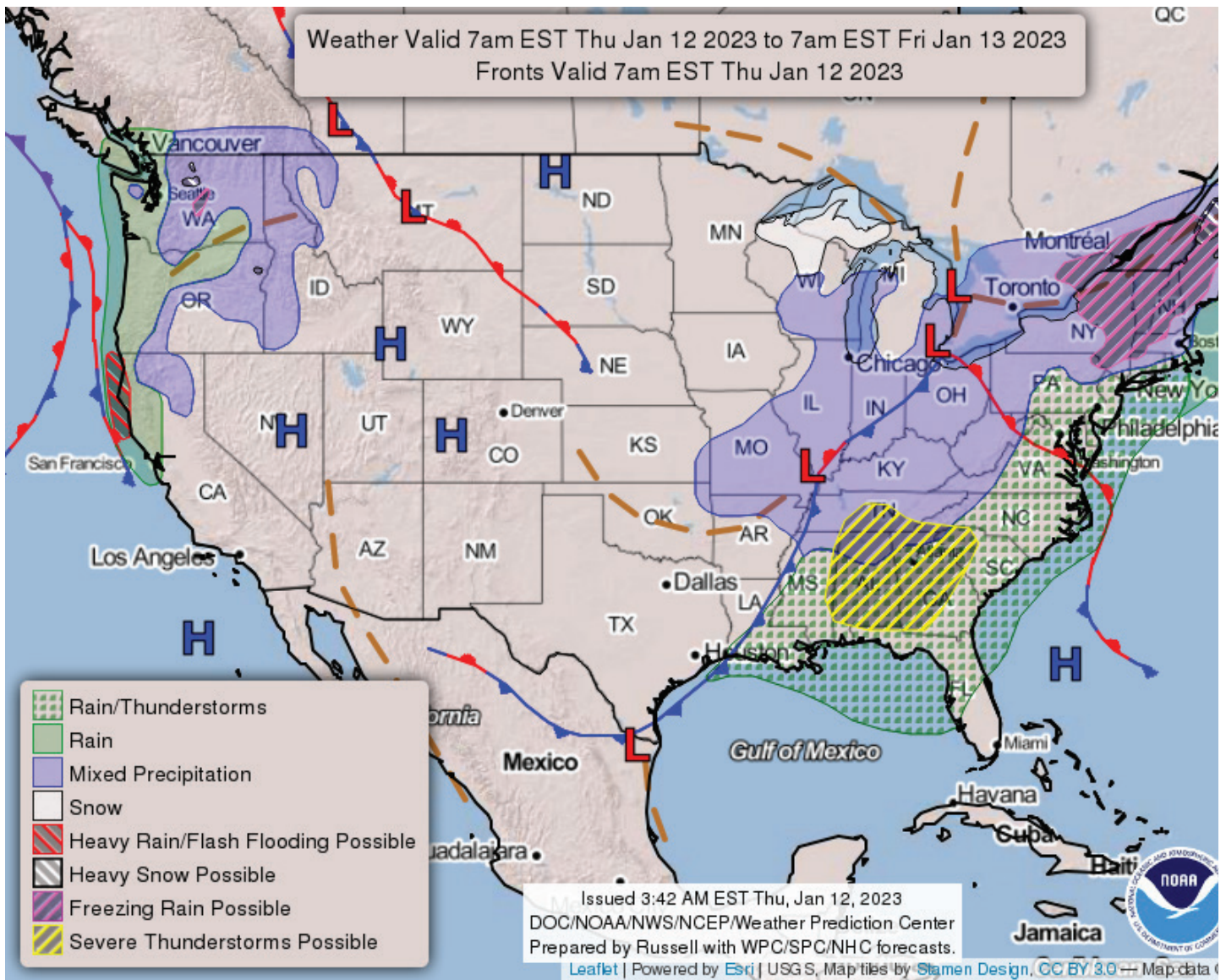
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 23 °F at 1:52 PM
Low Temp: 8 °F at 6:16 AM
Wind: 18 mph at 11:40 AM
Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 9 hours, 05 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 58 in 1987
Record Low: -46 in 1912
Average High: 23°F
Average Low: 2°F
Average Precip in Jan.: 0.25
Precip to date in Jan.: 0.00
Average Precip to date: 0.25
Precip Year to Date: 0.00
Sunset Tonight: 5:13:14 PM
Sunrise Tomorrow: 8 :07:42 AM



Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 188 ~ 26 of 78

Today in Weather History

January 12, 1912: The all-time coldest temperature ever recorded at Aberdeen and Timber Lake, South Dakota, was 46 degrees below zero on this date in 1912. On February 8th, 1895, 46 degrees below zero was also recorded in Aberdeen. The record low for this date was also set at Watertown, with 38 degrees below zero.

January 12, 1997: On January 12th, 1997, some of the greatest snow depths were recorded across central and northeast South Dakota. Ipswich had 29 inches on the ground, Aberdeen had 30 inches, Timber Lake had 31 inches, Mobridge had 34 inches, and Waubay had 38 inches. Some of the highest snow depths were recorded at Summit, Sand Lake, and Eureka. Summit had 42 inches of snow on the ground on January 12th, Sand Lake had 47 inches, and Eureka had a snow depth of 50 inches. The snow depth at Aberdeen was the all-time record, and Mobridge was just an inch shy of their 35-inch record snow depth.

1886: With a reading of 26 degrees below zero, Bowling Green, Kentucky, recorded its coldest temperature on record.

1888 - A sharp cold front swept southward from the Dakotas to Texas in just 24 hours spawning a severe blizzard over the Great Plains. More than 200 pioneers perished in the storm. Subzero temperatures and mountainous snow drifts killed tens of thousands of cattle. (David Ludlum)

1888: Children's or Schoolhouse Blizzard occurred on this day. The blizzard killed 235 people, many of whom were children on their way home from school, across the Northern Plains.

1890: A tornado touched down at St. Louis, Missouri, and crossed the Mississippi River, ending just south of Venice. The worst damage from this tornado occurred in St. Louis. Further east and northeast, one tornado in McLean County passed through downtown Cooksville, destroying at least a dozen buildings, while a tornado in Richland County destroyed four homes northeast of Olney. In all, over 100 homes and other buildings were unroofed or damaged. The storm caused four deaths and 15 injuries.

1912 - The morning low of 47 degrees below zero at Washta IA established a state record. (The Weather Channel)

1985 - A record snowstorm struck portions of western and south central Texas. The palm trees of San Antonio were blanketed with up to thirteen and a half inches of snow, more snow than was ever previously received in an entire winter season. (Weather Channel) (Storm Data)

1987 - Twenty-seven cities in the Upper Midwest reported new record high temperatures for the date. Afternoon highs of 72 degrees at Valentine NE and 76 degrees at Rapid City SD set records for the month of January. (National Weather Summary)

1988 - Parts of North Dakota finally got their first snow of the winter season, and it came with a fury as a blizzard raged across the north central U.S. Snowfall totals ranged up to 14 inches at Fargo ND, winds gusted to 65 mph at Windom MN, and wind chill readings in North Dakota reached 60 degrees below zero. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - A dozen cities in the southeastern U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date as readings warmed into the 70s and 80s. Fort Myers FL reported a record high of 86 degrees. (National Weather Summary)

1990 - Gale force winds produce squalls with heavy snow in the Great Lakes Region. Totals in northwest Pennsylvania ranged up to eleven inches at Conneautville and Meadville. Barnes Corners, in western New York State, was buried under 27 inches of snow in two days. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2010: A magnitude 7.0 earthquake devastated Haiti, leaving over 200,000 people dead.

The Children's Blizzard

<https://noaa.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=3b68adee4e9545b7abdd7355ab7fe367>

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 188 ~ 27 of 78

Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

THE COMMON BOND

Life, more often than not, seems to be determined by "boundaries." While many are set for us by others, we often set them for ourselves. These boundaries separate the rich from the poor, educated from uneducated: railroad tracks that separate the impoverished from those living in mansions, hippies from the elite. If there is some way to establish a boundary to make one group "better" or "different" or "weirder" than another group - someone, sooner than later, will discover it.

Fortunately for us, God has no favorites nor does He recognize any boundaries. "Rich and poor have this in common: The Lord is Maker of them all," wrote Solomon. The Hebrew word for "common" conveys the meaning that "everyone meets or stands together" before God - their Creator and Sustainer.

We each have our own particular way of looking at others. We tend to look at them through various lenses. Sometimes we "clump" them together and label them by color or class or creed. Even though we are advised not to "profile" anyone for any reason, we do it automatically even though we have been warned against doing so. Right or wrong, it is a convenient way to classify someone and "set them aside" or reach out to them.

No doubt the way we see and respond to others has developed over the years. It depends on our education and the experiences we have had in life, as well as the influence of our family and friends. We like people who are like us and avoid people who are different from us. But, thank God He is not like us! He will not reject any person for any reason. He is the "Maker" of us all and His Son, our Redeemer and Savior said, that "whoever believes in Me shall not perish but have eternal life!" The "whoever" includes each of us. Thank God He has no boundaries.

Prayer: Thank You, Lord, for Your love that includes everyone. Thank You for making Your love and salvation available to everyone. Thank You for being all inclusive. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Rich and poor have this in common: The Lord is Maker of them all. Proverbs 22:2



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

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 188 ~ 28 of 78

2023 Community Events

- 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)
- 03/25/2023 Spring Vendor Fair, 10am-3pm, Community Center
- 04/01/2023 Lion's Club Easter Egg Hunt 10am Sharp at the City Park (Saturday a week before Easter)
- 04/01/2023 Dueling Duo Baseball/Softball Fundraiser at the Legion Post #39 6-11:30pm
- 04/06/2023 Groton Career Development Event
- 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)
- 06/16/2023 – SDSU Alumni and Friends Golf Tournament
- 07/04/2023 – Couples Firecracker Golf Tournament
- 07/09/2023 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm (Sunday Mid-July)
- 07/26/2023 – GGA Burger Fundraiser Lunch at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 08/04/2023 – Wine on Nine 6pm
- 08/11/2023 – GHS Basketball Golf Tournament
- 09/09/2023 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
- 09/10/2023 – Couples Sunflower Golf Tournament
- 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)
- 12/02/2023 – Tour of Homes & Holiday Party

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 188 ~ 29 of 78

The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

Subscription Form

All prices listed include 6.5% Sales Tax

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

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

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City _____

State, Zip Code _____

E-mail _____

Phone Number _____

Mail Completed Form to:

Groton Independent

P.O. Box 34

Groton, SD 57445-0034

or scan and email to paperpaul@grotonsd.net

Groton Daily Independent

www.397news.com

Subscription Form

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

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

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City _____

State, Zip Code _____

Phone Number _____

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

E-mail _____

Password _____

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

paypal.me/paperpaul



Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 188 ~ 30 of 78



WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:
01.10.23

7 13 14 15 18 9

MegaPlier: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$1,350,000,000

NEXT 1 Days 16 Hrs 37
DRAW: Mins 42 Secs

[GAME DETAILS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 01.11.23

5 23 45 46 51 3

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$34,120,000

NEXT 2 Days 16 Hrs 37
DRAW: Mins 42 Secs

[GAME DETAILS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 01.11.23

24 39 41 42 45 6

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT 16 Hrs 7 Mins 42
DRAW: Secs

[GAME DETAILS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 01.11.23

6 12 18 31 35

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$20,000

NEXT 2 Days 16 Hrs 37
DRAW: Mins 42 Secs

[GAME DETAILS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 01.11.23

1 3 11 44 62 6

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT 2 Days 16 Hrs 36
DRAW: Mins 42 Secs

[GAME DETAILS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 01.11.23

4 8 46 47 48 5

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$404,000,000

NEXT 2 Days 16 Hrs 36
DRAW: Mins 42 Secs

[GAME DETAILS](#)

News from the Associated Press

Wyoming governor: 'Make hay' and save amid near-\$1B surplus

By MEAD GRUVER Associated Press

CHEYENNE, Wyo. (AP) — Booming oil and gas revenue has put Wyoming back among states with big budget surpluses but Republican Gov. Mark Gordon cautioned lawmakers Wednesday to save, not splurge, out of concern that tough times will eventually return.

"As a Wyoming rancher, I know the value of a good hay year. Because they do not always come around, it is important that we make hay when the conditions are right," Gordon told a joint session of the Wyoming Legislature in his annual state of the state speech.

Gordon often sprinkles his speeches with cowboy references. When Wyoming a year ago was still clawing back from a deficit that threatened to top \$1 billion, he compared the state's struggles with low oil prices and the COVID-19 pandemic to a hard cattle drive.

Now, Wyoming's looking at a surplus approaching \$1 billion, thanks to higher energy prices. Wyoming is a leading producer of oil and gas and the top U.S. producer of coal, an industry with fewer gyrations but in steady decline nonetheless.

While the biggest state, California, has turned from surplus to deficit, the least-populated state, Wyoming, joins several now flush. They include New Mexico, a major oil and gas producer looking at a \$3.6 billion surplus.

North Dakota's revenue outlook also has improved thanks to oil revenue, while others with stronger-than-expected revenue and lower spending have surpluses in the billions: South Carolina, \$3.8 billion; Hawaii, \$1.9 billion; Wisconsin, \$6.6 billion; Massachusetts, \$2.6 billion; Minnesota, \$17.6 billion; and Texas, as much as \$30 billion.

Some states including Massachusetts plan to give money back to taxpayers. In New Mexico, Democratic Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham proposes to tap surplus money to provide \$750 individual rebates.

Grisham also proposes to hire more local police, pay for free meals at all public schools, expand tuition-free college, create a new medical school endowment at the University of New Mexico and make new investments in affordable housing.

While Gordon cautioned against big spending, he's asking legislators who kicked off a two-month session Tuesday to set aside half of Wyoming's surplus in state savings accounts. Wyoming has a two-year budget; he made the suggestion in a supplemental budget released in November.

But he also outlined a few spending priorities in his state of the state speech. They include more raises for state employees including snowplow drivers, troopers, nurses and social workers; maintaining funding for the state economic development agency, the Wyoming Business Council; and storing water amid pressure to send more down the Colorado River drainage.

Even if Gordon wanted, the state's overwhelmingly Republican statehouse would be unlikely to bulk up a budget he described as the leanest in a decade, with an eye toward the state's boom-and-bust economy eventually sliding back to bust.

"And leaner times appear likely. Supply chains, inflation, tight labor markets and other economic uncertainties may conspire against us," Gordon said. "The actions we take today have meaning."

Striking New York City nurses reach deal with hospitals

By JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Two New York City hospitals have reached a tentative contract agreement with thousands of striking nurses that ends this week's walkout that disrupted patient care, officials announced Thursday.

The nurses, represented by the New York State Nurses Association, walked out early Monday after negotiations with management ran aground at Mount Sinai Hospital, in Manhattan, and Montefiore Medical

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 188 ~ 32 of 78

Center, in the Bronx. Each has over 1,000 beds and 3,500 or more union nurses.

Nurses for both hospitals were to return to work Thursday morning, the union said.

The union has stressed staffing levels as a key concern, saying that nurses who labored through the grueling peak of the coronavirus pandemic are stretched far too thin because too many jobs are open. Nurses say they have had to work overtime, handle twice as many patients as they should, and skip meals and even bathroom breaks.

The agreements with both hospitals include concrete, enforceable staffing ratios, the union said. The agreement with Montefiore also included what the union described as community health improvements and nurse-student partnerships to recruit local nurses from the Bronx.

"Through our unity and by putting it all on the line, we won enforceable safe staffing ratios at both Montefiore and Mount Sinai where nurses went on strike for patient care," NYSNA President Nancy Hagans said in a statement. "Today, we can return to work with our heads held high, knowing that our victory means safer care for our patients and more sustainable jobs for our profession."

The privately owned, nonprofit hospitals say they have been grappling with a widespread nursing shortage that was exacerbated by the pandemic.

"Our bargaining team has been working around the clock with NYSNA's leadership to come to an agreement," Montefiore said in a statement. "From the outset, we came to the table committed to bargaining in good faith and addressing the issues that were priorities for our nursing staff."

The hospital said it focused on ensuring the nurses had "the best possible working environment, with significant wage and benefit enhancements" through the deal with the union.

"We know this strike impacted everyone — not just our nurses — and we were committed to coming to a resolution as soon as possible to minimize disruption to patient care," the hospital said.

Mount Sinai said in a statement it was pleased to have reached a tentative agreement and that the strike was over.

"Our proposed agreement is similar to those between NYSNA and eight other New York City hospitals. It is fair and responsible, and it puts patients first," Mount Sinai Health System said.

Several other private hospitals around the city reached deals with the union as the strike deadline loomed. The agreements included raises totaling 19% over three years.

Mount Sinai and Montefiore said before the strike that they had offered the same pay boosts.

Rights group: Litany of crises in 2022 but also good signs

By EDNA TARIGAN and DAVID RISING Associated Press

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — Widespread opposition to Russia's invasion of Ukraine demonstrates the strength of a unified response against human rights abuses, and there are signs that power is shifting as people take to the streets to demonstrate their dissatisfaction in Iran, China and elsewhere, a leading rights group said Thursday.

A "litany of human rights crises" emerged in 2022, but the year also presented new opportunities to strengthen protections against violations, Human Rights Watch said in its annual world report on human rights conditions in more than 100 countries and territories.

"After years of piecemeal and often half-hearted efforts on behalf of civilians under threat in places including Yemen, Afghanistan, and South Sudan, the world's mobilization around Ukraine reminds us of the extraordinary potential when governments realize their human rights responsibilities on a global scale," the group's acting executive director, Tirana Hassan, said in the preface to the 712-page report.

"All governments should bring the same spirit of solidarity to the multitude of human rights crises around the globe, and not just when it suits their interests," she said.

Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, a broad group of nations imposed wide-ranging sanctions while rallying to Kyiv's support, while the United Nations Human Rights Council and the International Criminal Court both opened investigations into abuses, HRW said.

Countries now need to ask themselves what might have happened if they had taken such measures after

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 188 ~ 33 of 78

Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014, or applied the lessons elsewhere like Ethiopia, where two years of armed conflict has contributed to one of the world's worst humanitarian crises, Hassan said.

"Governments and the U.N. have condemned the summary killings, widespread sexual violence and pillage, but have done little else," she said of the situation in Ethiopia, where Tigray forces signed an agreement with the government late last year in hope of ending the conflict.

The New York-based organization highlighted the demonstrations in Iran that erupted in mid-September when Mahsa Amini died after being arrested by the country's morality police for allegedly violating the Islamic Republic's strict dress code, as well as protests in Sri Lanka that forced the government of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa to resign, and the democratic election in Brazil of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva over far-right Jair Bolsonaro.

"Courageous people time and again still take extraordinary risks to take to the streets, even in places like Afghanistan and China, to stand up for their rights," HRW's Asia director Elaine Pearson told reporters at the report's launch in Jakarta.

In China, Human Rights Watch said the U.N. and others' increased focus on the treatment of Uyghurs and Turkic Muslims in the Xinjiang region has "put Beijing on the defensive" internationally, while domestic protests against the government's "zero-COVID" strategy also included broader criticism of President Xi Jinping's rule.

As many Western governments turn away from China on trade toward India, however, Pearson admonished them not to ignore Prime Minister Narendra Modi's own human rights record.

"India, under Prime Minister Modi, has also seen very similar abuses, the systematic discrimination against religious minorities, especially Muslims, the stifling of political dissent, the use of technology to suppress free expression and tighten its grip on power."

At a later press conference in Beirut, HRW highlighted economic crises in the Middle East and North Africa that have impacted people's ability to meet their basic needs and have, in turn, triggered social unrest and violence, sometimes followed by government repression.

"Outside of the Gulf, nearly every country in the region is suffering from some kind of major economic challenge," said Adam Coogle, citing a growing currency crisis in Egypt and fuel and electricity crises in Lebanon and Syria. In Jordan, fuel price hikes have led to protests that turned violent.

One of the greatest humanitarian crises continues to be in Myanmar, where the military seized power in February 2021 from the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi and since then has brutally cracked down on any dissent. The military leadership has taken more than 17,000 political prisoners since then and killed more than 2,700 people, according to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners.

Human Rights Watch said peace attempts by Myanmar's neighbors in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations have failed, and that aside from barring the country's military leaders from its high-level meetings, the bloc has "imposed minimal pressure on Myanmar."

It urged ASEAN to engage with opposition groups in exile and "intensify pressure on Myanmar by aligning with international efforts to cut off the junta's foreign currency revenue and weapons purchases."

In Jakarta, Pearson noted that the only lasting solution to the Rohingya refugee situation would be holding Myanmar's government accountable for their persecution, and giving the Rohingya the ability to safely return.

"Most Rohingya want to go home, but they want safety, they want equal treatment, they want their land back, and they want the perpetrators of ethnic cleansing and acts of genocide held to account."

HRW chose Indonesia, the current chair of ASEAN, as the site to launch its report in the hopes that Jakarta would use the opportunity to push the group to hold Myanmar to account for implementing its five-point peace process, Pearson said.

"We urge Indonesia to use the ASEAN chairmanship effectively to resolve the crisis in Myanmar," she said. "The world's response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine shows what is possible when governments work together."

Domestically, Pearson said Indonesian President Joko Widodo's admission on Wednesday to serious

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 188 ~ 34 of 78

human rights violations at home in recent decades and vow to compensate victims was "significant," but only as a first step.

"What we need now, going forward, is proper accountability for the victims of those abuses and the genuine commitment, going forward, to safeguarding human rights."

US spies lag rivals in seizing on data hiding in plain sight

By NOMAAN MERCHANT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — As alarms began to go off globally about a novel coronavirus spreading in China, officials in Washington turned to the intelligence agencies for insights about the threat the virus posed to America.

But the most useful early warnings came not from spies or intercepts, according to a recent congressional review of classified reports from December 2019 and January 2020. Officials were instead relying on public reporting, diplomatic cables and analysis from medical experts — some examples of so-called open source intelligence, or OSINT.

Predicting the next pandemic or the next government to fall will require better use of open source material, the review found.

"There is little indication that the Intelligence Community's exquisite collection capabilities were generating information that was valuable to policymakers," wrote the authors of the review, conducted by Democrats on the House Intelligence Committee.

That echoes what many current and former intelligence officials are increasingly warning: The \$90 billion U.S. spy apparatus is falling behind because it has not embraced collecting open-source intelligence as adversaries including China ramp up their efforts.

This doesn't diminish the importance of traditional intelligence. Spy agencies have unique powers to penetrate global communications and cultivate agents. They scored a high-profile success when the Biden administration publicized ultimately correct intelligence findings that Russian President Vladimir Putin intended to invade Ukraine.

But officials and experts worry that the U.S. hasn't invested enough people or money in analyzing publicly available data or taking advantage of advanced technologies that can yield critical insights. Commercial satellite imagery, social media and other online data have given private companies and independent analysts new powers to reveal official secrets. And China is known to have stolen or acquired control over huge amounts of data on Americans, with growing concerns in Washington about Beijing's influence over widely used apps like TikTok.

"Open source is really a bellwether for whether the intelligence community can protect the country," said Kristin Wood, a former senior official at the CIA who is now chief executive at the Grist Mill Exchange, a commercial data platform. "We collectively as a nation aren't preparing a defense for the ammunition that our adversaries are stockpiling."

Intelligence agencies face several obstacles to using open source intelligence. Some are technological. Officers working on classified networks are often not able to easily access the unclassified internet or open data sources, for example. There are also concerns about civil liberties and protecting First Amendment rights.

But some experts also question whether agencies are held back by a reflexive belief that top-secret information is more valuable.

Rep. Jim Himes, a Connecticut Democrat and longtime Intelligence Committee member, said he believed there needed to be "some cultural change inside places like the CIA where people are doing what they're doing for the excitement of stealing critical secrets as opposed to reviewing social media pages."

In one 2017 test held by the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, a human team competed against a computer programmed with algorithms to identify Chinese surface-to-air missile sites using commercial imagery.

Both the humans and the computer identified 90% of the sites, Stanford University professor Amy Zegart

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 188 ~ 35 of 78

wrote in the book "Spies, Lies, and Algorithms," but the computer needed just 42 minutes — and it took the human team 80 times longer.

Reports created using commercial satellites, online posts and other open sources — like the daily analyses on Russian and Ukrainian military tactics published by the Institute for the Study of War — are widely read by lawmakers and intelligence officials.

"There is a lot of open-source capability that the U.S. intelligence community can pretty much rely on to be there," said Frederick Kagan, a senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute who oversees the creation of those reports. "What it needs to do is figure out how to leverage that ecosystem instead of trying to buy it."

Most of the 18 U.S. spy agencies have open-source programs, from the CIA's Open Source Enterprise to a 10-person program in the Department of Homeland Security's intelligence arm. But top officials acknowledge there isn't consistency across those programs in how they analyze open-source information or how they use and share it.

"We're not paying enough attention to each other and so we're not learning the lessons that different parts of the (intelligence community) are learning, and we're not scaling solutions," said Avril Haines, the U.S. director of national intelligence, at an industry event last year sponsored by the Potomac Officers Club. "And we're not taking advantage of some of the outside expertise and information and work that could be taken advantage of."

The Open Source Enterprise headquartered at the CIA is the successor to the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, where for generations employees monitored broadcasts to translate them for analysts.

Much of that work was transformed in the last decade. Where people once had to travel long distances to pick up tapes of radio broadcasts in remote places or areas where Americans weren't welcome, sensors now transmit more signals automatically. And machine translation has largely taken the place of people who had to listen to the tapes and transcribe them.

But officials acknowledge they have to do more.

Haines has begun multiple open-source reviews since becoming director of national intelligence and is expected to finalize recommendations this year. Some people involved in those reviews have suggested that the Open Source Enterprise no longer be designated as leading OSINT efforts across the spy agencies, said people familiar with the reviews who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss internal government deliberations.

Three people familiar with Open Source Enterprise say the center had cut its budget for multiple years running prior to last year. They argue that's a sign that open-source work has not always been prioritized at a consistent level.

The CIA recently appointed new leadership for the Open Source Enterprise and in 2021 created a "mission center" dedicated to technology.

"We recognize the importance of open source is only growing as the sheer volume of data openly available increases," the agency said in a statement. "CIA is working not just to keep pace with this trend, but to get ahead of it — and ahead of our adversaries who also utilize open-source information."

There's no consensus on whether the U.S. should create a new open-source agency or center. Supporters say a new organization could focus on adopting advanced technologies and creating more useful products, while opponents question whether it would be unnecessary bloat and take away resources from other agencies.

Carmen Medina, a retired CIA deputy director of intelligence, now studies how spy agencies can incorporate outside ideas and encourage employees to be more creative and intuitive.

She suggests a pilot program in which a cell of open-source analysts would compete for a number of years against the regular output of people with top-secret clearances.

Medina and others who have worked in top positions and briefed White House officials think that on most days, an open-source group would be competitive and might even produce better analysis using information that's broadly available.

"You can't make sense of the world today by just packaging tidbits," she said. "I've come to believe that almost all of the time, the open source way of thinking about it is correct."

Montana seeking prior authorization for Medicaid abortions

By AMY BETH HANSON Associated Press

HELENA, Mont. (AP) — State officials in Republican-controlled Montana want to require prior authorization before its health department pays for abortions for people covered by Medicaid, a proposal critics say would reduce access and delay or even prevent abortion care for low-income women in the state.

The Department of Public Health and Human Services is taking public comment Thursday on the proposed rule to require doctors to provide more medical information before Medicaid would agree to pay for an abortion to save a woman's life or any other medically necessary reason. The information would include the number of her pregnancies and children.

Montana is one of 16 states whose Medicaid program is required to cover the costs of "medically necessary" abortions based on state law or a court order, according to the Guttmacher Institute.

A 2019 federal report said seven states at that time, which were not listed, required prior authorization before Medicaid would cover abortion services.

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services did not immediately respond to a phone message Wednesday seeking more information.

"Given the time sensitive nature of abortion care, requiring doctors to obtain prior authorization before providing care creates an unnecessary obstacle that may result in delays in care and increase in costs for patients," said Cat Duffy with the National Health Law Program.

In Montana, abortion is legal until 24 weeks of gestation. A 2021 law that sought a reduction to 20 weeks is being challenged in court while the state also indicated it wants the Montana Supreme Court to overturn a ruling that the state Constitution's right to privacy guarantees access to legal abortion.

The proposed rule would only allow physicians — not physician assistants or advanced practice nurses — to provide Medicaid-funded abortion care.

"This will really inappropriately limit the provision of abortion care to physicians," said Martha Fuller, CEO of Planned Parenthood of Montana. "The reality is advanced practice clinicians ... are totally fully capable of providing abortion care and determining medical necessity."

Access to abortion is already limited in Montana and the proposed rules would further constrain access in the large, rural state, said nurse practitioner Helen Weems, who provides abortion care at her clinic in Whitefish.

A review of abortions paid for by Medicaid over the past decade led the health department "to reasonably believe that the Medicaid program is paying for abortions that are not actually medically necessary," the agency stated in an explanation of its proposed rule.

The federal Medicaid program, including state matching funds, will pay for abortions of pregnancies resulting from rape or incest or endangering the life of the mother. A 1995 court case in Montana also requires the state Medicaid program to pay for abortions considered medically necessary, such as to prevent aggravation of an existing physical or psychological condition.

The current form for providers of Medicaid-covered abortions does not require submission of additional evidence why the procedure is medically necessary or required to save the patient's life and very few providers offer an explanation, the health department said.

Under the proposed rule, physicians would have to provide more information about patients — including results of physical examinations, imaging determining fetus ages, documentation of chronic health issues and whether patients smoke or use illegal drugs — before the agency would authorize abortion services.

"It is the department's practice to require prior authorization especially when there may be questions as to whether the service is medically necessary," the proposed rule states.

"Whatever the intention, the real-world impact of this proposed rule change will be to bar Medicaid members from essential pregnancy care," Weems said in an emailed statement.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 188 ~ 37 of 78

"Abortion care is essential, medically necessary care," Weems wrote. "Research confirms that being denied an abortion results in worsening financial, health and family outcomes for patients and their children."

The department would not require any additional medical information for abortions covered by Medicare if the pregnancy stems from rape or incest, but the agency would take further action if the number of those abortions increases above historical levels.

The prior authorization requirement would not apply to treatments for incomplete abortions, miscarriages or septic abortions, it states. In an emergency case, the stated reason for the abortion will be reviewed before a Medicaid payment is made to the provider.

The health department believes the proposed rule change will result in the state spending more money on abortions because those performed by physicians are reimbursed at a higher rate than those provided by mid-level providers, such as physician assistants and nurse practitioners.

It's not clear based on the proposed rule how long the prior authorization process would take or who would make the decisions.

In Ukraine, power plant workers fight to save their 'child'

By HANNA ARHIROVA Associated Press

A POWER PLANT, Ukraine (AP) — Around some of their precious transformers — the ones that still work, buzzing with electricity — the power plant workers have built protective shields using giant concrete blocks, so they have a better chance of surviving the next Russian missile bombardment.

Blasted out windows in the power plant's control room are patched up with chipboard and piled-up sandbags, so the operators who man the desks 24/7, keeping watch over gauges, screens, lights and knobs, are less at risk of being killed or injured by murderous shrapnel.

"As long as there is equipment that can be repaired, we will work," said the director of the plant that a team of Associated Press journalists got rare access to.

The AP is not identifying the plant nor giving its location, because Ukrainian officials said such details could help Russian military planners. The plant's director and his workers also refused to be identified with their full names, for the same reason.

Because the plant can't function without them, the operators have readied armored vests and helmets to wear during the deadly hails of missiles, so they can stay at their posts and not join less essential workers in the bomb shelter.

Each Russian aerial strike causes more damage, leaves more craters and more blast holes in the walls already pockmarked by explosions, and raises more questions about much longer Ukraine's energy workers will be able to keep homes powered, heated and lit in winter's subzero temperatures.

And yet, against the odds and sometimes at the cost of their lives, they keep power flowing. They're holding battered plants together with bravery, dedication, ingenuity and dwindling stocks of spare parts. Each additional watt of electricity they manage to wring into the power grid defies Russian President Vladimir Putin's nearly 11-month invasion and his military's efforts to weaponize winter by plunging Ukrainians into the cold and dark.

Power, in short, is hope in Ukraine and plant workers won't let hope die.

In their minds, the plant is more than just a place where power is made. Over decades of caring for its innards of whirring turbines, thick cables and humming pipes, it's become something they have come to love and that they desperately want to keep alive. Seeing it slowly but systematically wounded by repeated Russian attacks is painful for them.

"The station is like an organism, each organ in it has some significance. But too many organs are already damaged," said Oleh. He has worked at the plant for 23 years.

"It hurts me so much to watch all this. This is inhuman stress. We carried this station in our arms like a child," he said.

Successive waves of Russian missile and exploding drone attacks since September have destroyed and damaged about half of Ukraine's energy system, the government says. Rolling power cuts have become

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 188 ~ 38 of 78

the norm across the country, with tens of millions of people now getting by with only intermittent power, sometimes just a few hours each day. The bombardments have also forced Ukraine to stop exporting electricity to neighbors Slovakia, Romania, Hungary, Poland and Moldova.

Russia has said the strikes are aimed at weakening Ukraine's ability to defend itself. Western officials say the suffering the blackouts cause for civilians is a war crime.

The plant that AP's team visited has been struck repeatedly and heavily damaged. It still powers thousands of homes and industries, but its output is down significantly from pre-invasion levels, its workers say.

All parts of the facility bear scars. Missile fragments are scattered around, left where they landed by workers too busy to clear up. Workers say their families send them off to their shifts with the words: "May God protect you."

Mykola survived one of the strikes. He started work at the plant 36 years ago, when Ukraine was still part of the Soviet Union.

"The windows flew out instantly, and dust began to pour from the ceiling," he recalled. So he could immediately assess the damage, he put on his armored vest and helmet and ventured outside rather than taking cover in the bomb shelter.

"We have no fear," Mykola said. "We're more scared for the equipment that is needed to provide light and heat."

Russian missile targeters seem to be learning as they go along, adapting their tactics to cause more damage, Oleh said. Missiles used to detonate at ground level, blasting out craters, but now they explode in the air, causing damage over wider areas.

As soon as it's safe, the plant's repair teams scramble — a dispiriting cycle of destruction and rebirth.

"The Russians are bombing and we are rebuilding, and they are bombing again and we are rebuilding. We really need help. We can't handle it here by ourselves," Oleh said. "We will restore it as long as we have something to repair it with."

Shooting fallout: Metal detectors in elementary schools?

By BEN FINLEY and DENISE LAVOIE Associated Press

NEWPORT NEWS, Va. (AP) — The shooting of a first-grade teacher by a 6-year-old boy has plunged the nation into uncharted waters of school violence, with many in the Virginia shipbuilding city where it happened demanding metal detectors in every school.

But experts warn there are no easy solutions when it comes to preventing gun violence in schools.

"This is a real game changer," said Mo Canady, executive director of the National Association of School Resource Officers, which trains law enforcement members who work in schools.

"How do we begin to approach the idea of protecting students and staff from an armed 6-year-old?" he said of the attack Friday in Newport News.

American educators have long been trying to create safe spaces that feel less like prisons and more like schools. If anything, Friday's shooting fuels a debate over the effectiveness of metal detectors — which are still relatively rare in schools — and other safety measures.

"Metal detectors and clear backpacks are more likely to cause young children to be fearful and feel criminalized," said Amanda Nickerson, a school psychology professor at the State University of New York at Buffalo.

"Many of the strategies being suggested do not have any research evidence, and they may actually erode a healthy school climate," she said — one where students and staff feel free to share concerns about possible threats, which has been shown to prevent shootings.

A more effective approach fosters "positive social, emotional, behavioral and academic success," Nickerson said.

Ron Avi Astor, a professor of social welfare and education at the University of California, Los Angeles, said "it's really the gun owners who need to be held responsible."

Police in Newport News say the 6-year-old brought his mother's gun, which had been purchased legally,

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 188 ~ 39 of 78

to school, though it's unclear how he gained access to it. A Virginia law prohibits leaving a loaded gun where it is accessible to a child under 14, a misdemeanor crime punishable with a maximum one-year prison sentence and \$2,500 fine. No charges have been brought against the mother so far.

Astor said that a public health approach to reducing gun violence in schools is needed, as well as gun licensing.

"Let's all agree that gun education is really important, particularly around gun safety and accidents and kids getting access to guns," Astor said. "Let's make that part of health class. Let's make sure every kid, parent and educator goes through education and hazardous materials safety training in every school in the United States."

"Gun safety education ... is something that most Americans agree on, based on national polls. That's a great place to start saving lives and reducing injury or death," Astor said.

The shooting Friday occurred as Abigail Zwerner taught her first-grade class at Richneck Elementary. There was no warning and no struggle before the 6-year-old pointed the gun at Zwerner and fired one round.

The bullet pierced Zwerner's hand and struck her chest. The 25-year-old hustled her students out of the classroom before being rushed to the hospital. She has improved and was listed in stable condition Monday, authorities said.

Police Chief Steve Drew described the shooting as "intentional." A judge will determine what's next for the child, who is being held at a medical facility following an emergency custody order.

Meanwhile, the superintendent of Newport News Public Schools said the shooting "will cause us to rethink how we handle our youngest children."

City schools rely on metal detectors and random searches in high schools and middle schools, but not for elementary buildings, Superintendent George Parker III said at a Monday news conference.

"I hate to be at this point where I'm considering this, but we have to start relying on those types of deterrents at the elementary level as well," Parker said.

James Graves, president of the Newport News Education Association, said the teachers union would ask the school board for metal detectors in every school.

"If a metal detector in every school is going to allow our kids to be safe, so be it," he told The Associated Press.

The union will also propose that students be required to carry only clear backpacks so the contents can be easily seen, Graves said.

Eric Billet, whose three children attend Newport News public schools, said he supports more security measures, like metal detectors, bag searches and a security officer at every school. But he would also like more behavioral specialists and counselors working with students.

Two of Billet's children go to Richneck, including his fourth-grade daughter who's endured nightmares following the shooting.

"The more challenging piece is the culture change," he said.

"I know some teachers have had trouble controlling classrooms since COVID," Billet added. "I do not know all of the reasons, whether it's parenting at home or other influences, or a lack of authority and discipline at school. I definitely do not blame the teachers for this."

Rick Fogle, whose grandson is in second grade at Richneck, supports increased use of metal detectors. But he also said schools need to be more willing to search backpacks, pockets and desks if kids are suspected of having a gun.

"They've got to overcome social pressure to respect people's rights and realize that the rights of those who could be injured need to be considered," Fogle said.

Researcher David Riedman, founder of a database that tracks U.S. school shootings dating back to 1970, said he's only aware of three other shootings involving 6-year-olds in that time period — and only one other case of a student younger than that.

At the same time, people are shot or guns are taken away at schools almost every day, Riedman said. There were 302 shootings on school property last year. And since 1970, more than 250 teachers, principals

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 188 ~ 40 of 78

and other school staff have been shot.

Still, he questioned how realistic it is for schools to ramp up use of metal detectors.

"Schools are already struggling with adequate resources — finding bus drivers, finding enough teachers," Riedman said. "To have comprehensive school security with 100% weapons detection essentially requires a TSA-style agency that would cost hundreds of billions of dollars to implement across the country. And that's not viable."

The use of metal detectors in schools, particularly elementary schools, is still rare, according to the National Center for Education Statistics.

During the 2019-2020 school year, less than 2% of public elementary schools performed random metal detector checks on students. It was 10% for middle schools and 14.8% for high schools.

About 2% of elementary schools required backpacks to be clear while just over 9% of middle schools and 7% of high schools imposed that requirement, the center said. About 54.6% of elementary schools had security staff present at least once a week; at middle schools it was 81.5% and at high schools 84.4%.

Canady said equipping schools with metal detectors requires a lot of training and maintenance — and can provide a false sense of security if they're not operated correctly.

A relationship-based policing approach can better help avert school violence, he said. "Every student in a school environment should have at least one trusted adult that they can connect with," Canady said.

Krista Arnold, executive director of the Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals, agreed. She worked as an elementary school principal for 18 years in Virginia Beach before retiring in 2021.

"I had a couple of knives brought to school during my 18 years, and (the students) usually sing like canaries and tell somebody," Arnold said. "And that usually got to the front office pretty quickly."

Arnold said she's not a proponent of turning schools into fortresses. Instead, she supports teaching empathy and other behavioral skills.

"My experience is when you build that community and you explicitly teach social, emotional skills — and you talk about how it makes the other person feel if you've hurt them ... you build that good citizenship and you reduce the amount of discipline and aggression in the school," she said.

Battle rages in Ukraine town; Russia shakes up its military

By ANDREW MELDRUM Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — The fate of a devastated salt-mining town in eastern Ukraine hung in the balance Wednesday in one of the bloodiest battles of Russia's invasion, while Ukraine's unflinching resistance and other challenges prompted Moscow to shake up its military leadership again.

Russian forces used jets, mortars and rockets to bombard Soledar in an unrelenting assault.

Soledar's fall, while unlikely a turning point in the nearly 11-month war, would be a prize for a Kremlin starved of good battlefield news in recent months. It would also offer Russian troops a springboard to conquer other areas of Donetsk province that remain under Ukrainian control, such as the nearby strategic city of Bakhmut.

Donetsk and neighboring Luhansk province, which together make up the Donbas region bordering Russia, were Moscow's main stated territorial targets in invading Ukraine, but the fighting has settled mostly into a stalemate.

In an apparent recognition of battlefield setbacks, Russia's Defense Ministry announced the demotion of the head of Russian forces in Ukraine after only three months on the job. Russia's top military officer — the chief of the military's General Staff, Gen. Valery Gerasimov — was named as the replacement for Gen. Sergei Surovikin, who was demoted to deputy.

During his short time overseeing the troops in Ukraine, Surovikin was credited with strengthening coordination, reinforcing control and introducing a campaign to knock out Ukraine's public utilities as a pressure tactic. But he also announced a humiliating withdrawal in November from Kherson, the only regional center Russian forces had captured just weeks after the Kremlin illegally annexed the area. His demotion signaled that Russian President Vladimir Putin wasn't fully satisfied with his performance.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 188 ~ 41 of 78

Gerasimov, meanwhile, was seen as the top architect of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and critics have blamed him for Moscow's military setbacks.

Britain's Defense Ministry said putting Gerasimov in charge is "an indicator of the increasing seriousness of the situation Russia is facing, and a clear acknowledgement that the campaign is falling short of Russia's strategic goals." It added in a tweet that Russian ultra-nationalists and military bloggers critical of Gerasimov are likely to greet the news with "extreme displeasure."

The Russian Defense Ministry's formal explanation was that expanded military tasks and the need for "closer interaction between branches of the military as well as increasing the quality of supplies and the efficiency of directing groups of forces" prompted the leadership changes.

On the battlefield, a Ukrainian officer, near Soledar, told The Associated Press the pattern is that first the Russians send one or two waves of soldiers, many from the private Russian military contractor Wagner Group, who take heavy casualties as they probe the Ukrainian defenses. When Ukrainian troops suffer casualties and are exhausted, the Russians send a fresh wave of highly-trained soldiers, paratroopers or special forces, said the Ukrainian officer, who insisted on anonymity for security reasons.

Ukrainian officials denied Russian claims that Soledar had fallen but the Wagner Group's owner repeated the assertion of a breakthrough late Wednesday.

"Once again I want to confirm the complete liberation and cleansing of the territory of Soledar from units of the Ukrainian army," Yevgeny Prigozhin wrote on his Russian social media platform. "Civilians were withdrawn. Ukrainian units that did not want to surrender were destroyed." He claimed about 500 people were killed and that "the whole city is littered with the corpses of Ukrainian soldiers."

Ukraine's military said late Wednesday Russian forces had suffered "huge losses" in the Soledar fighting. The AP was unable independently to verify either side's claims.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov stopped short of declaring the municipality's capture, telling reporters Russian forces had achieved "positive dynamics in advancing" in Soledar. "Let's not rush, and wait for official statements," he added.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy weighed in Wednesday in his nightly video address: "Now the terrorist state and its propagandists are trying to pretend that some part of our city of Soledar - a city that was almost completely destroyed by the occupiers - is allegedly some kind of Russia's achievement." He said Ukrainian forces in the area are holding out against the Russians.

Soledar, known for salt mining and processing, has little intrinsic value but it lies at a strategic point 10 kilometers (six miles) north of the city of Bakhmut, which Russian forces want to surround.

Taking Bakhmut would disrupt Ukraine's supply lines and open a route for the Russians to press toward Kramatorsk and Sloviansk, Ukrainian strongholds in Donetsk province.

Soledar's fall would make "holding Bakhmut much more precarious for Ukraine," Michael Kofman, the director of Russia Studies at the CAN nonprofit research group in Arlington, Virginia, noted.

The war of attrition, with heavy casualties, may make a Russian victory as deadly as a defeat.

"I don't think the outcome at Bakhmut is that significant compared to what it costs Russia to achieve it," Kofman said in a tweet.

The Wagner Group, which now reportedly includes a large contingent of convicts recruited in Russian prisons and constitutes up to a quarter of all Russian combatants in Ukraine, has spearheaded the attack on Soledar and Bakhmut.

Delivering victory in Soledar and Bakhmut after months of Russian frontline difficulties would help Prigozhin, who has criticized Gerasimov, increase his clout in what has emerged as somewhat of a rivalry with Russia's military leadership.

Russian troops have struggled to gain control over Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and another Ukrainian province the Kremlin illegally annexed in September, after incorporating the Crimean Peninsula in 2014. When Russian forces withdrew from Kherson, the battle heated up around Bakhmut.

Putin identified the Donbas region as a focus from the war's outset, and Moscow-backed separatists have fought there since 2014. Russia captured almost all of Luhansk during the summer. Donetsk escaped

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 188 ~ 42 of 78

the same fate, and the Russian military subsequently poured manpower and resources around Bakhmut. The Institute for the Study of War said Russian forces were up against “concerted Ukrainian resistance” around Bakhmut.

“The reality of block-by-block control of terrain in Soledar is obfuscated by the dynamic nature of urban combat ... and Russian forces have largely struggled to make significant tactical gains in the Soledar area for months,” the Washington-based think tank said.

An exceptional feature of the fighting near Bakhmut is that some has taken place around entrances to disused salt mine tunnels, which run for some 200 kilometers (120 miles), according to Western intelligence reports.

In other developments:

— Putin claimed Wednesday that Russia had successfully resisted Western pressure, especially sanctions, over its invasion of Ukraine and vowed that his country has enough resources to beef up its military while continuing social programs. “Nothing of what our enemies forecast has happened,” Putin said in a video call with his Cabinet. “We will strengthen our defense capability and will undoubtedly solve all issues related to supplies to military units involved in the special military operation,” he said, using the Kremlin’s euphemism for the war. Reports have circulated that Russia is struggling to produce enough weapons, equipment and clothing for its troops battling in Ukraine.

— Polish President Andrzej Duda said his country is willing to send German-made Leopard tanks to help Ukraine as part of a larger international coalition. Duda spoke after meeting in Lviv with Zelenskyy, who said Ukraine needs tanks to win the war. In Britain, another staunch Ukraine ally, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak’s spokesman said no final decision has been made whether to send tanks.

— The Russian and Ukrainian human rights commissioners agreed to swap more than 40 military prisoners, Turkey’s state-run Anadolu Agency reported. The two warring parties have exchanged prisoners multiple times, in one of the few areas of cooperation. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said his country has proposed establishing a corridor to bring the wounded to Turkey. “This is our humanitarian duty, our duty of conscience,” he said.

Taliban ban on women workers hits vital aid for Afghans

By RIAZAT BUTT Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — Last June, a team of female doctors and nurses drove six hours across mountains, dry riverbeds and on unpaved roads to reach victims of a massive earthquake that had just hit eastern Afghanistan, killing more than 1,000 people.

When they got there, a day after the earthquake hit, they found the men had been treated, but the women had not. In Afghanistan’s deeply conservative society, the women had stayed inside their tents, unable to come out to get medical help and other assistance because there were no women aid workers.

“The women still had blood on them,” said Samira Sayed-Rahman, from the aid agency International Rescue Committee. It was only after she met local elders to tell them about the arrival of a female medical team that women came out to get treatment. “That’s not just the situation in emergencies; in many parts of the country, women don’t go out to get aid,” she said.

It’s an example, Sayed-Rahman said, of how vital women workers are to humanitarian operations in Afghanistan — and shows the impact that will be felt after the Taliban last month barred Afghan women from working in non-governmental organizations.

The ban, announced Dec. 24, forced a widespread shutdown of many aid operations by organizations that said they cannot and would not work without their female staff. Aid agencies warn that hundreds of thousands are already hurt by the halt in services and that, if the ban continues, the dire and even deadly consequences will spiral wider for a population battered by decades of war, deteriorating living conditions and economic hardship.

Aid agencies and NGOs have been keeping Afghanistan alive since the Taliban seized power in August 2021. The takeover triggered a halt in international financing, a freeze in currency reserves and a cut-off

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 188 ~ 43 of 78

from global banking, collapsing the already fragile economy. NGOs have stepped into the breach, and providing everything from food provisions to basic services like health care and education.

After the ban, 11 major international aid groups along with some smaller ones suspended their operations completely, saying they cannot operate without their women workers. Many others have reduced their work dramatically. A post-ban survey of 151 local and international NGOs found that only about 14% were still operating at full capacity, according to U.N. Women.

U.N. agencies have continued working – most vitally to largely maintain the food lifeline that is keeping millions of Afghans out of starvation. Despite the ban, the World Food Programme provided food staples or cash transfers for food to 13 million people in December and the first week of January — more than a quarter of Afghanistan's population of some 40 million.

The extent of the ban's implementation and enforcement is unclear. In some places, some women have been able to continue working in the field.

Still, the impact is already great, agencies say.

The International Rescue Committee, which has suspended all its operations, estimates that around 165,000 people missed out on its health services between Dec. 24 and Jan. 9. It warned of an increase of death and disease because of the ban and an increased burden on Afghanistan's health system, which it said is "already fragile, near-to-collapse, and NGO-dependent."

IRC supports more than 100 health facilities in 11 provinces, including 30 mobile health teams, in some cases delivering lifesaving help to remote areas that had no humanitarian aid of any kind.

"It's the only healthcare that some women have access to," said Sayed-Rahman of the mobile teams. "Parts of Afghanistan still don't have hospitals, clinics or other medical facilities. With each day that passes, the suspension has a huge impact on the amount of aid being delivered."

IRC also helps families displaced by war and natural disaster, providing clean water, tents, cash and other necessities. Overall, IRC programs helped 6.18 million people between 2021-2022 — more than double the number in the previous one-year period.

While the bulk of food aid has continued to flow, important nutritional programs have stopped.

Save The Children is among the agencies that completely suspended its activities on Dec. 25. As a result, tens of thousands have not received nutritional support.

Last month before the ban came into effect, Save the Children helped nearly 30,000 children and nearly 32,000 adults with nutrition, including providing calorie- and vitamin-packed peanut paste to babies and children and porridge for women. The halt has also interrupted cash transfers to 5,077 families, who received one round of money in December but none of the further planned rounds - funds they rely on for food and other supplies.

Child malnutrition numbers are high and rising in Afghanistan, with a 50% increase over the past year. Around a million children under the age of 5 will likely face the most severe form of malnutrition this year, according to U.N. figures. Almost half of Afghanistan's 41 million people are projected to be acutely food insecure between November 2022 and March 2023, including more than 6 million people on the brink of famine, according to the World Food Programme.

"Children's lives (in Afghanistan) are hanging in the balance," said Keyan Salarkia from Save the Children.

"If you don't get the right type of food in the first 100 days, then that has a knock-on effect for the rest of your life," he said. In cases of severe acute malnutrition, after 10 days "you start slipping into loss of life," he said.

Salarkia said the ban will affect almost everyone in Afghanistan one way or another. Save the Children was also providing classes for children, immunization and child protection. Its cash grants helped families feel they didn't have to sell their children into marriage or labor. Without that support, more children will be married off or forced to work.

"The ripple effects of this will be huge, which is why we hope to see it reversed as soon as possible."

Salarkia recalled the impact when Save the Children briefly stopped work for security reasons after the Taliban takeover in August 2021. The pause only lasted a couple of weeks, but workers on mobile health

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 188 ~ 44 of 78

teams said some children they had seen regularly before never returned.

"That's how quickly the situation changes," he said.

University of Idaho stabbings suspect to appear in court

By REBECCA BOONE Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — The man accused in the fatal stabbings of four University of Idaho students is expected to appear in court Thursday, a day after classes resumed for undergraduates, many of whom until recent days were stricken by fear over the case.

Bryan Kohberger, the 28-year-old Washington State University graduate student charged in the case, has yet to enter a plea and is waiting to learn whether prosecutors in the high-profile case will pursue the death penalty. Thursday's hearing is a status conference, which often deal with scheduling of court dates.

Nearly two months after the four students were killed near campus — and two weeks after Kohberger was arrested and charged with the crime — the picturesque school grounds were starting to feel a little closer to normal.

On Wednesday, the first day of classes after winter break, students were once again striding across the university's frosty sidewalks and crowding the campus food court.

A general feeling of relief was in the air, university spokesperson Jodi Walker said.

"The students are back and enrollments are looking good," Walker said. "I think everybody's happy to be back under the circumstances. They're relieved that an arrest has been made, and ready to focus on the semester."

The Nov. 13 slayings of Madison Mogen, Kaylee Goncalves, Xana Kernodle and Ethan Chapin left the rural community in Moscow, Idaho, grief-stricken and afraid, prompting nearly half of the university's students to leave town for the perceived safety of online courses.

Weeks went by without a named suspect and few details were released, but on Dec. 30 Kohberger, a doctoral student from the university located just 10 miles (16 kilometers) away — was arrested at his parents' home in eastern Pennsylvania. Kohberger was extradited to Idaho last week.

It's too early to tell exactly how many students decided to return to in-person classes, Walker said. Those numbers are tallied in about two weeks to give students time for any schedule changes.

Professor Christopher Williams said when he stopped by the student union building to grab lunch from the food court, it was busier than it had been for weeks.

"It looked a fair amount more crowded than I've seen it, especially toward the end of last semester," he said.

Students will have the chance to sign up for a series of extracurricular self-defense classes as well as various violence prevention and safety planning programs, Walker said. There's still additional security on campus, as well as ongoing counseling and other support services for students, she said.

But it feels like the students have rallied and are determined to succeed despite the horrific circumstances of the last semester, Walker said.

"It definitely doesn't diminish what happened, but we are figuring out a path forward," she said.

The Latah County Jail, where Kohberger is being held without bond, is about a 20 minute walk from campus.

During his court appearance Thursday, a magistrate judge will discuss scheduling with his attorney and the prosecutor.

Sometimes decisions will be made at status conferences that change the trajectory of the case — for instance, a defendant could waive their right to a speedy trial or agree to skip the preliminary hearing — but more often the conferences are about things like agreeing on future court dates, discussing how many days each side will need to present testimony, or making sure both sides have access to any evidence they need.

The next major court appearance could be a preliminary hearing, when Prosecutor Bill Thompson will be expected to show the magistrate judge that he has enough evidence to justify moving forward with

the felony charges. If the magistrate judge agrees, the case will be "bound over" into Idaho's 2nd District Court, and a district judge will take over the felony case. Then Kohberger will have a chance to enter a plea to the charges. If he pleads not guilty, the case will begin working toward a trial. If he pleads guilty, a sentencing hearing will be set.

There's no guarantee that a preliminary hearing will occur, however. Defendants often agree to skip preliminary hearings for all sorts of reasons, and skipping one does not imply any admission of guilt. Likewise, if a defendant loses a preliminary hearing, they are still presumed innocent in the eyes of the law, and the preliminary hearing cannot be used against them when the case goes to trial.

The prosecutor has not yet said if he will seek the death penalty in Kohberger's case. If Thompson decides to seek the death penalty, he has to file a formal notice with the court no later than 60 days after Kohberger enters a plea.

A magistrate judge has also issued a gag order barring the attorneys and any agencies involved from talking about the case.

Boy told mom 'be calm' before being swept away in floodwater

By BRIAN MELLEY Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Lindsay Doan didn't think the water flowing over the creek crossing on San Marcos Road was deeper than normal when she tried navigating it in her SUV while driving her 5-year-old son to school.

But the creek, swollen with rain from California's epic winter storms, was much higher and flowing stronger than she anticipated. Doan cursed as she lost control of the steering and the 4,300-pound (1,950-kilogram) Chevy Traverse was carried off the road and pinned against a large sycamore tree.

"Mom, it's OK," her son, Kyle, reassured her from the back seat. "Just be calm."

They were the last words the little boy said to his mother before his fingers slipped away from hers and he was swept away Monday on California's central coast near Paso Robles.

"Yesterday I got to the point where I think I ran out of tears," Doan told The Associated Press. "I just don't know what to expect anymore. I mean, I've tried to do a Google search: How long can a child not eat? How long can they be in wet clothes? ... We're worried because I don't know if they're going to be able to find him."

More than 100 people, including National Guard troops, dive teams, searchers using dogs and drones and people picking through shoulder-high piles of driftwood on the banks of San Marcos Creek searched for a third day Wednesday for Kyle. So far, they've found only one of his blue and gray Nike shoes.

The storms that have relentlessly pounded California since the end of last year have claimed at least 18 lives. Most of the deaths have been caused by falling trees and people driving on flooded roads.

Kyle was listed as missing.

With a sister in high school and brother in college, he is the baby in his family and loves being the center of attention.

"He definitely capitalized on it," his mother said. "He loves making everyone laugh. He wanted to make everyone smile. He loves to please people."

As vacation came to an end, Kyle was excited to return to kindergarten Monday at Lillian Larsen Elementary School, his mother said. It was the first day he was going to be allowed to play without restrictions after recovering from a broken leg that required three surgeries and he was looking forward to seeing his friends.

Doan, a special education teacher at the school, was less enthusiastic, wishing she had a few more days off as she took the back road from their home near Paso Robles.

For most of the year, the creek running along San Marcos Road is like so many California rivers and streams — a sinuous band of sand that only flows with winter and spring rains. When it is flowing, it's often easy enough to drive through the shallow waters that course over the road in places.

The Doan family drove the same route Sunday to a truck stop on Highway 101, splashing through the

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 188 ~ 46 of 78

waters without incident.

When Doan approached Monday in light rain, there were no road closures and she didn't think it looked any different from the day before.

"But as soon as I hit the bottom, my car started to drift and I realized that it wasn't the same," she said. "It was completely different."

Scotty Jalbert, emergency services manager for San Luis Obispo County, said river crossings can be deceiving and people can run into trouble after successfully fording them several times. As little as 6 inches (15 centimeters) of water is enough to knock a person off their feet and can even push a car off course if it's moving rapidly.

"We use the term, 'Turn around, don't drown,'" Jalbert said. "With this tragedy, when the responders got to the scene, the water was over the vehicle. Obviously, that kind of energy is going to cause a bad situation."

Jalbert said someone trapped in a car taking on water should get out of it if they can and get on the roof, if possible.

Neil Collins and his wife, Danielle, who own an orchard off San Marcos Road had gone down to the creek that morning to see if they would be able to get out across the floodwaters.

When he saw waves of muddy brown water and the steady flow carrying sturdy oak and sycamore limbs downstream, he said, "This isn't going to end well for someone."

Within 15 minutes, his prediction had come true.

After Doan's car came to a rest against the trees it began taking on water, so she decided to abandon it. The windows wouldn't go down, but she was able to open her door and hug a tree. With the current pinning the rear door closed, she told Kyle to leave his belongings and climb into the front seat.

"I don't care about your backpack," she said. "I just want you to come to me."

She was able to grab his hand but her grip was tenuous and the current swept Kyle around the other side of the tree.

"I could feel his fingers slipping from mine," she said.

As the water pulled them apart, she let go of the tree to try to get her son, who couldn't swim.

"I saw his head kind of floating and he was looking at me because he was going backwards," she said. "I was trying to keep my head above the water, but the currents kept pulling me down. And after a while I didn't see Kyle or what was going on."

Collins missed seeing Doan drive into the creek. But her screams caught his attention.

"I looked at my wife and said, 'That sounds like a human,'" he said. "I heard a second scream and just ran up the river."

In a typical winter, the river may be waist deep, but he guessed it was up to 12 feet (3.6 meters) deep and four times its width when it's running.

After he spotted Lindsay Doan struggling to stay afloat, Collins noticed another body floating in the middle of the creek and thought it looked lifeless. So he focused on Doan, who was closer to shore.

He ran alongside her downstream while his wife called 911 and some orchard workers brought a rope. Eventually, Doan managed to grab some branches of bushes underwater and Collins and his crew tossed her a life line.

Doan was hysterical when she made it to shore, Collins said. It was only then that he realized the other figure that washed by was her little boy.

If Doan had floated another 100 yards (91 meters), he's not sure he could have helped her. An embankment and barbed wire fence would have prevented him from running alongside her.

"Time was running out," he said.

Brian Doan, Kyle's dad, is grateful his wife was saved. He doesn't fault her for driving that route and thinks she did the right things to try to save their son.

Lindsay Doan can't stop second-guessing herself.

"In the back of your mind, it's like, 'Well, what if, what if, what if I just turned around and went back the

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 188 ~ 47 of 78

other way?" she said. "What if, what if I had just decided, 'Hey, you know, let's not go down this road this day?' I don't know that that's ever going to disappear."

When asked what her son might say to her in this time, Doan took a breath and collected her thoughts before saying that Kyle always wanted his family to be happy and feel good.

"Maybe he would say something like ... 'There's nothing that you can do, Mom, it's OK. Everything will be OK.'"

Inflation report could show another month of cooling prices

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. inflation report for December being released Thursday morning could provide another welcome sign that the worst bout of spiking prices in four decades is slowly weakening.

Or it could suggest that inflation remains persistent enough to require tougher action by the Federal Reserve.

Most economists foresee the more optimistic scenario: They think December marked another month in which inflation, though still uncomfortably high, continued to cool. According to a survey by the data provider FactSet, analysts have predicted that consumer prices rose 6.5% in December compared with a year earlier. That would be down from 7.1% in November and well below a 40-year high of 9.1% in June.

On a month-to-month basis, the economists think prices were flat in December. Even more significant, a closely watched gauge of "core" prices — which excludes volatile energy and food costs — is expected to have risen just 0.3% from November to December and 5.7% from a year earlier. The Fed closely tracks core prices, which it sees as a more accurate indicator of future inflation, in setting its interest rate policies.

Another modest rise in core prices would increase the likelihood that the Fed would raise its benchmark rate by just a quarter-point, rather than a half-point, when its next meeting ends Feb. 1.

For now, inflation is falling, with the national average price of a gallon of gas declining from a \$5 a gallon peak in June to \$3.27 a gallon as of Wednesday, according to AAA.

Supply chain snarls that previously inflated the cost of goods have largely unraveled. Consumers have also shifted much of their spending away from physical goods and instead toward services, such as travel and entertainment. As a result, the cost of goods, including used cars, furniture and clothing, has dropped for two straight months.

Economists will pay particular attention Thursday to the prices of services, which are seen as a stickier component of inflation. They reflect rising wages among labor-intensive businesses such as restaurants, hotels and health care companies.

If the data show only a small increase in services costs, that would likely strengthen hopes that the economy can avoid recession and instead experience a "soft landing." Such a scenario would mean slow growth and likely a small rise in unemployment but much less economic pain than a full-fledged recession.

Indeed, last week's jobs report bolstered the possibility that recession could be avoided. Even after the Fed's seven rate hikes last year and with inflation still high, employers added a solid 223,000 jobs in December, and the unemployment rate fell to 3.5%, matching the lowest level in 53 years.

At the same time, average hourly pay growth slowed, which should lessen pressure on companies to raise prices to cover their higher labor costs.

"The soft landing narrative has gained some credibility this year, and that has also led to a stock market rally," said Michael Arone, chief investment strategist at State Street Global Advisors.

Another positive sign for the Fed's efforts to quell inflation is that Americans overall expect price increases to decline over the next few years. That is important because so-called "inflation expectations" can be self-fulfilling: If people expect prices to keep rising sharply, they will typically take steps, like demanding higher pay, that can perpetuate high inflation.

On Monday, the Federal Reserve Bank of New York said that consumers now anticipate inflation of 5% over the next year. That's the lowest such expectation in nearly 18 months. Over the next five years, consumers expect inflation to average 2.4%, only barely above the Fed's 2% target.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 188 ~ 48 of 78

Still, in their remarks in recent weeks, Fed officials have underscored their intent to raise their benchmark short-term rate by an additional three-quarters of a point in the coming months to just above 5%. Such increases would come on top of seven hikes last year, which caused mortgage rates to nearly double and made auto loans and business borrowing more expensive.

Futures prices show that investors expect the central bank to be less aggressive, and implement just two quarter-point hikes by March, leaving the Fed's rate just below 5%. Investors also project the Fed will cut rates in November and December, according to the CME FedWatch Tool.

Fed Chair Jerome Powell has sought to push back against that expectation of fewer hikes this spring and cuts by the end of the year, which can make the Fed's job harder if investors bid up stock prices and lower bond yields. Both trends can support faster economic growth just when the Fed is trying to cool it down.

The minutes from the Fed's December meeting noted that none of the 19 policymakers foresee rate cuts this year.

Still, last week James Bullard, president of the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, expressed some optimism that this year, "actual inflation will likely follow inflation expectations to a lower level," suggesting 2023 could be a "year of disinflation."

Peru anti-government protests spread, with clashes in Cusco

By DAVID PEREDA Z. Associated Press

LIMA, Peru (AP) — Protests against Peruvian President Dina Boluarte's government that have left 48 people dead since they began a month ago spread through the south of the Andean country on Wednesday with new clashes reported in the tourist city of Cusco.

Health officials in Cusco said 37 civilians and six police officers were injured after protesters tried to take over the city's airport, where many foreign tourists arrive to see sites including the nearby Incan citadel of Machu Picchu.

Protests and road blockades against Boluarte and in support of ousted President Pedro Castillo were also seen in 41 provinces, mainly in Peru's south.

The unrest began in early December following the destitution and arrest of Castillo, Peru's first president of humble, rural roots, following his widely condemned attempt to dissolve Congress and head off his own impeachment.

The protest, mainly in neglected rural areas of the country still loyal to Castillo, are seeking immediate elections, Boluarte's resignation, Castillo's release and justice for the protesters killed in clashes with police.

Some of the worst protest violence came on Monday when 17 people were killed in clashes with police in the city Juliaca near Lake Titicaca and protesters later attacked and burned a police officer to death.

On Wednesday, health officials in Cusco said that a civilian died after being hit by gunfire.

Earlier, Peru's Ombudsman's Office had said that 39 civilians had been killed in clashes with police and another seven died in traffic accidents related to road blockades, as well as the fallen police officer. Wednesday's death increases the toll to 48,

On Tuesday, Peru's government announced a three-day curfew from 8 p.m. to 4 a.m. in Puno.

The National Prosecutor's Office said it has requested information from the Presidency of the Council of Ministers and the defense and interior ministries for an investigation it has opened against Boluarte and other officials for the protest deaths.

In Juliaca, in Puno province, a crowd marched alongside the coffins of the 17 people killed in Monday's protests.

"Dina killed me with bullets," said a piece of paper attached to the coffin of Eberth Mamani Arqui, in a reference to Peru's current president.

"This democracy is no longer a democracy," chanted the relatives of the victims.

As they passed a police station, which was guarded by dozens of officers, the marchers yelled: "Murderers!"

Meanwhile, a delegation from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights began a visit to Peru on

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 188 ~ 49 of 78

to look into the protests and the police response.

Boluarte was Castillo's former running mate before taking over the presidency. She has said she supports a plan to push up to 2024 elections for president and congress originally scheduled for 2026. She's also expressed support for judicial investigations into whether security forces acted with excessive force.

But such moves have so far failed to quell the unrest, which after a short respite around the Christmas and New Year's holidays have resumed with force in some of Peru's poorest areas.

Castillo, a political novice who lived in a two-story adobe home in the Andean highlands before moving to the presidential palace, eked out a narrow victory in elections in 2021 that rocked Peru's political establishment and laid bare the deep divisions between residents of the capital, Lima, and the long-neglected countryside.

In Washington, 'classified' is synonymous with 'controversy'

By CHRIS MEGERIAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Hillary Clinton's presidential dreams were undermined by her use of a private email server that included classified information.

Donald Trump has risked criminal charges by refusing to return top-secret records to the government after leaving the White House.

And now misplaced files with classified markings could cause a political headache for President Joe Biden.

The three situations are far from equivalent. But taken together, they represent a remarkable stretch in which document management has been a recurring source of controversy at the highest levels of American politics.

For some, it's a warning about clumsiness or hubris when it comes to handling official secrets. For others, it's a reminder that the federal government has built an unwieldy — and perhaps unmanageable — system for storing and protecting classified information.

"Mistakes happen, and it's so easy to grab a stack of documents from your desk as you're leaving your office, and you don't realize there's a classified document among those files," said Mark Zaid, a lawyer who works on national security issues. "You just didn't hear about it, for whatever reason."

Now Americans are hearing about it all the time. Political talk shows have been clogged with conversations about which papers were stashed in which box in which closet. Voters are getting schooled in intelligence jargon like TS/SCI, HUMINT and damage assessments.

Clinton's email server was a dominant storyline of her presidential campaign, and the criminal investigation into Trump has clouded his hopes of returning to the White House. Republicans who recently took control of the House are now poised to examine Biden's own document practices as well, especially after a second batch of classified material was found.

"The American people are very well aware of issues involving classified documents in part because we've been talking about them for almost eight years," said Alex Conant, a Republican political consultant.

That's when a House Republican committee investigating the attack on the U.S. consulate in Benghazi, Libya, discovered that Clinton had used a private email account while serving as secretary of state. The revelation led to a federal investigation that didn't result in any charges, but 110 emails out of 30,000 that were turned over to the government were determined to have had classified information.

Trump, who pummeled Clinton over her handling of the emails, won the election and swiftly demonstrated carelessness with secrets. He memorably discussed sensitive intelligence with the Russian ambassador to the United States, leading to concerns that he may have jeopardized a source who helped foil terrorist plots.

After disputing the results of his election defeat, Trump left office in haphazard fashion, and he brought boxes of government documents with him to Mar-a-Lago, his Florida resort. Some of them were turned over to the National Archives, which is responsible for presidential records, but he refused to provide others.

Eventually the Justice Department, fearing that national security secrets were at risk, obtained a search warrant and found more top secret documents at the resort.

A special counsel was appointed to determine whether any criminal charges should be filed in the case

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 188 ~ 50 of 78

or a separate investigation into Trump's attempts to cling to power on Jan. 6, 2021, when a mob of his supporters attacked the U.S. Capitol.

Larry Pfeiffer, a former intelligence official, said the situation with Trump's documents is far different than ones he encountered while working in government.

During the time that Pfeiffer was CIA chief of staff, classified files turned up in the wrong place in presidential libraries a handful of times, he said.

"It just happens," said Pfeiffer, now director of the Michael V. Hayden Center for Intelligence, Policy and International Security at George Mason University. "Mistakes get made, and stuff gets found."

He said that seems more likely to be the case regarding the documents with classified markings that were found at an office used by Biden at the Penn Biden Center for Diplomacy and Global Engagement after his term as vice president ended.

Biden's personal lawyers discovered the documents and contacted the White House counsel's office, and the National Archives picked up the records the next day.

The situation appears like "an average, run-of-the-mill mistake" that's "being handled in a by-the-book, textbook fashion," Pfeiffer said.

However, he said it would be wise for the government to review its practices for managing documents during transitions between administrations. It's been six years since Biden left the vice president's office, meaning classified records have been in the wrong place for a long time.

"That's not a good thing, no matter how anyone is playing it," he said.

In addition to the files that were found at the Penn Biden Center, more classified material was identified in another location, a person familiar with the matter said Wednesday. It was unclear when or where the documents were found. The person was not authorized to discuss the matter publicly and requested anonymity.

Attorney General Merrick Garland asked a U.S. attorney to review the matter after the initial discovery, and House Republicans have said they will investigate as well.

Rep. James Comer, R-Ky., the new chairman of the House Committee on Oversight and Accountability, sent a letter to the White House on Tuesday saying that his panel will be investigating Biden's "failure to return vice-presidential records — including highly classified documents."

"The Committee is concerned that President Biden has compromised sources and methods with his own mishandling of classified documents," Comer wrote.

Biden said this week he was surprised to learn about the documents, which were discovered in November but whose existence only became public this week. He said he didn't know what kind of information they contained, and he said his team "did what they should have done" when they were found.

Miller, a former Justice Department spokesman who worked for Biden's National Security Council last year, said it's unlikely that such an episode would have made the news if it wasn't for the concurrent Trump investigation.

"The Penn Biden Center would have turned this stuff in, it would have gone to the Archives, and that would have been the end of it," he said.

Miller said the situation is a reminder that "the government classifies way too many documents."

"There's not a good process for declassifying them," he said. "And when you create this structure, you've unnecessarily widened the universe of classified documents that could unintentionally be mishandled."

It's not a new problem, and it's a concern that's even shared by Biden's top intelligence adviser, Avril Haines. In a letter to senators last year, Haines said there are "deficiencies in the current classification system," calling it "a fundamentally important issue that we must address."

However, Miller said, "no one has figured out a good answer to this problem."

White House: Jill Biden has two cancerous lesions removed

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Surgeons removed a cancerous lesion above first lady Jill Biden's right eye and one

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 188 ~ 51 of 78

on her chest, the White House said Wednesday, while a third lesion on her left eyelid was being examined.

Dr. Kevin O'Connor, the physician to President Joe Biden, said examinations showed that the lesion over Jill Biden's right eye and one newly discovered on her chest were both confirmed to be basal cell carcinoma. The lesion on her left eyelid was "fully excised, with margins, and was sent for standard microscopic examination," according to O'Connor's report.

Basal cell carcinoma is the most common type of skin cancer, but also the most curable form. It's considered highly treatable, especially when caught early. It is a slow-growing cancer that usually is confined to the surface of skin — doctors almost always can remove it all with a shallow incision — and seldom causes serious complications or becomes life-threatening.

The Bidens spent the day at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland, where the 71-year-old first lady underwent a common outpatient procedure known as Mohs surgery to remove and examine the lesions. After nearly nine hours at the hospital, the president returned to the White House solo.

Jill Biden's press secretary said the first lady returned to the White House Wednesday evening, and was "doing well and in good spirits."

O'Connor said she experienced "some facial swelling and bruising."

Basal cell carcinoma is so common there aren't good counts. The American Cancer Society lumps them in with another easily treated type called squamous cell cancers. About 3.3 million Americans get one of those two types each year and the vast majority are basal cell, according to the organization.

The first lady's office announced a week ago, through a Jan. 4 memo from O'Connor, that doctors had discovered the lesion above her right eye during a recent routine skin cancer screening. The lesions removed from her chest and left eyelid were discovered on Wednesday.

The Mohs surgery involves cutting away thin layers of skin and examining each layer for signs of cancer. Doctors keep removing and examining layers of skin until there are no signs of cancer.

Doctors recommended removing the lesion from above Jill Biden's right eye "in an abundance of caution," O'Connor wrote in the memo.

The Skin Cancer Foundation said the delicate skin around the eyes is especially vulnerable to damage from the sun's ultraviolet rays. Sun exposure is the main risk for basal cell carcinoma.

Jill Biden had the procedure the morning after she and the president returned from Mexico City, where he held two days of talks with the leaders of Mexico and Canada, and she kept a separate schedule of meetings with women, children and her counterparts from both countries.

Biden accompanied the first lady to the hospital, as he has done for some of her past medical appointments since he became president.

"Today is about his wife, that is the focus for the president right now," White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said when asked about Biden's activities at the hospital while doctors cared for the first lady. "This is about the president supporting his wife of 45 years."

Biden accompanied his wife to an outpatient center near the campus of George Washington University in April 2021 for a medical procedure the White House described only as "common."

He also went with her to Walter Reed in July 2021 for outpatient treatment after she punctured her left foot while walking on a beach in Hawaii. She had stopped there on her way back to Washington from the Tokyo Olympics.

Source: Biden team finds more docs with classified markings

By MICHAEL BALSAMO and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden's legal team has discovered additional documents containing classification markings in a second location, a person familiar with the matter told The Associated Press on Wednesday. The revelation comes days after an attorney for the president said Biden's lawyers had discovered a "small number" of classified documents at his former office space in Washington.

Earlier this week, the White House confirmed that the Department of Justice was reviewing "a small

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 188 ~ 52 of 78

number of documents with classified markings" found at the office. Biden's attorneys had discovered the documents at the offices of the Penn Biden Center and then immediately called the National Archives about the discovery, the White House said. Biden kept an office there after he left the vice presidency in 2017 until shortly before he launched his Democratic presidential campaign in 2019.

The person who spoke to the AP Wednesday said the president's legal team found additional classified material at a second location. The person was not authorized to publicly discuss details of the sensitive matter and spoke on condition of anonymity. The person did not say when or where the material was found or specific details about the level of classification of the documents.

The revelation that additional classified documents were uncovered by Biden's attorneys came hours after White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre dodged questions about Biden's handling of classified information and the West Wing's management of the discovery. She said the White House was committed to handling the matter in the "right way," pointing to Biden's personal attorneys' immediate notification of the National Archives.

But she refused to say when Biden himself had been briefed, whether there were any more classified documents potentially located at other unauthorized locations, and why the White House waited more than two months to reveal the discovery of the initial batch of documents, which were found Nov. 2, days before the midterm elections.

"As my colleagues in the Counsel have stated and said to all of you yesterday, this is an ongoing process under the review of the Department of Justice. So we are going to be limited on what we can say here," Jean-Pierre said.

The White House and Justice Department declined to comment Wednesday on reports of the second set of classified records. It was first reported by NBC News.

The Justice Department is reviewing the records that were found at the Penn Biden Center and Attorney General Merrick Garland has asked John Lausch, the U.S. attorney in Chicago, to review the the matter, another person familiar with the matter told the AP this week. That person also was not authorized to discuss the matter publicly and spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity.

Lausch is one of the few U.S. attorneys to be held over from former President Donald Trump's administration.

Irrespective of the Justice Department review, the revelation that Biden potentially mishandled classified or presidential records could prove to be a political headache for the president, who called Trump's decision to keep hundreds of such records at his private club in Florida "irresponsible."

Biden has said he was "surprised to learn that there are any government records that were taken there to that office" but his lawyers "did what they should have done" when they immediately called the National Archives.

The top Republican on the House Intelligence Committee has requested that the U.S. intelligence community conduct a "damage assessment" of potentially classified documents.

The revelation also may complicate the Justice Department's consideration of whether to bring charges against Trump, a Republican who is trying to win back the White House in 2024 and has repeatedly claimed the department's inquiry into his own conduct amounted to "corruption."

There are significant differences between the Trump and Biden situations, including the gravity of an ongoing grand jury investigation into the Mar-a-Lago matter.

Storm-weary Californians clean up, brace for another torrent

By MARTHA MENDOZA and CHRISTOPHER WEBER Associated Press

SANTA CRUZ, Calif. (AP) — Laurie Morse shoveled wet sand into bags in the pouring rain Wednesday, preparing to stack them along her garage in a last ditch effort to keep out a rising creek on California's central coast, as the storm-ravaged state braced for another round of lashing rains and damaging winds.

Morse's roof was leaking, and along with her neighbors near Santa Cruz, she's spent every day of 2023 trying to figure out how to keep her house dry after an unrelenting onslaught of violent weather caused

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 188 ~ 53 of 78

widespread damage over the past two weeks. Cars were submerged, trees uprooted and roofs blown off homes.

While the rain eased in many areas, thunderstorms led yet another atmospheric river into the northern half of the state and forecasters said the latest system would be followed by more storms this weekend and next week. From the San Francisco Bay Area down to Los Angeles, Californians had little time to rest between assessing damage from the last storm and preparing for the next.

Earlier this week, Morse and her fellow residents of tiny Rio Del Mar were ordered to evacuate as hill-sides collapsed and massive logs and stumps tumbled down the bloated Aptos Creek from the Santa Cruz mountains into the Monterey Bay.

Now they were scrambling to clean up while simultaneously stacking sandbags and hoping for the best as the rain got heavier.

"It's one step forward and two steps back right now," said Morse, 59, a disabled Army veteran. "There's so much damage already."

The plume of moisture lurking off the northern coast stretched all the way over the Pacific to Hawaii, making the atmospheric river "a true Pineapple Express," the National Weather Service said.

Michael Anderson, climatologist with the Department of Water Resources, said California has been hit by seven storms since the end of December and two more slightly weaker ones were expected before the state gets a reprieve by the end of next week.

"The challenge is they're storms eight and nine in the sequence and the cumulative effect is likely to cause impacts larger than the storms themselves might cause," Anderson said.

At least 18 people have died in the storms battering the state. The figure is likely to rise, Gov. Gavin Newsom said Tuesday during a visit to the scenic town of Capitola, just up the Santa Cruz coast from Rio Del Mar, that was hard hit by flooding creek waters. Raging surf destroyed an iconic pier.

A 43-year-old woman was found dead Wednesday in her submerged car a day after calling 911 to say the vehicle was stuck in floodwaters north of San Francisco, according to the Sonoma County Sheriff's Office. When the search resumed at sunrise, divers discovered the car under about 10 feet (3 meters) of water off a rural road near Forestville, the department said.

More than half of California's 58 counties were declared disaster areas and repairing the damage may cost more than \$1 billion, according to Brian Ferguson, spokesperson for the state Office of Emergency Services.

Crews worked to reopen major highways that were closed by rockslides, swamped by flooding or smothered with mud while more than 10,000 people who were ordered out of seaside towns on the central coast were allowed to return home.

That included Montecito, a wealthy Santa Barbara County community that is home to Prince Harry and other celebrities where 23 people died and more than 100 homes were destroyed in a mudslide five years ago.

This week's storm brought back harrowing memories for Montecito resident Susanne Tobey, who was rescued when the 2018 mudslide roared through her community.

Like five years ago, when the community was asked to evacuate on Monday, the only highway out was closed, she said. "It was terrifying," she said of the latest storm. "I don't think I slept the whole night and the rain was ... you just can't imagine. It's like just living in a waterfall." But even with yet another storm on its way, Tobey said she plans to stay put again.

She said the community has made improvements that she hopes will prevent a similar tragedy, including adding steel nets to catch falling boulders, and debris basins to catch the deluge before it overtakes the hillsides that plunge into the Pacific Ocean.

"You have to be brave to live in California," she said, adding: "I can't imagine living anywhere else."

High in the Eastern Sierra, California Department of Transportation snowplows were running around the clock to fully reopen U.S. 395, which at one time was blocked by 75 miles (121 kilometers) of snow, ice and rocks. The Palisades Tahoe ski resort reported that it had received 300 inches (7.6 meters) of snowfall

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 188 ~ 54 of 78

so far this season.

Despite the precipitation, most of the state remained in extreme or severe drought, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor.

Mudslides damaged some homes in pricey Los Angeles hillside areas, while further up the coast a sink-hole damaged 15 homes in the rural community of Orcutt.

Kevin Costner, best-actor winner in a television drama series for "Yellowstone," was unable to attend Tuesday's Golden Globe awards in LA because of the weather. Presenter Regina Hall said he was sheltering in place in Santa Barbara due to flooding.

In San Francisco, a tree fell on a commuter bus on Tuesday without causing injuries and lightning struck the city's iconic Transamerica Pyramid building without damage. In South San Francisco, high winds also ripped away part of the roof on a large apartment building.

Crews wielding chainsaws were working around the clock to clear all the downed trees across the Bay Area. Arborist Remy Hummer said he expected many more trees to fall as rains returned.

"The soil is basically like a sponge, and at some point he can't hold any more water and trees become essentially almost buoyant in the soil and very loose. And then you get the combinations of high winds and that's when you get tree failures, meaning full trees uprooting and falling over," he said.

Jeff Beck, guitar god who influenced generations, dies at 78

By MARK KENNEDY AP Entertainment Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Jeff Beck, a guitar virtuoso who pushed the boundaries of blues, jazz and rock 'n' roll, influencing generations of shredders along the way and becoming known as the guitar player's guitar player, has died. He was 78.

Beck died Tuesday after "suddenly contracting bacterial meningitis," his representatives said in a statement released Wednesday. The location was not immediately known.

"Jeff was such a nice person and an outstanding iconic, genius guitar player — there will never be another Jeff Beck," Tony Iommi, guitarist for Black Sabbath wrote on Twitter among the many tributes.

Beck first came to prominence as a member of the Yardbirds and then went out on his own in a solo career that incorporated hard rock, jazz, funky blues and even opera. He was known for his improvising, love of harmonics and the whammy bar on his preferred guitar, the Fender Stratocaster.

"Jeff Beck is the best guitar player on the planet," Joe Perry, the lead guitarist of Aerosmith, told The New York Times in 2010. "He is head, hands and feet above all the rest of us, with the kind of talent that appears only once every generation or two."

Beck was among the rock-guitarist pantheon from the late '60s that included Eric Clapton, Jimmy Page and Jimi Hendrix. Beck won eight Grammy Awards and was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame twice — once with the Yardbirds in 1992 and again as a solo artist in 2009. He was ranked fifth in Rolling Stone magazine's list of the "100 Greatest Guitarists of All Time."

"Jeff could channel music from the ethereal," Page tweeted Wednesday.

Beck played guitar with vocalists as varied as Luciano Pavarotti, Macy Gray, Chrissie Hynde, Joss Stone, Imelda May, Cyndi Lauper, Wynonna Judd, Buddy Guy and Johnny Depp. He made two records with Rod Stewart — 1968's "Truth" and 1969's "Beck-Ola" — and one with a 64-piece orchestra, "Emotion & Commotion."

"I like an element of chaos in music. That feeling is the best thing ever, as long as you don't have too much of it. It's got to be in balance. I just saw Cirque du Soleil, and it struck me as complete organized chaos," he told Guitar World in 2014. "If I could turn that into music, it's not far away from what my ultimate goal would be, which is to delight people with chaos and beauty at the same time."

Beck career highlights include joining with bassist Tim Bogert and drummer Carmine Appice to create the power trio that released "Beck, Bogert and Appice" in 1973, tours with Brian Wilson and Buddy Guy and a tribute album to the late guitarist Les Paul, "Rock 'n' Roll Party (Honoring Les Paul)."

Beck's album credits include "Talking Book," Stevie Wonder's landmark 1972 album. His tenderly rendered guitar solo on the ballad, "Lookin' For Another Pure Love" won him a warm "Do it Jeff" callout from

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 188 ~ 55 of 78

Wonder that was included on the album cut.

Geoffrey Arnold Beck was born in Surrey, England, and attended Wimbledon Art College. His father was an accountant, and his mother worked in a chocolate factory. As a boy, he built his first instrument, using a cigar box, a picture frame for the neck and string from a radio-controlled toy airplane.

He was in a few bands — including Nightshift and The Tridents — before joining the Yardbirds in 1965, replacing Clapton but only a year later giving way to Page. During his tenure, the band created the memorable singles “Heart Full of Soul,” “I’m a Man” and “Shapes of Things.”

Beck’s first hit single was 1967’s instrumental “Beck’s Bolero,” which featured future Led Zeppelin members Page and John Paul Jones, and The Who drummer Keith Moon. The Jeff Beck Group — with Stewart singing — was later booked to play the 1969 Woodstock music festival but their appearance was canceled. Beck later said there was unrest in the band.

“I could see the end of the tunnel,” he told Rolling Stone in 2010.

Beck was friends with Hendrix and they performed together. Before Hendrix, most rock guitar players concentrated on a similar style and technical vocabulary. Hendrix blew that apart.

“He came along and reset all of the rules in one evening,” Beck told Guitar World.

Beck teamed up with legendary producer George Martin — a.k.a. “the fifth Beatle” — to help him fashion the genre-melding, jazz-fusion classic “Blow by Blow” (1975) and “Wired” (1976). He teamed up with Seal on the Hendrix tribute “Stone Free,” created a jazz-fusion group led by synthesizer player Jan Hammer and honored rockabilly guitarist Cliff Gallup with the album “Crazy Legs.” He put out “Loud Hailer” in 2016.

Beck’s guitar work can be heard on the soundtracks of such films as “Stomp the Yard,” “Shallow Hal,” “Casino,” “Honeymoon in Vegas,” “Twins,” “Observe and Report” and “Little Big League.” Beck recently completed a tour supporting his album with Depp, “18” and was heard on Ozzy Osbourne’s “Patient Number 9” album.

Beck’s career never hit the commercial highs of Clapton. A perfectionist, he preferred to make critically well-received instrumental records and left the limelight for long stretches, enjoying his time restoring vintage automobiles. He and Clapton had a tense relationship early on but became friends in later life and toured together.

Why did the two wait some four decades to tour together?

“Because we were all trying to be big bananas,” Beck told Rolling Stone in 2010. “Except I didn’t have the luxury of the hit songs Eric’s got.”

Beck is survived by his wife, Sandra.

Brazil rioters plotted openly online, pitched huge ‘party’

By JOSHUA GOODMAN and DAVID KLEPPER Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — The map was called “Beach Trip” and was blasted out to more than 18,000 members of a public Telegram channel called, in Portuguese, “Hunting and Fishing.”

But instead of outdoor recreation tips, the 43 pins spread across the map of Brazil pointed to cities where bus transportation to the capital could be found for what promoters promised would a huge “party” on Jan. 8.

“Children and the elderly aren’t invited,” according to the post circulated on the Telegram channel, which has since been removed. “Only adults willing to participate in all the games, including target shooting of police and robbers, musical chairs, indigenous dancing, tag, and others.”

The post was one of several thinly coded messages circulating on social media ahead of Sunday’s violent attack on the capital by supporters of former President Jair Bolsonaro looking to restore the far-right leader to power.

It’s also now a potentially vital lead in a fledgling criminal investigation about how the rampage was organized and how officials missed clues to a conspiracy that, like the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol two years ago, appears to have been organized and carried out in plain view.

And like the attack in the U.S., the Brazilian riots demonstrate how social media makes it easier than ever for anti-democratic groups to recruit followers and transform online rhetoric into offline action.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 188 ~ 56 of 78

On YouTube, rioters livestreaming the mayhem racked up hundreds of thousands of views before a Brazilian judge ordered social media platforms to remove such content. Misleading claims about the election and the uprising also could be found on Twitter, Facebook and other platforms.

But even before Sunday's riot, social media and private messaging networks in Brazil were being flooded with calls for one final push to overturn the October election of Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva — something authorities appear to have inexplicably missed or ignored.

Most of the online chatter referred to the planned gathering at Brasilia's Three Powers Plaza as "Selma's party" — a play on the Portuguese word for "selva," a battle cry used by Brazil's military.

Participants were told to bring their own mask to protect against "pepper pie in the face" — or pepper spray fired by security forces. They also were told to dress in the green and yellow of Brazil's flag — and not the red preferred by Lula's Workers' Party.

"Get ready guests, the party will be a blast," the widely-circulated post said.

"It was all in the open," said David Nemer, a Brazil native and University of Virginia professor who studies social media. "They listed the people responsible for buses, with their full names and contact information. They weren't trying to hide anything."

Still, it's unclear to what extent social media was responsible for the worst attack on Brazil's democracy in decades. Only a handful of far-right activists showed up at gas terminals and refineries that were also pinpointed on the "Beach Trip" map as locations for demonstrations planned for Sunday.

Bruno Fonseca, a journalist for Agencia Publica, a digital investigative journalism outlet, has tracked the online activities of pro-Bolsonaro groups for years. He said the activists live in a state of constant confrontation but sometimes, their frequent calls to mobilize fall flat.

"It's difficult to know when something will jump out from social media and not," said Fonseca, who in a report this week traced the spread of the "Selma's Party" post to users who appear to be bots.

Still, he said, authorities could have paired the online activity with other intelligence-gathering tools to investigate, for example, a surge in bus traffic to the capital before the attacks. He said their inaction may reflect negligence or the deep support for Bolsonaro among security forces.

One gnawing question is why, on the day of the chaos, Anderson Torres, a Bolsonaro ally who had just been named the top security official in Brasilia, was reportedly in Florida — where his former boss was on a retreat. Torres was swiftly fired and Brazil's Supreme Court has ordered his arrest pending an investigation. Torres denied any wrongdoing and said he would return to Brazil and present his defense.

Sunday's violence came after Brazilian voters were bombarded by a flood of false and misleading claims before last fall's vote. Much of the content focused on unfounded concerns about electronic voting, and some featured threats of violent retaliation if Bolsonaro was defeated.

One of the most popular rallying cries used by Bolsonaro's supporters was #BrazilianSpring, a term coined by former Trump aide Steve Bannon in the hours after Bolsonaro's defeat to Lula.

"We all know that this Brazilian election was going to be contentious," said Flora Rebello Arduini, a London-based campaign director with SumOfUs, a nonprofit that tracked extremist content before and after Brazil's election. "Social media platforms played a vital role in amplifying far-right extremist voices and even calls for violent uprising. If we can identify this kind of content, then so can they (the companies). Incompetence is not an excuse."

Brazil's capital city steeled itself Wednesday for the possibility of new attacks fueled by social media posts, including one circulating on Telegram calling for a "mega protest to retake power." But those protests fizzled.

In response to the criticism, spokespeople for Telegram, YouTube and Facebook said their companies were working to remove content urging more violence.

"Telegram is a platform for free speech and peaceful protest," Telegram spokesman Remi Vaughn wrote in a statement to the AP. "Calls to violence are explicitly forbidden and dozens of public communities where such calls were being made have been blocked in Brazil in the past week — both proactively as per our Terms of Service as well as in response to court orders."

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 188 ~ 57 of 78

A YouTube spokeswoman said the platform has removed more than 2,500 channels and more than 10,000 videos related to the election in Brazil.

Meta, which owns Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp, has prioritized efforts to combat harmful content about Brazil's election, a company spokesman told The Associated Press.

Going home: Bills' Hamlin released from Buffalo hospital

By JOHN WAWROW AP Sports Writer

ORCHARD PARK, N.Y. (AP) — The "Prayers for Damar 3" have been answered. Buffalo Bills safety Damar Hamlin is finally home.

Nine days after he stunned and saddened his teammates by going into cardiac arrest and being resuscitated on the field in Cincinnati, and placed the NFL on hold, Hamlin was released from a Buffalo hospital on Wednesday, the Bills announced.

"We have completed a series of tests and evaluation and in consultation with the team physicians, we are confident that Damar can be safely discharged," Dr. Jamie Nadler said in a news release issued by the team.

This marks the next major step in what doctors have called Hamlin's remarkable recovery, which came two days after he was deemed healthy enough to be transferred from the University of Cincinnati Medical Center to the Buffalo General Medical Center. Nadler said the 24-year-old Hamlin will continue his rehabilitation with the Bills.

The Bills and Nadler did not disclose the results of the tests Hamlin had over the past two days in Buffalo to determine the reason his heart stopped after he struck squarely in the chest by Bengals receiver Tee Higgins while making what appeared to be a routine tackle. Hamlin collapsed during the first quarter of Buffalo's since-canceled game at Cincinnati on Jan. 2, a chilling scene that played out in front of millions on television.

"That just shows the type of kid that he is, how he's fought and he's continuing to win," Bills left tackle Dion Dawkins said. "There's no place that he would rather be than in his own bed, so blessing to him."

As Hamlin's recovery progressed, the Bills and the NFL's messaging switched from "Prayers for Damar 3" to "Love for Damar 3" by last weekend, when the entire league honored Hamlin, who wears No. 3. The Bills and their fans capped an emotionally draining week with a 35-23 regular-season-ending victory over New England.

"It's an awesome feeling. And we're just hoping that he's getting his rest and recovery," quarterback Josh Allen said Wednesday after practice, where the Bills (13-3) prepared to host their division rival Miami Dolphins (9-8) in a wild-card playoff game on Sunday. "As a team, we're extremely happy."

As much as players want to see Hamlin in person, Allen cautioned that moment might have to wait to allow Hamlin to gain his strength.

"Just making sure he's taking it slow, and obviously trying to get back to being himself," Allen added. "So we'll take all the time that we need. But I hope he knows the guys are ready to see him."

Coach Sean McDermott said it would be up to Hamlin to decide when to visit the team, saying: "We'll welcome him back as he feels ready."

Hamlin spent his first two days in hospital under sedation and showed no signs of neurological damage upon being awakened on Jan. 4. By Friday, he was breathing on his own and walking and appeared by videoconference in a team meeting, where he informed the Bills, "Love you boys."

On Sunday, Hamlin was live-tweeting during the Bills' victory, with doctors joking he tripped numerous alarms around the intensive care unit while watching teammate Nyheim Hines return the opening kickoff 96 yards for a touchdown.

Following his transfer to Buffalo, Hamlin posted a note on Twitter that read: "Special thank-you to Buffalo General it's been nothing but love since arrival!" while asking his followers to keep him in their prayers.

His doctors said Hamlin's progress in recovering from cardiac arrest, considered a life-threatening event, has been normal to accelerated.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 188 ~ 58 of 78

In the days that followed, \$8.6 million in GoFundMe donations poured into Hamlin's toy drive fundraiser, which will be used to support young people through education and sports.

Hamlin, who is from the Pittsburgh exurb of McKee's Rock, also will use proceeds from the sale of new T-shirts, emblazoned with "Did We Win?" along with his hands in the shape of a heart, to raise money for the trauma center in Cincinnati that initially treated him.

Prince Harry's memoir opens at a record-setting sales pace

By HILLEL ITALIE AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — No, the public has not tired of hearing about Prince Harry. Sales for "Spare" have placed the Duke of Sussex in some rarefied company.

Penguin Random House announced Wednesday that first day sales for the Harry's tell-all memoir topped 1.4 million copies, a record pace for non-fiction from a company that also publishes Barack and Michelle Obama, whose "Becoming" needed a week to reach 1.4 million when it was released in 2018.

The sales figures for "Spare" include hardcover, audiobook and e-book editions sold in the U.S., Canada and the United Kingdom.

"Spare" is the story of someone we may have thought we already knew, but now we can truly come to understand Prince Harry through his own words," Gina Centrello, President and Publisher of the Random House Group, said in a statement.

"Looking at these extraordinary first day sales, readers clearly agree, 'Spare' is a book that demands to be read, and it is a book we are proud to publish."

One of the most highly anticipated memoirs in recent times, "Spare" is Harry's highly personal and intimate account of his life in the royal family and his relationship with the American actor Meghan Markle, Duchess of Sussex.

Michelle Obama's memoir has since sold more than 15 million copies worldwide, its sales holding up over time in part because of highly favorable reviews. The verdict is mixed so far for "Spare."

New York Times critic Alexandra Jacob called the book, and its author, "all over the map — emotionally as well as physically," at times "frank and funny" and at other times consumed by Harry's anger at the British press. In The Washington Post, Louis Bayard found "Spare" to be "good-natured, rancorous, humorous, self-righteous, self-deprecating, long-winded. And every so often, bewildering."

EXPLAINER: Carlos Correa's free-agent saga ends with Twins

By RONALD BLUM AP Baseball Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Forget about RBIs and OPS. Carlos Correa's free-agent destination was decided by MRIs.

At the end of the most convoluted high-profile free-agent negotiation in baseball history, the small-market Minnesota Twins ended up with the All-Star shortstop — and not the San Francisco Giants or New York Mets — because of their doctors' comfort with Correa's surgically repaired right leg.

San Francisco balked at finalizing a \$350 million, 13-year contract with the 28-year-old, and then the Mets hesitated to close a \$315 million, 12-year deal, both after a scan of Correa's tibia alarmed their physicians.

As it turned out, those concerns cost Correa over \$100 million in guaranteed money.

Correa, best known as the shortstop for the 2017 World Series champion Houston Astros, spent 2022 with Minnesota. The team's medical staff, having examined the two-time All-Star several times over the past year, felt more comfortable with the ankle, which was repaired in 2014.

And so the Twins went ahead with a \$200 million, six-year agreement that was finalized Wednesday — 29 days after Correa agreed with the Giants and 21 days after he struck a deal with the Mets.

Right back where he started. Here's a look at how he got there:

WHY DID THE DEALS WITH THE GIANTS AND METS COLLAPSE?

Correa injured his right leg in 2014 while playing with the Class A Lancaster JetHawks, and doctors inserted a metal plate during surgery to repair it. The consternation centers on whether the ankle healed

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 188 ~ 59 of 78

in a way that might hinder Correa as he ages.

Correa's agent, Scott Boras, maintains it's only a question of "pain tolerance."

"It's not a functionality," Boras said Wednesday at Correa's introductory news conference in Minnesota. "It's just how long you weather the pain to play, and he has never had complaints. Will he have complaints in the future? And the answer is he hasn't had complaints after eight years in the major leagues, and the functional fitness orthopedists say it's unlikely he will going forward."

Boras cited a split among orthopedists and surgeons, maintaining orthopedists believe "almost a Darwinian concept where you actually grow into a formation of your being able to compete and perform."

According to Boras, the Giants and the Mets both relied on opinions from the same specialist — Dr. Robert Anderson, a Green Bay Packers associate team physician who operated on Derek Jeter's broken left ankle in 2012. Boras said Giants team orthopedist Dr. Ken Akizuki consulted with Anderson directly, while the Mets team at the Hospital for Special Surgery relied on foot and ankle specialist Dr. Mark Drakos — who also consulted with Anderson.

Meanwhile, Los Angeles Dodgers head team physician Dr. Neal ElAttrache, a noted orthopedist, examined Correa ahead of free agency last offseason. Correa was also looked at prior to last March's deal with Minnesota and again at the end of this past season by Dr. Christopher Camp, the Twins' medical director and director of high performance as well as an orthopedist at the Mayo Clinic.

"Dr. ElAttrache (was) telling me that the ankle is great, it's in great shape. Dr. Camp here telling me that I'm in outstanding shape, even better than last year," Correa said.

"One thing I learned throughout the whole process was that doctors have a difference of opinions," he added. "I had a lot of doctors tell me that I was fine. I had some doctors that said it wasn't so fine. It was shocking to me because since I had the surgery, I never missed a game. I never got a treatment in my ankle."

The ankle has bothered Correa on at least one occasion, when he came up slowly after a hard slide into second base during a game last Sept. 20.

"He just hit my plate," Correa told reporters at the time. "I had surgery and he hit it. Just kind of felt numb. Vibrating. So I was just waiting for it to calm down. It was a little scary, but when I moved I knew I was good."

Correa hit .319 in the final 12 games of the 2022 season after that slide.

HOW DID THE TWINS END UP WITH CORREA?

Twins president of baseball operations Derek Falvey kept calling Boras throughout the free-agent process, even after the deals were reached with the Giants and the Mets. New York owner Steve Cohen aggressively pursued Correa after San Francisco's agreement stalled, which Boras said precluded talks with the Twins.

After Correa's physical for the Mets, New York proposed cutting its guarantee in half to \$157.5 million.

"Sometimes in baseball as in life and everywhere else, fate and destiny come back together and there's an opportunity that you don't always expect," Falvey said. "The journeys are not always linear. They're circuitous sometimes."

Correa earned \$35.1 million from the Twins last season before opting out of the remainder of a \$105.3 million, three-year contract. The Twins offered Correa \$285 million over 10 seasons earlier this offseason. In the end, Correa agreed to a deal with four option years that could boost its value to \$270 million over a decade if he plays regularly.

Boras received a call from Falvey just after Christmas, and the agent told him Minnesota may have an opportunity. Last week, Boras called Falvey back.

"We should start discussing a very serious dynamic about getting this done," Boras recalled saying. "I've had five, six teams contact me, and I let him know, 'I'm only talking to you.'"

Boras said he spoke with Camp five times and sent him all the MRIs made available to the Mets.

"We're not here to fault exterior physicians and their opinions, but I will say that medicine, particularly in sport, orthopedic functionality and clinical exam on a day-to-day basis is far more important than an MRI," he said. "The orthopedists, they're operating on function, saying unless they have evidence to show

the degenerative nature, it's all speculation."

Boras maintained the Mets, led by chief legal officer Katie Pothier, tried to weaken the guarantee language. "There was an agenda going on there that was far afield from deal-making," he said. "There was an agenda where they felt that they could move a negotiation to a different place."

Boras said he sent Cohen a text on Sunday or Monday telling him Correa wouldn't accept the Mets' proposed language and was turning to other teams.

The Mets issued only a brief statement Wednesday, shortly before Correa was introduced as a Twin. "We were unable to reach an agreement," the team said. "We wish Carlos all the best."

US women's soccer tries to overcome past lack of diversity

By ANNE M. PETERSON AP Sports Writer

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — Crystal Dunn was often the only Black girl on her youth soccer clubs, and even when she finally made it to the national team, she did her own hair and makeup for photo shoots because "there wasn't someone set up for me."

While the U.S. national team has steadily become more representative, Dunn says there's still work to be done. That starts with making sure young women of color feel included all the way down to the youth level.

"I had very supportive parents who explained to me that, 'This is OK, you are still welcome in this sport. And just because there aren't many people that look like you, this is still your game,'" Dunn said. That support was key to her success "because honestly at the end of the day, it's pretty lonely to feel like you're the only one in this space and to not feel as if you belong."

Women's soccer in the United States has long had a diversity problem: The sport's pay-to-play model means that it's expensive, especially at higher levels. Club teams and traveling teams can cost thousands of dollars in some cases. Almost from the start, players without financial resources — including many from marginalized communities — are left behind.

Even U.S. Soccer President Cindy Parlow Cone has lamented that American soccer is seen as a "rich, white kids' sport."

Dunn first played for the national team in 2013 and was on the squad that won the 2019 World Cup in France. The job also involved off-field duties such as participating in professional photo shoots and public appearances.

Such events often included hair and makeup assistance for white players, but with no guarantee that the stylists would know how to work with Black skin or Black hair.

"Those are things that a lot of people didn't ever have to think about because there weren't that many of us," Dunn said.

She was among just five players of color out of 23 on the roster for the World Cup-winning team. In contrast, France had 12.

The most recent U.S. roster had 10 women of color — including young stars Trinity Rodman, Naomi Girma and Mallory (Pugh) Swanson — as the team readies for this summer's World Cup. The United States will face New Zealand twice next week as the teams ramp up for the tournament, which will be co-hosted by Australia and New Zealand.

"Representation matters," said Sophia Smith, who had a team-high 11 goals for the United States last year and won U.S. Soccer's Female Player of the Year award. "And I think for young girls to be able to look on the screen or come to a game and see a lot of people that look different, it's great."

The growing representation has helped diversify a team that included fewer than a dozen total Black players in its entire history before 2012.

The pool of players talented enough to reach the highest level in America — the national team and the National Women's Soccer League — is already small. The exclusionary nature of youth soccer makes it even smaller.

The pay-to-play structure "does leave a lot of marginalized minority communities in a pickle" because of the high costs, Dunn said. "And if I didn't have parents who could dish out three, four or five grand a

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 188 ~ 61 of 78

year, I don't know that I can sit here and say that I would have continued playing this sport."

Parlow Cone said at a youth sports panel last year that the U.S. federation is studying access to the game.

"A lot of it comes down to how our sport is viewed, marketing, and how do we shift that thinking from that it's a rich white kids' sport to this is a sport that is literally played in every country around the world?" she said. "And as the most diverse country in the world here in the U.S., how do we change that focus to making sure that every kid feels welcomed into our game?"

Ed Foster-Simeon, CEO of the U.S. Soccer Foundation, is among those trying to make soccer more accessible to communities that haven't traditionally been involved.

The foundation's Soccer for Success program has worked with more than 400,000 children – 90% of them from communities of color — since 2008. The program expects to serve more than 100,000 kids this year.

The foundation says that more than 121,000 girls from underserved communities have benefited from its programs over the past three years — part of its United For Girls initiative launched after the 2019 World Cup. Additionally, the foundation has engaged 5,475 coaches who identify as women or nonbinary over that period.

The foundation's goal is not to develop elite talent but to bring the game to more kids, particularly those in communities with fewer resources, he said.

In the last few years, "clearer and clearer pathways" have emerged for talented young people, Foster-Simeon said. "But I think our biggest challenge still today is that we're only scratching the surface in terms of participation. We are not reaching enough kids."

Indeed, much of the work with girls is being done at the grassroots level.

Shannon Boxx, who was enshrined last year into the National Soccer Hall of Fame, played on the national team from 2003 to 2015. She's on the board of Bridge City Soccer in Portland — which aims to bring girls into the game.

She remembers moments on the national team when she noticed she was the only person of color present.

"For me, it was just a big weight that I was willing to have, but I remember feeling like, OK, when we're signing autographs, I'm searching for those kids that are of color because I want them to know that they can do this," she said. "And I might be the only one right now, but that's not going to be the way it is in the future."

Shawna Gordon, a former pro who played for Sky Blue (now Gotham FC) in the National Women's Soccer League, started the nonprofit Football For Her in Southern California to mentor young players on and off the pitch — regardless of socioeconomic status. Football For Her takes a whole person approach, addressing nutrition and mental health, in addition to playing skills.

"It's a challenge to be playing with hard players, like they're all talented in their own ways. And for me, that gets to help me find my why," said Amber Ramirez, 13, who attended a Friday night Soccer For Her program last fall.

There's evidence those efforts may be working. Ten years ago, just 24% of Division I women's soccer players were nonwhite. The number grew to 34% last season.

But many believe stopgap measures are not the answer. They want to reconsider the pay-to-play model.

The pay-to-play model "is completely endemic to the issues that we're having, so how do we try to adjust it?" said Kate Markgraf, general manager of the U.S. women. "I think we're finally at a point now where we're willing — not as U.S. Soccer, but I think as a society — our eyes are open in a way that they never have been."

Dunn is hopeful. When she first joined the national team, there were many fewer women of color in the sport and even fewer who were playing at the highest levels.

It's important to celebrate progress, she said, "but it's also important to continue pushing, pushing for more and pushing for more women of color to be able to have access to the sport."

US women's soccer tries to overcome past lack of diversity

By ANNE M. PETERSON AP Sports Writer

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 188 ~ 62 of 78

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — Crystal Dunn was often the only Black girl on her youth soccer clubs, and even when she finally made it to the national team, she did her own hair and makeup for photo shoots because “there wasn’t someone set up for me.”

While the U.S. national team has steadily become more representative, Dunn says there’s still work to be done. That starts with making sure young women of color feel included all the way down to the youth level.

“I had very supportive parents who explained to me that, ‘This is OK, you are still welcome in this sport. And just because there aren’t many people that look like you, this is still your game,’” Dunn said. That support was key to her success “because honestly at the end of the day, it’s pretty lonely to feel like you’re the only one in this space and to not feel as if you belong.”

Women’s soccer in the United States has long had a diversity problem: The sport’s pay-to-play model means that it’s expensive, especially at higher levels. Club teams and traveling teams can cost thousands of dollars in some cases. Almost from the start, players without financial resources — including many from marginalized communities — are left behind.

Even U.S. Soccer President Cindy Parlow Cone has lamented that American soccer is seen as a “rich, white kids’ sport.”

Dunn first played for the national team in 2013 and was on the squad that won the 2019 World Cup in France. The job also involved off-field duties such as participating in professional photo shoots and public appearances.

Such events often included hair and makeup assistance for white players, but with no guarantee that the stylists would know how to work with Black skin or Black hair.

“Those are things that a lot of people didn’t ever have to think about because there weren’t that many of us,” Dunn said.

She was among just five players of color out of 23 on the roster for the World Cup-winning team. In contrast, France had 12.

The most recent U.S. roster had 10 women of color — including young stars Trinity Rodman, Naomi Girma and Mallory (Pugh) Swanson — as the team readies for this summer’s World Cup. The United States will face New Zealand twice next week as the teams ramp up for the tournament, which will be co-hosted by Australia and New Zealand.

“Representation matters,” said Sophia Smith, who had a team-high 11 goals for the United States last year and won U.S. Soccer’s Female Player of the Year award. “And I think for young girls to be able to look on the screen or come to a game and see a lot of people that look different, it’s great.”

The growing representation has helped diversify a team that included fewer than a dozen total Black players in its entire history before 2012.

The pool of players talented enough to reach the highest level in America — the national team and the National Women’s Soccer League — is already small. The exclusionary nature of youth soccer makes it even smaller.

The pay-to-play structure “does leave a lot of marginalized minority communities in a pickle” because of the high costs, Dunn said. “And if I didn’t have parents who could dish out three, four or five grand a year, I don’t know that I can sit here and say that I would have continued playing this sport.”

Parlow Cone said at a youth sports panel last year that the U.S. federation is studying access to the game.

“A lot of it comes down to how our sport is viewed, marketing, and how do we shift that thinking from that it’s a rich white kids’ sport to this is a sport that is literally played in every country around the world?” she said. “And as the most diverse country in the world here in the U.S., how do we change that focus to making sure that every kid feels welcomed into our game?”

Ed Foster-Simeon, CEO of the U.S. Soccer Foundation, is among those trying to make soccer more accessible to communities that haven’t traditionally been involved.

The foundation’s Soccer for Success program has worked with more than 400,000 children — 90% of them from communities of color — since 2008. The program expects to serve more than 100,000 kids this year.

The foundation says that more than 121,000 girls from underserved communities have benefited from

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 188 ~ 63 of 78

its programs over the past three years — part of its United For Girls initiative launched after the 2019 World Cup. Additionally, the foundation has engaged 5,475 coaches who identify as women or nonbinary over that period.

The foundation's goal is not to develop elite talent but to bring the game to more kids, particularly those in communities with fewer resources, he said.

In the last few years, "clearer and clearer pathways" have emerged for talented young people, Foster-Simeon said. "But I think our biggest challenge still today is that we're only scratching the surface in terms of participation. We are not reaching enough kids."

Indeed, much of the work with girls is being done at the grassroots level.

Shannon Boxx, who was enshrined last year into the National Soccer Hall of Fame, played on the national team from 2003 to 2015. She's on the board of Bridge City Soccer in Portland — which aims to bring girls into the game.

She remembers moments on the national team when she noticed she was the only person of color present.

"For me, it was just a big weight that I was willing to have, but I remember feeling like, OK, when we're signing autographs, I'm searching for those kids that are of color because I want them to know that they can do this," she said. "And I might be the only one right now, but that's not going to be the way it is in the future."

Shawna Gordon, a former pro who played for Sky Blue (now Gotham FC) in the National Women's Soccer League, started the nonprofit Football For Her in Southern California to mentor young players on and off the pitch — regardless of socioeconomic status. Football For Her takes a whole person approach, addressing nutrition and mental health, in addition to playing skills.

"It's a challenge to be playing with hard players, like they're all talented in their own ways. And for me, that gets to help me find my why," said Amber Ramirez, 13, who attended a Friday night Soccer For Her program last fall.

There's evidence those efforts may be working. Ten years ago, just 24% of Division I women's soccer players were nonwhite. The number grew to 34% last season.

But many believe stopgap measures are not the answer. They want to reconsider the pay-to-play model.

The pay-to-play model "is completely endemic to the issues that we're having, so how do we try to adjust it?" said Kate Markgraf, general manager of the U.S. women. "I think we're finally at a point now where we're willing — not as U.S. Soccer, but I think as a society — our eyes are open in a way that they never have been."

Dunn is hopeful. When she first joined the national team, there were many fewer women of color in the sport and even fewer who were playing at the highest levels.

It's important to celebrate progress, she said, "but it's also important to continue pushing, pushing for more and pushing for more women of color to be able to have access to the sport."

GOP opens long-promised investigation into Biden family

By FARNOUSH AMIRI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Republicans on Wednesday opened their long-promised investigation into President Joe Biden and his family, wielding the power of their new majority to demand information from the Treasury Department and former Twitter executives as they laid the groundwork for public hearings.

"Now that Democrats no longer have one-party rule in Washington, oversight and accountability are coming," Rep. James Comer, chairman of the House Oversight Committee, said in a statement.

The Republican-led committee sent a series of letters requesting financial information from the Treasury Department about financial transactions by members of the Biden family that were flagged as suspicious activity. Those reports are routine, with larger financial transactions automatically flagged to the government, and are not evidence on their own of misconduct.

Lawmakers also requested testimony from multiple former Twitter executives who were involved in the company's handling of an October 2020 story from the New York Post about Hunter Biden, the president's

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 188 ~ 64 of 78

younger son. Republicans say that story was suppressed for political reasons.

Moving quickly after taking control of the House, Republicans are setting up a messy, politically explosive showdown with the White House that could delve deeply into the affairs of the president's family and shape the contours of the 2024 race for the White House.

"In their first week as a governing majority, House Republicans have not taken any meaningful action to address inflation and lower Americans' costs, yet they're jumping out of the gate with political stunts driven by the most extreme MAGA members of their caucus in an effort to get attention on Fox News," Ian Sams, a White House spokesman, said in a statement, referring to former President Donald Trump's campaign slogan, Make America Great Again.

In a statement, Maryland Rep. Jamie Raskin, the senior Democrat on Oversight, echoed the White House sentiment, saying Democrats will work with Republicans "when they get serious about tackling problems that affect the American people."

The Treasury Department declined to comment.

Comer and other Republicans set out their plan for probing the Biden family the day after clinching a slim majority in the November midterm elections. The Kentucky Republican told reporters there are "troubling questions," specifically about the business dealings of Hunter Biden and one of the president's brothers, James Biden, that require deeper investigation.

GOP investigations into the Biden family are nothing new. Republican lawmakers and their staff have been analyzing messages and financial transactions found on a laptop that belonged to Hunter Biden for the past year. Comer told reporters late Wednesday that he's been in touch with GOP Sens. Chuck Grassley of Iowa and Ron Johnson of Wisconsin, who led the investigative efforts against Hunter Biden in the Senate, and there is information sharing between the two chambers.

But Republicans now have subpoena power in the House, giving them the authority to compel testimony and conduct a far more aggressive investigation.

Republicans have discussed issuing congressional subpoenas to foreign entities that did business with Hunter Biden, and they recently brought on James Mandolfo, a former federal prosecutor, to assist with the investigation as general counsel for the Oversight panel.

Hunter Biden's taxes and foreign business work are already under federal investigation, with a grand jury in Delaware hearing testimony in recent months. While he never held a position on the presidential campaign or in the White House, his membership on the board of a Ukrainian energy company and his efforts to strike deals in China have long raised questions about whether he traded on his father's public service, including reported references in his emails to the "big guy."

Joe Biden has said he's never spoken to his son about his foreign business. And there are no indications that the federal investigation involves the president in any way.

George Santos refuses to resign despite political pressure

By MICHELLE L. PRICE Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — State and local Republican leaders in New York on Wednesday called for the immediate resignation of their new GOP congressman George Santos, who is facing multiple investigations by prosecutors over his personal and campaign finances and lies about his resume and family heritage.

"His lies were not mere fibs. He disgraced the House of Representatives," Joseph Cairo Jr., chair of the Nassau County Republican Committee, said at a news conference. "He's not welcome here at Republican headquarters."

Santos, swarmed by reporters at the Capitol on Wednesday, flatly rejected the call to resign, saying, "I will not."

The call was an extraordinary rebuke of the freshman congressman whose election months ago flipped a Democratic-held House seat and was initially one of the GOP's highlights of the November election. The denunciation by local Republicans also amps up the pressure on Republicans in Congress to rebuke or sideline Santos.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 188 ~ 65 of 78

Cairo and other Republicans said Santos deceived voters and the local GOP in Long Island's Nassau County, and they were particularly incensed by his lies about having Jewish ancestry.

Rep. Anthony D'Esposito, another Republican newly elected to represent Long Island, spoke at the news conference via video from Washington and joined Cairo's call for his colleague's resignation.

"George Santos does not have the ability to serve here in the House of Representatives and should resign," D'Esposito said.

The state Republican Party joined the call a few hours later, with chair Nick Langworthy saying in a statement that it was clear Santos "cannot be an effective representative and it would be in the best interest of the taxpayers to have new leadership."

The state and local parties have no mechanism to remove Santos from office. He was sworn in to the U.S. House last week representing New York's 3rd Congressional District.

Santos reiterated his refusal in a post on Twitter later Wednesday.

"I was elected to serve the people of #NY03 not the party & politicians, I remain committed to doing that and regret to hear that local officials refuse to work with my office to deliver results to keep our community safe and lower the cost of living. I will NOT resign!"

House Speaker Kevin McCarthy stood by Santos on Wednesday, saying that voters had made their choice.

"The voters made the decision. He has a right to serve. If there is something that rises to the occasion that he did something wrong, then we'll deal with that later," McCarthy said in Washington.

The resignation calls come a day after two Democrats from New York asked the House Ethics Committee to investigate Santos. Reps. Ritchie Torres and Dan Goldman, in a letter to the committee, said Santos also failed to file "timely, accurate and complete" financial disclosure reports and the reports he did file are "sparse and perplexing."

Earlier this week, the nonpartisan Campaign Legal Center lodged a complaint with the Federal Election Commission and urged regulators to investigate Santos. The "mountain of lies" Santos propagated during the campaign about his life story and qualifications, the center said, should prompt the commission to "thoroughly investigate what appear to be equally brazen lies about how his campaign raised and spent money."

Initially, the victory by Santos, the only openly gay Republican in Congress, was seen as a bright spot for the party in an otherwise underwhelming midterm election. But as reports began to emerge that Santos had lied about having Jewish ancestry, a career at top Wall Street firms and a college degree, he turned into a distraction and an embarrassment to the party as it took control of the House.

During his campaign, he referred to himself as "a proud American Jew." But he later backtracked on that claim, saying his mother's family had "a Jewish background," and he told the New York Post in an interview, "I said I was 'Jew-ish.'"

Bruce Blakeman, a Jewish Republican and the elected Nassau County Executive, said he and other members of the sizeable Jewish population in the area take their religion and heritage seriously. He said it was "ridiculous" for Santos to call himself a Jew, but said it was "beyond the pale" and "outrageous" for Santos to have said in an interview that his grandparents survived the Holocaust.

"He cannot serve anymore. He does not deserve that right," Blakeman said. "He is a stain on the House of Representatives."

Blakeman said his office would have no interaction with Santos or his staff until he resigns and that the county would redirect any of Santos' constituents seeking help to the office of D'Esposito in the neighboring congressional district.

Santos first ran for Congress in 2020, losing to Tom Suozzi, a Democrat. He ran again in 2022, facing Democrat Robert Zimmerman in a district that includes some Long Island suburbs and a small slice of Queens.

Cairo said Santos was backed by the Nassau GOP after another local Republican club recommended him as a candidate in 2020 and that Santos lied when he presented his resume. He said they would change their vetting process going forward.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 188 ~ 66 of 78

With Santos now, Cairo said, "We do not consider him one of our congresspeople."

Naomi Osaka says she's pregnant, plans tennis return in 2024

By The Associated Press undefined

Naomi Osaka is pregnant and plans to return to competition in 2024, the tennis star announced Wednesday.

The former world No. 1 posted what she called "a little life update for 2023" on social media, including a picture of an ultrasound.

The 25-year-old Osaka has been dating Cordae, a rapper, for years.

"I know that I have so much to look forward to in the future, one thing I'm looking forward to is for my kid to watch one of my matches and tell someone, 'that's my mom,'" Osaka wrote.

Osaka hasn't played a competitive match since September and withdrew from the Australian Open, which begins Sunday. She has won that tournament twice, along with two U.S. Open championships.

She has taken mental health breaks in recent years and didn't play again after the Pan Pacific Open in Tokyo, shortly after falling in the first round of the U.S. Open. Osaka said the few months away have given her "a new love and appreciation for the game I've dedicated my life to."

Ash Barty, the 2022 Australian Open champion, announced last week she was pregnant. She retired last year while holding the No. 1 ranking.

But Osaka said she will return to tennis and plans to be in Melbourne next year for the start of the Grand Slam season.

"2023 will be a year that'll be full of lessons for me and I hope I'll see you guys in the start of the next one cause I'll be at Aus 2024," Osaka wrote. "Love you all infinitely."

Osaka closed by saying she doesn't know if there's a perfectly correct path in life, but that "if you move forward with good intentions you'll find your way eventually."

CES 2023: 10 tech innovations that caught our eye

Associated Press undefined

LAS VEGAS (AP) — From electric cars and boats to wireless TVs to the latest phones and tablets, there was a wide range of innovations on display at the CES tech show in Las Vegas last week. Some of it aimed to solve big real world problems. Some of it aimed to make your life more fun. And some of it was just a little out there.

Associated Press journalists spent last week combing cavernous exhibit halls for the most exciting, interesting and unusual tech innovations.

Here's what caught our eye:

MOST FUN WAY TO GET TO WORK

Journalists had fun zipping around the CES Unveiled event on remote-controlled, electric inline skates from French startup AtmosGear.

The battery lasts for 20 miles (32 kilometers), said founder Mohamed Soliman, who hopes people will see them as a viable way to commute, like electric bikes or scooters.

"My goal is for everyone to go skating again because it's so much fun, every time you see people skating you see them with a big smile," Soliman said.

A waist bag holds the battery and cables connected to the skates. They also can be used as regular skates when they need to be charged or skaters simply want to travel under their own power.

The \$500 skates are available for pre-order. The company has taken orders for 150 pairs so far and is aiming for 200 orders to start production.

TECH TO BRING TO A PARTY

A handheld device displayed by South Korean company Prinker allows you to quickly and easily apply temporary tattoos.

The device uses cosmetic-grade ink with a library of thousands of designs or the option to make your

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 188 ~ 67 of 78

own with the company's app. After picking a tattoo, you just wave the device over wherever you want it applied. The tattoos are waterproof but wash off with soap.

The flagship model is \$279 and a smaller model is \$229. Ink cartridges good for 1,000 tattoos are \$119.

There's also an accessory to temporarily color your hair.

KITCHEN TECH WE'RE COVETING

GE Profile unveiled a smart mixer that lets you weigh your ingredients in the bowl while you're working.

The mixer also has an auto sensor that can monitor changes in texture and viscosity and adjust speed accordingly. It shuts itself off automatically to avoid overmixing.

And it has voice control so you don't have to stop what you're doing and wash your hands off to operate it.

All that precision doesn't come cheap — the mixer costs \$999.95 and is only available at Crate & Barrel.

TECH TO BUY YOUR PARENTS

Bird Buddy showed off a smart bird feeder that takes snapshots of feathered friends as they fly in to eat some treats. The startup says its AI technology can recognize more than 1,000 species of birds, allowing users to share through a mobile app what kind of birds they're feeding.

"We try to kind of gamify the collection so it's a really fun game that you can play — almost like a real life Pokémon Go with real animals and wildlife in your backyard," said Kyle Buzzard, the company's co-founder and chief hardware officer.

The product has already sparked some interest from consumers who want to show the world what birds are coming into their backyards.

The company, which began as a Kickstarter project in 2020, says it started shipping its bird feeders in September and has already sold all 100,000 in its inventory. The price for the basic feeder is \$199.

TECH TO BUY YOUR KIDS

Meet Dog-E, the excitable robodog.

Unveiled by toy maker WowWee, Dog-E has more than a million possible combinations of lights, sounds and personality traits.

Dog-E begins as a blank canvas and develops its personality as you set it up.

The app-connected toy has audio sensors to hear sounds, touch sensors on its sides and body, and a tail that you can program to display lighted icons and messages when it wags.

Jessica Kalichman from WowWee says it's a good option for those who can't commit to owning a real pup, or perhaps for those with allergies.

"I do think for anyone that's either not ready to have a dog yet, this is a great test to take care of it, learn to feed it, nurture it, and really have that trial run for a family," she said.

WowWee expects to have Dog-E in stores in September. It will sell for \$79. The app to control the toy's movements does not require a subscription.

TECH FOR GOOD

Knowing exactly when an avocado is perfectly ripe may sound a bit niche, but Dutch startup OneThird thinks it's a key to helping reduce food waste.

The company unveiled an avocado scanner designed for supermarkets that's currently being tested in Canada and can tell you whether an avocado is still firm or ready to eat.

OneThird already works with growers, distributors and others along the supply chain to predict the shelf life of avocados, tomatoes, strawberries and blueberries and is working to add more produce.

According to the United Nations, nearly a third of food of all food globally is thrown away. Reducing that would mean less food waste being tossed into methane-producing landfills.

TECH FOR PETS

Have you ever wondered what your dog would say if it could speak to you?

FluentPet promises the next best thing — buttons the company says you can train your pet to push if it's hungry, needs to go outside or wants to play.

The buttons come in a hexagon-shaped plastic mat called a hextile. Hextiles can be connected to each other to form a bigger collection of buttons.

"We find that actually when dogs kind of know that they're being understood because they have the precision and specificity of the buttons, then they complain less because they're no longer wondering

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 188 ~ 68 of 78

whether they actually communicated what they wanted to," said Leo Trottier, FluentPet CEO.

At CES, the company announced FluentPet Connect, a new app that notifies owners when their dog presses a button and collects data on how the buttons are used.

Fluent Pet's starter kit comes with hextiles, a speaker and six buttons for \$159.95. The app does not require a subscription.

TECH TO MAKE YOUR NEXT CONFERENCE CALL MORE EXCITING

Tired of the same old videoconference calls? Zero Distance thinks it may have the answer.

The company's Wehead device helps people at a meeting feel like a remote attendee is in the room with them.

The device looks something like a machine you might find at the eye doctor, but with screens on the front. The person participating from afar looks like they're there in 3D and when they look around or nod, the machine also moves.

Wehead works with standard computer or smartphone webcams.

"If there are a few people around the table and just one screen, not everybody can see the screen, and the person in the laptop, he or she is not able to see everybody," Wehead creator Ilya Sedoshkin said. "That's the obvious application."

"But for people who spend like 40 hours a week in their home office, they don't see other people a lot. So feeling the real person in the room, using some space on your table, can give you less loneliness," Sedoshkin said.

The Wehead costs \$1,555, with a pro version available for \$4,555.

INNOVATION WE MOST WANTED TO TAKE HOME

Japan's Yukai Engineering says its robotic fufuly pillow can help users relax by mimicking the rhythm of breathing.

The soft, fluffy pillow gently expands and contracts, vibrating as you hold it against your stomach. The idea is that you'll breathe more slowly and deeply as your breath starts to synch with the movement of the pillow.

It was developed based on research done at the University of Tokyo.

Yukai CEO Shunsuke Aoki said the pillow can help remote workers who struggle to switch off from their jobs.

The version on display at CES is a prototype. The company is looking for partners and hopes to start producing it this year.

BEST CELEBRITY APPEARANCE

Singer and dancer Paula Abdul came to CES to launch Idol Eyes, a line of audio sunglasses.

"I've wanted to get into the tech world for the longest time," Abdul told The Associated Press, "but I wanted to do it in a way that was authentic to who I am."

Starting at \$199, the sunglasses feature a five-hour battery life and play audio from the arms of the frames via Bluetooth connectivity. You can listen to music or answer calls.

The Grammy- and Emmy-award winning artist's first collection of eyewear is available in seven colors, with polarized and blue light filter lenses.

"I'm just marrying fashion, movement and technology," Abdul said. "That's where my heart is."

Film helps renew search for 1st Black Navy pilot's remains

By THALIA BEATY Associated Press

The film "Devotion" reignited efforts to repatriate the remains of Jesse Brown, America's first Black Navy pilot, who died in 1950 after having to crash land his damaged plane during the Korean War.

Fred Smith, the founder of Memphis-based FedEx, financed the film about Brown because he thought Brown deserved wider recognition, a feeling his surviving relatives share, and lobbied the Trump administration to support the search efforts after consulting with Brown's daughter, Pamela.

"I'm still determined to try to get Jesse Brown home and put him where he ought to be in Arlington (Na-

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 188 ~ 69 of 78

tional Cemetery)," Smith said. "Among the other heroes of the republic next to his wingman, Tom Hudner."

Smith's daughters, Rachel and Molly, who produced the film, met members of Brown's family at the 2018 funeral of Hudner, who received the Medal of Honor after attempting to rescue Brown. Hudner returned to North Korea in 2013 in an attempt to locate Brown's remains, but was unsuccessful.

Jessica Knight Henry, Brown's granddaughter, said attending Hudner's funeral at Arlington solidified her grandmother's desire to have her husband's remains interred in Arlington.

"He's never had a full sort of burial with that with the pomp and circumstance that that we think is worthy of what his contribution is to this country" Knight Henry said, speaking from Washington.

Brown grew up in Mississippi, the son of sharecroppers, and succeeded in qualifying to be a pilot in the Navy, despite his training officer refusing to pin on his wings — just one of many racist insults and hurdles he overcame.

Smith has donated "Devotion"'s proceeds, in part, to endow a new scholarship fund, the Brown Hudner Navy Scholarship Foundation, for the children of Navy service members pursuing studies in STEM.

"Mr. Smith spent an incredible amount of money imaging the area where we think that my grandfather's remains are," said Knight Henry, adding that her family has worked with different agencies and groups to maximize any potential opportunity to get answers.

More than 7,500 American military personnel remain unaccounted for in the Korean War, according to the government agency that tracks prisoners of war and those missing in action.

Can US avoid a recession? As inflation eases, optimism rises

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — For months, the outlook for the U.S. economy has been a mostly bleak one: Inflation hitting a four-decade high, consumer spending weakening, interest rates surging. Most economists penciled in a recession for 2023.

An economic downturn is still possible. Yet in recent weeks, with inflation showing widespread signs of easing, a more cheerful view has gained traction: Maybe a recession isn't inevitable after all.

One reason for the tentative optimism is evidence that an acceleration in U.S. wages, which has benefited workers but also heightened inflation, is slowing. Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell has frequently pointed to fast-rising worker pay to explain why the Fed has had to raise interest rates so aggressively. Fed rate hikes, if carried out far enough and long enough, can weaken the economy so much as to trigger a recession.

On Thursday, the government is expected to issue another mild report on inflation, which would boost hopes that the Fed might decide to pause its rate hikes sooner than has been expected. In the meantime, the job market — the most important pillar of the economy — remains remarkably sturdy.

These trends are raising expectations that the Fed might manage to engineer an often-elusive "soft landing," whereby the economy slows but doesn't go into reverse and unemployment rate rises slightly but stays low. It would still mean painful times for many people. But it wouldn't inflict the widespread unemployment that typically results from a recession.

"All the signs are pointing to a higher, not a lower, probability of a soft landing," said Alan Blinder, a Princeton University economist who formerly served as vice chair of the Fed. "It may still not be more than 50-50. But 50-50 is looking better than it was a few months ago."

The most positive sign, Blinder said, is the ongoing slowdown in inflation. It has dropped from a peak of 9.1% in June to a still-high 7.1% in November. When the government issues the December inflation report Thursday, economists predict it will show another step down, to 6.5%. On a monthly basis, prices are expected to have remained flat from November to December — another encouraging sign.

The inflation slowdown stems from a range of factors, including cheaper gas, the unraveling of supply chain snarls and smaller profit margins among many retailers.

The national average price of a gallon of gas was \$3.27 on Wednesday, far below the \$5 peak in mid-June. Average used car prices, which skyrocketed 37% in 2021, have dropped for five straight months.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 188 ~ 70 of 78

They're now 3% cheaper than they were a year ago. Clothing prices have declined in two of the past three months. Furniture prices have dropped for three straight months.

In the meantime, consumers are spending less, forcing many retailers to cut prices to pare their inventories of goods. Online prices have fallen for four straight months from year-ago levels, according to Adobe Analytics, particularly for computers, toys and sporting goods.

"The sooner the inflation rate falls," Blinder said, "the sooner the Fed will ease up, and therefore the less the chance of a recession."

All that said, there are plenty of threats to a soft landing. As China's economy reopens from its COVID-19 lockdowns, it may start to absorb more of the world's oil supply. That could send U.S. gas prices up again.

And while layoffs remain historically low outside of technology companies, that trend could reverse if businesses become anxious again about the economic outlook. Congress may also struggle to raise the debt ceiling by this summer, which could cause economic turmoil, or a deep recession if they fail to do so.

But for now, a soft-landing scenario is beginning to play out. The slowdown in price increases suggests that the Fed's seven rate hikes last year have had some effect, though with inflation still well above their 2% target, the officials have made clear they expect to raise their key rate by at least three-quarters of a point more.

Even as the central bank has jacked up its benchmark rate at the fastest pace in four decades, the economy has kept growing and businesses have kept hiring. In December, employers added a solid 223,000 jobs, and the unemployment rate dropped back to 3.5%, matching a 53-year low.

"The job market data is very supportive of the idea that the economy can... slow without recession," said Mark Zandi, chief economist at Moody's Analytics.

There are signs of progress in the three areas Powell has identified as the key drivers of inflation: Cars, furniture and other physical goods; housing and rents; and travel, medical care, restaurant meals and other services.

Goods prices have fallen as shipping snarls during the pandemic have unraveled. And while rental and housing costs are still contributing to inflation, there is good news there as well: Private measures show that rents for new apartment leases are now rising much more slowly. That slowdown should feed into official rent measures as soon as this summer.

Powell has focused, in particular, on the inflation threat from accelerating wages. Restaurants, retailers, hotels and doctor's offices have had to substantially raise pay to attract and keep workers.

But even there, some signs indicate that inflation could keep waning. The December jobs report showed that wages increased 4.6% from a year ago, slower than the peak of 5.6% last spring. The Fed hopes to slow the pace of the wage increases so they are consistent with lower inflation. Milder inflation can help stretch paychecks further.

A wage tracker compiled by the job listings website Indeed is also showing deceleration: Wages advertised in job postings fell in December for a ninth straight month.

The wage slowdown has been even more pronounced in many services industries. Average hourly pay for workers in the leisure and hospitality sector, which includes restaurants, hotels and entertainment companies, grew by a healthy 6.4% last year. Yet that's only about half its growth rate in 2021. Average pay for retail workers has also declined.

"We're already well past the peak in monthly wage increases," said Claudia Sahm, a former Fed economist and founder of Sahm Consulting.

Sahm also noted that rising wages don't always translate into higher prices. While many companies pass on the cost of higher pay to customers by charging more, they can also make their workers more efficient or find other savings to offset higher pay.

Even if modest hiring continues, it doesn't mean wages will keep rising as fast as they have been.

Ron Hetrick, senior economist at Lightcast, a data analytics firm, noted that strong wage gains typically occur after a shock has hit the job market. An example was the swift reopening of the economy that followed the eruption of the pandemic in early 2020. Millions of employers tried to staff up at once.

Once that period passes, Hetrick said, companies can adjust. Even if unemployment remain low, employ-

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 188 ~ 71 of 78

ers don't have to perpetually pay ever-higher wages to fill jobs. They can try to automate some jobs, for example. That's what many companies in Japan, where unemployment has been low for years, have done.

"You do see some signs that there's a little less frantic-ness to hire," Hetrick said.

The number of temp workers has declined for five straight months. And the length of the average work-week fell in December. Both signs indicate that companies are less desperate for labor.

The fact that many employers have shortened workweeks rather than cut jobs also suggests that they want to retain their employees even as the economy slows. With so many businesses having struggled to hire workers in the past two years, businesses are now more reluctant to let them go.

"That's how you get a soft landing," Hetrick said. "By asking the workers that you have to not produce as much. But that doesn't mean you get rid of them."

Dish from Harry, one of their own, could fuel royal change

By DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — In public, they present a united front — always. But Prince Harry has a very different story to tell about the British royals and the way they operate.

Harry's explosive memoir, with its damning allegations of a toxic relationship between the monarchy and the press, could accelerate the pace of change already under way within the House of Windsor following the death of Queen Elizabeth II.

Harry's description of royals leaking unflattering information about other members of the family in exchange for positive coverage of themselves is but one of the more tawdry allegations in his book, "Spare," published this week. The prince singled out King Charles III's wife, Camilla, accusing her of feeding private conversations to the media as she sought to rehabilitate her image after her longtime affair with Charles when he was heir to the throne.

Far from the unity that is presented in public, the royal family and their staffs are depicted as scheming rivals, ready to stab each other in the back to make themselves or their bosses look better in the public eye. The palace that Harry describes resembles a modern version of the court of King Henry VIII, where courtiers jockeyed for the monarch's favor and some lost their heads.

The book leaves the impression of a deeply dysfunctional British royal family whose members are so concerned about the tabloid press that they are forced to make deals with journalists, says Ed Owens, author of "The Family Firm: Monarchy, Mass Media and the British Public, 1932-53." And the public, when faced with this proposition, may think twice.

"I think there needs to be some kind of reset, and we need to think carefully about what the monarchy is, what role it plays in society," says Owens, a historian. "Because this idea of 'we, the British taxpayers, pay and in return they perform' — it's really a broken and corrupting kind of equation."

Largely funded by taxpayers, the monarchy plays a mostly ceremonial role in British society these days — masters of soft power. But supporters argue that the institution still serves a vital role, uniting the country behind shared history and traditions embodied in both the grandeur of royal ceremonies and the day-to-day work of royals as they open schools and hospitals and hand out honors to those who serve the nation.

News coverage of the royal family generally falls into one of two categories: carefully orchestrated public appearances or sometimes chaotic stories about the private lives of royals based on unidentified sources.

But change may be at hand.

The history of colonialism — so deeply intertwined with the crown — is being re-examined around the world. Protesters have torn down or defaced statues in British cities, and internationally respected universities such as Oxford and Cambridge are changing their course offerings. It all adds up to one thing: An institution that was once the symbol of the British Empire is facing scrutiny as never before.

Charles, who became king after the death of Queen Elizabeth II in September, faces the challenge of modernizing Britain's 1,000-year-old monarchy to guarantee its survival. He has already said he plans to reduce the number of working royals and reduce the cost of the monarchy.

This has been a long time coming, perhaps, but was delayed by one key factor: Elizabeth herself.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 188 ~ 72 of 78

Personal affection for the queen meant that the monarchy's role in British society was rarely debated during her seven decades on the throne. Now that she's gone, the royal family is confronting questions about its relevance in a modern, multicultural nation that looks very different than when Elizabeth ascended the throne in 1952.

In Elizabeth's world — governed by the mantra "never complain, never explain" — the sort of personal revelations in Harry's book would have been unthinkable. He describes his mental health struggles following the 1997 car accident that killed his mother, Princess Diana. He recounts a physical altercation with his older brother, Prince William, reveals how he lost his virginity and describes using cocaine and cannabis.

"Spare" is the latest effort by Harry and his wife, Meghan, to tell their own story after they quit royal life and moved to California in 2020, citing what they saw as the media's racist treatment of Meghan and a lack of support from the palace.

In the ghostwritten memoir, Harry, 38, alleges that Camilla forged connections with the British press and traded information on her way to becoming queen consort, essentially feeding unflattering stories on Harry and Meghan to the press in exchange for better coverage of herself.

The allegations are particularly sensitive because of Camilla's role in the acrimonious breakdown of Charles' marriage to Diana. While many members of the public initially shunned Camilla, she has won fans by taking on a wide range of charitable activities and has been credited with helping Charles appear less stuffy and more in tune with modern Britain.

Daily Mail columnist Stephen Glover leapt to her defense, arguing that Harry was just thin-skinned.

"I daresay some members of the royal family have passed stories to the press through their courtiers over the years, but it is absurd and naïve to infer that this was part of an orchestrated attempt to destabilize Harry and Meghan," he wrote. "Royals are not puppets of the press, since — if they have any sense — they realize they can be biffed as well as praised. The wise ones know how to take the rough with the smooth."

But unlike Elizabeth, who famously issued a statement suggesting that "some recollections may vary" when confronted with racism allegations after Meghan's interview with Oprah Winfrey in 2021, Buckingham Palace has responded to the first major crisis of Charles' reign with silence.

That has left Harry to dominate the headlines on both sides of the Atlantic, apparently being served tequila on a late night U.S. television show and repeatedly talking about the House of Windsor's dirty laundry.

Since this isn't the first scandal to rock Buckingham Palace — among other sensations, Elizabeth's uncle abdicated the throne to marry a divorced American — many of those who bought Harry's book on Tuesday seemed certain the institution would weather the storm.

"They just have to shrug it off and carry on being the royal family," James Bradley, 61, said as he bought a copy. "After the queen's death, the royal family's stock has never been higher in my lifetime, and this will just bounce off. In six months' time we won't be talking about this."

But Steven Barnett, a professor of communications at the University of Westminster, expects Harry's revelations to push the palace to be more transparent — perhaps more like other institutions such the White House or the British prime minister's office at 10 Downing Street.

"He's done us a favor in exposing the collusive nature, the conspiratorial nature of relationships between the royal family and the British press," Barnett says. "They will have to change the way in which they do business with the press. And that's a good thing. It's a good thing for the monarchy and it's a good thing for British society."

A flowery pianist, Eddie's brevity and other Globes moments

By ANDREW DALTON AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Standout moments from the Golden Globe Awards, which returned to television Tuesday night after a year's absence.

DON'T SHOOT THE PIANO PLAYER

Pianist Chloe Flower had a sweet gig at the Golden Globes, playing TV and movie theme songs on camera as the show went to commercial breaks, but it turned temporarily sour when some in the viewing audi-

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 188 ~ 73 of 78

ence wrongly assumed she was the one deciding when annoyed winners had to wrap up their speeches.

"Shut up, I can beat you up," said Michelle Yeoh, the star of many a kung fu movie, when piano music began playing her off about two minutes into her acceptance of the Globe for best actress in a musical or comedy film for "Everything Everywhere All at Once."

"You can forget that piano," Colin Farrell said over the music as he accepted the male version of the same award for "The Banshees of Inisherin."

When Austin Butler won best actor in a drama film for "Elvis" and the piano began, he pleaded for a song by the man he portrayed.

"At least play 'Suspicious Minds' or something," Butler said.

But none of that was Flower.

"People on Twitter are mad like she's playing people off, but it's a track," host Jerrod Carmichael said during the show. "Chloe, we are lucky to have you."

Flower tweeted on the topic herself mid-show.

"I would never play piano over people's speeches!!" she wrote. "I'm only playing when you see me on camera!"

MURPHY SLAPS WITH TWO MINUTES AND A MIC DROP

Eddie Murphy certainly didn't need playing off. Many who win the Cecil B. DeMille Award, a lifetime achievement prize, use the moment to make a major speech. Oprah Winfrey's in 2018 inspired calls for a presidential run. But Murphy's acceptance took just two minutes, shorter than many of the night's regular winners.

He thanked a handful of people and quickly wrapped it up with a mic-drop joke about Will Smith and Chris Rock.

"I've been doing this for a long time so I could stand up here and keep saying thank you until they play the piano," Murphy said. "But I'm gonna wrap it up and just say something to all the up-and-coming dreamers and artists that are in the room tonight. I want to let you know that there is a definitive blueprint that you can follow to achieve success, prosperity and peace of mind. Pay your taxes, mind your business, and keep Will Smith's wife's name out of your (expletive) mouth!"

TEARS FOR LEAN YEARS AND LOST FAMILY

Despite the Globes' diminishment amid controversy in recent years, winning them still brought plenty of tears, sometimes from unexpected people. Ke Huy Quan set the emotional tone as he cried throughout his acceptance of the night's first award, best supporting actor in a film for "Everything Everywhere All at Once." He tearfully thanked Steven Spielberg for giving him his start in "Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom" before talking about the decades he spent thinking he would never get to top it.

Spielberg, who has remained restrained winning bigger awards, got emotional when he won the best director Globe for "The Fabelmans." Because this one was about his family. "I've been hiding from this story since I was 17 years old," he said, his voice cracking. He called out each of his family members by name, ending with his late mother, Leah Adler, who inspired the Michelle Williams character at the heart of the film, saying "she is up there kvelling about this right now."

Jennifer Coolidge, who always seems to be doing a bit when she speaks on stage, and frequently was Tuesday night as a presenter and winner, shed a few sincere tears when she effusively thanked creator Mike White for putting her in "White Lotus," for which she won best actress in a limited series.

"You changed my life in a million different ways," Coolidge said. "My neighbors are speaking to me."

White wept during the speech, and was still red-eyed minutes later when he accepted the best limited series award for the show.

EXCUSING ALL THE ABSENCES

On a night when some boycotted the show, Golden Globes presenters took the rare step of explaining, sometimes in detail, why some winners weren't there. Cate Blanchett, winner of best actress in a movie drama for "Tár," "couldn't be here tonight because she's on production in the UK," presenter Henry Golding said.

Amanda Seyfried, winner of best actress in a limited series for "The Dropout," "is deep in the process

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 188 ~ 74 of 78

of creating a new musical so she could not be here tonight," presenter Mo Brings Plenty said.

Regina Hall made it clear that she was reading from a teleprompter and mocked the explanation she had to give for Kevin Costner not accepting his best actor in a TV drama award for "Yellowstone," despite the serious subject matter of this week's severe flooding in California.

"He so much wanted to be here," Hall said, shaking her head and laughing, "but because of the unprecedented weather, he has to shelter in place, in Santa Barbara."

"Let's pray everyone," she said, before catching herself and saying "no, that's awful."

CARMICHAEL CASUALLY COURTS CONTROVERSY

Host Jerrod Carmichael pulled no punches with his jokes, starting with his opening monologue, in which he said he was hired "because I am Black." A few of his on-the-edge jokes, delivered in his laid back style, fell flat, including a dig at Tom Cruise and the Church of Scientology, and his calling the Beverly Hilton, the Globes' longtime home, "the hotel that killed Whitney Houston." The superstar died in a room there in 2012.

But a joke based on the antisemitic statements of Ye, formerly Kanye West, got a strong laugh when Carmichael told Spielberg that he had seen "The Fabelmans," which is based on Spielberg's Jewish family. "I actually saw it with Kanye," Carmichael said, "and it changed everything for him."

Spielberg responded with a "thank God" gesture.

In Norway, sled dogs train and play in warming Arctic

By DANIEL COLE and GIOVANNA DELL'ORTO Associated Press

BOLTERDALEN, Norway (AP) — Out of the dark, frozen vastness in this Arctic valley, a chorus of barks and howls trumpeted the return of Green Dog's oldest puppies from a dogsledding training run through the polar night on Tuesday afternoon.

Karina Bernlow and her husband, Martin Munck, run the outfit Green Dog, which has nearly 300 dogs in three yards. It's located half a dozen miles from the main village in Svalbard, a Norwegian archipelago so close to the North Pole that winter is shrouded in uninterrupted darkness.

The working dogs, younger puppies and new litters played in the lashing winds that shifted thigh-high snowdrifts. This mix of husky and Greenland dog — a breed known for taller legs, big paws and thick fur — is especially social and thrives in the cold, Bernlow said. They don't even fear the rare occasion when a polar bear ambles past the yards.

What hurts them is when this lunar landscape turns unusually warm, which is happening more often as much of the Arctic heats up several times faster than the rest of the world.

Last summer, a few dogsledding tours had to be canceled so the dogs wouldn't overheat. One of the tours leads to an ice cave and Bernlow, who's been here for more than a decade, said they're watching it disappear year after year.

"What we can do is teach our children to take care of the planet," said Bernlow, the mother of four children.

As she walked by them, the newly returned dogs strained their chains to reach out to be petted and puppies rushed to watch from their enclosure.

New Mega Millions jackpot of \$1.35B is game's 2nd highest

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — The Mega Millions prize has grown again to an estimated \$1.35 billion after there was no winner of the lottery's latest giant jackpot.

The numbers drawn late Tuesday night were: 7, 13, 14, 15, 18 and gold Mega Ball 9.

The new jackpot drawing on Friday night will be another milestone in the game, Mega Millions said in a statement early Wednesday.

"Now at \$1.35 billion, the Mega Millions jackpot is moving up and making history as the second highest Mega Millions jackpot ever," Pat McDonald, Ohio lottery director and lead director of the Mega Millions Consortium, said in the statement.

The only Mega Millions jackpot larger than Friday's prize is the \$1.53 billion won in South Carolina in

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 188 ~ 75 of 78

2018, Mega Millions said.

The largest jackpot in the U.S. to date was a \$2.04 billion Powerball won by a single ticket in California in November.

The estimated \$1.35 billion jackpot in the next drawing would only be distributed to a winner who chooses an annuity paid over 29 years. Nearly all grand prize winners opt to take a cash payout, which for Friday night's drawing is an estimated \$707.9 million.

There have been 25 drawings over three months since the last time a player matched all six numbers and claimed the jackpot.

Despite the game's long odds of 1 in 302.6 million, players continue to purchase tickets as the size of the grand prize grows.

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

US to max out on debt soon, setting up political fight

By FATIMA HUSSEIN and JOSH BOAK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The federal government is on track to max out on its \$31.4 trillion borrowing authority as soon as this month, starting the clock on an expected standoff between President Joe Biden and the new House Republican majority that will test both parties' ability to navigate a divided Washington, with the fragile global economy at stake.

Once the government bumps up against the cap — it could happen any time in the next few weeks or longer — the Treasury Department will be unable to issue new debt without congressional action. The department plans to deploy what are known as "extraordinary measures" to keep the government operating. But once those measures run out, probably mid-summer, the government could be at risk of defaulting unless lawmakers and the president agree to lift the limit on the U.S. government's ability to borrow.

The expected showdown over the debt limit would be a stark display of the new reality for Biden and his fellow Democrats, who enjoyed one-party control of Washington for the past two years. It would presage the challenges to come in achieving even the modest ambitions that Democrats are bringing to the task of legislating in a divided Capitol.

The White House has insisted that it won't allow the nation's credit to be held captive to the demands of newly empowered GOP lawmakers. But the concessions made by new House Speaker Kevin McCarthy in his arduous path to securing the job raise questions about whether he has the ability to cut any kind of deal to resolve a standoff.

McCarthy, who secured his post after 15 rounds of voting and major compromises with hard-line members of his caucus, has said that his fellow Republicans will only agree to increase the debt ceiling in return for spending cuts of unspecified magnitude. And a new rule that allows any lawmaker to trigger a vote for McCarthy's removal could make even the most urgent of votes a dicey matter.

McCarthy said he's spoken with Biden about the coming debt ceiling and told the president "it doesn't have to come to that" — meaning a federal government shutdown over spending levels.

"This is our moment to change the behavior," McCarthy said Tuesday on Fox News Channel's "Hannity."

But the new speaker stopped short of saying Republicans now in charge of the House would go so far as to refuse to pass the annual spending bills needed to fund the government, as happened more than a decade ago during an earlier debt ceiling showdown in Congress.

"We're going to look at every single dollar spent," McCarthy said.

The stakes are treacherous. Past forecasts suggest a default could instantly bury the country in a deep recession, right at a moment of slowing global growth as the U.S. and much of the world face high inflation because of the coronavirus pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The White House has ruled out executive action to stave off a default.

"Congress is going to need to raise the debt limit without — without — conditions, and it's just that simple," White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said recently. "Attempts to exploit the debt ceiling as leverage will not work. There will be no hostage taking."

On Capitol Hill, Republican Rep. Chip Roy of Texas, one of the McCarthy holdouts and an outspoken

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 188 ~ 76 of 78

critic of government spending, wouldn't rule out trying to oust McCarthy if he fails to live up to his pledge to seek spending cuts along with any debt limit increase.

"We will use the tools of the House to enforce the terms of the agreement," Roy told CNN on Sunday.

Rep. Bob Good, R-Va., said in a Fox News interview on Monday that the debt limit will be "the real test" for conservatives. Republicans have to begin "leveraging power to accomplish what you need to accomplish," he said. Good fought McCarthy's bid to become speaker until the final vote, when he responded "present."

The debt ceiling debate is a form of political theater — it encourages lawmakers to engage in brinkmanship in the name of fiscal responsibility — though past showdowns have done little to meaningfully alter the long-term rise in federal debt.

House Republican leaders liken the debt ceiling to a credit card limit, promising to put "mechanisms in place so that you don't keep maxing it out," in the words of House Majority Leader Steve Scalise of Louisiana.

"We're going to confront this, and I think the American people have called on us to confront this," Scalise said.

Republican Sen. Rick Scott of Florida pointed to his 2021 proposed amendment to the Senate Republican Conference that commits to only raising the debt ceiling if it also secures spending reform.

"I'll be fighting with every tool at my disposal to enforce this rule that every Republican in the Senate agreed to follow," Scott said. "A day of reckoning is coming."

Any effort to compromise with House Republicans could force Biden to bend on his own priorities, whether that's the funding of the IRS to ensure that wealthier Americans pay what they owe or domestic programs for children and the poor.

It's hard to peg the date when the government will hit its debt ceiling, because payments and receipts vary from day to day, especially with the April filing deadline for income taxes. The current balance suggests the debt ceiling could be reached as early as this week or as late as March.

When Treasury takes extraordinary measures to keep the government running, it can halt contributions to pension funds and borrow from accounts to manage changes in the foreign exchange rate, freeing up cash to meet its other obligations.

Treasury first used these measures in 1985 and has used them at least 16 times since, according to the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, a fiscal watchdog. But the extraordinary measures only work for so long, and would likely run out — and put the U.S. at risk of default — sometime around the summer.

If the government were to default, financial markets could be expected to crash. Several million workers could be laid off. The world could feel the aftershocks of the crisis for years to come. Moody's Analytics called this risk "cataclysmic" in a 2021 forecast ahead of the previous debt ceiling increase, suggesting that the resulting chaos would be due to government dysfunction, rather than the underlying health of the U.S. economy.

"Debt limit negotiations are always protracted and almost always contentious, and the political trends seem to make it likely that they will exacerbate those tendencies and will create a volatile situation," said Shai Akabas, director of economic policy at the Bipartisan Policy Center, which forecasts the so-called X-date when the government exhausts its extraordinary measures.

Akabas told The Associated Press the X-date has "likely moved forward" from this year's third quarter due to rising interest rates and a pause on student loan repayments recently extended by the Biden administration. A more precise date will become available when the Congressional Budget Office updates its outlook later this month.

Either way, lawmakers know the risks that they're taking with the livelihoods of people across the country by having this dispute. Economists have warned them plenty of times.

A 2013 Treasury report drew on the debt ceiling impasse in 2011, when Republicans had also just won a House majority. It outlined how impasses contribute to long-lasting scars on financial markets, noting that business and household confidence fell to levels that are typically only seen during recessions.

"It took months before confidence recovered, even though, ultimately, there was no default," the report said.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 188 ~ 77 of 78

Today in History: JAN 12, Berry Gordy Jr. founded Motown

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Thursday, Jan. 12, the 12th day of 2023. There are 353 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Jan. 12, 1959, Berry Gordy Jr. founded Motown Records (originally Tamla Records) in Detroit.

On this date:

In 1828, the United States and Mexico signed a Treaty of Limits defining the boundary between the two countries to be the same as the one established by an 1819 treaty between the U.S. and Spain.

In 1910, at a White House dinner hosted by President William Howard Taft, Baroness Rosen, wife of the Russian ambassador, caused a stir by requesting and smoking a cigarette — it was, apparently, the first time a woman had smoked openly during a public function in the executive mansion. (Some of the other women present who had brought their own cigarettes began lighting up in turn.)

In 1915, the U.S. House of Representatives rejected, 204-174, a proposed constitutional amendment to give women nationwide the right to vote.

In 1932, Hattie W. Caraway became the first woman elected to the U.S. Senate after initially being appointed to serve out the remainder of the term of her late husband, Thaddeus.

In 1945, during World War II, Soviet forces began a major, successful offensive against the Germans in Eastern Europe. Aircraft from U.S. Task Force 38 sank about 40 Japanese ships off Indochina.

In 1948, the U.S. Supreme Court, in *Sipuel v. Board of Regents of University of Oklahoma*, unanimously ruled that state law schools could not discriminate against applicants on the basis of race.

In 1966, President Lyndon B. Johnson said in his State of the Union address that the U.S. military should stay in Vietnam until Communist aggression there was stopped. The TV series "Batman," starring Adam West and Burt Ward as the Dynamic Duo, premiered on ABC.

In 1969, the New York Jets of the American Football League upset the Baltimore Colts of the National Football League 16-7 in Super Bowl III, played at the Orange Bowl in Miami.

In 1971, the groundbreaking situation comedy "All in the Family" premiered on CBS television.

In 2000, in a 5-4 decision, the U.S. Supreme Court, in *Illinois v. Wardlow*, gave police broad authority to stop and question people who run at the sight of an officer.

In 2010, Haiti was struck by a magnitude-7 earthquake; the Haitian government said 316,000 people were killed, while a report prepared for the U.S. Agency for International Development suggested the death toll may have been between 46,000 and 85,000.

In 2016, Iran detained 10 American sailors and their two small Navy boats after the boats drifted into Iranian waters; the sailors and their vessels were released the following day.

Ten years ago: The NHL's four-month lockout finally ended as the league and the players' association completed signing a required memorandum of understanding. Gary Stevens won the first race at Santa Anita, giving the Hall of Fame jockey his first win in North America since 2005, when he began a seven-year retirement that had recently ended. (Stevens rode 5-1 shot Branding to a 2 1/2-length victory in his third race since beginning his comeback on Jan. 6, 2013.)

Five years ago: President Donald Trump's White House physician, Dr. Ronny Jackson, declared him in "excellent health" after the president received his first checkup at Walter Reed military hospital. Sportscaster Keith Jackson, best known as the down-home voice of college football, died; he was 89. John Tunney, whose successful campaign for a California seat in the U.S. Senate was the basis for the Robert Redford film "The Candidate," died in Los Angeles at the age of 83.

One year ago: The House panel investigating the U.S. Capitol insurrection requested an interview and records from House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy as it continued to seek first-hand details from members of Congress on former President Donald Trump's actions on Jan. 6; McCarthy issued a statement saying he would refuse to cooperate, accusing the panel of an "abuse of power." The government reported that inflation jumped in December at its fastest year-over-year pace in nearly four decades, surging 7%. Ronnie Spector, who sang 1960s hits including "Be My Baby" as leader of the girl group The Ronettes, died

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 188 ~ 78 of 78

at 78 after a brief battle with cancer.

Today's birthdays: The Amazing Kreskin is 88. Country singer William Lee Golden (The Oak Ridge Boys) is 84. Actor Anthony Andrews is 75. Movie director Wayne Wang is 74. Legal affairs blogger Ann Althouse is 72. Writer Walter Mosley is 71. Country singer Ricky Van Shelton is 71. Radio-TV personality Howard Stern is 69. Writer-producer-director John Lasseter is 66. Broadcast journalist Christiane Amanpour is 65. Actor Oliver Platt is 63. Basketball Hall of Famer Dominique Wilkins is 63. Entrepreneur Jeff Bezos is 59. Rock singer Rob Zombie is 58. Actor Olivier Martinez is 57. Model Vendela is 56. Actor Rachael Harris is 55. Rock singer Zack de la Rocha is 53. Rapper Raekwon (Wu Tang Clan) is 53. Actor Zabryna Guevara is 51. Singer Dan Haseltine (Jars of Clay) is 50. Singer Melanie Chisholm (Spice Girls) is 49. Contemporary Christian singer Jeremy Camp is 45. Actor Cynthia Addai-Robinson is 43. R&B singer Amerie is 43. Actor Issa Rae is 38. Actor Will Rothhaar is 36. Actor Andrew Lawrence is 35. Rock singer ZAYN is 30. Pop/soul singer Ella Henderson (TV: "The X Factor") is 27.