

Groton Daily Independent

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Come out to Main Street this morning around 8 a.m. to join the FFA members as they drive their tractors to school for its annual tractor day for FFA Week! (A week late because of weather)

- [1- Upcoming Events](#)
- [2- Coming up on GDILIVE.COM](#)
- [4- Region Basketball Brackets](#)
- [6- Prairie Doc: "It's Healthy to Talk About Bodily Functions"](#)
- [7- That's Life by Tony Bender](#)
- [8- We the People Column: The Supreme Court Delivers Landmark Victory for Farmers](#)
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- [21- SD Searchlight: Republicans trying to inject integrity into an election system already dripping with it](#)
- [22- SD Searchlight: Mission of Wounded Knee activists continues 50 years later with children, grandchildren](#)
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Groton Community Calendar Monday, Feb. 27

Senior Menu: Parmesan chicken breast, baked potato with sour cream, lettuce salad with dressings, peaches, whole wheat bread.
School Breakfast: Breakfast pizza.
School Lunch: Pepperoni pizza, vegetable blend.
Noon.: Senior Citizens Meet at the Groton Community Center with potluck dinner.
The Pantry, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.
Region 1A GBB at Milbank, 6 p.m.

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



Tuesday, Feb. 28

Senior Menu: Roast beef, mashed potatoes with gravy, beets, chocolate cake, whole wheat bread.
School Breakfast: French toast.
School Lunch: Tacos.
Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.
The Pantry, 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.
Region 1A Boys Basketball at Groton.
United Methodist Church: Bible Study, 10 a.m.

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

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GDILIVE.COM

REGION 1A GIRLS' BASKETBALL AT MILBANK

Groton Area vs. Milbank

Monday, Feb. 27, 2023, 6 p.m.

Join Shane Clark with the play-by-play action on GDILIVE.COM

Game sponsored by

Bahr Spray Foam

Bary Keith at Harr Motors

Bierman Farm Service

Blocker Construction

Dacotah Bank

Groton Ag Partners

Groton American Legion

Groton Ford

Harry Implement

John Sieh Agency

Locke Electric

Lori's Pharmacy

Love to Travel

Milbrandt Enterprises, Inc.

S & S Lumber & Hardware Hank

Spanier Harvesting & Trucking

Weber Landscaping

Weismantel Insurance Agency



\$5 ticket to watch can be purchased at GDILIVE.COM.

GDI Subscribers can watch for free

GDILIVE.COM

REGION 1A BOYS' BASKETBALL AT GROTON Groton Area vs. Webster Area Tuesday, Feb. 28, 2023, 6 p.m.

Game sponsored by

Bahr Spray Foam
Bary Keith at Harr Motors
Bierman Farm Service
Blocker Construction
Dacotah Bank
Groton Ag Partners
Groton American Legion
Groton Dairy Queen
Groton Chiropractic Clinic
Groton Ford
Harry Implement
John Sieh Agency
Locke Electric
Lori's Pharmacy
Love to Travel
Milbrandt Enterprises, Inc.
S & S Lumber & Hardware Hank
Spanier Harvesting & Trucking
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Weismantel Insurance Agency



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GDI Subscribers can watch for free

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Region 1A Boys Basketball



#1 - Summit School Gym

 1 Waubay/Summit	17-3	2/28 6:00 PM CT
 8 Sisseton	1-19	



#2 - Summit School Gym

 4 Tiospa Zina	10-9	2/28 7:30 PM CT
 5 Aberdeen Ronc...	9-11	

#3 - Groton Area High School

 2 Groton Area	14-5	2/28 6:00 PM CT
 7 Webster Area	4-15	


#4 - Groton Area High School

 3 Milbank	13-7	2/28 7:30 PM CT
 6 Redfield	8-12	

#5 -

#1 WINNER	3/3
#2 WINNER	TBD

SODAK 16 QUALIFIER



#6 -

#3 WINNER	3/3
#4 WINNER	TBD

SODAK 16 QUALIFIER

Seed Point Averages (calculated Feb. 24)
 #1 Waubay/Summit 43.700 - #2 Groton Area 42.368 - #3 Milbank 41.800 - #4 Tiospa Zina 40.684 - #5 Aberdeen Roncalli 39.750 - #6 Redfield 39.200 - #7 Webster Area 37.526 - #8 Sisseton 35.800



The Groton Public Works Department personnel were busy hauling off the snow from Downtown Groton this morning. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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Region 1A Girls Basketball

Class A - Region 1



#1 - Sisseton High School

 1 Sisseton	83	FINAL
 8 Tiospa Zina	46	



#2 - Sisseton High School

 4 Aberdeen Ronc...	45	FINAL
 5 Redfield	32	

#3 - Milbank Armory Gym

 2 Milbank	57	FINAL
 7 Webster Area	39	

#4 - Milbank Armory Gym

 3 Groton Area	55	FINAL
 6 Waubay/Summit	27	



#5 - Sisseton High School

 1 Sisseton	18-2	2/27 6:00 PM CT
 4 Aberdeen Ronc...	11-9	



SODAK 16 QUALIFIER

#6 - Milbank Armory Gym

 2 Milbank	13-7	2/27 6:00 PM CT
 3 Groton Area	13-8	

SODAK 16 QUALIFIER

Seed Point Averages (calculated Feb. 17)

#1 Sisseton 44.579 - #2 Milbank 41.526 - #3 Groton Area 41.100 - #4 Aberdeen Roncalli 40.842 - #5 Redfield 40.000 - #6 Waubay/Summit 39.000 - #7 Webster Area 38.474 - #8 Tiospa Zina 37.632

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"It's Healthy to Talk About Bodily Functions"

One summer during my college years, another premed student and I got a job at the Swedish Hospital in Minneapolis, as nurses' aides. At that time, the guys were called orderlies, but we were part of the nursing department. We were taught how to clean patients' private parts without making the patient feel self-conscious, and how to place urinary catheters mostly in old men with prostates that had overgrown and were blocking urinary flow.



Based on Science, Built on Trust



the late Richard P. Holm, MD

We all have those private areas, let's not pretend otherwise. The waste disposal parts are as important to us through our lifetime as our hearts, except not quite as romantic. Try switching metaphors and famous poems simply don't have the same pizzazz. For example, try E.E. Cummings' "I carry your colon with me," or William Wordsworth's "My urinary tract leaps up when I behold a rainbow in the sky," or Douglass Cross' "I left my bladder in San Francisco."

Romance aside, we are happy when our urinary tract is working well, draining the urine, removing waste and water. The kidneys collect and concentrate the urine, they deliver this yellow fluid through the ureters, the tubes from the kidneys to the bladder. The bladder is a bag to collect the urine until it is convenient to be emptied.

It seems like a simple, straight-forward system. However, trouble could be around the next corner. Conditions like urinary tract infections, kidney stones, bladder control problems, and prostate troubles are not uncommon through the course of a person's life and can vary from causing short-term discomforts to long-lasting conditions.

One of the barriers to treatment for many people is the human problem of stigma and shame. It does not feel good to admit to anyone, even a loved one or a medical professional, that you're having troubles "down there." Let me reassure you: this is a common human condition. Shame is an enemy to a healthy, functioning body. I would instead say "join the club!" and remind you that you are not the only one with such a problem.

I am no longer the young orderly helping the old men in the Swedish Hospital with their issues. I now find myself amazed at the magnificent function of the human body, identifying more with those old guys than I do with the young staff. All of us have bladders and urinary tracts about which there is nothing to be ashamed.

Richard P. Holm, MD wrote this essay in February 2020. He passed away in March of 2020 after a battle with pancreatic cancer. He was founder of The Prairie Doc® and author of "Life's Final Season, A Guide for Aging and Dying with Grace" available on Amazon. Dr. Holm's legacy lives on through his Prairie Doc® organization. For free and easy access to the entire Prairie Doc® library, visit www.prairiedoc.org and follow Prairie Doc® on Facebook, featuring On Call with the Prairie Doc® a medical Q&A show streaming on Facebook and broadcast on SDPB most Thursdays at 7 p.m. Central.

My international wrestling incident

It's funny how the state wrestling tournament stirs up memories, "funny" being the key word when it comes to this story.

Already, I've heaped pressure on myself. We've all been at parties when someone says, "I've got the funniest joke..." Then, 10 minutes later, it feels like a hostage situation. I'm the most impolite listener ever. I'll just drift away. It embarrasses my family, but anyone that boring can't be my friend.

Feel free to walk away anytime. But don't.

It was 1997 in Hettinger. By then, Randy Burwick and his assistant, Theo Schalesky, and the championship program they'd built, had me enthralled by the human drama of it all.

I love that town. The exceptional athletes I watched, the lifetime friends I made. As Randy and I reminisced at this year's state tournament, I confessed to leaving a chunk of my heart behind when I left. He smiled. Nodded. "I know."

I've known Wrestling Hall of Famer Kayle Dangerud, a championship coach with West Fargo, since he was in grade-school. Loved the kid. His mom, Ginger, worked for me at the Adams County Record.

That year, Kayle, a returning state champ at 145, moved up to 152. Waiting there was Justin Haas from the Ashley-Wishek program, the returning 152-pound state champ. He'd racked up a winning streak, a devastating path of carnage so dominant I feared for Kayle's well-being.

Justin epitomized what his coach, the great Gary Hoffman, was all about. Brute strength, impeccably-conditioned steamrollers. Kayle was regarded as one of the finest technicians ever to step on the mat. There was a December showdown looming, a tournament in Linton.

That's how it started.

I'd describe Kayle's personality even then as pretty Zen, so I decided he might need some extra motivation, and I went to the florist to order the frilliest balloon they had. The accompanying note read something like, "Looking forward to seeing you in Linton." For the exact verbiage check with Ginger. She still has the evidence in a box of memorabilia.

The balloon was delivered to Kayle at school. I imagined the look on his face, the ire of his teammates, the steam rolling out of Burwick's ears, and smiled with self-satisfaction.

I thought that'd be the end of it.

Uh-uh. Ginger, one of the sweetest people you'll meet, stormed into the office—as much as Ginger ever storms—and broke the news to the staff. Naturally, I was surprised and offended by the audacity of Justin Haas. The nerve.

I was so naive. I hadn't realized that wrestlers are the biggest gossips ever placed upon this earth. The Internet was in its infancy, but it wasn't necessary. Word spread across town, across the region, to every Class B school in the state.

This snowball was out of control. I'd created an international wrestling incident.

I didn't dare say a word. Thank God for florist-client confidentiality.

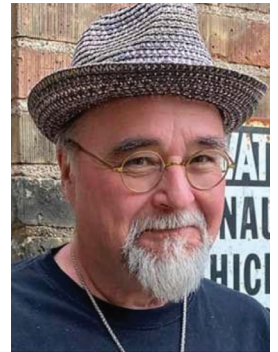
As the tournament approached, I developed the flop-sweats. What if Kayle lost? I hadn't considered that. It was entirely possible. This Haas kid was a monster. An unrepentant balloon-sender. His deeds were spoken of in hushed tones. Like Beetlejuice, you dared not say his name aloud three times.

By then, Kayle had taken on a steely-eyed look you see mostly in serial killers.

He remembers gripping Justin for the first time in the championship. "I'd never felt that kind of strength before." It was close, Kayle and Goliath, but I believe Kayle had a 3-2 lead as time waned in the last period, forcing Justin to take a chance that Kayle countered. If memory serves, it was a 5-2 win.

I've never felt such relief. They'd have run me out of town.

I don't recall when I confessed or exactly when I talked to Gary Hoffman about the epic match, but I



**That's
Life**
by Tony Bender

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remember what he said clearly. "What surprised us was how strong Kayle was."

After their Linton showdown, Justin pulled Kayle aside. "Hey, I didn't send that balloon." Of course, he didn't. He was a well-mannered kid from a good family. It'd take a real jerk to do something like that.

Whatever the gate was at Linton, I think I deserve a cut, though.

It ended anticlimactically. Justin was upset along the way in the state tournament, and Kayle took the championship.

It's always good for a laugh when I get together with the Dangeruds, but someday Justin Haas is going to burst through my door and kick my ass.

And I'll have it coming.

© Tony Bender, 2023

We the People

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



By David Adler

The Supreme Court Delivers Landmark Victory for Farmers

In 1877, in *Munn v. Illinois*, the U.S. Supreme Court delivered a landmark ruling that, to this day, ranks as one of the most important victories ever rendered for farmers in American legal history. The decision rewarded Midwestern farmers for their broad and sustained political activism in a long campaign to protect their economic interests in a confrontation with the "all powerful railroads."

In a 7-2 opinion for the majority, Chief Justice Morrison R. Waite, upheld an Illinois statute, one of several "Granger laws" enacted by Midwestern legislatures, that regulated the rates that grain operators could charge grain producers. Farmers agonized, groaned and complained about the enormous power of the railroads to establish rates for farmers, who viewed them as arbitrary, unfair and potentially lethal to their futures. Farmers were outraged that it cost as much to ship wheat from Minnesota to Wisconsin as it did to England.

Farmers organized politically to counter the power of the railroads. In the late 1860s, the newly minted Patrons of Husbandry, known as the Grange, created the first social movement since the Civil War. This early version of the Progressive Movement successfully pressured the Illinois Legislature to enact statutory limits on the rates that railroads could charge.

The railroads attacked the regulations as a violation of laissez-faire economics and the 14th Amendment's Due Process Clause, which protects life, liberty and property. The Supreme Court sought a path between the exercise of the state police power and the 14th Amendment. On one hand, the future of farmers, and the importance of farming to the public good, could not be left to the conscience of railroads. On the other, the asserted interests of farmers could not be permitted to derail an industry that was critical to the development of the United States.

Chief Justice Waite revived an English law doctrine introduced in the 17th Century by Lord Chief Justice Matthew Hale, which permitted regulation of private property "clothed with a public purpose." Waite altered

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the ancient language, preferring businesses "affected with a public interest," thus drawing a line between those state regulations that would violate the due process clause and those that would not. Waite stated that a business affected with a public interest or "devoted to a public use" was subject to rate regulation.

This test, the Chief Justice observed, did not mean that states could impose arbitrary rates, but the problem that he faced was that of developing criteria to create classifications. He could not, for example, simply apply a "commonsense criterion" to any business important to the public, for that would apply to most businesses, which would be anathema in a capitalist economy. Still, even the most conservative judges would acknowledge that there were many businesses whose prices could not be allowed to run wild.

The judicial solution lay in permitting rate regulations of businesses under the public interest principle, without specifying what that principle meant. Yes, you read that sentence correctly! Public service industries, light railroads and electric power companies fell into that category, as did traditionally regulated occupations such as taxicabs, hotels and fire insurance companies. The great problem that the Court could not more adequately resolve was the fundamental dilemma of the regulation of private property within a capitalist economic system.

That is why Chief Justice Waite was left to say that when one devotes "property to a use in which the public has an interest, he, in effect, grants to the public an interest in that use, and must submit to be controlled by the public for the common good, to the extent of the interest he has created. For protection against "abuses by the legislatures," Waite wrote, "the people must resort to the polls, not to the courts."

Waite's affirmation of the 19th Century's understanding of judicial restraint, as justification for upholding state legislation in the face of 14th Amendment due process concerns, collided with Justice Stephen Field's famous dissent, which called for judicial activism in the name of protecting private property. Field, a champion of conservatism, dismissed Waite's standard. It would mean, he said, "that all property and all business in the state are at the mercy of the Legislature." Such a standard, he said, would eviscerate property "rights."

Consequently, Justice Field argued that the 14th Amendment Due Process Clause imposes a substantive limitation on the state's police power, a position that would become known as "substantive due process." Field asserted substantive due process as a means of protecting property rights, a position that would be associated with those who advocate for conservatism. In the years since, substantive due process would be invoked by other Justices, those viewed as liberals, to protect personal rights, including the rights to privacy and autonomy, among others. Justice Field could not have imagined what an important door he was opening when he invoked substantive due process.

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NSU Women's Basketball

Wolves Fall to Vikings in NSIC Quarterfinal Round

Sioux Falls, S.D. – The 2022-23 women's basketball season came to a close in the NSIC Tournament Quarterfinals for Northern State as they fell to (RV) Augustana 78-67 on Sunday at the Sanford Pentagon. The Wolves battled till the end and momentarily took the lead early in the third quarter, however a 27 point and 18 rebound performance by the NSIC South Player of the Year, Aislinn Duffy, was too much to overcome.

THE QUICK DETAILS

Final Score: NSU 78, AU 67

Records: NSU 18-12 (12-10 NSIC), AU 25-4 (18-4 NSIC)

Attendance: 1,556

HOW IT HAPPENED

A Jordyn Hilgemann 3-pointer with 5:08 left in the first period cut the Augustana lead to 9-7, however Augie would stretch the lead to 20-10 with an 11-3 scoring run late in the first quarter

The Wolves erased the early ten-point deficit with an 8-0 scoring run that held the Vikings scoreless for over four minutes from the closing seconds of the opening quarter till midway through the second period; Augustana went 0-10 from the field during the Northern State scoring run

While NSU was never able to take control of the lead, the Wolves battled back from another seven-point deficit to get within a point at the halftime break (31-30) with a layup by Rianna Fillipi with 58 seconds remaining in the half

Northern State out-scored Augustana 12-6 in the final 4:43 of the first half, shooting the ball 6-8 from the field in the closing minutes

A jumper by Kailee Oliverson to open the second half gave Northern their first lead of the game (32-31) only ten seconds into the half, and the team's traded the lead back-and-forth a total of six times early in the third quarter before Augie was able to regain control for good in the closing minutes of the period

The Vikings pushed the lead to as many as 16 points midway through the fourth quarter before a pair of free throws by Madelyn Bragg were able to cut the lead back to single digits (72-63) with only 2:15 remaining in the contest

Northern State suffered only their second loss of the season when holding a better shooting percentage than their opponent (17-2 on the season), 44.3 percent compared to 42.4 percent by Augustana

The difference on the scoreboard came down to free throws and 3-pointers where the Vikings were 21-25 from the charity stripe and 7-19 from beyond the arc compared to 9-12 and 4-12 by the Wolves

For the 14th time this season NSU committed fewer than ten turnovers in a game with only seven against AU

Oliverson scored in double figures for the 13th consecutive game and 24th time this season, while Fillipi scored in double figures for the 18th time and Bragg for the fourth time

NORTHERN STATE STATISTICAL STANDOUTS

Rianna Fillipi: 17 points, 7 rebounds, 4 assists, 1 block

Kailee Oliverson: 17 points, 5 rebounds, 1 assist

Madelyn Bragg: 10 points, 4 rebounds, 1 block

BEYOND THE BOX SCORE

With two blocked shots against the Vikings, Laurie Rogers moved into fifth place on the single-season blocks list with 69 this season and is tied for fifth in a single-season with an average of 2.3 per game; Rogers also is fourth all-time in career blocked shots with 159 and is second with an average of 1.9 blocks per game in 84 career games played

Fillipi's 2.0 steals per game is tied for fifth in a single-season while her 3.6 assists per game this season is tied for sixth in a single-season in program history

Oliverson is now tied for fourth all-time with a career points per game average of 13.8

Weekly Vikings Recap - NFL Combine Preview

By Jack & Duane Kolsrud

On Tuesday, February 28, the NFL Combine will kick off in Indianapolis. For those unfamiliar, the Combine is a week-long showcase of measuring every NFL prospect's speed, strength, and size compared to his peers. Often, a player's performance at the Combine will have some sort of effect, whether positive or negative, on where the player ends up being picked in the upcoming NFL Draft. In other words, millions of dollars are on the line for some of these players.

Although there are several drills that players will go through at the Combine, the one drill that gets all the attention is the 40-yard dash. It has gotten so popular that in 2017, Adidas offered an island valued at \$1 million to any player that was able to break Chris Johnson's 40-yard dash record of 4.24 seconds. However, despite the popularity of the 40-yard dash, a player's success at it does not necessarily translate to future NFL success. Of the top ten fastest 40-yard dashes in NFL Combine history, only one made a pro bowl in their NFL career.

Based on how Minnesota Vikings' general manager, Kwesi Adofo-Mensah, drafted in 2022, there appears to be one specific testing number from the 40-yard dash that he focuses on at the NFL Combine: the ten-yard split. The ten-yard split is a measurement of the amount of time it takes the player to reach the first ten yards of the 40-yard dash. Rather than focusing on a player's speed at his peak, the ten-yard split focuses on a player's explosiveness and acceleration, which makes more sense in a sport where you rarely ever reach maximum speed.

In 2022, eight of the nine players drafted by Adofo-Mensah were in the 80th or above percentile in the ten-yard split for their respective position. Cine, who was Adofo-Mensah's first-ever draft pick, was even measured as having the fastest ten-yard split among safeties in the 2022 draft class. So, if you end up watching the NFL Combine this week, get familiar with the prospects with the fastest ten-yard splits as those players might be in the running to be future Vikings.

Despite the seriousness that surrounds the NFL Combine, there is one Vikings-related combine stat that is somewhat comical. Vikings' quarterback Kirk Cousins, who weighs 210 pounds and ran a 4.93 in the 40-yard dash at the NFL Combine in 2012, has an equal or slower 40-yard dash time than three of his five starting offensive linemen (Brian O'Neill, Ezra Cleveland, and Garrett Bradbury). The only starting offensive lineman that we can confirm is slower than Cousins is Ingram, who ran a 5.02 in last year's Combine.

One thing to remember about the NFL Combine is it always brings an increase in draft and trade rumors. Given that it is the only time of the year that every NFL team's general manager is in one place, the Combine offers teams a unique chance to start discussing possible draft trades in person with other teams. The main discussion nationally will be what the Chicago Bears decide to do with their first overall pick. However, for the Vikings, this could be a chance to get the ball rolling on a possible trade, whether it is to move up to take a possible quarterback, or trade down and get more draft capital. Whatever it is, this upcoming week might start to provide some answers on the route the Vikings will take in the 2023 NFL Draft.

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**This small group music contest was held on Wednesday 2/8 at the ARCC in Aberdeen. Congratulations students on wonderful day!
- Desiree Yeigh**



Kianna Sander (vocal), Anna Bisbee (vocal), Ashtyn Bahr (vocal), and Carter Barse (alto sax- not pictured) all received superior ratings on their Contest solos!



Cadance Tullis (vocal) and Ellie Weismantel (Piano) both received Superior Pluses- perfect scores on their Contest solos!



Becca Poor (vocal) and Emily Clark (piano) both received excellent pluses on their contest solos! These ladies were one point from a superior rating!

Photos courtesy of Desiree Yeigh

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Chamber Choir (received a superior rating)

Front row L to R: Ashlyn Feser, Shaylee Peterson, Cadance Tullis, Ashtyn Bahr, and Natalia Warrington

Back row L to R: Kianna Sander, Becca Poor, Axel Warrington, Ellie Weismantel, and Anna Bisbee

Not pictured is Carter Barse



Mixed Choir (received an excellent rating)

Front Row from L to R: Savannah Bible, Jaedyn Penning, Brooklyn Hansen, Kennedy Hansen, Jerica Locke, Shaylee Peterson, and Ashlyn Feser

Back Row from L to R: Tyson Parrow, Keegen Tracy, Karsten Jeschke, Mia Crank, and Anna Bisbee

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All three Band Ensembles received superior ratings. The Brass Ensemble was one point from a perfect score!

Woodwind Ensemble

Front (L to R): Kira Clocksene (clarinet), Kayla Lehr (clarinet), Jeslyn Kosel (flute), Becca Poor (flute), Gretchen Dinger (flute)

Back (L to R): Emerlee Jones (alto sax), Cadence Feist (bari sax), Kianna Sander (tenor sax)
Not pictured is Carter Barse (alto sax) and Kamryn Flihs (tenor sax)

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Ensemble

Front row (L to R): Carlee Johnson (French horn), Jackson Dinger (French horn), Sierra Ehresmann (trumpet), Jayden Schwan (trumpet), Nathan Unzen (trumpet), Ben Hoeft (trumpet)
Back row (L to R): Garrett Schultz (baritone), Ethan Clark (baritone), Blake Lord (tuba), Brody Lord (trombone), Gavin Kroll (trombone), and Jackson Hopfinger (trombone)



Percussion Ensemble

Front Row (L to R): Teagan Hanten (mallets), Ashtyn Bahr (suspended cymbal), Lincoln Krause (claves), and Cadance Tullis (mallets)
Back Row (L to R): Jacob Lewandowski (Bongos), Emily Clark (mallets), Ellie Weismantel (mallets), Axel Warrington (mallets), and Faith Flihs (claves)

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GROTON VET CLINIC
1503 N Broadway, Groton, 605/397-8145



Aberdeen
225-6772
1-800-843-1865

Redfield
1-800-247-4650

Webster
1-800-658-2252



Groton Community March Calendar of Events

Wednesday, March 1

Senior Menu: Vegetable soup, ham salad sandwich, fruit, cookie.

School Breakfast: Egg omelets.

School Lunch: Garlic cheese bread, carrots.

Groton CM&A: Kids' Club, Youth Group and Adult Bible Study begins at 7 pm

Groton Chamber Board Meeting, noon, at City Hall
St. John's Lutheran: Bible Study, 2:45 p.m.; Confirmation, 3:45 p.m.; Lent Service, 7 p.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Sarah Circle, 5 p.m.; Confirmation, 6 p.m.; Soup Supper, 6 p.m.; League, 6:15 p.m. (Sunday school serves), Worship, 7 p.m.

United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Book Study with Lindsey Tietz, 4 p.m.; Confirmation, 4 p.m.; Groton Ash Wednesday Service, 6:30 p.m.; UMYF attend Ash Wednesday Service, 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, March 2

Senior Menu: Oven fried chicken, mashed potatoes, fruit, winter blend vegetables, dinner roll.

School Breakfast: Muffins.

School Lunch: Pasta with meat sauce.

Girls Basketball SoDak16

Emmanuel Lutheran: Nigeria Circle, 2 p.m.

Friday, March 3

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

Senior Menu: Breaded Cod, rice pilaf, pea and cheese salad, apple crisp, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Eggs and sausage.

School Lunch: Chicken quesadilla, Santa Fe Corn.

Boys Region 1A

Middle School All-State Band in Huron

Saturday, March 4

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.

Middle School All-State Band in Huron

Emmanuel Lutheran: Land & Legacy at Bethlehem Lutheran, Aberdeen, 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Sunday, March 5

Groton CM&A: Sunday School at 9:15 a.m., Worship Service at 10:30 a.m.

Catholic: SEAS Confession, 7:45-8:15 a.m., SEAS Mass, 8:30 a.m.; Turton Confession, 10:30-10:45 a.m.; Turton Mass, 11 a.m.

Open Gym: Grades JK-8; 2:00 PM to 3:30 PM, Grades 6-12; 3:30 PM to 5:00 PM

St. John's Lutheran: Worship with communion, 9 a.m.; Sunday school, 9:45 a.m.; Zion Lutheran worship with communion, 11 a.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship with communion, 9 a.m.; Milestones - 7th & 8th graders; Sunday school, 10:15 a.m.; Choir, 7 p.m.

United Methodist: Communion Sunday. Conde worship, 8:30 a.m.; Coffee hour, 9:30 a.m.; Groton worship, 10:30 a.m.; Sunday school after children's sermon; Family Feast following worship RSVP Pastor Brandon, 11:30a .m.

Monday, March 6

Senior Menu: Spanish rice with hamburger, green beans, Mandarin oranges, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Mini waffles.

School Lunch: Chicken legs, mashed potatoes.

The Pantry, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

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

United Methodist: Lent Bible Study with Pastor Brandon, 7 p.m.

Tuesday, March 7

Senior Menu: Creamed chicken, buttermilk biscuit, glazed carrots, apricots, cookie.

School Breakfast: Egg and cheese wrap.

School Lunch: Lasagna hot dish, corn.

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

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

City Council Meeting, 7 p.m.

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New Construction
Remodeling
Hoop Barns
Shops

BLOCKER
CONSTRUCTION LLC

Perry Blocker
13379 Sperry Ln, Bath
605/216-2677
prblocker@hotmail.com



TREE TRIMMING & REMOVAL
STUMP GRINDING
STORM DAMAGE CLEANUP

Matt's Tree Service
www.aberdeentreeservice.com
605/228-3861

Boys Basketball SoDak16
ACT Practice Test at GHS, 8:30 a.m. (Grades 11 and 12 (optional))
St. John's Lutheran: Ladies Aid LWML, 1 p.m.
Emmanuel Lutheran: Lay leader night via zoom, 7 p.m.

Wednesday, March 8

Senior Menu: Baked pork chop, creamy noodles, California blend vegetables, carrot bars, whole wheat bread.
School Breakfast: Eggs and breakfast potatoes.
School Lunch: Sloppy joes, sweet potatoes fries.
Groton CM&A: Kids' Club, Youth Group and Adult Bible Study begins at 7 pm
ACT Practice Test at GHS, 8:30 a.m. (Grades 11 and 12 (optional))
St. John's Lutheran: Bible Study, 2:45 p.m.; Confirmation, 3:45 p.m.; Lent Service, 7 p.m.
Emmanuel Lutheran: Confirmation, 6 p.m.; Soup Supper, 6 p.m. (Sarah Circle serves), worship, 7 p.m.
United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Book Study with Lindsey Tietz, 4 p.m.; Confirmation, 4 p.m.

Thursday, March 9

Senior Menu: Meatloaf, baked potato with sour cream, creamed peas, fruit, whole wheat bread.
School Breakfast: Stuffed bagels.
School Lunch: Chicken sandwich, chips.
Girls Basketball State Tournament in Watertown

Friday, March 10

Senior Menu: Potato soup, chicken salad sandwich, tomato spoon salad, cinnamon apple sauce.
School Breakfast: Biscuits and Jelly.
School Lunch: Pizza crunchers, green beans.
Girls Basketball State Tournament in Watertown

Saturday, March 11

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.

Girls Basketball State Tournament in Watertown

Sunday, March 12

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME BEGINS
Groton CM&A: Sunday School at 9:15 a.m., Worship Service at 10:30 a.m.
Catholic: SEAS Confession, 7:45-8:15 a.m., SEAS Mass, 8:30 a.m.; Turton Confession, 10:30-10:45 a.m.; Turton Mass, 11 a.m.
Open Gym: Grades JK-8; 2:00 PM to 3:30 PM, Grades 6-12; 3:30 PM to 5:00 PM
St. John's Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m.; Sunday school, 9:45 a.m.; Zion Lutheran worship, 11 a.m.
Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m.; Sunday school, 10:15 a.m.; Choir, 7 p.m.
United Methodist: Confirmation Sunday. Conde worship, 8:30 a.m.; Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Sunday school and sing in church at 10:30 a.m.; Groton worship, 10:30 a.m.

Monday, March 13

Senior Menu: Goulash, corn, baked apples, whole wheat bread.
School Breakfast: Egg bake.
School Lunch: Chicken nuggets, waffle fries.
The Pantry, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
School Board Meeting, 7 p.m.
Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.
United Methodist: Lent Bible Study with Pastor Brandon, 7 p.m.; PEO Meeting, 7 p.m. (outside group)
1 p.m.: Senior Citizens Meet at the Groton Community Center.

Tuesday, March 14

Senior Menu: Ham, sweet potatoes, mixed vegetables, tropical fruit, dinner roll.
School Breakfast: Egg omelets.
School Lunch: Enchiladas, Spanish rice.
Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.
The Pantry, 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.
Middle School Talent Show, GHS Gym.
Emmanuel Lutheran: Council, 7 p.m.

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Wednesday, March 15

Senior Menu: Breaded cod, parsley buttered potatoes, green beans, mandarin orange salad, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Hashbrown pizza.

School Lunch: Chicken Alfredo vegetable blend.

Groton CM&A: Kids' Club, Youth Group and Adult Bible Study begins at 7 pm

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

Emmanuel Lutheran: Confirmation, 6 p.m.; Soup Supper, 6 p.m. (Emmanuel Men serve), League, 6:15 p.m.; Worship, 7 p.m.

United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Book Study with Lindsey Tietz, 4 p.m.; Confirmation, 4 p.m.; Groton Ad Council, 7 p.m.

Thursday, March 16

Senior Menu: Beef stew, biscuit, Waldorf salad, sherbert.

School Breakfast: Pancake on a stick.

School Lunch: Hamburgers, smiley fries.

Boys Basketball State Tournament in Sioux Falls

Emmanuel Lutheran: WELCA (Program-Nigeria, hostess - Sarah).

Friday, March 17

Senior Menu: St. Patrick's Day Dinner: Corned beef, boiled potatoes, cabbage, Jell-O cake, dinner roll.

Boys Basketball State Tournament in Sioux Falls
SPRING BREAK - No School

Fruit Fusion Grand Opening, 7:10 a.m. to 4 p.m., 110 N Main St.

Saturday, March 18

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.

Boys Basketball State Tournament in Sioux Falls

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship at Rosewood Court, 10 a.m.

Sunday, March 19

Groton CM&A: Sunday School at 9:15 a.m., Worship Service at 10:30 a.m.

Catholic: SEAS Confession, 7:45-8:15 a.m., SEAS

Mass, 8:30 a.m.; Turton Confession, 10:30-10:45 a.m.; Turton Mass, 11 a.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Worship with communion, 9 a.m.; Sunday school, 9:45 a.m.; Zion Lutheran worship with communion, 11 a.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship with communion, 9 a.m.; Sunday school, 10:15 a.m.; Worship at Avantara, 3 p.m.; Choir, 7 p.m.

United Methodist: Newsletter items due. NO Sunday school.. Conde worship, 8:30 a.m.; Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Groton worship, 10:30 a.m.

Monday, March 20

Senior Menu: Ranch chicken bread, boiled potatoes, broccoli, fruit cocktail, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Breakfast pizza.

School Lunch: Taco salads.

The Pantry, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Christian Literature Circle, 7:30 p.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.; Newsletter deadline.

United Methodist: Lent Bible Study with Pastor Brandon, 7 p.m.

1 p.m.: Senior Citizens Meet at the Groton Community Center.

Tuesday, March 21

Senior Menu: Scalloped potatoes with ham, peas, sunset salad, cookie, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: French toast.

School Lunch: Meatballs, mashed potatoes.

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

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

City Council Meeting, 7 p.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Quilting, 9 a.m.

Cell Phone Navigation Assistance Class, 10:30 a.m. to noon and 12:30 p.m. to 2 p.m., Groton Community Center

Wednesday, March 22

Senior Menu: Chicken fried steak, mashed potatoes with gravy, corn, peaches, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Egg omelets.

School Lunch: Chicken strips, tri taters.

Groton CM&A: Kids' Club, Youth Group and Adult Bible Study begins at 7 pm

St. John's Lutheran: Bible Study, 2:45 p.m.; Con-

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firmation, 3:45 p.m.; Lent Service, 7 p.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Confirmation, 6 p.m.; Soup Supper, 6 p.m. (League serves), Worship, 7 p.m.

United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Book Study with Lindsey Tietz, 4 p.m.; Confirmation, 4 p.m.

Thursday, March 23

Senior Menu: Spaghetti with meat sauce, mixed vegetables, garlic toast, Mandarin orange salad.

School Breakfast: Muffins.

School Lunch: Hot dogs, baked beans.

All State Band in Sioux Falls

Friday, March 24

END OF THIRD QUARTER

Senior Menu: Tuna noodle casserole, peas and carrots, fruit, breadstick.

School Breakfast: Eggs and sausage.

School Lunch: Mac and cheese, cooked carrots.

All State Band in Sioux Falls

Saturday, March 25

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.

All State Band in Sioux Falls

Spring Vendor Fair, 10am-3pm, Community Center

Sunday, March 26

Groton CM&A: Sunday School at 9:15 a.m., Worship Service at 10:30 a.m.

Catholic: SEAS Confession, 7:45-8:15 a.m., SEAS Mass, 8:30 a.m.; Turton Confession, 10:30-10:45 a.m.; Turton Mass, 11 a.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m.; Sunday school, 9:45 a.m.; Zion Lutheran worship, 11 a.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m.; Milestone 4 yr olds and juniors; Sunday School, 10:15 a.m.; Choir, 7 p.m.

United Methodist: Conde worship, 8:30 a.m.; Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Groton worship, 10:30 a.m.; Sunday school after children's sermon in worship.

Monday, March 27

Senior Menu: Beef stroganoff noodles, mixed vegetables, fruit cocktail, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Mini waffles.

School Lunch: Oriental chicken, rice.

The Pantry, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

School Board Meeting, 7 p.m.

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

United Methodist: Lent Bible Study with Pastor Brandon, 7 p.m.; PEO Meeting, 7 p.m. (outside group)

Noon: Senior Citizens Meet at the Groton Community Center with potluck dinner.

Tuesday, March 28

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

School Breakfast: Breakfast sandwich.

School Lunch: corndogs, tater tots.

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

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

Large Group Music Contest at NSU.

Indoor track meet at NSU

Wednesday, March 29

Senior Menu: Teriyaki chicken, rice pilaf, broccoli, pineapple/strawberry ambrosia, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Eggs and breakfast potatoes.

School Lunch: Pizza grilled cheese, chips.

Groton CM&A: Kids' Club, Youth Group and Adult Bible Study begins at 7 pm

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

Emmanuel Lutheran: Confirmation, 6 p.m.; Soup Supper, 6 p.m. (Nigeria Circle serves), worship, 7 p.m.

United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Book Study with Lindsey Tietz, 4 p.m.; Confirmation, 4 p.m.

Thursday, March 30

Senior Menu: Tater tot hot dish, green beans, grape juice, apple crisp, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Stuffed bagels.

School Lunch: Goulash, corn.

Friday, March 31

Senior Menu: Ham and bean soup, egg salad sandwich, fruit, cookie.

School Breakfast: Biscuits and gravy.

School Lunch: Fish fry spudsters.



Weekly Column: Progress for South Dakota

MADISON—While most of District 8 was digging out from the latest blizzard, your state Legislature dug in and worked hard to meet our Crossover Day deadline and we considered the largest tax cut in South Dakota state history.

South Dakota's Legislative process works. We extend an opportunity for every piece of legislation to have a hearing. This allows every lawmaker the chance to be a voice for their district. The Senate recorded 219 proposals in 2023, and 63 percent have been agreed to by the Senate and sent to the House of Representatives.

This week I continued to advocate for tuition freezes at our universities and technical colleges. Making school affordable is one of the best ways we can impact workforce development for our next generation leaders. Tuition freezes help kids fight inflation and keep more dollars in their pocket as they enter the workforce. Plus, keeping our talent in South Dakota after high school means we need more affordable higher education. That is how we grow South Dakota's economy and expand prosperity for our residents.

The Senate had a robust and healthy debate on a number of issues in Week 7. Notably, the Senate considered two proposals to address the foreign ownership of agricultural land in the state. Every member of the Legislature agrees that the Chinese Communist Party should not own land in South Dakota. We agree in principle along with the Governor. The question is how the state establishes laws, processes and regulations that do not adversely impact honest, hardworking farmers looking to sell land to young families who want to start farming.

My hope is that farmers, landowners and policymakers can agree on a proposal for the 2024 session in the absence of a federal solution to this national security threat. The Legislature did unanimously pass HB 1189 to address foreign land ownership. This bill closes a loophole in the current foreign ag land ownership ban. Right now, foreign persons are banned from owning 160 acres or more. This bill bans foreign entities from owning more than 160 acres.

Next week is our deadline to pass policy proposals before we turn our attention to finalizing the state's budget in the final week of session. The Senate will have its first chance to vote on the largest tax cut in the history of the state. I am committed to a fiscally conservative budget for our state. We can meet our needs and increase funding for schools and vulnerable populations while also reducing the tax burden for South Dakota families. Based on the strength of our economy, we can do it, South Dakota.



COMMENTARY

Republicans trying to inject integrity into an election system already dripping with it

Dana Hess ~ FEBRUARY 26, 2023 6:00 AM

It seems that South Dakotans should be upset about the integrity of their elections. If the long list of bills in the current session of the Legislature is any indication, our elections are all fouled up.

A recent South Dakota Searchlight story noted that there were 43 — count 'em, 43 — election-related pieces of legislation under consideration in the current session of the Legislature. Suddenly, there's widespread legislative concern about the integrity of our elections. That begs the question: Are there widespread problems with the elections in South Dakota? The short answer is no, South Dakota election officials handle their duties with professionalism and any problems they encounter are dealt with promptly.

As the Searchlight story noted, the bills and resolutions being considered in the Legislature have two general sources: Republican Party leadership and Republican lawmakers who belong to the South Dakota Freedom Caucus. This space has been used before to point out that there are two Republican parties slugging it out at the Capitol. The provenance of these election bills proves it.

While some legislators are vigorously sounding an alarm about election fraud — here's looking at you, Freedom Caucus — others are trying to prevent problems that have yet to appear in South Dakota.

While there are no widespread election integrity problems in South Dakota, it may be interesting to see where it ranks in that area with the other states. Unfortunately, outfits that rank election integrity don't seem to use the same set of criteria or come up with the same results.

The Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank, ranked South Dakota 19th in election integrity. Not bad for a state that's perennially ranked last in most categories. The top five states, according to the Heritage Foundation, were Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama, Missouri and South Carolina.

The Election Integrity Project, billed as an independent academic project from Harvard and Sydney Universities, ranks South Dakota 32nd in election integrity. It's top five states are Vermont, Idaho, New Hampshire, Iowa and New Mexico. Tennessee, tops in the Heritage Foundation study, is ranked 49th by the Election Integrity Project.

While the rankings for state election integrity obviously fluctuate based on who is analyzing the data, the fact remains that until recently, no one has been howling about election integrity in South Dakota.

This sudden interest in protecting the state's voters from fraud seems to be rooted in the false claims of former president Donald Trump that his victory in the 2020 election was somehow stolen from him by widespread voter fraud and corruption.

Trump's claims have been proven false by every measure available. Recently a Washington Post story revealed that after the 2020 election, the Trump campaign hired Berkeley Research Group to analyze voting data in six swing states: Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. The researchers could find no evidence of the fraud that Trump's people were looking for, consequently triggering the campaign to keep the findings a secret until they were dug up by the Post.

It seems what we're seeing in the South Dakota Legislature is a continuation of the Trump storyline that the 2020 presidential election was rigged and rife with corruption. With no theft to point at in South Dakota, two factions of GOP lawmakers are trying to out-conservative each other as they struggle with different and various ways to make an already strong election system even stronger. They are essentially

trying to protect us from fraud that isn't there and instill integrity in a system that's already dripping with it. South Dakotans can only hope that the most outlandish of these election integrity bills will be defeated. They should also hope that all the shouting in Pierre about election integrity doesn't cause them to lose trust in their state's elections just because Republicans in the Legislature are putting so much effort into fixing a system that isn't broken.

Dana Hess spent more than 25 years in South Dakota journalism, editing newspapers in Redfield, Milbank and Pierre. He's retired and lives in Brookings, working occasionally as a freelance writer.

Mission of Wounded Knee activists continues 50 years later with children, grandchildren

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER - FEBRUARY 27, 2023 1:30 AM

The world had largely forgotten about Native American people by the early 1970s, said Marcella Gilbert.

Native populations had been decimated by disease and colonization; their sprawling homeland where ancestors had roamed was splintered into reservations. The Lakota language was nearly extinct and practicing the Lakota religion was illegal.

"People across the world didn't even know we still existed," Gilbert said. "They thought John Wayne killed us all."

But she said that began to change after South Dakota was put in the national and international spotlight starting on Feb. 27, 1973.

On that day 50 years ago, hundreds of Native Americans and Indigenous activists began a 71-day standoff against the U.S. government at Wounded Knee on the Pine Ridge reservation, fighting for Native American recognition and rights.

The confrontation and subsequent negotiations with the federal government about treaty obligations were on international display, said Gilbert, daughter of one of the occupation's leaders, Madonna Thunder Hawk.

"The world became aware that we were still here," said Gilbert, a member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe. "History exploded in front of their faces."

Wounded Knee '73 spurred movements globally and nationwide to recognize Indigenous rights, and the work continues today with the children and grandchildren of the '73 activists.

"It's about knowing who we are and how we educate our future generations," Gilbert said.

Wounded Knee '73: 'It was warfare'

Madonna Thunder Hawk is an 82-year-old great-grandmother, a community worker and a member of the Oohenumpa band of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe.

Fifty years later, she can remember the sounds of gunfire at Wounded Knee.

"It was warfare," she recalled.

Back then, she was a 32-year-old mother serving as a medic for the American Indian Movement, a grassroots Native American organization started in Minneapolis in 1968. She joined because she was determined to forge a better future for her family and children. She spent "practically every night" huddled



Daughter-mother duo Marcella Gilbert and Madonna Thunder Hawk (left to right) pose for a photo for the "Warrior Women" documentary film.

(Courtesy of Castle King LLC)

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Wounded Knee Indians 'Are Prepared To Die'

An article printed during the Wounded Knee Occupation in 1973 reads that "Wounded Knee Indians 'Are Prepared To Die'" (Courtesy of South Dakota State Archives)

(Courtesy of South Dakota State Archives)

in a bunker while AIM members traded gunfire with the federal government.

"To be organized was new and amazing," Thunder Hawk recalled. "We were younger people then. Any time young people are on the move, change happens."

AIM was labeled as a militant group by the federal government for its disruptive protests, including a protest in Custer weeks before the occupation about the insufficiency of charges against a white man who killed a Native American man. Eventually, the protest turned into a riot with extensive damage to public property.

After the incident in Custer, Thunder Hawk traveled to the Pine Ridge reservation with an AIM caravan at the request of Lakota elders on Pine Ridge to discuss corruption on the reservation, she said.

Thunder Hawk assumed the visit would just be a day trip, but the group moved into the small town of Wounded Knee the night of Feb. 27, 1973, taking over the trading post and establishing a base of operations shortly before being surrounded by federal agents.

By the time the siege ended on May 8 with an agreement to disarm and further discuss treaty obligations, at least three people were killed and more than a dozen were wounded.

The occupation became a symbol of Indigenous power,

said Beth Castle, a former professor of Native American studies at the University of South Dakota and a director and producer of the 2018 documentary "Warrior Women," which focused on female leadership during the occupation and in following Native movements.

"Wounded Knee hit every newspaper in the world. It announced this existence and continual survival of Native people," Castle said.

But the occupation is not a celebratory memory for everyone. The late Tim Giago, who was an Oglala Lakota newspaper publisher and columnist, lived in Wounded Knee as a child in the 1930s. His father was a clerk and butcher at the Wounded Knee Trading Post.

The cabin they'd lived in was burned to the ground during the occupation, Giago wrote in a commentary in 2013. AIM members took 11 Wounded Knee residents as hostages during the occupation, including the owners of the trading post.

"The village is now gone, burned to the ground," Giago wrote. "The homes and the Trading Post were never rebuilt and the empty streets and burned out homes are stark reminders of the day Wounded Knee was 'liberated.'"

But Castle said the occupation led to the passage of the American Indian Religious Freedom Act and the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978, as well as the United Nations Conference on Indians in the Americas, which eventually led to the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples signed in 2007.

Thunder Hawk has continued her work in grassroots activism through the Women of All Red Nations, Black Hills Alliance and more, including serving as an elder organizer for the Dakota Access Pipeline protests of 2016 on the Standing Rock Indian Reservation in south-central North Dakota.

Castle said the success of Standing Rock would not have been possible without its predecessor and that current grassroots efforts in South Dakota, such as NDN Collective and Thunder Valley Community Development, are continued efforts inspired by Wounded Knee '73.

"These efforts are all connected to the sons and daughters of movement organizers and leaders," Castle said. "They're the ones that carry the fire on."

Reclaiming the Lakota language

The occupation of Wounded Knee established the resurgence of Native Americans voices. Yet five decades after the occupation, the Lakota language is still dangerously close to extinction. Of the nearly 200,000 Lakota people alive in 2021, fewer than 2,000 were fluent Lakota speakers.

Part of that was due to the forced assimilation of Native American children at Indian boarding schools across the country, said Sierra Concha, a literacy project coordinator at Red Cloud Indian School in Pine Ridge. Red Cloud was formerly the Holy Rosary Mission boarding school where Concha's grandmother was sent as a child.

Concha's grandfather, AIM leader and Wounded Knee '73 activist Dennis Banks, was sent to a boarding school in Flan-dreau.

Native children were removed from their families and communities by the federal government in the late 1800s until the mid 1900s and placed in boarding schools where they weren't allowed to speak in their native language, wear their hair in traditional customs or pray according to their religion.

But Lakota educators are reclaiming the space that stripped their relatives' cultural identity now, using it to revitalize Lakota language and culture. Red Cloud serves over 500 Lakota students and includes a comprehensive Lakota language curriculum and Lakota language immersion program.

"This work is so important because we're reclaiming not only our language but our Indigenous knowledge systems — things that come with language and are tied to every part of our identity like songs, prayers and stories," Concha said. "Our language is the very core of our being and who we are as unique Indigenous people."

Concha said Banks' mission was to ensure that native people were "recognized and treated as equals." Banks died in 2017, but his children and grandchildren continue that work.

Concha works with her mother, Red Cloud Executive Vice President Tashina Banks Rama.

Banks Rama said she draws inspiration from her father Dennis Banks' example.

"He used to have this phrase: 'It was my generation's job to go and beat these doors down and fight our way into these institutions and have native people be heard and recognized. It's your generation and the next generation's job to walk into these institutions and work them from the inside with the same mission,'" Banks Rama said.

As an administrator, Banks Rama said she's able to advocate for change "at the table" rather than "standing on the outside, screaming for change."



AMERICAN INDIAN Movement leaders Russell Means, Dennis Banks and Carter Camp (left to right) join hands with James Armstrong, Bishop of the United Methodist Church

of S.D., at Wounded Knee after AIM leaders agreed on a peace proposal with Federal forces to be supervised by the National Council of Churches. (UPI Photo)

A newspaper photo shows AIM leaders Russell Means, Dennis Banks and Carter Camp (left to right) join hands with a bishop of the United Methodist Church of South Dakota after leaders agreed to a peace proposal. (Courtesy of the South Dakota State Archives)

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South Dakota is 'still taking our children away'

While the Indian boarding school era is over, Thunder Hawk's continued mission is to strengthen and reunite Native families. The work stems from her activism in the '70s.

She called the foster care system a polished and "modernized" version of boarding schools.

More than half the state's foster children are Native American, even though Native children make up only 12% of the population. And Native American children are nearly three times as likely to be in foster care as other children, according to a 2020 Annie E. Casey Foundation study.

Foster care is "more acceptable to outside society," but is still a "form of genocide" and colonization, Castle said.

Gilbert serves as director at the Simply Smiles Children's Village in La Plant on the Cheyenne River Reservation, which aims to improve Indigenous foster care by keeping children in their tribal community instead of placing them in foster families away from the reservation.

The village can house up to 18 children and has hired trained professionals whose full-time job is to care for children in a village setting that provides cultural programming and mental health services.

"Our people have lost so many things because of the oppression of the government," Gilbert said. "The foster system is an extension of that. They're still taking our children."

Thunder Hawk's mission in the last five decades has always focused on family and child welfare. As a member of the Waśagiya Najin "Standing Strong" grandmother's group on the Cheyenne River Reservation, Thunder Hawk and Gilbert helped bring Simply Smiles to the community and are working with the tribal council to develop a family restoration program and department through tribal government.

Freedom fighters: 'it's in our DNA'

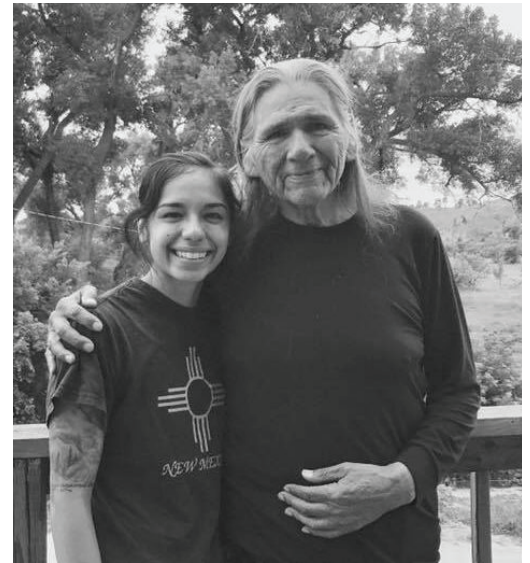
Some of the issues activists fought for in 1973 haven't changed in 50 years.

While much work has been done and there have been improvements, the ultimate goal is tribal sovereignty and self sufficiency, Banks Rama said.



Tatewin Means is the executive director of the Thunder Valley Community Development Corporation. (Courtesy of Thunder Valley)

(Courtesy of Thunder Valley)



Sierra Concha poses for a photo with her late grandfather Dennis Banks. (Courtesy of Sierra Concha)

"Now we have native policy makers, legislators, lawyers and business people – people who understand the system," Banks Rama said. "Tribes have a better understanding of their sovereignty now and how to assert their sovereignty when dealing with the federal government."

Tatewin Means, daughter of the late AIM member and spokesman Russell Means, served as the attorney general for the Oglala Sioux Tribe in the 2010s and ran unsuccessfully for South Dakota attorney general in 2018. But she's stepped away from her role in government to run Porcupine's Thunder Valley Community Development as its executive director.

Working at the nonprofit allows her the freedom to dream and the autonomy to see those dreams through.

"Liberation. Freedom. That's always been our collective vision as a nation to reclaim that sovereignty prior to colonization and to get as close as possible to being the spiritual beings and have the way of life we've always carried," said Means, a member of the Sisseton Wahpeton Dakota, Oglala Lakota and Inhanktonwan nations. "It's still there now because we've fought so hard to keep it."

Means said her father taught her about the occupation as she grew

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up and how the event “reawakened the strength, spirit and pride to be Lakota and Indigenous.”

“It’s not just the legacy of him or other people, but the legacy that our community left — individuals who sacrificed their lives there and were willing to die so our people could be free from oppression,” Means said. “It’s part of our responsibility to be freedom fighters. It’s who we are; it’s in our DNA.”

Banks Rama said she’s grateful for the work her father and other activists did at Wounded Knee in 1973. Their activism set a foundation for the work Indigenous people across South Dakota and the United States continue today.

“The Lakota people and the Indigenous people across this country are very strong and resilient,” Banks Rama said. “Our youth and the next seven generations are rising.”

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

The Bulletin

by Newsweek

JANUARY 24, 2023

World in Brief

loons like the one spotted flying over U.S. airspace could pose a major threat and could “take out” the entire country.

- Former Arizona gubernatorial candidate Kari Lake said she would soon take her election lawsuit to the Supreme Court after an appeals court rejected her challenge to throw out November’s results.

- Donald Trump attacked former House Speaker Paul Ryan after he said he would skip the 2024 Republican National Convention if Trump wins the GOP presidential nomination.

- Everything Everywhere All At Once dominated the Screen Actor Guild (SAG) awards, winning nearly every top category. See the full list of winners.

- In the ongoing war in Ukraine, Russia lost another 660 soldiers, having lost 1,310 soldiers and 18 tanks in the last two days, according to U.K. defense ministry.

- Special Counsel Jack Smith’s decision to subpoena Ivanka Trump over her father’s, Donald Trump, possible efforts to overturn 2020 election could end up being more revealing than her earlier testimony, legal experts told Newsweek.

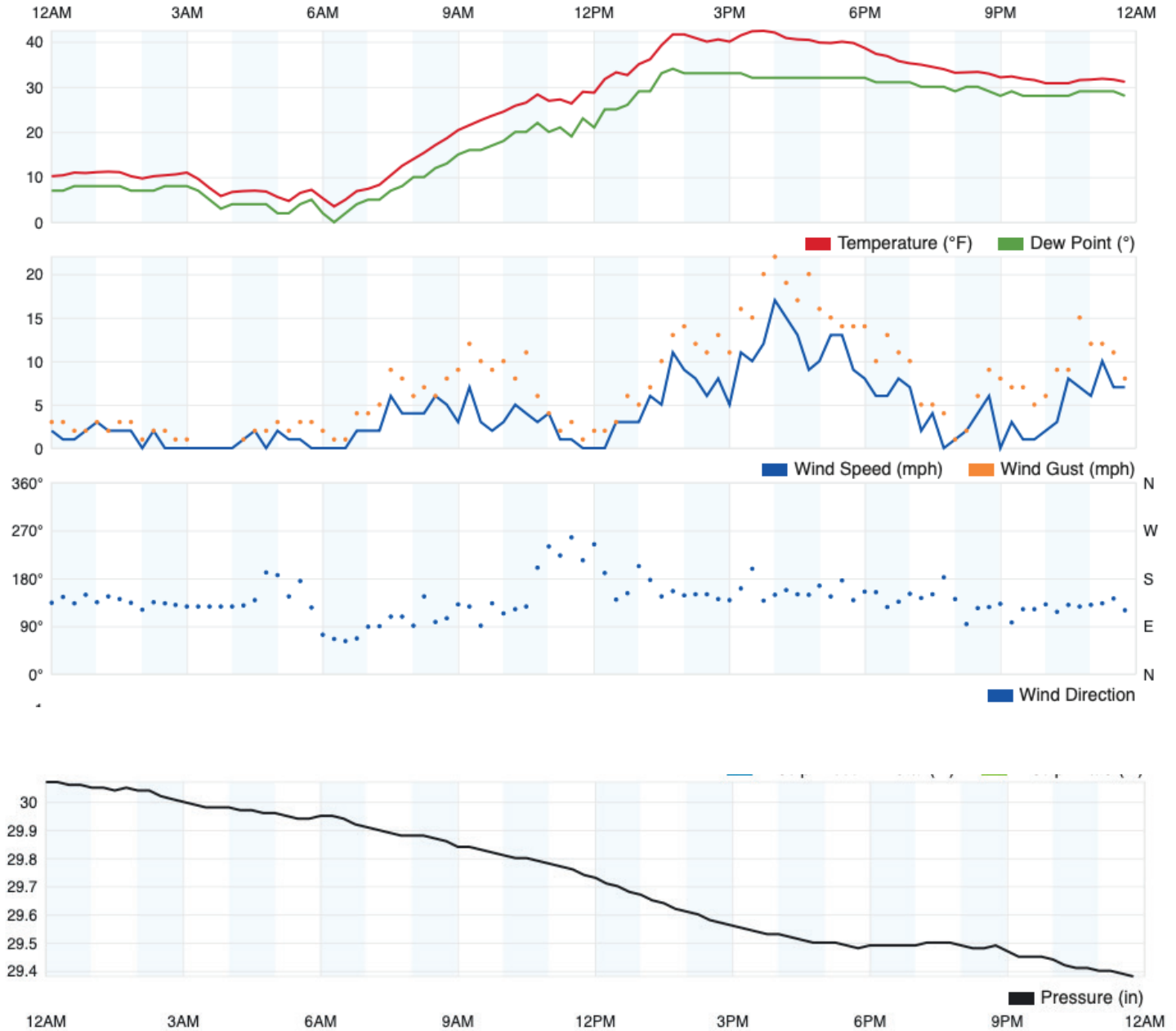
- At least three tornadoes have been reported in Oklahoma and Kansas, and videos of the aftermath are circulating on social media. Oklahoma remains under tornado watches and warnings.

- Texas state Senator Bob Hall said that “five or six” balloons

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today	Tonight	Monday	Monday Night	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday
						
Patchy Fog then Partly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy then Slight Chance Freezing Drizzle	Patchy Blowing Snow and Breezy	Mostly Clear	Mostly Sunny then Chance Snow	Chance Snow and Patchy Blowing Snow	Chance Snow and Areas Blowing Snow
High: 34 °F	Low: 23 °F	High: 35 °F	Low: 7 °F	High: 31 °F	Low: 11 °F	High: 19 °F



Fog Lifts Late This Morning - Breezy Again Today

February 27, 2023
3:25 AM

- **Pockets of Dense Fog This Morning**
- **Breezy to Windy Today (Blowing Snow Potential)**
- **Snow Possible Mid-Week**

Maximum Wind Gust Forecast

	2/27 Mon			2/28 Tue			3/1 Wed			
	6am	12pm	6pm	12am	6am	12pm	6am	12pm		
Aberdeen	31↘	33↘	23↘	13↘	10↘	25↘	33↘	36↘	44↘	36↘
Britton	26↘	31↘	14↘	12↘	8↘	23↘	33↘	38↘	41↘	35↘
Eagle Butte	41↘	35↘	16↘	17↘	26↘	30↘	33↘	30↘	28↘	22↘
Eureka	38↘	40↘	18↘	10↘	21↘	35↘	41↘	41↘	38↘	32↘
Gettysburg	39↘	37↘	15↘	9↘	32↘	36↘	37↘	30↘	26↘	25↘
Kennebec	40↘	36↘	13↘	13↘	28↘	31↘	35↘	41↘	40↘	24↘
McIntosh	44↘	37↘	15↘	6↘	23↘	32↘	35↘	30↘	26↘	22↘
Milbank	25↘	35↘	26↘	20↘	9↘	16↘	22↘	26↘	30↘	30↘
Miller	33↘	31↘	13↘	9↘	25↘	28↘	30↘	28↘	31↘	28↘
Mobridge	32↘	32↘	15↘	8↘	21↘	33↘	37↘	29↘	26↘	23↘
Murdo	39↘	32↘	10↘	20↘	29↘	31↘	43↘	45↘	37↘	21↘
Pierre	31↘	28↘	10↘	13↘	29↘	30↘	35↘	32↘	30↘	18↘
Redfield	33↘	30↘	21↘	7↘	15↘	28↘	30↘	32↘	35↘	31↘
Sisseton	32↘	38↘	31↘	24↘	10↘	15↘	23↘	28↘	31↘	30↘
Watertown	33↘	40↘	16↘	10↘	12↘	23↘	28↘	30↘	32↘	32↘
Webster	37↘	41↘	18↘	18↘	13↘	28↘	36↘	37↘	41↘	37↘
Wheaton	22↘	28↘	26↘	20↘	10↘	14↘	18↘	26↘	29↘	26↘



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

We will wake up to dense fog this morning, but as winds increase out of the northwest we can expect clearing. There may be some light blowing and drifting of snow today but shouldn't be much more than a nuisance. We are watching a system for mid week

The Challenges of “Banded Snowfall”

A Small Shift In Track Or Change In Location = Big Difference In Snow Totals

What is Banded Snowfall:

- A narrow corridor of heavier snowfall within a broader area of light amounts
- Usually has very tight gradients in snow amounts on the edges of the heavier band
- Very difficult to forecast, especially more than 12-24 hours out from event

What Should You Do:

Always monitor the latest forecast from a reliable source. Banded snow events often result in frequent and sometime drastic forecast changes.



City A
Light Snow Totals
(Less than 2")

City B
Heavy Snow Totals
(Greater than 6")

City C
Moderate Snow Totals
(2 to 6")



Photo taken by Leigh Marts (via NWS Wichita, KS)

Some of the challenges associated with bands of snow. The graphics shows the rather drastic contrast a band of snow can produce. We expect more widespread light snow but areas along the North Dakota state line have the best chances for a swath of heavier snow. Any shift however will have dramatic consequences on snowfall amounts.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 42 °F at 3:36 PM

Low Temp: 3 °F at 6:20 AM

Wind: 22 mph at 3:55 PM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 11 hours, 05 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 68 in 2016

Record Low: -23 in 2001

Average High: 33

Average Low: 11

Average Precip in Feb.: 0.59

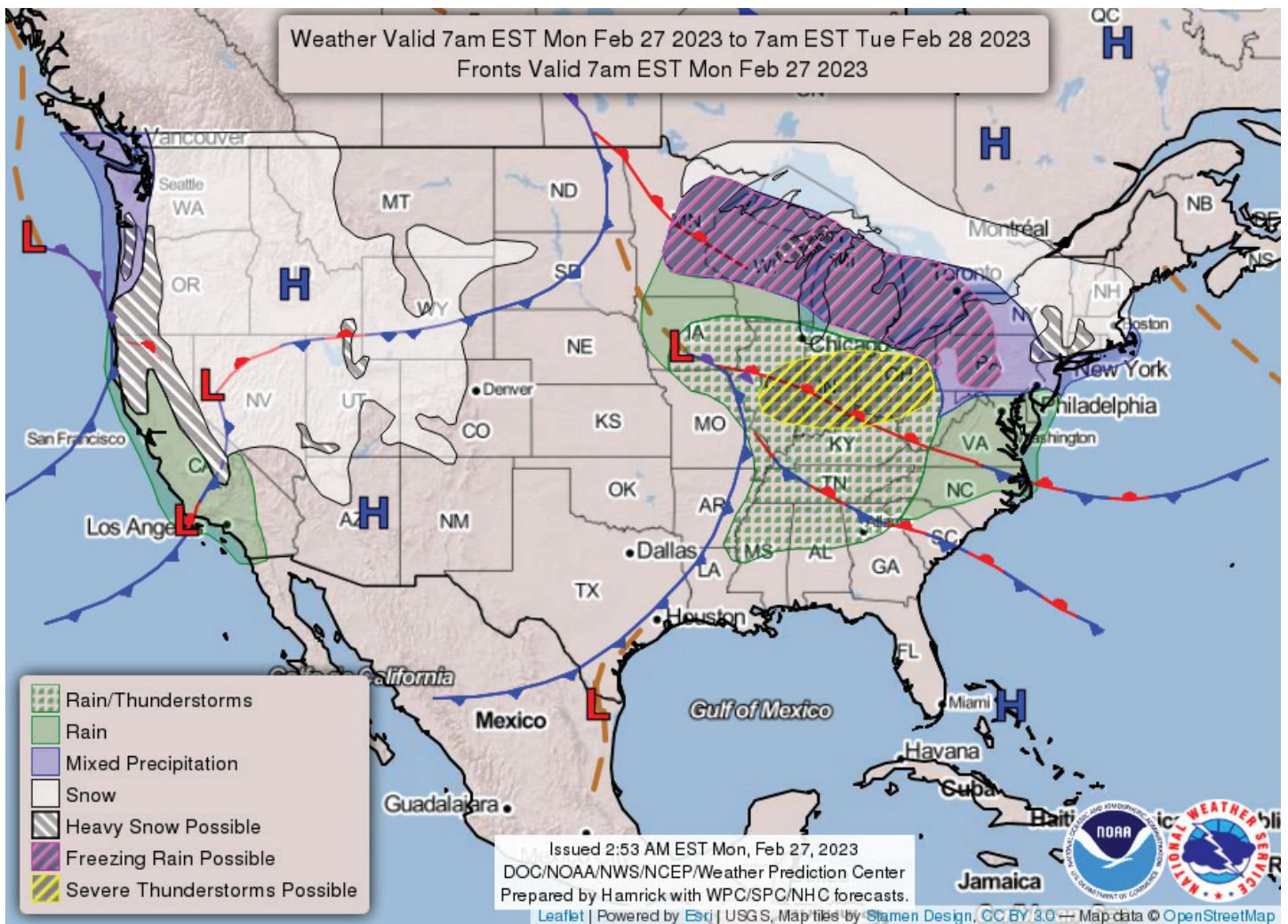
Precip to date in Feb.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 1.14

Precip Year to Date: 1.58

Sunset Tonight: 6:17:41 PM

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:10:42 AM



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Today in Weather History

February 27, 1969: Snowfall of up to 15 inches blocked many roads in South Dakota. In addition, freezing rain formed a glaze on many utility lines resulting in extensive damage. The most considerable damage occurred in the north-central part of the state.

February 27, 1996: Across central and northeast South Dakota and west-central Minnesota, a strong area of low pressure brought 4 to 11 inches of snow from the late afternoon of the 26th to the evening of the 27th. Along with the snow came strong north winds of 20 to 40 mph, creating near-blizzard conditions. Wind chills were from 20 below to 60 below. As a result, some schools were closed or started late on the 27th, along with some activities canceled. Snowfall amounts included 4 inches at Sisseton, 5 inches at Aberdeen, Redfield, near Reliance, Wheaton, Browns Valley, Britton, and Gettysburg. Other snowfall amounts included 6 inches at Lebanon, Hoven, Miller, Webster, Eden, Frederick, and Seneca, 7 inches near Chelsea and Mellette, 8 inches at Roscoe and east of Hosmer, Tulare, and near Milbank, 9 inches south of Ree Heights, 8 to 10 inches in the Ortonville area, and 11 inches at Wilmot.

1717 - What was perhaps the greatest snow in New England history commenced on this date. During a ten day period a series of four snowstorms dumped three feet of snow upon Boston, and the city was snowbound for two weeks. Up to six feet of snow was reported farther to the north, and drifts covered many one story homes. (David Ludlum)

1969 - A record snowstorm in Maine came to an end. Two to four feet of snow buried southern and central Maine, with a state record of 57 inches reported at West Forks. Drifts covered many single story homes, and the weight of the snow collapsed many roofs. Two to four feet of snow also buried northeastern Vermont and northeastern Massachusetts. In New Hampshire, Mount Washington NH reported 97.8 inches of snow, a record storm total for New England. (24th-28th) (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1986: It was 99 degrees in Palm Springs, California, the highest temperature on record for February. Palm Springs also reached 99 degrees on February 26, 1986.

1987 - A storm spread heavy snow into the Central High Plains Region, and produced severe thunderstorms in the Southern Plains. Snowfall totals in western Nebraska ranged up to 19 inches at Sydney. Severe thunderstorms in Oklahoma produced baseball size hail at Stringtown and Atoka. A storm in the eastern U.S. produced heavy rain over the Carolinas and heavy snow in the southern Appalachians and piedmont region. Five inches of rain left four feet of water in the streets of Greenville SC. Snowfall totals in southwestern Virginia ranged up to 20 inches. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Thunderstorms along a cold front produced heavy rain in southern California, with up to 2.52 inches reported in Ventura County. Strong winds accompanying the rain gusted to 55 mph in the Tehachapi Mountains. Rapid City SD established a February record with an afternoon high of 75 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Rain and snow prevailed in the southeastern U.S. Up to eight inches of snow blanketed north central Tennessee, and snowfall totals in western North Carolina ranged up to 14 inches at Mount Mitchell. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 - A winter storm produced heavy snow in southeastern Colorado, with 12 inches reported at Lamar. The same storm produced severe thunderstorms over the Southern High Plains, with wind gusts to 93 mph reported at the White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico. Low pressure brought high winds to the Prince William Sound area of Alaska. Big River Lakes reported wind gusts to 92 mph. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2010 - A weak EF0 tornado causes no damage as it moved across California's southern San Joaquin Valley. However it is the only tornado reported in the United States during the month. According to the Storm Prediction Center only five months since 1950 have lacked a tornado report. The Weather Doctor

2010: A magnitude 8.8 earthquake occurred off the coast of central Chili at 3:34 local time. The quake triggered a tsunami that devastated several coastal towns in south-central Chile. Tsunami warnings were issued in 53 countries. In addition, waves caused minor damage in the San Diego area and the Tohoku region of Japan.

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Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

DRIVEN BY DESIRE

Young Antonio was driven by a desire to play the violin and sing. Unfortunately, his fingers were not nimble enough to move swiftly over the strings, and his voice sounded screechy. He went from one teacher to another, and then another. They all agreed that he would never be a great musician. They would laugh, and he would cry.

One day, by chance, he met Amati, a violin maker. He was very attracted to the sincerity and passion that Antonio had for music, even though he could neither play nor sing. "Son," said Amati, "it is a song in your heart that makes the difference. There are many ways to make music. And you can make music if you want."

Those words inspired Antonio, and he became an apprentice to Amati to learn how to make violins. In time, Antonio Stradivarius became the world's greatest maker of violins. He was helped by a friend, something all of us can do for others.

The Apostle Paul had some great advice: "Don't make your children - or anyone's children - angry by the way you treat them." The true purpose of guidance is to help children grow by example and encouragement. All children deserve a parent or teacher who is Christ-honoring, hard-working, accountable to God and others. Expressing love by being kind, patient, and encouraging to children, ours and others, is an honor and calling. Showing "our Father's" love by encouraging and mentoring children is a gift we can all give to children.

Prayer: We pray, Lord, for opportunities to demonstrate Your concern for children. May we show Your love and grace by word and deed, and follow Your example. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. Ephesians 6:4



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

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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)
- 01/31/2023-02/03/2023 Lion's Club Prom & Formal Dress Consignment Drop Off 6-9pm, Community Center
- 02/04/2023-02/05/2023 Lion's Club Prom & Formal Dress Consignment Sale 1-5pm, Community Center
- 02/25/2023 Littles and Me, Art Making 10-11:30am, Wage Memorial Library
- 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
- 10/14/2023 Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm
- 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
- 12/09/2023 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services 9-11am

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The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:
02.24.23

2 22 49 65 67 7

MegaPlier: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$145,000,000

NEXT 1 Days 16 Hrs 25
DRAW: Mins 39 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
02.25.23

14 22 34 39 50 8

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$38,310,000

NEXT 16 Hrs 25 Mins 38
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
02.26.23

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT 15 Hrs 55 Mins 38
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
02.25.23

11 14 19 25 34

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$68,000

NEXT 2 Days 16 Hrs 25
DRAW: Mins 38 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
02.25.23

4 6 39 60 66 2

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT 16 Hrs 24 Mins 38
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
02.25.23

11 24 58 66 67 26

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$131,000,000

NEXT 16 Hrs 24 Mins 39
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the Associated Press

Legacy of Wounded Knee occupation lives on 50 years later

By KALLE BENALLIE, ICT undefined

WOUNDED KNEE, S.D. (AP) — Madonna Thunder Hawk remembers the firefights.

As a medic during the occupation of Wounded Knee in early 1973, Thunder Hawk was stationed nightly in a frontline bunker in the combat zone between Native American activists and U.S. government agents in South Dakota.

"I would crawl out there every night, and we'd just be out there in case anybody got hit," said Thunder Hawk, of the Oohenumpa band of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, one of four women assigned to the bunkers.

Memories of the Wounded Knee occupation — one in a string of protests from 1969 to 1973 that pushed the American Indian Movement to the forefront of Native activism — still run deep within people like Thunder Hawk who were there.

Thunder Hawk, now 83, is careful about what she says today about AIM and the occupation, but she can't forget that tribal elders in 1973 had been raised by grandparents who still remembered the 1890 slaughter of hundreds of Lakota people at Wounded Knee by U.S. soldiers.

"That's how close we are to our history," she told ICT recently. "So anything that goes on, anything we do, even today with the land-back issue, all of that is just a continuation. It's nothing new."

Other feelings linger, too, over the tensions that emerged in Lakota communities after Wounded Knee and the virtual destruction of the small community. Many still don't want to talk about it.

But the legacy of activism lives on among those who have followed in their footsteps, including the new generations of Native people who turned out at Standing Rock beginning in 2016 for the pipeline protests.

"For me, it's important to acknowledge the generation before us — to acknowledge their risk," said Nick Tilsen, founder of NDN Collective and a leader in the Standing Rock protests, whose parents were AIM activists. "It's important for us to honor them. It's important for us to thank them."

Akim D. Reinhardt, who wrote the book, "Ruling Pine Ridge: Oglala Lakota Politics from the IRA to Wounded Knee," said the AIM protests had powerful social and cultural impacts.

"Collectively, they helped establish a sense of the permanence of Red Power in much the way that Black Power had for African Americans, a permanent legacy," said Reinhardt, a history professor at Towson University in Towson, Maryland.

"It was the cultural legacy that racism isn't OK and people don't need to be quiet and accept it anymore," he said. "That it's OK to be proud of who you are."

A series of events in South Dakota in recent days recognized the 50th anniversary of the occupation, including powwows, a documentary film showing and a special honor for the women of Wounded Knee.

'THUNDERBOLT' OF PROTEST

The occupation began on the night of Feb. 27, 1973, when a group of warriors led by Oklahoma AIM leader Carter Camp, who was Ponca, moved into the small town of Wounded Knee. The group took over the trading post and established a base of operations along with AIM leaders Russell Means, of the Oglala Sioux Tribe; Dennis Banks, who was Ojibwe; and Clyde Bellecourt, of the White Earth Nation.

Within days, hundreds of activists had joined them for what became a 71-day standoff with the U.S. government and other law enforcement.

It was the fourth protest in as many years for AIM. The organization formed in the late 1960s and drew international attention with the occupation of Alcatraz in the San Francisco Bay from 1969-1971. In 1972, the Trail of Broken Treaties brought a cross-country caravan of hundreds of Indigenous activists to Washington, D.C., where they occupied the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs headquarters for six days.

Then, on Feb. 6, 1973, AIM members and others gathered at the courthouse in Custer County, South

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Dakota, to protest the killing of Wesley Bad Heart Bull, who was Oglala Lakota, and the lenient sentences given to some perpetrators of violence against Native Americans. When they were denied access into the courthouse, the protest turned violent, with the burning of the local chamber of commerce and other buildings.

Three weeks later, AIM leaders took over Wounded Knee.

"It had been waiting to happen for generations," said Kevin McKiernan, who covered the Wounded Knee occupation as a journalist in his late 20s and who later directed the 2019 documentary film, "From Wounded Knee to Standing Rock."

"If you look at it as a storm, the storm had been building through abuse, land theft, genocide, religious intolerance, for generations and generations," he said. "The storm built up, and built up and built up. The American Indian Movement was simply the thunderbolt."

The takeover at Wounded Knee grew out of a dispute with Oglala Sioux tribal leader Richard Wilson but also put a spotlight on demands that the U.S. government uphold its treaty obligations to the Lakota people.

By March 8, the occupation leaders had declared the Wounded Knee territory to be the Independent Oglala Nation, granting citizenship papers to those who wanted them and demanding recognition as a sovereign nation.

The standoff was often violent, and supplies became scarce within the occupied territory as the U.S. government worked to cut off support for those behind the lines. Discussions were ongoing throughout much of the occupation, with several government officials working with AIM leaders to try and resolve the issues.

The siege finally ended on May 8 with an agreement to disarm and to further discuss the treaty obligations. By then, at least three people had been killed and more than a dozen wounded, according to reports.

Two Native men died. Frank Clearwater, identified as Cherokee and Apache, was shot on April 17, 1973, and died eight days later. Lawrence "Buddy" Lamont, who was Oglala Lakota, was shot and killed on April 26, 1973.

Another man, Black activist Ray Robinson, who had been working with the Oglala Sioux Civil Rights Organization, went missing during the siege. The FBI confirmed in 2014 that he had died at Wounded Knee, but his body was never recovered. A U.S. marshal who was shot and paralyzed died many years later.

Camp was later convicted of abducting and beating four postal inspectors during the occupation and served three years in federal prison. Banks and Means were indicted on charges related to the events, but their cases were dismissed by a federal court for prosecutorial misconduct.

Today, the Wounded Knee National Historic Landmark identifies the site of the 1890 massacre, most of which is now under joint ownership of the Oglala Sioux and Cheyenne River Sioux tribes.

The tribes agreed in 2022 to purchase 40 acres that included the area where most of the carnage took place in 1890, the ravine where victims fled and the area where the trading post was located.

The purchase, from a descendant of the original owners of the trading post, included a covenant requiring the land to be preserved as a sacred site and memorial without commercial development.

And though internal tensions emerged in the AIM organization in the years after the Wounded Knee occupation, AIM continues to operate throughout the U.S. in tribal communities and urban areas.

In recent years, members participated in the Standing Rock protests and have persisted in pushing for the release from prison of former AIM leader Leonard Peltier, who was convicted of two counts of first-degree murder despite inconsistencies in the evidence in the deaths of two FBI agents during a shootout in 1975 on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation.

A NEW GENERATION

Tilsen, now president and chief executive of NDN Collective, an Indigenous-led organization centered around building Indigenous power, traces the roots of his activism to Wounded Knee.

His parents, JoAnn Tall and Mark Tilsen, met at Wounded Knee, and he praises the women of the movement who sustained the traditional matriarchal system during the occupation.

"I grew up in the American Indian Movement," said Tilsen, a citizen of the Oglala Lakota Nation. "It

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wasn't a question about what you were fighting for. You were raised up in it. In fact, if you didn't fight, you weren't going to live."

Tilsen credits AIM and others for most of the rights Native Americans have today, including the ability to operate casinos and tribal colleges, enter into contracts with the federal government to oversee schools and other services, and religious freedom.

He said the movement showed the world that tribes were sovereign nations and their treaties were being violated. And when AIM and spiritual leaders such as Henry Crow Dog, Leonard Crow Dog and Matthew King joined the fight, it became intergenerational.

"It became a spiritual revolution," he said. "It also became a fight that was about human rights. It became a fight that was about where Indigenous people aren't just within the political system of America, but within the broader context of the system; of the world."

Tilsen appreciates that his parents were willing to participate in an armed revolution to achieve one of their dreams of establishing KILI radio station, known as the "Voice of the Lakota Nation," which began operating in 1983 as the first Indigenous-owned radio station in the United States.

The Dakota Access Pipeline protest in 2016 became a defining moment for him and his brother. They had wondered, he said, what would be their Wounded Knee?

"What made it so powerful and what made it different was that you actually had grassroots organizers and revolutionaries and official tribal governments coming together, too," Tilsen said. "I think that Standing Rock in particular actually reached way further than Wounded Knee because of how the issue was framed around 'water is life.'"

Alex Fire Thunder, deputy director of the Lakota Language Consortium, said the occupation of Wounded Knee and other activism helped revitalize Indigenous languages and cultures. His mother was too young to have participated in the occupation but he said she remembered visits from AIM members in the community.

"The whole point of AIM, the American Indian Movement, was to bring back a sense of pride in our culture," Fire Thunder, Oglala Lakota, told ICT.

FUTURE GENERATIONS

For Thunder Hawk, the issues became her lifelong work rather than momentary activism.

She joined AIM in 1968 and participated in the occupation at Alcatraz, the BIA headquarters, the Custer County Courthouse and Wounded Knee, as well as the Standing Rock pipeline protest in 2016.

She said work being done today by a new generation is a continuation of the work her ancestors did.

"That's why we were successful in Indian Country, because we were a movement of families," she said. "It wasn't just an age group, a bunch of young people carrying on."

She hopes her legacy will live on, that her great-great-grandchildren will see not just a photo of her but know what she sounded like and the person she seemed to be.

It's something that she can't have when she looks at a photo of her paternal great-grandparents.

"Hopefully that's what my descendants will see, you know?" she said. "And with the technology nowadays, they can press a button, maybe, and it'll come up."

Frank Star Comes Out, the current president of the Oglala Sioux Tribe, also believes it's time for the previous generation's work to be recognized.

Some of his family members strongly supported AIM, including his mother and father. He said it's important to fight for his people, who survived genocide.

"That's why I support AIM, not only on a family level," he said. "I have a lot of pride in who I am as a Lakota. ... Times (have) changed. Now I'm using my leadership to help our people rise, to give them a voice. And I believe that's important for Indian Country."

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Memories of Wounded Knee reflect mixed legacy after 50 years

By STEVE KARNOWSKI Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Tensions that had been smoldering on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota flared up 50 years ago Monday, when activists from the American Indian Movement took over the town of Wounded Knee.

In the view of the protesters, Oglala Sioux tribal chairman Dick Wilson was in cahoots with the Bureau of Indian Affairs and other federal authorities, and used threats of violence to intimidate his critics. But the 71-day occupation quickly morphed into an outpouring of anger with the federal government over decades of broken treaties, the theft of ancestral lands, forced assimilation and other injustices dating back centuries.

Two Native Americans died in the fighting, and a U.S. marshal was left paralyzed.

Wounded Knee had already been seared into history as the site of an 1890 massacre by U.S. Army cavalry troops in one of the last major military operations against Native Americans on the northern plains. Accounts vary, but the massacre left around 300 Lakota dead — including children, women and older people. Congress apologized in 1990.

Ahead of the 50th anniversary of the occupation, The Associated Press reached out to people who were at Wounded Knee or involved from a distance to hear their stories.

DWAIN CAMP

Dwain Camp, a member of the Ponca Tribe of Oklahoma, was in California when his younger brother, Carter, called to say he and other leaders of the American Indian Movement took a group of activists into Wounded Knee.

"He was telling me they were in a hell of a fight," Camp, now 85, recalled. "I heard the gunfire and that was all I needed. I went up there and stayed for the duration of the standoff."

Their brother, Craig, a Vietnam veteran, also joined them. Camp said the rifles and shotguns the occupiers took from the trading post in town were no match for the weapons and armored vehicles the feds had.

"We were going to make it very expensive should they go ahead and roll in," Camp said. "It didn't come to that, thank goodness."

Camp remembers the occupation with pride as "a very vital time" that changed his life. He said he experienced "the freest feeling that I could ever imagine." He met AIM leaders who became famous, including Dennis Banks, Clyde Bellecourt and Russell Means. It was also a spiritual awakening for many occupiers and visitors, he said, with sweat lodge ceremonies providing a chance for prayer and learning about their traditions.

And it helped change the way Native Americans across the country saw themselves, Camp said.

"The Native people of this land after Wounded Knee, they had like a surge of new pride in being Native people," he said.

Camp said the takeover was a catalyst for policy changes that had been "unimaginable" before, including the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act, the Indian Child Welfare Act, the American Indian Religious Freedom Act and the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act, to name a few. And it provided a focus for his own activism.

"After we left Wounded Knee, it became paramount that protecting Mother Earth was our foremost issue," he said. "Since that period of time, we've learned that we've got to teach our kids our true history."

Camp sees the fight over the Dakota Access Pipeline — which drew thousands of Indigenous people and supporters to the Standing Rock Reservation in North Dakota in 2016 and 2017 — as a continuation of the resurgence fueled by Wounded Knee.

"We're not the subjugated and disenfranchised people that we were," he said. "Wounded Knee was an important beginning of that. And because we're a resilient people, it's something we take a lot of pride in."

Camp said he wished he could return to Pine Ridge for the 50th anniversary observances, but traveling isn't easy at his age. Instead, he plans to get together with his surviving brother, Craig, who lives near him in Ponca. They'll burn some of the sacred sage that family members bring back every year from South

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Dakota.

—
JIM HUGGINS

FBI Special Agent Jim Huggins was on the other side of the roadblocks. He was one of several agents from the Denver FBI office who went to Wounded Knee to back up their colleagues.

"It was a dangerous situation," recalled Huggins, 83, who's retired and lives in Frankfort, Kentucky. "The people that took over the town of Wounded Knee were a group of militants, mostly out of Minneapolis. ... They were dedicated members of the American Indian Movement and were very anti-FBI."

Huggins said there was often an exchange of gunfire between the two sides.

"Every time you were out on the roadblocks, you could anticipate a shot coming your way," he said. "You could hear them whizz by pretty close sometimes. ... It seemed like every night just after sunset a few shots would ring out in our direction."

Unlike Camp, Huggins doesn't think much good came out of the occupation.

"I think it was totally unnecessary on their part," he said. "I base that on interviewing several Native Americans who lived for years on the reservation. They were totally against the takeover."

And Huggins believes the ongoing tensions between AIM and authorities led to the killings of two FBI agents in a shootout on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation two years later, one of whom was a good friend of his. AIM activist Leonard Peltier maintains he was wrongly convicted in their deaths, but successive presidents have denied requests for clemency.

—
PHIL HOGEN

Phil Hogen was chief of staff to new U.S. Rep. James Abdnor, whose district included the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, when the occupation began just a few weeks after they moved to Washington.

"We were sort of on the front page of the Washington Post for 71 days while this was going on," Hogen recalled. He said Abdnor "did not look kindly on that disruption. He was all for resolving differences." But he said they worked hard to try to find a resolution, consulting with the FBI, the U.S. Marshals Service and the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Hogen, 77, who lives off the reservation in Black Hawk, South Dakota, now has mixed, but mostly negative, views on the occupation.

"It was regrettable in many respects," he said. "That is, the disruption of government, the confrontation, the loss of lives. I don't know that all of those wounds have yet healed. But at the end of the day there was a greater awareness of American Indian/Native American concerns and injustices they had been exposed to."

As a member of the Oglala Sioux Tribe, Hogen said he could identify with some of their concerns.

"But it didn't start out from my perspective as a national confrontation, rather a national confrontation looking for a place to happen," he said. Tribal leader Wilson "sometimes ruled with an iron hand, but sometimes on Pine Ridge that was necessary."

Hogen went on to serve as U.S. attorney for South Dakota under President Ronald Reagan.

If any lasting good came out of the occupation of Wounded Knee, Hogen said, it was that it "reminded the whole country about what a tragedy the original massacre was, and how those concerns or wounds were probably never appropriately addressed. It probably steered some resources toward solving some of those problems. ... But it left a bad taste in the mouths of a lot of people, so it cut both ways."

Hogen said it's also unfortunate that relatively little has been done with the massacre site, which was mostly private land until last fall.

"It's the site of a national tragedy, and it's regrettable that it isn't better memorialized there than it is," he said.

—
JIM MONE

Jim Mone had been a photographer with The Associated Press in Minneapolis for about 3 1/2 months

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when he was sent to cover the takeover. He packed a couple hundred pounds of equipment — including photo transmitters, a complete darkroom and a bulk pack of black-and-white film — and got on a flight to Rapid City, South Dakota.

The closest available motel room was in the town of Martin, about 30 miles (48 kilometers) east of Wounded Knee. He set up his darkroom in the bathroom and mixed his chemicals. His editor soon arrived and said, "Let's go to Wounded Knee."

But that wasn't easy. The FBI and AIM had erected roadblocks. So they took backroads to get as close as they could, ditching their car about 2 miles (3.2 kilometers) away, and started walking. Soon they came upon surprised AIM members who let them keep going.

"They were courteous enough to tell us how much farther we had to go," said Mone, 79, of the Minneapolis suburb of Bloomington.

Entering Wounded Knee, they saw a ransacked church where activists and journalists had gathered — and men with rifles. But Mone said he developed good relations with AIM leaders in the seven weeks he was there.

"They knew they needed the media, so I don't think any media people got hurt," he said. "You could get inches away from them, and photograph them. They treated us quite well and respectfully."

The most worrying moments, he said, included firefights when he could see tracer bullets overhead, and a when a jet buzzed the town just a few hundred feet overhead.

To get an edge on his competition, Mone said, he practically crawled into a packed tipi where AIM activists and federal authorities smoked a peace pipe to mark the deal to end the occupation. He developed his film using equipment in his trunk before driving back to his motel, where he used a bulky transmitter connected to his room phone to send in the key picture, which Mone said was used by The New York Times the next day.

Mone said the atmosphere as the deal was signed was courteous, tense and businesslike all at once, and he believed that the fact the final negotiations were conducted in a tipi was "a sign of respect to the Native Americans."

AP WAS THERE: The occupation at Wounded Knee

By TERRY DEVINE Associated Press

WOUNDED KNEE, S.D. (AP) — Members of the American Indian Movement took over the town of Wounded Knee on Feb. 27, 1973, starting a 71-day occupation on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota. The standoff with the U.S. government — which grew out of turmoil within the Oglala Sioux Tribe as well as a protest of the federal government's treatment of Native Americans — became violent at times, and two Native American men were killed. The siege sowed divisions on the reservation, and also left a lasting impact on members of the Oglala Sioux Tribe and the future of Native American activism. On the 50th anniversary of the start of that occupation, The Associated Press is republishing a 1973 story by reporter Terry Devine.

Please note the language used to describe members of the American Indian Movement. AP Style is to no longer use the term "Indian" as shorthand for Native American.

WOUNDED KNEE

By Terry Devine

WOUNDED KNEE, S.D., FEB. 28 (AP) — Militant Indians who took over this small town continued to hold 11 hostages Wednesday after one exchange of gunfire and unsuccessful attempts at negotiations, authorities said.

Gunshots were exchanged between the Indians and federal marshals earlier in the day, according to a Bureau of Indian Affairs official, but there were no reports of injuries.

An FBI spokesman said there were 11 hostages, ranging in age from 12 to 82.

John McCarty, an FBI agent at the scene, said attempts had been made to reach agreement on release

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of the hostages. However, he said, "At this time, there have been no meaningful negotiations."

The Indians, who were demanding to see two U.S. senators concerning a list of demands, repeated earlier assurances that the hostages would not be harmed.

Spokesmen for the Indians also said a cease-fire had been arranged with the FBI.

Dick Wilson, president of the Oglala Sioux tribe that lives on the reservation, issued a statement accusing American Indian Movement members of "mob rule" and trying to "overthrow the tribal government."

Wilson, 38, said the takeover of the historic community should be regarded as a criminal act and the demonstrating Indians should be "held responsible and prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law."

The brief flurry of shots had come when a car carrying several Indians from Wounded Knee stopped about half a mile from a roadblock set up by the marshals, the FBI spokesman said.

He said the Indians, whose leaders said they were well-armed, emerged from the car firing rifles at the officers, and the marshals returned fire.

Indian leaders said there was other gunfire when Indians warned off cards that came too close to the village. Federal officers at the scene refused to discuss the shots and say whether they were returned. Another FBI official said only the Indians fired.

Marshals had personnel vehicles equipped with machine guns transported to Pine Ridge, 20 miles (32 kilometers) south of Wounded Knee, Wednesday, but the marshals declined to say if the vehicles would be taken to the site of the demonstration.

Spokesmen for the Indians said the occupying force had grown from 200 when the trouble started to 400 by Wednesday.

The takeover of the community, site of a bloody battle between the U.S. Cavalry and Sioux in 1890, began at about 10 p.m. EST on Tuesday. By the middle of the afternoon Wednesday, an FBI spokesman in Washington said, "The Indians are in charge of the town, hostages are there, roadblocks are up, the demands are the same."

Clyde Bellecourt, of Minneapolis, a leader of the American Indian Movement, said the exchange of gunfire occurred when Indians fired warning shots over cars that came within a quarter of a mile of the village of about 100. He said federal marshals returned the fire.

Carter Camp, of Ponca City, Oklahoma, a national coordinator of AIM, said warning shots were fired by Indians at a low-flying airplane, but claimed it was not hit. Camp said the cease-fire was agreed upon before 2 p.m. EST.

Camp said the hostages would not be hurt unless authorities — who had surrounded the village — came too close.

The Indians — including members of AIM and of the Oglala Sioux tribe — held nine members of one family and a Roman Catholic priest. They demanded that Sens. Edward M. Kennedy, of Massachusetts, and J.W. Fulbright, of Arkansas, both Democrats, come to the 2,500-square mile (6,475-square kilometers) Pine Ridge reservation to discuss the Indians' grievances.

The trouble allegedly started when the Indians broke into a trading post in the town 140 miles (225 kilometers) southeast of Rapid City and armed themselves with weapons and supplies. Their demands included an investigation of the dealings of the U.S. Department of the Interior and the Bureau of Indian Affairs with the Oglala Sioux. They also sought an ouster of the current leaders, including Richard Wilson, tribal chairman, who has feuded with AIM members in the past.

Bellecourt and Russell Means, another AIM leader, said the Indians were well armed. "We have high-powered rifles, shotguns, explosives and 14 hand grenades," Means said.

"The government has two choices: either they attack and wipe us out like they did in 1890, or they negotiate our reasonable demands."

Wounded Knee, which is about 140 miles (225 kilometers) southeast of Rapid City, was the site of the last major confrontation between Indians and whites in the campaign to settle the West. More than 200 Indian women, children and old men were massacred on Dec. 29, 1890, by troops of the 7th Cavalry. That was the division led by Gen. George Custer that was annihilated four years before at the battle of

the Little Big Horn in Montana.
Feb. 28, 1973

Outsmarting humans just one step for AI video game players

By MATT O'BRIEN AP Technology Writer

Speed around a French village in the video game Grand Turismo and you might spot a Corvette behind you trying to catch your slipstream.

The technique of using the draft of an opponent's racecar to speed up and overtake them is one favored by skilled players of PlayStation's realistic racing game.

But this Corvette driver is not being controlled by a human — it's GT Sophy, a powerful artificial intelligence agent built by PlayStation-maker Sony.

Grand Turismo players have been competing against computer-generated racecars since the franchise launched in the 1990s, but the new AI driver that was unleashed last week on Grand Turismo 7 is smarter and faster because it's been trained using the latest AI methods.

"Grand Turismo had a built-in AI existing from the beginning of the game, but it has a very narrow band of performance and it isn't very good," said Michael Spranger, chief operating officer of Sony AI. "It's very predictable. Once you get past a certain level, it doesn't really entice you anymore."

But now, he said, "this AI is going to put up a fight."

Visit an artificial intelligence laboratory at universities and companies like Sony, Google, Meta, Microsoft and ChatGPT-maker OpenAI and it's not unusual to find AI agents like Sophy racing cars, slinging angry birds at pigs, fighting epic interstellar battles or helping human gamers build new Minecraft worlds -- all part of the job description for computer systems trying to learn how to get smarter in games.

But in some instances, they are also trying to learn how to get smarter in the real world. In a January paper, a University of Cambridge researcher who built an AI agent to control Pokémon characters argued it could "inspire all sorts of applications that require team management under conditions of extreme uncertainty, including managing a team of doctors, robots or employees in an ever-changing environment, like a pandemic-stricken region or a war zone."

And while that might sound like a kid making a case for playing three more hours of Pokémon Violet, the study of games has been used to advance AI research — and train computers to solve complex problems — since the mid-20th century.

Initially, AI was used on games like checkers and chess to test at winning strategy games. Now a new branch of research is more focused on performing open-ended tasks in complex worlds and interacting with humans, not just for the purpose of beating them.

"Reality is like a super-complicated game," said Nicholas Sarantinos, who authored the Pokémon paper and recently turned down a doctoral offer at Oxford University to start an AI company aiming to help corporate workplaces set up more collaborative teams.

In the web-based Pokémon Showdown battle simulator, Sarantinos developed an algorithm to analyze a team of six Pokémon — predicting how they would perform based on all the possible battle scenarios ahead of them and their comparative strengths and weaknesses.

Microsoft, which owns the popular Minecraft game franchise as well as the Xbox game system, has tasked AI agents with a variety of activities — from steering clear of lava to chopping trees and making furnaces. Researchers hope some of their learnings could eventually play a role in real-world technology, such as how to get a home robot to take on certain chores without having to program it to do so.

While it "goes without stating" that real humans behave quite differently from fictional video game creatures, "the core ideas can still be used," Sarantinos said. "If you use psychology tests, you can take this information to conclude how well they can work together."

Amy Hoover, an assistant professor of informatics at the New Jersey Institute of Technology who's built algorithms for the digital card game Hearthstone, said "there really is a reason for studying games" but it is not always easy to explain.

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"People aren't always understanding that the point is about the optimization method rather than the game," she said.

Games also offer a useful testbed for AI — including for some real-world applications in robotics or health care — that's safer to try in a virtual world, said Vanessa Volz, a researcher and co-founder of the Danish startup Modl.ai, which builds AI systems for game development.

But, she adds, "it can get overhyped."

"It's probably not going to be one big breakthrough and that everything is going to be shifted to the real world," Volz said.

Japanese electronics giant Sony launched its own AI research division in 2020 with entertainment in mind, but it's nonetheless attracted broader academic attention. Its research paper introducing Sophy last year made it on the cover of the prestigious science journal Nature, which said it could potentially have effects on other applications such as drones and self-driving vehicles.

The technology behind Sophy is based on an algorithmic method known as reinforcement learning, which trains the system by rewarding it when it gets something right as it runs virtual races thousands of times.

"The reward is going to tell you that, 'You're making progress. This is good,' or, 'You're off the track. Well, that's not good,'" Spranger said.

PlayStation players will only get to try racing against Sophy until Wednesday, on a limited number of circuits, so it can get some feedback and go back into testing. Peter Wurman, director of Sony AI America and project lead on GT Sophy, said it takes about two weeks for AI agents to train on 20 PlayStations.

"To get it spread throughout the whole game, it takes some more breakthroughs and some more time before we're ready for that," he said.

And to get it onto real streets or Formula One tracks? That could take a lot longer.

Self-driving car companies adopt similar machine-learning techniques, but "they don't hand over complete control of the car the way we are able to," Wurman said. "In a simulated world, there's nobody's life at risk. You know exactly the kinds of things you're going to see in the environment. There's no people crossing the road or anything like that."

Slain Hong Kong model's in-laws, ex-husband appear in court

By KANIS LEUNG Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — The ex-husband and former in-laws of a slain Hong Kong model were put in custody without bail Monday on a joint murder charge, after police found parts of her body in a refrigerator.

Ex-husband Alex Kwong, his father Kwong Kau and his brother Anthony Kwong were charged with murdering model Abby Choi. His mother, Jenny Li, faces one count of perverting the course of justice. The four were placed in custody without bail.

Choi, 28, was a model with more than 100,000 followers on Instagram. Her last post was Feb. 19, featuring a photoshoot she had done with fashion magazine L'Officiel Monaco.

Choi went missing Feb. 21, according to a report filed later with the Hong Kong Police.

On Friday, police found her dismembered body in a refrigerator in a house rented by Kwong Kau in Lung Mei Tsuen, a suburban part of Hong Kong about a 30-minute drive from the border with mainland China.

On Sunday, authorities discovered a young woman's skull believed to be Choi's in a cooking pot that was seized from the house. Officials believe that a hole on the right rear of the skull is where the fatal attack struck her.

Choi had financial disputes involving tens of millions of Hong Kong dollars with her ex-husband and his family, police said earlier, adding that "some people" were unhappy with how Choi handled her financial assets.

Choi's friend Bernard Cheng said she had four children: two sons ages 10 and 3, and two daughters ages 8 and 6. Kwong, 28, fathered the elder two, and her current husband, Chris Tam, was the father of the younger children.

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Tam said he was very thankful to have had Choi in his life and praised her for being supportive, friend Pao Jo-yee relayed in a Facebook post.

"When Abby was alive, she was a very kind person and always wanted to help people," he was quoted as saying in the post. "I feel anyone who had a chance to be her family or her friend are blessed."

Pao, who is married to Cheng, told The Associated Press that she has known Choi for over seven years. "She was the type of person that wouldn't have enemies," she said.

Cheng said Choi had very good relationships with her family, and would travel with the families of her current and former husbands together. Choi's current father-in-law is one of the founders of a famous Hong Kong chain of Yunnan rice noodle shops, local newspaper The Standard reported.

The gruesome killing of Choi has gripped many in Hong Kong and across the border in mainland China, as the self-governed southern Chinese city is widely considered safe with a very low level of violent crime.

Her case is one of the most shocking killings Hong Kong has seen since 2013, when a man killed his parents and their heads were later found in refrigerators. In another famous 1999 case, a woman was kidnapped and tortured by three members from an organized crime group before her death. Her skull was later found stuffed in a Hello Kitty doll.

The hearing of the murder case was adjourned to May.

Death toll at 62 in Italy migrant tragedy; dozens missing

By PAOLO SANTALUCIA and LUIGI NAVARRA Associated Press

STECCATO DI CUTRO, Italy (AP) — The death toll rose to 62 in the migrant tragedy off Italy's southern coast after rescue crews recovered three more bodies on Monday, driving home once again the desperate and dangerous boat crossings of people seeking to reach Europe. Dozens more were believed to be missing.

Children were among the dead after a wooden boat broke up in stormy seas on the reefs near the Calabrian coast on Sunday. At least 80 people survived, but more were feared dead given survivor reports that the boat, which set off from Turkey last week, had carried about 170 people.

The beach at Steccato di Cutro, on Calabria's Ionian coast, was littered with the splintered remains of the 20-meter (65-foot) boat as well as the belongings the migrants had brought with them, including a toddler's tiny pink sneaker and a yellow plastic pencil case decorated with pandas.

There were only a few life jackets scattered amid the debris.

The U.N. and Doctors Without Borders, which had crews on the scene, said many of the victims were Afghans, including members of large families, as well as Pakistanis and Iraqis. Afghans were the second top nationality to seek asylum in the European Union last year, and have increasingly fled the spiraling security, humanitarian and economic troubles that followed the Taliban takeover in August 2021.

On Monday, two coast guard vessels searched the seas north to south off Steccato di Cutro while a helicopter flew overhead and a four-wheel vehicle patrolled the beach. A strong wind whipped the seas that still churned up splinters of the boat, gas tanks, food containers and shoes.

Firefighters confirmed three more bodies had been recovered Monday morning, but held out little hope for finding survivors.

"I think no, because the sea conditions are too difficult," said provincial fire Cmdr. Roberto Fasano. "But we can never abandon this hope."

Italy's Sky TG24 said at least three people had been detained on suspicion they helped organize the trip from Izmir, Turkey.

Italy is a prime destination for migrant smugglers, especially for traffickers launching boats from Libyan shores, but also from Turkey. According to U.N. figures, arrivals from the Turkish route accounted for 15% of the 105,000 migrants who arrived on Italian shores last year, with nearly half of those fleeing from Afghanistan.

Would-be refugees leaving Turkey have increasingly taken the more lengthy and dangerous Mediterranean journey to Italy to avoid Greece where authorities have been repeatedly accused of pushing back migrant boats to Turkey. Overcrowded refugee camps in Greece and the increasing difficulty to join family

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in Western and Northern Europe have also led more people to pay smugglers thousands of euros to get straight to Italy instead.

Firefighter Inspector Giuseppe Larosa said what gutted the first rescue crews who arrived on the scene was how many children had drowned, and that the bodies of the dead had scratches all over them, as if they had tried to hang onto the boat to save themselves.

"It was a spine-chilling scene. Bodies disseminated all along the beach, many bodies disseminated on the beach. Among them many children," Larosa said on the beach Monday morning. He said he had focused on the recovery efforts, but that the reaction of the survivors haunted him.

"That thing that struck me the most was their silence. The terror in their eyes and the fact that they were mute. Silent," he said.

The mayor of Cutro declared a day of mourning Monday, with flags on public buildings at half-staff. A city ordinance invited all residents, and especially schoolchildren, to observe a minute of silence at 11 a.m.

Interior Minister Matteo Piantedosi, who has spearheaded Italy's crackdown on migration, visited the scene Sunday and met with local officials in Crotona. At a news conference, he insisted the solution was to put an end to migrant crossings at their origin.

"I ask myself how it's possible that these crossings are organized, pushing women and children to make the trips that end up tragically dangerous," he said.

Italy's government under Premier Giorgia Meloni has focused on trying to block migrant boats from departing, while discouraging humanitarian rescue teams from operating in the central Mediterranean where Libyan-based smugglers operate. Meloni said Sunday that the government was committed to that policy "above all by insisting on the maximum collaboration with the countries of origin and departure."

Italy has complained bitterly for years that fellow EU countries have balked at taking in migrants, many of whom are aiming to find family or work in northern Europe. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen called for a redoubling of efforts to deal with the problem.

"The resulting loss of life of innocent migrants is a tragedy," she said in a tweet.

Meloni's government has concentrated on complicating efforts by humanitarian boats to make multiple rescues in the central Mediterranean by assigning them ports of disembarkation along Italy's northern coasts. That means the vessels need more time to return to the sea after bringing migrants aboard and taking them safely to shore.

Humanitarian organizations have lamented that the crackdown also includes an order to the charity boats not to remain at sea after the first rescue operation in hopes of performing other rescues, but to head immediately to their assigned port. Violators face stiff fines and confiscation of rescue vessels.

Israel beefs up troops after unprecedented settler rampage

By MAJDI MOHAMMED and ILAN BEN ZION Associated Press

HAWARA, West Bank (AP) — Israel sent hundreds more troops to the occupied West Bank on Monday, a day after a Palestinian gunman killed two Israelis and settlers rampaged through a Palestinian town, torching homes and vehicles in the worst such violence in decades.

The responses to the rampage laid bare some rifts in Israel's new right-wing government, with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu appealing for calm while a member of his ruling coalition praised the rampage as deterrence against Palestinian attacks.

The events also underscored the limitations of the traditional U.S. approach to the long-running Israeli-Palestinian conflict: Washington has been trying to prevent escalation while staying away from the politically costly task of pushing for a resolution of the core disputes.

As the violence raged in the West Bank, such an attempt at conflict management was taking place Sunday in Jordan, with the U.S. bringing together Israeli and Palestinian officials to work out a plan for de-escalation.

Sunday's events kicked off when a Palestinian gunman shot and killed brothers Hillel and Yagel Yaniv, ages 21 and 19, from the Jewish settlement of Har Bracha, in a shooting ambush in the Palestinian town

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of Hawara in the northern West Bank. The gunman fled.

Following the shooting, groups of settlers rampaged along the main thoroughfare in Hawara, which is used by both Palestinians and Israeli settlers. In one video, a crowd of settlers stood in prayer as they stared at a building in flames.

Labor Party leader Merav Michaeli condemned the rampage as "a pogrom by armed militias" of West Bank settlers.

Late Sunday, a 37-year-old Palestinian was shot and killed by Israeli fire, two Palestinians were shot and wounded and another was beaten with an iron bar, Palestinian health officials said. Some 95 Palestinians were being treated for tear gas inhalation, according to medics.

On Monday morning, the Hawara thoroughfare was lined with rows of burned-out cars and smoke-blackened buildings. Normally bustling shops remained shuttered. Palestinian media said some 30 homes and cars were torched.

At the scene of the shooting, Defense Minister Yoav Galant told reporters that Israel "cannot allow a situation in which citizens take the law into their hands," but stopped short of outright condemning the violence.

"I ask everyone to heed the law and especially to trust in the army and security forces," he said

The Yaniv brothers were to be laid to rest in Jerusalem on Monday.

Lt. Col. Richard Hecht, an Israeli military spokesman, described the situation as "a tense quiet." He said the army deployed hundreds of additional troops to the area with the aim of de-escalation. Two battalions were sent late Sunday and a third on Monday, with several hundred soldiers each.

The army has not caught the Palestinian gunman. Israeli police spokesman Dean Elsdunne said eight Israelis were detained in connection with Sunday's rioting, and that six had already been released.

Israeli troops also began removing settlers from a previously evacuated settlement outpost near the West Bank city of Nablus. Several settlers had camped there following Sunday's deadly shooting, Israel's public broadcaster Kan reported.

Speaking at a settlement outpost reoccupied by Jewish settlers after Sunday's shooting, the firebrand Public Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, the leader of the Jewish Power party, called for a "real war on terrorism" and legalizing the outpost, which troops were once again clearing.

"We must crush our enemies," he said in response to the Palestinian attack. As for the settler violence, he added: "I understand the hard feelings, but this isn't the way, we can't take the law into our hands."

While Netanyahu and President Isaac Herzog urged settlers not to engage in vigilante actions, other members of the ruling coalition fanned the flames.

Tzvika Foghel, a lawmaker from the ultra-nationalist Jewish Power party, said the rampage would help deter Palestinian attacks. "I see the result in a very good light," he told Army Radio when asked about what the interviewer referred to as a pogrom.

Sunday's violence has drawn condemnation from the international community. U.S. State Department spokesman Ned Price said the shooting attack and the rampage "underscore the imperative to immediately de-escalate tensions in words and deeds."

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas said he held the Israeli government responsible for what he called "the terrorist acts carried out by settlers under the protection of the occupation forces tonight."

The violence erupted shortly after the Jordanian government hosted talks at the Red Sea resort of Aqaba aimed at de-escalating tensions ahead of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

The Palestinians claim the West Bank, east Jerusalem and Gaza Strip — areas captured by Israel in the 1967 Mideast war — for a future state. Some 700,000 Israeli settlers live in the West Bank and east Jerusalem. The international community overwhelmingly considers Israel's settlements as illegal and obstacles to peace.

So far this year, 62 Palestinians, about half of them affiliated with armed groups, have been killed by Israeli troops and civilians. In the same period, 14 Israelis have been killed in Palestinian attacks.

Last year was the deadliest for the Palestinians in the West Bank and east Jerusalem since 2004, ac-

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According to figures by the Israeli rights group B'Tselem. Nearly 150 Palestinians were killed in those areas, Some 30 people on the Israeli side were killed in Palestinian attacks.

The West Bank is home to a number of hard-line settlements — several of them in the immediate vicinity of Hawara — whose residents frequently vandalize Palestinians land and property.

Michigan power crews work, California recovers after storms

By RICK CALLAHAN and CHRISTOPHER WEBER Associated Press

Some Michigan residents faced a fourth straight day without power Sunday as crews continued work to restore electricity more than 165,000 homes and businesses in the greater Detroit area following last week's ice storm.

Leah Thomas, whose home north of Detroit lost power Wednesday night, was still waiting Sunday afternoon for the power to come back.

Thomas said she feels lucky that she and their 17-year-old son have been able to stay at her parents' nearby home, which still has power, while they are in Florida.

With her husband traveling out of town, Thomas said it was up to her to recharge the battery to their home's backup sump pump Sunday with her car. She went to multiple stores to find a long cable for the task.

"I'm a strong woman. I figured it out," she said. "Our basement is OK, so we're the lucky ones."

But with the local school district on mid-winter break, Thomas said some of their neighbors have been out of town and will be returning to find a mess from burst water pipes and flooded basements.

"They don't know what they're coming home to," she said.

Powerful storms with widespread wind gusts moved into Oklahoma on Sunday evening from the Texas panhandle. The National Weather Service said that tornado watches and warnings remained in effect in parts of Oklahoma after tornados were spotted there and in Kansas.

Widespread gusts up to 90 mph (144 kilometers) were reported in southwest Oklahoma with downed trees and power lines, road closures and damage to homes around Norman and Shawnee.

The Norman Police Department said on Facebook that they were responding to storm damage on the south and eastern sides of Norman about 20 miles (32 kilometers) south of Oklahoma City. In their post, they said they are still assessing potential injuries and the extent of all the damage.

In hard-hit southeastern Michigan, still reeling from the ice storm and high winds, the state's two main utilities — DTE Energy and Consumers Energy — reported about 168,000 homes and businesses were without power as of about 6 p.m. Sunday. About 132,000 of those were DTE customers.

Both utilities said they still hoped to have the lights back on by Sunday night for a majority of their affected customers.

DTE Energy spokeswoman Cindy Hecht said some DTE business and residential customers have been without power since late Wednesday, but she did not know how many.

She said power restoration efforts have proven time-consuming because of the large number of damaged lines, including individual lines linking single homes on the grid.

Wednesday's ice storm coated lines and trees with a half an inch (more than 1.25 centimeters) of ice or more. The storm was followed Thursday by high winds that put about 600,000 DTE customers in the dark at the storm's peak.

Hecht said that was the second-largest number of outages DTE has ever experienced, topped only by a March 2017 wind storm that cut power to about 800,000 of its customers.

"The icing event we had this week is equivalent to a hurricane for coastal utilities. It was the amount of ice and high winds — the winds and the amount of ice accumulation on lines and branches," she said.

Hecht said the utility's meteorologists have been tracking another storm system that will move into Michigan on Monday, and the utility is "prepared to respond."

The outages prompted some Democratic state lawmakers to call for legislative hearings in Lansing to question utilities about the long restoration times and reliability issues. "There will be hearings. We will

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be taking over," State Sen. Darrin Camilleri told WDIV-TV.

California, meanwhile, got a brief break from severe weather after a powerful storm a day earlier swelled Los Angeles-area rivers to dangerous levels, flooded roads and dumped snow at elevations as low as about 1,000 feet (300 meters). The sun came out briefly Sunday in greater LA, where residents emerged to marvel at mountains to the north and east blanketed in white.

Suburban Santa Clarita, in hills north of Los Angeles, received its first significant snowfall since 1989.

"We went outside and we let our sons play in the snow," resident Cesar Torres told the Santa Clarita Signal. "We figured, while the snow's there, might as well make a snowman out of it."

The weather service said Mountain High, one of the closest ski resorts to Los Angeles, received an eye-popping 7.75 feet (2.3 meters) of snow during the last storm, with more possible this week.

Rain and snow were falling again Sunday in Northern California as the first of two new storms began moving in. Blizzard warnings go into effect at 4 a.m. Monday and will last until Wednesday for much of the Sierra Nevada.

"Extremely dangerous and near to impossible mountain travel is expected due to heavy snow and strong wind," the weather service's Sacramento office warned on Twitter.

After fierce winds toppled trees and downed wires, about 65,000 utility customers remained without electricity statewide as of Sunday afternoon, according to PowerOutage.us. The majority of the outages were in Los Angeles.

Days of downpours dumped almost 11 inches (28 cm) of rain in the Woodland Hills area of LA's San Fernando Valley, while nearly 7 inches (18 cm) were reported in Beverly Hills.

In Valencia, north of LA, county officials said the heavy rains eroded an embankment at an RV park and swept multiple motorhomes into the Santa Clara River, with emergency video showing one of the vehicles toppled on its side. No one was reported injured.

Rare blizzard warnings for Southern California mountains and widespread flood watches ended late Saturday. But Interstate 5, the West Coast's major north-south highway, was closed off and on due to heavy snow and ice in the Tejon Pass through the mountains north of Los Angeles. Emergency crews, meanwhile, worked to clear mountain roads east of LA of snow and ice.

Huawei dominates MWC mobile tech fair despite US sanctions

By KELVIN CHAN AP Business Writer

BARCELONA, Spain (AP) — A contingent of Chinese companies led by technology giant Huawei is turning the world's biggest wireless trade fair into an opportunity to show their muscle in the face of Huawei's blacklisting by Western nations concerned about cybersecurity and escalating tensions with the U.S. over TikTok, spy balloons and computer chips.

After three years of pandemic disruption, they are among tens of thousands in Barcelona for MWC, also known as Mobile World Congress, an annual tech industry expo starting Monday where mobile phone makers show off new devices and telecom industry executives peruse the latest networking gear and software.

Out of 2,000 exhibitors and sponsors, 150 are Chinese companies and Huawei Technologies Ltd. has the biggest presence. The smartphone and network equipment maker expanded its footprint by 50% from last year and is taking up almost an entire vast exhibition hall at Barcelona's Fira convention center, organizers said.

That is striking considering that Huawei has been at the center of a geopolitical battle over global technology supremacy that's left parts of its business crippled by Western sanctions.

The U.S. three years ago successfully pushed European allies like Britain and Sweden to ban or restrict Huawei equipment in their phone networks over fears Beijing could use it for cybersnooping or sabotaging critical communications infrastructure — allegations Huawei has denied repeatedly. Japan, Australia, New Zealand and Canada have taken similar action.

Brian Chamberlin, executive adviser at Huawei's wireless carrier group, said "the sanctions have had a big impact" but the company is "not going to try to break any of those rules."

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"But at the same time, that's not going to slow us down from delivering innovation, innovative solutions," he said at the expo. "We will continue to do business with companies and countries that want our support."

Huawei's supersized presence at the show is a sign of defiance, said John Strand, a Danish telecom industry consultant.

Huawei wants to "give Biden the finger," Strand said of the U.S. president. The company's message, he said, is: "Despite the American sanctions, we are alive and kicking and doing so well."

U.S.-China tech tensions have only grown.

A suspected Chinese spy balloon downed by a U.S. fighter jet sparked acrimony between Beijing and Washington in recent weeks.

U.S. authorities have banned TikTok from devices issued to government employees over fears the popular Chinese-owned video sharing app is a data privacy risk or could be used to push pro-China narratives.

The U.S. also is seeking to restrict China's access to equipment to make advanced semiconductors, signing up key allies Japan and the Netherlands.

That followed the MWC expo four years ago becoming a battleground between the U.S. and China over Huawei and the security of next generation wireless networks. In a keynote speech, a top Huawei executive trolled the U.S. over its push to get allies to shun the company's gear.

Huawei hasn't gone away, and the dispute continues to simmer. Washington widened sanctions last month with new curbs on exports to Huawei of less advanced tech components.

Still, the company has maintained its status as the world's No. 1 maker of network gear thanks to sales in China and other markets where Washington hasn't been so successful at persuading governments to boycott the company.

Strand, who has been attending MWC for 26 years, said Huawei wants to show the world it's pivoting away from mainly making networking gear — the hidden plumbing such as base stations and antennas connecting the world's mobile devices — and becoming an all-round tech supplier.

The company is reinventing itself by supplying hardware and software for cargo ports, self-driving cars, factories and other industries it hopes are less vulnerable to Washington.

"Since MWC is a global event, they (Huawei) will want to communicate on this and showcase that they are still a key player in the telecom and high-tech industry," said Thomas Husson, a principal analyst at Forrester Research.

The company's presence is so big simply because of "pent-up demand," said Chamberlin of Huawei.

"We have been locked into China for the past three years due to the COVID restrictions. So this is really the first time we've been able to engage with our customers," he said.

Huawei also makes smartphones but sales outside China cratered after Google was blocked from providing maps, YouTube and other services that usually come preloaded on Android devices.

"The Huawei consumer brand has collapsed in Europe," Husson said. At MWC, "Huawei may well announce new consumer smartphones and new consumer devices, but the brand has lost momentum and these announcements are primarily for fast-growing markets outside the U.S. and Western Europe."

Huawei is just part of the larger Chinese delegation, whose turnout is getting a boost from China lifting all COVID-19 travel restrictions. ZTE, another Chinese tech company that had been sanctioned by the U.S., plans product launches at MWC.

Chinese mobile phone makers Honor, Oppo and Xiaomi will have a strong presence, said Ben Wood, chief analyst at CCS Insight. Honor was Huawei's budget brand but was sold off in 2020 in hopes of reviving sales by separating it from the sanctions on its corporate parent.

"The removal of COVID restrictions in China has made it possible for these manufacturers to attend the show in force," Wood said. "They are all keen to establish themselves as the 'third alternative' to Apple and Samsung in European markets and see MWC as a pivotal event to do that."

Dilbert distributor severs ties to creator over race remarks

By DAVID A. LIEB Associated Press

Dilbert comic strip creator Scott Adams experienced possibly the biggest repercussion of his recent comments about race when distributor Andrews McMeel Universal announced Sunday it would no longer work with the cartoonist.

Andrews McMeel Chairman Hugh Andrews and CEO and President Andy Sareyan said in a joint statement that the syndication company was "severing our relationship" with Adams.

In the Feb. 22 episode of his YouTube show, Adams described people who are Black as members of "a hate group" from which white people should "get away." Various media publishers across the U.S. denounced the comments as racist, hateful and discriminatory while saying they would no longer provide a platform for his work.

Andrews and Sareyan said Andrews McMeel supports free speech, but the comments by the cartoonist were not compatible with the core values of the company based in Kansas City, Missouri.

"We are proud to promote and share many different voices and perspectives. But we will never support any commentary rooted in discrimination or hate," they said in the statement posted on the company website and Twitter.

The creator of the long-running comic that pokes fun at office-place culture defended himself on social media against those whom he said "hate me and are canceling me."

The backlash against Adams arose following comments on "Real Coffee with Scott Adams." Among other topics, Adams used the YouTube show to reference a Rasmussen Reports survey that had asked whether people agreed with the statement "It's OK to be white."

Most agreed, but Adams noted that 26% of Black respondents disagreed and others weren't sure.

The Anti-Defamation League says the phrase was popularized in 2017 as a trolling campaign by members of the discussion forum 4chan but then began being used by some white supremacists.

Adams, who is white, repeatedly referred to people who are Black as members of a "hate group" or a "racist hate group" and said he would no longer "help Black Americans."

"Based on the current way things are going, the best advice I would give to white people is to get the hell away from Black people," Adams said on his Wednesday show.

In another episode of his online show Saturday, Adams said he had been making a point that "everyone should be treated as an individual" without discrimination.

"But you should also avoid any group that doesn't respect you, even if there are people within the group who are fine," Adams said.

Dilbert had already been dropped by several media outlets by the time of the announcement from its distributor.

"We have decided to no longer publish the 'Dilbert' comic strip in our international print edition following racist comments by Scott Adams," said Danielle Rhoades Ha, a spokeswoman for The New York Times who said Dilbert was published in the international print edition but not in the U.S. edition or online.

The Washington Post said it would stop publishing Dilbert in light of "Scott Adams's recent statements promoting segregation," although the strip could not be prevented from running in some forthcoming print editions.

The Los Angeles Times cited Adams' "racist comments" while announcing Saturday that Dilbert will be discontinued Monday in most editions and that its final run in the Sunday comics — which are printed in advance — will be March 12.

The San Antonio Express-News, which is part of Hearst Newspapers, said Saturday it will drop the Dilbert comic strip, effective Monday, "because of hateful and discriminatory public comments by its creator."

The USA Today Network tweeted Friday that it will stop publishing Dilbert "due to recent discriminatory comments by its creator."

The Plain Dealer in Cleveland and other publications that are part of media company Advance Local also announced they are dropping Dilbert.

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"This is a decision based on the principles of this news organization and the community we serve," Plain Dealer Editor Chris Quinn wrote. "We are not a home for those who espouse racism. We certainly do not want to provide them with financial support."

Christopher Kelly, vice president of content for NJ Advance Media, wrote that the news organization believes in "the free and fair exchange of ideas."

"But when those ideas cross into hate speech, a line must be drawn," Kelly wrote.

Twitter CEO Elon Musk defended Adams in posts on the platform, saying the media previously "was racist against non-white people, now they're racist against whites & Asians."

Last-minute problem keeps SpaceX rocket, astronauts grounded

By MARCIA DUNN AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — Last-minute technical trouble forced SpaceX to call off Monday's attempt to launch four astronauts to the International Space Station for NASA.

The countdown was halted with just two minutes remaining until liftoff from Kennedy Space Center. With just a split second to blast off, there was no time to deal with the problem, which involved the engine ignition system.

SpaceX delayed the launch until at least Thursday.

Strapped into the capsule atop the Falcon rocket were two NASA astronauts, one Russian cosmonaut and one astronaut from the United Arab Emirates. They had to wait until all the fuel was drained from the rocket — an hourlong process — before getting out.

"We'll be sitting here waiting," commander Stephen Bowen assured everyone. "We're all feeling good."

Bowen and his crew — including the first astronaut from the United Arab Emirates assigned to a monthslong mission, Sultan al-Neyadi — will replace four space station residents who have been up there since October.

Officials said the problem involved ground equipment used for loading the engine ignition fluid. The launch team could not be sure there was a full load. A SpaceX engineer likened this critical system to spark plugs for a car.

'Love doesn't exist': Immigrants defy forced marriage abroad

By FRANCES D'EMILIO Associated Press

GUASTALLA, Italy (AP) — From the day of her birth in Pakistan, Iram Aslam was betrothed to a cousin 17 days older. But to the young woman, who emigrated as a teenager to this Italian farm town on the Po River plain, the cousin felt like a brother. So on a visit to her homeland, she played for time, telling her aunts she wasn't ready for marriage.

"They did everything possible to make me marry him," said Aslam, now 29. She said she told them: "I don't want to marry him and please don't ask me anymore."

Her family, in both Italy and Pakistan, kept scheming to have her wed a man of their choice — and their caste. Aslam dismissed around 30 potential husbands.

"In the end, I made everyone angry, and no one talks to me anymore," she said of her relatives in Pakistan.

In two murder trials this month, Italian prosecutors are seeking justice for Pakistani immigrant women allegedly killed because they refused marriages imposed by their parents. The cases highlight differences, often misconstrued as religion-based, between centuries-old immigrants' cultural traditions and Western values prizing individualism.

"I liked another person, wanted another one," Aslam said of her own situation. "But they didn't want it, because among us, love doesn't exist."

Love is viewed "as a sin," she added, her thick, wavy brown hair covered by a multicolored headscarf. She asked that her face not be fully shown for fear of further antagonizing Pakistani neighbors in Guastalla, a town of 15,000 where they are the dominant immigrant community.

To escape marriage-obsessed relatives, Aslam went for a time to live in Germany.

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But there was no escape for 18-year-old Saman Abbas.

Like Aslam, she emigrated as a teenager from Pakistan to an Italian farm town, Novellara, 11 kilometers (seven miles) from Guastalla.

In what appears to be an identity card photo taken shortly after her arrival, Abbas' face is framed by a black hijab, or headscarf. But the young woman quickly embraced Western ways, appearing in social media posts with her hair tumbling out from under a bright red headband. In one, she and her Pakistani boyfriend were shown kissing on a street in the regional capital, Bologna.

According to Italian investigators, that kiss enraged Abbas' parents, who wanted their daughter to marry a cousin in Pakistan.

In November, her body was dug up in the ruins of a Novellara farmhouse. She had last been seen alive a few hundred yards away on April 30, 2021, in surveillance camera video as she walked with her parents on the watermelon farm where her father worked. A few days later, her parents caught a flight from Milan to Pakistan.

Abbas had reportedly told her boyfriend she feared for her life, because she refused to be married to an older man in her homeland.

An autopsy revealed a broken neck bone, possibly caused by strangulation.

An uncle and a cousin were extradited from France, and another cousin from Spain. They are now on trial in Reggio Emilia, the provincial capital with jurisdiction over Novellara, accused of Abbas' murder.

Also indicted is her father, Shabbir Abbas, arrested in his village in eastern Punjab. The whereabouts of her mother, who is also charged, are unknown.

A lawyer for her father, Akhtar Mahmood, told Italian state television that the young woman's family is innocent. He disputed prosecutors' allegations, contending that she had wanted to return with her family to Pakistan to flee Western ways.

Asked about Italy's request for Shabbir Abbas' extradition, Pakistan's ambassador to Italy, Ali Javed, told The Associated Press that the Pakistani government would "not hesitate" to do so. However, Italy has no extradition treaty with Pakistan.

Javed blamed "individual ignorance" for forced marriage, which is illegal in Pakistan.

In 2019, Italy made coercing an Italian citizen or resident into marriage, even abroad, a crime covered under domestic violence laws.

Late this month, police in Spain detained the father of two sisters who were allegedly murdered while visiting family in Pakistan. The women had reportedly refused to have their husbands come to Spain after being forced to marry their cousins.

In the United Kingdom, home to Europe's largest Pakistani community, the government's Forced Marriage Unit cautioned that the problem of forced marriage isn't "specific to one country, religion or culture" and said statistics don't reflect "the full scale of the abuse" since forced marriage is a "hidden crime."

Under the Italian justice system, civil plaintiffs can attach lawsuits for damages to criminal trials, and two organizations representing Islamic communities in Italy are among those suing in the Abbas trial.

Other plaintiffs include women's advocacy organizations.

Tiziana Dal Pra, whose group, Trama delle Terre, promotes intercultural relations, said that while violence surrounding forced marriage "gets interpreted as religious," what's really at play is "patriarchal control" of women's bodies.

In December, a court in the northern city of Brescia convicted and gave five-year prison sentences to three Pakistani immigrants — the parents and older brother of four girls — for beating them and keeping them out of school.

According to court documents, the parents threatened their daughters that if they refused arranged marriages, they would end up like that "girl in Pakistan."

The court said that threat referred to 25-year-old Sana Cheema, who was slain when she returned from Italy to Pakistan in 2018, allegedly at her parents' insistence.

By her friends' accounts, Cheema, who had taken Italian citizenship, loved her life in Brescia, where she worked out at a gym, went out for coffee with girlfriends and danced with them at a disco. She was proud

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of her job teaching at a driving school in the northern city.

Brescia prosecutors are now trying Cheema's father and brother in absentia on a novel charge: murder in violation of the political right to marry one's own choice.

In 2019, a court in Pakistan acquitted the two on murder charges, citing insufficient evidence. But Italy's justice ministry ruled the Brescia trial could go forward since Pakistan and Italy have no agreement governing cases involving so-called judicial double jeopardy.

Cheema's family initially told Pakistani authorities that she died of a heart attack the day before she was supposed to fly back to Italy. Two friends testified in Brescia this month that Cheema told them her parents wanted her to marry a cousin in Pakistan.

They also quoted from Facebook messages in which Cheema said her parents had confiscated her passport and phone in Pakistan.

With the Italian Embassy closely following the case, Cheema's body was exhumed. An autopsy indicated she was likely strangled.

Prosecuting the case in Italy sends the message that "exercising the right of who you want to live with, above all, who you want to marry, is a political right" to be guaranteed "with utmost firmness," Brescia Prosecutor General Guido Rispoli told the AP.

At the edge of a field near the farmhouse where Saman Abbas' body was found, mourners have left a stuffed toy squirrel and bunches of flowers at an improvised shrine.

"It will continue to happen, I tell you, that's how it is," Aslam said of violence linked to forced marriage.

What progress has been made with trials like the ones in Reggio Emilia and Brescia isn't enough, she added: "It's like salt in flour."

Blazers' Lillard has 71 pts and 13 3s, then gets drug tested

By ANNE M. PETERSON AP Sports Writer

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — The celebration surrounding Damian Lillard's record-breaking performance was short-lived.

Lillard set franchise and career marks with 71 points — tied for the most in the NBA this season — and 13 3-pointers in the Portland Trail Blazers' 131-114 victory over the Houston Rockets on Sunday night.

"I enjoy those moments in the game when I'm just going after people," Lillard said, "when I'm in attack mode."

But soon after the streamers fell to the court and the crowd headed for the exits, Lillard was summoned for a drug test. Turns out, the seven-time All-Star who's unafraid of taking a 3-pointer from half court is afraid of needles.

"I know I've got a lot of tattoos, but when you're doing a blood draw, it's different from tattoos. It brought me down from here to the floor," Lillard said gesturing with his hand raised then dropping it.

And Lillard got tested on the night he tied Cleveland's Donovan Mitchell for the most points in a game this season after Mitchell also scored 71 in a win over Chicago on Jan. 2. His 13 3-pointers were also one shy of the NBA record set by Golden State's Klay Thompson in 2018. Thompson's Warriors teammate Stephen Curry (2016) and Chicago's Zach LaVine (2019) also made 13 3s.

Lillard broke his own franchise mark of 61 points, which he'd done twice, on a 3-pointer with 4:42 left that also topped his previous career record for 3s, which was 11.

Known for his humility, Lillard was unsure how to mark the occasion.

"I think any hooper enjoys those moments when you're hot, you're in attack mode, you're feeling good," Lillard said. "But it's the stuff afterward that I struggle with, like when I walked off the court, was I supposed to be overly excited, or what?"

In the final minutes of the game, the crowd at the Moda Center was on its feet, phones recording the moment, while chanting "MVP! MVP!"

"It really, really was a masterful performance," Blazers coach Chauncey Billups said. "It was a piece of art. That was incredible."

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Even Mitchell took notice.

"My mom calls me and says @Dame_Lillard tied your record ... you gotta get 72 now," Mitchell posted on Twitter with some laughing emojis.

Lillard left the game with 44 seconds left, tied with Mitchell, Elgin Baylor (1960) and David Robinson (1994) for the eighth-most points scored in a game in NBA history. Wilt Chamberlain owns the league record with 100 for Philadelphia against New York on March 2, 1962, at Hershey, Pennsylvania.

Lillard had 41 points and eight 3-pointers by halftime. It was a career high in a half for Lillard and the most points in a half for any player in the league this season. He had 50 by the start of the fourth quarter.

In the end, he made 22 of 38 shots from the floor and he hit on 13 of his 22 3-point attempts. He was also 14 of 14 from the foul line.

Jerami Grant added 13 points for the Blazers, who led by as many as 23. Portland is part of a cluster of eight Western Conference just four wins apart that are vying for playoff spots.

Alperen Sengun had 17 points and 10 rebounds for the Rockets, sitting in last place in the Western Conference with just 13 overall wins and nine straight losses.

"It's not like we didn't give effort, he made some really tough shots," said Rockets coach Stephen Silas, who sat Sengun midway through the third quarter for the rest of the game. "But we need everyone to give effort on the defensive end."

Houston trailed 102-88 heading into the final quarter, but scored the first six points of the period to close the gap to 102-94. Grant's 3-pointer for Portland extended the margin to 108-98.

Lillard's 3, his 11th of the night to tie his career high, made it 113-103 with 6:43 left. He added a driving layup and a free throw. Houston could not catch up.

Lillard started after resting for Thursday night's 133-116 loss to Sacramento. He participated in the NBA All-Star Game and won the 3-point contest the previous weekend.

The Blazers led 73-58 at the break with Lillard the 10th player since the 1996-97 season with 40-plus points in a half. He has 15 games with 50 or more points, sixth-most in NBA history.

SIDELINED

Guards Jalen Green and Kevin Porter Jr. did not play, although Silas said both should be available for the team's short upcoming homestand. Green missed his second game with a strained left groin. Porter has been out 19 games because of a left foot contusion.

TIP-INS

Rockets: It was the third and final meeting between the teams this season. The Blazers won the previous two. Last season, the series ended 2-2. ... Jae'Sean Tate had four fouls in the first half, but finished with 17 points.

Trail Blazers: Portland remained without center Jusuf Nurkic (left calf) and guard Anfernee Simons (right ankle).

UP NEXT

Rockets: Return home to face the Denver Nugget on Tuesday.

Trail Blazers: Visit the Golden State Warriors on Tuesday.

Iraqi president says country now peaceful, life is returning

By JOHN DANISZEWSKI and ABBY SEWELL Associated Press

BAGHDAD (AP) — Nearly 20 years after the overthrow of Saddam Hussein by U.S.-led forces, Iraqi President Abdul Latif Rashid wants the world to know his country now is at peace, democratic and intent on rebuilding economic life while maintaining a government that serves the whole country and the region.

Rashid told The Associated Press on Sunday that after overcoming the hardships of the past two decades, Iraq is ready to focus on improving everyday life for its people. Those hardships included years of resistance to foreign troops, violence between Sunnis and Shiites, and attacks by Islamic State group extremists who once controlled large areas, including Iraq's second-largest city, Mosul.

"Peace and security is all over the country, and I would be very glad if you will report that and emphasize

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on that, instead of giving a picture of Iraq ... still (as) a war zone, which a lot of media still do," Rashid said.

While Iraq's major fighting has ended, there have been some recent outbreaks of violence — including on the day of Rashid's election, which came after a yearlong stalemate following the October 2021 election. Ahead of the vote, at least nine rockets targeted Iraq's Parliament inside Baghdad's fortified Green Zone.

After Rashid's election, he nominated Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani, who formed a government with the backing of a coalition of Iran-backed parties and with promises of improving security and public services.

Despite its oil wealth, Iraq's infrastructure remains weak. Private generators fill in for the hours of daily state electricity cuts. Long-promised public transportation projects, including a Baghdad metro, have not come to fruition.

Rashid said this is due to damage as "a result of conflicts and as a result of terror, as a result of a number of years living at war."

Government critics say the sputtering electricity supply is also a result of endemic corruption, rooted in the country's sectarian power-sharing system that allows political elites to use patronage networks to consolidate power.

Rashid, who spoke at his presidential quarters in Saddam's former palace, also asserted that most Iraqis believe the 2003 invasion of Saddam-ruled Iraq by the United States and its allies was necessary because of the former dictator's brutality.

He said he believes most Iraqis, "including all sections of the society, the Kurds, the Sunni, the Christian, the Shiites, they were all against" Saddam and appreciate that the U.S. and its allies came to "save" Iraq.

"Obviously certain things did not work out as we hoped. Nobody expected Daesh (the Islamic State group) and nobody expected car bombs," he said. "It should have been controlled right from the beginning. It should have been studied and planned out right from the beginning. I think the myth was that once Saddam is removed, Iraq becomes heaven."

The reality proved more difficult, he said, but it hasn't weakened Iraq's commitment to democracy.

"Even if you have conflicts and if we have arguments, it's much better to have a freedom and democracy rather than a dictatorship," he said.

However, mass anti-government demonstrations that kicked off in late 2019 were often put down by force. Hundreds of protesters were killed by security forces and state-backed armed groups.

Rashid acknowledged there are still conflicts, but urged Iraqis, particularly the younger generation, to be patient and have faith in the future. "We don't have much choice but to live together ... and let our democratic election take place to represent our values," said Rashid, a veteran Kurdish politician and former water minister after Saddam's ouster.

Rashid assumed the presidency in October. Under Iraq's unofficial power-sharing arrangement, the country's president is always a Kurd, the prime minister a Shiite and the parliament speaker a Sunni.

Rashid's job entails helping to maintain a delicate balance among Iraq's various centers of political power and even-keel relations with both the U.S. and Iran, the government's two key — and often opposing — international backers.

The balancing act is reflected in a monument near Baghdad airport. It extolls Iran's Revolutionary Guard commander Qassem Soleimani, who was targeted and killed in a 2020 U.S. airstrike.

Improving relations with neighbors including Iran, Syria, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Jordan is a source of strength for Iraq, Rashid said. Arab countries led by Saudi Arabia had for years kept a distance from Iraq, partly because of its ties to Iran.

He noted with pride that Iraq hosted a Mideast meeting of senior Arab lawmakers on Saturday and expressed the country's willingness to continue serving as a mediator in now-stalled talks between regional rivals Iran and Saudi Arabia.

Rashid also promised to take a hard line on corruption.

In October, reports emerged that over \$2.5 billion in Iraqi government revenue was embezzled by a network of businesses and officials from the country's tax authority. And in recent months, amid allegations of widespread money laundering used to smuggle dollars to U.S.-sanctioned Iran and Syria, the U.S.

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has taken measures to tighten Iraq's dollar supply, putting pressure on the currency.

"I admit, we did have and we still have some problems with corruption, but the government is very serious (about fighting it)," Rashid said, adding that the government and the central bank are taking measures to regulate transfers out of the country to deter money laundering.

Economically, he said, Iraq is focusing on rebuilding industry and agriculture damaged by years of conflict, and developing its natural gas reserves so as not to be dependent on buying gas from neighboring countries — notably Iran.

Despite the currency's devaluation and inflation in recent months, Iraq's prospects are good, he said, buoyed by strong oil production and high global oil prices.

"Iraq economically is in a sound position and probably is one of the countries in the world which (does not have) a deficit in our budget," he said.

'A time bomb': India's sinking holy town faces grim future

By KRUTIKA PATHI and SHONAL GANGULY Associated Press

JOSHIMATH, India (AP) — Inside a shrine overlooking snow-capped mountains, Hindu priests heaped spoonfuls of puffed rice and ghee into a crackling fire. They closed their eyes and chanted in Sanskrit, hoping their prayers would somehow turn back time and save their holy — and sinking — town.

For months, the roughly 20,000 residents in Joshimath, burrowed in the Himalayas and revered by Hindu and Sikh pilgrims, have watched the earth slowly swallow their community. They pleaded for help that never arrived, and in January their desperate plight made it into the international spotlight.

But by then, Joshimath was already a disaster zone. Multistoried hotels slumped to one side; cracked roads gaped open. More than 860 homes were uninhabitable, splayed by deep fissures that snaked through ceilings, floors and walls. And instead of saviors they got bulldozers that razed whole lopsided swaths of the town.

The holy town was built on piles of debris left behind by years of landslides and earthquakes. Scientists have warned for decades, including in a 1976 report, that Joshimath could not withstand the level of heavy construction that has recently been taking place.

"Cracks are widening every day and people are in fear. We have been saying for years this is not just a disaster, but a disaster in the making... it's a time bomb," said Atul Sati, an activist with the Save Joshimath Committee.

Joshimath's future is at risk, experts and activists say, due in part to a push backed by the prime minister's political party to grow religious tourism in Uttarakhand, the holy town's home state. On top of climate change, extensive new construction to accommodate more tourists and accelerate hydropower projects in the region is exacerbating subsidence — the sinking of land.

Located 1,890 meters (6,200 feet) above sea level, Joshimath is said to have special spiritual powers and believed to be where Hindu guru Adi Shankaracharya found enlightenment in the 8th century before going on to establish four monasteries across India, including one in Joshimath.

Visitors pass through the town on their way to the famous Sikh shrine, Hemkund Sahib, and the Hindu temple, Badrinath.

"It must be protected," said Brahmachari Mukundanand, a local priest who called Joshimath the "brain of North India" and explained that "Our body can still function if some limbs are cut off. But if anything happens to our brain, we can't function. ... Its survival is extremely important."

The town's loose topsoil and soft rocks can only support so much and that limit, according to environmentalist Vimlendu Jha, may have already been breached.

"You can't just construct anything anywhere just because it is allowed," he said. "In the short term, you might think it's development. But in the long term, it is actually devastation."

At least 240 families have been forced to relocate without knowing if they would be able to return.

Prabha Sati, who fled Joshimath in a panic last month when her home began to crack and tilt, came back to grab the television, idols of Hindu gods and some shoes before state officials demolished her home.

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"We built this house with so much difficulty. Now I will have to leave everything behind. Every small piece of it will be destroyed," she said, blinking back tears.

Authorities, ignoring expert warnings, have continued to move forward with costly projects in the region, including a slew of hydropower stations and a lengthy highway. The latter is aimed at further boosting religious tourism, a key plank of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party.

In 2021, Modi promised a prosperous decade ahead for Uttarakhand. It is dotted with several holy shrines and improving the state's infrastructure has already led to a steady rise in pilgrims over the decades. Nearly 500,000 passed through Joshimath in 2019, state data shows.

"In the next 10 years, the state will receive more tourists than it did in the last 100 years," Modi said.

A big Uttarakhand tourism draw is the Char Dham pilgrimage, one of the toughest in India.

The route takes people to four, high-altitude Hindu temples. Pilgrims traverse challenging terrain, dropping oxygen levels and harsh weather between Badrinath, Gangotri, Kedarnath and Yamunotri temples. In 2022, over 200 out of the 250,000 pilgrims died while making the journey. Authorities said the rise in visitors was straining existing infrastructure.

Already underway, the Char Dham infrastructure project, aims to make the journey more accessible via a 10-meter (32-foot) wide and 889-kilometer (552 miles) long all-weather highway as well as a 327-kilometer (203-mile) railway line that would crisscross through the mountains.

It is a controversial project with some experts saying it will exacerbate the fragile situation in the upper Himalayas where several towns are built atop landslide debris.

Veteran environmentalist Ravi Chopra called the project a desecration when he resigned from a court-ordered committee studying its impact. To create such wide roads, engineers would need to smash boulders, cut trees and strip shrubbery, which he said will weaken slopes and make them "more susceptible to natural disasters."

Urban planning expert Kiran Shinde suggested a pedestrian corridor instead, noting these places were never meant for cars nor crowds numbering in the hundreds of thousands.

"The highway is the most disastrous thing to happen to the Char Dham," said Shinde, a professor at Australia's La Trobe University who has written on religious tourism. "Let people walk."

Cracks continue to form. Located near a rail line construction site, Sangeeta Krishali's home in Lachmoli, about 100 kilometers (62 miles) from Joshimath, has them. She fears for her safety: "It happened there, it can happen here, too."

In Joshimath's foothills, construction was paused on a road for the Char Dham project that would ferry tourists faster to the Badrinath temple after cracks emerged in people's homes.

Locals feared it was too late. A long, jagged crack running across one of the front walls in the famed Adi Shankaracharya monastery had deepened worryingly in recent weeks, said Vishnu Priyanand, one of the priests.

"Let places of worship remain as places of worship. Don't make them tourist spots," he pleaded.

It's not just the highways. For the past 17 years, Atul Sati, the Save Joshimath Committee member, has been convinced that a hydropower station located near his town could one day ruin it. He isn't alone. In late January, hundreds of residents protested against the National Thermal Power Corporation's Tapovan project. Posters reading 'Go back NTPC' are plastered across the town's main market.

"Our town is on the verge of destruction because of this project," Sati said.

Locals say construction blasts for a 12-kilometer (7-mile) tunnel for the station are causing their homes to crumble. Work has been suspended but NTPC officials deny any link to Joshimath's subsidence. An expert committee is still investigating the cause, but state officials earlier blamed faulty drainage systems.

The state government announced interim relief packages, including compensation worth 150,000 rupees (\$1,813) to each affected family, said Himanshu Khurana, the officer in charge of Chamoli district where Joshimath is located. Various government agencies were conducting surveys to determine what caused the damage, he added.

The crisis in Joshimath has reignited questions over whether India's quest for more hydropower in the

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mountains to cut its reliance on coal can be achieved sustainably. Uttarakhand, home to more than 30 rivers and surrounded by melting glaciers, has around 100 hydropower projects in varying stages.

In 2021, 200 people died after the Tapovan plant near Joshimath was submerged by severe floods caused in part by fast shrinking glaciers, and over 6,000 were killed in the state after a devastating cloudburst in 2013.

The heavy construction required for hydropower, like blasting boulders, diverting river flows and cutting through forests, in a region already vulnerable to climate change, could do irreparable damage, experts warn.

It could also displace entire villages, as residents of a hamlet near Joshimath found out.

Haat, a village along the Alaknanda River, was once a sacred hamlet that traced its origins to the guru Adi Shankaracharya, who is said to have established another temple here in the 8th Century.

Today, it is a dumping site for waste and a storage pit for construction materials after the village was acquired in 2009 by an energy enterprise to build a hydropower project.

The Laxmi Narayan temple, encircled by grey stacks of cement, is the only part of the village still standing. All of its residents left over the years as authorities began razing down their homes, said Rajendra Hatwal, once the village chief who now lives in another town nearby.

The project, he fumed, had killed Haat.

"What sort of development requires destroying these priceless places? We don't want any part of it."

A court last year directed authorities to stop dumping waste near the historic temple, which was once the last rest stop for devotees on their pilgrimage to Badrinath.

Hatwal and a few others still check in on the temple often. A caretaker, who refused to leave, lives in a makeshift room next to it. He sweeps the grounds, cleans the idols and prepares tea for the odd guest who comes through.

They feared its days, like their homes, were also numbered.

"We are fighting to protect the temple. We want to preserve our ancient culture to pass on to a new generation," said Hatwal. "They have not only destroyed a village - they have finished a 1,200 year old culture."

DeSantis moves toward GOP presidential bid on his own terms

By STEVE PEOPLES AP National Political Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Republican presidential contenders typically fight for prime speaking slots at the Conservative Political Action Conference. But as conservative activists gather in suburban Washington this week, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis will be courting donors more than a thousand miles away in Texas and California.

The apparent CPAC snub is nothing new for DeSantis, who has emerged in the early phase of the 2024 presidential election as a leading contender for the GOP nomination even as he ignores many conventions of modern politics.

DeSantis is a frequent voice in conservative cultural fights on cable television, but he often avoids gatherings of fellow Republican governors and party leaders, who are quick to complain in private about his go-it-alone approach. He is the only top-tier presidential prospect yet to court voters in Iowa, New Hampshire or South Carolina, the states hosting the GOP's opening presidential primary contests. And he is often at odds with the press, refusing even to notify local media of last week's rare three-state tour with law enforcement.

Indeed, as DeSantis moves toward a White House run, it is becoming increasingly clear that the 44-year-old Republican governor will manage his presidential aspirations in his own way, on his own timeline, with or without allies in national GOP leadership or relationships with the press.

"DeSantis has, in his style and the actions he's taken as governor, shown a willingness to fight the traditional powers that be, the establishment," said David McIntosh, president of the Club for Growth, an influential conservative group based in Washington. McIntosh described DeSantis' style as "refreshing" and suggested the GOP is ready to move on from former President Donald Trump.

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For now, DeSantis is perhaps the most potent threat to Trump's effort to win the GOP nomination for the third time. The Club for Growth will host DeSantis among a half-dozen presidential prospects at a closed-door retreat in Florida next weekend with top donors. Trump is not invited.

Meanwhile, DeSantis has quietly begun to expand his political coalition on his terms just as he releases a book, "The Courage to be Free," which comes out Tuesday.

He spent the weekend huddled behind closed doors at a south Florida luxury hotel for a "Freedom Blueprint" retreat with more than 100 donors, elected officials and conservative influencers. The attendees included former Trump chief of staff Mick Mulvaney, Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds, Arkansas Sen. Tom Cotton and Texas-based donor Roy Bailey, a former member of Trump's national finance committee.

Oklahoma Gov. Kevin Stitt and Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee were also in attendance, along with Wisconsin Sen. Ron Johnson, Utah Sen. Mike Lee, Texas Rep. Chip Roy and Kentucky Rep. Thomas Massie.

Fox News host Laura Ingraham hosted a fireside chat with DeSantis on Sunday before he joined a "fighting back against woke" discussion with Chaya Raichik, who runs the "Libs of TikTok" social media account.

Details from the gathering were disclosed by participants who requested anonymity to discuss the private event.

Trump was largely ignored throughout the weekend retreat, although conservative commentator Ann Coulter seized on his failure to build a wall spanning the entire U.S.-Mexico border during a Saturday panel discussion with DeSantis on border security, according to one person in the room. She accused the former president of never actually wanting to build it in the first place.

In the coming days and weeks, DeSantis will use the release of his book to introduce himself to voters beyond Florida, having established his political dominance there last fall by winning reelection by more than 19 percentage points.

He is expected to make his first appearances in key states on the primary calendar such as Iowa and New Hampshire in the coming weeks in addition to general election battlegrounds like Georgia and Pennsylvania. Last week, he made surprise stops in New York City, Philadelphia and Chicago to court law enforcement leaders, although the events were private and he did not notify local media.

The Florida governor is already scheduled to headline two Republican fundraisers in Texas on Saturday. The next day he'll speak at a \$500-a-head reception for the GOP of Orange County, California. He'll serve as the keynote speaker for the Alabama GOP the following week.

While he has begun to expand his profile, DeSantis has done far less than most of the early 2024 class to connect with primary voters and would-be allies in key states.

He has long avoided gatherings of Republican governors or top GOP officials, who privately condemn his approach as arrogant. He's never set foot in Iowa.

Former New Hampshire GOP chair Jennifer Horn noted that Republican primary voters often embrace anti-establishment candidates "who are willing to create their own lane or take their own path."

"But when you're running for president, and in this environment, I think he has to be careful not to be a victim of his own arrogance," she said. "He has this belief that he knows better than everyone about everything, and that's never a good thing."

Meanwhile, DeSantis' team feels no urgency to enter the 2024 contest, which already features three Republican candidates. Trump announced three months ago.

He's also shown no interest in responding to Trump's increasingly personal attacks, which include recent social media posts suggesting that DeSantis behaved inappropriately with underage girls when he briefly taught high school in his early 20s.

Trump refers to the Florida governor as "Ron DeSanctimonious" and "Meatball Ron."

By contrast, DeSantis in his new book actually credits Trump for helping him win the Florida governorship in 2018.

"I knew that a Trump endorsement would provide me with the exposure to GOP primary voters across the State of Florida, and I was confident that many would see me as a good candidate once they learned about my record," DeSantis writes, according to an early copy obtained by the Guardian.

Trump's increasing focus on DeSantis may unintentionally help the Florida governor by defining him as

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the strongest Republican Trump alternative, according to Sam Nunberg, a former Trump aide turned critic. "Look, Donald is worried, and if I was working for him, I'd say he needs to update the playbook," Nunberg said.

In the meantime, DeSantis is focused on expanding his conservative agenda in Florida's looming state legislative session, which runs from March through May.

Already, he has pushed to eliminate diversity, equity and inclusion programs from Florida's public universities and colleges. Among his other priorities: allowing people to carry guns in public without a permit; weakening laws protecting journalists from lawsuits; and cracking down on illegal immigration, including a plan to eliminate in-state tuition for college students in the country illegally.

In a nod to his political strength, DeSantis is under attack from a growing group of Republican rivals.

New Hampshire Gov. Chris Sununu publicly condemned DeSantis' decision to use the levers of government to punish private businesses like Disney that push back against his policy priorities. North Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem's team has criticized DeSantis' record on abortion as insufficiently conservative.

DeSantis did himself no favors inside the Republican National Committee last month when he publicly sided with RNC Chair Ronna McDaniel's challenger during her bitter reelection fight. McDaniel easily won reelection to her post.

"We are going to move forward. And that's what I'm focused on," McDaniel said Sunday on CNN's "State of the Union" when asked about her relationship with DeSantis. "The one thing Republicans can do to make sure we don't win is fight each other all the time."

North Korea holds rare meeting on farming amid food shortage

By KIM TONG-HYUNG and HYUNG-JIN KIM Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korean leader Kim Jong Un opened a major political conference dedicated to agriculture, state media reported Monday, amid outside assessments that suggest the country is facing a serious shortfall of food.

South Korean experts estimate that North Korea is short around 1 million tons of grain, 20 percent of its annual demand, after the pandemic disrupted both farming and imports from China.

Recent, unconfirmed, reports have said an unknown number of North Koreans have died of hunger. But observers have seen no indication of mass deaths or famine in North Korea.

During a high-level meeting of the ruling Workers' Party that began Sunday, senior party officials reviewed last year's work on state goals to accomplish "rural revolution in the new era," the official Korean Central News Agency reported.

The report said that the meeting of the party's Central Committee will identify "immediate, important" tasks on agricultural issues and "urgent tasks arising at the present stage of the national economic development."

KNCA didn't say whether Kim spoke during the meeting or how long it would last. Senior officials such as Cabinet Premier Kim Tok Hun and Jo Yong Won, one of Kim's closest aides who handles the Central Committee's organizational affairs, were also attending.

The meeting is the first time the party has convened a plenary session only to discuss agriculture. Monday's report didn't elaborate on its agenda, but the party's Politburo said earlier this month that a "a turning point is needed to dynamically promote radical change in agricultural development."

Most analysts North Korea's food situation today is nowhere near the extremes of the 1990s, when hundreds of thousands of people died in a famine. However, some experts say its food insecurity is likely at its worst since Kim took power in 2011, after COVID-19 restrictions further shocked an economy battered by decades of mismanagement and crippling U.S.-led sanctions imposed over Kim's nuclear program.

In early 2020, North Korea tried to shield its population from the coronavirus by imposing stringent border controls that choked off trade with China, its main ally and economic lifeline. Russia's war on Ukraine possibly worsened the situation by driving up global prices of food, energy and fertilizer, on which North Korea's agricultural production is heavily dependent.

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North Korea reopened freight train traffic with China and Russia last year. More than 90% of North Korea's official external trade goes through its border with China.

Last year, North Korea's grain production was estimated at 4.5 million tons, a 3.8% drop from 2020, according to South Korean government assessments. The North was estimated to have produced between 4.4 million tons to 4.8 million tons of grain annually from 2012-2021, according to previous South Korean data.

North Korea needs about 5.5 million tons of grain to feed its 25 million people annually, so it's short about 1 million tons this year. In past years, half of such a gap was usually met by unofficial grain purchases from China, with the rest remaining as unresolved shortfall, according to Kwon Tae-jin, a senior economist at the private GS&J Institute in South Korea.

Kwon says trade curbs due to the pandemic have likely hindered unofficial rice purchases from China. Efforts by North Korean authorities to tighten controls and restrict market activities have also worsened the situation, he said.

It's unclear whether North Korea will take any action to quickly address its food problems. Some experts say North Korea will use this week's plenary meeting to boost public support of Kim during his confrontations with the United States and its allies over his nuclear ambitions.

Despite limited resources, Kim has been aggressively pushing to expand his nuclear weapons and missile programs to pressure Washington into accepting the idea of the North as a nuclear power and lift international sanctions on it. After a record year of weapons testing activities in 2022, North Korea launched an intercontinental ballistic missile and other weapons in displays this month.

Migrant boat breaks up off Italian coast, killing nearly 60

By FRANCES D'EMILIO Associated Press

ROME (AP) — A wooden boat crowded with migrants smashed into rocky reefs and broke apart before dawn Sunday off the Italian coast, authorities said. Rescuers recovered nearly 60 bodies, and dozens more people were missing in the rough waters.

Officials feared the death toll could top 100 since some survivors indicated the boat had as many as 200 passengers when it set out from Turkey, United Nations refugee and migration agencies said.

At least 80 people were found alive, including some who reached the shore after the shipwreck just off Calabria's coastline along the Ionian Sea, the Italian Coast Guard said. One of the agency's motorboats rescued two men suffering from hypothermia and recovered the body of a boy.

As sundown approached, firefighters said 59 bodies had been found.

One man was taken into custody for questioning after fellow survivors indicated he was a trafficker, state TV said.

The boat collided with the reefs in wind-whipped seas. Three big chunks of the vessel ended up on the beach near the town of Steccato di Cutro, where splintered pieces of bright blue wood littered the sand like matchsticks.

"All of the survivors are adults," Red Cross volunteer Ignazio Mangione said. "Unfortunately, all the children are among the missing or were found dead on the beach." A baby and young twins were reported among the dead.

Rescuers said two men who survived were spotted trying to save children by holding them over their heads as waves buffeted them. But the children died, state TV said.

The humanitarian group Doctors Without Borders said it was offering psychological assistance to survivors, who included a 16-year-old boy from Afghanistan whose sister, 28, made it to the beach but then died. The group said the teen "hasn't found the courage to tell his parents."

Another survivor was a 12-year-old boy from Afghanistan who lost his entire family, including four siblings. Italian state TV quoted survivors as saying the boat set out five days ago from Turkey.

Standing next to the wreckage on the beach, a reporter for Italian RAI state TV noted a life preserver bearing the word "Smyrna," a Turkish port also known as Izmir.

More than 170 migrants were estimated to have been aboard the ship, the U.N. High Commissioner for

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Refugees and the International Organization for Migration said in a joint statement.

Among them were "children and entire families," according to the U.N. statement, with most of the passengers from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Somalia.

Earlier, in an indication of the difficulty in establishing how many passengers had set out on the voyage, Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni said some 200 people had been crowded into a 20-meter (66-foot) boat.

The rescue operation involved a helicopter and police aircraft, as well as vessels from state firefighter squads, the Coast Guard and border police. Local fishermen also joined in the search.

The bodies were brought to the sports stadium in the nearest city, Crotona.

A priest said a few of the bodies washed up on a stretch of beach near his town. "While I blessed them, I was asking myself why do we arrive after the deaths," the Rev. Rosario Morrone told state TV. "We need to get there before."

State TV said 22 survivors were taken to a hospital.

Pope Francis told the faithful in St. Peter's Square that he was praying for the dead, the missing and the survivors, as well as for rescuers "and for those who give welcome" to the migrants.

"It's an enormous tragedy," Crotona Mayor Vincenzo Voce told RAI. "In solidarity, the city will find places in the cemetery" for the dead.

In 2022, some 105,000 migrants arrived on Italian shores, some 38,000 more than in 2021, according to Interior Ministry figures.

According to U.N. figures, arrivals from the Turkish route accounted for 15% of the total number, with nearly half of those fleeing from Afghanistan.

Meloni expressed "her deep sorrow for the many human lives torn away by human traffickers."

"It's inhumane to exchange the lives of men, women and children for the 'price' of a ticket paid by them in the false prospect for a safe voyage," said Meloni, a far-right leader whose governing allies include the anti-migrant League party.

She vowed to crack down on departures arranged by human smugglers and to press fellow European Union leaders to help.

Opposition parties pointed to Sunday's tragedy as proof of the flaws in Italy's migration policy.

"Condemning only the smugglers, as the center-right is doing now, is hypocrisy," said Laura Ferrara, a European Parliament lawmaker from the populist 5-Star Movement.

"The truth is that the EU today doesn't offer effective alternatives for those who are forced to abandon their country of origin," Ferrara said in a statement.

Another route employed by traffickers crosses the central Mediterranean Sea from Libya's coast, where migrants often endure brutal detention conditions for months before they are allowed to board rubber dinghies or aging wooden fishing boats for Italian shores. That route is considered one of the deadliest.

Meloni's government has concentrated on complicating efforts by humanitarian boats to make multiple rescues in the central Mediterranean by assigning them ports of disembarkation along Italy's northern coasts. That means the vessels need more time to return to the sea after bringing migrants aboard and taking them safely to shore.

Humanitarian organizations have lamented that the crackdown also includes an order to the charity boats not to remain at sea after the first rescue operation in hopes of performing other rescues, but to head immediately to their assigned port. Violators face stiff fines and confiscation of rescue vessels.

Italian President Sergio Mattarella called on the European Union to "finally concretely assume the responsibility of managing the migratory phenomenon to remove it from the traffickers of human beings."

Italy has complained bitterly for years that fellow EU countries have balked at taking in some of the migrants, many of whom are aiming to find family or work in northern Europe.

'Everything Everywhere All at Once' dominates at SAG Awards

By JAKE COYLE AP Film Writer

The unlikely awards season juggernaut "Everything Everywhere All at Once" marched on at the Screen Actors Guild Awards on Sunday, and even gathered steam with wins not just for best ensemble, Michelle Yeoh and Ke Huy Quan but also for Jamie Lee Curtis.

The SAG Awards, often an Oscar preview, threw some curve balls into the Oscars race in a ceremony streamed live on Netflix's YouTube page from Fairmont Century Plaza in Los Angeles.

But the clearest result of the SAG Awards was the overwhelming success of Daniel Kwan and Daniel Scheinert's madcap multiverse tale, which has now used its hotdog fingers to snag top honors from the acting, directing and producing guilds. Only one film ("Apollo 13") had won all three and not gone on to win best picture at the Oscars.

After so much of the cast of "Everything Everywhere All at Once" had already been on the stage to accept awards, the night's final moment belonged to 94-year-old James Hong, a supporting player in the film and a trailblazer for Asian American representation in Hollywood. He brought up the ignoble yellowface history of the 1937 film "The Good Earth."

"The leading role was played with these guys with their eyes taped up like this and they talked like this because the producers said the Asians were not good enough and they were not box office," said Hong. "But look at us now!"

Hong added that the cast of "Everything Everywhere All at Once" wasn't all Chinese, though he granted Jamie Lee Curtis had a good Chinese name. Curtis' win was one of the most surprising of the night, coming over the longtime favorite, Angela Bassett ("Black Panther: Wakanda Forever"), who had seemed to be on a clear path to becoming the first actor to win an Oscar for a performance in a Marvel movie.

A visibly moved Curtis said she was wearing the wedding ring her father, Tony Curtis, gave her mother, Janet Leigh.

"I know you look at me and think 'Nepo baby,'" said Curtis, who won in her first SAG nomination. "But the truth of the matter is that I'm 64 years old and this is just amazing."

The actors guild, though, lent some clarity to the lead categories. Though some have seen best actress as a toss up between Yeoh and BAFTA winner Cate Blanchett ("Tár"), Yeoh again took home the award for best female lead performance.

"This is not just for me," said Yeoh, the first Asian actress to win the SAG Award for female lead. "It's for every little girl that looks like me."

Quan, the former child star, also won for best supporting male actor. The "Everything Everywhere All at Once" co-star had left acting for years after auditions dried up. He's also the first Asian to win best male supporting actor at the SAG Awards.

"When I stepped away from acting, it was because there were so few opportunities," said Quan. "Now, tonight we are celebrating James Hong, Michelle Yeoh, Stephanie Hsu, Hong Chau, Harry Shum Jr. The landscape looks so different now."

Some online commentators suggested there was irony in Mark Wahlberg, who presented best ensemble, handing out the night's final award to a film with a predominantly Asian and Asian American cast. In 1988, a 16-year-old Wahlberg attacked two Vietnamese men while trying to steal beer near his home in Dorchester, Massachusetts. Wahlberg, who said race wasn't a factor in the assault, served 45 days of a two-year sentence. Wahlberg also announced the film "Women Talking" as "Women Are Talking."

Best actor has been one of the hardest races to call. Austin Butler ("Elvis"), Brendan Fraser ("The Whale") and Colin Farrell ("The Banshees of Inisherin") have all been seen as possible winners. But it was Fraser who went home with the SAG Award for his comeback performance as an obese shut-in in "The Whale."

"Believe me, if you just stay in there and put one foot in front of the other, you'll get where you need to go," said Fraser, who anxiously eyed the actor-shaped trophy and left the stage saying he was going to go look for some pants for him.

The SAG Awards are considered one of the most reliable Oscar bellwethers. Actors make up the biggest

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percentage of the film academy, so their choices have the largest sway. Last year, "CODA" triumphed at SAG before winning best picture at the Oscars, while Ariana DeBose, Will Smith, Jessica Chastain and Troy Kotsur all won at a SAG Award before taking home an Academy Award.

After the SAG Awards, presented by the film and television acting guild SAG-AFTRA, lost their broadcast home at TNT/TBS, Netflix signed on to stream Sunday's ceremony. Next year's show will be on Netflix, proper.

Sunday's livestream meant a slightly scaled-down vibe. Without a broadcast time limit, winners weren't played off. A regal and unbothered Sam Elliott, winner for male actor in a TV movie or limited series for "1883," spoke well past his allotted time. The show sped through early winners, including awards for Jean Smart ("Hacks"), Jeremy Allen White ("The Bear") and Jason Bateman ("Ozark").

Another streaming effect: No bleeping.

Quinta Brunson and Janelle James of "Abbott Elementary" kicked off the ceremony with a few opening jokes, including one that suggested Viola Davis, a recent Grammy winner, is beyond EGOT status and has transcended into "ShEGOTallofthem."

Brunson later returned to the stage with the cast of "Abbott Elementary" to accept the SAG award for best ensemble in a comedy series. Brunson, the sitcom's creator and one of its producers, said of her castmates, "These people bring me back down to Earth."

"The White Lotus" also took a victory lap, winning best ensemble in a drama series and another win for Jennifer Coolidge, coming off her wins at the Emmys and the Golden Globes. A teary-eyed Coolidge traced her love of acting to a first-grade trip to see a Charlie Chaplin film. She then thanked her date, a longtime friend, the actor Tim Bagley.

"You're a wonderful date tonight," said Coolidge. "I can't wait until we get home."

The ceremony's first award went to a winner from last year: Jessica Chastain. A year after winning for her lead performance in the film "The Eyes of Tammy Faye," Chastain won best female actor in a TV movie or limited series for Showtime's country music power couple series "George & Tammy." Chastain jetted in from previews on the upcoming Broadway revival of "A Doll's House."

One award was announced ahead of the show from the red carpet: "Top Gun: Maverick" won for best stunt ensemble. Though some have cheered that blockbusters like "Maverick" and "Avatar: The Way of Water" are best picture nominees at this year's Oscars, the indie smash "Everything Everywhere All at Once" increasingly looks like the biggest blockbuster at this year's Academy Awards.

Survey: Business economists push back US recession forecasts

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — A majority of the nation's business economists expect a U.S. recession to begin later this year than they had previously forecast, after a series of reports have pointed to a surprisingly resilient economy despite steadily higher interest rates.

Fifty-eight percent of 48 economists who responded to a survey by the National Association for Business Economics envision a recession sometime this year, the same proportion who said so in the NABE's survey in December. But only a quarter think a recession will have begun by the end of March, only half the proportion who had thought so in December.

The findings, reflecting a survey of economists from businesses, trade associations and academia, were released Monday.

A third of the economists who responded to the survey now expect a recession to begin in the April-June quarter. One-fifth think it will start in the July-September quarter.

The delay in the economists' expectations of when a downturn will begin follows a series of government reports that have pointed to a still-robust economy even after the Federal Reserve has raised interest rates eight times in a strenuous effort to slow growth and curb high inflation.

In January, employers added more than a half-million jobs, and the unemployment rate reached 3.4%, the lowest level since 1969.

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And sales at retail stores and restaurants jumped 3% in January, the sharpest monthly gain in nearly two years. That suggested that consumers as a whole, who drive most of the economy's growth, still feel financially healthy and willing to spend.

At the same time, several government releases also showed that inflation shot back up in January after weakening for several months, fanning fears that the Fed will raise its benchmark rate even higher than was previously expected. When the Fed lifts its key rate, it typically leads to more expensive mortgages, auto loans and credit card borrowing. Interest rates on business loans also rise.

Tighter credit can then weaken the economy and even cause a recession. Economic research released Friday found that the Fed has never managed to reduce inflation from the high levels it has recently reached without causing a recession.

Tens of thousands protest Mexico's electoral law changes

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Tens of thousands of people filled Mexico City's vast main plaza Sunday to protest President Andrés Manuel López Obrador's electoral law changes they say threaten democracy and could mark a return to the past.

The plaza is normally thought to hold nearly 100,000 people, but many protesters who couldn't fit in the square spilled onto nearby streets.

The marchers were clad mostly in white and pink — the color of the National Electoral Institute — and shouted slogans like "Don't Touch my Vote!" Like a similar but somewhat larger march on Nov. 13, the marchers appeared somewhat more affluent than those at the average demonstration.

The electoral law changes drew attention from the U.S. government.

Brian A. Nichols, the U.S. assistant secretary of state for Western hemisphere affairs, wrote in his Twitter account that "Today, in Mexico, we see a great debate on electoral reforms that are testing the independence of electoral and judicial institutions."

"The United States supports independent, well-resourced electoral institutions that strengthen democratic processes and the rule of law," Nichols wrote.

López Obrador's proposals were passed last week. Once enacted, they would cut salaries, funding for local election offices and training for citizens who operate and oversee polling stations. They would also reduce sanctions for candidates who fail to report campaign spending.

Mexico's president denies the reforms are a threat to democracy and says criticism is elitist, arguing the institute spends too much money. He says the funds should be spent on the poor.

But protester Enrique Bastien, a 64-year-old veterinarian, said that with the reforms López Obrador "wants to return to the past" when "the government controlled elections."

"It was a life with no independence," said Bastien, recalling the 1970s and 80s when the Institutional Revolutionary Party, or PRI, ruled Mexico with fraud and handouts.

Fernando Gutierrez, 55, a small businessman, said López Obrador wanted to lead Mexico to a socialist government. "That's obvious, from the aid going to Cuba," Gutierrez said.

López Obrador has imported coronavirus vaccines, medical workers and stone railway ballast from Cuba, but has shown little taste for socialist policies at home.

Many other demonstrators were simply wary of the kind of vote miscounting, campaign overspending and electoral pressure tactics that were common in Mexico before the independent electoral agency was created in the 1990s.

López Obrador said Thursday he'll sign the changes into law, even though he expects court challenges. Many at Sunday's protest expressed hope that Mexico's Supreme Court would overturn some of the changes, as courts have done with other presidential initiatives.

Lorenzo Cordova, the head of the National Electoral Institute, has said the reforms "seek to cut thousands of people who work every day to guarantee trustworthy elections, something that will of course pose a risk for future elections."

López Obrador has appeared nonchalant about court challenges, saying Thursday that he believed the

changes would be upheld because none was "outside the law."

However, in the past he has frequently attacked Mexico's judiciary and claimed judges are part of a conservative conspiracy against his administration.

The president's strident pushback against the judiciary, as well as regulatory and oversight agencies, has raised fears among some that he is seeking to reinstitute the practices of the old PRI, which bent the rules to retain Mexico's presidency for 70 years until its defeat in the 2000 elections.

Elections in Mexico are expensive by international standards, in part because almost all legal campaign financing is, by law, supplied by the government. The electoral institute also issues the secure voter ID cards that are the most commonly accepted form of identification in Mexico, and oversees balloting in the remote and often dangerous corners of the country.

López Obrador remains highly popular in Mexico, with approval ratings of around 60%. While he cannot run for reelection, his Morena party is favored in next year's national elections and the opposition is in disarray.

Part of his popular appeal comes from railing against high-paid government bureaucrats, and he has been angered by the fact that some top electoral officials are paid more than the president.

Jake Paul takes first ring defeat by split decision to Fury

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia (AP) — YouTube star Jake Paul took the first defeat of his professional boxing career Sunday night, losing a split decision to Tommy Fury.

Paul (6-1) knocked down Fury with a short left hand early in the final round of their cruiserweight bout, but the younger half-brother of heavyweight champion Tyson Fury controlled long stretches of the eight-round meeting at Diriyah Arena.

Two judges scored the bout 76-73 for Fury (9-0, 4 KOs), while the third favored Paul, 75-74.

"I've already won every single way in life," Paul said. "I made it farther than I ever thought I would, and beyond. This is a humbling experience. I'll take it on the chin and come back."

Fury is the first actual professional boxer fought by Paul, who built his lucrative second career by taking on mixed martial artists and a fellow YouTuber in boxing bouts that generated huge social media attention despite featuring more enthusiasm than skill.

Fury also is much better known as a celebrity sibling — and much more accomplished as a reality television star — than as a boxer, leading to a relatively even matchup with Paul. Fury's unbeaten record entering this bout was built against a series of wildly overmatched opponents with a combined record of 24-176-5.

"In my first main event, 23 years old, I had the world on my shoulders, and I came through," Fury said. "This, to me, is a world title fight. I trained so hard for this. This was my destiny."

Both fighters had good moments in the first four rounds in front of a star-studded crowd in Saudi Arabia, but Fury landed more significant shots behind a consistent jab that allowed him to keep Paul at a distance.

Paul appeared to stun Fury with an accurate left hook early in the fifth round, but he also lost a point when the referee penalized him, apparently for pushing down on Fury's head in a clinch. The referee then took a point from Fury in the sixth, apparently for excessive clinching.

Fury had a strong seventh round despite a cut near his left eye from a clash of heads, repeatedly tagging Paul with combinations. But Paul abruptly reversed the momentum with a perfectly timed left that wobbled Fury, who put his left glove on the canvas to steady himself and bounced up immediately.

Fury finished strong and claimed the decision.

Fury and Paul were slated to meet two times previously, but Fury was unavailable for both showdowns. He injured a rib before their scheduled bout in December 2021, and he was denied entry to the U.S. last summer ahead of a planned meeting in August.

Paul used the postponements to taunt Fury, and the emotions built into a contentious weigh-in earlier this week in Saudi Arabia, which jumped at the chance to underwrite this boxing spectacle and social media event.

"All the way through these 2 1/2 years, I had a dream, I had a vision that I would win this fight," Fury

said. "No one believed me. Now I can stand up, and everyone can take note."

The crowd in the arena outside Riyadh included Al Nassr forward Cristiano Ronaldo, comedian Kevin Hart and a collection of boxers including Mike Tyson, Deontay Wilder, Devin Haney and Tyson Fury, who had publicly urged his younger sibling to interrupt Paul's career with a knockout.

Hong Kong model's in-laws charged after body parts found

By KANIS LEUNG and HUIZHONG WU Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — Police in Hong Kong filed murder charges against the former father-in-law and brother-in-law of a model and influencer whose body parts were found in a refrigerator and a skull believed to be hers in a pot at a rural house.

Authorities also arrested Abby Choi's ex-husband on Saturday and charged him with murder on Sunday night, Superintendent Alan Chung said.

He will appear in court Monday alongside three family members: Choi's former father-in-law and his eldest son were charged with murder, while her former mother-in-law faces a count of perverting the course of justice, police said in a statement. The names of those accused have not been released.

Choi, 28, had financial disputes involving tens of millions of Hong Kong dollars with her ex-husband and his family, Chung said earlier, adding that "some people" were unhappy with how Choi handled her financial assets.

Choi was a model and influencer who shared her glamorous life of photo shoots and fashion shows with more than 100,000 followers on Instagram. Dressed in a tulle floor-length gown, she had just attended a Dior show at Paris Fashion Week.

Her last post was a week ago, featuring a photoshoot she had done with L'Officiel Monaco, a fashion publication.

Choi had been missing several days when police discovered her dismembered body and documents on Friday. The remains were stored in a refrigerator in the home in the village of Tai Po, a suburban part of Hong Kong closer to the border with mainland China.

At Sunday's news briefing, Chung said a young woman's skull believed to be Choi's was found in one of the cooking pots authorities seized, along with human ribs, hair, and tissue. Forensic pathologists found a small number of human bones in a second pot, he added.

"There's a hole on the right side rear on the skull, so the pathologist believes that that should be the fatal attack on the victim," he said.

Chung said Choi was believed to have been attacked in a car and was unconscious when she arrived at the house. Police were still trying to find out the exact time of death and locate her hands and torso.

On Sunday, police also arrested another woman believed to have been in an affair with the ex-husband's father for allegedly assisting the other suspects. Chung said the woman had rented the house together with the father, as well as another place to hide the ex-husband.

Walter Mirisch, Oscar-winning producer, dead at 101

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Walter Mirisch, the astute and Oscar winning film producer who oversaw such classics as "Some Like It Hot," "West Side Story" and "In the Heat of the Night," has died of natural causes, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences said Saturday. He was 101.

Mirisch died on Friday in Los Angeles, according to a statement from the academy's CEO Bill Kramer and its president Janet Yang.

"Walter was a true visionary, both as a producer and as an industry leader," they said, noting he had served as academy president and an academy governor for many years. "His passion for filmmaking and the Academy never wavered, and he remained a dear friend and advisor. We send our love and support to his family during this difficult time."

Mirisch received the best picture Academy Award for 1967's "In the Heat of the Night," and the company run by him and his brothers also produced the best-picture Oscar winners "The Apartment" and "West

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Side Story.”

Born eight years before the first Academy Awards ceremony, he served as president of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences from 1973 to 1977 and received two honorary Oscars, in 1978 and 1983, for his body of work and his humanitarian efforts.

As a producer, Mirisch aggressively recruited top filmmakers such as Billy Wilder and Norman Jewison, then gave them freedom to craft the movies as they saw fit.

“We offered these filmmakers what they needed,” he told the Los Angeles Times in 1983. “Billy could call me up and say, ‘I’d next like to do a picture about so-and-so’ — and that’s all we’d need to know. ... We became, in effect, partners with our directors.”

His company’s regular stable of directors included not only Wilder and Jewison, but Blake Edwards and John Sturges. The company also produced movies by John Ford, John Huston, William Wyler, George Roy Hill and Hal Ashby.

Mirisch entered the movie business in his teens, advancing from usher to management jobs with a theater chain before going on to production work on low-budget action flicks and Westerns in the late 1940s.

The company he founded in 1957 with his brother Marvin and half brother Harold was one of the most successful independent production outfits to arise from the old studio system as television cut into movie attendance.

The Mirischs made a string of hits from the 1950s to the 1970s, among them “The Magnificent Seven,” “Fiddler on the Roof,” “The Great Escape,” “The Russians Are Coming, the Russians Are Coming,” “The Thomas Crown Affair,” “The Pink Panther” and its sequel, “A Shot in the Dark.”

Their company started with a handful of Westerns before producing 1959’s “Some Like It Hot,” the Wilder comedy with Marilyn Monroe co-starring Jack Lemmon and Tony Curtis as cross-dressing musicians running from the mob.

Mirisch was willing to take on unusual projects. A Harvard-trained business executive, he efficiently oversaw the commerce side of things, allowing his filmmakers to concentrate on their movies.

Elmore Leonard — the crime novelist and screenwriter on two Mirisch productions, 1974’s “Mr. Majestyk” and the 1987 TV movie “Desperado” — dedicated his Hollywood satire “Get Shorty” to Mirisch, calling him “one of the good guys.”

Mirisch was also among a handful of filmmakers Sidney Poitier acknowledged in his speech at the 2002 Academy Awards when he accepted an honorary Oscar for lifetime achievement.

“Those filmmakers persevered, speaking through their art to the best in all of us,” said Poitier, who starred in Mirisch’s “In the Heat of the Night” and the sequel “They Call Me Mister Tibbs!”

The Mirisch brothers adjusted their management style film by film, depending on the level of oversight they felt a director wanted or needed. In a 1972 interview in the journal “Films and Filming,” Mirisch said some directors worked well as their own producers, while others showed little interest beyond the actual filmmaking.

“We’ve worked with brilliant directors and producer-directors, and I must say that the relationship with each of them has been entirely different,” he said.

A team for most of their careers, the Mirisch brothers also worked in theater. Before joining the Allied Artists production company in the 1940s, Walter worked as a producer and later head of production and Harold and Marvin had administrative jobs.

While at Allied, Walter produced both Westerns and a series of low-budget titles in the “Bomba the Jungle Boy” series that starred Johnny Sheffield, who had played Boy in the “Tarzan” movies of the 1940s.

After his oldest brother, Harold, died in 1968, the surviving siblings continued their company with Marvin as chairman and Walter, the youngest brother, in charge of production. Marvin died in 2002.

Walter Mirisch continued to produce theatrical movies into the 1980s. Although the quality and commercial success of his films generally declined, there were still some hits, including Oscar nominations and a Golden Globe for “Same Time Next Year.” Other films that came late in his career included “Midway,” “Gray Lady Down,” and the 1979 version of “Dracula.” He was also executive producer on a few television projects in the 1990s.

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Walter Mortimer Mirisch was born in New York City on Nov. 8, 1921. After studying at City College of New York, he earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin in Madison in 1942 and a graduate degree in business from Harvard in 1943.

In 1947, Mirisch married Patricia Kahan, who preceded him in death. They had three children, Anne, Andrew and Lawrence.

In lieu of flowers, the family requested donations to the Motion Picture and Television Fund (MPTF). A memorial service will be held at a future date.

In heart of Haiti's gang war, one hospital stands its ground

By MEGAN JANETSKY and FERNANDA PESCE Associated Press

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP) — When machine gun fire erupts outside the barbed-wire fences surrounding Fontaine Hospital Center, the noise washes over a cafeteria full of tired, scrub-clad medical staff.

And no one bats an eye.

Gunfire is part of daily life here in Cité Soleil — the most densely populated part of the Haitian capital and the heart of Port-au-Prince's gang wars.

As gangs tighten their grip on Haiti, many medical facilities in the Caribbean nation's most violent areas have closed, leaving Fontaine as one of the last hospitals and social institutions in one of the world's most lawless places.

"We've been left all alone," said Loubents Jean Baptiste, the hospital's medical director.

Fontaine can mean the difference between life and death for hundreds of thousands of people just trying to survive, and it offers a small oasis of calm in a city that has descended into chaos.

The danger in the streets complicates everything: When gangsters with bullet wounds show up at the gates, doctors ask them to check their automatic weapons at the door as if they were coats. Doctors cannot return safely to homes in areas controlled by rival gangs and must live in hospital dormitories. Patients who are too scared to seek basic care due to the violence arrive in increasingly dire condition.

Access to health care has never been easy in Haiti, the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere. But late last year it suffered a one-two punch.

One of Haiti's most powerful gang federations, G9, blockaded Port-au-Prince's most important fuel terminal, essentially paralyzing the country for two months.

At the same time, a cholera outbreak made worse by gang-imposed mobility restrictions brought the Haitian health care system to its knees.

The U.N. high commissioner for human rights, Volker Türk, said this month that violence between G9 and a rival gang has turned Cité Soleil into "a living nightmare."

Reminders of the desperation are never far away. An armored truck driven by hospital leaders passes by hundreds of mud pies baking in the harsh sun to fill the stomachs of people who can't afford food. Black spray-painted "G9" tags dot nearby buildings, a warning of who's in charge.

In a February report, the U.N. documented 263 murders between July and December in just the small area surrounding the hospital, noting that violence has "severely hampered" access to health services.

That was the case for 34-year-old Millen Siltant, a street vendor who sits in a hospital hallway waiting for a checkup, her hands nervously clutching medical paperwork over her pregnant belly.

Nearby, hospital staff play with nearly 20 babies and toddlers — orphans whose parents were killed in the gang wars.

Normally, Siltant would travel an hour across the city by colorful buses known as tap-taps for her prenatal checkups at Fontaine. There she would join other pregnant women waiting for exams and mothers cradling malnourished children in line for weigh-ins.

All the clinics in the area where she lives have closed, she said. For two months last year she couldn't leave the house because gangs holding the city hostage made travel through the dusty, winding streets nearly impossible.

"Some days, there's no transportation because there's no fuel," she said. "Sometimes there's a shooting

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on the street and you spend hours unable to go outside ... Now I'm worried because the doctor says I need to get a C-section."

Health care providers told the Associated Press that the crisis has caused more bullet and burn wounds. It has also fueled an uptick in less predictable conditions such as hypertension, diabetes and sexually transmitted infections, largely because of slashed access to primary care.

Pregnant women are disproportionately affected. Gynecologist Phalande Joseph sees the repercussions every day when she leaves her hospital dormitory and pulls on her light blue scrubs.

The young Haitian doctor snaps on a pair of white surgical gloves and makes an incision into a pregnant patient's belly with a steady hand that only comes with practice.

She works swiftly, conversing with medical staff in her native Creole, when a burst of wailing erupts from a baby girl nurses swaddle in pink blankets.

Operations like these have grown more common, Joseph explains in between C-sections, because the very conditions that have intensified amid the turmoil can turn a pregnancy from high risk to deadly.

This year, 10,000 pregnant women in Haiti could face fatal obstetric complications due to the crisis, according to U.N. data.

Those risks are only compounded by the fact that many of Joseph's patients are sexual violence survivors or widows whose husbands were killed by gangs. Permeating the struggle is an air of fear.

"If they start having contractions at 3 a.m., they are terribly scared of coming here because it is too early, and they are scared something might happen to them because of the gangs," Joseph said. "Many times when they arrive, the baby is already suffering, and it is too late so we need to do C-section."

That became most evident to Joseph last October when four men came rushing to a hospital carrying a woman giving birth stretched out on top of a door. Because of gang lockdowns, the woman couldn't find any transportation to the hospital after her water broke.

"These four men were not even her family. They found her delivering on the street ... When I heard she lost the baby, it shook me," she said. "The situation in my country is so bad, and there is not much we can do about it."

Started as a one-room clinic to provide basic medical services to a community with no other resources, Fontaine Hospital Center was opened in 1991 by Jose Ulysse.

Ulysse and his family have worked to expand the hospital year after year. They fight to keep their doors open, Ulysse said.

Even when firefights arrive at the doors of Fontaine, the hospital reopens few hours later. If it were to close for longer, administrators worry that it could lose momentum and would be hard to reopen.

Today, it's the only facility to perform C-sections and other high-level surgeries in Cité Soleil.

Because most of the people in the area live in extreme poverty, the hospital charges little to nothing to patients even as it struggles to purchase advanced medical equipment with funds from UNICEF and other international aid providers. Between 2021 and 2022, the facility saw a 70% jump in the number of patients.

The hospital possesses a certain level of protection because it accepts all patients.

"We don't pick sides. If the two groups face off, and they arrive at the hospital like any other person, we treat them," Jean Baptiste said.

Even the gangs understand the importance of medical care, he added. Yet the walls still feel like they're closing in.

Rising carjackings of medical vehicles have made it impossible for Fontaine to invest in an ambulance. When ambulance operators are called from areas like Cité Soleil, they offer a simple response: "Sorry, we can't go there."

Fontaine's mobile clinic can now travel little more than a few blocks outside the facility's walls.

Doctors worry, but they keep working, just as they've always done.

"You say, well, I have to work. So let God protect me," Jean Baptiste said. "As this situation gets worse, we go out and decide to face the risks. ... We have to keep pushing forward."

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Mississippi GOP governor now backs longer Medicaid for moms

By EMILY WAGSTER PETTUS Associated Press

JACKSON, Miss. (AP) — Mississippi Republican Gov. Tate Reeves did an abrupt about-face Sunday on an issue for which Democrats have been sharply criticizing him this election year, saying for the first time that he wants the state to allow a full year of Medicaid coverage to women after they give birth.

Reeves said on social media that if the Republican-controlled state House and Senate send him a bill to allow a year of postpartum Medicaid coverage, "I will sign it into law."

Reeves said he is willing to do so "as part of our new pro-life agenda." He said more babies will be born because the U.S. Supreme Court upended abortion rights nationwide last year with a case that originated in Mississippi.

"I believe that to be a beautiful thing," Reeves wrote. "I also believe that added stress will be felt by more Mississippi moms. We have to love them. We have to support them."

As governor since January 2020 and during two previous terms as lieutenant governor, Reeves has resisted efforts to expand the scope of Medicaid and other government programs. He has not publicly changed his opposition to a broader expansion of Medicaid coverage to working people with low-wage jobs that don't provide private insurance. Mississippi is one of 11 states that have not approved that broader expansion.

Twenty-eight states and the District of Columbia have extended postpartum Medicaid coverage to a full year.

Physicians in the Mississippi State Medical Association and businesses leaders in the Mississippi Economic Council have endorsed a full year of postpartum Medicaid coverage, saying it could improve health outcomes in a state with a high rate of maternal mortality.

Mississippi is one of the poorest states in the U.S., and about 60% of births in Mississippi are to women covered by Medicaid. The state usually allows two months of postpartum Medicaid coverage.

Since the COVID-19 public health emergency started in 2020, Mississippi has allowed a full year of postpartum coverage, although many patients have said the state did little to let them know the coverage remained after the usual two months.

The national public health emergency is set to expire in May. The deadline, combined with the Mississippi election season, has intensified debate over postpartum coverage.

Brandon Presley, a state utility regulator now running for governor as a Democrat, said Thursday on Twitter that Reeves "doesn't have the guts to push postpartum care for mothers."

"You would think 'His Majesty' would be able to persuade the Legislature to do the right thing," Presley wrote. "Unlike @tatereeves, I don't think I know more than doctors."

The two Democratic leaders in the Mississippi Legislature — Sen. Derrick Simmons of Greenville and Rep. Robert Johnson of Natchez — criticized Reeves in a joint statement Sunday

"Saying he'll sign this bill if it comes to him is simply a last-ditch effort to save face on an issue that the vast majority of Mississippians support," Simmons and Johnson said of the governor. "It is not courageous; it is craven political theater."

The Mississippi Senate on Feb. 7 passed a bill to allow a full year of postpartum Medicaid coverage, as it has in previous years. House Speaker Philip Gunn, a Republican, has not said whether the House will consider that bill. The other Senate bills in recent years have died in the House because of Gunn's opposition.

Reeves, who often refers to himself as a "numbers guy," expressed skepticism Sunday as he staked out his new position on longer postpartum Medicaid coverage.

"The debate surrounding the future of those benefits has been fierce," Reeves wrote. "And, to be perfectly honest, I haven't been swayed by the data that is, at best, incomplete and, at worst, often misconstrued and mischaracterized by the 'more government benefits no matter the cost' crowd."

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'Powder keg' for 9/11: 1993 trade center bombing remembered

By JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Lolita Jackson was at her 72nd-floor desk in the World Trade Center, feeling like she worked at the top of the world. Then came the boom, and smoke started curling in from an elevator shaft.

Unsure what was happening, she joined thousands of other office workers on a harrowing trek down dark, smoky stairs, emerging onto the scene of a terror attack.

It wasn't Sept. 11, 2001. This was Feb. 26, 1993, when a deadly bombing killed six people, one of them pregnant, and injured more than 1,000 — becoming a harbinger of terror at the twin towers.

Jackson hopes that Sunday's 30th anniversary serves as a reminder that even though decades have passed since the seismic acts of terrorism in the United States' most populous city, no one, anywhere, can say the threat of mass violence is over.

She knows that more personally than most: On 9/11, she had to flee the trade center's south tower again.

"I'm a living testament that it can happen to you, and it can happen to you twice," Jackson said.

Victims' relatives, survivors, dignitaries and others gathered at the trade center Sunday for a ceremony that included the reading of the names of the six people killed. The anniversary was also being marked at a Mass Sunday at a nearby church and a panel discussion Monday at the 9/11 Memorial Museum.

A bell was tolled and a moment of silence held to mark the time of the attack, 12:18 p.m., and victims' relatives and others laid roses next to their names, which are inscribed on one of the Sept. 11 memorial pools.

Gov. Kathy Hochul, Mayor Eric Adams and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer were among speakers honoring the lives lost and mourning the loss of innocence in the attack's wake.

"Today, 30 years later, we still feel the impact of that event," said Stanley Brezenoff, who survived the bombing as then-head of the government agency that owns the World Trade Center. "The grief we hold for the ones we lost — we feel and share the hurt that the families have felt these many years. That will not change, even years into the future."

Charlie Maikish, the executive in charge of the World Trade Center at the time, said the bombing was a "wake up call" and that safety protocols enacted in the aftermath — including evacuation drills, emergency lighting in stairwells and new fire command stations — likely saved thousands of lives on 9/11.

The noontime explosion, set off in a rented van parked in an underground garage, served notice that Islamic extremists yearned to destroy the trade center's twin towers. But the public memory of the attack was largely subsumed after 9/11. Even the fountain that memorialized the bombing was crushed in the later attack.

But for some survivors and victims' relatives, the 1993 attack still echoes as a warning that was unheeded, a loss that feels overlooked and a lesson that still needs learning.

"The '93 World Trade Center bombing was the powder keg for the 9/11 attacks," said Andrew Colabella, a cousin of bombing victim John DiGiovanni. Colabella said he feels the earlier attack is largely remembered as "a blip," rather than a siren, in the history of international terror.

"These two historical events that have taken place should be instilled in our hearts and minds, to think united and to be united," Colabella said. Now a town council member in Westport, Connecticut, he regularly attends ground zero anniversary ceremonies for both the bombing and 9/11, to honor the cousin he lost as a small child but can still picture.

DiGiovanni was at the trade center as a visiting salesperson. Other victims all worked in the complex. They were Robert Kirkpatrick, Stephen A. Knapp, William Macko, Wilfredo Mercado and Monica Rodriguez Smith, who was due to start maternity leave the next day.

"Every part of our effort has considered the '93 bombing as a part of the story that we are telling," museum Director Clifford Chanin said.

The explosive was planted by Muslim extremists who sought to punish the U.S. for its Middle East policies, particularly Washington's support for Israel, according to federal prosecutors.

Six people were convicted and imprisoned, including accused ringleader Ramzi Yousef. A seventh suspect

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in the bombing remains on the FBI's most wanted list.

Yousef hoped the bomb would fell the twin towers by making one collapse into the other, according to the FBI.

The idea of razing the skyscrapers endured. A message found on another convicted conspirator's laptop warned that "next time it will be very precise, and the World Trade Center will continue to be one of our targets."

Yousef's uncle, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, would later become the self-proclaimed mastermind of 9/11, when hijacked planes were used as missiles to strike the buildings.

Although the towers endured the '93 bombing, it knocked out power, backup generators and the public address system. Tens of thousands of people picked their way down the stairs; others were rescued from stalled elevators and the wrecked garage. Some workers kicked out windows for air, a group of 120 kindergarteners were stranded for a time on an observation deck and police helicopters flew to rooftops to pick up two dozen people.

The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, which runs the trade center, apologized to the victims' relatives on the 25th anniversary, saying the complex and the country weren't prepared for the attack.

After the bombing, the trade center forbade underground parking and installed security cameras and vehicle barriers, and the complex issued worker ID cards for entry.

On Sept. 11, 2001, Jackson was again in her office, by then on the 70th floor. When flames started shooting out of the tower next door, her company ordered an immediate evacuation.

Now she wonders whether what she experienced — twice — seems "like folklore" to people born after both attacks. She warns against complacency.

"You're just at work getting a cup of coffee," she said, "and you might have to run for your life."

Cardi B: Court-ordered service 'the best thing' to happen

By MICHAEL R. SISAK Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Grammy-winning rapper Cardi B spoke to girls in a police mentorship program Friday as part of what she says has been an eye-opening and emotional week performing court-mandated community service for her role in a pair of brawls at New York City strip clubs in 2018.

The 30-year-old "Bodak Yellow" singer visited an NYPD "Girls Talk" event at the police training academy in Queens and shared what the department said was "her rags to riches story." She danced with teens and posed for photos.

Cardi B's plea deal requires her to perform 15 days of community service by March 1 to avoid a 15-day jail sentence.

"I feel like there's so many people that make y'all probably feel like, 'This is what's cool, this is what's going on, this is what it takes to be lit, this is what it takes to be fire,'" Cardi B told her young audience.

"Sometimes that's a little bit of peer pressure like on a girl. Don't fall into that. You know what I'm saying? Like, be great. Be you. You're amazing. You're dope yourself."

The NYPD posted a video to Twitter showing highlights of the event.

That drew criticism from some people, including a retired police lieutenant, who questioned whether Cardi B was an appropriate role model for children given her sometimes provocative lyrics, criminal record and past admission that she drugged and robbed men while working as a stripper before she got famous.

Cardi B, a New York City native whose real name is Belcalis Almanzar, has been chronicling her community service on Twitter all week. On Saturday, she wrote: "Community service has been the best thing that has happened to me."

She likened the experience to a spiritual journey that sometimes left her in tears. "Those people that we leave behind they just need somebody to talk and a lil push and YOU might be able to change their life forever," she wrote.

In another post, on her way to the police academy, the multiple-platinum selling artist and mother of two complained about waking up early to perform community service before going to the recording studio,

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but added: "I did the crime 'I only have myself to blame'."

Cardi B agreed in September to a conditional discharge just as her case was about to go to trial. She pleaded guilty to two misdemeanor charges stemming from the August 2018 fights. Ten other counts, including two felonies, were dismissed. Two co-defendants also pleaded guilty.

In a statement at the time, Cardi B said: "Part of growing up and maturing is being accountable for your actions. As a mother, it's a practice that I am trying to instill in my children, but the example starts with me. I've made some bad decisions in my past that I am not afraid to face and own up to. These moments don't define me and they are not reflective of who I am now."

According to prosecutors, Cardi B and her entourage were targeting employees of Angels Strip Club in Flushing, Queens, over an apparent personal dispute. In one fight, chairs, bottles and hookah pipes were thrown as the group argued with a bartender. She and another employee had minor injuries.

In 2019, Cardi B rejected a plea deal that would have given her a conditional discharge. Prosecutors then presented the case to a grand jury and obtained an indictment that included the two felony charges.

NYPD Chief of Training Juanita Holmes created the "Girls Talk" program to build trust and foster mentorships between police officers and girls, with occasional special guests. Ballet dancer Misty Copeland spoke to the group at police headquarters in December 2021.

Cardi B's chart-topping hits include "I Like It" and the Maroon 5 collaboration "Girls Like You."

Contaminated waste shipments from Ohio derailment to resume

EAST PALESTINE, Ohio (AP) — Shipment of contaminated waste from the site of a fiery train derailment earlier this month in eastern Ohio near the Pennsylvania state line will resume Monday to two approved sites in Ohio, according to federal environmental authorities.

The announcement came a day after the Environmental Protection Agency ordered Norfolk Southern to "pause" shipments from the site of the Feb. 3 derailment in East Palestine to allow additional oversight measures about where waste was shipped. Some liquid and solid waste had already been taken to sites in Michigan and Texas.

EPA-certified facilities able to accept some of the waste had been identified, which meant shipments could restart Monday, Region 5 administrator Debra Shore, of the Environmental Protection Agency, said Sunday.

Some of the liquid waste will be sent to a facility in Vickery, Ohio, for disposal in an underground injection well, Shore said. Norfolk Southern will also begin shipping solid waste to an incinerator in East Liverpool, Ohio, and additional solid waste disposal locations were being sought, she said.

"All of this is great news for the people of East Palestine and the surrounding community, because it means cleanup can continue at a rapid pace," she said.

The Ohio governor's office said Saturday night that five of the 20 truckloads (approximately 280 tons) of hazardous solid waste had been returned to East Palestine after 15 truckloads were disposed of at a Michigan hazardous waste treatment and disposal facility. Shore said material shipped out to sites in other states, but later returned to East Palestine, would now be shipped to the two Ohio sites.

All of the rail cars except for the 11 cars held by the National Transportation Safety Board have been removed from the site, which will allow excavation of additional contaminated soil and installation of monitoring wells to check for groundwater contamination, said Anne Vogel, director of the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency.

No one was injured when 38 Norfolk Southern cars derailed in a fiery, mangled mess on the outskirts of town, but as fears grew about a potential explosion due to hazardous chemicals in five of the rail cars, officials evacuated the area. They later opted to release and burn toxic vinyl chloride from the tanker cars, sending flames and black smoke billowing into the sky again.

Federal and state officials have repeatedly said it's safe for evacuated residents to return to the area and that air testing in the town and inside hundreds of homes hasn't detected any concerning levels of contaminants. The state says the local municipal drinking water system is safe, and bottled water is available for those with private wells. Despite those assurances, many residents have expressed a sense of

mistrust or have lingering questions about what they have been exposed to and how it will impact the future of their families and communities.

Leaders of House China panel denounce attack on Rep Judy Chu

WASHINGTON (AP) — The leaders of a new House select committee on China defended Democratic Rep. Judy Chu on Sunday, saying it was abhorrent and unacceptable for a GOP lawmaker to question her loyalty to the United States based on her Chinese heritage.

"One of my colleagues, unfortunately, attacked Judy Chu, the first Chinese American congresswoman in the United States Congress, saying that somehow she's not loyal to the United States. I find that offensive as an Asian American myself," said Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi, the ranking Democrat on the panel, about the comments last week from Rep. Lance Gooden, R-Texas.

Wisconsin Rep. Mike Gallagher, the Republican chair of the China panel who appeared Sunday with Krishnamoorthi on CBS' "Face the Nation," said Gooden was out of line.

"We should not question anybody's loyalty to the United States," Gallagher said. "That is out of bounds. It's beyond the pale."

In a Fox News interview last week, Gooden criticized Chu for her defense of Biden economic appointee Dominic Ng, who the president named to the business advisory council of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation. Gooden questioned either Chu's "loyalty or competence." He also suggested that Chu, a California Democrat, should not have a security clearance or access to classified briefings.

Chu, the chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus who was born in Los Angeles, called Gooden's comments "racist," saying the attacks on her and Ng relied on false information from right-wing media.

On Sunday, Gallagher said his bipartisan committee, which is officially called the "Select Committee on the Strategic Competition Between the United States and the Chinese Communist Party" was named as such to "to constantly make that distinction between the party and the people."

"We must constantly be aware of going overboard as we try and win this competition with China," he said.

On Ukraine front, civilians cling on as troops repel Russia

By MSTYSLAV CHERNOV and JOHN LEICESTER Associated Press

VUHLEDAR, Ukraine (AP) — The murky water oh so slowly trickles from the filthy drainpipe into her grimy container — the ticking seconds ramping up the risk that Emilia Budskaya could lose life or limb to Russian artillery strikes torturing her front-line town in eastern Ukraine.

Gaping gashes from shrapnel in the courtyard walls around her testify to the dangers of venturing outside — exposed and without the body armor that Ukrainian soldiers defending Vuhledar wear when they emerge from their bunkers.

But Budskaya and her daughter need water to cling on and survive, to eke out another day in the ruins.

And so they wait — tick, tick, tick — for the container to fill, for Budskaya to then pour the water into plastic bottles and — tick, tick, tick — for her to then start the process again until their bottles are filled.

Picking their way through the debris and mud, they carry their bounty back to the dark basement that now passes for their home.

"We have no water, nothing," Budskaya says. "I'm getting rain water to wash dishes and hands."

On the largely static front line between Ukrainian and Russian forces that stretches over hundreds of kilometers (miles), from the Black Sea in the south to Ukraine's northeastern border with Russia, Vuhledar has become one of the deadliest hot spots.

It has joined Bakhmut, Marinka and other cities and towns, particularly in fiercely contested eastern Ukraine, as evidence of a grinding and destructive war of attrition, as well as symbols of fierce Ukrainian resistance.

By defending their ruins, Ukrainian forces are slowing costly Russian offensive efforts to extend Mos-

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cow's control over the entirety of eastern Ukraine's industrial Donbas region. It became Russian President Vladimir Putin's revised target for conquest after his forces were beaten back from the capital, Kyiv, and northern Ukraine in the invasion's opening stage a year ago.

Ukrainian soldiers are paying a heavy price, too, but say their sacrifices are wearing down waves of troops and equipment that Moscow is throwing into battle.

In Bakhmut, a soldier who allowed himself to be identified only by his war name, "Expert," said the pulverized city in the Donbas' Donetsk region "has become a stronghold " for Ukraine.

"See what they have done to it?" he said of Russian forces that have been pounding Bakhmut for months, slowly inching forward with heavy casualties to capture a prize that, if it falls, might allow Moscow to argue that the invasion is making progress.

"And this is not the only city," the soldier, who fights in a Ukrainian rapid response unit, added. "I wish they would break their teeth trying to chew it."

Battlefields around Vuhledar, southwest of Bakhmut and also in the Donetsk region, bear witness to the precious equipment and manpower that Russia is expending, with little territorial gain. Tanks and other armored fighting vehicles blown up by mines or stopped in their tracks by Ukrainian strikes are clumped together on the blasted, cratered terrain.

Although Russia has seized most of the Luhansk region that also forms part of the Donbas, the adjacent Donetsk region remains roughly divided between Ukrainian and Russian control.

Ukraine's military said Sunday that Russian assaults in the east remain concentrated on Bakhmut and other objectives.

Russian forces include mercenaries of the notorious Wagner Group, a private military company that has recruited fighters from prisons and tossed them into combat, with high casualty rates. Its millionaire owner with longtime links to Putin, former convicted felon Yevgeny Prigozhin, said Saturday that his fighters had advanced into a settlement on Bakhmut's northern outskirts. The Ukrainian military disputed that claim, saying Russian forces were repelled.

Donetsk Gov. Pavlo Kyrylenko reported three civilians killed and four wounded in Russian strikes on Saturday. Vuhledar and its surroundings were also intensely shelled, he said. Further along the front line, in the southern Kherson region also split between Ukrainian and Russian control, Gov. Oleksandr Prokudin reported two civilians killed and seven injured in 78 Russian strikes on the region on Saturday.

On patrol in Vuhledar's ruins, hurrying down muddy paths to take cover behind pockmarked walls, Ukrainian soldiers said their fight was larger than for control of the city.

"We fight for our children, for our fellow Ukrainians, for our nation," said a marine with the war name "Moryak."

"Because I think what Russia is doing now is genocide of Ukrainians. And Ukrainians don't have another option but to win."

In other developments Sunday:

— Marking the anniversary of Russia's occupation of Ukraine's Crimea in 2014, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy expressed confidence the peninsula's return to Ukrainian control would be part of an end to the war.

"This is our land. Our people. Our history. We will return the Ukrainian flag to every corner of Ukraine," Zelenskyy wrote on Telegram.

U.S. State Department spokesperson Ned Price repeated Sunday that "the United States does not and never will recognize Russia's purported annexation of the peninsula. Crimea is Ukraine."

Asked whether the United States would support a Ukrainian military effort to retake Crimea, White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan said on CNN's "State of the Union": "What ultimately happens with Crimea in the context of this war and a settlement of this war is something for the Ukrainians to determine, with the support of the United States."

The Ukrainian military said Sunday that Russian forces were building fortifications in Crimea to strengthen their defense, allegedly bringing 150 Russian conscripts from Russia's Chelyabinsk region, close to the Ural mountains, to perform engineering work.

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— Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Farhan bin Faisal visited Kyiv to sign an agreement under which Riyadh will provide humanitarian aid and financing for purchases of oil derivatives purchases. “We hope this helps ease the suffering of the Ukrainian people during this humanitarian crisis,” he said of the agreement that is worth \$400 million.

CIA director: Putin too confident he can grind down Ukraine

By JOSH BOAK Associated Press

Wilmington, Del. (AP) — As the war in Ukraine enters its second year, CIA Director William Burns said Sunday that Russian President Vladimir Putin is being “too confident” in his military’s ability to grind Ukraine into submission.

Burns, in a television interview, said the head of Russia’s intelligence services had displayed in their November meeting “a sense of cockiness and hubris” that reflected Putin’s own beliefs “that he can make time work for him, that he believes he can grind down the Ukrainians that he can wear down our European allies, that political fatigue will eventually set in.”

That conversation, in which Burns warned of the consequences if Russia were to deploy a nuclear weapon in Ukraine, was “pretty dispiriting,” Burns said.

Burns said he judged Putin as “quite determined” to continue prosecuting the war, despite the casualties, tactical shortcomings and economic and reputational damage to Russia.

“I think Putin is, right now, entirely too confident of his ability ... to wear down Ukraine,” Burns told CBS’ “Face the Nation” in an interview that aired Sunday. Burns said that “at some point, he’s going to have to face up to increasing costs as well, in coffins coming home to some of the poorest parts of Russia,” where he said many of the conscripts “being thrown as cannon fodder” are from.

Burns also said Putin was underestimating U.S. resolve to support Ukraine, saying that it has been his experience that the Russian leader’s view is that Americans have “attention deficit disorder and we’ll move on to some other issue eventually.”

The comments came at a critical juncture for the war as the Biden administration is “confident that the Chinese leadership is considering” whether to provide “lethal” military equipment to Russia.

“It would be a very risky and unwise bet,” Burns said, adding that such a move could only further strain relations between the world’s two largest economies. “That’s why I hope very much that they don’t.”

Burns said China’s leader, Xi Jinping, has closely watched how the war has evolved, and “I think, in many ways, he’s been unsettled and sobered by what he’s seen.” The CIA director spoke of “where Putin’s hubris has now gotten Russia,” and said that in authoritarian systems, when “nobody challenges” a leader, “you can make some huge blunders.”

Meanwhile, the question of military aid and the pace of the war is also a source of uncertainty in the U.S. as Republican lawmakers criticized the administration for not sending F-16 fighter jets to Ukraine.

White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan said the U.S. was providing Ukraine with the military aid needed to retake territory seized by Russia. The domestic politics of support for Ukraine are also complicated by some GOP members of Congress who say the administration should pull back and focus more on the needs at home.

Rep. Michael McCaul, chairman of the House Foreign Relations Committee, said planes and long-range artillery could help end the war on a faster timeline. “This whole thing is taking too long,” McCaul said. “And it really didn’t have to happen this way,” said McCaul, R-Texas.

Ukraine won support last month from Baltic nations and Poland in its quest to obtain Western fighter jets, but there have been no signs that nations such as the U.S. and Britain will change their stance of refusing to provide warplanes to Kyiv.

Biden said in an ABC News interview on Friday that he’s “ruling it out for now,” saying that they are not the weaponry that Ukrainians need in the near term.

But Sen. Dan Sullivan, R-Alaska, said the White House has been slow in providing what Ukraine seeks, including jets. “That has been a pattern with this administration from the beginning, where they have

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slow-rolled critical military weapons systems," he said.

Jake Sullivan said the U.S. is already providing parts to keep Ukraine's fleet of Soviet-era jets flying, but supplying F-16s "is really a question for another day, for another phase" of the war.

Jake Sullivan appeared on NBC's "Meet the Press," CNN's "State of the Union" and ABC's "This Week." McCaul was on ABC and Dan Sullivan was on NBC.

Failing at polls, election deniers focus on state GOP posts

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI and JOEY CAPPELLETTI Associated Press

PARKER, Colo (AP) — In a basement event space in the Denver suburb of Parker, Tina Peters surveyed a crowd of Colorado Republicans last week and made an unusual pitch for why she should become chair of their beleaguered party: "There's no way a jury of 12 people is going to put me in prison."

Peters was referring to her upcoming trial on seven felony charges related to her role in allegedly accessing confidential voting machine data while she was clerk in western Colorado's Mesa County. The incident made her a hero to election conspiracy theorists but unpopular with all but her party's hardest-core voters.

Peters, who condemns the charges as politically motivated, finished second in last year's GOP primary for secretary of state, Colorado's top elections position.

Now Peters has become part of a wave of election deniers who, unable to succeed at the polls, have targeted the one post — state party chair — that depends entirely on those hardest-core Republicans.

Embracing election conspiracy theories was a political albatross for Republicans in states that weren't completely red last year, with deniers losing every statewide bid in the swing states of Arizona, Michigan, Nevada, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. But the movement has focused on GOP state party chairs — positions that usually are selected by only dedicated activists and have the power to influence the party's presidential nominating contest and some aspects of election operations, such as recruiting poll watchers.

"The rise of this dangerous ideology nationwide and the rise within party machinery are ominous," said Norm Eisen, a prominent Washington lawyer and former ambassador who is executive chair of States United Democracy Center, which tracks election deniers. "It's an outrageous phenomenon."

Kristina Karamo, a former community college instructor who lost her bid last fall to become Michigan's secretary of state by 14 percentage points, won the chair of the Michigan Republican Party a week ago. She beat a fellow election denier, failed attorney general candidate Matthew DePerno.

In Kansas, Mike Brown, a conspiracy theorist who lost his primary bid for secretary of state, was named chair of the state party.

Peters is just one of multiple candidates for the Colorado position who have repeated former President Donald Trump's lies that President Joe Biden did not legitimately win the 2020 election.

"We can't just say, 'Oh, it's time to get over 2020 and be done with that,'" said Aaron Wood, a self-described Christian conservative father also running for Colorado GOP chair, who organized a slate of candidates to take over the party's top posts. "Until I have 100% confidence that the election has integrity, I will not be done with that."

The wave of election deniers follows a push by Trump during his administration to stock the roster of party chairs with loyalists, several of whom supported his attempt to overturn the 2020 election and remain in the White House. Of those, Kelli Ward, the chair of the Arizona GOP, did not run again and was replaced by another Trump loyalist, former state Treasurer Jeff DeWitt. In Georgia, chairman David Shafer has announced he won't seek another term this June, amid scrutiny over whether he could be indicted for efforts to help Trump overturn the 2020 election.

As in most states, the new Georgia party head will be selected by leaders of local county parties. Many of those are Trump loyalists who also backed Shafer's bid to overturn Trump's 2020 loss in the state. But Republican Gov. Brian Kemp, who defied Trump's request and easily beat a primary challenger last year backed by Shafer, has marginalized the state party, creating a parallel structure to raise money and turn out voters.

That's an example of how the once powerful post of state party chair has changed.

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"It used to be adjacent to public service, to be the state party chair, and now it's something where you get to dunk on Democrats on Twitter," said Robert Jones, a Republican pollster in Idaho.

In that state, Dorothy Moon, an election denier and former state representative who made an unsuccessful primary run for secretary of state, became the Idaho GOP chair last year.

Still, Eisen noted that state parties have important roles in appointing poll workers and poll watchers in many states. A perennial fear has been that conspiracists could fill those positions and disrupt elections, though that did not happen in 2022 despite a prominent conservative effort to find more poll watchers.

"Maybe the Karamos and the Browns and the Moons will implode," Eisen said. "There is a kind of incompetence that goes with this ideology. But it's a concerning trend given the power these state parties have."

Parties also have a major role in structuring their primaries. In Michigan, the party apparatus that Karamo now leads has the power to move its nominating contest to a closed convention, where activists select the winner.

"Donald Trump would love there to be a convention for Michigan's delegates," Jason Roe, the former executive director of the state party, said in an interview.

Ironically, Trump had endorsed DePerno, a lawyer who unsuccessfully sued to force a new count in 2020. Instead, Karamo, whom the former president had supported in her secretary of state race, won. She has described abortion as "child sacrifice" and Democrats as having a "Satanic agenda."

Last week, on the podcast of Trump adviser Steve Bannon last week, Karamo said Michigan was "ground zero for the globalist takeover of the United States of America."

In Colorado, many Republican strategists say they are prepared for Peters or another election denier to win the party chair position next month.

"People seem almost resigned that the party is going to fall into the hands of this crowd for the next two years," said Sage Naumann, one of the operatives, who said usually a chair's impact on elections is "neutral," but that could change.

"If they're constantly making controversial statements, then they can be detrimental," Naumann said.

The insurgent candidates running for Colorado's chair argue things can't get worse for the GOP in the state. Republicans lost every statewide race by double digits in November and have their smallest share of seats in the Legislature in state history.

The candidates for party chair claim the Colorado GOP has been too timid and needs to be more outspoken and conservative — a risky bid in a state that has been rapidly moving to the left. As part of that, they seek to restrict the primary to only registered Republicans, shutting out voters not affiliated with any party who have been eligible to participate. That would require overturning a voter-approved ballot measure, which activists failed to do in a lawsuit last year. They hope to have a better shot with the party chair's support.

At the debate last week in Parker, former state Rep. Dave Williams said: "It's time we had a warlike leader who is going to go toe-to-toe" with Democrats.

Williams later added: "Joe Biden is not a legitimate president."

Only one candidate, Erik Aadland, a military veteran who unsuccessfully ran for Congress last year, cautioned about the election denier rhetoric. He noted that Democrats effectively used a tape of him questioning the validity of the 2020 election against him in his race. In an interview, he said specifically that he worried about Peters' candidacy.

"It's not healthy, the words we're using, the rhetoric we've been using," Aadland said. And, he added, "I don't think it'd be healthy to have a chairwoman under seven indictments."

Peters, however, reveled in her national profile. She noted that she had just started a podcast that had 60,000 downloads on its first day and that she raised \$250,000 to fund a recount in three days after the 2022 primary — a recount that confirmed her loss.

During a separate debate Saturday, she demonstrated the appeal of her message to voters whose beliefs are increasingly unpopular in a liberal state.

"It's not your fault that we lost this election in 2022. It's not my fault that we lost this election in 2022," she told another crowd of Republican voters at a suburban pizzeria. "It's because of the machines."

In 2024 campaign, kingmaker reprise for South Carolina?

By MEG KINNARD Associated Press

CHARLESTON, S.C. (AP) — South Carolina is accustomed to increased attention in the years leading up to presidential elections, with the state hosting the South's first voting contests for several of the last cycles. But even by those standards, 2024 feels different.

Democrats elevated South Carolina to the top of their presidential primary calendar, leapfrogging Iowa and New Hampshire. Republicans, meanwhile, could potentially have two homegrown South Carolina presidential candidates in the race, a prospect that has already caused friction among the state's GOP circles of supporters.

A look at why so many political roads to 2024 will lead to South Carolina:

THE DEMOCRATS

Earlier this month, the Democratic National Committee approved its 2024 calendar, an effort to give a prominent voice to a more diverse electorate.

President Joe Biden had endorsed a plan placing South Carolina first on the party's calendar for the coming presidential cycle, followed by New Hampshire, Nevada, Michigan and Georgia.

Biden's recognition of the role South Carolina played in reviving his 2020 campaign, after less-than-stellar performances in earlier-voting states, has been clear since his victory celebration three years ago in February.

"You brought me back," Biden told supporters. His win built momentum that helped him plow through the Super Tuesday votes that followed.

Last year, in a fundraiser for South Carolina Democrats, Vice President Kamala Harris offered her gratitude, saying, "We see how South Carolina Democrats set President Joe Biden and me on a path to the White House. ... Thank you, South Carolina."

The Biden administration has kept close ties with the state, where Biden's roots run deep and include family vacations to the state, as well as friendships with late Sens. Fritz Hollings and Strom Thurmond, and lawyer Dick Harpootlian, a former state party chairman who is now a state senator.

On Monday, Harris will return to South Carolina to discuss the administration's advancements on broadband internet expansion, a top priority of Rep. Jim Clyburn, one of Biden's closest allies and the lone Democrat in South Carolina's congressional delegation. Other Cabinet officials visited last year.

While South Carolina Democrats have not won a statewide race since 2006, they have begun selling buttons, mugs and apparel flaunting the state's new status, with the tagline "South Carolina Democrats Pick Winners." But the party is undergoing a period of transition, with chair Trav Robertson announcing this past week he would not seek another term after six years in the job.

Looking ahead, Robertson noted the regional financial impact that could be felt from the early position of South Carolina, where media markets — and the campaign advertising dollars spent in them — bleed into surrounding states.

"We have long advocated that South Carolina's position in this process has been extremely beneficial to North Carolina and Georgia and to Tennessee," Robertson told The Associated Press. "The impact of this is going to be felt for a generation."

HOMEGROWN GOP CANDIDATES

Nikki Haley's official launch to her 2024 presidential campaign, in downtown Charleston two weeks ago, was steeped in references to her six years as South Carolina's governor.

"It's a great day in South Carolina!" Haley said, a nod to her gubernatorial catchphrase that she for a time required state Cabinet agencies to use when answering public phone lines.

Haley, the first woman and Indian American to lead the state, also cloaked herself in references to accomplishments during her time in office, including creating jobs. She mentioned leading the state "beyond hate and violence," a reference to the shooting of an unarmed Black motorist by a white police officer and

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the slayings of nine Black parishioners by a self-avowed white supremacist.

She did not explicitly mention the removal of the Confederate battle flag from the Statehouse grounds in 2015 after the church shootings — a move she pushed for after years of publicly supporting its presence.

With former President Donald Trump already in the 2024 race, Haley — who served two years as his U.N. ambassador — became the first major Republican to challenge him for the nomination.

Some of South Carolina's top Republicans, including Gov. Henry McMaster, Lt. Gov. Pamela Evette and U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham, have endorsed Trump, whose 2016 victory in South Carolina's primary helped solidify GOP support behind his campaign.

Haley has lined up support from at least one member of the state's congressional delegation, Rep. Ralph Norman. Rep. Nancy Mace, whom Haley endorsed for reelection last year, has said that, for now, "my powder is dry" when it comes to the 2024 White House race.

But Tim Scott, South Carolina's junior senator, has been making moves that seem to put him on the verge of formalizing his own 2024 bid. The day after Haley's launch, Scott was in Charleston himself, speaking at a Charleston County GOP dinner his team characterized as part of a "listening tour." Days later, both he and Haley were in Iowa, which holds the GOP's first 2024 votes.

Scott's potential entry into the race has led to some awkwardness among the state's Republicans, many of whom have been supporters of both him and Haley.

Catherine Templeton, who served in Haley's administration, said Haley and Scott are calling the state's Republicans seeking support, a process she characterized as "uncomfortable."

"Generally, a Scott Republican and a Haley Republican are pretty similar creatures, but it is a game of addition, so both candidates are being deferential," Templeton said. "They are saying, 'If I can't be your first, I'd like to be your second.' You won't find them criticizing each other, but ultimately, it is uncomfortable to choose between friends."

Templeton won't say whom she plans to support and says she expects a similar waiting game among GOP voters and donors in South Carolina.

"People are waiting to see what Tim does before they make a decision," she said. "But Nikki is in either way."

WHAT ELSE IS GOING ON?

The 2024 season is only getting started in South Carolina, just as in the other early states. Next month, the state plays host to one of the first leadoff, multicandidate events, when Palmetto Family sponsors its Vision '24 conference in Charleston.

So far, one announced candidate — Haley — is scheduled to attend, though potential ones, including Scott and former Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson, are set to come. Trump, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem, former Vice President Mike Pence and former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo are among those yet to RSVP.

CIA chief: China has some doubt on ability to invade Taiwan

By HOPE YEN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. intelligence shows that China's President Xi Jinping has instructed his country's military to "be ready by 2027" to invade Taiwan though he may be currently harboring doubts about his ability to do so given Russia's experience in its war with Ukraine, CIA Director William Burns said.

Burns, in a television interview that aired Sunday, stressed that the United States must take "very seriously" Xi's desire to ultimately control Taiwan even if military conflict is not inevitable.

"We do know, as has been made public, that President Xi has instructed the PLA, the Chinese military leadership, to be ready by 2027 to invade Taiwan, but that doesn't mean that he's decided to invade in 2027 or any other year as well," Burns told CBS' "Face the Nation."

"I think our judgment at least is that President Xi and his military leadership have doubts today about whether they could accomplish that invasion," he said.

Taiwan and China split in 1949 after a civil war that ended with the Communist Party in control of the

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mainland. The self-governing island acts like a sovereign nation yet is not recognized by the United Nations or any major country. In 1979, President Jimmy Carter formally recognized the government in Beijing and cut nation-to-nation ties with Taiwan. In response, Congress passed the Taiwan Relations Act, creating a benchmark for a continuing relationship.

Taiwan has received numerous displays of official American support for the island democracy in the face of growing shows of force by Beijing, which claims Taiwan as part of its territory. President Joe Biden has said that American forces would defend Taiwan if China tries to invade. The White House says U.S. policy has not changed in making clear that Washington wants to see Taiwan's status resolved peacefully. It is silent as to whether U.S. forces might be sent in response to a Chinese attack.

In Sunday's interview, Burns said the support from the U.S. and European allies for Ukraine following Russian President Vladimir Putin's invasion of that country may be acting as a potential deterrent to Chinese officials for now but said the risks of a possible attack on Taiwan will only grow stronger.

"I think, as they've looked at Putin's experience in Ukraine, that's probably reinforced some of those doubts," Burns said. "So, all I would say is that I think the risks of, you know, a potential use of force probably grow the further into this decade you get and beyond it, into the following decade as well.

"So that's something obviously, that we watch very, very carefully," he said.

Black Mississippi capital distrusts plans by white officials

By EMILY WAGSTER PETTUS Associated Press

JACKSON, Miss. (AP) — Random gunfire, repeated break-ins and a decaying city water system are constant challenges at Mom's Dream Kitchen, the soul food restaurant Timothy Norris' mother opened 35 years ago in Mississippi's capital.

"I have some cousins that live in Ohio," said Norris, who has spent most of his 54 years in Jackson and now owns the restaurant. "They came last year. They hadn't been here in 22 years. They were completely shocked at Jackson."

Citing rising crime, Mississippi's Republican-controlled House recently passed a bill that would expand areas of Jackson patrolled by a state-run Capitol Police force and create a new court system with appointed rather than elected judges. Both would give white state government officials more power over Jackson, which has the highest percentage of Black residents of any major U.S. city.

The state Senate has also passed a bill to establish a regional governing board for Jackson's long-troubled water system, with most members appointed by state officials. The system nearly collapsed last year and is now under control of a federally-appointed manager.

The proposals for state control have angered Jackson residents who don't want their voices diminished in local government, and are the latest example of the long-running tensions between the Republican-run state government and the Democratic-run capital city.

"It's really a stripping of power, and it's happening in a predominantly Black city that has predominantly Black leadership," said Sonya Williams-Barnes, a Democratic former state lawmaker who is now Mississippi policy director for the Southern Poverty Law Center Action Fund. "You don't see this going on in other areas of the state where they're run by majority white people."

Norris notes state government officials have long been unwilling to help Jackson with the water system and other problems.

"We had to go through all this by ourselves. Solo," he said. "Now, all of the sudden you want to come and take it and say, 'OK, well, we're going to take over.' You know, treating us like kids. We're not kids."

Mayor Chokwe Antar Lumumba said the proposal for courts with appointed judges reeks of apartheid and "plantation politics."

"If we allow this type of legislation to stand in Jackson, Mississippi, it's a matter of time before it will hit New Orleans, it's a matter of time before it hits Detroit, or wherever we find our people," Lumumba said.

The sponsor of the expanded police and court bill, Republican Rep. Trey Lamar, from a rural town more than 170 miles (275 kilometers) north of Jackson, said it's aimed at making Mississippi's capital safer and

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at reducing a backlog in the judicial system.

"I can assure you that the bill has zero racial intent whatsoever," said Lamar, who is white, in response to arguments that courts with appointed judges would disenfranchise Jackson voters. "There is nothing racial about the bill on its face, and there is no intent for the effect to be racial."

Still, Black lawmakers say creating courts with appointed judges would strip away voting rights in a state where older generations of Black people still remember the struggle for equal access to the ballot.

Judges for the proposed new courts would not be required to live in Jackson or even the county where it's located. They would be appointed by the chief justice of the Mississippi Supreme Court — a position currently held by a white conservative man from outside Jackson.

About 83% of Jackson's nearly 154,000 residents are Black, and some 25% live in poverty. The pace of white flight accelerated in the 1980s, about a decade after public schools integrated. Many middle-class and wealthy Black families have also left the city. The potholes marring its streets are a jarring reminder of the struggle to maintain aging infrastructure.

Mississippi's current Republican governor, Tate Reeves, campaigned on withholding state financial support the city requested. During last year's water crisis, Reeves, speaking elsewhere, said, it was "as always, a great day to not be in Jackson."

Jackson residents have a longstanding distrust of the water system because of frequent warnings that the water must be boiled to kill contaminants before it's safe to drink. During crises in August and September and again in December, people waited in long lines for bottled water.

Still, opponents of a regional water board note that state officials sought a role only after the federal government approved hundreds of millions of dollars for the troubled system.

The Capitol Police are intended to supplement rather than replace the short-staffed Jackson Police Department. The state-run force has in the past year been involved in several violent incidents, including the shooting death of a Black man during a traffic stop and a crash that killed another Black man during a police chase.

At Mt. Helm Baptist Church, near the Mississippi Capitol building, the Rev. CJ Rhodes said many people in his predominantly Black congregation strongly object to expanding Capitol Police territory and creating courts with appointed judges.

"They feel — viscerally feel — like this is taking us back to the 1950s and 1960s," said Rhodes, who is the son of a civil rights attorney.

People pushing the legislation failed to consult with most Jackson lawmakers or Jackson residents, the pastor said.

"It feels like this sort of white paternalism: 'We're going to come in and do what we need to do, citizens of Jackson be damned,'" Rhodes said.

Maati Jone Primm, who owns Marshall's Music & Bookstore in a once-thriving and now struggling Black business district in downtown Jackson, said she's not surprised by the majority-white Legislature's attempts to control Jackson.

"It's a land grab. It's a resource grab. It's a way to disempower Jackson and its citizens, for its citizens not to have a say," said Primm, whose storefront window displays a handwritten sign: "Jim Crow Must Go" — a phrase on T-shirts that Mississippi NAACP leader Medgar Evers had in his car the night a white supremacist assassinated him in Jackson in 1963.

Primm said legislators' proposals — especially for appointed judges — are problematic.

"You know, it should reek of unconstitutionality, but here in Mississippi, it's just the same old song," she said.

The Capitol Police currently patrol state government buildings in and near downtown. The House bill would expand the territory to cover the city's more affluent shopping and residential areas, and several neighborhoods that are predominantly white.

Critics say it's an effort to create a city within the city, diluting Black voices and providing extra police coverage for areas that already have lower crime rates than other parts of Jackson.

The House and Senate have exchanged the bills for more debate. On Thursday, a Senate committee

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suggested having Capitol Police patrol the entire city.

Jackson is not the first case of a majority-Black city having local authority stripped away by state government. That happened in Flint, Michigan, when an emergency manager appointed by then-Republican Gov. Rick Snyder made the cost-cutting decision to switch the city's water supply to the Flint River in 2014. The water wasn't treated to reduce corrosion from old pipes, causing lead contamination. The disaster was greatly compounded by indifference by state environmental regulators, despite widespread complaints about water quality.

In Jackson, some white residents also object to a wider territory for the Capitol Police and new courts with appointed judges.

"It's ridiculous. I think judges should be elected officials," said Dan Piersol, a retired art museum curator who lives in a neighborhood that would be patrolled by Capitol Police and in the new court district.

Kelly Crim said she was unaware of the new courts proposal but supports expanding Capitol Police patrols into northeast Jackson where she lives with her husband and 15-month-old son.

She said she was pleased the Capitol Police had a more visible presence at the Mississippi State Fair last fall, after fights occurred there in the past.

"I know people that ... because they knew the Capitol Police were there, felt more comfortable going with kids or at night," she said.

Mom's Kitchen, located in the once-safe neighborhood where Norris grew up, is a casual place serving baked chicken, turnip greens and candied sweet potatoes. The dining room has a broken window with cardboard taped over it, a vestige of earlier vandalism.

Norris said he often feels unsafe working in the area. A few months ago, he said, he and some employees were looking outside when "a guy just rolled by ... shooting in the air."

"It scared me," said Norris, who is also a licensed therapist specializing in helping young Black men, including those traumatized by violence.

He said some of his patients have had violent encounters with law enforcement officers. Norris said he would like to see a more effective police presence in Jackson, but he is concerned the Capitol Police are not the answer.

"Policemen should be building a relationship with the community," Norris said.

Casinos and consulting? Pandemic spurs tribes to diversify

By SUSAN HAIGH Associated Press

MASHANTUCKET, Conn. (AP) — When the COVID-19 pandemic shuttered Foxwoods Resort Casino in Connecticut for three months in 2020, its owners, the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation, had to reckon with decades of relying heavily on gambling as the tribe's main source of revenue.

"The fact that the casino revenues went from millions to zero overnight just fully reiterated the need for diverse revenue streams," said Tribal Chairman Rodney Butler.

The 1,000-member tribe has since expanded its efforts to get into the federal government contracting business, making it one of several tribal nations to look beyond the casino business more seriously after the coronavirus crisis. Tribal leaders and tribal business experts say the global pandemic has been the latest and clearest sign that tribal governments with casinos can't depend solely on slot machines and poker rooms to support future generations.

In Michigan, the Match-E-Be-Nash-She-Wish Band of Pottawatomi Indians, or Gun Lake Tribe, recently announced a 25-year plan to develop hundreds of acres near its casino into a corridor with housing, retail, manufacturing and a new 15-story hotel. A non-gambling entity owned by the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians, also in Michigan, is now selling "NativeWahl" burger franchises to other tribes after forming a 2021 partnership with Wahlburgers, the national burger chain created by the celebrity brothers Paul, Mark and Donnie Wahlberg.

Some tribes, with and without casinos, have gotten involved in a wide range of non-gambling businesses, such as trucking, construction, consulting, health care, real estate, cannabis and marketing over the past

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decade or longer while others have been branching out more recently.

"While enterprise diversification can come with costs, its necessity became clear during the early phases of the pandemic, when tribally owned casinos were shut down to mitigate COVID-19 transmission and gaming-dependent tribes were left with little incoming revenue," according to a new report from the Center for Indian Country Development at the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis.

The report found that many tribes are increasingly doing business with the federal government, especially the U.S. Department of Defense.

The Mashantucket Pequots' non-gambling entity, Command Holdings, last year made its largest acquisition to date: WWC Global, a Florida-based management consulting firm that predominantly works with federal agencies, including the defense and state departments. WWC announced in December that it had been awarded a \$37.5 million contract supporting the federal Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency.

WWC Global CEO Jon Panamaroff applauded the Mashantucket Pequots' casino and hospitality business but noted that it can be subject to the "ups and downs of the market," making it important to branch out economically. A member of the Sun'aq Tribe of Kodiak, Alaska, he credited the Mashantucket Pequots' tribal leaders with doubling down on diversification efforts during the pandemic instead of "shying away and trying to hunker down."

Butler said the tribe hopes non-gambling revenues, including from a planned family resort with a 91,000-square-foot (8,450-square-meter) water park that's expected to open in 2025, will eventually comprise 50% to 80% of the Mashantucket Pequots' portfolio, providing "stability and certainty" when another challenging event undoubtedly will happen.

"You think about the financial crisis in '08 and now COVID. And so, something's going to happen again," Butler said. "We've learned from past mistakes, and we want to be ready for it in the future."

Even before the pandemic hit, some tribal casinos were already facing competitive pressures from the advent of other gambling options, including legalized online wagering on sports and casino games in some states. At the same time, traditional patrons of brick-and-mortar casinos are getting older.

"Tribal economies are at an inflection point because gaming markets are maturing across the U.S.," said Dawson Her Many Horses, head of Native American banking for Wells Fargo and an enrolled member of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe of South Dakota. "As casino revenues flatten, tribes will be looking for new business opportunities in other industries."

Terri Fitzpatrick, a member of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians in Michigan and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation's chief real estate and global attraction officer, has noted "tremendous growth" in non-gambling-related tribal businesses over the last decade in Michigan. Most tribes within the state now engage in some form of economic development other than casinos.

The pandemic, Fitzpatrick said, really highlighted the importance of such a strategy, given the financial impact of COVID-19 on tribal schools, health care centers, assistance for older adults, day care programs and other services.

"It wasn't about a loss of revenue," she said. "It was a loss of, 'What we can do for our community and in our community.'"

The Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi in Michigan saw its successful casino shut down in the early months of the pandemic. But the financial blow was blunted in part by the tribe's non-gambling businesses, including a firm that's involved in drone development for the federal government and was deemed "essential."

The tribe's economic development entity, Waséyabek Development Company LLC, now has mapped out a plan to generate at least one-third of the revenue needed to support the tribe from activities other than gambling by 2040, its president and CEO, Deidra Mitchell, said.

That doesn't mean tribes are giving up on gambling. Some are even expanding it. The gambling and hospitality entity owned by the Mohegan Tribe in eastern Connecticut announced this month it is partnering with a New York developer to try and secure a New York City gambling license and build a proposed entertainment district in Manhattan's East Side. Meanwhile, the Chickasaw Nation in Oklahoma is part of

another consortium that wants to build a casino and entertainment complex on New York's Coney Island.

The National Indian Gaming Association reported in August that \$39 billion in gross gambling revenue was generated in fiscal year 2021, the most in tribal gambling history. That figure, which accounts for 243 tribes across 29 states, increased 40% over the previous year.

Patrick Davison, vice president of Native American gaming and finance at PNC Bank, said he's been working with tribal officials who still want to build casinos but also want to avoid overbuilding. He said the pandemic was "a real eye-opener for tribes" as officials consider their tribes' futures in the gambling business.

"There's a lot more thought being put into it," he said.

Fleeing Nicaraguans a boon to economy back home

By GABRIELA SELSER Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Each month, Antón Martínez, 38, sets aside \$200 from his wages as a dishwasher in the United States to send home to his mother in Nicaragua.

Martínez wishes it could be more, but he's still trying to find his footing in the new country and pay off the debt of his migration. His monthly contribution to family back home was part of a 50% surge in remittances to Nicaragua in 2022, a massive jump that analysts attribute to the thousands of Nicaraguans who emigrated to the U.S. in the past two years.

They have been leaving as the government intensifies a crackdown on opposition voices since early 2021, high global inflation slams families' buying power and job opportunities remain limited at home.

That swell of Nicaraguan arrivals to the U.S. was part of the reason the Biden administration announced in January that it would begin turning them away at the border if they did not first register online to make asylum petitions. Their numbers have dropped precipitously since.

But Martínez, who arrived in late 2021, and others already there are keeping Nicaragua's economy afloat with the more than \$3.2 billion they sent home last year.

Last year's huge jump, "can only be explained by the disproportionate increase in migrants," Nicaraguan economist Enrique Sáenz said.

Emigration "has become (President Daniel Ortega's) main macroeconomic policy and his main social policy," Saenz said.

Ortega's increasingly authoritarian government has drawn sanctions from the U.S. government and Europe, but the measures have been targeted toward his inner circle and members of his administration to avoid adding more economic hardship for average Nicaraguans.

Still, for the fiscal year ending last September, U.S. authorities recorded more than 163,000 encounters with Nicaraguans, more than three times the 2021 total. Encounters peaked in December with more than 35,000 and then plummeted to 3,377 in January.

The reasons vary from a lack of economic opportunity to outright persecution of political opponents and voices of dissent. Ortega cracked down violently after popular protests broke out in April 2018. He ratcheted up the pressure in 2021 ahead of national elections.

Earlier this month, he put 222 imprisoned opponents on a plane to Washington, saying he was sending the "terrorists" back to their foreign sponsor.

Until last year, Costa Rica had been the primary destination for Nicaraguans in recent years. But the small neighboring country's asylum system is overwhelmed, the wait now stretches years and its economy has struggled to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. Costa Rica President Rodrigo Chaves tightened the generous asylum system in December, arguing that it was being abused by economic migrants.

Those factors made the U.S. a more attractive destination despite the distance. Ortega blames the U.S. sanctions for the emigration.

In Martínez's case, he left because he had participated in anti-government protests in 2018 and feared he could be arrested at any moment. "I miss my mother and I love Nicaragua, but there was nothing else to do. It was leave or be taken prisoner at some point."

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Many others reached the same decision.

Nicaragua's government released data late last year showing that between Sept. 17 and Oct. 7, it issued 20,192 passports. In the capital, residents camped out on sidewalks just to get one of the limited numbers called each day to process a passport application.

Sabrina Gazol Moncada, a 28-year-old college student who had to drop out to find work, left Nicaragua in October, the month after her husband travelled to the U.S.

"It's a really difficult decision to make, because ultimately you are leaving your country, your family, the people who support you and love you," she said.

Gazol moved north on buses, on foot and stuffed into semi-trailers with 200 others. After three weeks of often rough and frightening travel through Central America and Mexico, Gazol crossed the Rio Grande near Eagle Pass, Texas, turned herself over to Border Patrol and began the process to seek asylum.

In Nicaragua, "people who are not with the Ortega regime are threatened and persecuted, there's no freedom of expression," she said.

She had not been able to send money home since arriving in the U.S., because she was still awaiting permission to work as she pursued asylum.

"In Nicaragua, the government does what it wants and everybody is looking for a way out," she said. "In the end, Nicaragua is going to be left without young people, it's going to be a ghost country."

Today in History: FEB 27, Women's right to vote upheld

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Monday, Feb. 27, the 58th day of 2023. There are 307 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Feb. 27, 1922, the Supreme Court, in *Leser v. Garnett*, unanimously upheld the 19th Amendment to the Constitution, which guaranteed the right of women to vote.

On this date:

In 1807, poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was born in Portland, Maine.

In 1933, Germany's parliament building, the Reichstag, was gutted by fire; Chancellor Adolf Hitler, blaming the Communists, used the fire to justify suspending civil liberties.

In 1939, the Supreme Court, in *National Labor Relations Board v. Fansteel Metallurgical Corp.*, effectively outlawed sit-down strikes.

In 1942, the Battle of the Java Sea began during World War II; Imperial Japanese naval forces scored a decisive victory over the Allies.

In 1951, the 22nd Amendment to the Constitution, limiting a president to two terms of office, was ratified.

In 1973, members of the American Indian Movement occupied the hamlet of Wounded Knee in South Dakota, the site of the 1890 massacre of Sioux men, women and children. (The occupation lasted until the following May.)

In 1991, Operation Desert Storm came to a conclusion as President George H.W. Bush declared that "Kuwait is liberated, Iraq's army is defeated," and announced that the allies would suspend combat operations at midnight, Eastern time.

In 1997, divorce became legal in Ireland.

In 1998, with the approval of Queen Elizabeth II, Britain's House of Lords agreed to end 1,000 years of male preference by giving a monarch's first-born daughter the same claim to the throne as any first-born son.

In 2006, former Newark Eagles co-owner Effa Manley became the first woman elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame.

In 2010, in Chile, an 8.8 magnitude earthquake and tsunami killed 524 people, caused \$30 billion in damage and left more than 200,000 homeless.

In 2020, U.S. stocks posted their worst one-day drop since 2011, as worldwide markets plummeted amid

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growing anxiety about the coronavirus; the Dow tumbled nearly 1,200 points. President Donald Trump declared that a widespread U.S. outbreak of the virus was not inevitable, even as top health authorities at his side warned that more infections were coming.

In 2021, the U.S. got a third vaccine to prevent COVID-19, as the Food and Drug Administration cleared a Johnson & Johnson shot that worked with just one dose instead of two.

Ten years ago: The Senate confirmed Jacob Lew to be Treasury secretary by a vote of 71-26. President Barack Obama unveiled a statue of civil rights icon Rosa Parks at the U.S. Capitol. Van Cliburn, the internationally celebrated pianist whose triumph at a 1958 Moscow competition launched a spectacular career that made him the rare classical musician to enjoy rock star status, died in Fort Worth, Texas, at age 78.

Five years ago: It was revealed that security clearance of White House senior adviser and presidential son-in-law Jared Kushner had been downgraded, significantly reducing his access to classified information. (Kushner's status was restored in May after the completion of his background check.) A five-hour truce ordered by Syria's Russian allies to let civilians flee a besieged rebel-held enclave near Damascus failed to result in aid deliveries or medical evacuations, as deadly airstrikes and shelling continued. President Donald Trump named former digital adviser Brad Parscale as campaign manager for his 2020 re-election bid.

One year ago: President Vladimir Putin dramatically escalated East-West tensions by ordering Russian nuclear forces put on high alert, while Ukraine's embattled leader agreed to talks with Moscow as Putin's troops and tanks drove deeper into the country. Citing "aggressive statements" by NATO, Putin issued a directive to increase the readiness of Russia's nuclear weapons — a step that raised fears that the invasion of Ukraine could boil over into nuclear war. New York City Mayor Eric Adams announced that a dramatic drop in coronavirus infections could lead to the lifting of vaccine mandates on restaurants, bars and theaters within days.

Today's birthdays: Actor Joanne Woodward is 93. Consumer advocate Ralph Nader is 89. Actor Barbara Babcock is 86. Actor Debra Monk is 74. Rock singer-musician Neal Schon (Journey) is 69. Rock musician Adrian Smith (Iron Maiden) is 66. Actor Timothy Spall is 66. Rock musician Paul Humphreys (Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark) is 63. Country singer Johnny Van Zant (Van Zant) is 63. Rock musician Leon Mobley (Ben Harper and the Innocent Criminals) is 62. Basketball Hall of Famer James Worthy is 62. Actor Adam Baldwin is 61. Actor Grant Show is 61. Actor Noah Emmerich is 58. Actor Donal Logue is 57. R&B singer Chilli (TLC) is 52. Rock musician Jeremy Dean (Nine Days) is 51. Country-rock musician Shonna Tucker is 45. Chelsea Clinton is 43. Actor Brandon Beemer is 43. Rock musician Cyrus Bolooki (New Found Glory) is 43. Rock musician Jake Clemons (Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band) is 43. R&B singer Bobby V is 43. Singer Josh Groban is 42. Banjoist Noam Pikelnny is 42. Rock musician Jared Champion (Cage the Elephant) is 49. Actor Kate Mara is 40. TV personality JWovw (AKA Jenni Farley) is 37. Actor Lindsey Morgan is 33.