

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, April 1, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 267 ~ 1 of 68

- [1- Upcoming Events](#)
- [2- Drought Monitor](#)
- [3- South Dakota Average Gas Prices](#)
- [4- Blizzard strikes with a thunder](#)
- [4- Groton Prairie Mixed Bowling](#)
- [5- SearchLight: South Dakota one of few states to saddle counties with public defense costs](#)
- [7- SearchLight: Former head of SD university system selected as Nebraska education commissioner](#)
- [9- SearchLight: Planned Parenthood affiliate fires two union leaders, disciplines entire bargaining team](#)
- [11- SearchLight: Social Security trustees predict benefit cuts in 2033 without congressional action](#)
- [13- Weather Pages](#)
- [18- Daily Devotional](#)
- [19- 2023 Community Events](#)
- [20- Subscription Form](#)
- [21- Lottery Numbers](#)
- [22- News from the Associated Press](#)

Groton Community Calendar

Saturday, April 1

- Postponed to April 8th:** Easter Egg Hunt at the Groton Area Elementary School, 10 a.m.
Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Catholic: SEAS Confession, 3:45-4:15 p.m.; SEAS Mass, 4:30 p.m.
St. John's Lutheran: Questioning Confirmands, 5 p.m.
Dueling Duo at Groton Legion, 6 p.m.
State DI Tournament in Pierre

Sunday, April 2

- PALM SUNDAY
Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship with communion, 9 a.m. (Procession of Palms), No Sunday school Choir, 7 p.m.
Groton CM&A: Sunday School at 9:15 a.m., Worship Service at 10:30 a.m.; Hymn Sign/Night of worship with cookies/bars to follow, 6 p.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.; SEAS Confession, 4-5 p.m.
St. John's Lutheran: Worship with communion at St. John's, 9 a.m., and Zion, 11 a.m.; Sunday school, 9:45 a.m.
United Methodist: Worship with communion at



- Conde, 8:30 a.m. and at Groton, 10:30 a.m.; Coffee hour, 9:30 a.m.; Dessert Auction for Mission, 9:30 a.m.; Sunday School sing in worship, 10:30 a.m.; Family Feast following worship RSVP Pastor Brandon, 11:30 a.m.
POPS Concert, 2 p.m. and 5 p.m.

Monday, April 3

- School Breakfast: Egg bake.
School Lunch: Pepperoni pizza, green beans.
Catholic: SEAS Confession, 12:00 noon, 7:00 - 8:00 pm
Senior Menu: Sloppy Joe on bun, oven roasted potatoes, mixed vegetables, ice cream sundae.
The Pantry, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study, 6 p.m.

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

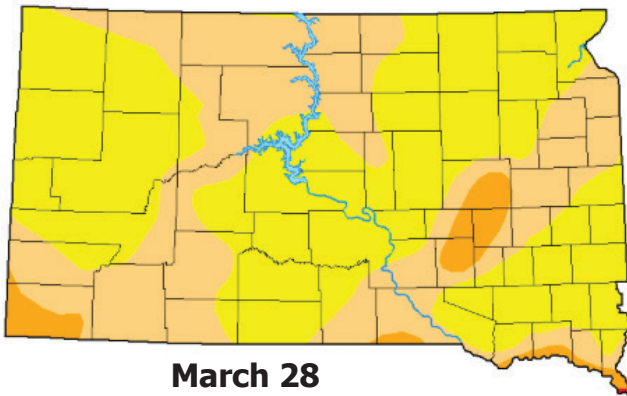
Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, April 1, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 267 ~ 2 of 68

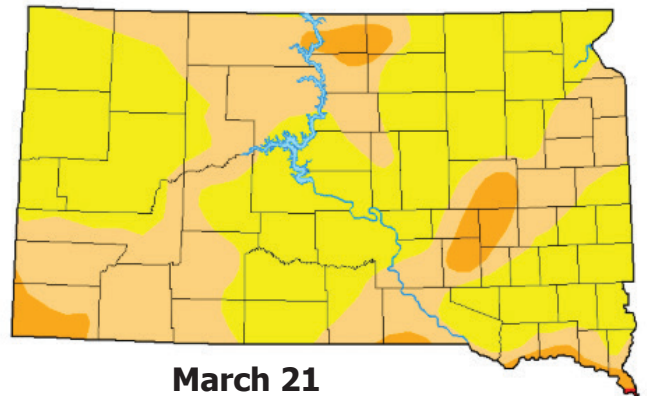
Drought Classification



Drought Monitor



March 28



March 21

The High Plains region generally saw drier weather this week, with a few areas of the central and northern Great Plains seeing some precipitation. Heavier snows also occurred in some of the mountainous areas of Colorado and Wyoming, leading to some improvements to drought and abnormal dryness areas there. Colder-than-normal weather occurred over the entire region. Compared to normal, the coldest temperatures, in some cases 15 to 20 degrees below normal, occurred in North Dakota, western Wyoming and western Colorado. In southern Colorado, abnormal dryness and moderate drought lessened in coverage in the San Luis Valley and Sangre de Cristo Mountains. Recent precipitation and lessening long-term precipitation deficits, as well as deep snowpack in some areas, led to some localized improvements to ongoing drought areas in the Dakotas, western Nebraska and far northeast Colorado, while mounting precipitation deficits and low soil moisture led to localized worsening of conditions in eastern Nebraska and northeast North Dakota.

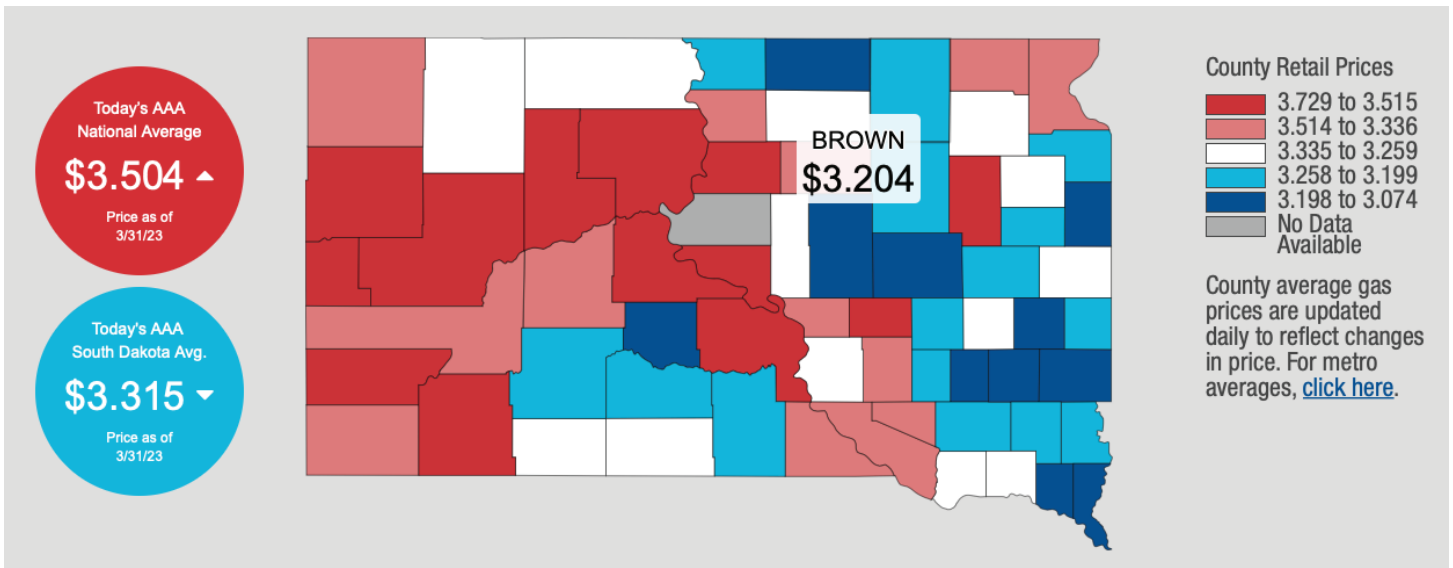
Broton Daily Independent

Saturday, April 1, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 267 ~ 3 of 68

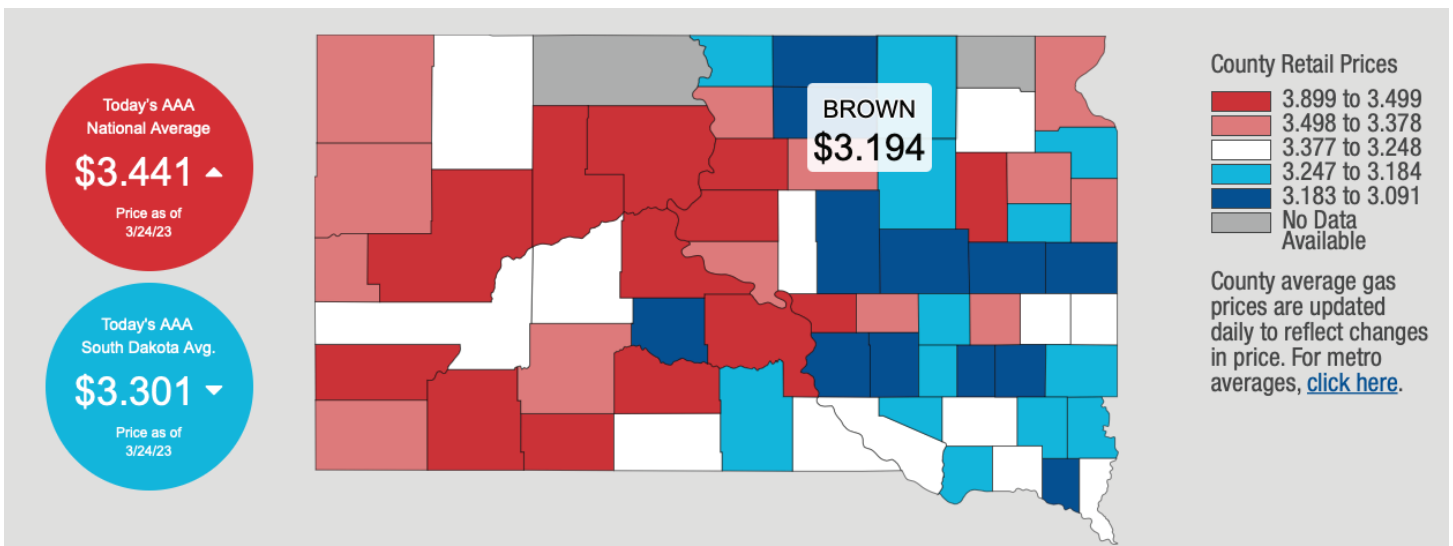
South Dakota Average Gas Prices

	Regular	Mid-Grade	Premium	Diesel
Current Avg.	\$3.315	\$3.488	\$3.933	\$3.898
Yesterday Avg.	\$3.318	\$3.467	\$3.904	\$3.902
Week Ago Avg.	\$3.302	\$3.451	\$3.891	\$3.960
Month Ago Avg.	\$3.328	\$3.467	\$3.914	\$4.199
Year Ago Avg.	\$3.928	\$4.054	\$4.423	\$4.869

This Week



Two Weeks Ago



Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, April 1, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 267 ~ 4 of 68



Blizzard strikes with a thunder

Strong wind and heavy snow pellets along with an occasional thunder swept through the area Friday afternoon and Friday night. By Saturday morning, the moon was shining and the wind was calm. Five inches of snow/snow pellets fell in Groton during that time. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

Groton Prairie Mixed Bowling League Week #21 Results

Team Standings: Shihtzus – 22, Foxes – 14 ½, Jackelopes – 12 ½, Chipmunks – 12 ½, Cheetahs – 12, Coyotes – 10 ½

Men's High Games: Lance Frohling – 257, Tony Madsen – 222, Roger Spanier – 218

Women's High Games: Vicki Walter – 180, Sue Stanley – 166, Lori Giedt – 159

Men's High Series: Brad Waage – 556, Roger Spanier – 540, Tony Madsen & Lance Frohling – 538

Women's High Series: Vicki Walter – 475, Darci Spanier – 440, Sue Stanley – 438

Shihtzus won the final third! A bowl off will be scheduled between the Chipmunks, Jackelopes, and Shihtzus to see who is the league champion.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

South Dakota one of few states to saddle counties with public defense costs

Bills for indigent defense more than doubled in past decade, task force told

BY: JOHN HULT - MARCH 31, 2023 6:05 PM

All U.S. citizens have a right to an attorney when charged with a crime, even if they can't afford one. Only 11 states, including South Dakota, use local rather than state dollars to pay for the vast majority of public defense.

Just one state relies more heavily on counties to pay the cost than South Dakota, and that state – Pennsylvania – is now considering a five-year, \$50 million investment in public defense.

South Dakota's 66 counties, meanwhile, have seen their public defense costs for criminal cases more than double in the last decade.

That's true even though the state-mandated mileage and drive time reimbursement for the private attorneys who serve as public defenders in all but three counties hasn't budged in more than 20 years – at \$1 a mile.

Those facts were among a flurry of data points on offer Friday during the first meeting of South Dakota's Indigent Defense Task Force. Gov. Kristi Noem signed legislation to create the task force earlier this year after lawmakers passed a bill supported by South Dakota Supreme Court Chief Justice Steven Jensen.

Jensen is concerned about the sustainability of South Dakota's "hodgepodge" approach to meeting its constitutional obligation to provide legal services. Three counties have dedicated public defender's offices. The rest contract with private attorneys or have attorneys on call.

With fewer lawyers in rural areas and higher-paying legal work available through private practice or in federal court, Jensen said, "judges are having more and more difficulty finding counsel to represent indigent defense in criminal and juvenile cases."

"They're saying, 'I just can't afford to travel three hours to provide defense,'" the chief justice said.

That's a reality the task force's co-chair, Judge Mike Day of Belle Fourche, deals with regularly. It's difficult to find attorneys who are experienced enough to handle cases and willing to give up that much windshield time.

"I have lawyers that are driving over 200 miles one way to get to court in Corson County," Day said.

The reality of rising costs, meanwhile, has been felt in county commission rooms all across the state.

"I've been a commissioner for a couple of years now," said Hughes County Commissioner and task force member Randy Brown. "But I was extremely shocked by how much we're spending on court-appointed attorneys and how much that cost continues to keep rising for us every year without any way of figuring out how to fund it."

Hanging in the balance is each defendant's right to legal representation, as well as the importance of "effective counsel." Jensen told the group that appeals often originate with claims of ineffective counsel.

State-by-state comparison offers guidance

The group invited representatives from the nonprofit Sixth Amendment Foundation to speak during the first meeting. The nonpartisan group studies public defense state-by-state, with an eye to effectiveness of counsel and U.S. Supreme Court case law on defendant rights.

It also offers guidance for states that seek to address issues with their own indigent defense funding, but Director David Carroll told the group that it doesn't file or intervene in lawsuits or push for change in

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, April 1, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 267 ~ 6 of 68

states that haven't asked for help.

"Every state is unique, and we do not want to presume we understand the strengths and weaknesses of a particular public defense system until we listen and learn from local stakeholders," Carroll said.

Senior Attorney Aditi Goel of the Center offered a rundown of how differing states have approached and adjusted their models. Many of the states that previously relied on counties to fund legal aid have moved toward greater levels of state funding. Last year, Idaho pledged to move toward 100% state funding by 2024, for example.

Most of South Dakota's neighbors already have similar setups. North Dakota and Montana fully fund indigent defense at the state level. Iowa funds defense for everything but municipal violations that are punishable by jail time. Minnesota funds all public defense at the state level, but allows counties to pitch in extra money.

Moving from county to state-level funding can help ensure that counties with smaller tax bases – often financially stressed counties with higher poverty rates – can continue to fulfill the constitutional obligation to provide for public defense without facing dire budgetary straits.

"Counties with higher levels of poverty are also called on to spend more of their available funds on social services, such as medical care for the uninsured and housing needs for the unemployed, leaving less money available to spend on the right to counsel for indigent people," Goel said.

Options for South Dakota

Neil Fulton is the dean of the University of South Dakota Knutson School of Law, and he serves as co-chair of the task force.

Fulton, a former federal public defender, urged task force members to approach discussions on potential changes in South Dakota with an eye to effectiveness and efficiency.

"We should think about what we have an opportunity to do, not an obligation to do," Fulton said at the start of the meeting. "We have an opportunity to really talk about how we make recommendations on what an effective system for representation is. Everybody here knows that when you have excellent, effective, ethical counsel on both sides of criminal defense, it's better for everyone."

That was top of mind for House Majority Leader Will Mortenson, R-Pierre, after hearing from Carroll and Goel of the Sixth Amendment Center. Mortenson is one of two task force members appointed by the Legislature, the other being Sen. Jim Mehlhaff, R-Pierre.

Mortenson told the group he'd like to return to the table in upcoming meetings to look at the experiences of states that have changed their approach to public defense in the past few decades.

Ideally, he said, he'd like to learn the outcome of public defense reform in states that have a few major population centers and a large number of smaller, more rural communities.

"Did it accomplish what it set out to accomplish?" Mortenson said. "Or did they spend a lot more money to get the same system, and different frustrations, but still frustrations?"

Carroll told the group that the Center would be glad to offer more assistance, but he also urged them to compile information on how South Dakota counties approach indigent defense.

Lake County State's Attorney Wendy Kloepfner offered to reach out to the South Dakota State's Attorney's Association for input on individual county issues, since that group's annual meeting is a little more than a month away.

The Madison attorney said the task force should dive deep into the data and consider the potential ripple effects of any adjustments on the established practices from place to place.

"I feel overwhelmed just thinking about where is the starting point?" Kloepfner said. "Is it personnel? Is it funding? Obviously, money is very important, but how much money and where from?"

The task force will meet again in April.

That was top of mind for House Majority Leader Will Mortenson, R-Pierre, after hearing from Carroll and Goel of the Sixth Amendment Center. Mortenson is one of two task force members appointed by the Legislature, the other being Sen. Jim Mehlhaff, R-Pierre.

Mortenson told the group he'd like to return to the table in upcoming meetings to look at the experiences

of states that have changed their approach to public defense in the past few decades.

Ideally, he said, he'd like to learn the outcome of public defense reform in states that have a few major population centers and a large number of smaller, more rural communities.

"Did it accomplish what it set out to accomplish?" Mortenson said. "Or did they spend a lot more money to get the same system, and different frustrations, but still frustrations?"

Carroll told the group that the Center would be glad to offer more assistance, but he also urged them to compile information on how South Dakota counties approach indigent defense.

Lake County State's Attorney Wendy Kloepfner offered to reach out to the South Dakota State's Attorney's Association for input on individual county issues, since that group's annual meeting is a little more than a month away.

The Madison attorney said the task force should dive deep into the data and consider the potential ripple effects of any adjustments on the established practices from place to place.

"I feel overwhelmed just thinking about where is the starting point?" Kloepfner said. "Is it personnel? Is it funding? Obviously, money is very important, but how much money and where from?"

The task force will meet again in April.

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

Former head of SD university system selected as Nebraska education commissioner

BY: AARON SANDERFORD - MARCH 31, 2023 4:28 PM

OMAHA — The Nebraska Board of Education looked north for its next education commissioner Friday, but not before exposing board divisions over his selection and how he was chosen.

A 5-3 majority chose Brian Maher, former executive director of the South Dakota Board of Regents and a former superintendent in Kearney, Neb.; Utica, Neb.; and Sioux Falls, S.D.

Friday's split vote is an oddity for the State Board, which has approved most of its recent commissioners unanimously, including the last two, the department confirmed.

Experienced administrator

Maher's supporters — Patsy Koch Johns, Lisa Fricke, Patti Gubbels, Jacquelyn Morrison and Deb Neary — applauded his experience leading schools and education bureaucracies.

"You could see that he was very, very experienced," Koch Johns said. "Very careful and very calm ... that's something in Nebraska we need right now."

Neary praised Maher for saying during his interview that he would ask each of the board members to refer him to five members of their communities that he should hear from.

Morrison said she was pleased to hear that he considers feedback one of the most important parts of the teaching process. She said she values that push for improvement.

Board members voting no — Elizabeth Tegtmeier, Kirk Penner and Sherry Jones — said they preferred a different candidate and questioned the fairness of the hiring process.

Much of their criticism centered on questions about the potential influence of Steve Joel, the McPherson Jacobson consultant, who is a former Lincoln Public Schools superintendent.

"I find it interesting that this candidate is a longtime colleague of one of our consultants," Tegtmeier said. Maher knows Joel from his time as a Nebraska superintendent.

The State Board revised its consulting contract with Joel's firm to make sure he attended the interviews and hiring sessions this week. He sat in the front row Friday.

Frustration with interview process

Penner said he didn't like how the commissioner-hiring process limited the number and types of ques-

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, April 1, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 267 ~ 8 of 68

tions that individually elected board members could ask of potential candidates.

He said he had to get permission from Joel to ask a question, and no one on the board asked the candidates how they would address the state's shortage of teachers.

"If we can't ask the questions my constituents want to know, then we miss the mark," he said. "To have to send and get approved questions is bizarre."

Fricke said the board had to narrow down its questions to 19 to fit the window of an hour and 45 minutes per candidate.

Morrison, who helped pick the finalists, defended the board's processes. She said government hiring, while it may seem convoluted, tries to keep the process fairer.

"We do it so all the candidates get asked the same questions," she said. "There are also legalities in what we can and cannot ask, so we had to vet them (the questions)."

Next steps

Penner, Tegtmeier and Sherry Jones are all new board members. They were among four candidates who ran as a conservative slate last November.

The board spent much of the meeting discussing the strengths of all three of its finalists: Maher, Melissa Poloncic, superintendent of the Douglas County West Community Schools and Summer Stephens, superintendent for Fallon, Nevada's Churchill County School District.

The board directed its president, Gubbels, to negotiate a contract with Maher and expects to vote on a contract during the April 14 meeting in Lincoln. He would succeed Matthew Blomstedt, who resigned as education commissioner in January. Deputy Education Commissioner Deborah Frison is serving as interim commissioner.

During Thursday's finalist interviews, Maher, who recently resigned from his post with the South Dakota Board of Regents, told the board that he believes one of the most important skills he has learned is that communication is a two-way street. He said he listens.

One of his first goals for the department would be trying to figure out what's standing between teachers and teaching and to make sure the department helps remove those obstacles.

Maher's son, Brett, was an all-conference kicker and punter in the early 2010s for the University of Nebraska. He kicked last season for the National Football League's Dallas Cowboys.

This story was originally published by the Nebraska Examiner, which like South Dakota Searchlight is part of States Newsroom, a network of news bureaus supported by grants and a coalition of donors as a 501c(3) public charity. Nebraska Examiner maintains editorial independence. Contact Editor Cate Folsom for questions: info@nebraskaexaminer.com. Follow Nebraska Examiner on Facebook and Twitter.

Nebraska Examiner political reporter Aaron Sanderford has tackled various news roles in his 20-plus year career. He has reported on politics, crime, courts, government and business for the Omaha World-Herald and Lincoln Journal-Star. He also worked as an assignment editor and editorial writer. He was an investigative reporter at KMTV.

Planned Parenthood affiliate fires two union leaders, disciplines entire bargaining team

North Central States arm of organization includes South Dakota

BY: MAX NESTERAK - MARCH 31, 2023 10:18 AM

Planned Parenthood North Central States has fired two members of the elected bargaining team in charge of negotiating wages, benefits and working conditions for hundreds of newly unionized employees across five states, including South Dakota.

The other 11 bargaining team members have received "final written warnings," which says they can be terminated immediately if they violate any other policy. It's a uniquely severe form of discipline that longtime employees say they hadn't heard of before.

Workers and union leaders at SEIU Healthcare Minnesota & Iowa say the terminations and disciplinary actions are based on trumped-up claims of misconduct that amount to brazen union busting.

"I think it's about mitigating the power and strength of the union," said Grace Larson, who was fired from her job as a licensed practical nurse at Planned Parenthood on Tuesday.

The discipline stems from an allegation that confidential information about the organization was shared in the union's private group chat.

Planned Parenthood managers apparently obtained a copy of the union's private group chat. The workers' alleged breach of confidentiality had nothing to do with patient data, but rather about a previous employee's termination and an effort by management to limit workers wearing union T-shirts on the job.

The violations happened months ago, and the union hoped to keep the inner turmoil under wraps to avoid embroiling a revered progressive institution in a public spectacle when it's confronting new abortion restrictions across the country.

Yet the termination of Larson for alleged retaliation has forced the issue into public view. The union has filed complaints with federal authorities at the National Labor Relations Board.

Union leaders said they hoped for a collegial negotiating process with Planned Parenthood after workers voted to unionize last July. The union represents more than 400 nurses, clinicians, administrative assistants, educators and other workers across Minnesota, Iowa, Nebraska and North and South Dakota.

The organization's new CEO, Democratic state Rep. Ruth Richardson of Mendota Heights, was endorsed by labor unions including SEIU Healthcare Minnesota & Iowa.

On her campaign website, Richardson credits her dad's union with saving them from economic ruin after he was injured on the job. "Unions are under attack right now, but I am committed to standing with them as they did with me and my family all those years ago," her website says.

Yet union leaders say Planned Parenthood's hardball approach is reminiscent of giant corporations like Amazon, Starbucks and Tesla, which have waged expensive campaigns to prevent the proliferation of unions among their rank-and-file workers.

"I've never seen anything like this," said Phillip Cryan, executive vice president for SEIU Healthcare Minnesota & Iowa.

"It has been really concerning to see the way that the organization's leadership has decided to treat the elected members of their bargaining team in ways we've literally not seen any other employer ever do," he said.

Richardson did not respond to emails seeking comment.

A spokesperson for Planned Parenthood shared a statement on behalf of Molly Gage, vice president of human resources, that said the organization would not publicly comment on individual personnel matters.

"Planned Parenthood North Central States leadership is committed to bargaining in good faith with SEIU and strongly disagrees with any characterization to the contrary. We support the dedicated PPNCs employees across the affiliate as they preserve abortion access for the community and provide essential education and health services," the statement said.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, April 1, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 267 ~ 10 of 68

The discipline stems from a falling-out in the bargaining committee that started late last year. In November, the 14-member bargaining committee was meeting with Planned Parenthood leaders in Des Moines to negotiate a labor agreement.

One night after negotiations, Ashley Schmidt says a co-worker became belligerent at the hotel, slapped her across the face and accused her of "making fun of me with your mind."

April Clark, who is a Planned Parenthood training specialist, witnessed the slap and told the Reformer it was hard enough to leave a handprint.

The Reformer is not naming the individual because no charges were filed and they were unable to be reached for comment.

Schmidt, a training specialist in Nebraska and Iowa, said the slap was unprovoked and came after years of bullying on the job.

Schmidt says she initially didn't bring the incident to the attention of the rest of the bargaining team because she didn't want to distract from contract negotiations. But then the next month, Schmidt says the co-worker became verbally abusive toward Schmidt's 7-year-old daughter, calling the little girl "unimpressive," "unimportant" and "selfish."

"And that's what finally got me to be like, I need to leave the bargaining team. I need to set a boundary," Schmidt said.

When she told the bargaining team why she wanted to step down, they decided to hold meetings with both her and the co-worker. In mid-January, they voted unanimously to ask the person accused of slapping Schmidt to resign from the bargaining team.

Within days of the person stepping down from the bargaining team, all the remaining members were placed under investigation and one member was fired, according to workers.

Larson, the former Planned Parenthood nurse fired this week, says she and other members of the bargaining team were told they had failed to report a breach of confidentiality, but told little else. She said her investigatory meeting with human resources lasted less than 10 minutes.

"I didn't know what was going on," Larson said. "They said that they couldn't tell us specifically what the accusation was — just that I had knowledge of wrongdoing and I did not turn it in."

The union was able to piece together that Planned Parenthood's managers must have received a copy of a private Signal group chat between the bargaining team and union staff. Union leaders say Planned Parenthood managers have quoted things said in the chat verbatim, though they have not said where they got the information.

In the chat, one person had shared private information about another employee's termination as well as management's plan to enforce its dress code to crack down on workers wearing union T-shirts. That person was fired and the others believe they were disciplined for not reporting the alleged breach of confidentiality.

Clark, the training specialist in Iowa, says she was never told exactly what she was supposed to have seen in the group chat and failed to report.

"It is a group chat with over a dozen people in it, and I'm busy ... I don't always see everything that goes through the chat," Clark said. "I said, 'I want to see what you're saying I did because I don't know what you're talking about.'"

She said Planned Parenthood managers still give no specifics beyond failing to report a breach of confidentiality.

Each of the bargaining team members received a final written warning, including Schmidt. The final warning never expires, which means they could be immediately fired if they break any policy again.

Union leaders say it felt like hardball intimidation, even as negotiations progressed toward a labor agreement.

In March, Larson found out she was under investigation again.

She had sent an email from her personal account to a non-profit organization in Nebraska that also employs the Planned Parenthood worker accused of slapping Schmidt.

The co-worker is employed teaching young people about having healthy and safe relationships, and

Larson thought they should be aware of the alleged slap.

"I wanted them to be aware of this incident," Larson said. "I felt it's the right thing to do. And I still feel it's the right thing to do."

Larson never heard back from the non-profit, but Planned Parenthood's human resources department received a copy. According to Larson, management informed her she was under investigation. On the advice of her therapist, she took a brief leave. When she returned, Larson said, management alleged she had retaliated against a coworker by sending the email, and fired her on Tuesday.

SEIU Healthcare Minnesota & Iowa is fighting for Larson's job back. They're contesting the termination and filed a complaint with the National Labor Relations Board.

"I'm gonna keep up the fight," Larson said.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This story has been updated to reflect a correction in the number of bargaining team members disciplined.

This story was originally published by the Minnesota Reformer, which like South Dakota Searchlight is part of States Newsroom, a network of news bureaus supported by grants and a coalition of donors as a 501c(3) public charity. Minnesota Reformer maintains editorial independence. Contact Editor Patrick Coolican for questions: info@minnesotareformer.com. Follow Minnesota Reformer on Facebook and Twitter.

Max Nesterak is the deputy editor of the Minnesota Reformer and reports on labor and housing. Most recently he was an associate producer for Minnesota Public Radio after a stint at NPR. He also co-founded the Behavioral Scientist and was a Fulbright Scholar to Berlin, Germany.

Social Security trustees predict benefit cuts in 2033 without congressional action

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT - MARCH 31, 2023 1:18 PM

WASHINGTON — Social Security will no longer be able to pay full benefits in 2033, a year earlier than previously expected, according to a report released Friday.

The updated projections, in the annual trustee report, mean that without action to stabilize the Old-Age and Survivors Insurance Trust Fund, Social Security would have enough money to pay about 77% of the total scheduled benefits.

A separate report for Medicare shows that its Hospital Insurance Trust Fund can continue paying full benefits through 2031, three years longer than previously expected. The fund would then have enough money to pay about 89% of expected benefits.

Maya MacGuineas, president of the nonpartisan, nonprofit Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, sharply criticized lawmakers in a written statement following the reports' release, saying "many in Washington would rather weaponize these programs than save them."

"Anyone who pledges not to touch Social Security is endorsing a 20 percent across-the-board cut in benefits," MacGuineas said. "Refusal to fix Medicare means supporting major disruptions in health services."

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Administrator Chiquita Brooks-LaSure said in a written statement accompanying the report that the Biden administration looks "forward to working with Congress to strengthen this vital program serving over 65 million Americans."

Kilolo Kijakazi, Social Security acting commissioner, said the "Trustees continue to recommend that Congress address the projected trust fund shortfalls in a timely fashion to phase in necessary changes gradually."

"Social Security will continue to play a critical role in the lives of 67 million beneficiaries and 180 million workers and their families during 2023," Kijakazi added. "With informed discussion, creative thinking, and timely legislative action, Social Security can continue to protect future generations."

The report's release comes amid a tense back-and-forth between U.S. House Speaker Kevin McCarthy

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, April 1, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 267 ~ 12 of 68

and President Joe Biden over the federal budget deficit and the \$31 trillion national debt.

Biden has repeatedly called on Congress to raise the nation's borrowing limit, known as the debt ceiling, without strings attached.

McCarthy and many House Republicans have said cuts to future spending must go along with legislation to raise the debt limit, though they've mostly ruled out raising additional revenue through taxes.

McCarthy has pledged not to cut Social Security or Medicare. House Republicans, however, have not yet released their budget resolution for the upcoming fiscal year. The tax and spending blueprint would detail how the party wants the federal government to approach fiscal policy during the next decade, including on entitlement programs.

The Biden administration has repeatedly called on House Republicans to release the document so the two can begin negotiations over future revenue and spending. House Republicans have given no timeline for releasing the budget.

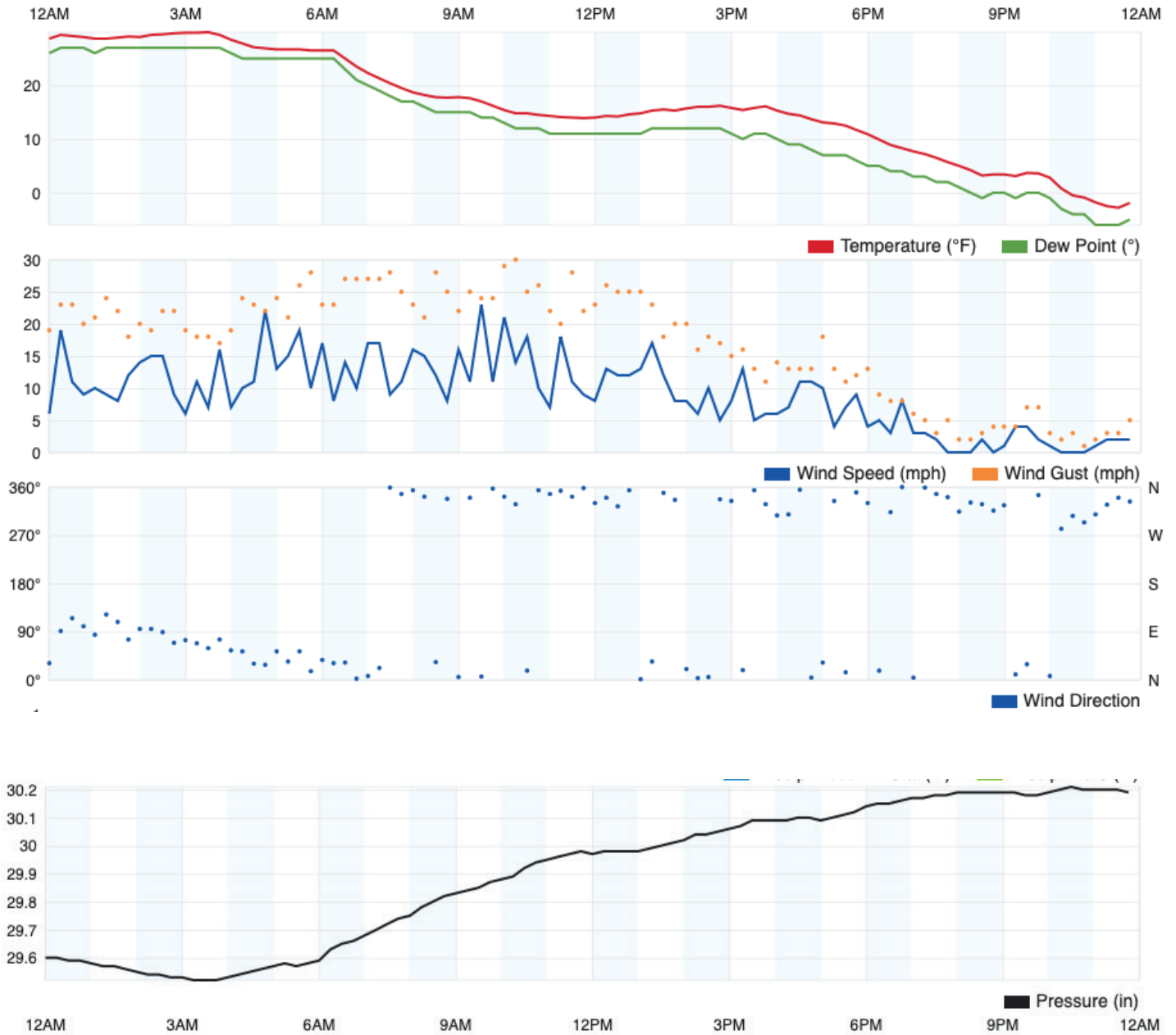
If negotiators can't broker a bipartisan debt limit deal before the summer deadline, and the nation begins its first ever debt default, Social Security and Medicare benefits would likely be delayed. The extent of those delays is unknown.

Jennifer covers the nation's capital as a senior reporter for States Newsroom. Her coverage areas include congressional policy, politics and legal challenges with a focus on health care, unemployment, housing and aid to families.

Groton Daily Independent








Saturday, April 1, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 267 ~ 13 of 68

Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



Broton Daily Independent

Saturday, April 1, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 267 ~ 14 of 68

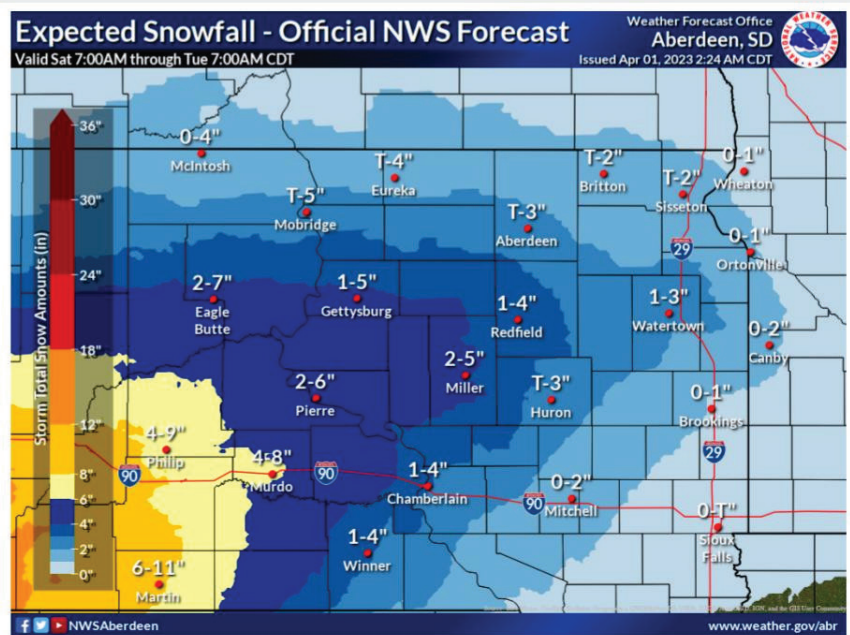
Today	Tonight	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday	Monday Night	Tuesday
						
Becoming Sunny	Partly Cloudy then Patchy Blowing Snow	Mostly Sunny	Mostly Clear and Breezy	Partly Sunny	Slight Chance Snow then Snow Likely and Blustery 20% → 70%	Heavy Snow and Blustery 100%
High: 30 °F	Low: 27 °F	High: 37 °F	Low: 21 °F	High: 34 °F	Low: 18 °F	High: 30 °F

Upcoming Winter Storm Potential - Tuesday/Wednesday April 1, 2023 4:55 AM

Key Messages

- Moderate to heavy snow possible by early Tuesday morning.
- Strong winds could accompany this next storm system.
- Moderate to major impacts possible from this storm system. Consider adjusting travel plans this upcoming week.

This graphic only depicts the latest potential snow probabilities **through 7AM Tuesday morning**. It is possible that quite a bit more snow accumulation will be added to this graphic over the next few days.



The next storm system to march across the region could be generating accumulating snow by Tuesday morning.

Broton Daily Independent

Saturday, April 1, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 267 ~ 15 of 68



Precipitation Type - Intensity - Timing

April 1, 2023
4:55 AM

	Weather Forecast												
	4/3 Mon			4/4 Tue				4/5 Wed			4/6 Thu		
	6am	12pm	6pm	12am	6am	12pm	6pm	12am	6am	12pm	6pm	12am	6am
Aberdeen			25%	70%	95%	95%	95%	95%	80%	60%	30%		
Britton				60%	90%	95%	95%	95%	85%	70%	40%		
Eagle Butte		25%	45%	80%	90%	90%	90%	80%	65%	25%			
Eureka			25%	60%	85%	95%	95%	90%	75%	50%	25%		
Gettysburg			45%	80%	95%	95%	95%	90%	75%	40%			
Kennebec			50%	90%	95%	95%	95%	90%	70%	25%			
McIntosh			30%	60%	75%	85%	85%	80%	65%	30%			
Milbank				60%	95%	100%	100%	95%	85%	70%	35%		
Miller			40%	85%	100%	100%	95%	95%	80%	50%	20%		
Mobridge			30%	65%	85%	90%	90%	85%	70%	40%	20%		
Murdo		30%	65%	95%	95%	95%	95%	85%	65%	25%			
Pierre		20%	55%	85%	95%	95%	95%	90%	70%	30%			
Redfield			30%	80%	100%	100%	95%	95%	80%	60%	25%		
Sisseton				60%	95%	100%	100%	95%	90%	75%	40%		
Watertown				70%	100%	100%	95%	95%	85%	65%	25%		
Webster				70%	95%	100%	100%	95%	85%	70%	35%		
Wheaton				45%	90%	95%	95%	95%	85%	75%	40%		

- Fz Rain + - Wintry Mix + - Snow +



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

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

The heaviest precipitation is currently forecast for Tuesday through early Wednesday morning.



Potential Wind Gusts With Tuesday/Wednesday System

April 1, 2023
4:55 AM

Strong winds could lead to blowing and drifting snow

Overview

- Strongest winds expected Tuesday afternoon through Wednesday morning.
- Gusts generally between 40 mph and 50 mph are possible.
- The combination of falling snow and winds could lead to greatly reduced visibility at times.

	Maximum Wind Gust Forecast																									
	4/3 Mon					4/4 Tue						4/5 Wed				4/6 Thu										
	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am	3am	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am	3am	6am	9am								
Aberdeen	20	18	18	20	22	26	32	33	35	36	38	40	43	44	44	44	45	45	44	41	37	32	28	23	20	
Britton	20	18	18	17	20	24	26	29	33	35	37	40	43	43	43	44	44	44	44	43	41	39	36	30	25	22
Eagle Butte	23	18	17	16	24	29	30	33	37	36	37	39	43	44	45	46	46	46	44	40	36	31	25	22	20	
Eureka	21	21	20	17	20	25	30	35	39	38	38	41	43	44	44	46	47	46	44	43	39	35	29	23	18	
Gettysburg	18	18	17	16	18	28	35	38	39	37	38	41	44	44	43	44	44	45	44	41	36	30	24	21	18	
Kennebec	18	16	17	16	20	31	36	38	39	36	33	35	37	38	40	43	44	44	41	38	33	29	24	21	17	
McIntosh	23	20	18	16	22	29	30	31	33	35	37	38	39	40	41	43	43	44	43	40	35	30	25	21	17	
Milbank	26	21	20	17	20	21	22	25	30	33	36	37	38	38	38	38	38	40	43	44	44	41	36	31	25	
Miller	23	18	16	17	21	25	32	36	38	33	36	37	38	38	39	39	39	38	36	33	28	23	18	17		
Mobridge	15	16	17	16	21	25	28	30	33	35	37	40	44	44	45	45	46	46	45	41	35	29	25	21	16	
Murdo	17	15	13	13	22	35	38	39	40	37	33	37	39	40	41	41	44	44	44	43	38	33	28	23	20	17
Pierre	13	13	12	13	20	28	32	33	33	35	37	39	40	41	41	44	44	44	41	37	32	28	22	18	16	
Redfield	18	18	17	17	18	23	31	37	38	36	38	39	39	39	39	40	40	40	39	37	33	29	25	21	17	
Sisseton	29	22	21	20	18	20	22	22	28	32	36	37	38	39	39	39	38	39	40	43	43	40	36	30	25	
Watertown	22	18	17	17	17	21	28	31	35	39	41	44	44	44	41	41	40	41	43	41	40	37	32	26	22	
Webster	22	20	20	17	20	23	29	32	38	38	40	44	46	45	43	41	41	41	41	41	41	40	37	33	29	24
Wheaton	23	21	22	21	18	16	18	22	26	31	35	38	39	40	39	38	36	37	38	40	40	39	35	30	25	



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

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, April 1, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 267 ~ 16 of 68

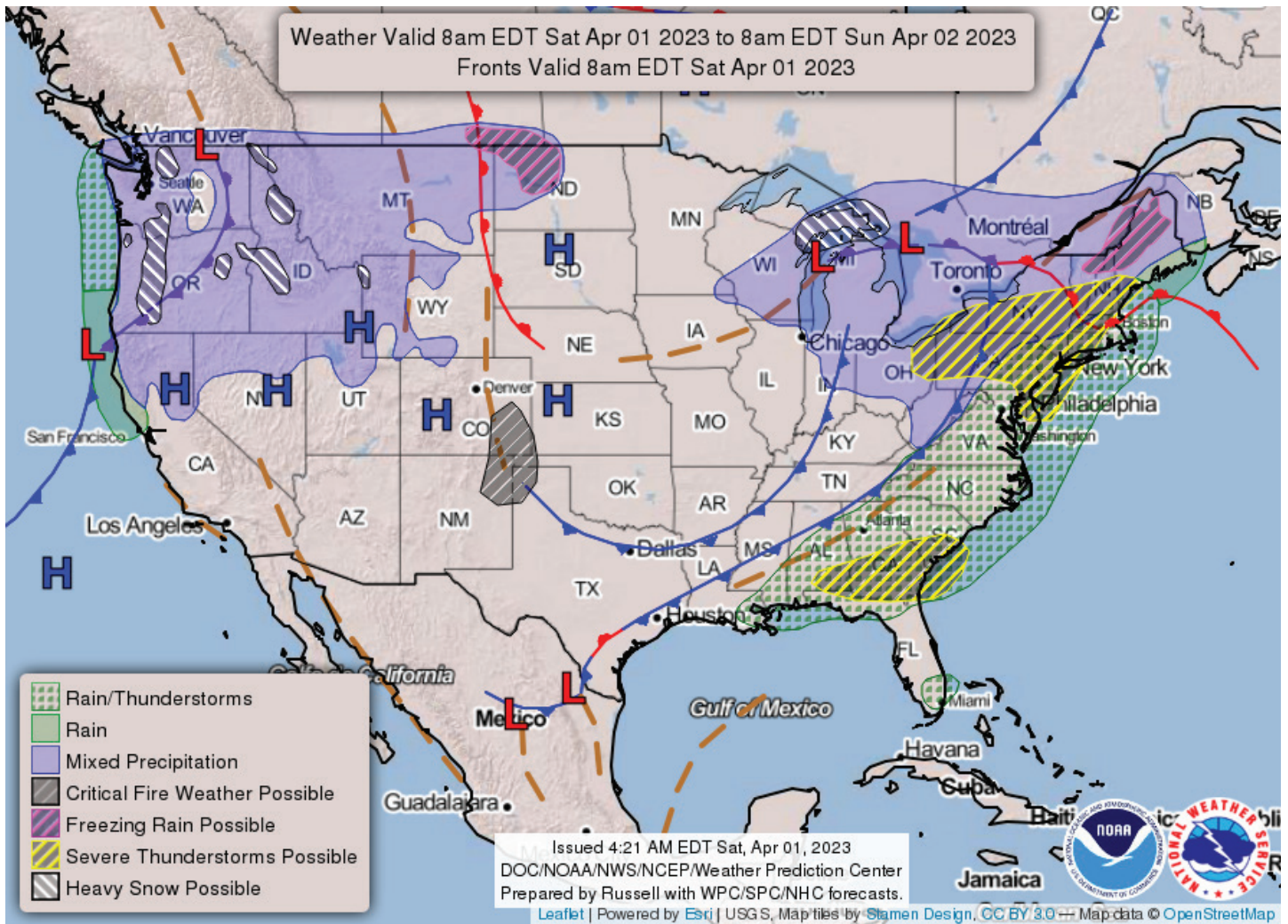
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 30 °F at 1:29 PM
Low Temp: 23 °F at 11:22 PM
Wind: 37 mph at 8:00 PM
Precip: : 0.00 (5" of Snow)

Day length: 12 hours, 50 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 80 in 1928
Record Low: 0 in 1899
Average High: 51
Average Low: 26
Average Precip in April.: 0.04
Precip to date in March.: 1.60
Average Precip to date: 2.10
Precip Year to Date: 3.18
Sunset Tonight: 8:01:33 PM
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:09:03 AM



Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, April 1, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 267 ~ 17 of 68

Today in Weather History

April 1, 1960: Heavy snow of 4 to 10 inches fell in the eastern half of South Dakota. Some highways were closed mainly due to the difficulty of plowing the heavy, wet snow. Power and phone failures of short duration were caused by the snowfall in the Aberdeen area, which received 7.5 inches, setting the record for April 1st. Snow with high water content aggravated floods that were currently in progress on the James, Vermillion and Big Sioux Rivers.

April 1, 2011: Snowmelt flooding in March continued across much of central and northeast South Dakota as the rest of the snowpack melted into early April. Many roads along with many acres of crop and pastureland remained flooded. Roads, culverts, and bridges were damaged across the region. Several roads were washed out with many closed. Many homes were threatened with some surrounded by water. Rising lake levels in northeast South Dakota also threatened and flooded many homes. Many people had to use four-wheelers to get to their homes. A Presidential Disaster was declared for all counties due to the flooding damage. The total damage estimates, including March, were from 4.5 to 5 million dollars for the area. The flooding diminished across much of the area into May. The snowmelt flooding damaged many roads and highways, including U.S. Highway 81, throughout Hamlin County. Many roads were closed throughout the county. In the late evening of April 13th on U.S Highway 81, a car with four people inside went through a flooded area at a high rate of speed and ended up in the flooded ditch. They all got out with no injuries. The snowmelt runoff caused Lake Kampeska to rise to nearly 44 inches overfull. The lake flooded several roads and also threatened many homes. Sandbagging was done to hold off the rising lake. Waves and ice chunks did eventually do some damage to homes. Also, many boat lifts were damaged. Mud Creek near Rauville also went slightly above the flood stage of 9 feet to 9.64 feet for a couple of days in early April.

1875: The London Times published the first daily newspaper weather map. The first American newspaper weather map would be issued on 5/12/1876 in the New York Herald. Weather maps would first appear on a regular basis beginning on 5/9/1879 in the New York Daily Graphic.

1912 - A tornado with incredible velocity ripped into downtown Houston, TX, breaking the water table and giving the city its first natural waterspout. (The Weather Channel)

1923 - Residents in the eastern U.S. awoke on "April Fool's Day" to bitterly cold temperatures. The mercury plunged to -34 degrees at Bergland MI and to 16 degrees in Georgia. (David Ludlum)

1960: The first weather satellite, TIROS 1 (Television and Infra-Red Observation Satellite) began sending pictures back to Earth. The TIROS series would have little benefit to operational weather forecasters because the image quality was low and inconsistent. The most critical understanding achieved from the new technology was the discovery of the high degree of organization of large-scale weather systems, a fact never apparent from ground and aircraft observations.

1973: A tornado touches down near Brentsville, Virginia, then traveled to Fairfax hitting Woodson High School. This F2 tornado injured 37 and caused \$14 million in damage.

1987 - Forty-five cities across the southeastern U.S. reported record low temperatures for the date. Lows of 37 degrees at Apalachicola FL, 34 degrees at Jacksonville FL, 30 degrees at Macon GA, and 22 degrees at Knoxville TN, were records for April. (The National Weather Summary)

1987 - A tornado touched down briefly during a snow squall on the south shore of White Fish Bay (six miles northwest of Bay Mills WI). A mobile home was unroofed and insulation was sucked from its walls. (The Weather Channel)

1988 - A powerful spring storm produced 34 inches of snow at Rye CO, 22 inches at Timpas OK, 19 inches at Sharon Springs KS, and up to 35 inches in New Mexico. Severe thunderstorms associated with the same storm spawned a tornado which caused 2.5 million dollars damage at East Mountain TX. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Up to six inches of snow blanketed the Adirondacks of eastern New York State and the Saint Lawrence Valley of Vermont. Up to a foot of snow blanketed the Colorado Rockies. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, April 1, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 267 ~ 18 of 68

Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

IT'S NOT ALL LOOKS

The pastor of a church in a rural community had been complaining about not feeling well for several months. His wife finally persuaded him to see the local doctor. Concerned that he would not explain all of the details of his illness, she decided to accompany him.

After his examination, the doctor asked her to accompany him into an adjacent room. After a moment he said, "I really don't like the way your husband looks."

After a few moments, she said, "I don't either." Then she continued in a hushed voice, "But he's a wonderful pastor, a great husband, and an excellent example for the children to follow."

What gracious compliments! There are not many who measure up to His standards. However, we as Christians are challenged to live lives that are examples. Paul said that we "must be an example to them by doing good deeds of every kind," and "to let everything we do reflect the integrity and seriousness of our teaching."

When we live according to God's standards, we will be examples for others to follow. If we live according to His instructions, we have the right to be heard when we speak, teach or talk. Additionally, we can provide counsel and comfort with certainty to those who are discouraged and in need if we are faithful to His Word. Are you an example of Him?

Prayer: Help us, Father, to live as an example of Your love, grace, and mercy by doing good deeds every moment of every day. May our lives imitate Your Son's! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: And you yourself must be an example to them by doing good works of every kind. Let everything you do reflect the integrity and seriousness of your teaching. Teach the truth so that your teaching can't be criticized. Then those who oppose us will be ashamed and have nothing bad to say about us. Titus 2:7-8



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

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, April 1, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 267 ~ 19 of 68

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
- 04/08/2023 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
- 04/08/2023 Lion's Club Easter Egg Hunt 10am Sharp at the City Park (Saturday a week before Easter)
- 04/22/2023 Firemen's Spring Social at the Fire Station 7pm-12:30am (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
- 04/23/2023 Princess Prom 4:30-8pm (Sunday after GHS Prom)
- 05/06/2023 Lion's Club Spring Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm (1st Saturday in May)
- 05/29/2023 Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services (Memorial Day)
- 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

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, April 1, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 267 ~ 20 of 68

The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

Subscription Form

All prices listed include 6.5% Sales Tax

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

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

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City _____

State, Zip Code _____

E-mail _____

Phone Number _____

Mail Completed Form to:

Groton Independent

P.O. Box 34

Groton, SD 57445-0034

or scan and email to paperpaul@grotonsd.net

Groton Daily Independent

www.397news.com

Subscription Form

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

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

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City _____

State, Zip Code _____

Phone Number _____

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

E-mail _____

Password _____

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

paypal.me/paperpaul



Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, April 1, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 267 ~ 21 of 68



WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:
03.31.23

16 26 27 42 61 23

MegaPlier: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$385,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
03.29.23

19 24 38 45 46 4

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$40,030,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 19 Mins 39
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
03.31.23

16 19 28 31 34 4

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 49 Mins 38
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
03.29.23

2 15 16 19 21

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$20,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 19 Mins 38
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
03.29.23

1 20 39 47 49 23

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 18 Mins 39
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
03.29.23

4 9 24 46 66 7

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$147,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 18 Mins 39
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the Associated Press

Tornadoes strike Arkansas, Illinois; 7 dead, dozens injured

By ANDREW DeMILLO Associated Press

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (AP) — A monster storm system tore through the South and Midwest on Friday, spawning deadly tornadoes that shredded homes and shopping centers in Arkansas, collapsed a theater roof during a heavy metal concert in Illinois and made a deadly sweep across the border into rural Indiana.

The storm caused three fatalities in Sullivan County, Indiana, Emergency Management Director Jim Pirtle said in an email to The Associated Press early Saturday. The storm damaged homes and some residents were missing in the county seat of Sullivan, located near the Illinois state line about 95 miles (152 kilometers) southwest of Indianapolis.

At least one person was killed and more than two dozen were hurt, some critically, in the Little Rock area, authorities said. The town of Wynne in northeastern Arkansas was also devastated, and officials reported two dead there, along with destroyed homes and people trapped in the debris.

Authorities said a theater roof collapsed during a tornado in Belvidere, Illinois, killing one person and injuring 28, five of them severely. The Belvidere Police Department said the collapse occurred as a heavy storm rolled through the area and that calls began coming from the theater at 7:48 p.m. It said that an initial assessment was that a tornado had caused the damage.

The collapse occurred at the Apollo Theatre during a heavy metal concert in the town located about 70 miles (113 kilometers) northwest of Chicago.

Belvidere Fire Department Chief Shawn Schadle said 260 people were in the venue. He said first responders also rescued someone from an elevator and had to grapple with downed power lines outside the theater.

Belvidere Police Chief Shane Woody described the scene after the collapse as "chaos, absolute chaos."

Gabrielle Lewellyn had just entered the theater when a portion of the ceiling collapsed.

"I was there within a minute before it came down," she told WTVO-TV. "The winds, when I was walking up to the building, it went like from zero to a thousand within five seconds."

Some people rushed to lift the collapsed portion of the ceiling and pull people out of the rubble, said Lewellyn, who wasn't hurt.

"They dragged someone out from the rubble and I sat with him and I held his hand and I was (telling him) 'It's going to be OK.' I didn't really know much else what to do."

There were more confirmed twisters in Iowa and wind-whipped grass fires blazed in Oklahoma, as the storm system threatened a broad swath of the country home to some 85 million people.

The destructive weather came as President Joe Biden toured the aftermath of a deadly tornado that struck in Mississippi one week ago and promised the government would help the area recover.

The Little Rock tornado tore first through neighborhoods in the western part of the city and shredded a small shopping center that included a Kroger grocery store. It then crossed the Arkansas River into North Little Rock and surrounding cities, where widespread damage was reported to homes, businesses and vehicles.

In the evening, officials in Pulaski County announced a confirmed fatality in North Little Rock but did not immediately give details.

Baptist Health Medical Center-Little Rock officials told KATV in the afternoon that 21 people had checked in there with tornado-caused injuries, including five in critical condition.

Mayor Frank Scott Jr., who announced that he was requesting assistance from the National Guard, tweeted in the evening that property damage was extensive and "we are still responding."

Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders activated 100 members of the Arkansas National Guard to help local authorities respond to the damage throughout the state.

In Little Rock, resident Niki Scott took cover in the bathroom after her husband called to say a tornado was headed her way. She could hear glass shattering as the tornado roared past, and emerged afterward

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, April 1, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 267 ~ 23 of 68

to find that her house was one of the few on her street that didn't have a tree fall on it.

"It's just like everyone says. It got really quiet, then it got really loud," Scott said afterward, as chainsaws roared and sirens blared in the area.

At Clinton National Airport, passengers and workers sheltered temporarily in bathrooms.

"Praying for all those who were and remain in the path of this storm," Sanders, who declared a state of emergency, said on Twitter.

About 50 miles (80 kilometers) west of Memphis, Tennessee, the small city of Wynne, Arkansas, saw widespread tornado damage, Sanders confirmed.

St. Francis County Coroner Miles J. Kimble told the AP by phone Friday night that he was assisting the Cross County coroner in Wynne and that two people died there in the tornado.

The governor at a briefing with Little Rock officials Friday night said it was possible the number of deaths could rise.

City Councilmember Lisa Powell Carter told AP that the town Wynne was without power and roads were full of debris.

"I'm in a panic trying to get home, but we can't get home," she said. "Wynne is so demolished. ... There's houses destroyed, trees down on streets."

The unrelenting tornadoes continued spawning and touching down in the area into the night.

The police department in Covington, Tennessee, said on Facebook that the west Tennessee city was impassable after power lines and trees fell on roads when the storm passed through Friday evening. Authorities in Tipton County, north of Memphis, said a tornado appeared to have touched down near the middle school in Covington and in other locations in the rural county.

Tipton County Sheriff Shannon Beasley said on Facebook that homes and structures were severely damaged.

Tornadoes moved through parts of eastern Iowa, with sporadic damage.

One tornado veered just west of Iowa City, home to the University of Iowa. Video from KCRG-TV showed toppled power poles and roofs ripped off an apartment building in the suburb of Coralville and significantly damaged homes in the city of Hills.

Nearly 90,000 customers in Arkansas lost power, according to poweroutage.us, which tracks outages.

In neighboring Oklahoma, wind gusts of up to 60 mph (96 kph) fueled fast-moving grass fires. People were urged to evacuate homes in far northeast Oklahoma City, and troopers shut down portions of Interstate 35.

In Illinois, Ben Wagner, chief radar operator for the Woodford County Emergency Management Agency, said hail broke windows on cars and buildings in the area of Roanoke, northeast of Peoria. More than 109,000 customers had lost power in the state as of Friday night.

More outages were reported in Iowa, Missouri, Tennessee, Wisconsin, Indiana and Texas.

Fire crews battled several blazes near El Dorado, Kansas, and some residents were asked to evacuate, including about 250 elementary school children who were relocated to a high school.

At Chicago's O'Hare International Airport, a traffic management program was put into effect that caused arriving planes to be delayed by nearly two hours on average, WFLD-TV reported.

The National Weather Service's Storm Prediction Center had forecast an unusually large outbreak of thunderstorms with the potential to cause hail, damaging wind gusts and strong tornadoes that could move for long distances over the ground.

Such "intense supercell thunderstorms" are only expected to become more common, especially in Southern states, as temperatures rise around the world.

The weather service is forecasting another batch of intense storms next Tuesday in the same general area as last week.

Associated Press writers Michael Tarm in Chicago, Jill Bleed in Little Rock, Harm Venhuizenin in Madison, Wisconsin, Isabella O'Malley in Philadelphia, Lisa Baumann in Bellingham, Washington, Adrian Sainz in Memphis, Michael Goldberg in Jackson, Mississippi, and Trisha Ahmed in Minneapolis contributed to this report.

Pope Francis leaves hospital; 'Still alive,' he quips

By FRANCES D'EMILIO Associated Press

ROME (AP) — Pope Francis was discharged on Saturday from the Rome hospital where he was treated for bronchitis, quipping to journalists before being driven away: "I'm still alive."

Francis, 86, was hospitalized on Wednesday at Gemelli Polyclinic after reportedly having breathing difficulties following his weekly public audience. The pontiff was treated with antibiotics administered intravenously, the Vatican said.

Before departing, Francis had an emotional moment with a Rome couple whose 5-year-old daughter died Friday night at the hospital. Serena Subania, mother of Angelica, sobbed as she pressed her head into the chest of the pope, who put a hand on the woman's head.

Francis seemed eager to linger with well-wishers. When a boy showed him his arm cast, the pope made a gesture as if to ask "Do you have a pen?" A papal aide handed Francis one, and the pope autographed the cast.

The pontiff answered in a voice that was close to a whisper when reporters peppered him with questions, indicating he did feel chest pain, a symptom that convinced his medical staff to take him to the hospital Wednesday.

Francis sat in the front seat of the white Fiat 500 car that drove him away from Gemelli Polyclinic. But instead of heading straight home, his motorcade sped right past Vatican City, according to an Associated Press photographer positioned outside the walled city-state.

The pope was apparently headed to a Rome basilica that is a favorite of his. After he was discharged from the same hospital in July 2021 following intestinal surgery, Francis stopped to offer prayers of thanksgiving at St. Mary Major Basilica in Rome, which is home to an icon depicting the Virgin Mary.

On Friday, Vatican officials said Francis would be at St. Peter's Square for Palm Sunday Mass to mark the start of Holy Week, which culminates on Easter, April 9.

Gregorio Borgia contributed reporting.

Clark, Iowa end perfect South Carolina season in Final Four

By DOUG FEINBERG AP Basketball Writer

DALLAS (AP) — Caitlin Clark tossed the ball high in the air as the clock ticked down, gave a huge shout-out to her adoring fans and then took off on a gleeful gallop around the court.

In the biggest matchup of her life, the dazzling point guard from Iowa had done it all -- poured in 41 points to set a record for the highest-scoring NCAA Tournament semifinal, ended the perfect season of South Carolina and, most importantly, put her Hawkeyes into the championship game.

Clark overwhelmed the reigning champions with another sensational show from start to finish, helping Iowa stop the Gamecocks' 42-game winning streak 77-73 on Friday night in the Final Four.

"We had nothing to lose. I have all the confidence in the world in this group, and they believe right back in me, and that's all you need," Clark said. "All we do is believe in one another and we love each other to death, and that's what a true team is. If you want an example of a team, that's what this is."

The spectacular junior became the first women's player to post back-to-back 40-point performances in the NCAA Tournament. She now has the Hawkeyes in a spot they've never been in before — one victory away from a national championship.

They'll have to beat another SEC team to do that as Iowa (31-6) will face LSU in the title game on Sunday afternoon. The Tigers beat Virginia Tech in the other national semifinal.

It's the Tigers' first appearance in the title game as Kim Mulkey became the second coach to take two different teams to the championship game.

"I love me some Caitlin Clark," Iowa coach Lisa Bluder said. "We've been talking about being mission-focused a lot this year, and we had a game plan and these guys executed so well. That is South Carolina

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, April 1, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 267 ~ 25 of 68

we just beat, folks. Amazing.”

Thanks to the riveting play of Clark and the historic year by South Carolina, this was one of the most talked about and highly anticipated matchups in women’s Final Four history,

The game lived up to the hype surrounding it—the best player vs. the best team — much to the delight of the sellout crowd of over 19,000 fans.

“Tonight showed how fun women’s basketball is,” Clark said. “I’m sure some people wished this was a series of seven games.”

Coach Dawn Staley and South Carolina (36-1) had kept on winning since taking last year’s title.

“I don’t think we felt pressure to win the game, we just didn’t perform,” Staley said. “And that hasn’t been us all season long.”

“I don’t think our players felt pressure, any other pressures besides wanting to win another basketball game,” he said.

This was Iowa’s first appearance in the Final Four in 30 years. The last time the Hawkeyes advanced this far was 1993 and C. Vivian Stringer was the coach of that team that lost to Ohio State in overtime.

Clark wowed the crowd that included Harper Stribe, a young fan of the team who has been battling cancer. She was featured in a surprise video that informed the Hawkeyes’ star that she was the AP Player of the Year.

Clark has created quite a stir since going to college in her home state. She led the nation in scoring twice and last weekend had a game for the ages, recording the first 40-point triple-double in NCAA history to lead the Hawkeyes to the Final Four.

Now she has them on the doorstep of more history.

Trailing 59-55 entering the fourth quarter, South Carolina scored the first five points to take the lead. Clark answered right back with two deep 3-pointers and an assist to Monika Czinano to give the Hawkeyes a 67-62 lead.

South Carolina got within 69-68 on Raven Johnson’s 3-pointer before Clark got a steal for a layup with 3:32 left. Neither team scored again until star Aliyah Boston was fouled with 1:37 left. She made the second of two free throws.

Clark then scored another layup on the other end out of a timeout to make it a four-point game. After a layup by Zia Cooke with 58 seconds left, the Hawkeyes ran the clock down with McKenna Warnock grabbing a huge offensive rebound off a Clark miss with 18 seconds remaining.

Clark hit two free throws after South Carolina fouled her with 13.5 seconds left. They were her 38th and 39th point, moving her past Nneka Ogwumike for the most in a Final Four semifinal game.

After a putback by Johnson with 9.9 seconds left got the Gamecocks within 75-73, Clark sealed the game with two more free throws.

The loss ended a tremendous season for the defending champion Gamecocks, who were trying to become the 10th team to go through a season unbeaten.

“It was physical. You’ve got to give them a lot of credit,” Clark said. “They’re a tremendous team, they’ve had a tremendous year, obviously so well-coached.”

Cooke led the Gamecocks with 24 points. Slowed by foul trouble, Boston had just eight points and 10 rebounds as the Hawkeyes packed the paint, brazenly daring South Carolina to shoot from the outside. The defense seemed to bamboozle the Gamecocks, who finished 4 for 20 from behind the 3-point line. They couldn’t take advantage of their 49-25 rebounding edge that included 26 offensive boards.

1,000-POINT CLUB

Clark became the sixth player to score over 1,000 points in a season. She joined former Hawkeyes star Megan Gustafson, breaking her school mark of 1,001. Villanova’s Maddy Siegrist also did reach that milestone this season. Kelsey Plum, Jackie Stiles and Odyssey Sims were the others to do it.

More AP coverage of March Madness: <https://apnews.com/hub/march-madness> and <https://apnews.com/hub/womens-college-basketball> and https://twitter.com/AP_Top25

NBA, players reach deal for a new labor agreement

By TIM REYNOLDS AP Basketball Writer

The NBA will have labor peace for years to come.

The league and its players came to an agreement early Saturday on a new seven-year collective bargaining agreement, the NBA announced. It is still pending ratification, though that process is almost certainly no more than a formality.

The deal will begin this summer and will last at least through the 2028-29 season. Either side can opt out then; otherwise, it will last through 2029-30.

Among the details, per a person familiar with the negotiations who spoke to The Associated Press: the in-season tournament that Commissioner Adam Silver has wanted for years will become reality, and players will have to appear in at least 65 games in order to be eligible for the top individual awards such as Most Valuable Player. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because neither the league nor the National Basketball Players Association released specifics publicly.

Another new part of the CBA will be a second luxury tax level that, when reached, will keep teams from using their midlevel exception to sign players. That was a clear compromise, given how some teams wanted the so-called "upper spending limit" that would have essentially installed an absolute ceiling on what can be spent each season and help balance the playing field between the teams that are willing to pay enormous tax bills and those who aren't.

Not in the CBA is a change to the policy that would allow high school players to enter the NBA draft. It was discussed and has been an agenda item for months, but it won't be changing anytime soon — probably not for at least the term of the next CBA.

"We also appreciate that there is a lot of benefit to really having veterans who can bring those 18-year-olds along," NBPA executive director Tamika Tremaglio said in February during an NBPA news conference at All-Star weekend. "And so, certainly anything that we would even consider, to be quite honest, would have to include a component that would allow veterans to be a part of it as well."

Silver said Wednesday, at the conclusion of a two-day Board of Governors meeting, that he was hopeful of getting a deal done by the weekend. He also said there had been no consideration — at least on the league's part — of pushing the opt-out date back for a third time.

The current CBA, which took effect July 1, 2017, came with a mutual option for either the NBA or the NBPA to opt out after six seasons — June 30 of this year. The sides originally had a Dec. 15 deadline to announce an intention to exercise the opt-out, then pushed it back to Feb. 8, then to Friday.

The league and the union continued talking after the midnight opt-out deadline passed, and a deal was announced nearly three hours later.

The agreement doesn't end the process, though it's obviously a huge step forward.

The owners will have to vote on what the negotiators have hammered out, and the players will have to vote to approve the deal as well. Then comes the actual writing of the document — the most recent CBA checked in at around 600 pages containing nearly 5,000 paragraphs and 200,000 words. Much of it will be the same; much of it will need revising.

AP NBA: <https://apnews.com/hub/NBA> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

Credit Suisse takeover hits heart of Swiss banking, identity

By JAMEY KEATEN Associated Press

GENEVA (AP) — The UBS takeover of embattled rival Credit Suisse has shaken Switzerland's self-image and dented its reputation as a global financial center, analysts say, warning that the country's prosperity could grow too dependent on a single banking behemoth.

The uncertain future of a union of Switzerland's two global banks comes at a thorny time for Swiss

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, April 1, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 267 ~ 27 of 68

identity, built nearly as much on a self-image of finesse in finance as on know-how with chocolate, watch-making and cheese.

Regulators who helped orchestrate the \$3.25 billion deal have a lot on their plates as UBS checks the books of its rival, cherry-picks the parts it wants and dispenses with the rest.

"The real question is what's going to happen, because we'll now have a mastodon — a monster — that will be increasingly too big to fail," said Marc Chesney, a finance professor at the University of Zurich. "The danger is that over time, it will take more risks knowing that it is too big for the Swiss state to abandon it."

After studying the numbers, he said, the total value of exotic securities — like options or future contracts — held by the merged bank could be worth 40 times Switzerland's economic output.

"Over time, UBS will control the Swiss state, rather than the other way around," Chesney said.

The neutral, prosperous country of about 8.5 million people enjoys the highest gross domestic product per capita of any country its size. Switzerland's relatively low-tax and pro-privacy environment draws well-heeled expats, and it regularly ranks among the most innovative countries. Over generations, it has become a global hub for wealth management, private banking and commodities trading.

That climate also has bred a reputation as a secret haven of billions in ill-gotten or laundered money, with the Tax Justice Network ranking Switzerland second only to the U.S. in financial secrecy.

That was on display this week when a U.S. Senate committee's two-year investigation found that Credit Suisse violated a plea agreement with U.S. authorities by failing to report secret offshore accounts that wealthy Americans used to avoid paying taxes.

Such turmoil at the Switzerland's second-largest bank, which also includes hedge fund losses and fines for failing to prevent money laundering by a Bulgarian cocaine ring, made it vulnerable as U.S. bank collapses stirred market upheaval this month.

Now, many conservatives are reviving their calls for Switzerland to turn inward.

Christoph Blocher, a former government minister and power broker of the right-wing Swiss People's Party, blasted the Credit Suisse-UBS deal as "very, very dangerous, not just for Switzerland or the United States, but the entire world."

"This has to stop," he told French-language public broadcaster RTS. "Swiss banks must remain Swiss and keep their operations in Switzerland."

If Switzerland wants to be a strong financial center, it needs a strong globally significant bank, said Sergio Ermotti, who was CEO at UBS for nine years and will return to help shepherd the takeover.

"For me, the debate nowadays is not 'too big to fail' — it's rather 'too small to survive,'" Ermotti said at a news conference this week. "And we want to be a winner out of this."

Gregoire Bordier, scion of an illustrious Geneva banking family who chairs the Association of Swiss Private Banks, played down the size of the merged institution, estimating that it would have roughly the same weight in Switzerland as Dutch giant ING does relative to the Netherlands' economic output.

"Rather than arranging the dissection of the last great 'universal bank' in this country — and let rival finance companies benefit — it's above all necessary to roll out much greater control measures for the new UBS," Bordier told the Tribune de Geneve newspaper.

Still, he acknowledged that the combined entity's potential importance within Switzerland was "another question," saying he reacted to the banks' shotgun marriage, announced on prime-time TV, as if watching "a bad soap opera."

Critics say the federal government was asleep at the wheel and hadn't learned from the 2008 global financial crisis.

Blocher's protégé, Ueli Maurer — who was finance minister until stepping down in December — championed a hands-off approach to banks like Credit Suisse to let them sort out their own troubles.

The Credit Suisse rescue is a stain on regulators and the idea that putting money into a Swiss bank means it's "rock solid and safe," overseen by the world's best financial managers, said Octavio Marenzi, CEO of consulting firm Opimas LLC.

"That reputation has gone up in smoke, and it's very hard to regain that reputation," Marenzi said. "Unfortunately, a reputation that you built up over years and decades and maybe even centuries, you can

destroy really quickly.”

Beyond banking, Switzerland’s image has been unsteady recently, generating debate ahead of parliamentary elections in October.

A web of bilateral deals with the European Union, Switzerland’s biggest trading partner, are clouded under a standoff with Brussels. The country’s constitutionally enshrined commitment to “neutrality” has angered Western nations that are blocked from shipping Swiss-made arms to Ukraine so it can fight Russia.

Swiss diplomats, who have been intermediaries between Iran and Saudi Arabia since the countries broke off ties in 2016, were absent as China brokered an agreement this month to restore relations between the Mideast rivals.

Scott Miller, the U.S. ambassador to Switzerland who is a former UBS executive in Colorado, upshifted the debate about how the European country interprets its idea of neutrality.

Miller told the Neue Zuercher Zeitung newspaper this month that Switzerland was facing its “biggest crisis since the Second World War” and urged the Swiss to do more to help Ukraine defend itself — or at least not block others from doing so.

Before the bank marriage was engineered on March 19, Credit Suisse was hemorrhaging deposits, shareholders were dumping its stock and creditors were rushing to seek repayment.

Since then, some smaller Swiss banks have reported an influx of deposits from Credit Suisse customers. Staffers face the prospect of sweeping job cuts, though details may take weeks or months to iron out.

The fallout is far from over.

A special session of Parliament next month is expected to discuss the takeover, including “too big to fail” legislation and possible penalties against Credit Suisse managers.

Sascha Steffen, a professor of finance at Germany’s Frankfurt School of Finance & Management, said “having such a huge bank isn’t necessarily bad,” pointing to efficiencies.

But creating a behemoth could make it harder for small businesses to get credit. The way the takeover was done — using emergency measures to tweak Swiss law and shucking the bondholder-shareholder pecking order on losses — has unsettled investors.

“The false marriage that was initiated by the government was something markets don’t really like, particularly when there was no involvement of other stakeholders whatsoever,” Steffen said.

“The attractiveness as a place to invest is definitely damaged,” he said.

AP Business Writers David McHugh in Frankfurt, Germany, and Courtney Bonnell in London contributed.

Russia-Ukraine war: Will there be a spring counteroffensive?

By BARRY HATTON Associated Press

Europe’s biggest armed conflict since World War II is poised to enter a new phase in the coming weeks.

With no suggestion of a negotiated end to the 13 months of fighting between Russia and Ukraine, the Ukrainian defense minister said last week that a spring counteroffensive could begin as soon as April.

Kyiv faces a key tactical question: How can the Ukrainian military dislodge Kremlin forces from land they are occupying? Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is working hard to keep his troops, and the general public, motivated for a long fight.

Here’s a look at how the fighting has evolved and how the spring campaign might unfold:

HOW DID THE WAR GET HERE?

Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24 2022, but its attacks fell short of some main targets and lost momentum by July. Ukrainian counteroffensives took back large areas from August through November.

Then the fighting got bogged down in attritional warfare during the bitter winter and into the muddy, early spring thaw.

Now, Kyiv can take advantage of improved weather to seize the battlefield initiative with new batches of Western weapons, including scores of tanks, and fresh troops trained in the West.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, April 1, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 267 ~ 29 of 68

But Russian forces are dug in deep, lying in wait behind minefields and along kilometers (miles) of trenches. HOW HAS RUSSIA FARED SO FAR?

The war has exposed embarrassing shortcomings in the Kremlin's military prowess.

The battlefield setbacks include Russia's failure to reach Kyiv in the early days of the invasion, its inability to hold some areas and its failure to take the devastated eastern city of Bakhmut despite seven months of fighting. Attempts to break the Ukrainian will to fight, such as relentlessly striking the country's power grid, have failed too.

Moscow's intelligence services badly misjudged Ukraine's resolve and the West's response. The invasion also depleted Russian military resources, triggering difficulties with ammunition supplies, morale and troop numbers.

Russian President Vladimir Putin, apparently concerned that the war could erode public support for his government, has avoided an all-out push for victory through a mandatory mass mobilization.

"The Russians have no end of problems," said James Nixey, director of the Russia and Eurasia program at Chatham House, a think tank in London.

Realizing he cannot win the war any time soon, Putin aims to hunker down and drag out the fighting in the hope that Western support for Kyiv eventually frays, Nixey said.

Russia's strategy is designed around "getting the West to crumble," he said.

WHAT'S NEXT FOR THE UKRAINIANS?

The Ukrainian military starts the season with an influx of powerful weapons.

Germany said this week that it had delivered the 18 Leopard 2 tanks it promised to Ukraine. Poland, Canada and Norway have also handed over their pledged Leopard tanks. British Challenger tanks have arrived too.

Ukraine's defense minister, Oleksii Reznikov, has said he's hopeful Western partners will supply at least two battalions of the German-made Leopard 2s by April. He also expects six or seven battalions of Leopard 1 tanks, with ammunition, from a coalition of countries.

Also pledged are U.S. Abrams tanks and French light tanks, along with Ukraine soldiers recently trained in their use.

The Western help has been vital in strengthening Ukraine's dogged resistance and shaping the course of the war. Zelenskyy recognizes that without U.S. help, his country has no chance to prevail.

The new supplies, including howitzers, anti-tank weapons and 1 million rounds of artillery ammunition, will add more muscle to the Ukraine military and give it a bigger punch.

"Sheer numbers of tanks can drive a deeper wedge into Russian holding positions," Nixey said.

In their counteroffensive, Ukrainian forces will look to break through the land corridor between Russia and the annexed Crimean peninsula, moving from Zaporizhzhia toward Melitopol and the Azov Sea, according to Ukrainian military analyst Oleh Zhdanov.

If successful, the Ukrainians "will split the Russian troops into two halves and cut off supply lines to the units that are located further to the west, in the direction of Crimea," Zhdanov said.

WHAT MIGHT THE END GAME BE?

The Institute for the Study of War, a Washington-based think tank, reckons that Ukraine will need to launch a series of counteroffensives, not just one, to get the upper hand.

The operations would have "the twin aims of persuading Putin to accept a negotiated compromise or of creating military realities sufficiently favorable to Ukraine that Kyiv and its Western allies can then effectively freeze the conflict on their own regardless of Putin's decisions," the institute said in an assessment published this week.

Nixey has no doubt that each side will keep "tearing chunks out of each other" over the coming months in the hope of gaining an advantage at the negotiating table.

A make-or-break period may lie ahead: If Kyiv fails to make progress on the battlefield with its Western-supplied weapons, allies may become reluctant to send it more of the expensive hardware.

The stakes are high: Defeat for Ukraine would "have global ramifications, and there will be no such thing as European security as we (currently) understand it," Nixey said.

Associated Press Writer Yuras Karmanau in Tallinn, Estonia, contributed to this report.

Follow AP's coverage of the war in Ukraine at <https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine>

TikTok attorney: China can't get U.S. data under plan

By HALELUYA HADERO undefined

SAULSALITO, Calif. (AP) — Under intense scrutiny from Washington that could lead to a potential ban, the top attorney for TikTok and its Chinese parent company ByteDance defended the social media platform's plan to safeguard U.S. user data from China.

"The basic approach that we're following is to make it physically impossible for any government, including the Chinese government, to get access to U.S. user data," said general counsel Erich Andersen during a wide-ranging interview with The Associated Press at a cybersecurity conference in Sausalito, California, on Friday sponsored by the Hewlett Foundation and Aspen Digital and featuring top government officials, tech executives and journalists.

ByteDance will continue to develop its new app called Lemon8, Andersen said.

"We're obviously going to do our best with the Lemon8 app to comply with U.S. law and to make sure we do the right thing here," Andersen said, referring to the new social app developed by ByteDance that resembles Instagram and Pinterest. "But I think we got a long way to go with that application — it's pretty much a startup phase."

ByteDance's most known app, TikTok, is under intense scrutiny over concerns it could hand over user data to the Chinese government or push pro-Beijing propaganda and misinformation on its behalf. Lemon8 was introduced across app stores in Japan in April 2020 and has been rolled out in more countries since then. It's available for download in the U.S. and could face similar scrutiny to TikTok.

Leaders at the FBI, CIA and officials at other government agencies have warned that ByteDance could be forced to give user data — such as browsing history, IP addresses and biometric identifiers — to Beijing under a 2017 law that compels companies to cooperate with the government for matters involving China's national security. Another Chinese law, implemented in 2014, has similar mandates.

To assuage concerns from U.S. officials, TikTok has been emphasizing a \$1.5 billion proposal, called Project Texas, to store all U.S. user data on servers owned and maintained by the software giant Oracle. Under the plan, access to U.S. data would be managed by U.S. employees through a separate entity called TikTok U.S. Data Security, which is run independently of ByteDance and monitored by outside observers.

Some lawmakers have said that's not enough. But despite skepticism about the project, TikTok says it is moving forward anyway.

"We're investing in a system where people don't have to believe the Chinese government and they don't have to believe us," Andersen said.

He also wondered if the skepticism was being driven by something else.

"Where are we falling short here?" he said. "At some point you get beyond the cybersecurity risk assessment, etcetera, and you get to 'We don't like your nationality.'"

TikTok CEO Shou Zi Chew has said the company started deleting all historic U.S. user data from non-Oracle servers this month and expects that process to be completed this year. During a congressional hearing held last week, Chew said migrating the data to Oracle will keep it out of China's hands, but also acknowledged China-based employees may still have access to it before the process wraps up.

TikTok maintains it has never been requested to turn over any kind of data and won't do so if asked. But whether those promises, or Project Texas, will allow it to stay operating in the U.S. remains to be seen.

The U.S., as well as Britain, the European Union and others, have banned TikTok on government devices. And the Biden administration is reportedly threatening a U.S. ban on the app unless its Chinese owners divest their stakes in the company.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, April 1, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 267 ~ 31 of 68

On Friday, Andersen said a ban would be "basically giving up".

"Banning a platform like TikTok is a defeat, it's a statement that we aren't creative enough to find another way," he said.

China has said it would oppose a possible sale, a declaration that makes it more difficult for TikTok to position itself and ByteDance as a global enterprise instead of a Chinese company. In 2020, the country had also come out in fierce opposition to executive orders by then President Donald Trump that sought to ban TikTok and the messaging app WeChat.

"They were clear about their point of view back in 2020 timeframe when we faced an existential challenge from executive orders under the Trump administration," Andersen said.

Courts blocked Trump's efforts, and President Joe Biden rescinded Trump's orders after taking office. The company has since been in talks about privacy concerns with the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States, a multi-agency panel that sits under the Treasury department.

Meanwhile, lawmakers on Capitol Hill have been pushing bills that would effectively ban TikTok or give the administration more authority to do so. One bill by U.S. Sen. Josh Hawley was blocked this week by Sen. Rand Paul, the only Republican who has come out in opposition to a TikTok ban. A small number of progressive lawmakers have also said they would oppose a ban, and argued the U.S. should implement a national privacy law to curtail the problem.

Andersen said Friday TikTok would support broad-based privacy legislation.

"Our view is that we would really welcome broad-based legislation that applies broadly and evenly," he said. "What we don't like, frankly, is legislation that is sort of targeted at one company."

TikTok could also be banned through another bill, called the RESTRICT Act, that has garnered broad bipartisan support in the Senate and backing from the White House. The legislation does not call out TikTok but would give the Commerce Department power to review and potentially restrict foreign threats to technology platforms.

This story has been updated to change Hewlett-Packard Foundation to Hewlett Foundation.

Trump indictment ends decades of perceived invincibility

By JILL COLVIN Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — When Donald Trump steps before a judge next week to be arraigned in a New York courtroom, it will not only mark the first time a former U.S. president has faced criminal charges. It will also represent a reckoning for a man long nicknamed "Teflon Don," who until now has managed to skirt serious legal jeopardy despite 40 years of legal scrutiny.

Trump, who is the early frontrunner for the Republican presidential nomination, is expected to turn himself in Tuesday. He faces charges including at least one felony offense related to hush money payments to women during his 2016 campaign. Like any other person facing trial, he will be booked, fingerprinted and photographed before being given the chance to enter a plea.

The spectacle that is sure to unfold will mark an unprecedented moment in American history that will demonstrate once again how dramatically Trump — who already held the distinction of being the first president to be impeached twice — has upended democratic norms. But on a personal level, the indictment pierces the cloak of invincibility that seemed to follow Trump through his decades in business and in politics, as he faced allegations of fraud, collusion and sexual misconduct.

"Boy, after all this time it's a bit of a shock," Trump biographer Michael D'Antonio said of the indictment. "You know I always thought of him as the Gingerbread Man, shouting, 'You can't catch me!' as he ran away."

"Given his track record," he said, "I had trouble imagining he would ever be held accountable."

"These are not things that Donald Trump ever thought in his entire life, nor I, for that matter, that he would ever be confronted with," Michael Cohen, Trump's longtime fixer and a key witness in the case who served jail time for the payments, told CNN.

Of course, some of the celebration by Trump's detractors may be premature. The former president

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, April 1, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 267 ~ 32 of 68

could seek to have a judge quickly dismiss the case. And even if it moves forward, there's no guarantee of conviction. Intensifying investigations in Atlanta and Washington are seen as potentially more serious legal threats.

Still, Trump and his team were caught by surprise when word of the New York indictment broke Thursday evening, following news reports that the grand jury hearing the case was set for a weeks-long hiatus. As the deliberations dragged on, some in Trump's orbit had become convinced that the case had stalled and that charges might never be brought. That included Trump attorney Joe Tacopina, who said Friday morning he had hoped the "rule of law would prevail."

Trump, he said on the "Today" show, was "initially was shocked" by news of the charges, but quickly pivoted to his usual pushback playbook.

"After he got over that," he said, Trump "put a notch on his belt and he decided we have to fight now. And he got into a typical Donald Trump posture where he's ready to be combative on something that he believes is an injustice. ... I think he's now in the posture that he's ready to fight this."

In the meantime, Trump and his team have tried to use the news to his advantage, hoping to energize his loyal base by painting the investigation as part of a larger plot to derail his candidacy.

Already, the charges have been a boon to his struggling fundraising. The campaign announced Friday evening that it had raised over \$4 million in the 24 hours after the indictment became public, far smashing its previous record after the FBI search of Trump's Mar-a-Lago club.

More than 25% of donations, according to the campaign, came from first-time donors. The average contribution: \$34.

His campaign also continued to blast out supportive statements from dozens of top Republicans who have rallied behind Trump, including several of his declared and likely challengers, underscoring his continued hold on the party. Trump has been in contact by phone with key congressional allies, including members of House leadership and top committees, according to people familiar with the conversations, who, like others, spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the response.

Trump ally Rep. Jim Banks, R-Ind., who formally endorsed the former president Friday, said Trump "doesn't back down" and was going to "fight back," telling a local radio show it was "yet another chapter where Donald Trump is going to come back on top in the end."

The media maelstrom has catapulted the former president back into the spotlight he craves, at least temporarily limiting attention being paid to his rivals, including Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, who is widely expected to challenge Trump for the nomination, and has been holding events across the county to promote his book.

Trump aides have been discussing other ideas to maximize the situation, including the possibility of holding a press event either before or after the arraignment. Trump is expected to travel from Florida to New York on Monday and stay overnight at Trump Tower in Lower Manhattan before heading to the courthouse early Tuesday. He will then return to Florida after the arraignment.

Trump has long denied that he had a sexual encounter with the porn actor known as Stormy Daniels and has blasted Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg for pursuing the years-old case.

Trump is also facing continued investigations in Georgia, over his efforts to overturn the results of the 2020 election, and in Washington, where a special counsel is probing the events of Jan. 6, 2021, as well as Trump's handling of classified documents at Mar-a-Lago and potential obstruction of the investigation.

But Sam Nunberg, a longtime former aide who broke with Trump years ago, said that while he no longer supports Trump, he believes the Manhattan case is "a waste of time," given the allegations, which remain under seal. And he said he was skeptical it would ultimately matter.

"It doesn't surprise me," he said of the indictment. "What would surprise me is if he actually ended up behind bars in prison and I don't see that happening."

D'Antonio said that sentiment — and a continued belief that Trump will somehow prevail and dodge the charges — continues among the many people who have reached out to him in the last 24 hours, despite the charges.

"They're like, he's going to get away with it," he said. "Somehow, he's going to get it thrown out."

Intensity and insults rise as lawmakers debate debt ceiling

By KEVIN FREKING Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Fights over increasing the nation's borrowing authority have been contentious in Congress, yet follow a familiar pattern: Time and again, lawmakers found a way to step back from the brink before markets began to panic and the nation risked a dangerous default on its debt.

But this year's fight has a different feel, some lawmakers say.

A new Republican majority in the House is itching for a spending showdown, and determined not to yield. They blame what they view as excessive federal spending for higher food and gasoline prices and the growing national debt. Led by Speaker Kevin McCarthy, they have ruled out passing a "clean" debt ceiling increase even as the White House insists such legislation be passed without conditions. It's an impasse that shows no signs of easing ahead of this summer's deadline for action.

"Very worried. Very worried," was how Rep. Patrick McHenry, R-N.C., a close McCarthy ally, described his outlook. "And frankly, I don't see how we get there at this point. There's no process set up, there's no dialogue, there's no discussion."

The political conditions are comparable to 2011, when a new Republican majority swept into power after a resounding election win and was determined to confront a Democratic White House and extract major spending cuts in return for a debt limit increase.

To resolve that stalemate, Congress passed and President Barack Obama signed the Budget Control Act. The bill temporarily allowed borrowing to resume, set new spending limits and created a bipartisan "supercommittee" to recommend at least \$1.2 trillion more in deficit reduction over 10 years. Republicans and Democrats on the panel failed to compromise, however, triggering automatic reductions in spending.

But some damage was done. Standard & Poor's Ratings Services downgraded U.S. debt for the first time that year because it lacked confidence political leaders would make the choices needed to avert a long-term fiscal crisis.

In 2013, Obama took a different tack. He made clear early on there would be no negotiations on must-pass legislation to prevent a U.S. default, and he never wavered.

A partial government shutdown, which began Oct. 1, swiftly coincided with the prospects of a default. On Oct. 16, Congress passed legislation to end the twin threats and GOP lawmakers who demanded to roll back Obama's signature health care law got nothing for their efforts. "We fought the good fight. We just didn't win," conceded then-House Speaker John Boehner.

Republicans say they are determined that Biden, who was Obama's vice president during both of those debt ceiling battles, will have to follow the path set in 2011 — not the one set in 2013.

"President Biden is not President Obama, right?" said Rep. Scott Perry, R-Pa., the leader of the hard-right House Freedom Caucus. "His poll numbers are in the tank and they're going to keep going down."

The result, Perry said, is that Biden doesn't have the political standing to ignore House Republicans.

"Look, there's gonna be shrapnel all around, right. Right?" Perry said. "Everybody might take some wounds from it, but he's not walking out of this thing unscathed."

After a tumultuous start to the new Congress in which Republicans struggled to elect a speaker, they are taking great pains to show unity. Moderates and conservatives in the House are adamant: Biden must engage.

"Any damage in Treasury markets and the bond market, to the economy, will fall at the feet of the president of the United States because he's the one that started this entire saga saying he wanted no negotiations," said Rep. Byron Donalds, R-Fla.

"He's got to meet us partway," added Rep. Don Bacon, R-Neb.

Democratic Rep. Gerry Connolly of Virginia said what concerns him most is that some Republicans believe the damage from a federal default is manageable, rather than to be avoided at all costs.

"Some of these people are substituting belief for empirical evidence and don't accept the warnings of

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, April 1, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 267 ~ 34 of 68

economists, Wall Street, Janet Yellen," Connolly said.

Breaching the debt ceiling is different than a federal government shutdown. The government can continue to operate once the Treasury has exhausted its cash-on-hand. But outgoing payments would be limited to incoming revenue. Not all payments could be made on time and in full. Many fear such an event would shake the foundations of the global financial system.

Some lawmakers don't believe the consequences would be that devastating. Rep. Bob Good, R-Va., said breaching the debt limit without an agreement to increase it would force "prioritization of our spending."

"I'm not afraid of that, quite frankly," Good said.

Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen has said the government may be unable to pay all its bills as soon as June. Mark Zandi, chief economist at Moody's Analytics, told a House panel this week the so-called X Day is likely to occur in mid-August. He said market pressures will likely build after Congress returns from its July 4th recess.

"As we can see from recent events given the banking crisis, the system is very fragile at this point in time," Zandi said. "Adding the debt limit as an issue for investors would be particularly inopportune."

He said there would be immediate and long-term consequences from a default.

"I think under any scenario, we would go into recession, it would be severe, financial markets would be upended," Zandi said.

In the Senate, Democratic Sen. Joe Manchin of West Virginia is encouraging negotiations. "I think Kevin McCarthy has been most reasonable," he said.

GOP leadership in the Senate has also voiced support for McCarthy's efforts. But some Senate Republicans say spending fights should be relegated to the annual spending bills that Congress passes to fund government agencies. An increase in the debt limit doesn't authorize new federal spending — it only allows borrowing to pay for what Congress has already approved.

"Look, if we have disagreements on spending, and if we have to close government to resolve things, so be it, but threatening a collapse of the U.S. and world economy without raising the debt ceiling is, in my opinion, a weapon that is too severe," said Sen. Mitt Romney, R-Utah.

There have been roughly 80 deals to raise or suspend the borrowing cap since the 1960s. Romney noted that the debt ceiling was extended, with the help of Democrats, multiple times during Donald Trump's presidency.

"Of course, last time you had President Trump as the individual pushing to raise the debt ceiling, but somehow when we have a Democratic president, we find religion," Romney said.

The focus on the debt limit, now at about \$31.4 trillion, intensified this week with McCarthy sending a letter to Biden warning that his position of not negotiating "could prevent America from meeting its obligations and hold dire ramifications for the entire nation."

In a formal response, Biden signaled that he would not be willing to meet directly with the speaker until House Republicans released their own budget plan, which he asked McCarthy to do before lawmakers left Washington on Thursday for the Easter recess.

"As I have repeatedly said, that conversation must be separate from prompt action on the Congress' basic obligation to pay the Nation's bills and avoid economic catastrophe," Biden wrote.

The letters did not appear to generate any progress or good will. Republicans left town without proposing a budget. And McCarthy accused Biden on Thursday of making the decision to put the economy in jeopardy, while seemingly making a crack about the president's age.

"I don't know what more I can do and how easy. I would bring the lunch to the White House. I would make it soft food if that's what he wants," McCarthy said, prompting laughter from other Republicans in the room.

Associated Press staff writer Stephen Groves contributed to this report.

Harris seeks billions for climate resilience in Africa

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, April 1, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 267 ~ 35 of 68

By CHRIS MEGERIAN Associated Press

LUSAKA, Zambia (AP) — Vice President Kamala Harris is pushing for \$7 billion in private-sector investments to help Africa prepare for the effects of climate change.

The announcement comes as she wraps up her weeklong trip to the continent on Saturday. Harris plans to visit a farm outside Lusaka where workers are using new techniques and technology to grow more produce, part of her effort to demonstrate ways to secure food supplies despite global warming.

"The United States is committed to these types of innovative solutions to support climate adaptation, mitigation and resilience," she said Friday during a press conference with Zambian President Hakainde Hichilema.

The \$7 billion announcement is the biggest-ticket item that Harris has unveiled during her trip, but more work will be needed to follow through.

For example, African Parks, a nonprofit group, has committed to raise \$1.25 billion over the next 7 years in order to expand its conservation program. Another organization, One Acre Fund, plans to raise \$100 million to plant 1 billion trees by the end of the decade.

The politics of climate change are complicated in Africa, which has contributed far less to overall greenhouse gas emissions than richer corners of the world like the United States. According to the International Energy Agency, 43% of Africans didn't have access to electricity in 2021, and recent outages have sparked frustration.

In Ghana, she was questioned at a press conference about how the West can demand that Africa go green and forgo using its natural resources. And she was pressed on whether wealthy nations would supply \$100 billion annually to help poor countries cope with climate change, a commitment made under the Paris climate accord.

Harris allowed that it is "critically important that, as global leaders, we all speak truth about the disparities that exist in terms of cause and effect and that we address those disparities." And she said there were opportunities in the "clean energy economy" that could help generate growth in Africa.

As for the money, President Joe Biden has requested \$11 billion in his proposed budget to meet commitments in the Paris accord.

"We are waiting for Congress to do its work," Harris said.

Mulkey, LSU women rally in Final Four, reach 1st title game

By STEPHEN HAWKINS AP Sports Writer

DALLAS (AP) — Kim Mulkey is back in another national championship game, this time taking the flagship university from her home state there for the first time.

It took LSU only two seasons to get there with the feisty and flamboyantly dressed coach, and a big comeback in the national semifinal game that was quite an undercard Friday night.

Alexis Morris scored 27 points and had two of her misses in the fourth quarter turned into putback baskets by Angel Reese in a big run as LSU rallied to beat top-seeded Virginia Tech 79-72 in the first semifinal game.

"I'm never satisfied. I'm super-excited that we won, but I'm hungry," said Morris, who jumped on a court-side table and fired up LSU fans after the game. "Like, I'm greedy. I want to win it all so I can complete the story."

Reese finished with 24 points and 12 rebounds for LSU (33-2), which will play in the national title game Sunday against fellow AP All-American Caitlin Clark and Iowa (31-6), which beat previously undefeated South Carolina 77-73 in their highly anticipated matchup and prevented an all-Southeastern Conference final.

"It's like a dream. It still hasn't hit me that I'm at the Final Four," said Reese, the transfer from Maryland who carries the nickname, "Bayou Barbie." "I'm just not even believing this right now. It's crazy how much my life has changed in one year."

Mulkey — in a carnation pink top this time — won three national titles in four Final Four appearances over her 21 seasons at Baylor. She is only the second coach to take two different teams to the national championship game. The other is C. Vivian Stringer, who did it with Cheyney in the inaugural 1982 women's

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, April 1, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 267 ~ 36 of 68

tournament and Rutgers in 2007.

"I came home for lots of reasons," Mulkey said. "One, to some day hang a championship banner in the PMAC (Pete Maravich Assembly Center). Never, ever do you think you're going to do something like this in two years."

LSU made five national semifinal games in a row from 2004-08 — the only times the Tigers had made it this far. They lost each of those years.

The Tigers had to dig deep for this one, with neither team backing down.

Trailing 59-50 after three quarters, LSU went ahead with a 15-0 run over a five-minute span. The Tigers led for the first time since late in the first half when Falu'jae Johnson had a steal and drove for a layup to make it 64-62.

Reese had six points in that game-turning spurt, including a basket after Morris' attempted 3-pointer clanked off the front rim. Reese had a second-effort follow of her own miss after rebounding another shot by Morris.

Elizabeth Kitley, the 6-foot-6 senior, had 18 points and 12 rebounds for Virginia Tech (31-5), the Atlantic Coast Conference champion that was in the Final Four for the first time. Georgia Amoore and Kayana Traylor each had 17 points, while Cayla King had 14.

Amoore set a record for the most 3-pointers in a single NCAA Tournament with 24, though she had a tough night shooting — 4 of 17 overall, including 4 of 15 from beyond the arc. She passed Kia Nurse's record 22 set in the 2017 tourney for UConn, which lost in the national semifinals on the same court. Arizona's Aari McDonald had 22 in six NCAA tourney games two years ago.

The big run for LSU came right after Amoore made her last 3-pointer with 7:52 left for a 62-57 lead. The Hokies didn't make another basket until King's 3 with 1:19 left.

"I think we had a few crucial turnovers as well as missed box-outs where they scored on second-chance opportunities," Traylor said. "I think that's just what it came down to really."

Morris had opened the fourth quarter with a 3-pointer for LSU, then had a driving layup before Reese had a layup after a steal by Johnson. That quick 7-0 run prompted a timeout by Hokies coach Kenny Brooks.

"They hit a couple of shots, gave them a little bit of momentum. They hit a 3 right off the bat ... kind of changed the momentum," Brooks said. "They were aggressive in the passing lanes. But they also were a little bit more aggressive down low."

Virginia Tech had ended the first half with its own 11-0 run to lead for the first time, at 34-32 on Traylor's driving layup with 53 seconds left.

But it was the Tigers who led for 17:55 of the first half with the Hokies getting off to a slow start shooting — they missed eight of their first nine shots — that an LSU cheerleader had an assist even before they officially had a shot.

King was charged with a turnover on a ball that hit the rim and bounced over the top of the backboard and got stuck there. With encouragement from officials and others at that end, a male cheerleader lifted up a female cheerleader, who knocked the ball down.

AP March Madness coverage: <https://apnews.com/hub/march-madness> and <https://apnews.com/hub/ap-top-25-womens-college-basketball-poll> and https://twitter.com/AP_Top25

Taiwan leader scrambles for allies in Central America visit

By MEGAN JANETSKY Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — As Taiwan's diplomatic partners dwindle and turn instead to rival China, Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen is aiming to shore up ties with the self-governing island's remaining allies during a trip this week to Central America.

Tsai touched down in Guatemala on Friday afternoon, walking from the plane along a red carpet alongside Guatemala's foreign minister.

In a speech addressed to leaders of Guatemala and Belize shortly before departing on her visit, Tsai

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, April 1, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 267 ~ 37 of 68

framed the trip as a chance to show Taiwan's commitment to democratic values globally.

"External pressure will not obstruct our resolution to go on the world stage. We will be calm, self-confident, we will not submit but also not provoke," said Tsai, who will also meet with U.S. House Speaker Kevin McCarthy in a stopover in the United States.

But the trip also is aimed to solidifying ties in Latin America as China funnels money into the region and pressures its countries to break off relations with the self-governed democratic island.

In Guatemala and Belize, Tsai is expected to bring an open checkbook. But in a region under growing Chinese influence, analysts say that Taiwan may already have lost the long game.

"These countries, they are symbolic. And I don't think Taiwan wants to lose any of them," said June Teufel Dreyer, a political scientist at University of Miami. "But if China is going to indulge in checkbook diplomacy, I don't think Taiwan can compete and it knows it."

The visit comes just days after Honduras became the latest country to break with Taiwan in favor of establishing ties with China.

Honduras follows in the footsteps of Nicaragua, El Salvador, the Dominican Republic, Panama and Costa Rica in ditching Taiwan. In some cases, China was said to have dangled hefty investment packages and loans in exchange for switching allegiances.

As the Asian superpower has sought to isolate Taiwan and expand its power on the global stage, Chinese trade and investment in Latin America has soared.

Between 2005 and 2020, the Chinese have invested more than \$130 billion in Latin America, according to the United States Institute of Peace. Trade between China and the region has also shot up, and is expected to reach more than \$700 billion by 2035.

Honduras' move came in conjunction with the construction of a hydroelectric dam project built by the Chinese company SINOHYDRO with about \$300 million in Chinese government financing.

It left Taiwan with no more than 13 official diplomatic partners. More than half of those are small countries in Latin America and the Caribbean: Belize, Guatemala, Paraguay, Haiti, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

At the same time Chinese influence has grown, lagging spending by the U.S. — Taiwan's primary ally and source of defensive weaponry — has caused its sway in Latin America to slip.

For decades, China has claimed Taiwan as its own territory to be brought under its control by force if necessary, but the Taiwanese public overwhelmingly favors the current state of de-facto independence.

China has spent a great amount of effort in its campaign to diplomatically isolate Taiwan ever since Tsai's election in 2016, successfully convincing nine countries to break off relations with Taipei since she has been in office.

China's government views Tsai and her independence-leaning Democratic Progressive Party as separatists.

In recent months, tensions have only intensified as relations between Beijing and Washington have spiraled. As a result, regions like Central America have grown in geopolitical importance.

"While our policy has not changed, what has changed is Beijing's growing coercion — like trying to cut off Taiwan's relations with countries around the world," U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a speech about China relations last year.

Guatemala and Belize are among those who have remained steadfast supporters of Taiwan, Guatemala's government reaffirming in March its "recognition of Taiwan as an independent nation with which democratic values and mutual respect are shared."

Yet analysts say their allegiance is also a political calculation.

Tiziano Breda, researcher at International Affairs Institute, said that position will likely be wielded politically, used as a potential shield against pressure from the U.S.

The U.S. government, for example, has been highly critical of the administration of President Alejandro Giammattei for not doing enough to crack down on corruption.

"It's a card these countries wait to play," Breda said.

Dreyer of University of Miami said many of Taiwan's allies will use their relationship with both China and

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, April 1, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 267 ~ 38 of 68

Taiwan as a "bargaining chip" to seek greater investment and monetary benefits from both countries.

She said in Ing-wen's meetings with Guatemala and Belize, the president is likely to offer investment and development projects contingent on maintaining good relations with her country.

But Dreyer noted that given the power China wields on a world stage, it's only a matter of time before the economic superpower pulls Taiwan's final diplomatic partners onto their side.

The Chinese "are not only willing to wait, but eager to wait until they think the time is ripe," Dreyer said. "They want the most auspicious moment possible."

Associated Press writer Huizhong Wu in Taipei contributed to this report.

UN food chief: Billions needed to avert unrest, starvation

By EDITH M. LEDERER Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Without billions of dollars more to feed millions of hungry people, the world will see mass migration, destabilized countries, and starving children and adults in the next 12 to 18 months, the head of the Nobel prize-winning U.N. World Food Program warned Friday.

David Beasley praised increased funding from the United States and Germany last year, and urged China, Gulf nations, billionaires and other countries "to step up big time."

In an interview before he hands the reins of the world's largest humanitarian organization to U.S. ambassador Cindy McCain next week, the former South Carolina governor said he's "extremely worried" that WFP won't raise about \$23 billion it needs this year to help millions of needy people

"Right at this stage, I'll be surprised if we get 40% of it, quite frankly," he said.

Last year, Beasley raised \$14.2 billion for WFP, more than double the \$6 billion in 2017, the year he took over as executive director. That money helped over 128 million people in more than 120 countries and territories.

Beasley said he was able to convince the United States last year to increase its funding from about \$3.5 billion to \$7.4 billion and Germany to raise its contribution from \$350 million a few years ago to \$1.7 billion, but he doesn't think they'll do it again this year.

Other countries need to step up now, he said, starting with China, the world's second-largest economy which gave WFP just \$11 million last year.

Beasley applauded China for its success in substantially reducing hunger and poverty at home, but said it gave less than one cent per person last year compared to the United States, the world's leading economy, which gave about \$22 per person.

China needs "to engage in the multilateral world" and be willing to provide help that is critical, he said. "They have a moral obligation to do so."

Beasley said they've done "an incredible job of feeding their people," and "now we need their help in other parts of the world" on how they did it, particularly in poorer countries including in Africa.

With high oil prices Gulf countries can also do more, especially Muslim nations that have relations with countries in east Africa, the Sahara and elsewhere in the Middle East, he said, expressing hope they will increase contributions.

Beasley said the wealthiest billionaires made unprecedented profits during the COVID-19 pandemic, and "it's not too much to ask some of the multibillionaires to step up and help us in the short-term crisis," even though charity isn't a long-term solution to the food crisis.

In the long-term, he said what he'd really like to see is billionaires using their experience and success to engage "in the world's greatest need – and that is food on the planet to feed 8 billion people."

"The world has to understand that the next 12 to 18 months is critical, and if we back off the funding, you will have mass migration, and you will have destabilization nations and that will all be on top of starvation among children and people around the world," he warned.

Beasley said WFP was just forced to cut rations by 50% to 4 million people in Afghanistan, and "these are people who are knocking on famine's door now."

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, April 1, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 267 ~ 39 of 68

"We don't have enough money just to reach the most vulnerable people now," he said. "So we are in a crisis over the cliff stage right now, where we literally could have hell on earth if we're not very careful."

Beasley said he's been telling leaders in the West and Europe that while they're focusing everything on Ukraine and Russia, "you better well not forget about what's south and southeast of you because I can assure you it is coming your way if you don't pay attention and get on top of it."

With \$400 trillion worth of wealth on the planet, he said, there's no reason for any child to die of starvation. The WFP executive director said leaders have to prioritize the humanitarian needs that are going to have the greatest impact on stability in societies around the world.

He singled out several priority places -- Africa's Sahel region as well as the east including Somalia, northern Kenya, South Sudan and Ethiopia; Syria which is having an impact on Jordan and Lebanon; and Central and South America where the number of people migrating to the United States is now five times what it was a year-and-a-half ago.

Beasley said McCain, the widow of U.S. Senator John McCain from Arizona who was the 2008 Republican presidential nominee and has been the U.S. ambassador to Rome-based WFP and the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization, "is the right person at the right time" to lead the World Food Program.

They've been working together to make sure "she hits the ground running," he said, But "it's going to be a very, very challenging time" because of all the money going to the war in Ukraine, and the need to help so many other fragile economies.

Beasley said his biggest surprise was believing in April 2017, when he took over the agency and there were 80 million people in the world "marching to starvation," that "we could end world hunger and put the World Food Program out of business."

What he didn't expect were the conflicts and wars, the climate shocks, the COVID-19 pandemic and the Ukraine war, he said, which raised the 80 million in desperate need of food to 135 million right before COVID started spreading in early 2020, to 276 million before Russia invaded Ukraine -- "the bread basket of the world" -- in February 2022, and to 350 million now.

Beasley said "it's hard not to get depressed" but two things give him hope.

Seeing little girls and boys smiling in the midst of war and suffering from hunger "inspires you not to give up," he said, as does the bipartisan support in the often divided U.S. Congress for helping the poorest of the poor around the world.

As he returns to his family in South Carolina, Beasley said his dream remains to end world hunger.

Transgender Day of Visibility rallies held amid backlash

By WILSON RING Associated Press

MONTPELIER, Vt. (AP) — Thousands of people rallied across the country Friday as part of a Transgender Day of Visibility in support of the rights of transgender people and their resilience amid what many denounced as an increasingly hostile environment.

Supporters converged on statehouses nationwide, at the Capitol Reflecting Pool in Washington, D.C., and were planned as far away as Mexico City and the Portuguese capital of Lisbon to mark a day of international unity first proclaimed more than a decade ago.

Chanting, "We're here, we're queer, get used to it!" many at the statehouse in Montpelier, Vermont, draped themselves in pride flags or carried posters with messages like "yay gay" or "protect trans kids."

Transgender youth stood in front of the Vermont crowd and spoke movingly of the lack of support for their gender identity and sexuality.

Charlie Draughn, a 17-year-old high school senior from Chisago City, Minnesota, who attends a boarding school in Vermont, said he was angry that groups are trying to control his life and turn him into a political pawn.

"My life is not your debate," Draughn said. "It is not a political issue. I am not hurting anyone and I am certainly not hurting myself."

The rallies came as Republican lawmakers nationwide have pursued hundreds of proposals this year to

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, April 1, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 267 ~ 40 of 68

push back on LGBTQ+ rights, particularly those of transgender residents, including banning transgender girls from girls' sports, keeping transgender people from using restrooms in line with their gender identities and requiring schools to deadname transgender students — mandating they be identified by names they were given at birth.

"We're not a new idea. We're not a new group," said Penelope Torres, who traveled from Chicago to Washington, D.C., where more than 1,000 people marched from Union Station to the reflecting pool. "We have always been here, we've always been part of the communities and it's time to start recognizing that and to give us equal protections."

At least 11 states have enacted laws restricting or banning gender-affirming care for minors: Alabama, Arkansas, Arizona, Georgia, Iowa, Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee, Utah, South Dakota and West Virginia. Federal judges have blocked enforcement of laws in Alabama and Arkansas, and nearly two dozen states are considering bills this year to restrict or ban care.

On Friday, President Joe Biden issued a statement supporting Transgender Day of Visibility and reaffirming that transgender Americans deserve to be safe and supported in every community. He denounced what he called hundreds of hateful and extreme state laws that target transgender kids and their families.

"Let me be clear: These attacks are un-American and must end," Biden said. "The bullying, discrimination, and political attacks that trans kids face have exacerbated our national mental health crisis."

Draped in pride flags and carrying signs outside the Alabama capital of Montgomery, about 100 mostly young people marched around the statehouse where lawmakers last year approved the nation's first law making it a felony to provide gender-affirming drugs to transgender minors, as well as legislation governing what school bathrooms and sports teams transgender kids can access.

Rhydian Gonzalez, an 18-year-old high school student at the Magic City Acceptance Academy, founded as a school that welcomes LGBTQ students, said anti-transgender bills don't help anyone.

"Transitioning saved my life and so many others and I think it's so important that people understand that," said Gonzalez, who began socially transitioning at 14 and began testosterone treatment at 16.

"Without it I don't think I would be here," Gonzalez said.

In Connecticut, Democratic Lt. Gov. Susan Bysiewicz, state lawmakers, transgender advocates and others clapped and cheered as the Transgender Pride flag was raised over the state Capitol in Hartford for the first time.

State Rep. Dominique Johnson of Norwalk, who identifies as gender nonconforming, likened the day to the 1969 Stonewall riots in New York City.

"We stand on the shoulders of our elders, and we want the next generation to stand on our shoulders," Johnson said. "I might be the first legislator to use singular they pronouns in this dome, but I will not be the last."

In Montana, supporters gathered in the rotunda of the state Capitol in Helena in support of the transgender, nonbinary and Two Spirit community, two days after Montana's Legislature gave final passage to a bill that would ban gender-affirming medical care for transgender minors. The governor has not said if he will sign the bill.

Remi Still Smoking, 17, said that bill and another that would define sex in state law as only male or female are "degrading." Transgender people are not part of a fad, or something new, said Still Smoking, who is Native American.

"I don't want to go back to the closet," Still Smoking said. "I am happy how I am and I want people to understand that. I'm not hurting my body. I'm normal."

Outside the South Carolina State House in Columbia, bubbles filled the spring air as Greg Green, the executive director of Transgender Awareness Alliance, hugged people as they arrived.

For Green, the day was about showing people who don't feel safe coming out that their identity is still valid.

"I'm visible to show those who aren't that it's OK to be yourself right where you are," said Green, a former police officer whose organization trained voluntary marshals to help monitor safety at the celebration.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, April 1, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 267 ~ 41 of 68

"This year it's a bit scarier because there's such an intense effort to erase trans folks and our community," Green said.

In Topeka, Kansas, more than 100 people, many of them transgender youth, marched around the Statehouse to celebrate transgender identity and to protest proposals before the Legislature to roll back transgender rights.

International Transgender Day of Visibility was created in 2010 by an advocate who decried that most media coverage focused on anti-transgender violence rather than the positive contributions to society made by transgender people, according to advocacy group GLAAD. Advocates say it's important to improve transgender visibility because many voters and policymakers take actions that impact transgender people's lives without knowing a transgender person.

Aspen Overy, 19, of Burlington, Vermont, who came out as transgender a couple of years ago, said they attended the Montpelier rally to show support for other trans people.

"I think there's this myth of Vermont as like this lovely, perfect little state," Overy said. "But as many of the trans kids said today ... those kids still frequently face so much hatred and discrimination for being, for living their lives and that's not okay."

Associated Press journalist Mike Pesoli contributed from Washington, D.C., as did Hannah Schoenbaum from Raleigh, North Carolina; Kim Chandler in Montgomery, Alabama; Amy Hanson in Helena, Montana; Susan Haigh in Hartford, Connecticut; James Pollard in Columbia, South Carolina and John Hanna in Topeka, Kansas.

Factory explosion survivor, on fire, fell into chocolate vat

By MICHAEL RUBINKAM and ACACIA CORONADO Associated Press

A woman pulled alive from the rubble of a Pennsylvania chocolate factory after an explosion that killed seven co-workers says flames had engulfed the building, and her arm, when the floor gave way beneath her. That might have been the end, if she hadn't fallen into a vat of liquid chocolate.

The dark liquid extinguished her blazing arm, but Patricia Borges wound up breaking her collarbone and both of her heels. She would spend the next nine hours screaming for help and waiting for rescue as firefighters battled the inferno and choppers thumped overhead at the R.M. Palmer Co. factory.

"When I began to burn, I thought it was the end for me," Borges, 50, told The Associated Press in an exclusive interview from her hospital bed in West Reading, Pennsylvania, just minutes from the chocolate factory where she worked as a machine operator. Investigators from the National Transportation Safety Board interviewed Borges on Friday, according to her family.

The March 24 blast at R.M. Palmer killed seven of Borges's co-workers and injured 10. Federal, state and local investigations are underway. A cause has not been determined, but the federal transportation safety agency has characterized it as a natural gas explosion.

Borges said she and others had complained about a gas odor about 30 minutes before the factory blew up. She is angry Palmer didn't immediately evacuate. She said the deaths of her co-workers — including her close friend, Judith Lopez-Moran — could've been prevented.

Others workers have also said they smelled natural gas, according to their relatives. Palmer, a 75-year-old, family-run company with deep roots in the small town 60 miles (96 kilometers) northwest of Philadelphia, has not responded to questions about the workers' claims.

Speaking in Spanish over videoconference, her eyes bruised and her burned right arm heavily bandaged, Borges recounted her terrifying brush with death.

The factory was getting ready for a product switch that day, so instead of running a candy-wrapping machine as usual, she was helping to clean.

At 4:30 p.m., Borges told the AP, she smelled natural gas. It was strong and nauseated her. Borges and her co-workers approached their supervisor, asking "what was going to be done, if we were going to be evacuated," she recalled.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, April 1, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 267 ~ 42 of 68

Borges said the supervisor noted someone higher up would have to make that decision. So she got back to work.

Just before 5 p.m., the two-story brick building exploded.

Borges, who'd been on a ladder, was thrown to the ground. She heard screaming. There was fire everywhere, and the flames quickly overtook her. "I asked God why he was giving me such a horrible death," she said. "I asked him to save me, that I didn't want to die in the fire."

She began to run. That's when the floor gave way, and she could feel herself falling — into a long, horizontal tank of chocolate in the factory's basement. At 4 feet, 10 inches tall, Borges landed on her feet in chest-high liquid.

The chocolate extinguished the flames, but she believes her fall is what broke her feet.

The vat began filling with water from firefighters' hoses, eventually forcing Borges to climb out as it reached neck level. She sat on the lip of the tank, then jumped into a pool of water that had formed on the basement floor. Briefly submerged, Borges said she swallowed a mouthful of water before surfacing. She grabbed onto some plastic tubing.

And then she waited.

"Help, help, please help!" she yelled, over and over, for hours. No one came.

The pain grew more intense. The water was frigid. The main supply pipe for the building's fire suppression system had ruptured — and water was pouring into the basement. She lost track of time but thought she might be there for days.

"The only thing I wanted was to get out of there," she said.

Finally, in the middle of the night, she saw a light and screamed anew for help.

Search-and-rescue dogs had alerted their handlers that a survivor might be in the rubble. Now, as rescuers carefully worked their way down to the basement, they heard Borges's cries.

Calling for quiet, the rescuers followed the sound of her voice. They found her in a tight space, in chest-deep water. She made her way to them and was placed in a litter.

"She was severely hypothermic and banged up," conscious but "absolutely confused," said Ken Pagurek, who helped lead rescue efforts as program manager of Pennsylvania Task Force 1, an emergency response team that deploys to disaster sites around the country.

"I think had they not gotten to her when they did, there was a very good chance the number of victims was going to be plus one," said Pagurek, also a captain in the Philadelphia Fire Department.

Her rescue gave hope to first responders who already had pulled two bodies from the rubble in the hours after the blast. Rescuers spent two more days at the pile. They found five more bodies but no additional survivors.

Borges now faces surgery on both feet and a long recovery. Her family has launched a GoFundMe campaign to help her pay the bills.

Borges, who came to the United States 31 years ago from Puebla state in south-central Mexico, has worked at Palmer for four years. She said she's seeking accountability.

"I wanted to speak so that this will be prevented in the future," she said. "For my colleague Judy, I want there to be justice."

Rubinkam reported from northeastern Pennsylvania and Coronado reported from Austin, Texas.

Probe of deadly Black Hawk crash begins as Army IDs victims

By DYLAN LOVAN Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) — The nine service members who died in a crash involving two U.S. Army Black Hawk helicopters ranged in age from 23 to 36 and were from seven states, the military said Friday, as it released the identities of the soldiers and an investigative team continued its probe of the accident.

A military news release said the service members came from Florida, Texas, Missouri, California, North Carolina, Alabama and New Jersey.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, April 1, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 267 ~ 43 of 68

"This is a time of great sadness for the 101st Airborne Division. The loss of these Soldiers will reverberate through our formations for years to come," said Maj. Gen. JP McGee, commanding general of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) and Fort Campbell.

Two HH-60 Black Hawk medical evacuation helicopters crashed near Fort Campbell on Wednesday night in southwest Kentucky during a training exercise, killing all nine soldiers aboard the two aircrafts. The crash occurred in Trigg County, Kentucky, about 30 miles (48 kilometers) northwest of the Army post that is home to the 101st Airborne Division.

A special military investigative team was on the scene Friday but rain and wind have slowed the early work, Army officials said.

The two Black Hawks were flying during a training exercise and the pilots were using night-vision goggles, Army officials said. The accident occurred during flying and not during the course of a medical evacuation drill, said Brig. Gen. John Lubas, the 101st Airborne deputy commander.

The helicopters carried flight data recorders, similar to the black boxes that investigators use to analyze crashes involving passengers planes. Officials are hoping the devices yield information about the cause.

The Army identified the soldiers as: Warrant Officer 1 Jeffery Barnes, 33, of Milton, Florida; Cpl. Emilie Marie Eve Bolanos, 23, of Austin, Texas; Chief Warrant Officer 2 Zachary Esparza, 36, of Jackson, Missouri; Sgt. Isaacjohn Gayo, 27, of Los Angeles, California.; Staff Sgt. Joshua C. Gore, 25, of Morehead City, North Carolina; Warrant Officer 1 Aaron Healy, 32, of Cape Coral, Florida; Staff Sgt. Taylor Mitchell, 30, of Mountain Brook, Alabama; Chief Warrant Officer 2 Rusten Smith, 32, of Rolla, Missouri; and Sgt. David Solinas Jr., 23, of Oradell, New Jersey.

The four soldiers piloting the two Black Hawks were Esparza, Smith, Barnes and Healy, according to the Army.

Dave Busby, who taught Smith in middle school, was among several of Smith's childhood teachers and classmates who posted tributes on Facebook.

"What a great kid. What a tragedy," Busby said by phone from his home in St. James, Missouri, the small town where Smith grew up. "I'll be honest I wept — what a shame."

Even as a teen, Smith was ambitious, forward-looking and perceptive, Busby said: "You could tell he was going places."

Solinas' dedication to being a flight medic showed his character, his brother, Aidan Solinas, said in a statement.

"We are a faithful family and we are proud David was training to rescue soldiers on the battlefield," he said. "Being a flight medic is one of the most difficult jobs that you can do, and illustrates that David was a man of compassion and faith.

Gore's father, Tim Gore, told the Goldsboro News-Argus that his son leaves behind a wife who's pregnant. Gore, a pastor in Wayne County, said that his son, who was known to family as Caleb, was an infant when the family moved to North Carolina and remained in the state until he joined the Army after graduating high school.

"His passion was search and rescue, and if you were wounded on the battlefield, Caleb coming out of that helicopter would be the most beautiful thing you would ever see," Gore told the newspaper. "He was kind, compassionate, and a gentle giant because he was built like a tank."

Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear on Friday ordered flags at state buildings lowered to half-staff from sunrise on Saturday until sunset Monday in honor of the soldiers.

Over the last 10 years, the Army's Black Hawk helicopter has been involved in 40 so-called Class A mishaps, which involve either a fatality or more than \$2.5 million in damage. Forty-four personnel died in those cases.

Wednesday's crash was the deadliest training incident for the Army since March 2015, when a Black Hawk helicopter crashed off the Florida coast in dense fog, said Jimmie Cummings, spokesperson for the Army Combat Readiness Center at Fort Rucker. Four soldiers from the Louisiana Army National Guard and seven Marine special operations forces were killed.

Cummings said the most deadly non-combat Black Hawk crash was in 1988 and also involved Fort

Campbell aircraft. The crash killed 17 troops when two helicopters collided in mid-air. The most deadly Army aircraft training incident was a Chinook crash in Germany in 1982, that killed 46 U.S. and international forces. The second was a C-23 Sherpa fixed wing aircraft crash in Georgia in 2001 that killed 21 Army and Air Guard personnel.

Fort Campbell also had a multi-aircraft crash in 1996, when two Blackhawks clipped propellers, killing five soldiers. The last deadly aviation accident at Fort Campbell occurred in 2018, when an Apache helicopter crashed during training, killing two soldiers on board.

The Black Hawk helicopter is a critical workhorse for the U.S. Army and is used in security, transport, medical evacuations, search and rescue and other missions. The helicopters are known to many people from the 2001 movie "Black Hawk Down," which is about a 1993 battle in Somalia.

Associated Press researcher Rhonda Shafner in New York and writers Lolita Baldor in Washington, Lea Skene in Baltimore and Beatrice Dupuy in New York contributed to this report.

Romania: Andrew Tate's detention replaced with house arrest

By STEPHEN McGRATH AND VADIM GHIRDA Associated Press

BUCHAREST, Romania (AP) — Andrew Tate, the divisive internet personality who has spent months in a Romanian jail on suspicion of organized crime and human trafficking, has won an appeal to replace his detention with house arrest, an official said Friday.

The Bucharest Court of Appeal ruled in favor of Tate's appeal, which challenged a judge's decision last week to extend his arrest a fourth time for 30 days, said Ramona Bolla, a spokesperson for Romania's anti-organized crime agency, DIICOT.

Tate, 36, a British-U.S. citizen who has 5.5 million Twitter followers, was initially detained in late December in Romania's capital Bucharest, along with his brother Tristan and two Romanian women.

All four won an appeal Friday, and will remain under house arrest until Apr. 29, Bolla said. None of the four has yet been formally indicted. The court ruled in favor of their immediate release. Prosecutors cannot challenge the appeal court's decision, which was final, Bolla added.

As the brothers left the detention facility late Friday in Bucharest, Tristan Tate told a scrum of reporters that "the judges today made the right decision."

"I respect what they've done for me and they will be vindicated in their decision, because I'm an innocent man and I can't wait to prove it," he said.

Some Tate supporters outside the facility chanted "Top-G, Top-G," using a popular moniker many of Andrew Tate's fans refer to him as.

Later, standing outside what is believed to be the Tate brothers' home near the capital, Andrew Tate said he wanted to thank the judges "who heard us today, because they were very attentive and they listened to us, and they let us free."

"I have no resentment in my heart for the country of Romania or for anybody else," he said. "I just believe in the truth ... I truly believe that justice will be served in the end. There is zero percent chance of me being convicted for something I've not done."

Tate, a professional kickboxer who has resided in Romania since 2017, was previously banned from various social media platforms for expressing misogynistic views and hate speech. He has repeatedly claimed Romanian prosecutors have no evidence and alleged their case is a "political" conspiracy designed to silence him.

DIICOT said in a statement after the December arrests that it had identified six victims in the human trafficking case who were allegedly subjected to "acts of physical violence and mental coercion" and sexually exploited by members of the alleged crime group.

The agency said victims were lured with pretenses of love and later intimidated, placed under surveillance and subjected to other control tactics while being coerced into engaging in pornographic acts for the financial gain of the crime group.

In January, Romanian authorities descended on a compound near Bucharest linked with the Tate brothers and towed away a fleet of luxury cars that included a Rolls-Royce, a Ferrari and a Porsche. They reported seizing assets worth an estimated \$3.9 million.

Prosecutors have said that if they can prove the cars' owners gained money through illicit activities such as human trafficking, the assets would be used to cover the expenses of the investigation and to compensate victims. Tate unsuccessfully appealed the asset seizure.

Stephen McGrath reported from Sighisoara, Romania.

Judge: Dominion defamation case against Fox will go to trial

By RANDALL CHASE and DAVID BAUDER Associated Press

DOVER, Del. (AP) — A Delaware judge's ruling Friday set the stage for a dramatic springtime trial on whether Fox News bears financial responsibility for airing false allegations that a voting machine company rigged the 2020 presidential election against former President Donald Trump.

Superior Court Judge Eric Davis ruled that it was "CRYSTAL clear" that none of the allegations made by Trump allies on Fox in the weeks after the election were true.

Davis said it was up to a jury to decide whether Fox acted with actual malice in airing the claims and, if so, how much money Dominion is entitled to in damages. Dominion has sued Fox for \$1.6 billion.

Barring a last-minute settlement, the trial is expected to begin in mid-April.

"The statements at issue were dramatically different than the truth," Davis said in a summary judgment ruling, which denied Fox's effort to throw out the case as well as Dominion's request for a victory without a jury. "In fact, although it cannot be attributed directly to Fox's statements, it is noteworthy that some Americans still believe the election was rigged."

Fox's failure to reveal extensive evidence contradicting the fraud claims "indicates that its reporting was not disinterested," the judge wrote.

In a statement issued after the ruling, Dominion said it was gratified that the court had rejected Fox's arguments and found "as a matter of law that their statements about Dominion are false. We look forward to going to trial."

Fox emphasized that the case is about the media's First Amendment protections, and that it was trying to cover highly newsworthy developments — a sitting president's claim that an election was rigged.

"Fox will continue to fiercely advocate for the rights of free speech and a free press as we move into the next phase of these proceedings," the network said in a statement Friday.

The ruling sets the stage for a trial in which Fox News stars such as Tucker Carlson, Sean Hannity and Maria Bartiromo, as well as network founder Rupert Murdoch, could be called to the stand.

Even before the judge's ruling, thousands of pages of evidence presented in the case showed Fox executives and stars privately ridiculing the accusations and bluntly expressing opinions, like Carlson saying he hated Trump "passionately."

During a deposition, Murdoch testified that he believed the 2020 election was fair and had not been stolen from the former president.

"Fox knew the truth," Dominion argued in court papers. "It knew the allegations against Dominion were 'outlandish' and 'crazy' and 'ludicrous' and 'nuts.' Yet it used the power and influence of its platform to promote that false story."

Fox aired the allegations despite the doubts of its hosts and executives, and the coverage helped feed an ecosystem of misinformation surrounding Trump's loss in 2020 that has persisted ever since.

The documents also showed Fox feared losing viewers angered by the network's election night call of Arizona for Democrat Joe Biden, and how it didn't want to alienate viewers who backed Trump.

In methodically going through each side's arguments, Davis said neither Fox nor Dominion had presented a convincing argument for him to rule on whether or not the network acted with malice.

"These are genuine issues of material fact and therefore must be determined by a jury," he said.

Davis denied summary judgment to Dominion on whether Fox Corp., the news network's parent com-

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, April 1, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 267 ~ 46 of 68

pany, was liable for the statements being aired — meaning the corporate executives' responsibility will have to be settled at trial.

The Trump allies had falsely claimed after the election that Dominion's machines and accompanying software had switched votes from Trump to Biden. Dominion claims it has lost millions of dollars in business because this belief spread across the country; Fox contends its claims are overblown.

"The calculation of damages is a question for the jury," Davis said.

Davis ruled that the statements Dominion had challenged constitute defamation "per se" under New York law. That means Dominion did not have to prove damages to establish liability by Fox.

The U.S. Supreme Court limited the ability of public figures to sue for defamation in a 1964 case involving The New York Times. It ruled that plaintiffs needed to prove that news outlets published or aired false material with "actual malice" — knowing it was false or acting with a "reckless disregard" for whether or not it was true.

That has provided news organizations with stout protection against libel judgments. The nearly six-decade legal standard has come under attack by some conservatives in recent years, including Trump and Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, who have argued for making it easier to win a libel case.

Baader reported from New York. Associated Press writer Jennifer Peltz in New York contributed to this report.

EPA approves California rules phasing out diesel trucks

By SOPHIE AUSTIN Associated Press/Report for America

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — The Biden administration cleared the way Friday for California's plan to phase out a wide range of diesel-powered trucks, part of the state's efforts to drastically cut planet-warming emissions and improve air quality in heavy-traffic areas like ports along the coast.

The decision by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency allows California — which has some of the nation's worst air pollution — to require truck manufacturers to sell an increasing number of zero-emission trucks over the next couple of decades. The rule applies to a wide range of trucks including box trucks, semitrailers and even large passenger pick-ups.

"Under the Clean Air Act, California has longstanding authority to address pollution from cars and trucks. Today's announcement allows the state to take additional steps in reducing their transportation emissions through these new regulatory actions," said EPA Administrator Michael Regan, in a statement.

Gov. Gavin Newsom applauded the state's role as a leader for setting ambitious vehicle emission standards.

"We're leading the charge to get dirty trucks and buses — the most polluting vehicles — off our streets, and other states and countries are lining up to follow our lead," the Democrat said in a statement.

The EPA typically sets standards for tailpipe emissions from passenger cars, trucks and other vehicles, but California has historically been granted waivers to impose its own, stricter standards. Other states can then follow suit, and eight other states plan to adopt California's truck standards, Newsom's office said. In a letter last year, attorneys general from 15 states, Washington, D.C., and New York City urged the EPA to approve the California truck standards.

The transportation sector accounts for nearly 40% of California's greenhouse gas emissions. Newsom has already moved to ban the sale of new cars that run entirely on gasoline by 2035. The EPA has not acted on those rules.

The new truck standards are aimed at companies that make trucks and those that own large quantities of them. Companies owning 50 or more trucks will have to report information to the state about how they use these trucks to ship goods and provide shuttle services. Manufacturers will have to sell a higher percentage of zero-emission vehicles starting in 2024. Depending on the class of truck, zero-emission ones will have to make up 40% to 75% of sales by 2035.

California has a long legacy of adopting stricter tailpipe emission standards, even before the federal Clean Air Act was signed into law, said Paul Cort, a lawyer with environmental nonprofit Earthjustice.

"We have a vehicle problem," Cort said. "We're addicted to our cars and trucks, and that's a big cause

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, April 1, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 267 ~ 47 of 68

of the air pollution that we're fighting."

But Wayne Winegarden, a senior fellow at the Pacific Research Institute, said it's too soon to adopt the California standards.

"The charging infrastructure is certainly not there," he said about powering stations for electric vehicles. "And on top of the charging infrastructure, we have the grid issues."

While California was hit this winter by atmospheric rivers that soaked much of the state, it has for years suffered from drought conditions, and in September, a brutal heat wave that put its electricity grid to the test.

The announcement came as advocates are pushing for more ambitious tailpipe emissions standards in other states and at the national level.

"We don't just fight for California, we fight for all of the communities," said Jan Victor Andasan, an activist with East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice. The group advocates for better air quality in and around Los Angeles, the nation's second-most populous city that is known for its dense traffic and intense smog.

Andasan and other environmental activists from across the country who are a part of the Moving Forward Network, a 50-member group based at Occidental College in Los Angeles, met with EPA officials recently to discuss national regulations to limit emissions from trucks and other vehicles.

But some in the trucking industry are concerned about how costly and burdensome the transition will be for truck drivers and companies.

"The state and federal regulators collaborating on this unrealistic patchwork of regulations have no grasp on the real costs of designing, building, manufacturing and operating the trucks that deliver their groceries, clothes and goods," said Chris Spear, president of the American Trucking Association, in a statement.

"They will certainly feel the pain when these fanciful projections lead to catastrophic disruptions well beyond California's borders," he added.

Federal pollution standards for heavy trucks are also getting tougher. The EPA released rules that will cut nitrogen oxide pollution, which contributes to the formation of smog, by more than 80% in 2027. The agency will propose greenhouse gas emissions limits this year.

The agency expects the new standards and government investment will lead to zero-emissions electric and hydrogen fuel cell trucks carrying most of the nation's freight.

California activists Andasan and Brenda Huerta Soto, an organizer with the People's Collective for Environmental Justice, are troubled by the impact of pollution from trucks and other vehicles on communities with a large population of residents of color that live near busy ports in Los Angeles, Oakland and other cities as well as warehouse-dense inland areas.

Huerta Soto works in Southern California's Inland Empire, where a high concentration of trucks pass through to transport goods. On top of truck pollution, the many cars, trucks and trains that travel through the area burden residents with noises, odors and pollutants these vehicles emit, she said.

"We have the technology, and we have the money" to move toward zero-emission vehicles, she said.

Associated Press writers Tom Krisher in Detroit and Matthew Daly in Washington, D.C., contributed to this report.

Sophie Austin is a corps member for the Associated Press/Report for America Statehouse News Initiative. Report for America is a nonprofit national service program that places journalists in local newsrooms to report on undercovered issues. Follow Austin on Twitter: @sophieadanna

Florida teen debuts trans visibility film as bans spread

By LAURA BARGFELD Associated Press

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP) — A Florida teenager has documented how it feels to be young and transgender for a film set to debut at a festival as transgender people around the world celebrate visibility and

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, April 1, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 267 ~ 48 of 68

lawmakers across the country look to restrict their rights and care.

Carys Mullins, 19, who is gender non-conforming and uses she and they pronouns, said their experience inspired conversations with community members for a documentary, "You're Loved." The film directed and produced by Mullins is set to premiere Friday at the Tampa Bay Transgender Film Festival on International Transgender Day of Visibility.

"That's a big part of what the festival is," Mullins said. "A big part of the Tampa Bay Transgender Film Festival is: Look at us."

"You're Loved" debuts at a time where access to gender-affirming care for transgender and nonbinary young people is under assault across the United States. Florida, Missouri and Texas have regulations banning puberty-blocking hormones and gender-affirming surgeries for minors. At least 11 other states ban gender-affirming care for minors by law: Alabama, Arkansas, Arizona, Georgia, Iowa, Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee, Utah, South Dakota and West Virginia.

Federal judges have blocked enforcement of laws in Alabama and Arkansas, and nearly two dozen states are considering bills this year to restrict or ban care.

When describing how it feels to be a gender-nonconforming person in their home state, Mullins draws many comparisons.

"It feels like you're under a microscope."

"It feels like we're all in a circus."

"It almost feels like you're a guinea pig of sorts for people who have no idea what it's like to be trans, to be nonbinary, to be gender-nonconforming. They don't see us as people."

Mullins interwove perspectives from three young transgender people in Florida, Texas and Illinois, along with mental health providers, advocates and allies. They sent participants a set list of questions, depending on their role in the documentary, and edited together their recorded answers.

Topher Malone, a Black transgender high school student in Round Rock, Texas, said participating in the documentary gave her space to be herself.

"I could share my story," Malone said. "And, you know, those opportunities don't come often, especially for Black trans youth."

Malone spoke at a Texas House committee hearing on Monday about a measure seeking to restrict care. The hearing started around 8 a.m. Malone said she wasn't able to speak until after 11 p.m.

"I'm a youth. I go to public school. I'm supposed to be supported by my government," Malone said, "And so, that not being true is just so difficult."

The bills have a measurable impact on the well-being of transgender youth. Half of transgender adults ages 18 through 34 say they have had suicidal thoughts in the past year, and about a quarter said that they have engaged in self-harm, they had an eating disorder and they misused alcohol or drugs, according to a Washington Post-KFF poll of transgender adults in the U.S.

The poll shows nearly 8 in 10 transgender adults overall say living as a gender that is different from the gender they were assigned at birth has made their lives more satisfying.

But the poll also shows transgender adults say they are satisfied with their lives at a lower rate than the U.S. adult population as a whole.

Transgender adults are especially likely to report feeling anxious, depressed or lonely in the past year. About two-thirds say they have faced discrimination because of their gender identity or expression. And 78% say that growing up, they experienced serious mental health problems such as depression or anxiety.

"The landscape right now is urgent," said Jonah DeChants, senior research scientist at The Trevor Project.

However, while the numbers are grim, DeChants does not want them to be the sole focus in conversations about transgender youth. He said polls and surveys have also shown that access to adult role models and communities that affirm their identity can play a significant role in lowering suicide risk.

"For me especially as a scientist and a former youth worker, it's really exciting to see data that firmly shows that being an ally to young people matters," DeChants said.

Florida-based psychologist Dani Rosenkrantz, who also participated in the documentary, sees herself

as part of this larger support system for the young transgender and nonbinary people she works with. Despite the challenges she faces operating as an LGBTQ+ therapist in Florida, Rosenkrantz wants to give space for her clients to not only process their grief, but also to find joy in their identities.

"Our life isn't just these awful, sad, real statistics that are really important to know about and resist, but it's also these beautiful, thriving people." Rosenkrantz said.

Mullins hopes their documentary resonates with transgender people and with the community at large. They see the message of love as universal.

"At the end of the day, if you take away these labels and these identities, the whole point of this film is you are loved and you are seen, no matter what experiences you go through," Mullins said.

In Texas, Malone finds her joy in many places: at underground ballroom events, in online communities, and even Monday after the hearing. Malone said there was a rally as they were leaving the state Capitol after midnight, with people shouting, laughing, and dancing.

"There was a sense of community," Malone said. "There was a sense of trans joy in that moment."

Baldwin codefendant gets 6 months probation on gun charge

By MORGAN LEE Associated Press

SANTA FE, N.M. (AP) — A codefendant in the case against actor Alec Baldwin in the fatal 2021 shooting of a cinematographer on a movie set in New Mexico was convicted Friday of unsafe handling of a firearm and sentenced to six months of probation.

Safety coordinator and assistant director David Halls also must pay a \$500 fine, complete a gun-safety course and 24 hours of community service after agreeing to the conviction related to the death of Halyna Hutchins on the set of the Western movie "Rust."

Under the plea agreement, Halls agreed to testify truthfully at any upcoming hearings or trials. That includes criminal proceedings against Baldwin and movie armorer Hannah Gutierrez-Reed, who have pleaded not guilty to charges of involuntary manslaughter in Hutchins' death.

Halls appeared briefly by video to waive his right to challenge the negligence charge, as state District Judge Mary Marlowe Sommer approved terms of a plea agreement with prosecutors.

Defense attorney Lisa Torracco urged the court not to impose a prison sentence — the maximum possible penalty was 6 months behind bars — noting that Halls was "extremely traumatized and "rattled" with guilt.

Hutchins died shortly after she was shot on Oct. 21, 2021, during rehearsals on a film-set ranch on the outskirts of Santa Fe. Baldwin was pointing a pistol at Hutchins when the weapon went off; a single live round killed her and wounded director Joel Souza.

If convicted of involuntary manslaughter, Baldwin and Gutierrez-Reed could face a maximum penalty of 18 months in prison and fines.

Torraco said Halls had checked the rounds in the revolver before handing it to Baldwin to see whether they were dummies or blanks with an explosive. She said it was "never in anyone's imagination" that live rounds would be in the gun.

"When Ms. Gutierrez-Reed brought the firearm ... on set into the church, he did check the firearm," she said of Halls. "He wouldn't have even thought that there was a live round in that, in that gun. ... And he, like many others, is extremely traumatized."

But prosecutor Kari Morrissey said Halls, a veteran filmmaker of more than 30 years, failed in his duty as the last line of defense for firearms safety, and that the fatal shooting took place after two earlier weapons misfires on set.

"Mr. Halls did not check every round that was in the gun to confirm that it was a dummy round and not a live round," she said. "He then handed the gun to Mr. Baldwin and Mr. Baldwin began to practice his cross draw. And during that action of practicing the cross draw, the gun went off. And obviously Mrs. Hutchins was struck by the bullet and was killed. That is the factual basis for Mr. Halls taking the no contest plea to the unsafe handling of a deadly weapon."

In separate regulatory proceedings, workplace safety authorities have asserted Halls shared responsibility

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, April 1, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 267 ~ 50 of 68

for identifying and correcting any hazardous conditions related to firearms safety in the movie's production.

Halls' sentencing took place on the 30th anniversary of the death of Brandon Lee. The son of martial-arts legend Bruce Lee was hit by a .44-caliber slug from a gun that was supposed to have fired a blank while filming "The Crow."

A weeklong preliminary hearing in May will decide whether evidence against Baldwin and Gutierrez-Reed is sufficient to proceed to trial.

In her sentencing, Judge Marlowe Sommer confirmed with Halls that he would "testify truthfully in all hearings, trials, or settings involving any and all defendants and co-defendants in this matter." Prosecutors can reopen the case if Halls violates the terms of the plea agreement.

Santa Fe's district attorney this week appointed two special prosecutors, Morrissey and Jason Lewis.

The original special prosecutor, Andrea Reeb, resigned following missteps in the initial filing of charges against Baldwin and objections that her role as a state legislator created conflicting responsibilities.

Journalist's arrest threatens reporting from Russia

By DAVID BAUDER AP Media Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The arrest of a Wall Street Journal reporter on espionage charges in Russia has news organizations based outside the country weighing for the second time in a year whether the risks of reporting there during wartime are too great.

The Journal and other news outlets continued to press Friday for the release of Evan Gershkovich, He was taken into custody by Russian security officials a day earlier and accused of spying, charges the newspaper vehemently denies.

More than 30 press freedom groups and news organizations, including the Journal, The New York Times, BBC, The Associated Press, The New Yorker, Time and The Washington Post, signed a letter Friday to Anatoly I. Antonov, Russia's ambassador to the U.S., expressing concern about "a significant escalation in your government's anti-press actions.

"Russia is sending the message that journalism within your borders is criminalized and that foreign correspondents seeking to report from Russia do not enjoy the benefits of the rule of law," they said.

A reporter for The New York Times who was temporarily in Moscow, Valerie Hopkins, left after Gershkovich's arrest, the newspaper said.

"This is a significant shift and one that a lot of news outlets that have maintained journalists there will be looking at with alarm," said Jodie Ginsberg, president of the Committee to Protect Journalists, an advocacy group that promotes press freedom and safety.

Gershkovich's arrest comes a year after the Russian government, shortly after its full-scale invasion of Ukraine, imposed harsh new restrictions on journalists that threatened punishment for reports that went against the Kremlin's version of events — even forbidding the use of the word "war" to describe the conflict.

Some news organizations pulled their journalists out as a result. Some of those journalists returned later when it became clear the restrictions were aimed mostly at Russians.

A free-lance Russian journalist, Andrey Novashov, was sentenced to eight months of "correctional labor" for allegedly reporting false information about the Russian military, CPJ said. Ilya Krasilshchik, former publisher of the Latvia-based news site Meduza, was prosecuted on a similar charge but he left the country, CPJ said.

Hundreds of Russian journalists have left the country, Ginsberg said.

To date, the advocacy group said it was unaware of any non-Russian journalists arrested or prosecuted under those laws. Gershkovich was detained on separate spying charges.

"Pretty much any foreign correspondent who is still there is getting ready to depart, or giving that very serious consideration at this point," said Ann Cooper, who was a National Public Radio bureau chief in Moscow and former executive director of the Committee to Protect Journalists. Gershkovich's arrest is "very unsettling and would make anybody feel uncomfortable," she said.

"Every journalist and news organization has to weigh the circumstances and make their own decision,"

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, April 1, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 267 ~ 51 of 68

Cooper said. "If I were an American correspondent based in Moscow right now, I don't believe I would stay."

The New York Times does not have a reporter based in Russia now but has sent journalists, like Hopkins, in for periodic assignments, a spokeswoman said. For Tuesday's newspaper, Hopkins wrote about a single father who was convicted of discrediting the army and had his 13-year-old daughter put in an orphanage in a case that stemmed from an antiwar drawing she made at school.

One journalist who left and came back, Steve Rosenberg, Russia editor of the BBC, tweeted that he was "shocked by what has happened" to Gershkovich. His Twitter account said nothing about his own status, and the BBC declined comment Friday.

CNN has rotated international correspondents like Matthew Chance and Fred Pleitgen in and out of Russia for the past year, and Chance has been reporting from Moscow about Gershkovich's arrest. The network would not say more about its plans for staffing in the country.

"We are concerned by the news coming from Russia and are monitoring the situation there closely," it said in a statement.

The Washington Post has three journalists reporting on Russia — Robyn Dixon, Mary Ilyushina and Francesca Ebel — but is not commenting on their whereabouts, a spokeswoman said. Dixon wrote about Gershkovich's arrest from Latvia. In a memo announcing Ebel's hiring last fall, the Post said its Russian team is working from outside the country.

The Associated Press story about Gershkovich's arrest, as well as a separate profile of the journalist, carried no bylines or datelines. The AP does not speak about the moves of its personnel for security reasons, but it "maintains a presence" in Russia, spokeswoman Lauren Easton said.

Bloomberg News pulled its reporters from Russia last year, with Editor-in-Chief John Micklethwait telling staff members then that the new laws seem "designed to turn any independent reporter into a criminal purely by association." Bloomberg reporters have not returned to the country, a spokeswoman said on Friday.

Even journalists who fled Russia last year continued to report on the country, taking advantage of technology unavailable to predecessors from earlier generations: the Internet, encrypted communications, and mobile-phone cameras in the hands of millions of potential witnesses.

Still, Ginsberg said, "technology never replaces being there."

US Marine's adoption of Afghan war orphan voided

By CLAIRE GALOFARO, JULIET LINDERMAN and MARTHA MENDOZA undefined

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. (AP) — In a highly unusual ruling, a state court judge on Thursday voided a U.S. Marine's adoption of an Afghan war orphan, more than a year after he took the little girl away from the Afghan couple raising her. But her future remains uncertain.

For now, the child will stay with Marine Maj. Joshua Mast and his wife, Stephanie, under a temporary custody order they obtained before the adoption. The Masts will have to re-prove to the court that they should be granted a permanent adoption.

Despite the uncertainty, the ruling was a welcome move for the Afghan couple, who had been identified by the Afghan government as the child's relatives in February 2020 and raised her for 18 months. They dropped to their knees in prayer outside the courthouse. As they held each other, the young man wiped the tears from both their eyes with his wife's headscarf.

The Masts quickly left the courthouse after Thursday's hearing, flanked by their attorneys. The parties are forbidden from commenting by a gag order.

The dispute raised alarms at the highest levels of government, from the White House to the Taliban, after an Associated Press investigation in October revealed how Mast became determined to rescue the baby and bring her home as an act of Christian faith. But until now, the adoption order has remained in place.

"There's never, ever been a case like this," said Judge Claude V. Worrell Jr. on Thursday.

The girl, who will turn 4 this summer, was an infant when she was found injured in the rubble after a U.S.-Afghan military raid in a rural part of the country in September 2019. She spent more than five months

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, April 1, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 267 ~ 52 of 68

in a U.S. military hospital before the Afghan government and International Committee of the Red Cross determined she had living relatives, and united her with them.

Unbeknownst to them, Mast learned about the baby while she was hospitalized, and decided that he and his wife should be her parents. The Masts told Virginia Circuit Court Judge Richard Moore that she was the daughter of transient terrorists who died in the fight, and thus a stateless orphan. He claimed that the Afghan government was prepared to waive jurisdiction over her, though it never did. Moore granted him the adoption.

The Masts contacted the couple in Afghanistan, offering to help with her medical treatment. After the U.S. military withdrew and Afghanistan fell to the Taliban in 2021, the Masts helped them evacuate to the United States. Once they arrived, Mast used the adoption order to take the child, and the Afghan couple have not seen her since.

The Masts claim in court filings that they legally adopted the child, and that the Afghan couple's accusations that they kidnapped her are "outrageous" and "unmerited." They have repeatedly declined to comment to the AP.

Judge Worrell, who took over the case after Judge Moore retired in November, said the Afghan couple "were the de facto parents when they arrived in the U.S." and their due process was violated. Worrell also said from the bench that the Masts knew things that they never told the court, particularly about what was happening in Afghanistan at the same time the judge in Virginia was granting the adoption. He said he wasn't sure it was intentional, but "the fact of the matter is that the court did not have all the information known to (the Masts) at the time the order was entered."

The ruling is one more twist in what is already a standout case.

"Once an adoption is final, it is extremely difficult and rare for it to be overturned," said Virginia attorney Stanton Phillips.

"This is really, really unusual," said adoption attorney Barbara Jones. "You just don't hear about this happening."

A Defense Department spokesperson said Thursday it was aware of the ruling and referred the AP to the Justice Department, which declined to comment. Another hearing is scheduled for June.

Worries grow that Trump indictment will eclipse other probes

By GARY FIELDS Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The indictment against former President Donald Trump involving a 2016 hush money payment is raising concerns that it could undermine public confidence in what democracy experts view as far more important investigations.

Trump is facing multiple investigations related to his refusal to accept his 2020 loss to Democrat Joe Biden. That includes whether he pressured election officials to overturn the results, encouraged fake electors from battleground states and his role in the events that led to the Jan. 6, 2021, assault on the U.S. Capitol.

Jeffrey Engel, founding director of the Center for Presidential History at Southern Methodist University, called the indictment this week from a New York grand jury "the appetizer to their main course still to come."

"That main course, literally, is democracy at stake and who we are as a nation," he said.

The New York investigation that led to Thursday's indictment involved payments to porn actor Stormy Daniels at the tail end of the 2016 presidential campaign to silence claims of an extramarital sexual encounter. But some worry that the charges — which remain under seal — could distract public attention from the other cases, which are more squarely focused on attacks against the country's democratic institutions and traditions.

Larry Diamond, an expert on democracy and senior fellow at the conservative Hoover Institution at Stanford University, said he was nervous that the New York charges will "trigger all of the charges of politicization against him and misuse of the judiciary." It's a theme Trump has been emphasizing on social media and during a recent campaign rally in Texas.

"I would certainly not be opting to have this flimsiest of the cases go first," Diamond said.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, April 1, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 267 ~ 53 of 68

The indictment already has rallied Trump's supporters, both at the grassroots level and those holding public office. The reaction to Thursday's indictment has exposed the deep political rifts that have increasingly polarized the country since Trump's rise within the Republican Party.

Kathy Clark, a retired police officer from suburban Palm Beach County, stood alongside the road outside Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida after the indictment news broke, holding a "Trump Won" banner. Clark, dressed in a red, white and blue cowboy hat and vest, said the New York indictment will backfire.

"People who were on the fence are going to see how the government has politicized the judicial system," she said.

Trump has promoted the idea that the investigations are partisan and intended to undermine his campaign as he embarks on his third bid for the White House. On his social media site, the former president cast prosecutors involved in the investigations as the ones endangering democracy.

Other supporters lined up quickly behind him, including West Virginia Attorney General Patrick Morrisey, a Republican, who called the indictment "a political witch hunt and a political prosecution. And the only reason they're doing this is because they're scared. They know that they can't beat him at the ballot box. That's why they're resorting to these terrible tactics."

Polls have shown that a majority of Republicans still support Trump's false claim that the 2020 presidential election was stolen, suggesting they already believe he has been wronged by the system even though Biden's win has been affirmed in multiple reviews, recounts and audits in the key presidential battleground states.

Trump's attempts to overturn those results amid false claims of widespread fraud are at the heart of two other ongoing investigations, including his role in trying to halt the certification of the election results and in the run-up to the violent attack on the Capitol. A special prosecutor also is looking into Trump's retention of classified documents at his Mar-a-Lago estate, an investigation that could hold the greatest legal peril for the former president.

A separate investigation in Georgia's Fulton County, which includes Atlanta, is looking into the pressure Trump and others exerted on state officials to overturn the results of the presidential election there. The investigation began after a phone call in which Trump urged Georgia's secretary of state to "find" enough votes to overturn Biden's win.

The payment that Trump's lawyer, Michael Cohen, made in 2016 to cover up an alleged sexual encounter with Daniels is the one that least involves an attack on democratic norms. But it is the detail that most easily lends itself to Trump's contention that he is being attacked for partisan reasons.

John Bolton, Trump's former national security adviser, said on CNN recently that the question is what happens after the indictment. If prosecutors fail to get a conviction, "I think the historians will look back and say that is the act that re-elected Donald Trump president."

Diamond, the Stanford expert, said despite his nervousness of the New York case moving ahead first, it will not stop the others.

"The other stuff is not going to simply evaporate, and I think for the purpose of the defense of our constitutional system and the defense of the rule of law ... those are the ones that I think should carry the most weight in the public mind," he said.

Roscoe Howard, a former U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia, said prosecutors in New York are aware of who they are dealing with and the turmoil that will follow. But he said prosecutors aren't focused on public opinion or the political consequences of a case.

Their concern is not about other investigations, but whether their case is ready to go to court, Howard said.

"There's not a prosecutor in this country who will take a case to trial that they think they are going to lose," he said. "They just don't do that."

Associated Press writer Terry Spencer in Palm Beach, Florida, contributed to this report.

Brooke Shields takes charge of her story in 'Pretty Baby'

By BROOKE LEFFERTS Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Brooke Shields has been known as beautiful, smart and famous since she was a baby, but a new documentary reveals why it's taken decades for her to feel confident in her talent.

With a dazzling array of archival photos and footage, and in-depth interviews with Shields, "Pretty Baby: Brooke Shields" is a firsthand examination of her success as a model, actor, author and now lifestyle entrepreneur, despite being sexualized and objectified at a young age and managing her alcoholic mother — the original "momager," Teri Shields.

Like other recent documentaries on Britney Spears and Pamela Anderson, "Pretty Baby" includes a cringe-worthy barrage of media clips where mostly older men reduce her to a pretty face and have little interest in her answers to their questions. The film, which drops in two parts on Hulu on Monday, looks back at how women were treated in the 1980's and 1990's — including Shields revealing she was the victim of a sexual assault by a Hollywood executive after she graduated college.

Shields spoke to The Associated Press recently about what she learned from the project, how she overcame being shamed for her personal choices and gained confidence, and how she sees her future.

Answers have been edited for length and clarity.

AP: In the series you say "I'm owning my identity fully." What did you mean?

SHIELDS: I made myself small for so long, either to be relatable or to not be threatening or humbled, you know? Don't be a snob. Don't be arrogant. Have people like you. Be kind to everyone. It was like this the way I grew up, and I was rewarded for it. I'm saying that it's okay to pat myself on the shoulder a little bit. It's okay to say I really do have talent because I wouldn't still be here if I didn't. It's not just because I'm smart or just because I look a certain way. I've maintained a career and kept challenging myself, and I don't think I ever felt confident enough to say it out loud. I always just wanted other people's approval about my talent, never thinking that I could give it to myself.

AP: The documentary details the press scrutinizing you for years, how have you felt promoting the series?

SHIELDS: What I noticed when I was a little girl was that nobody really wanted my answers. They wanted their narrative to be the soundbite that I gave them. And being very stubborn always, I, in my own way, refused to give it to them. Now, I don't ever feel like I'm on the defensive because I've learned that I'm not at anybody else's mercy. Looking back, I can see that that's what I was doing, and I don't need to do that anymore, which is very empowering but, you know, it took 40-something years (laughs).

AP: What was the hardest part to reveal in the documentary?

SHIELDS: I was worried about the #MeToo stuff just because I didn't want it to be reduced to just a headline. And yet I knew that if I didn't, I would have felt like a hypocrite or inauthentic. I haven't been able to talk about it up until now, and then it felt like, you sort of owe it to yourself. And I just hoped that out of two hours and however many minutes, the one brief story — I mean, I knew it's going to be clickbait — but I was worried that I would get let down again by the press.

AP: It sounds like compartmentalizing was a survival technique for you?

SHIELDS: I think that happens with a child of an alcoholic. You know, you really do learn to compartmentalize. You love a person who is very broken and has a disease that they cannot seem to get under control. But you can't afford to have their love not be real. So you learn, when things felt ...not in control...I would become very organized, and that sort of was my center, that was my meditation, you know, redoing my Filofax or refolding my socks.

AP: You recently started a company aimed at celebrating women's lives after 40. Why is that important to you?

SHIELDS: I decided at an early age that if I was going to speak about anything, it was going to be about things that I believe that could help other people. Over the years I've thought, how can I not feel alone? I can share my story and I'm sure there's someone else who can identify with it. Before COVID I was healthy and I was working out a lot and I felt good. I was feeling so easy about things. My kids are all right. I like my life. I'm proud of it.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, April 1, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 267 ~ 55 of 68

The irony was that whenever I looked outside of myself, there wasn't anything addressing me. You know, your agents tell you, 'Well, you're of a certain age...' I'm not dead and I don't have one foot in the grave, come on! I was shocked. You have to own how hard it is just to get to this age, and with your wits about you, and good people in your life and how much more there is.

AP: What are your dreams now?

SHIELDS: To be in another television show. I really want to find the right (one) because "Suddenly Susan" to me was such a revelation and it was the happiest time for me. And I want to feel that whole thing again because it was a very healthy, pure place for me to be. And I really, really loved it.

Gwyneth Paltrow scores court win that means more than \$1

By ANDREW DALTON and SAM METZ Associated Press

PARK CITY, Utah (AP) — All that for a dollar?

Nah, Gwyneth Paltrow's motivation to go to trial to fight a lawsuit accusing her of sending a fellow skier "absolutely flying" at a posh Utah ski resort in 2016 was about vindication.

She got it when a jury found her not at fault in the collision, granting her exactly the \$1 she sought in her countersuit. As a court reporter read the verdict, the courtroom gallery made up mostly of her supporters exhaled while Paltrow sat next to her lawyer intently and avoided displaying emotion that could be interpreted as surprise or gloating.

She might have come out ahead in the court of public opinion, too, Hollywood lawyers and publicists say.

"It's not often that you go through the whole expense and time and bother of litigation for a dollar," said Tre Lovell, a Los Angeles lawyer who handles many celebrity cases. "But she wanted to turn this into a positive as a way of saying 'I'm not going to get taken advantage of,' and 'I'm a good person.'"

The actor-turned-influencer avoided engaging in any memorable missteps during the eight-day trial that she attended every day as viewers in Park City, Utah, and around the world watched closely. She even ended things on a classy note when she stopped before leaving court to lean over and tap her accuser's shoulder to wish him best of luck.

"She came across on the stand very well," said Emily D. Baker, legal analyst and former Los Angeles deputy district attorney. "She was personable, she was firm, but she wasn't ever aggressive. And it actually came across that she had empathy for what this plaintiff has gone through."

When 76-year-old Terry Sanderson filed the lawsuit in 2019, it was the kind of case that seemed to scream for the quick, confidential settlement typical in lawsuits against celebrities. Instead, it endured for four years through trial.

"I felt that acquiescing to a false claim compromised my integrity," Paltrow posted to her 8.3 million Instagram followers after the verdict.

Sanderson himself questioned afterward whether the lawsuit was worth it and said he believed that people tend to naturally trust celebrities like Paltrow.

Juror Samantha Imrie said in an interview on Good Morning America that it was evidence, not Paltrow's celebrity, that swayed the jury. She said Sanderson seemed to be telling "his truth" but she thought it was "distorted." Imrie, a 31-year-old nurse, said she found Paltrow's testimony convincing.

"I think, you know, there was in the back of my mind, 'Yes, this woman's an actress,' and you know, I took that into account," Imrie said. "But, I didn't feel that she had a reason to lie under oath. She's always in the spotlight, so she always has to be honest."

Holly Baird, a publicist who handles major celebrity crises including many court cases, says that while trials have potential downsides, there is no reason for famous people to avoid them at all costs.

"I didn't see this being a downfall for her," Baird said. "This isn't like a murder case or anything. It humanizes her. People have similar stories."

There were moments of potential pitfall, as when Paltrow answered a question about damages by saying she "had lost half a day of skiing," acknowledged paying nearly \$9,000 for her then-small kids' skiing instruction and explained why she let her ski instructor stay behind to check on Sanderson and exchange

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, April 1, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 267 ~ 56 of 68

information. As he waited to be tobogganed down the mountain by ski patrol, she followed her children Moses and Apple down the mountain, testifying that she was accustomed to having things done for her.

But the honest answer may not have done her damage.

"They live in a different world and it becomes their normal, but people are going to assume that," Lovell said. "You can have that and people are going to know it and accept. You've just got to come across as humble."

Baird agreed.

"I think she was authentic," she said. "She's with her children, she's worried about them."

The jury apparently found Paltrow likeable enough, returning after just 2 1/2 hours to give her a resounding win that blamed the collision 100% on Sanderson. Paltrow was awarded the \$1 she requested in her countersuit, a symbolic amount that mirrored Taylor Swift's response to a radio host's defamation lawsuit. Swift was awarded \$1 in 2017. She may also be awarded money to pay attorney fees, a decision that rests with the judge. He had not posted a decision on the online court docket as of Friday.

His lawsuit had sought more than \$300,000, though in closing arguments, his attorneys estimated damages as more than \$3.2 million.

Trial lawyers are known to regularly engage in seemingly friendly repartee with witnesses to try and cultivate sympathy among the jury. But many observers thought Sanderson's attorney Kristin VanOrman did the actor a major favor when she at times appeared charmed by Paltrow when she was on the stand.

When VanOrman asked Paltrow her height and she responded "just under 5'10"," VanOrman replied, "I am so jealous! I think I'm shrinking. I have to wear heels just to make it to 5'5"."

VanOrman's efforts to flag for the jury that Paltrow was larger than the man she collided with were overshadowed when the actor said back: "They're very nice."

Lovell said it was so "bizarre and ineffective" that he thought VanOrman was Paltrow's attorney when he first tuned in.

"That was ridiculous," she said. "The jury sees that and thinks she must not be that bad if the opposing attorney likes her. She seemed star struck."

Once among the most ubiquitous leading women in Hollywood, the Oscar winner has taken fewer and fewer roles in recent years. Many now identify her more with her wellness-and-lifestyle company Goop, whose offerings have brought her ridicule in some quarters as the quintessential out-of-touch peddler of celebrity woo-woo.

But that also makes Paltrow her own boss, who is not beholden to others for work, and has brought her a devoted set of customer-fans.

"Gwyneth has such a cult following in the lifestyle and wellness brand, and people love to see another side of their life like this," Baird said. "I think her PR team should be using it. She's getting way more TV time than she would any other way."

Paltrow's fight to clear her name resonated with many of her fans, including those who braved blizzards to fill the gallery of the Park City courtroom for two weeks.

"When you are a celebrity you know that you're going to get some of this, but that was totally over the top," said Ann Malcolm, a Park City local who enjoys skiing at Deer Valley, the mountain where Paltrow and Sanderson crashed.

A crowd made up of locals and some who traveled from California to catch a glimpse of the trial snapped selfies, showed each other mockups of t-shirts that read "#Gwynnocent" and commended Paltrow for being both gracious and fighting to clear her name.

"He thought it would be an easy payday," said David Madow, a retired dentist and avid skier who attended multiple days of court proceedings. "I was impressed with the fact that she said 'No, I'm not gonna do that.'"

Dalton reported from Los Angeles.

Associated Press Writer Krysta Fauria contributed.

Justice Department sues Norfolk Southern over derailment

By JOHN SEEWER Associated Press

The federal government filed a lawsuit against railroad Norfolk Southern over environmental damage caused by a train derailment on the Ohio-Pennsylvania border that spilled hazardous chemicals into nearby creeks and rivers.

The U.S. Department of Justice said it's seeking to hold the company accountable for "unlawfully polluting the nation's waterways and to ensure it pays the full cost of the environmental cleanup," in the lawsuit filed Thursday.

It's asking for fines under the Clean Water Act and for a judgment to hold the railroad accountable for past and future costs.

The derailment in early February led to the evacuation of half of the 5,000 residents of East Palestine when responders intentionally burned toxic chemicals in some of the derailed cars to prevent an uncontrolled explosion.

Chemicals from the derailed cars and firefighting foam seeped into creeks and rivers near the village, with some eventually ending up in the Ohio River. So far, more than 9 million gallons (34 million liters) of wastewater have been removed from the site and hauled to hazardous waste storage sites in Ohio and other states, according to the state officials.

Government officials say tests haven't found dangerous levels of chemicals in the air or water in the area, but many residents remain concerned about their long-term health.

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources said three weeks after the disaster that the spilled contaminants killed an estimated 44,000 fish, mostly small ones such as minnows.

Norfolk Southern CEO Alan Shaw has repeatedly apologized for the impact the derailment and the company has pledged to pay for the cleanup. The railroad has promised so far to spend close to \$28 million to help the Ohio community recover while also announcing several voluntary safety upgrades.

Connor Spielmaker, a spokesperson for Norfolk Southern, said the company is focused on the cleanup and working at the direction of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

"Our job right now is to make progress every day cleaning up the site, assisting residents whose lives were impacted by the derailment, and investing in the future of East Palestine and the surrounding areas," he said in a statement.

Ohio filed a lawsuit against Norfolk Southern just over two weeks ago to make sure it pays for the cleanup and environmental damage, and pays for groundwater and soil monitoring in the years ahead.

Moscow prison for US reporter was used in Stalin's purges

By The Associated Press undefined

Lefortovo prison, where American journalist Evan Gershkovich has been jailed on espionage charges, dates from the czarist era and has been a terrifying symbol of repression since Soviet times.

The inconspicuous, pale yellow complex in eastern Moscow was built as a military penitentiary in 1881 and was used for low-ranking convicts sentenced to relatively short terms. But it gained its notoriety after the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, when it became a top detention facility for the Soviet secret police.

Under Soviet leader Josef Stalin's Great Terror of mass arrests in the 1930s, Lefortovo was one of the main pre-trial detention facilities for "enemies of the people," equipped with torture chambers to extract confessions. Stalin's sadistic secret police chief, Lavrentiy Beria, personally took part in some prisoner interrogations and executions in its basement.

Vasily Blyukher, one of the highest-ranking Red Army officers, was among those who died in 1938 after being tortured in Lefortovo.

After Stalin's death in 1953, the prison continued to serve as main detention facility for the KGB, which used it for espionage suspects and political dissidents. Stalin's younger son Vasily was held in Lefortovo at

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, April 1, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 267 ~ 58 of 68

one point following his father's death as the country's new leaders prosecuted him for various offenses. Nobel prize author Alexander Solzhenitsyn, who chronicled Stalin's purges in his "Gulag Archipelago," spent a night in Lefortovo in 1974 before being expelled from the Soviet Union.

Soviet dissidents Vladimir Bukovsky and Natan Sharansky were held there during Leonid Brezhnev's rule and later released in prisoner exchanges, and Brezhnev's son-in-law, Yuri Churbanov, served time there on corruption charges soon after the leader's death.

Nicholas Daniloff, a Moscow correspondent for U.S. News and World Report, was put in Lefortovo after his 1986 arrest on bogus espionage accusations. He was released without charge 20 days later in a swap for an employee of the Soviet Union's U.N. mission who was arrested by the FBI on spying charges.

Gershkovich, a 31-year-old reporter for The Wall Street Journal, is the first American reporter to be arrested on espionage charges in Russia since Daniloff. The Journal denied the allegations and demanded Gershkovich's release.

Mathias Rust, a German teenager who astonished the world by landing his light plane on Red Square in 1987 after fooling Soviet air defenses, also was held in Lefortovo until his release the following year.

After the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union, the leaders of a hard-line parliamentary rebellion against Russia's first president, Boris Yeltsin, in 1993 also were held there until their amnesty the following year.

Other famous Lefortovo inmates included Russian intelligence officers Alexander Litvinenko and Sergei Skripal, both later poisoned in the U.K. in what British authorities described as Moscow-engineered attacks. Litvinenko died in London in 2006 after drinking tea laced with radioactive polonium, while Skripal and his daughter survived their 2018 poisoning with the nerve agent Novichok.

Even though it was formally transferred to Justice Ministry jurisdiction in 2005, the Federal Security Service, the top KGB successor agency that is known under its acronym FSB, has maintained de facto control of the facility.

All those arrested by the FSB on spying charges and some other high-profile suspects, including government officials accused of corruption, are held in Lefortovo pending trial.

Paul Whelan, a Michigan corporate security executive and a former Marine, was held in Lefortovo after his arrest in 2018 on espionage charges that his family and the U.S. government have said are baseless. After his conviction in 2020, Whelan was transferred to another prison to serve his 16-year sentence.

Lefortovo's trademark is holding its prisoners in "total information isolation," said Yevgeny Smirnov, a prominent lawyer who has defended espionage and treason suspects.

"No calls, no visitation, no newspapers, nothing," Smirnov told The Associated Press. "At best, they will receive letters — and even then most likely with a delay of a month or two. It's one of the tools of suppression."

Smirnov and his colleague Ivan Pavlov said FSB espionage investigations typically last from a year to 18 months, followed by a trial behind closed doors. There have been no acquittals in treason and espionage cases in Russia since 1999, Pavlov said.

While Lefortovo has maintained its distinctive Soviet-era feel, one addition was a small Russian Orthodox church built on its grounds with small separate prayer cabins to keep inmates from being seen by others.

Authorities maintain a tight lid of secrecy on Lefortovo, not disclosing any details such as the number of prisoners held there. Russian media reports said it hosts no more than 200 prisoners at a time, normally kept in solitary confinement.

Writer Eduard Limonov, who spent two years in Lefortovo in the early 2000s after being charged with extremism for his political activities, described its dusty red carpets in the corridors, muffling the steps of inmates, and portraits of Soviet secret police founder Felix Dzerzhinsky in interrogation rooms.

Cell doors shut noiselessly, with the silence only broken when guards use clacking devices or banged metal pipes to warn colleagues that they were escorting a suspect to avoid meeting others.

Final Four: At Florida Atlantic, it's not 'F-A-Who?' anymore

By EDDIE PELLIS AP National Writer

HOUSTON (AP) — Nobody will ever mistake Tobacco Road for 777 Glades Road, which is the address

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, April 1, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 267 ~ 59 of 68

of one of history's most unexpected Final Four party crashers.

But there, across the street from a strip mall anchored by a Whole Foods in the upscale retirement town of Boca Raton, Florida, sits one of the fastest-growing, most-diverse college campuses that very few basketball fans had heard of until this month.

Florida Atlantic University has barreled its way onto the sport's biggest stage, adding "Final Four" to a hoops resume that, until now, could have been scribbled down on the back of a cocktail napkin.

It's one of those unique situations where the little guys — in this case, the ninth-seeded Owls, anchored by 7-foot-1 center Vladislav Golden out of Russia — aren't so little. But even with the 21,000 or so students on its main campus, the school president — at least for now — doesn't want anyone mistaking FAU for anything other than an underdog.

"Our basketball program is sort of representative of what FAU is," said Stacy Volnick. "In my mind, they seek their opportunity to go farther than most might have imagined they would. Literally, we are a school that gives opportunities to students who might not otherwise have them."

That was, in a nutshell, precisely why the school was formed.

Dedicated in 1964 with a grand-opening speech from none other than President Lyndon Johnson, FAU started as a two-year school for upperclassmen and graduate students.

Some thought the beach might be a good place to put FAU, but as one of the members of the state control board argued, "we want to educate them, not give them a bath."

So, the fifth school in Florida's state university system was placed on an old Army air base in a still-sleepy region of a still-sleepy state where the system was dominated by Florida State and the University of Florida — the school Alabama football coach Bear Bryant liked to call a "sleeping giant."

Now, FAU is the sleeping giant. It happened over decades.

As South Florida got bigger, so did FAU. It became a four-year college in the 1980s, and today it bills itself as a world-class research school that is growing its medicine programs with an eye on building the state's second public dental college.

It boasts of being Florida's most diverse public university, and a school with no "equity gap" — no difference between success rates of low-income and Pell-grant-eligible students and the rest of the student body.

Famous alums? It's a tight list. One is renowned orthopedic surgeon Marc Philippon. Another is Scott Thompson, the man more familiar to the public at-large as the comedian Carrot Top.

In a way, his story mirrors those of lots of students who come to FAU.

"I originally wanted to go to Florida. I loved the Gators," Thompson said. "I applied, I got accepted, but it wasn't something I could really afford."

A friend mentioned FAU, which was closer to the water, and closer to his childhood home on Florida's central Coast.

"I decided to give it a whirl, and that's really how I ended up in comedy," said Thompson.

He started telling jokes at an on-campus bar called the Rathskeller that hasn't changed much since his first open-mic night there in the late 1980s.

These days, everyone at FAU is smiling.

Volnick makes no secret about leaning into one of the old saws of academia: that sports serves as the front door to your university. In college sports, it's often a coin flip as to whether that's a good thing or not. At FAU, Volnick said 2022 was the largest fundraising year in school history. That was before the basketball team made the Final Four.

And while FAU will never be mistaken for North Carolina or Duke, neither will it be confused with Colorado or Oregon or Wisconsin or any of the dozens of flagship universities that stand as focal points in typical college towns. It is in Boca Raton, a well-to-do retirement town where nearly 25% of the population is 65 or over (compared to 17% nationwide) and the average resident is more concerned with that day's pickleball game than what the Owls are doing.

It didn't stop them from trying. In 1993, FAU set out on building a Division I sports program, a move that brings with it a commitment to spending more, growing more and dealing with more outside pressures.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, April 1, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 267 ~ 60 of 68

In 2001, former University of Miami coach Howard Schnellenberger, an acolyte of Bryant himself, came out of retirement and built the football program from scratch with an early capital raise of \$13 million. A program that began with 22 scholarship players found itself in the New Orleans Bowl by 2007.

"It's been a great romance and it's produced, I think, a wonderful child," Schnellenberger said then in an ESPN.com interview.

Now, the hoops program is all grown up, too, which brings some good things and some challenges.

Their coach, former Florida assistant Dusty May, is certain to become a more popular commodity. The school is set to move from Conference USA to the higher-profile American Athletic Conference next season.

While FAU certainly benefited from the newly wide-open transfer rules that have hit college sports, it still needs more love on the name-image-likeness (NIL) scene, which is propped up by "collectives" that are loosely affiliated with the universities and can offer big bucks to prospective players. There's no lack of money in South Florida — billionaire John Ruiz has reportedly bankrolled some \$2 million in NIL earnings for Miami players — only a question of how FAU can tap into it.

For now, though, the school the locals used to call "Find Another University" has made a name for itself. And everyone, it seems, is taking this place seriously.

"Nobody really knew what FAU was when I went there," Thompson said. "But you look at it today, and it's a whole different school."

AP March Madness coverage: <https://apnews.com/hub/march-madness> and bracket: <https://apnews.com/hub/ncaa-mens-bracket> and <https://apnews.com/hub/ap-top-25-college-basketball-poll> and https://twitter.com/AP_Top25

A key inflation gauge tracked by the Fed slowed in February

By PAUL WISEMAN AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Federal Reserve's favored inflation gauge slowed sharply last month, an encouraging sign in the Fed's yearlong effort to cool price pressures through steadily higher interest rates.

Friday's report from the Commerce Department showed that consumer prices rose 0.3% from January to February, down from a 0.6% increase from December to January. Measured year-over-year, prices rose 5%, slower than the 5.3% annual increase in January.

Excluding volatile food and energy prices, so-called core inflation rose 0.3% from January and 4.6% from a year earlier. Both were slowdowns from the previous month. The Fed is believed to pay particular attention to the core measure as a gauge of underlying inflation pressures.

Taken as a whole, Friday's figures show that inflation pressures, though easing gradually, still maintain a grip on the economy. The Fed has raised its benchmark rate nine times since March of last year in a strenuous drive to tame inflation, which hit a four-decade high in mid-2022.

The report also showed that consumer spending rose 0.2% from January to February, a drop from a hefty 2% increase a month earlier. But Phil Levy, chief economist at the supply chain firm Flexport, noted that the government revised up January's consumer spending figures and that the savings rate ticked up in February — to 4.6% of after-tax income. That suggested to him that Americans have the financial wherewithal to keep shopping.

"People are spending," Levy said. "People can afford to be spending. If you want to slow down inflation, you've got to somehow suppress that."

Job openings remain plentiful, hiring is strong, layoffs are still low and the unemployment rate is barely above a half-century low. A result has been upward pressure on wages, which have contributed to inflationary pressures. Even after having slowed, consumer prices are still posting year-over-year increases well above the Fed's 2% target. Earlier this month, the Labor Department said its consumer price index rose 0.4% from January to February and 6% from February 2022.

The Fed's policymaking has been complicated by the tumult that erupted in the financial system after the collapse this month of Silicon Valley Bank and New York-based Signature — the second- and third-biggest

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, April 1, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 267 ~ 61 of 68

bank failures in U.S. history. The central bank now must consider the risk that its continuing efforts to cool inflation through ever-higher interest rates could further destabilize the banking system.

At a news conference last week, Fed Chair Jerome Powell acknowledged that the uncertainties now overhanging small and midsize banks will likely cause tighter lending conditions. If banks do restrict lending in the coming months, Powell said, it would probably slow the economy and perhaps act as the equivalent of a Fed rate hike.

Flexport's Levy noted that at 4.6%, the report's measure of year-over-year core inflation was still as high in February as it had been in December, suggesting that inflationary pressures are persistent and that the Fed still has work to do.

"You look at this report and think, we've got to keep applying the brakes," Levy said. "The question is how much of March's banking turmoil has already applied the brakes for them."

Many American families are still feeling squeezed.

"I can go get a \$5 meal at Wendy's, which isn't even healthy, but that's cheaper than buying the ingredients to make a meal at home," said Jennifer Schultz of St. Joseph, Missouri.

"Eggs started to skyrocket, meat's gone up tremendously, a gallon of milk: staple products that our seniors needed — they were really being affected by the inflation and still are," said Michelle Fagerstone, chief development officer at St. Joseph's Second Harvest Community Food Bank.

On Friday, the European Union reported that inflation in the 20 countries that use the euro currency slowed to its lowest level in a year as energy prices dropped, though food costs still rose, keeping pressure on the European Central Bank to raise rates further. Consumer prices in the eurozone jumped 6.9% in March from a year earlier, down from 8.5% in February. Eurozone inflation has been easing since peaking at 10.6% in October.

In the United States, the Fed is thought to monitor the inflation gauge that was issued Friday, called the personal consumption expenditures (PCE) price index, even more closely than it does the government's better-known consumer price index. Typically, the PCE index shows a lower inflation level than CPI. In part, that's because rents, which have been among the biggest drivers of inflation, carry twice the weight in the CPI that they do in the PCE.

The PCE price index also seeks to account for changes in how people shop when inflation jumps. As a result, it can capture emerging trends — when, for example, consumers shift away from pricey national brands in favor of less expensive store brands.

AP Video Journalist Nick Ingram in St. Joseph, Missouri, contributed to this report.

Oscar Pistorius stays in prison after his parole is denied

By MOGOMOTSI MAGOME and GERALD IMRAY Associated Press

PRETORIA, South Africa (AP) — Former Olympic runner Oscar Pistorius was denied parole Friday and will have to stay in prison for at least another year and four months after it was decided that he had not served the "minimum detention period" required to be released following his murder conviction for killing girlfriend Reeva Steenkamp 10 years ago.

The parole board ruled that Pistorius would only be able to apply again in August 2024, South Africa's Department of Corrections said in a short, two-paragraph statement. It was released soon after a parole hearing at the Atteridgeville Correctional Centre prison where Pistorius is being held.

The board cited a new clarification on Pistorius' sentence that was issued by South Africa's Supreme Court of Appeal just three days before the hearing, according to the statement. Still, legal experts criticized authorities' decision to go ahead with the hearing when Pistorius was not eligible.

Reeva Steenkamp's parents, Barry and June, are "relieved" with the decision to keep Pistorius in prison but are not celebrating it, their lawyer told The Associated Press.

"They can't celebrate because there are no winners in this situation. They lost a daughter and South Africa lost a hero," lawyer Tania Koen said, referring to the dramatic fall from grace of Pistorius, once a

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, April 1, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 267 ~ 62 of 68

world-famous and highly-admired athlete.

The decision and reasoning to deny parole was a surprise but there has been legal wrangling over when Pistorius should be eligible for parole because of the series of appeals in his case. He was initially convicted of culpable homicide, a charge comparable to manslaughter, in 2014 but the case went through a number of appeals before Pistorius was finally sentenced to 13 years and five months in prison for murder in 2017.

Serious offenders must serve at least half their sentence to be eligible for parole in South Africa. Pistorius' lawyers had previously gone to court to argue that he was eligible because he had served the required portion if they also counted periods served in jail from late 2014 following his culpable homicide conviction.

The lawyer handling Pistorius' parole application did not immediately return phone calls seeking comment.

June Steenkamp attended Pistorius' hearing inside the prison complex to oppose his parole. The parents have said they still do not believe Pistorius' account of their daughter's killing and wanted him to stay in jail.

Pistorius, who is now 36, has always claimed he killed Steenkamp, a 29-year-old model and law student, in the pre-dawn hours of Valentine's Day 2013 after mistaking her for a dangerous intruder in his home. He shot four times with his licensed 9 mm pistol through a closed toilet cubicle door in his bathroom, where Steenkamp was, hitting her multiple times. Pistorius claimed he didn't realize his girlfriend had got out of bed and gone to the bathroom.

The Steenkamps say they still think he is lying and killed her intentionally after a late-night argument.

Lawyer Koen had struck a more critical tone when addressing reporters outside the prison before the hearing, saying the Steenkamps believed Pistorius could not be considered to be rehabilitated "unless he comes clean" over the killing.

"He's the killer of their daughter. For them, it's a life sentence," Koen said before the hearing.

June Steenkamp had sat grim-faced in the back seat of a car nearby while Koen spoke to reporters outside the prison gates ahead of the hearing. June Steenkamp and Koen were then driven into the prison in a Department of Corrections vehicle. June Steenkamp made her submission to the parole board in a separate room to Pistorius and did not come face-to-face with her daughter's killer, Koen said.

Barry Steenkamp did not travel for the hearing because of poor health but a family friend read out a statement to the parole board on his behalf, the parents' lawyer said.

Pistorius was once hailed as an inspirational figure for overcoming the adversity of his disability, before his murder trial and sensational downfall captivated the world.

Pistorius's lower legs were amputated when he was a baby because of a congenital condition and he walks with prosthetics. He went on to become a double-amputee runner and multiple Paralympic champion who made history by competing against able-bodied athletes at the 2012 London Olympics, running on specially designed carbon-fiber blades.

Pistorius' conviction eventually led to him being sent to the Kgosi Mampuru II maximum security prison, one of South Africa's most notorious. He was moved to the Atteridgeville prison in 2016 because that facility is better suited to disabled prisoners.

There have only been glimpses of his life in prison, with reports claiming he had at one point grown a beard, gained weight and taken up smoking and was unrecognizable from the elite athlete he once was.

He has spent much of his time working in an area of the prison grounds where vegetables are grown, sometimes driving a tractor, and has reportedly been running bible classes for other inmates.

Pistorius' father, Henke Pistorius, told the Pretoria News newspaper before the hearing that his family hoped he would be home soon.

"Deep down, we believe he will be home soon," Henke Pistorius said, "but until the parole board has spoken the word, I don't want to get my hopes up."

Imray reported from Cape Town, South Africa.

Biden to Russia on detained US journalist: 'Let him go'

By SEUNG MIN KIM Associated Press

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, April 1, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 267 ~ 63 of 68

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden on Friday urged Russia to release Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich, who was arrested on espionage charges — allegations the newspaper denies.

“Let him go,” Biden told reporters at the White House when asked about his message to Russia on the arrest of Gershkovich.

Russia’s Federal Security Service has accused Gershkovich, a U.S. citizen, of trying to obtain classified information. It is the first time an American journalist has been detained in Russia on accusations of spying since the Cold War. The Journal has said it “vehemently denies” the charges.

Speaking at a news conference in Lusaka, Zambia, Vice President Kamala Harris added that the administration was “deeply concerned” about Gershkovich’s arrest.

“We will not tolerate — and condemn, in fact — repression of journalists,” Harris said during a weeklong visit to Africa.

The Biden administration said Thursday it was working to secure U.S. consular access to Gershkovich. Asked Friday whether he would expel Russian diplomats or journalists in the U.S., Biden responded: “That’s not the plan right now.”

Karine Jean-Pierre, the White House press secretary, called the targeting of U.S. citizens in Russia “unacceptable” and said the administration condemns the detention of Gershkovich “in the strongest terms.”

The Biden administration has also warned U.S. citizens not to travel to Russia, and for Americans in the country to depart immediately.

In Moscow, Dmitry Muratov, Nobel Peace Prize-winning editor-in-chief of the Novaya Gazeta newspaper, told reporters he knows the detained journalist and “Gershkovich was not an agent using his professional and journalistic accreditation as a cover for espionage.”

Speaking more generally of the Kremlin’s repression of independent journalism, which has intensified since Russia invaded Ukraine, Muratov said: “This is a trend — trying to attribute espionage and treason to people at every step, to show that the profession of a journalist is an enemy profession for the country — for Russian and other journalists.”

Associated Press reporter Chris Megerian contributed to this report from Lusaka, Zambia.

Finland’s NATO membership: What’s next?

The Associated Press undefined

HELSINKI (AP) — Finland received the green light to join NATO when Turkey ratified the Nordic country’s membership late Thursday, becoming the last country in the 30-member Western military alliance to sign off.

All NATO members must vote unanimously to admit a new country. into the alliance. The decision by the Turkish parliament followed Hungary’s ratification of Finland’s bid earlier in the week.

The addition of Finland, which shares a 1,340 kilometer (832 mile) border with Russia, will more than double the size of NATO’s border with Russia.

However, a few more steps and procedures are required before the northern European nation becomes the 31st full NATO member:

ACCEPTANCE LETTERS

Turkey and Hungary dispatch acceptance letters to the United States which is the depositary, or safe-keeper, of NATO under the alliance’s 1949 founding treaty. The letters will be filed in the archives of the U.S. State Department, which will notify NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg that the conditions for inviting Finland to become a member were met.

INVITATION

NATO sends a letter signed by Stoltenberg inviting Finland to join the military alliance.

SIGNATURES

Finland sends its own acceptance document, signed by Foreign Minister Pekka Haavisto, to the U.S. State Department. Finnish President Sauli Niinistö authorized Haavisto to sign the document. Either the Finnish Embassy in Washington or a Finnish government official will deliver the document.

FULL MEMBERSHIP

Once Finland's membership acceptance document reaches the State Department in Washington, the country officially becomes a NATO member.

FINLAND-SWEDEN

Finland and neighboring Sweden jointly applied for NATO membership in May 2022. The countries, which have close cultural, economic and political ties, planned to enter the alliance simultaneously.

Sweden's bid, however, has stalled due to opposition from Turkey, whose president has said his country wouldn't ratify membership before its disputes with Stockholm were resolved. The Turkish government has accused Sweden of being too soft on groups that it deems to be terror organizations.

In his first reaction to the Turkish parliamentary vote, Sweden's Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson congratulated Finland.

"It would have been even better if we came in at the same time," he said, adding that there are no guarantees Sweden will be in by the NATO July summit in Vilnius, Lithuania's capital, as initially expected.

"We are now awaiting the Turkish election" in May, Kristersson said. "There is a significant part in this that also deals with Turkish domestic politics."

Hungary's parliament also has yet to ratify Sweden's accession to NATO, and it remains unclear when it will do so.

Funerals set for Nashville school shooting's 6 victims

By TRAVIS LOLLER and ADRIAN SAINZ Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — Funeral arrangements were disclosed Thursday for the six people killed in this week's school shooting in Nashville, as the grieving city mourns the victims of the horrific attack that transformed what should have been a normal day of school on a bright, sunny morning into wrenching tragedy.

Heartbreaking new details continued to emerge about the lives of the three adults and three 9-year-old students who police say were killed during the shooting Monday at The Covenant School. The children have been identified as Evelyn Dieckhaus, Hallie Scruggs and William Kinney. Also killed were Katherine Koonce, 60, the head of the school; Mike Hill, 61, a custodian; and Cynthia Peak, 61, a substitute teacher.

A funeral service for Evelyn was scheduled for Friday at Woodmont Christian Church in Nashville, with a private reception to follow, according to an obituary provided to The Associated Press by a family friend. Funeral guests are invited to wear pink or other joyful colors "in tribute to Evelyn's light and love of color," according the obituary. She will be laid to rest on Saturday in a private family burial.

Hallie's family planned a private funeral for her Saturday at Covenant Presbyterian Church, where her father is the lead pastor. On Thursday, members of Our Lady of the Lake Catholic Church, including the girl's grandparents, were planning to pray the rosary for Hallie and for all those affected by the shooting, according to a Facebook post from the church.

The funeral for Hill has been set for Tuesday morning at 11 a.m. at Stephens Valley Church in Nashville, with visitation beginning at 10 a.m., pastor Jim Bachmann said.

A visitation for Koonce was scheduled for Tuesday from 5-8 p.m. at Christ Presbyterian Church, with a service the following day at 1 p.m.

The service for Kinney was set for 2:30 p.m. Sunday at Christ Presbyterian.

Peak's visitation was scheduled for Saturday at 10:30 a.m., also at Christ Presbyterian, with a service at noon.

The funeral plans were announced as new information about Evelyn and some of the others was released.

In the obituary given to the AP by a family friend, Evelyn was described as "a constant beacon of joy" who loved art, music, animals and snuggling with her older sister on the couch.

"With an unwavering faith in the goodness of others, Evelyn made people feel known, seen, but never judged," the obituary said. "Her adoring family members agree that 'she was everyone's safe space.'"

In preschool, Evelyn "would often position herself between two younger babies, intuitively offering comfort

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, April 1, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 267 ~ 65 of 68

by patting their backs." She would greet people with open arms and an infectious laugh, the obituary said.

Evelyn enjoyed crafting and drawing, and her teachers "would observe Evelyn studying the world around her with curiosity, eagerness, and clarity," according to the obituary.

She also liked to sing along to tunes by Taylor Swift and from the Broadway show "Hamilton." She also loved her dogs, Mable and Birdie, and wanted a rat for her 10th birthday present.

"Strong but never pushy, she had self-composure and poise beyond her years," the obituary said. "This girl 'could read a room.'"

As Evelyn's loved ones prepared for her funeral, William Kinney's youth baseball league was taking steps to remember a teammate and friend.

The night after the shooting, a coach at the Crieve Hall Baseball park led a prayer and a moment of silence for the boy. The tribute was posted on the park's Facebook page.

William had played baseball at the park in the past and his team this season was the Reds, said Steve Cherrico, director of Crieve Hall youth athletics. Players and their families have been encouraged to wear red in the field and in the stands, and red ribbons have been placed at the field where William played.

"We've covered everything in red," Cherrico said. "We have put plenty of memory pieces on the ballpark itself."

Cherrico said league members were heartbroken at the loss of William and the others who were killed. Cherrico said it was not the first time that Crieve Hall has lost a player.

"The league has always stepped up and come together as a family," he said.

In response to the park's tribute, Major League Baseball's Cincinnati Reds posted the following on Instagram: "'Sending all of our love from Cincinnati,'" with a heart emoji at the end.

Loller reported from Nashville; Sainz reported from Memphis, Tennessee; Ben Finley contributed to this report from Norfolk, Virginia.

Purdue's Zach Edey named AP men's player of the year

By JOHN MARSHALL AP Basketball Writer

Zach Edey spent the days following Purdue's historic NCAA Tournament loss lying low, his phone turned off, along with the rest of the outside world.

The disappointing finish did little to diminish the season the Boilermakers big man had.

Dominating at both ends of the floor during the regular season, Edey was a near-unanimous choice as The Associated Press men's college basketball player of the year. Edey received all but one vote from a 58-person media panel, with Indiana's Trayce Jackson-Davis getting the other.

"The season ended in disappointment, which really sucks, but it's always nice to win individual accolades," Edey said. "It kind of validates your work a little bit. The last three years I've played here, I've seen my game grow every year. AP player of the year is a great feeling, it just kind of stinks the way the season ended."

That ending came in the NCAA Tournament's first round, when Purdue lost to Fairleigh Dickinson, joining Virginia in 2018 as the only No. 1 seeds to lose to a No. 16.

Before that, Edey dominated.

The 7-foot-4 Canadian was named a unanimous AP All-American and the Big Ten player of the year after finishing sixth nationally in scoring (22.3), second in rebounding (12.8) and first in double-doubles (26).

Edey also shot 62% from the floor and averaged 2.1 blocked shots per game while leading Purdue to its first outright Big Ten regular-season title since 2017. He is the first player since Navy's David Robinson in 1985-86 to have at least 750 points, 450 rebounds and 50 blocked shots in a season.

"He's kind of a one of a kind," Purdue guard David Jenkins Jr. said. "I've never played with someone like him, probably never will again."

And to think, Edey didn't want to play basketball when he was younger.

A hockey and baseball player growing up in Toronto, Edey resisted basketball at first. He was 6-2 by the

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, April 1, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 267 ~ 66 of 68

sixth grade and the natural inclination by the adults was to push him toward basketball, where his size would be a massive advantage.

"It was something I kind avoided all my life.," Edey said. "I didn't like people telling me what I should be doing with my life and it felt like that's what people were doing with basketball. When I started playing competitively, that's when I really fell in love with the sport."

Edey developed his game quickly. He played at IMG Academy in Bradenton, Florida, and proved himself against some of the nation's best high school players, drawing attention from college coaches. He ended up at Purdue, where coach Matt Painter had a proven track record of developing big men.

Edey had a limited role as a freshman, then averaged 14.4 points and 7.7 rebounds last season on a team that had talented big man Trevion Williams and future NBA lottery pick Jaden Ivey.

Already a tireless worker, Edey put in even more time during the offseason, spending extra time after practice and taking better care of his body. His already solid footwork got better, he added quickness and developed more patience with the constant double teams he faced — not to mention the barrage of physical play teams tried to employ against him.

"There's not really any kind of cool, sexy answer," Edey said. "I came in every day, I worked hard, I stayed after practice — stayed a long time after practice. I took care of my body and was able to steadily improve. There was nothing revolutionary I did. I just worked hard."

It certainly paid off, even if the season ended with a huge disappointment.

AP March Madness coverage: <https://apnews.com/hub/march-madness> and bracket: <https://apnews.com/hub/ncaa-mens-bracket> and <https://apnews.com/hub/ap-top-25-college-basketball-poll> and https://twitter.com/AP_Top25

Richard Branson's Virgin Orbit slashing 85% of its workforce

By MICHELLE CHAPMAN AP Business Writer

Richard Branson's Virgin Orbit is letting go of almost its entire work force with the satellite launch company finding it difficult to secure funding three months after a failed mission.

The company, headquartered in Long Beach, California, will cut 675 jobs, about 85% of its workforce, according to a Friday filing with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission.

Earlier this month Virgin Orbit said that it was pausing all operations amid reports of possible job cuts. At the time the company confirmed that it was putting all work on hold, but didn't say for how long.

In January, a mission by Virgin Orbit to launch the first satellites into orbit from Europe failed after a rocket's upper stage prematurely shut down. It was a setback in the United Kingdom which had hoped that the launch from Cornwall in southwest England would mark the beginning of more commercial opportunities for the U.K. space industry.

The company said in February that an investigation found that its rocket's fuel filter had become dislodged, causing an engine to become overheated and other components to malfunction over the Atlantic Ocean.

Virgin Orbit has completed four successful satellite launches so far from California for a mix of commercial and U.S. government defense uses.

Virgin Orbit said in a regulatory filing on Friday that the job cuts will occur in all areas of the company.

It expects about \$15.5 million in charges related to the job cuts, with the majority of the charges taking place in the first quarter. The company anticipates \$8.8 million in severance payments and employee benefits costs and \$6.5 million in other employee-related costs.

Virgin Orbit anticipates the job cuts being mostly complete by Monday.

Virgin Orbit, which is listed on the Nasdaq stock exchange, was founded in 2017 by British billionaire Richard Branson to target the market for launching small satellites into space. Its LauncherOne rockets are launched from the air from modified Virgin passenger planes, allowing the company to operate more flexibly than using fixed launch sites.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, April 1, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 267 ~ 67 of 68

Today in History: Apr 1, First pro baseball, hockey strikes

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Saturday, April 1, the 91st day of 2023. There are 274 days left in the year. This is April Fool's Day.

Today's Highlights in History:

On April 1, 1972, the first Major League Baseball players' strike began; it lasted 12 days. Twenty years later, on April 1, 1992, the National Hockey League Players' Association went on its first-ever strike, which lasted 10 days.

On this date:

In 1865, during the Civil War, Union forces routed Confederate soldiers in the Battle of Five Forks in Virginia.

In 1891, the Wrigley Co. was founded in Chicago by William Wrigley, Jr.

In 1924, Adolf Hitler was sentenced to five years in prison for his role in the Beer Hall Putsch in Munich. (Hitler was released in December 1924; during his time behind bars, he wrote his autobiographical screed, "Mein Kampf.")

In 1945, American forces launched the amphibious invasion of Okinawa during World War II. (U.S. forces succeeded in capturing the Japanese island on June 22.)

In 1970, President Richard M. Nixon signed a measure banning cigarette advertising on radio and television, to take effect after Jan. 1, 1971.

In 1975, with Khmer Rouge guerrillas closing in, Cambodian President Lon Nol resigned and fled into exile, spending the rest of his life in the United States.

In 1976, Apple Computer was founded by Steve Jobs, Steve Wozniak and Ronald Wayne.

In 1977, the U.S. Senate followed the example of the House of Representatives by adopting, 86-9, a stringent code of ethics requiring full financial disclosure and limits on outside income.

In 2003, American troops entered a hospital in Nasiriyah (nah-sih-REE'-uh), Iraq, and rescued Army Pfc. Jessica Lynch, who had been held prisoner since her unit was ambushed on March 23.

In 2011, Afghans angry over the burning of a Quran at a small Florida church stormed a U.N. compound in northern Afghanistan, killing seven foreigners, including four Nepalese guards.

In 2013, Taylor Swift was named entertainer of the year for the second year in a row at the Academy of Country Music Awards.

In 2016, world leaders ended a nuclear security summit in Washington by declaring progress in safeguarding nuclear materials sought by terrorists and wayward nations, even as President Barack Obama acknowledged the task was far from finished.

In 2017, Bob Dylan received his Nobel Literature diploma and medal during a small gathering in Stockholm, where he was performing a concert.

In 2020, resisting calls to issue a national stay-at-home order, President Donald Trump said he wanted to give governors "flexibility" to respond to the coronavirus. Under growing pressure, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis joined his counterparts in more than 30 states in issuing a stay-at-home order.

Ten years ago: Prosecutors announced they would seek the death penalty for James Holmes should he be convicted in the July 2012 Colorado movie theater attack that killed 12 people. (Holmes, found guilty of murder, ended up being sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole.) A cast member of the MTV reality show "BUCKWILD," Shain Gandee, 21, was found dead in a sport utility vehicle in a West Virginia ditch along with his uncle and a friend; the cause was accidental carbon monoxide poisoning.

Five years ago: Writer and producer Steven Bochco, known for creating the groundbreaking TV police drama "Hill Street Blues," died after a battle with cancer; he was 74. Authorities said the SUV that had carried members of a large, free-spirited family to their deaths several days earlier may have been driven intentionally off a scenic California cliff; six adopted children were killed along with their parents.

One year ago: Talks to stop the fighting in Ukraine resumed, as another attempt to rescue civilians from the shattered and encircled city of Mariupol was thrown into jeopardy and Russia accused the Ukrainians of a cross-border helicopter attack on a fuel depot. New federal rules were unveiled requiring that new

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, April 1, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 267 ~ 68 of 68

vehicles sold in the United States would have to travel an average of at least 40 miles per each gallon of gasoline by 2026. Amazon workers in Staten Island, New York, voted to unionize, marking the first successful U.S. organizing effort in the retail giant's history.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Don Hastings is 89. Actor Ali MacGraw is 84. R&B singer Rudolph Isley is 84. Reggae singer Jimmy Cliff is 75. Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito is 73. Rock musician Billy Currie (Ultravox) is 73. Actor Annette O'Toole is 71. Movie director Barry Sonnenfeld is 70. Singer Susan Boyle is 62. Actor Jose Zuniga is 61. Country singer Woody Lee is 55. Actor Jessica Collins is 52. Rapper-actor Method Man is 52. Movie directors Albert and Allen Hughes are 51. Political commentator Rachel Maddow is 50. Former tennis player Magdalena Maleeva is 48. Actor David Oyelowo is 47. Actor JJ Feild is 45. Singer Bijou Phillips is 43. Actor Sam Huntington is 41. Comedian-actor Taran Killam is 41. Actor Matt Lanter is 40. Actor Josh Zuckerman is 38. Country singer Hillary Scott (Lady A) is 37. Rock drummer Arejay Hale (Halestorm) is 36. Actor Asa Butterfield is 26. Actor Tyler Wladis is 13.