

Groton Daily Independent

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Groton Community Calendar

Tuesday, April 25

Senior Menu: Beef stroganoff noodles, squash, cookie, apple sauce.

School Breakfast: Egg omelets.

School Lunch: Meat balls, mashed potatoes.

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

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

United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.

Ag Fair in Aberdeen.

Cancelled: Groton Area Track Meet, 11 a.m.

Track at Miller, 2 p.m.

Wednesday, April 26

Senior Menu: Meat loaf, scalloped potatoes, creamed peas, honey fruit salad, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Hashbrown pizza.

School Lunch: Chicken strips, sweet potato puffs.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Confirmation, 6 p.m.

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

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

Postponed to May 10: Baseball, Softball, T-Ball Parent Meeting at the Groton Legion, 7:30 p.m.

High School Baseball: Miller at Groton, 5:30 p.m. (V/JV)

Thursday, April 27

Senior Menu: Beef stew, biscuit, tossed salad, rainbow sherbert.

School Breakfast: Oatmeal.

School Lunch: Hot dogs, baked beans.

Cancelled: Girls Golf Meet at Redfield Golf Course, 10 a.m.

Middle School Spring Concert, 7 p.m.

Track at Milbank, 3:30 p.m.

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

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The Bulletin

by Newsweek

JANUARY 24, 2023

World in Brief

thought to have been lodged by CNBC news anchor Hadley Gamble.

- Myles Cosgrove, the former Louisville police officer who fired the shot that killed Breonna Taylor in 2020, has been hired as a deputy in the sheriff's department of Carroll County in northeastern Kentucky, sparking protests in the state

- Protesters disrupted proceedings in the Montana House of Representatives in support of Zooey Zephyr, the transgender lawmaker who has been barred from speaking on the floor since she criticized a GOP bill banning gender-affirming care for minors.

- A bombing attack on a police station in northern Pakistan has killed at least 15 people and wounded dozens as terrorist violence continues to rise in the country.

- In the ongoing war in Ukraine, Ukrainian forces have successfully established positions along the eastern bank of the Dnieper River in a sign that Russian forces are losing their defensive positions in the south, the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) has said.

What to Watch in the Day Ahead

- E. Jean Carroll's battery and defamation lawsuit against former President Donald Trump begins Tuesday in Manhattan federal court. Carroll accused Trump of raping her in a dressing room at the Bergdorf Goodman department store in the mid-1990s. Trump has vehemently denied the allegations.

- The deadline for Facebook users to apply for a share of a \$725 million privacy lawsuit is today. Users qualify for compensation if they had accounts from May 2007 to Dec. 2022.

- On the economic front, both new home sales figures for March and Consumer confidence data for April are also scheduled to be released at 10 a.m.

- A 72-hour U.S.-brokered ceasefire in Sudan is allegedly under threat, with gunfire and shelling reportedly heard in the capital Khartoum.

- Donald Trump has received a new timeline for a possible indictment in Georgia over allegations he attempted to overturn the results of the 2020 election in the state. The "term of court" will begin on July 11, 2023, and conclude on September 1, 2023.

- NBCUniversal Chief Executive Jeff Shell has left the company following an allegation of sexual misconduct

Wrestling coach addition approved, health service discussed at Groton Area school board meeting

by Elizabeth Varin

The growing Groton Area wrestling team will now have another leader for those on the mat.

The Groton Area School District board approved hiring a junior high wrestling coach in addition to the two high school wrestling coaches.

Wrestling has been growing through the past few years, with 26 total kids this school year, said Head Wrestling Coach Darin Zoellner. And predictions for next year include more than a dozen junior high student wrestlers.

"Wrestling is kind of a unique sport where junior high is with varsity," Zoellner said. "It's like having your high school football teams all in one room."

There are some junior high students who have never wrestled, he said. It's hard to work with those at the beginner level all the way to state tournament-level athletes at one time. There area also a growing number of female wrestlers joining the team.

In the past, the coaches and athletes have had to rely volunteers and parents to help at tournaments and trips, he said. While varsity-level tournaments usually only have a couple of wrestling matches at a time, junior high and junior varsity tournaments can have more matches at the same time. It becomes more likely multiple Groton athletes will be wrestling at the same time.

"However hard you try, you're going to miss something," he said.

Zoellner asked the board to hire a junior high wrestling coach for next year.

"Do you have someone in mind?" asked Board Member TJ Harder.

Zoellner replied that he has spoken with three people who seem interested and will likely apply if a position were made available.

At one time, the district had a junior high wrestling coach, said Superintendent Joe Schwan. The position was cut during budget slashing after a state-aid reduction in the 2012 fiscal year. However, that cut was worded so the school board could bring back the position if it voted to do so.

A junior high coach salary is five percent of the base teaching salary, totaling \$2,150, Schwan said.

While the Groton wrestling team has been fortunate to have past wrestlers and college athletes volunteer, they can't always make it to tournaments or practices, Zoellner said. However, the community has come together to help the young athletes.

"It's a lot of people helping out," he said. "We have a great youth program, and it trickles up."

The board voted unanimously to add the junior high coach position, with Board Member Harder adding, "let's get him another coach."

Board Member Tigh Fliehs also added, "keep up the good work."

District staff gets creative for health and wellness

Three years ago, Presentation College stopped bringing nursing students to Groton to help screen students for height, weight, hearing, scoliosis and more, said School Nurse Beth Gustafson. Since then, there have been quite a few changes as the district partners with outside entities and looks within for help.

The district now does hearing screenings through the South Dakota School for the Deaf, she said.

"It's a really beneficial thing they do for us," she said, adding that the school brings both screeners and an audiologist. "If they tag someone who's not hearing right, they get to go to the audiologist and proceed from there."

The district has also brought in the Lions Club to assist with vision screenings, she said. If a student is flagged as having a potential vision issue, they are advised to go see their eye doctor.

A Groton Area high school student who wants to go in to nursing has also been asked to assist in height and weight screenings for middle school students, Gustafson said. This will allow the high schooler to learn some things about nursing while also assisting in the process.

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In other health and wellness news, the district has upgraded CPR dummies, she said. New versions need to be able to provide feedback if a student is not performing CPR at the right rate or rhythm. As of next year, Gustafson said, all of the district's CPR dummies will be able to do that.

The district has also added a couple new automated external defibrillators or AEDs, bringing the total to five. Two are located at the elementary school, one in the commons area and one in the office, Gustafson told the board. The high school has three: one in the nook outside the library door, one by the ticket booth near the arena, and one out at the soccer fields.

- Board President Deb Gengerke announced that Groton Area Superintendent Joe Schwan is the 2023 Innovator of the Year Award recipient from the School Administrators of South Dakota. An official announcement is expected Tuesday.

- The last full day of school for seniors will be May 5, according to the high school principals report by Dr. Kiersten Sombke. Graduation is scheduled for 2 p.m. on Sunday, May 14.

- The board accepted the resignation of two teachers. Sixth grade teacher Rose Long-Buechler and K-12 vocal music teacher submitted letters of resignation, effective at the end of the 2022-23 school year.

- The board voted to hire Brooke Malsom as a sixth grade teacher and junior high track coach for the 2023-24 school year. Malsom is a 2019 Aberdeen Central High School graduate who is finishing her teaching degree at Valley City State University. She also holds school records for the Valley City State University outdoor track and field team in the 100 and 200 meters. For indoor track and field, she holds the school record for the 55 meters, 60 meters, 200 meters and 300 meters.

- Ideas, plans and probable costs for potential work on the 1969 gymnasium are in the works, Superintendent Schwan told the board. He expects to have an update at the board's May meeting.

- Some schools in South Dakota are pushing forward next school year with an e-sports league. At some point, the Groton district will need to determine if there is interest in starting a league here and whether it would be feasible to do so, said Superintendent Schwan. There are some college scholarships already available, and some industries are pushing for students with those skills.

- This will be a busy summer for custodial staff at Groton Area School District, said Mike Nehls, head custodian. District staff have to prepare the arena floor to be sanded and refinished. The old gymnasium floor also needs to be stripped and recoated. Other summer projects include replacing windows at the football field concession stand, fixing cabinetry and doors at the school and other things that come up throughout the summer.

- Groton Area School District Head Cook Brandon Clocksene reported changes that have taken place this year. More salads and different vegetables are being offered, and Clocksene said he wants to try and find some new fruit for the students, though it will cost more. Third graders at the elementary school are able to dish themselves instead of being served portions in little bowls. The breakfast and lunch menu rotations have also changed, with the breakfast menus being repeated every three weeks and the lunch menu repeating every five weeks.

- Transportation Manager Damian Bahr detailed the buses currently in use and the ones that will need to be replaced soon. He also told the board that if the buses purchased moving forward are diesel, there's going to be an issue with fluids turning to sludge in colder weather. He recommended the board look at possibly heating one of the Quonsets and parking those diesel vehicles inside there. Once school is out, the transportation staff will get the buses cleaned and ready for inspection.

- The board authorized membership in the South Dakota High School Activities Association for the 2023-2024 school year. It's basically an agreement to follow the rules as set by the high school activities association, Superintendent Schwan said.

- Teaching contracts for the 2023-2024 are being issued, with a return date of Monday, May 1.

- Smarter balance science testing at the elementary began this week for fifth graders. ELA and math testing for third, fourth and fifth graders takes place next week, said elementary school Principal Brett Schwan.

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Superintendent's Report to the Groton Area School District 06-6 Board of Education

April 24, 2023

HS Arena HVAC Project. On Thursday of this week, we will be having a pre-construction meeting with Sichmeller Engineering and Ethan Barton from Fay's Refrigeration and Heating (and perhaps subcontractors) regarding scheduling for this summer's work.

1969 Gym/Locker Rooms Project. I've been in communication with Herm Harms at JLG Architects and am expecting to hear and see something from JLG within the next week or so regarding ideas and plans and probable cost estimates for some potential work in the 1969 Gymnasium.

Region V Superintendent Meeting. On Wednesday, April 19, I attended the Region V Superintendent's meeting in Roscoe. The primary topic of the meeting was the South Dakota Registered Teacher Apprenticeship program pilot. The pilot program is federally approved and will accommodate up to 50 participants who must be employed full-time (minimum 950 hours) as a paraprofessional in a school district. Participants will earn a bachelor's degree in elementary, secondary, or special education over the course of this two-year program.

Following our discussion regarding the apprenticeship program, we had discussion with four area legislators regarding the recent legislative session and teacher shortages.

E-Sports Meeting. On Thursday, April 20, I met with Jeff Evenson at the NVC office in Aberdeen to discuss E-Sports. Jeff showed me a few things that he's learned about E-Sports and Fenworks, the ND-based company hired by SDHSAA to administer E-Sports in South Dakota. NVC/JVT has always been a great supporter of schools and has committed to financially supporting schools with that have an e-sports team in the 2023-24 school year with a donation. The SDHSAA is sponsoring a pilot season in 2023-24 with full sanctioning beginning in the 2024-25 school year.

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Principal's Report

MS/HS Building

Dr. Sombke

April 24, 2023

1) Smarter Balance Testing Update- Smarter Balance Testing was completed last week on April 20th for the Middle School and High School. Ms. VanGerpen will continue to test all individual students who were absent during testing days. Parents and guardians will receive a student growth report for students in grades 6-8 and 11 at the beginning of the 2023-2024 school year.

2) NWEA-MAPS Testing- Grades 6-11 will complete the 3rd testing session for the 2023 school year during their regular Math, Science, and English class from May 10-24. Parents and guardians will receive a student growth report at the beginning of the 2023-2024 school year.

3) Senior and Graduation Update- The last full day for seniors will be May 5th. Please see below for the dates and times for seniors during the last week of school, graduation preparation week, and graduation day:

May 4th- 2nd hour Awards and some scholarship pictures for local newspaper in the Library Conference Room. 3rd hour Class Picture in Arena (Class Shirt Needed)

May 5th- Senior's LAST full day

May 11th- 9:00am Graduation Rehearsal/Arena

-Bring basket for cards and gifts

-Collect Cap and Gown after rehearsal

-1:30-3:00 Scholarship Meet and Greet with local donors/Professional Dress for Scholarship Recipients

May 14th- Graduation at 2:00pm in Arena

-1:00pm Seniors arrive to old GHS Gym

-1:30pm Class Picture in Cap and Gown in Arena

-1:30-1:45 Family and Student Picture Time

-1:45 Students line up in old GHS Gym

-2:00 Graduation Ceremony

Dates to Know:

4/25- FFA Ag Fair Aberdeen

4/27- Middle School Spring Concert @ 7pm old GHS Gym

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4/29- Middle School Music Contest @ Groton Area (Grades 6-8)

5/4- High School Spring Concert @ 7pm old GHS Gym

5/5- Senior's Last Full School Day

5/8- FFA Banquet @ 6:30pm old GHS Gym

5/8- School Board Meeting @ 7pm

5/14- Groton Area Graduation Ceremony @ 2pm

5/25- Last Day of School for the 2022-2023 School Year/ End of 4th quarter

5/26- Faculty Inservice 8:00-3:30pm all staff

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April 17-23, 2023

We're back in Washington after two weeks in South Dakota for our Easter in-state work period. It was good to visit with so many South Dakotans about the issues that matter the most to them. From national defense and financial services issues out in Rapid City to visiting

with students in Aberdeen about reforming the federal government's role in the student loan process, South Dakota had a lot on its mind! Additionally, it was wonderful to be with friends and family to celebrate the resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Now that the in-state work period is over, we're scheduled to spend the next five work-weeks in session before Memorial Day. The year is going by fast! I know we usually say every week is a busy week, which is true, but this one was exceptionally full. Most of it, however, was meetings with South Dakotans in DC, which is always time well spent. I also attended seven hearings and other meetings, as well. Here's my Weekly Round[s] Up:

South Dakota groups I visited with: The South Dakota Rural Electric Association; the South Dakota chapter of the American College of Surgeons; South Dakota Farmers Union; South Dakota Telecommunications Association; South Dakota Secretary of Tourism Jim Hagen and representatives from Travel South Dakota; Brandon Maddox with Silencer Central, which is based in Sioux Falls; South Dakota Trucking Association; and Chairman J. Garret Renville with members of the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate.

Meetings this past week: Chris Inglis, former National Cyber Director; and Tom Bossert, President of Trinity Cyber. I attended an event to hear from Dr. Siddhartha Mukherjee, an oncologist, researcher and author who is heavily involved in cancer research. We also had our Senate Prayer Breakfast, where Senator Ben Cardin of Maryland was our speaker.

Met with South Dakotans from: Aberdeen, Alcester, Bison, Britton, Caputa, Clear Lake, Colman, Custer, Dante, Freeman, Garretson, Gettysburg, Groton, Highmore, Hot Springs, Hoven, Huron, Ipswich, Isabel, Kimball, Lake Andes, Madison, Millbank, Mina, Mitchell, Murdo, New Effington, Onida, Parade, Pierre, Quinn, Rapid City, Rosholt, Salem, Sioux Falls, Sisseton, Tabor, Vermillion, Wagner, Wall, Wessington Springs and Yankton. 42 communities might be a new one-week record!

Topics discussed: Rural electricity and broadband, cybersecurity, spectrum auction authority and the start of tourism season in South Dakota.

Votes taken: 12 – one of these votes was on a resolution that would have overturned a VA rule that forces taxpayers to fund abortions at VA medical facilities. I disagree with this VA rule and voted to reverse this policy.

Hearings: I attended seven hearings this week! I had one hearing in the Senate Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee where we heard from President Biden's nominee to be the Chair of his Council of Economic Advisors. I was able to question him on President Biden's policy-induced inflation. You can watch our exchange here.

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We had two full committee hearings in the Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) this week: one with Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro (you can watch a clip of that here) and one with US Indo-Pacific Command. We also had one hearing in the SASC Strategic Forces Subcommittee, and one in the SASC Cybersecurity Subcommittee, on which I serve as Ranking Member. I had two hearings in the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence.

Classified briefings: Two – one of which was on the leak of classified Pentagon documents. This leak will have national security implications and we will continue to have discussions about potential reforms that may need to be made to prevent situations like this from happening in the future.

Legislation introduced: I introduced the Protecting Access for Hunters and Anglers Act with 24 of my Senate colleagues this week. This bill would prohibit the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) from banning the use of traditional lead ammunition or tackle on public lands unless such action is supported by the best available science and state wildlife and fish agencies. More here.

My staff in South Dakota visited: Brookings, Hot Springs, Martin, Mitchell, Rapid City, Rochford, Sturgis and Wall.

Steps taken this week: 64,372 steps or 29.89 miles.

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Bradin of Groton Area Tigers Varsity Shuts Out Oldham-Ramona/ Rutland/Arlington Varsity Rebels

Bradin Althoff had all the right stuff on Sunday for Groton Area Tigers Varsity, allowing zero runs and besting Oldham-Ramona/Rutland/Arlington Varsity Rebels by a score of 10-0

Groton Area Tigers Varsity tallied four runs in the third inning. Tate Larson, Cade Larson, Dillon Abeln, and Braxton Imrie each had RBIs in the frame.

One bright spot for Oldham-Ramona/Rutland/Arlington Varsity Rebels was a double by Brock Eppe in the fifth inning.

Althoff was credited with the victory for Groton Area Tigers Varsity. The lefty allowed one hit and zero runs over six innings, striking out four and walking one.

Boyd Pooler took the loss for Oldham-Ramona/Rutland/Arlington Varsity Rebels. The righthander went five and a third innings, allowing ten runs on 13 hits, striking out two and walking zero.

Groton Area Tigers Varsity racked up 13 hits. Abeln, Larson, Logan Ringgenberg, and Althoff all collected multiple hits for Groton Area Tigers Varsity. Larson and Abeln each managed three hits to lead Groton Area Tigers Varsity. Groton Area Tigers Varsity didn't commit a single error in the field. Imrie had four chances in the field, the most on the team.

Eppe led Oldham-Ramona/Rutland/Arlington Varsity Rebels with one hit in two at bats.

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Oldham-Ramona/ Rutland/Arlington Varsity Rebels 0 - 10 Groton Area Tigers Varsity

📍 Home 📅 Sunday April 23, 2023

	1	2	3	4	5	6	R	H	E
OLDH	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
GRTN	0	3	4	0	0	3	10	13	0

BATTING

Oldham-Ramona/R	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
K Geherls (3B)	3	0	0	0	0	0
B Oftedal (SS)	2	0	0	0	0	0
C Hojer (C)	2	0	0	0	0	1
B Bickett (1B)	1	0	0	0	0	1
#17 (1B)	1	0	0	0	0	0
B Eppe (RF)	2	0	1	0	0	0
K McLaughlin (CF)	2	0	0	0	0	0
R Schneider (2B)	1	0	0	0	1	1
B Pooler (P)	2	0	0	0	0	0
N Pearson (LF)	1	0	0	0	0	1
Totals	17	0	1	0	1	4

2B: B Eppe, **TB:** B Eppe 2, **HBP:** N Pearson, **LOB:** 1

PITCHING

Oldham-Ram	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
B Pooler	5.1	13	10	7	0	2	0
Totals	5.1	13	10	7	0	2	0

L: B Pooler, **P-S:** B Pooler 80-56, **HBP:** B Pooler 2, **BF:** B Pooler 32

Groton Area Tigers	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
C Simon (SS)	4	1	1	1	0	0
C Dunker (LF)	4	0	0	0	0	2
B Althoff (P)	3	2	2	0	0	0
T Larson (1B)	4	1	3	2	0	0
L Ringgenberg (RF)	4	2	2	2	0	0
R Groeblichhoff (...)	3	1	1	0	0	0
C Larson (C)	2	0	0	0	0	0
D Abeln (CF)	3	1	3	2	0	0
B Imrie (2B)	3	0	1	2	0	0
CR: B Fliehs	0	2	0	0	0	0
Totals	30	10	13	9	0	2

2B: L Ringgenberg, T Larson 2, **3B:** B Althoff 2, **TB:** D Abeln 3, C Simon, B Imrie, R Groeblichhoff, L Ringgenberg 3, B Althoff 6, T Larson 5, **HBP:** B Althoff, C Larson, **SB:** L Ringgenberg, **LOB:** 5

Groton Area	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
B Althoff	6.0	1	0	0	1	4	0
Totals	6.0	1	0	0	1	4	0

W: B Althoff, **P-S:** B Althoff 66-47, **HBP:** B Althoff, **BF:** B Althoff 19



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

'Always in emergency mode': Tribe partners with national groups on food security, disaster prep

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER - APRIL 24, 2023 4:37 PM

About 90 inmates at the Roberts County Jail in northeastern South Dakota didn't have food in mid-December this winter.

The jail relies on weekly truck deliveries from over 50 miles away, but back-to-back blizzards dropped roughly 18 inches of snow on the region, closed the interstate and left kitchen staff stranded in their homes.

"Any time the roads are closed will cause a delay in getting food, supplies, whatever the jail needs," said James Foster, the Roberts County jail administrator.

But with the help of the Sisseton Wahpeton Sioux Tribe, inmates were able to eat. The tribe's emergency management and disaster assistance program gathered community members to purchase and cook breakfast, lunch and dinner for inmates while the truck was delayed.

And it's not just jail inmates — the tribe's disaster assistance program helps tribal members and residents throughout the reservation in similar situations.

"We're always in emergency mode in our communities," said Thomas "Sonny" LeBlanc, director of the tribe's Disaster Assistance Response Employee Team. "I say that in the nicest way. We've been in emergency mode since we were established on these reservations. You guys call it an emergency disaster. We call it Tuesdays and Wednesdays."

Selected for national program

The Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate is one of five tribal nations selected to participate in a partnership with Feeding America and Partnerships With Native Americans to further strengthen emergency preparedness and food security. Other tribes are in Louisiana, New York, Arizona and Washington.

"When the pandemic started, we had two big disparities we saw: feeding ourselves and getting clean water," LeBlanc said. "This project will help eliminate one of the big problems we have, which is food security. We have 14,000-plus people we're responsible for at the end of the day."

Food insecurity impacts 25% of Native Americans across the country, according to the PWNA. Some reservations are also especially susceptible to natural disasters — such as blizzards on the South Dakota prairie.

While many tribal nations have relied on Feeding America in emergencies, this partnership will help communities become more autonomous and self-reliant, said Laura Schad, long term solutions program manager for the PWNA Plains office.

Sisseton Wahpeton was selected as a participant not only because it responds to several emergencies a year but also because its disaster assistance program during the COVID pandemic was identified as an example of how tribes should effectively respond to emergencies, Schad said.

Responding across South Dakota

While in its early stages, local leaders like LeBlanc hope the program will set an example of how to implement emergency management and preparedness "across Indian Country."

Ideas up for consideration by the tribe include building a warehouse to store emergency supplies, partnering with other organizations to establish emergency response offices on the reservation, and training community members and strengthening disaster management so the tribe can help other tribal nations in the region when needed.

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The partnership will allow the tribal nation to step back and “go upstream” to work on prevention so they’re not “always being in crisis response mode,” said Winona Burley, a member of the tribe’s Disaster Assistance Response Employee Team.

“We’re still in a huge state of poverty,” Burley said. “If we can alleviate the stress of where some people are going to get their food tomorrow and water tonight to make sure our community members have those basic needs met, the prayer is that we can start building our community back up to a healthier place where they can budget and keep savings to get them out of their situations.”

Mark Ford, the native and tribal partnerships director with Feeding America, hopes this partnership strengthens emergency preparedness not only for Sisseton Wahpeton but creates a network for tribal nations to learn from each other.

“Onondaga in New York has one of the most advanced food sovereignty programs I’ve seen among any nation,” Ford said. “There are about 60 people working full time, paid for by the tribe, to hunt, fish, grow food, can food and preserve food. They have three years of food stockpiled for tribal members in an emergency.”

The Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate will complete its plan and priorities by the end of 2023 or early 2024. After that, the tribe will implement its plan over a two-year period, during which Feeding America and PWNA will bring in outside funding sources, donors and technical support. The cost allocated for the project is \$280,000.

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

COMMENTARY

Noem is just like her father in good and bad ways

SETH TUPPER

Gov. Kristi Noem shares a lot of stories about her late father, Ron Arnold, that are intended to portray him as the South Dakota embodiment of John Wayne. Noem doesn’t seem to realize that with every story she tells, she’s also creating her own public psychological profile.

Recently, she spoke to a National Rifle Association gathering in Indianapolis, where she shared a memory of hunting with her dad when she was 10 years old.

They were stalking elk in Wyoming’s Bighorn Mountains when he told her to “hunt your way back to camp.” He said he’d meet her there at dark, and then he disappeared over a ridge.

“To a 10-year-old girl, this was terrifying,” Noem said. “And as strange noises came and darkness fell, I had to rely on my instincts and my horse to find my way back to our tent.”

Noem said she learned years later that her dad followed her at a safe distance and was the source of some of the noises, which he produced by “scratching trees and growling.”

Noem’s 2022 memoir, “Not My First Rodeo: Lessons from the Heartland,” includes similar tales.

There was the time her father grew irritated with his children’s inability to move an ornery cow into the barn. He stormed toward the cow, wrapped his arm around its neck and “began punching her giant black nose,” according to Noem. She and her brother watched as their dad lost his footing and became pinned under the angry animal. Noem and her brother had to draw the cow’s attention away to save their father.

In another story, Noem was 12 or 13, riding with her dad in a semi as they hauled a load of corn out of a field.

“As we started rolling down the road, he suddenly remembered that he needed to bring another vehicle home too,” Noem wrote. “So he turned to me and said, ‘Here, come take the wheel. Take the truck home.’ His only advice: ‘Make your corners wide.’”

Noem had never driven a semi but somehow managed to get it home safely.

A different driving adventure didn’t turn out as well. Noem was 14 when a farmhand told her to back a semi out of an outbuilding on a busy day during the fall harvest. She accidentally backed into and wrecked

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her dad's pickup, which was parked behind the semi. Noem went out to the fields, climbed into her dad's combine and broke the news.

"He sat there, his jaw clenched, hands gripping the steering wheel, staring at me for a long time. Finally, he said, 'All right. Get out,'" Noem wrote.

That story is followed in Noem's book by a memory of fixing fences with her dad. When she didn't produce a needed tool immediately on demand, he barked, "Listen, you should know what I need before I know what I need!"

In young adulthood, Noem clashed with her father. They had a heated argument about the management of the family farm that ended in a verbal blow-up.

"I can't take it anymore," Noem recalled saying. "I can't do anything right for you."

"Fine," her dad responded. "Find yourself a job somewhere working for somebody else who lets you do anything you want."

Noem did just that and got a job in town. Several months later, in 1994, Ron Arnold climbed to the top of a grain bin, got sucked into a pocket of corn as he was trying to break up its crusted surface, and was instantly buried. Rescuers eventually extracted him, but he died later at a hospital.

In one of the saddest and most revealing sentences in her book, Noem wrote, "It was not a big surprise that Dad would take a risk like he did that day in the grain bin."

During the aftermath of the tragedy, Noem made a defining decision.

"No matter what I did," she wrote, "I would live my life to make him proud."

That deep-seated resolve drove her to save the family farm after her dad's death, earn a seat in the Legislature, topple an incumbent for a seat in Congress, and become South Dakota's first female governor.

But Noem also inherited – and embraced – her father's stubborn and risk-taking nature.

Those may be the qualities that drove her to defend her administration's "Meth: We're On It" public health campaign even as much of the nation mocked it; to shun masks during the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic while claiming she knew better than many scientists and doctors; to subject the Black Hills National Forest to wildfire danger during a politically motivated fireworks show with then-President Donald Trump at Mount Rushmore; and to spend much of her time as governor fixated on national politics.

Of course, Noem would not agree that any of those things are mistakes. But she makes clear in her book that she's acutely aware of all the ways she's like her father, both good and bad.

"Growing up with a father like mine was challenging, exciting, exasperating, and inspiring," she wrote.

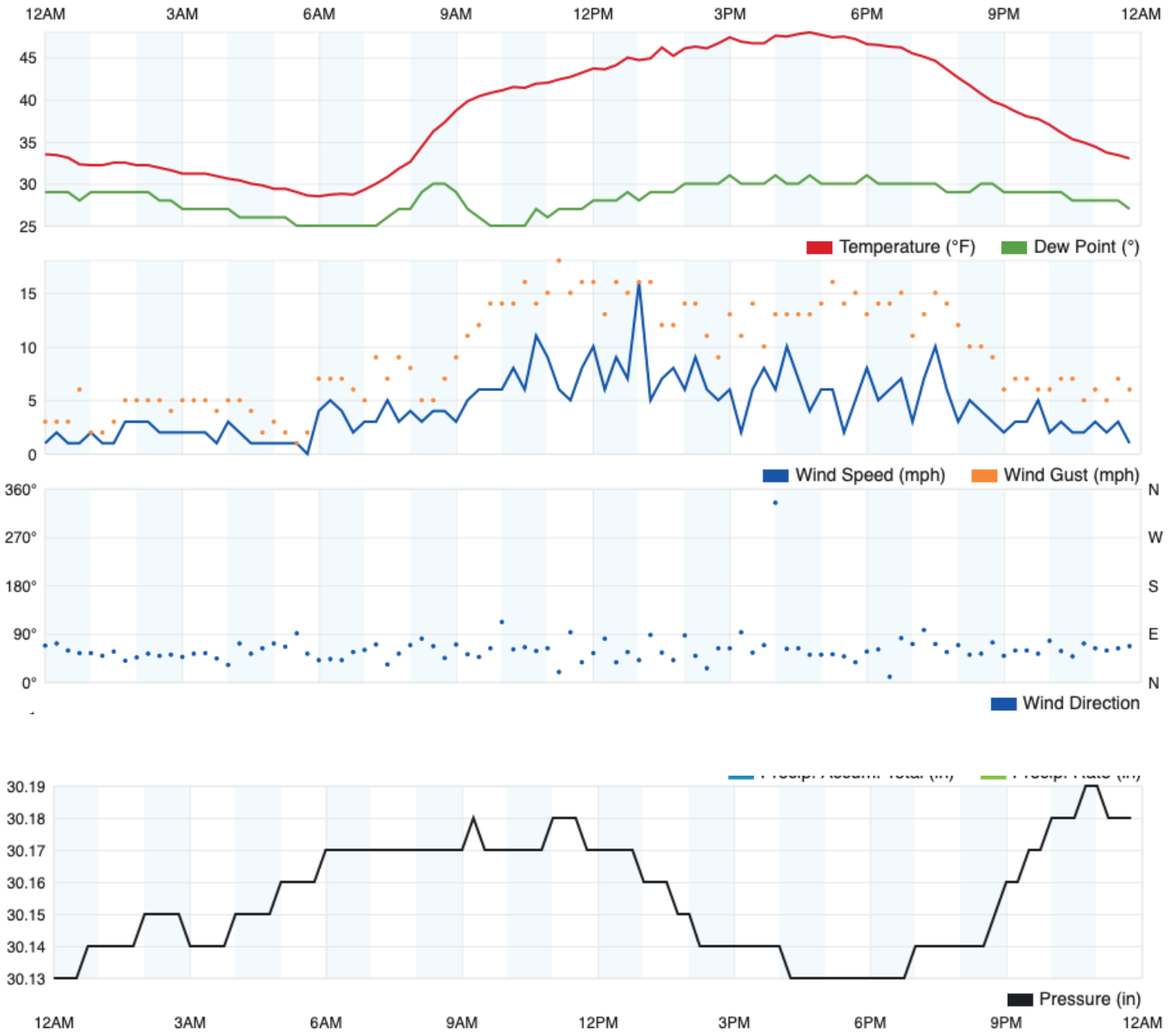
She added in her NRA speech, "It made me who I am today."

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

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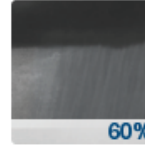

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today	Tonight	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday
						
Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Partly Sunny then Chance Showers and Breezy	Slight Chance T-storms then Slight Chance Showers	Mostly Cloudy then Chance Showers	Showers Likely and Windy	Chance Showers and Breezy
High: 50 °F	Low: 32 °F	High: 62 °F	Low: 34 °F	High: 61 °F	Low: 35 °F	High: 49 °F



Warmup continues through Thursday

Today:

Low 50s

Central SD



20 to 30% chance of rain showers, shifting north through the day

Eastern SD & West central MN



Dry

Wednesday:

upper 50s & 60s



20 to 40% chance of afternoon and evening rain showers. Winds out of the south gusting 25 to 30 mph.

Thursday:

60s



30 to 60% chance of afternoon rain showers. Over central SD: Increasing winds out of the northwest gusting 30 to 40 mph.

Temperatures will be on the rise, topping out in the low 50s today and rising into the mid 50s and 60s for Wednesday and Thursday. While most locations will remain dry today, there is a 20 to 30% chance of rain showers across central South Dakota. A warm front will move across the area Wednesday, bringing warmer air but another 20 to 40% chance of afternoon and evening rain showers. Another round of showers will be possible Thursday. Over central South Dakota winds will increase out of the northwest gusting 30 to 40 mph.

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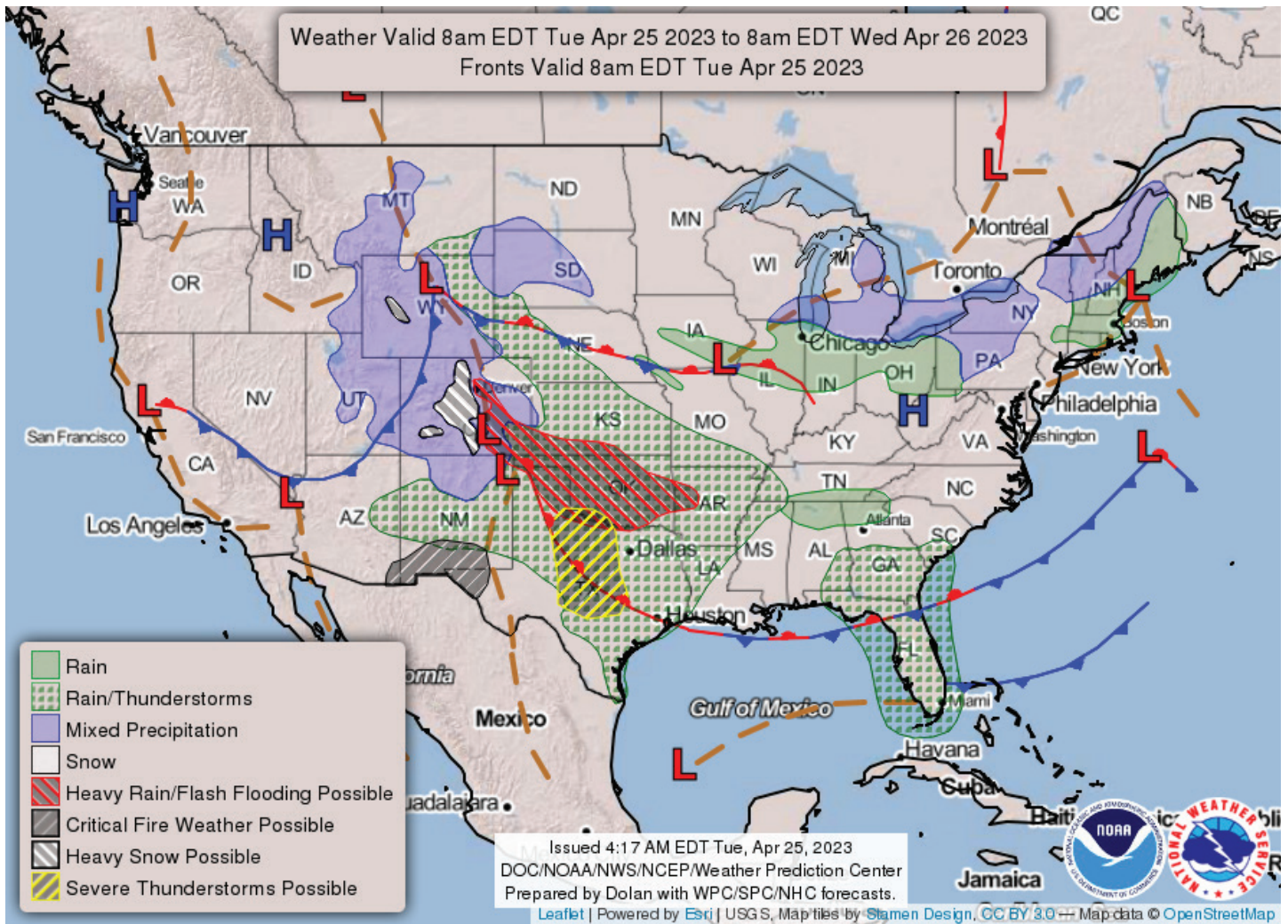
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 48 °F at 4:27 PM
Low Temp: 28 °F at 5:52 AM
Wind: 18 mph at 11:12 AM
Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 14 hours, 04 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 97 in 1962
Record Low: 19 in 2013
Average High: 62
Average Low: 35
Average Precip in April.: 1.45
Precip to date in April.: 1.67
Average Precip to date: 3.51
Precip Year to Date: 5.60
Sunset Tonight: 8:32:32 PM
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:26:34 AM



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Today in Weather History

April 25, 1994: Lightning from a thunderstorm 4 miles W of Aberdeen struck two houses, causing structural damage and starting a fire which caused further damage to one home. The second house suffered damage only to a surge protector.

April 25, 1996: An intense area of low pressure brought high winds of 30 to 50 mph with isolated gusts to 80 mph to central and north central South Dakota from the morning to the evening of the 25th. The dry April soil was picked up by the high winds, lowering visibilities in blowing dust. Some places experienced dust storm conditions with low visibilities and drifting dust. Many roofs lost shingles due to the strong winds. In Eagle Butte, the Vietnam Veterans Center roof was blown off. Other buildings were also damaged across the area, along with some broken windows. Some power poles and lines were downed west of Fort Pierre. Some trees and branches were also downed. Near Isabel, a cattle trailer was tipped over, and two calf shelters were destroyed. Also, a twenty foot Conoco sign was blown down near Isabel along with other signs damaged across the area. The dust storm reminded many of the 1930s. Some wind gusts include 60 mph at Mobridge and Selby, 70 mph at Miller, Pierre, and Murdo, and 80 mph at Isabel and Eagle Butte.

1875: New York City received three inches of snow, the latest measurable snowfall on record for that location.

1880: A violent tornado, at times up to 400 yards wide, swept away at least 20 homes in Macon, Mississippi. Pieces of houses were found 15 miles away. 22 people died, and 72 were injured. Loaded freight cars were thrown 100 yards into homes. Clothes were carried for eight miles.

1898 - The temperature at Volcano Springs CA hit 118 degrees to establish a U.S. record for the month of April. (The Weather Channel)

1910: Chicago, Illinois was blanketed with 2.5 inches of snow, and a total of 6.5 inches between the 22nd and the 26th. It was the latest significant snow on record for the city. Atlanta, Georgia also received late-season snowfall when 1.5 inches fell. Their 32 degrees low is the latest freeze on record.

1912: An estimated F4 tornado struck Ponca City, Oklahoma. One person was killed, and 119 homes were damaged or destroyed. Dozens of oil derricks were flattened or twisted, southwest of town. The tornado was reportedly visible and audible for 20 miles.

1920 - Atlanta, GA, received 1.5 inches of snow, and experienced their latest freeze of record with a morning low of 32 degrees. The high of just 39 degrees was only their second daily high colder than 40 degrees in April. (The Weather Channel)

1984 - A late season snowstorm struck the Northern Rockies and the Northern Plains. The storm produced some unusually high snowfall totals. The town of Lead, located in the Black Hills of western South Dakota, was buried under 67 inches of snow. Red Lodge, located in the mountains of southern Montana, reported 72 inches of snow. Up to 60 inches blanketed the mountains of northern Wyoming. It was rated the worst late season storm of record for much of the affected area. (25th-28th) (Storm Data) (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Low pressure off the coast of North Carolina produced heavy rain flooding creeks in the foothills and the piedmont area, before moving out to sea. The low pressure system also produced wind gusts to 50 mph in Virginia. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Thunderstorms racing at 65 mph produced large hail in Alabama and Georgia. Hail damage in Alabama was estimated at fifty million dollars, making it their worst weather disaster since Hurricane Frederick in 1979. Hail three inches in diameter accompanied a tornado near Valdosta GA. Hail four and a half inches in diameter was reported south of Atlanta GA. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Thunderstorms developing along a stationary front produced severe weather from North Carolina to Indiana and Ohio, with more than 70 reports of large hail and damaging winds. A strong (F-2) tornado hit Xenia OH injuring 16 persons and causing more than a million dollars damage. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2008 - Anchorage, AK, receives a record 17.2 inches at the airport and 22 inches in northeast Anchorage from the 25th to 26th. The 15.5 inches on the 25th makes it the third most received on any one day in Anchorage.

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Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

CONQUERED OR CONQUEROR

George Mallory, a famous mountaineer and explorer from England, led two expeditions to conquer Mount Everest. Both times he failed to conquer the mountain. He refused to give up and was so committed to conquering the mountain that he recruited another team to accompany him on another expedition.

He studied his past efforts thoroughly and made extensive preparations, carefully planning every detail. Finally, he began his ascent. However, before he reached the top this time, an avalanche struck, killing him and most of his men.

One of the survivors was determined to honor Mallory. Looking at a picture of Mount Everest, he cried, and with tears in his eyes, shouted, "We shall defeat you some- day because you can't get any bigger and we can."

When we feel defeated or destroyed by the tragedies and trials of life, the most important thing we can ever do is to face them honestly. Then carefully plan, take God at His word, and try again. With Paul we can proclaim, "I can do all things through Christ!"

Prayer: Lord, may we labor in Your strength to meet and overcome every challenge we face. In You, with You, and through You, we will succeed! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength. Philippians 4:13



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

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2023 Community Events

- 01/29/2023 Groton Robotics Pancake Feed, 10am-1pm, Community Center
- 01/29/2023 85th Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm (Last Sunday of January)
- 01/31/2023-02/03/2023 Lion's Club Prom & Formal Dress Consignment Drop Off 6-9pm, Community Center
- 02/04/2023-02/05/2023 Lion's Club Prom & Formal Dress Consignment Sale 1-5pm, Community Center
- 02/25/2023 Littles and Me, Art Making 10-11:30am, Wage Memorial Library
- 03/25/2023 Spring Vendor Fair, 10am-3pm, Community Center
- 04/01/2023 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
- 06/17/2023 Groton Triathlon
- 07/04/2023 Couples Firecracker Golf Tournament
- 07/09/2023 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm (Sunday Mid-July)
- 07/26/2023 GGA Burger Fundraiser Lunch at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 08/04/2023 Wine on Nine 6pm
- 08/11/2023 GHS Basketball Golf Tournament
- 09/09/2023 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
- 09/10/2023 Couples Sunflower Golf Tournament
- 10/14/2023 Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm
- 10/31/2023 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm (working day on or closest to Halloween)
- 10/31/2023 United Methodist Church Trunk or Treat 5:30-7pm
- 11/23/2023 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm (Thanksgiving)
- 12/02/2023 Tour of Homes & Holiday Party
- 12/09/2023 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services 9-11am

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The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:
04.21.23

3 21 29 46 63 9

MegaPlier: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$26,000,000

NEXT 15 Hrs 47 Mins 59
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
04.24.23

6 8 15 16 31 5

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$2,500,000

NEXT 1 Days 15 Hrs 47
DRAW: Mins 59 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
04.24.23

17 18 21 25 42 13

TOP PRIZE:
\$7,000/week

NEXT 15 Hrs 17 Mins 59
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
04.22.23

7 11 18 25 34

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$36,000

NEXT 1 Days 15 Hrs 47
DRAW: Mins 59 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
04.24.23

9 18 24 30 58 15

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT 1 Days 15 Hrs 47
DRAW: Mins 0 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
04.24.23

19 21 55 66 68 3

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$37,000,000

NEXT 1 Days 15 Hrs 47
DRAW: Mins 0 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the Associated Press

Biden announces 2024 reelection bid: 'Let's finish this job'

By ZEKE MILLER AP White House Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden on Tuesday formally announced that he is running for reelection in 2024, asking voters to give him more time to “finish the job” he began when he was sworn into office and to set aside their concerns about extending the run of America’s oldest president for another four years.

Biden, who would be 86 at the end of a second term, is betting his first-term legislative achievements and more than 50 years of experience in Washington will count for more than concerns over his age. He faces a smooth path to winning his party’s nomination, with no serious Democratic rivals. But he’s still set for a hard-fought struggle to retain the presidency in a bitterly divided nation.

The announcement, in a three-minute video, comes on the four-year anniversary of when Biden declared for the White House in 2019, promising to heal the “soul of the nation” amid the turbulent presidency of Donald Trump — a goal that has remained elusive.

“I said we are in a battle for the soul of America, and we still are,” Biden said. “The question we are facing is whether in the years ahead we have more freedom or less freedom. More rights or fewer.”

While the prospect of seeking reelection has been a given for most modern presidents, that’s not always been the case for Biden. A notable swath of Democratic voters have indicated they would prefer he not run, in part because of his age — concerns Biden has called “totally legitimate” but ones he did not address head-on in the launch video.

Yet few things have unified Democratic voters like the prospect of Trump returning to power. And Biden’s political standing within his party stabilized after Democrats notched a stronger-than-expected performance in last year’s midterm elections. The president is set to run again on the same themes that buoyed his party last fall, particularly on preserving access to abortion.

“Freedom. Personal freedom is fundamental to who we are as Americans. There’s nothing more important. Nothing more sacred,” Biden said in the launch video, depicting Republican extremists as trying to roll back access to abortion, cut Social Security, limit voting rights and ban books they disagree with. “Around the country, MAGA extremists are lining up to take those bedrock freedoms away.”

“This is not a time to be complacent,” Biden added. “That’s why I’m running for reelection.”

As the contours of the campaign begin to take shape, Biden plans to campaign on his record. He spent his first two years as president combating the coronavirus pandemic and pushing through major bills such as the bipartisan infrastructure package and legislation to promote high-tech manufacturing and climate measures. With Republicans now in control of the House, Biden has shifted his focus to implementing those massive laws and making sure voters credit him for the improvements.

The president also has multiple policy goals and unmet promises from his first campaign that he’s asking voters on giving him another chance to fulfill.

“Let’s finish this job. I know we can,” Biden said in the video, repeating a mantra he said a dozen times during his State of the Union address in February, listing everything from passing a ban on assault-style weapons and lowering the cost of prescription drugs to codifying a national right to abortion after the Supreme Court’s ruling last year overturning *Roe v. Wade*.

Buoyed by the midterm results, Biden plans to continue to cast all Republicans as embracing what he calls “ultra-MAGA” politics — a reference to Trump’s “Make America Great Again” slogan — regardless of whether his predecessor ends up on the 2024 ballot.

In the video, Biden speaks over brief clips and photographs of key moments in his presidency, snapshots of diverse Americans and flashes of outspoken Republican foes, including Trump, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, and Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene of Georgia. He exhorts supporters that “this is our moment” to “defend democracy. Stand up for our personal freedoms. Stand up for the right to vote and our civil rights.”

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Biden also plans to point to his work over the past two years shoring up American alliances, leading a global coalition to support Ukraine's defenses against Russia's invasion and returning the U.S. to the Paris climate accord. But public support in the U.S. for Ukraine has softened in recent months, and some voters question the tens of billions of dollars in military and economic assistance flowing to Kyiv.

The president faces lingering criticism over his administration's chaotic 2021 withdrawal from Afghanistan after nearly 20 years of war, which undercut the image of competence he aimed to portray, and he's the target of GOP attacks over his immigration and economic policies.

As a candidate in 2020, Biden pitched voters on his familiarity with the halls of power in Washington and his relationships around the world. But even back then, he was acutely aware of voters' concerns about his age.

"Look, I view myself as a bridge, not as anything else," Biden said in March 2020, as he campaigned in Michigan with younger Democrats, including now-Vice President Kamala Harris, Sen. Cory Booker of New Jersey and Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer. "There's an entire generation of leaders you saw stand behind me. They are the future of this country."

Three years later, the president now 80, Biden allies say his time in office has demonstrated that he saw himself as more of a transformational than a transitional leader.

Still, many Democrats would prefer that Biden didn't run again. A recent poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research shows just 47% of Democrats say they want him to seek a second term, up from 37% in February. And Biden's verbal — and occasional physical — stumbles have become fodder for critics trying to cast him as unfit for office.

Biden, on multiple occasions, has brushed back concerns about his age, saying simply, "Watch me."

During a routine physical in February, his physician, Dr. Kevin O'Connor, declared him "healthy, vigorous" and "fit" to handle his White House responsibilities.

Aides acknowledge that while some in his party might prefer an alternative to Biden, there is anything but consensus within their diverse coalition on who that might be. And they insist that when Biden is compared with whomever the GOP nominates, Democrats and independents will rally around Biden.

For now, the 76-year-old Trump is the favorite to emerge as the Republican nominee, creating the potential of a historic sequel to the bitterly fought 2020 campaign. But Trump faces significant hurdles of his own, including the designation of being the first former president to face criminal charges. The remaining GOP field is volatile, with DeSantis emerging as an early alternative to Trump. DeSantis' stature is also in question, however, amid questions about his readiness to campaign outside of his increasingly Republican-leaning state.

To prevail again, Biden will need the alliance of young voters and Black voters — particularly women — along with blue-collar Midwesterners, moderates and disaffected Republicans who helped him win in 2020. He'll have to again carry the so-called "blue wall" in the Upper Midwest, while protecting his position in Georgia and Arizona, longtime GOP strongholds he narrowly won last time.

Biden's reelection bid comes as the nation weathers uncertain economic crosscurrents. Inflation is ticking down after hitting the highest rate in a generation, but unemployment is at a 50-year low, and the economy is showing signs of resilience despite Federal Reserve interest rate hikes.

Presidents typically try to delay their reelection announcements to maintain the advantages of incumbency and skate above the political fray for as long as possible while their rivals trade jabs. But the leg up offered by being in the White House can be rickety — three of the last seven presidents have lost reelection, most recently Trump in 2020.

Biden's announcement is roughly consistent with the timeline followed by then-President Barack Obama, who waited until April 2011 to declare for a second term and didn't hold a reelection rally until May 2012. Trump launched his reelection bid on the day he was sworn in in 2017.

Biden is not expected to dramatically alter his day-to-day schedule as a candidate — at least not immediately — with aides believing his strongest political asset is showing the American people that he is governing. And if he follows the Obama playbook, he may not hold any formal campaign rallies until well into 2024.

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On Tuesday, Biden named White House adviser Julie Chávez Rodríguez to serve as campaign manager and Quentin Fulks, who ran Sen. Raphael Warnock's reelection campaign in Georgia last year, to serve as principal deputy campaign manager. The campaign co-chairs will be Reps. Lisa Blunt-Rochester, Jim Clyburn and Veronica Escobar; Sens. Chris Coons and Tammy Duckworth; entertainment mogul and Democratic mega-donor Jeffrey Katzenberg; and Whitmer.

On the heels of the announcement Tuesday, Biden was set to deliver remarks to union members before hosting South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol for a state visit at the White House. He plans to meet with party donors in Washington later this week.

Follow the AP's coverage of President Joe Biden at <https://apnews.com/hub/joe-biden>.

Fitful start to new 3-day truce in Sudan; airlifts continue

By SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — Sudan's warring generals pledged Tuesday to observe a new three-day truce that was brokered by the United States and Saudi Arabia in an attempt to pull Africa's third-largest nation back from the abyss.

The claims were immediately undercut by the sound of heavy gunfire and explosions in the capital of Khartoum. Residents said warplanes were flying overhead.

Several previous cease-fires declared since the April 15 outbreak of fighting were not observed, although intermittent lulls during the weekend's major Muslim holiday allowed for dramatic evacuations of hundreds of diplomats, aid workers and other foreigners by air and land.

For many Sudanese, the departure of foreigners and closure of embassies is a terrifying sign that international powers expect a worsening of the fighting that has already pushed the population into disaster.

Many Sudanese have desperately sought ways to escape the chaos, fearing that the rival camps will escalate their all-out battle for power once evacuations are completed.

In Khartoum, bus stations were packed Tuesday morning with people who had spent the night there in hopes of getting on a departing bus. Drivers increased prices, sometimes tenfold, for routes to Port Sudan or the border crossing with Egypt.

Late Monday, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced that he had helped broker a new 72-hour cease-fire. The truce would be an extension of the nominal three-day holiday cease-fire.

The Sudanese military, commanded by Gen. Abdel Fattah Burhan, and the rival Rapid Support Forces, a paramilitary group led by Gen. Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo, said Tuesday they would observe the cease-fire. In separate announcements, they said Saudi Arabia played a role in the negotiations.

"This cease-fire aims to establish humanitarian corridors, allowing citizens and residents to access essential resources, healthcare, and safe zones, while also evacuating diplomatic missions," the RSF said in a statement.

The army announcement used similar language, adding that it will abide by the truce "on the condition that the rebels commit to stopping all hostilities."

But fighting continued, including in Omdurman, a city across the Nile River from Khartoum. Omdurman resident Amin Ishaq said there were clashes early Tuesday around the state television headquarters and around military bases just outside Omdurman.

"They did not stop fighting," he said. "They stop only when they run out of ammunition."

"Sounds of gunfire, explosions and flying warplanes are still heard across Khartoum," said Atiya Abdalla Atiya, a senior figure in the Sudan Doctors' Syndicate, a group that monitors casualties. "They don't respect cease-fires."

Atiya said he suspected the main purpose of declaring a new case-fire was to allow for more foreigners to be evacuated.

Sudan was once a symbol of hope because of its fitful efforts to transition from decades of autocratic rule to democracy. Now it faces a bleak future. Even before April 15, one-third of the population of 46

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million relied on humanitarian assistance. Most of those providing aid have suspended operations.

In the past 11 days, Sudanese have faced a harrowing search for safety in the constantly shifting battle of explosions, gunfire and armed fighters looting shops and homes. Many have been huddling in their homes for days. Food and fuel are leaping in price and harder to find, electricity and internet are cut off in much of the country, and hospitals are near collapse.

Those who can afford it were making the 15-hour drive to the Egyptian border or to Port Sudan on the Red Sea coast. Those without means to get abroad streamed out to relatively calmer provinces along the Nile, north and south of Khartoum.

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warned of a "catastrophic conflagration" that could engulf the whole region. He urged the 15 members of the Security Council to "exert maximum leverage" on both sides in order to "pull Sudan back from the edge of the abyss."

More than 420 people, including at least 291 civilians, have been killed and over 3,700 wounded since the fighting began. The military has appeared to have the upper hand in Khartoum but the RSF still controls many districts in the capital and Omdurman, and has several large strongholds around the country.

Meanwhile, airlifts of foreigners continued.

Britain said Tuesday that it will run evacuation flights for U.K. nationals from an airfield outside Khartoum. However, those trying to get on a flight will have to make their own way to the airfield, said British Foreign Secretary James Cleverly.

The situation is "dangerous, volatile and unpredictable," Cleverly told Sky News. "We cannot predict how the situation on the ground will develop."

Officials have said there are as many as 4,000 British citizens in Sudan, 2,000 of whom have registered for potential evacuation. The Foreign Office said priority would be given to families with children, the sick and the elderly.

French President Emmanuel Macron said Tuesday that France has evacuated 538 people, including 209 French nationals. The large-scale French rescue operation and the inclusion of citizens from three dozen other countries stood in contrast to limited evacuation efforts by the U.S. and Britain.

The British government, which evacuated its diplomats from Sudan over the weekend, has come under growing criticism for its failure to airlift civilians, as some European countries have done.

The U.S. said Monday that it has begun facilitating the departure of private U.S. citizens after swooping in to extract diplomats on Sunday. White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan said the U.S. has placed intelligence and reconnaissance assets over the evacuation route from Khartoum to Port Sudan but does not have any U.S. troops on the ground.

Germany said one of its rescue planes flew another mission early Tuesday, bringing the total of people evacuated to nearly 500.

Despite the pullout, U.S. and European officials insisted they were still engaged in trying to secure an end to the fighting. But so far the conflict has shown how little leverage they have with Burhan and Dagalo who appear determined to fight to the end.

The U.S. and EU have been dealing with the generals for years, trying to push them into ceding power to a democratic, civilian government. A pro-democracy uprising led to the 2019 ouster of former strongman Omar al-Bashir. But in 2021, Burhan and Dagalo joined forces to seize power in a coup.

Associated Press writers Jill Lawless in London and Kirsten Grieshaber in Berlin contributed to this report.

Rodgers latest aging NFL star to join Jets late in career

By DENNIS WASZAK Jr. AP Pro Football Writer

FLORHAM PARK, N.J. (AP) — The trade of quarterback Aaron Rodgers from Green Bay to New York puts one of the greatest players in NFL history in a Jets uniform.

Despite a 54-year Super Bowl drought and the league's longest active streak without a playoff appearance (12 seasons), the Jets have acquired several Hall of Fame players over the years. Some had big impacts,

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while others simply made a pitstop in New York on their way to Canton.

Here are some of the most notable players who joined the Jets late in their careers and ended up in the Pro Football Hall of Fame — mostly for their accomplishments elsewhere:

QB BRETT FAVRE: After 17 NFL seasons, including 16 in Green Bay, the three-time MVP and one-time Super Bowl champion was traded to New York during training camp in 2008 for a conditional fourth-round draft pick. He got the Jets off to an 8-3 start before a shoulder injury affected his performance and New York missed the playoffs. Favre retired after his stint with the Jets before returning to play two more years with Minnesota.

Jets stats: 3,472 yards passing, 22 TDs, 22 INTs in 16 games. Pro Football Hall of Fame: 2016.

RB LaDAINIAN TOMLINSON: The 2006 NFL MVP and Offensive Player of the Year was one of the most electric players in league history as a speedy and elusive double threat out of the Chargers' backfield. After nine seasons in San Diego, Tomlinson signed with the Jets in 2010 and helped them to the AFC title game. Not nearly as dynamic a player in his two years with New York, he retired after the 2011 season.

Jets stats: 1,194 yards and 7 TDs on 294 carries with 94 catches for 817 yards and two TDs in 29 games. Pro Football Hall of Fame: 2017.

S RONNIE LOTT: The hard-hitting defensive back helped San Francisco win four Super Bowl titles during his 10 seasons with the 49ers. After two seasons with the Raiders, Lott signed with the Jets as a free agent in 1993. He was still a quality safety during his two-year stint with the Jets.

Jets stats: three interceptions, two sacks and six forced fumbles in 31 games. Pro Football Hall of Fame: 2000.

WR ART MONK: After a 14-year career in Washington during which he was one of the league's most productive wide receivers and had a then-NFL record 106 receptions in 1984, Monk signed with New York as a free agent in 1994. At 36, his best days were behind him. He wasn't re-signed and spent his final NFL season in Philadelphia.

Jets stats: 46 receptions, 581 yards, three TDs in 16 games. Pro Football Hall of Fame: 2008.

DE/LB JASON TAYLOR: Taylor was already established as one of the NFL's top pass rushers when he left the Dolphins to join the AFC East-rival Jets in 2010. He was a good fit for Rex Ryan's aggressive defense that helped New York to the AFC title game. Taylor returned to Miami for one final season before retiring.

Jets stats: 5 sacks, 1 safety, 6 passes defensed, 2 forced fumbles, 2 fumble recoveries in 16 games. Pro Football Hall of Fame: 2017.

G ALAN FANCA: Faneca played 10 years with Pittsburgh, helping the Steelers win a Super Bowl while also becoming one of the NFL's top guards as a ferocious run blocker. The six-time All-Pro signed a five-year deal with the Jets in 2008, helping them make the AFC title game that season. He also was selected to the Pro Bowl in two years with the Jets before being released in a cost-cutting move. Faneca played one final year in Arizona.

Jets stats: 32 games, 32 starts. Pro Football Hall of Fame: 2021.

S ED REED: The five-time All-Pro and 2004 Defensive Player of the Year with Baltimore was on the back end of his illustrious career when Ryan lured him to the Jets after being waived by Houston in 2013. Reed had three interceptions in his short tenure with the Jets and retired after spending the 2014 season out of football.

Jets stats: 3 INTs, 4 passes defensed in seven games, including five starts. Pro Football Hall of Fame: 2019.

S STEVE ATWATER: One of the most feared safeties in NFL history because of his ferocious hits, Atwater spent 10 seasons in Denver and helped win a Super Bowl while twice being selected an All-Pro and making eight Pro Bowl teams. He signed with the Jets in 1999 and spent one season in New York before retiring.

Jets stats: 1 pass defensed, 1 forced fumble in 12 games, including 11 starts. Pro Football Hall of Fame: 2020.

CB TY LAW: The three-time Super Bowl champion with New England had two stints with the Jets. He had a league-leading 10 interceptions and made the Pro Bowl after signing a three-year deal with New York as a free agent in 2005. He was a salary-cap cut the following offseason, but rejoined the Jets midway

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through the 2008 season after two years in Kansas City. Law retired after one more season in Denver.

Jets stats: 10 INTs, 20 passes defensed, 1 forced fumble, 1 fumble recovery in 23 games. Pro Football Hall of Fame: 2019.

AP NFL: <https://apnews.com/hub/nfl> and https://twitter.com/AP_NFL

Ex-Wagner Group member faces Norway court for bar brawl

COPENHAGEN, Denmark (AP) — A former member of the Russian private military contractor Wagner Group who's seeking asylum in Norway has admitted charges of resisting arrest after a bar brawl and carrying an air gun.

Andrey Medvedev appeared in court in Oslo on Tuesday. He denied using violence against police officers who handcuffed him outside an Oslo pub in February, the Norwegian news agency NTB reported.

"He didn't quite understand what was going on and panicked," his defense lawyer Brynjulf Risnes told NTB. "He believes that he did not kick, but that he spat because it hurt" when he was put in handcuffs.

Medvedev has also pleaded guilty to carrying an air gun in another episode in March when he went to a pub in downtown Oslo.

He would probably get a short sentence, prosecutor Vegard Gjertsen told NTB. It was not clear when the sentence would be pronounced.

Medvedev who has said that he fears for his life if he returns to Russia, fled to Norway earlier this year, crossing illegally over its 198-kilometer (123-mile) -long border with Russia.

Medvedev said he originally signed up to join the Wagner group from July to November 2022 but left after his contract was extended without his consent. He said he was willing to testify about any war crimes he witnessed and denied participating in any himself.

Earlier, he reportedly told Russian dissident group Gulagu.net that he was ready to tell everything he knew about the shady private military company and its owner, Yevgeny Prigozhin, a millionaire with ties to Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Ex-UN head Ban Ki-moon urges army to end Myanmar violence

By GRANT PECK Associated Press

BANGKOK (AP) — Former U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on Tuesday urged Myanmar's ruling military to take the initiative in finding a way out of the country's violent political crisis, including releasing political detainees, after a surprise meeting with the army leader who seized power two years ago.

Ban met Monday in the Myanmar capital Naypyitaw with the leader of the military government, Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing, and other top officials. His mission was made on behalf of a group of elder statesmen that engages in peacemaking and human rights initiatives around the world.

Ban is the deputy chair of the group, which calls itself The Elders.

A statement released Tuesday by the group quoted Ban saying "I came to Myanmar to urge the military to adopt an immediate cessation of violence, and start constructive dialogue among all parties concerned." He described his talks as "exploratory."

"With patient determination, I believe a way forward can be found out of the current crisis. The military must take the first steps," he said.

The statement said Ban, who flew to Bangkok from Naypyitaw Monday night, in his talks stressed the need to implement a peace plan by the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations — ASEAN — and a United Nations resolution to stop the violence between the military and the pro-democracy resistance forces following the army's 2021 ouster of the civilian government led by Aung San Suu Kyi.

"ASEAN member states and the wider international community need to show unity and resolve in their commitment to peace and democracy in Myanmar, which is a source of serious international concern," Ban was quoted as saying.

The statement also said Ban "supported the international community's calls for the immediate release

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by the Myanmar military of all arbitrarily detained prisoners, for constructive dialogue, and for utmost restraint from all parties.”

The 77-year-old Suu Kyi was imprisoned for 33 years after the takeover on charges widely seen as being trumped up by the military to keep her from playing an active role in politics. Her trials were held behind closed doors, and the military has turned down requests from U.N. officials, foreign diplomats and other interested parties to see her.

Myanmar has been wracked by violence since the army’s takeover, which prevented Suu Kyi’s National League for Democracy party from beginning a second term in office. The takeover was met with massive public opposition, which security forces quashed with deadly force, in turn triggering widespread armed resistance.

Myanmar’s military government has spurned previous outside initiatives calling for negotiations as an infringement on Myanmar’s sovereignty, and generally describes the pro-democracy opposition as terrorists.

The Elders’ statement said Ban warned that elections promised by the military must be held only under free and fair conditions.

Holding elections under current conditions risks further violence and division, and the results not being recognized by the people of Myanmar, ASEAN and the wider international community, it said.

State television MRTV reported Monday night that Ban and Min Aung Hlaing exchanged views on the situation in Myanmar in a “friendly, positive and open discussion.” It did not report details of the meeting, which it said was also attended by the ministers of defense and foreign affairs.

The Elders statement did not say if Ban had made contact with Myanmar’s main opposition group, the National Unity Government — known as NUG — which styles itself as the country’s legitimate administrative body.

Nay Phone Latt, an NUG spokesperson, told The Associated Press international leaders should know their hands will be stained with blood when they shake hands with the leader of the “terrorist army,” referring to Ban Ki-Moon’s meeting on Monday.

“If they want to solve the problem of Myanmar, it is important not to ignore the will of the people of Myanmar,” Nay Phone Latt said.

With little progress seen from previous peacemaking efforts, experts were pessimistic about Ban’s initiative.

“Without any concrete outcome, it’s hard to see the value of this visit at this time. There may be more going on behind the scenes, but from the tone of the statement, it doesn’t seem like it,” Richard Horsey, a senior adviser to the Brussels-headquartered Crisis Group think tank, told AP.

“And the prospects of a negotiated settlement in Myanmar are in any case slim - this is not a context where throwing another diplomat at the problem is likely to bring dividends.”

Ban has a long history of involvement with Myanmar. While U.N. secretary-general from 2007 to 2016, Ban went to Myanmar to press the then-ruling generals to let an unimpeded influx of foreign aid and experts reach survivors of Cyclone Nargis in 2008, which killed an estimated 134,000 people. He urged the military to embrace democracy as well.

He also attended a peace conference in Naypyitaw in 2016, which sought to end decades of armed conflict with ethnic minority groups.

Two months after the military takeover, Ban urged the U.N. Security Council and Southeast Asian countries to take swift and strong action to stop the deadly crackdown. He then tried to make a diplomatic visit to Myanmar, aiming to meet with all parties to try to de-escalate the conflict and foster dialogue, but he was told by Myanmar’s authorities that it was inconvenient at that time.

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Long days of gravediggers tell story of Ukraine's war dead

SAMYA KULLAB Associated Press

KRYVYI RIH, Ukraine (AP) — The graves are dug in the morning. Four plots, each two meters deep in the section of a cemetery in a central Ukrainian city devoted to the nation's fallen soldiers.

The day begins for Oleh Itsenko, 29, and Andrii Kuznetsov, 23, shortly after dawn, when the two diggers report for the grueling work. A day in their lives tells the story of Ukraine's mounting war dead. They won't be finished until sunset.

With a tractor equipped with an earth auger they bore into the ground. Armed with shovels, they go about carving out perfect rectangles with precision, the final resting place for the country's soldiers killed in fierce battles on Ukraine's eastern front.

There will be four funerals today in the main cemetery of Kryvyi Rih, an iron-mining city 400 kilometers (250 miles) from the capital, Kyiv.

"It's hard," says Itsenko, a former metal worker. "But someone's got to do it."

In Ukraine, even the business of death has become routine as funerals are held for soldiers across the country almost every day, at times multiple times a day. The war's death toll is kept a closely guarded secret by government and military officials, but it can be measured in other ways: through the long working hours of the two young men, the repetitive rhythm of shovels and spades scooping up soil, the daily processions of weeping mourners.

Western officials estimate there have been at least 100,000 Ukrainians soldiers killed or wounded since Russia's full-scale invasion began last year. Estimates for Moscow's war dead and wounded are double that as Ukrainian military officials report Russia is using wave tactics to exhaust resources and deplete their morale.

Many soldiers have died fighting in Bakhmut, in what has become the war's longest battle, and among the deadliest. Ukrainian forces in the city are surrounded from three directions by advancing Russian invaders, and are determined to hold on to the city to deprive Moscow of any territorial victories. In the process many Ukrainian servicemen have died.

At 11 a.m., when the first coffin arrives, the two men lean back, exhausted, under the late morning sun. Shovels to the side, they peer from under baseball caps as the familiar scene, now a routine, unfolds.

The family of Andrii Vorobiov, 51, weep as they enter the premises. Dozens more mourners arrive in buses. The deceased's fellow servicemen weep as the coffin, draped in the yellow and blue of the national flag, is placed on the gravel. Vorobiov died in an aerial bomb attack in Bakmut, leaving behind three children.

When the priest is done reciting the funeral rites, Vorobiov's wife throws her hands over his coffin and wails. His daughter holds his medals, won for acts of bravery in the battlefield.

"I won't see you again," she screams. "You won't come to breakfast. I can't bear it!"

Between tears and screams, Itsenko and Kuznetsov wait for the last handful of dirt to be tossed onto the lowered coffin. Then they can begin the work of filling Vorobiov's grave.

The outpouring of grief is normal, Kuznetsov said. He isn't affected most of the time because they are strangers.

But once, he was asked to help carry the coffin because there weren't enough pallbearers. He couldn't hold back his anguish in the middle of that crowd.

He didn't even know the guy, he reflected.

Kuznetsov never imagined he would be a gravedigger. He has a university degree in Technology. A good degree, he was told by his teachers.

"If it's so good then why am I doing this?" he asked, panting as he shoveled dirt into Vorobiov's grave.

There were no jobs, and he needed the money, he said finally.

Itsenko lost his job when the war broke out, and learned the local cemetery needed diggers. Without any options, he didn't need to think twice.

It is 1:30 p.m. While the two young men are still working to fill the first grave, another funeral is starting.

The family of Andrii Romanenko, 31, erects a tent to protect the coffin from the afternoon sun. The priest reads the rites and the wailing starts again.

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Romanenko died when he was hit by a mortar defending the city of Bakhmut. A fellow servicemen, Valery, says they had served together in Zaporizhzhia and Donetsk but parted ways in December.

"He went too soon," says Valery, sighing deeply. He speaks on the condition his last name be withheld, citing Ukrainian military protocols for active soldiers.

As mourners bid their last farewell and toss earth into Romanenko's grave, Itsenko and Kuznetsov still have not finished filling the first.

"Got to hurry," says Itsenko, wiping the sweat from his brow.

There will be two more funerals in the next hour. And tomorrow, there will be another three funerals. Neither man can afford to stop.

"What we are doing is for the greater good," Itsenko says. "Our heroes deserve a proper resting place."

But he, his family's only breadwinner, wouldn't want to be fighting alongside them.

"It's better here," he says, patting Vorobiov's grave with his shovel. Kuznetsov plunges the cross into the earth, the last step before the flowers are laid.

One done, three more to go.

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

As Israel turns 75, its flag unfurls into deep divisions

TEL AVIV, ISRAEL (AP) — It's become an unmistakable hallmark of the anti-government protests roiling Israel for the last few months: the country's blue and white national flag adorned with the Star of David.

To an outside observer, that may not be surprising, as the demonstrators say their struggle is over the very soul of the nation.

For most Jewish Israelis, the flag has been a potent symbol of their foundational narrative — of a nation that rose from the ashes of the Holocaust to build a modern-day miracle, with a strong military and at the forefront of technology.

However, those protesting now say that the flag has increasingly been co-opted by nationalists claiming to have greater legitimacy to decide the country's character and its future.

As Israel marks 75 years since its creation, the protesters say they are turning that argument on its head by reclaiming the flag.

As flags are strewn across the country to mark Independence Day on Wednesday — along avenues and down skyscrapers, on military bases and in West Bank settlement outposts — the fight over the flag on the milestone anniversary has laid bare the country's divisions everywhere you look.

With the protests awash in them, the flags have been a dominant image in the Israeli consciousness for months.

The protests erupted after the country's most right-wing government in history announced its planned judicial overhaul, which critics say would imperil Israel's democratic fundamentals. The government claims it is meant to rein in what it portrays as an interventionist legal system. The plan has plunged Israel into one of its worst domestic crises, exposing deeply rooted divisions and sending tens of thousands of people into the streets each week, even after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu paused the overhaul because of the intense pressure.

There are other disagreements over the flag. Many of the country's Palestinian citizens, who make up one-fifth of Israel's 9.7 million people, do not feel represented by the flag — one of the reasons they have not joined the anti-government protests. For Palestinians in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and east Jerusalem, the flag is an emblem of a 56-year-old occupation that includes military control and increased settlement building, further dimming their hopes for an independent state. ____

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Coronation gives tourism boost, but UK economy still reeling

By KELVIN CHAN AP Business Writer

LONDON (AP) — Kelly Curto is taking her first trip outside the U.S., and the die-hard fan of the British royal family is making it the one at the top of her bucket list — heading to London for King Charles III's coronation.

After arriving on May 5, the 44-year-old school bus driver from Long Island and a friend will head to the Mall, the ceremonial avenue to Buckingham Palace where the monarch's pomp-filled procession will pass by the following day.

That's where they plan to spend the night if they can find a good spot to glimpse the gilded horse-drawn state coach, royals and thousands of soldiers filing past — despite splurging on a four-star hotel for their nine-day trip.

"This is like a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. You get to be part of history," Curto said. "Everybody around the world knows this family. Everybody around the world is going to be watching this coronation — and we get to be a part of that."

The coronation is luring royal enthusiasts fascinated by the ceremonial spectacle — and drama — of the monarchy and far-flung visitors eager to experience a piece of British history. Tour companies, shops and restaurants are rolling out the red carpet, whether it's a decked-out bus tour of London's top sights with high tea or merchandise running from regal to kitschy.

The weekend of events starting May 6 will bring a cash infusion to central London businesses, especially hotels, pubs and restaurants, but it won't do much for U.K. residents struggling with an economy on the precipice of recession and a cost-of-living crisis that has stirred months of disruptive strikes by workers seeking pay hikes.

For visitors looking to splash out, hotels across London are touting coronation-themed packages, menus and decor.

Those willing to spend an eye-popping 12,995 pounds (over \$16,000) can get an overnight stay in the Royal Suite at the five-star Hotel Cafe Royal and a limo ride to the Tower of London for a private tour and viewing of the Crown Jewels.

The Dorchester Hotel, long a favorite with royals and celebrities, concocted a lavish, five-tier coronation cake and put up theater-style draping across its facade to re-create the decorations that it used to mark Queen Elizabeth II's coronation in 1953.

Many international visitors are drawn by the idea of a "beautiful fairytale" about "the royals and everything that is around them," general manager Luca Virgilio said.

"So there's a lot of love and a lot of interest. And we are sold out already, which is very encouraging," he said.

The Royal Lancaster Hotel near Hyde Park is serving afternoon tea inspired by Charles' favorites: roast beef sandwiches, darjeeling tea and damson plum mousse.

The spread features a darjeeling tea cake shaped like crown atop a crimson cushion, while the hotel bar serves a coronation cocktail: a martini with a splash of darjeeling tea, trimmed with gold leaf.

For a different twist, Annie Verhaert, 64, and daughter Claudia Lombaert, 30, from Belgium, boarded a vintage red double-decker bus strung with Union Jack flags for a coronation-themed tour that hits landmarks like Big Ben and Trafalgar Square.

On the way, they sipped tea — using cupholders to prevent spills — and snacked on finger sandwiches and pastries like the "royal scone" from a menu a former royal butler curated for tour operator Brigit's Bakery.

"We knew the queen all our life," Verhaert said. "And it's now the first time we see a change on the throne. So it's special."

And souvenirs are in no short supply, including tea towels, socks, dessert plates and other paraphernalia with coronation insignia from the Royal Collection Trust, purveyor of official memorabilia.

Unofficial merchandise also abounds at shops in tourist areas, with Charles' likeness crudely emblazoned on tote bags, coasters and teabag holders or coronation-branded pens, tins of fudge and playing cards offering more upscale options. Even more items show his mother, who died in September after 70 years

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on the throne, on everything from mugs to bobblehead figures.

Officials have high hopes that the coronation will provide a vital boost to the country's tourism industry, which is still reeling from two years of COVID-19 shutdowns. The U.K. received some 29.7 million visits last year, still nearly a third below 2019.

"Events like this really kick-start the recovery, don't they? And they put Britain on the world stage again," said Patricia Yates, chief executive of the VisitBritain tourism board.

Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee celebrations last year brought in an extra 2.6 million visitors to London, she said, and Charles' coronation is expected to have a similar effect.

History, heritage and the royals are the biggest draw for international tourists, Yates said, and royal pageantry is a particular magnet for Americans, who are driving the U.K.'s tourism recovery.

"We can see a 10% increase in flight bookings through May from the America market," she said. "The big question mark is, of course, China, which was our second-most-valuable market and still not coming back quite in the numbers we would like to see."

The coronation's wider impact on Britain's economy is less clear.

Tax revenue will get a boost from extra retail spending for parties nationwide, including booze sales that have hefty alcohol duties. Pubs will be allowed to stay open two hours longer May 5-6.

However, organizing the coronation has a huge cost that some reports estimate could run as high as 100 million pounds, and an extra public holiday on May 8 means a lost day of productivity.

So while the hospitality industry benefits, "the flipside of that is that by giving everybody an extra day off, you're taking quite a bit of output out of the economy in quite a lot of other sectors," said Andrew Goodwin of Oxford Economics.

The British economy has been essentially stagnant since the start of last year as decades-high inflation squeezes households and small businesses. The International Monetary Fund expects U.K. output to shrink by the most of any major economy this year.

To keep up with the soaring cost of living, nurses, teachers, postal workers and others have been striking for higher wages. Security guards at Heathrow Airport plan to walk off the job starting May 5, threatening to disrupt travel for the coronation.

"There's a lot of headwinds that the economy has to battle," Goodwin said.

Brand Finance says the monarchy boosts the U.K. economy to the tune of 500 million pounds a year, more than making up for the estimated 350 million pounds it costs taxpayers.

However, that boon is less than a third of the London-based consultancy's 2017 forecast. CEO David Haigh blamed the plunge in value on a "disastrous six years" for the royal family, including a scandal involving Prince Andrew, a string of gaffes by minor royals and Harry and Meghan falling out with the family.

Still, "going forward, we still believe that the monarchy generates more in terms of revenue for the U.K. economy than it costs," Haigh said.

The royals certainly are drawing Curto, who will stay with a friend at the Wellington Blue Orchid hotel in London at a cost of about 3,000 pounds.

They plan to visit Hampton Court Palace, Westminster Abbey, the Tower of London and make day trips to Oxford and the Cotswolds. It won't be cheap, but Curto won't be pinching pence.

"I plan on enjoying myself without limits," she said. "I know London is an expensive city, so I'm prepared to spend a fair amount."

AP reporter Sylvia Hui in London contributed.

Australians and New Zealanders recall war dead on Anzac Day

By ROD McGUIRK Associated Press

CANBERRA, Australia (AP) — Hundreds of thousands of Australians gathered at dawn services and veterans' street marches across the nation on Tuesday to commemorate their war dead on Anzac Day as recent events focused minds on the cost of war and the new threat of China's rapid military buildup.

Australia and New Zealand commemorate Anzac Day every April 25 — the date in 1915 when the Australia and New Zealand Army Corps landed on the beaches of Gallipoli, in northwest Turkey, in an ill-fated campaign that was the soldiers' first combat of World War I.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese spoke to more than 30,000 people who gathered at the Australian War Memorial in the national capital Canberra for the first Anzac Day since his government was elected almost a year ago.

"Gallipoli is just one battle in our history, but in all its stories of valor and resilience, in its simple truth of Australians looking out for each other no matter how bad things got, it has come to stand for something so much bigger in our collective heart," Albanese said.

His government chose the eve of Anzac Day to release a review of the nation's defense force that warned with China's growing military strength and assertiveness, Australia's geographic isolation did not provide the protection from global conflict that it once did.

The report recommended more Australian defense spending and a rapid embrace of missile technology to strike targets at longer ranges. It described China's military buildup as the largest and most ambitious of any country since the end of World War II.

Over the weekend, Australians were given a tragic reminder of when Japan's land forces reached what is now Australia's nearest neighbor, Papua New Guinea, during World War II. With Japanese supply lines stretched, Japan decided to isolate rather than invade Australia.

Deep-sea explorers announced Saturday they had found the wreck of the Japanese ship Montevideo Maru that was transporting Allied prisoners of war from Rabaul in the then-Australian territory of New Guinea to China when it was torpedoed off the coast of the Philippines in 1942.

The 1,080 killed from 14 nations included 979 Australians, which was Australia's largest wartime loss of life at sea.

While veterans of the two world wars dominated Anzac Day services and marches for decades, their descendants and unrelated younger generations have taken their place, defying an expectation that the tradition might die with the veterans.

Veterans Affairs Minister Keogh, who is representing his government at Gallipoli, said the dawn service there was expected to attract the biggest crowd since the centenary commemorations in 2015.

"What we've really seen Anzac Day become is not just about one conflict, it's now a day where we commemorate not just those that died but all those people that have served in our uniform on our behalf in conflict," Keogh told Australian Broadcasting Corp.

In downtown Sydney, Glenda Rixon wore the medals of her late father Henry "Harry" Rixon, a Korean War infantryman, and was touched that the 70th anniversary of the Korean armistice was noted in Martin Place where dawn services have been held since 1927.

"Usually they don't say anything -- it's like it's the forgotten war," Rixon said.

"I'm really proud of my father. He passed away eight years ago. It's a special day. We used to always watch him march," she added.

As well as 70 years since Australia's involvement in the Korean War ended, this year's ceremonies also commemorated 50 years since the last Australian forces withdrew from the Vietnam War.

Dawn services and marches were also held across New Zealand, where Anzac Day is considered the most important day of national commemoration as it is in Australia.

Jury selection set to start in rape lawsuit against Trump

By LARRY NEUMEISTER and JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — For decades, former President Donald Trump has seemed to shake off allegations, investigations and even impeachments. Now his “Teflon Don” reputation is about to face a new test: a jury of average citizens in a lawsuit accusing him of rape.

Jury selection is scheduled to begin Tuesday in a trial over former advice columnist’s E. Jean Carroll’s claim that Trump raped her nearly three decades ago in a department store dressing room. He denies it.

The trial is in a federal civil court, meaning that no matter the outcome, Trump isn’t in danger of going to jail. He isn’t required to be in court, either, and his lawyers have indicated he most likely won’t testify.

But the trial, which comes as Trump is again running for president, still has the potential to be politically damaging for the Republican. The jury is poised to hear a reprisal of stories of sexual misconduct that rocked his 2016 presidential campaign, allegations he claimed were falsehoods spun up to try to stop him from winning.

The trial also comes a month after he pleaded not guilty in an unrelated criminal case surrounding payments made to bury accounts of alleged extramarital sex.

Carroll is expected to testify about a chance encounter with Trump in late 1995 or early 1996 that she says turned violent.

She says that after running into the future president at Manhattan’s Bergdorf Goodman, he invited her to shop with him for a woman’s lingerie gift before they teased one another to try on a garment. Carroll says they ended up alone together in a store dressing room, where Trump pushed her against a wall and raped before she fought him off and fled.

Since Carroll first made her accusations in a 2019 memoir, Trump has vehemently denied that a rape ever occurred or that he even knew Carroll, a longtime columnist for Elle magazine.

Trump has labeled Carroll a “nut job” and “mentally sick.” He claimed she fabricated the rape claim to boost sales of her book.

“She’s not my type,” he has said repeatedly, although during sworn questioning in October, he also misidentified her in a photograph as his ex-wife Marla Maples.

Jurors are also expected to hear from two other women who say they were sexually assaulted by Trump.

Jessica Leeds is set to testify that Trump tried to put his hand up her skirt on a 1979 flight on which the two were assigned neighboring seats. Natasha Stoyanoff, a former People magazine staff writer, will testify that Trump pinned her against a wall and forcibly kissed her at his Florida mansion when she went there in 2005 to interview Trump and his then-pregnant wife Melania Trump.

Jurors will also see the infamous 2005 “Access Hollywood” video in which Trump is heard making misogynistic remarks about women, including an assertion that celebrities can grab, even sexually, women without asking.

Carroll’s allegations normally would be too old to bring to court. But in November, New York state enacted a law allowing for suits over decades-old sexual abuse claims.

The trial will also include a defamation claim that Carroll brought against Trump over disparaging remarks he made about her in response to the rape allegations.

The jurors’ names will be withheld from both the public and the lawyers, to protect them against possible harassment.

Judge Lewis A. Kaplan, who will preside over the trial, rejected a request by Trump’s lawyers that jurors be told that the ex-president wanted to spare the city the disruption his presence might cause.

Kaplan noted that Trump has a New Hampshire campaign event scheduled for Thursday, the third day of the trial.

“If the Secret Service can protect him at that event, certainly the Secret Service, the Marshals Service, and the City of New York can see to his security in this very secure federal courthouse,” Kaplan wrote in an order.

Trump could still decide to attend the trial and testify. If he does not, the jury might be shown excerpts

from his deposition, which was recorded on video.

On Monday, Kaplan instructed lawyers on both sides not to say anything in front of prospective jurors Tuesday about who is paying legal fees.

Earlier this month, the judge let Trump's lawyers question Carroll for an extra hour after it was revealed that her lawyers had received funding from American Future Republic, an organization funded by LinkedIn co-founder Reid Hoffman. In earlier questioning, Carroll said the lawyers were relying solely on contingency fees.

The Associated Press typically does not name people who say they have been sexually assaulted unless they come forward publicly, as Carroll, Leeds and Stoyhoff have done.

Black history class to undergo changes, College Board says

By CHEYANNE MUMPHREY Associated Press

The College Board says changes will be made to its new AP African American studies course, after critics said the agency bowed to political pressure and removed several topics from the framework, including Black Lives Matter, slavery reparations and queer life.

In a statement on Monday, the College Board said the development committee and experts charged with authoring the Advanced Placement course "will determine the details of those changes over the next few months."

"We are committed to providing an unflinching encounter with the facts and evidence of African American history and culture," the company said.

It remains unclear what the changes are or when they will be made public.

The course gained national attention this winter when Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, a possible Republican presidential candidate in 2024, said he would ban the course in his state because it pushed a political agenda.

"In the state of Florida, our education standards not only don't prevent, but they require teaching Black history, all the important things. That's part of our core curriculum," DeSantis previously said. "We want education and not indoctrination."

But the official curriculum for the course, released after DeSantis' administration rejected it, downplayed some components that had drawn objections from the governor and other conservatives. The College Board faced an onslaught of criticism from activists and African American scholars outraged at the notion the course changed because of political controversy.

The course was launched in 60 schools in the U.S. and will be expanded to 800 schools and 16,000 students this upcoming school year.

The nonprofit testing company previously said revisions to the course were substantially complete and not shaped by political influence before DeSantis shared his objections. College Board officials said developers consulted with professors from more than 200 colleges, including several historically Black institutions, and took input from teachers piloting the class.

The company said Monday the creation of the course had prioritized access to a discipline that is not widely available to high schoolers, plus bringing that content to as many students as possible — a possible reference to students in states run by conservatives. "Regrettably," the nonprofit testing company said, those two goals "came into conflict."

The College Board offers AP courses across the academic spectrum, including in math, science, social studies, foreign languages and fine arts. The courses are optional and taught at a college level. Students who score high enough on the final exam usually earn course credit at their university.

Mumphrey reported from Phoenix.

The Associated Press education team receives support from the Carnegie Corporation of New York. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

AP source: Jets agree on deal to acquire Aaron Rodgers

By DENNIS WASZAK Jr. AP Pro Football Writer

After six weeks of waiting, Aaron Rodgers is leaving behind his brilliant legacy in Green Bay and heading to the bright lights — and massive expectations — of the Big Apple.

The New York Jets agreed on a deal Monday to acquire the four-time NFL MVP from the Packers, according to a person with knowledge of the trade. The person spoke to The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity because the teams had not officially announced the deal.

Packers general manager Brian Gutekunst said at a pre-draft news conference that the deal hasn't been finalized, but should be completed before the draft begins Thursday.

"We were expecting it to be done very quickly, hopefully soon," Gutekunst said. "A lot of things have been agreed upon. Some things to go through."

The Jets will receive Rodgers, the No. 15 overall pick and a fifth-rounder this year from the Packers, according to another person with knowledge of the trade. In exchange, Green Bay will get the 13th overall selection, a second-rounder (No. 42) and a sixth-rounder this year and a conditional 2024 second-round pick that can become a first-rounder if Rodgers plays 65% of plays for New York this season.

ESPN first reported the agreement on terms between the teams on a deal.

The 39-year-old Rodgers spent a few days in February contemplating his life and playing future during an isolation retreat in Oregon — while fans and reporters speculated about what he would decide.

He emerged and deliberated some more before deciding on March 10 he intended to play again — and for the Jets. Rodgers made his intentions official during an appearance on "The Pat McAfee Show" on YouTube and Sirius XM on March 15. That came after New York had sent a contingent that included owner Woody Johnson, coach Robert Saleh and general manager Joe Douglas to Rodgers' home in Southern California in early March.

And then he and the sports world waited — and waited — for the Packers and Jets to finally complete a deal.

"We've been working on this for a while," Gutekunst said. "To get beyond the draft I think would have been tough for both teams."

Several weeks of negotiations appeared to be stalled at times, with fans — and the teams — wondering when or if the trade would be completed.

"We're anxious," Johnson told reporters at the league's annual meetings on March 28. "I guess, as we look forward, we're optimistic. But we have a plan, so we're willing to stick with our plan. And I don't think anybody is hyperventilating at this point."

It took a while, but the sides were finally able to agree on compensation. And the deal puts the one-time Super Bowl champion in New York after Zach Wilson, the No. 2 overall draft pick in 2021, struggled mightily in his first two seasons.

New York was 7-10 last season, finishing on a six-game losing streak that extended the NFL's longest active playoff drought to a franchise-record 12 straight years.

With the Jets, Rodgers reunites with offensive coordinator Nathaniel Hackett to try to jumpstart an offense that was among the NFL's worst under coordinator Mike LaFleur, the younger brother of Matt, Rodgers' coach in Green Bay the past four years.

Rodgers joins some promising young playmakers on offense, such as wide receiver Garrett Wilson, the AP Offensive Rookie of the Year, and running back Breece Hall.

"There's a lot of reasons why the Jets are attractive," Rodgers said during his appearance on "The Pat McAfee Show." "But there's one coach that has meant as much to me as any coach I've ever had. And he happens to be the coordinator there."

Saleh acknowledged a few times this offseason that the Jets were looking for a veteran quarterback to add to a team that features a top-five defense. And Johnson said he was "absolutely" on board with paying an established signal caller — "the missing piece," he called it — if Douglas could get him.

They ended up getting one of the NFL's greatest quarterbacks.

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Rodgers said shortly after the season ended that he was making up his mind on whether he wanted to return to the Packers for a 19th season, retire or request a trade. Meanwhile, the Jets explored a few quarterback options, including meeting with free agent Derek Carr at their facility and then again at the NFL combine in Indianapolis.

But after Carr agreed to terms to sign with New Orleans, it became even more apparent that New York would be all-in on Rodgers — as long as he wanted to play there.

It's reminiscent of the stunning trade the Jets made in 2008, when they acquired Brett Favre — who also turned 39 a few months later — from the Packers. And, coincidentally, clearing the way for Rodgers to start in Green Bay.

Rodgers was the league MVP in 2020 and 2021, but didn't perform as well last season while playing with a broken right thumb and dealing with the absence of star wideout Davante Adams, who was traded to Las Vegas. He had his lowest passer rating as a starter (91.1) and threw 12 interceptions, his highest total since 2008. The Packers went 8-9 and missed the playoffs to end a string of three straight NFC North titles.

Rodgers led the Packers to their most recent Super Bowl title in the 2010 season. Rodgers never got the Packers back to the Super Bowl, but he helped make them annual contenders. The Packers have lost in the NFC championship game four of the past nine seasons.

"I've got nothing but love and appreciation for what Aaron has done for so many in our organization," Matt LaFleur said last month during the NFL meetings in Phoenix.

Rodgers' departure marks a sea change for the Packers after they've had about three decades of Hall of Fame-level quarterback production in Favre and Rodgers. Next in line is Jordan Love, a 2020 first-round pick who has made only one career start.

Rodgers acknowledged the move caught him by surprise. He skipped the Packers' 2021 mandatory minicamp in a standoff with team management before reporting to camp and producing a second straight MVP season. (He also won the award for 2011 and 2014.) But the sides had patched things up afterward.

When he was asked last June at the Packers' mandatory minicamp whether he expected to finish his career in Green Bay, Rodgers replied: "Yes. Definitely."

Then came a 2022 season that didn't go according to plan.

Rodgers now will be tasked with leading a franchise that hasn't been in the Super Bowl since Joe Namath led the franchise to a victory in its only appearance in January 1969.

And quarterback issues have often been among the key culprits in the struggles since. That has especially been the case during the Jets' current playoff drought.

Saleh said the Jets remain committed to developing Wilson, the second overall pick in 2021. But the 23-year-old will do so as a backup to Rodgers, who was Wilson's idol while growing up in Utah.

Wilson joked the day after the season ended that he'd welcome a veteran starter coming in to claim his job and said he plans to "make that dude's life hell in practice every day."

Little did he know then "that dude" would be the quarterback he tried to emulate as a youngster — who'll now be in New York trying bring the Jets to another long-awaited Super Bowl.

AP Pro Football Writer Rob Maaddi and AP Sports Writer Steve Megargee contributed.

AP NFL: <https://apnews.com/hub/nfl> and https://twitter.com/AP_NFL

Hutchinson's launch highlights Arkansas city of Bentonville

By ANDREW DeMILLO Associated Press

BENTONVILLE, Ark. (AP) — When Asa Hutchinson launches his bid for president this week, he'll do so at a familiar location: the downtown square in the northwest Arkansas city where he was born, practiced law and first ran for office.

But Bentonville today is vastly different from the sleepy small town of fewer than 9,000 people where he got his start handling real estate cases and writing wills.

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Fueled by retail giant Walmart, the nearly 57,000-person city is now the state's fastest growing. High-end restaurants, art galleries and shops crowd the downtown, while mountain bikers are a regular presence. The sounds of construction and the sight of cranes are also a regular part of life in the city. It's a far cry from a town that didn't even have an FM radio station until Hutchinson launched one in the late 1970s.

"To me, today, Bentonville represents the success of entrepreneurship and hard work and independent thinking," Hutchinson told The Associated Press.

Hutchinson's campaign event on Wednesday gives the former two-term governor and increasingly outspoken critic of Donald Trump a chance to introduce himself on a national stage as he makes an uphill bid for the GOP nomination. But the venue also highlights Hutchinson's portrayal of himself as a business-friendly conservative in the backyard of his state's most well-known employer. It comes at the same time potential rival Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis is waging war with Disney in his own state.

"It 's both a return to something old and a rallying of something new," said Janine Parry, a political science professor at the University of Arkansas. "It's all encapsulated in one place."

Hutchinson was born in Bentonville but grew up in Gravette, a neighboring town of about 3,600 people. He graduated from high school in Springdale, the home of Tyson Foods, and returned to Bentonville to start his law practice after college.

After serving part-time as the city's attorney, Hutchinson tried his hand at politics with a bid for local prosecutor. He ran as a Republican, something unheard of in then-solidly Democratic Arkansas.

"Back then, in Benton County, we didn't know what a Republican looked like," said Kim Hendren, a former state legislator and Hutchinson's brother-in-law. Hendren, then a Democrat, won a seat to the Legislature that year, while Hutchinson lost the prosecutor's race.

Hutchinson said fellow lawyers advised him he had no political future in the state if he remained a Republican.

"They said, 'If you ever want to be a prosecutor, if you ever want to be a judge, you've got to be a Democrat. There's just no future being a Republican lawyer in the state,'" said Hutchinson, who went on to serve as a federal prosecutor and was later elected to the U.S. House.

Now, the state is predominantly Republican with the GOP holding every statewide and federal seat and the party having a majority in both chambers of the Legislature.

Bentonville, however, is viewed as less conservative than the surrounding county and is expected to move more in that direction with an influx of Walmart employees and vendors from outside the state.

The influence of Walmart and founder Sam Walton's family is seen throughout the city. The original Walton's 5&10 store building still sits off the town square and is being renovated into an expanded museum. A temporary museum space, not far from the square, includes a hologram of Walton that answers visitors' questions.

The town has become a major tourist destination since Walton's daughter, Alice, founded the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in 2011. Crystal Bridges' collection features famous works of art such as Norman Rockwell's "Rosie the Riveter" painting and includes a Frank Lloyd Wright house that was moved to the museum's grounds in 2015.

Not far from the museum, ground has been broken on another project funded by Alice Walton: a school of medicine that is expected to welcome its first class of students in 2025. The Walton family has also spent millions of dollars in improvements around the area, including a system of biking trails that also draws visitors.

"The Bentonville of 20 years ago is not there anymore," said Republican state Sen. Jim Dotson, whose district includes part of the city. "We've had so much growth, so much influx of folks that the small-town historical Bentonville that was the Sam Walton Bentonville where the five-and-dime started is virtually unrecognizable."

It's an area where Hutchinson's political ties run deep. Hutchinson's brother, Tim Hutchinson, served in the U.S. Senate. His father was mayor of neighboring Sulphur Springs, and several of his nieces and nephews served in the state Legislature.

But Hutchinson remains an unknown to some who have recently moved to the region. That includes

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At least 10 of her neighbors have since relocated, pressured by flooding.

"We are still here because we have nowhere else to go," Nakacwa said.

Companies — often with soldiers or police manning the gates — operate virtually under no supervision and local officials have been reduced to mere spectators, according to some officials and residents who spoke to the AP.

Charles Tamale, mayor of nearby town Lukaya, said they were powerless to do anything when companies presented their papers.

"It needs some control, but the government licenses these guys," he said. "But in fact what they are doing you cannot say it's legal ... they are mining and not putting up preventative measures."

Namara, the NEMA official, didn't reveal the names of any other companies licensed to operate in Lwera, but noted that "every effort is being made to ensure that the sand is being mined in a sustainable manner."

Then there's the way the sand is distributed — fluid yet opaque, fueling fears that cartels protected by top Ugandan officials are behind mining operations.

Chinese-made trucks loaded with sand lumber up and down hills and dump the sand at designated areas along the highway, which middlemen then distribute to building sites. Some sand goes to regional markets across the border.

It can cost up to \$1,000 to have sand deposited anywhere in the Kampala metropolitan area.

"Not any company can come and do such a thing," Tamale said of sand mining in Lwera. "They are owned by big people in government, or they have contacts within government, in that whatever they want can be done as they wish, not as it would have been done."

He provided no evidence, repeating the widespread belief among locals that powerful government officials are among mining companies' beneficiaries.

Jerome Lugumira, the NEMA official whose docket includes looking after wetlands, said he wasn't available for comment.

Activist David Kureeba, who tracks mining activities in wetlands, said NEMA was too weak to resist "pressure from the middlemen in government who bring investors" into the country. Lwera should be out of reach to all investors, said Kureeba.

No matter the economic rewards, "NEMA commits a mistake to allow sand mining in such an important ecosystem," he said. "They had better cancel all the leases."

Associated Press climate and environmental coverage receives support from several private foundations. See more about AP's climate initiative here. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

Montana transgender lawmaker silenced again, backers protest

By AMY BETH HANSON and SAM METZ Associated Press

HELENA, Mont. (AP) — Montana Republicans persisted in forbidding Democratic transgender lawmaker Zoey Zephyr from participating in debate for a second week and her supporters brought the House session to a halt Monday — chanting "Let her speak!" from the gallery before they were escorted out.

Zephyr defiantly hoisted her microphone into the air as her supporters interrupted proceedings for nearly half an hour in protest of Republicans denying her requests to speak on a proposal that would restrict when children can change the names and pronouns they use in school and require parental consent.

The interruption — hours after supporters rallied on the Capitol steps — was the latest development in a standoff over Zephyr's remarks against lawmakers who support a ban on gender-affirming care for minors. Zephyr, a first-term Democrat from Missoula, hasn't spoken on the Statehouse floor since last Tuesday when she told Republican colleagues they would have "blood on their hands" if they banned gender-affirming medical care for transgender youth.

Law enforcement escorted Zephyr's supporters from the gallery above the House floor, including several by force. Seven were arrested for criminal trespass, the sheriff said. They were going to be booked and released.

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Gerald Hatley, a retiree who moved to neighboring Bella Vista from Texas in 2019, who was in Bentonville with his painting club one day last week. Hatley said he wasn't familiar with Hutchinson and said he's open to supporting anyone he thought would have the best chance at unseating President Joe Biden.

"I think we need to work toward getting the guy that's in there out," Hatley said as he painted a picture of the Benton County courthouse. "Whatever candidate would prove to be the most successful in achieving that is the first criteria of mine."

Brian Dutrieux, who works for a food supplier in Bentonville, said he'd need to know more about Hutchinson as a presidential candidate but said he's been happy with how the state's economy fared under Hutchinson.

Dutrieux said he's ready to look at a candidate other than Trump, citing DeSantis as an example. But he was skeptical of how Hutchinson could stack up.

"In the world we live in today, I just don't know if he has the swagger or the brand to compete," Dutrieux said. "He just seems very vanilla."

Hutchinson is also launching his bid in an area where the former president remains popular. About 62% of the county's voters supported Trump in the 2020 presidential election. But Hutchinson said the challenges he faces in winning over Trump supporters in his home territory are the same that he'll encounter in early states in the GOP contest.

"You're going uphill when you're running against Trump in the primary, whether you're running in Iowa or Arkansas," Hutchinson said.

UN chief and West berate Russia's top diplomat over Ukraine

By EDITH M. LEDERER Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The United Nations chief and representatives from Western nations berated Russia's top diplomat as he chaired a U.N. meeting Monday, accusing Moscow of violating the U.N. Charter by attacking Ukraine and occupying part of its territory.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov responded by defending his country's military action and accusing the U.S. and its allies of undercutting global diplomacy, the foundation of the United Nations, which was created to prevent a third world war.

Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called cooperation among the U.N.'s 193 member nations the organization's "beating heart" and "guiding vision," and he warned the Security Council that global collaboration is under the greatest strain since the creation of the United Nations in 1945 on the ashes of World War II.

Tensions between major powers are at a "historic high" and so are the risks of conflict "through misadventure or miscalculation," he said, pointing first and foremost to the war in Ukraine.

The U.N. secretary-general and the ambassadors of the U.S., Britain, France and their allies all pointed to the U.N. Charter's underlying principle requiring all countries to support the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every nation — which Russia violated by invading its smaller neighbor on Feb. 24, 2022, and illegally annexing several regions.

Russia convened the ministerial meeting on making "multilateralism" — when countries work together — more effective through the defense of the U.N. Charter, calling it the high point of its month-long presidency of the Security Council. It has been the most contentious presidency in the memory of longtime U.N. diplomats and officials, and Monday's meeting added to the antagonism.

U.S. Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield called Russia a "hypocritical convener" of the meeting whose "illegal, unprovoked and unnecessary" war in Ukraine "struck at the heart of the U.N. Charter and all that we hold dear."

Britain's U.N. Ambassador Barbara Woodward said the world has seen "what Russia's idea of multilateralism means for the world" — the trampling of the U.N. Charter and a war that has brought unimaginable suffering to Ukraine and been "an unmitigated disaster for Russia, too."

The 27-member European Union called Russia's attempt to portray itself as a defender of the U.N. Charter and multilateralism "cynical," saying it is "in contempt" not only of the U.N. Charter but U.N. General

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Assembly resolutions demanding the withdrawal of Russian forces.

But Lavrov defended what Moscow calls its "special military operation," reiterating accusations that Ukraine was promoting "Nazi practices" and banning the Russian language and culture, and NATO was planning to expand into Ukraine. He stressed, however, that "it's not all about Ukraine" but what he called the West's plans to leverage the Ukrainian government in the hope of weakening Russia.

"We cannot consider the Ukrainian issue separately from the geopolitical context," Lavrov said. "It's about how international relations will continue to be shaped through the establishment of a sound consensus on the basis of balance of interests, or through aggressive and volatile advancement of Washington's hegemony."

Lavrov strongly criticized NATO members' activities in the Western Pacific, specifically the alliance between Australia, Britain and the U.S., and also strengthening U.S. ties with Japan, South Korea and a number of Southeast Asian countries.

Lavrov also accused the U.S. Embassy in Moscow of blocking Russian journalists from accompanying him to New York by approving their visas only after his plane left.

The Russian minister stressed that multilateralism is a key part of the U.N. Charter and accused the United States and its allies of "destroying globalization" despite touting its benefits.

Lavrov said the West is promoting a "rules-based order" where nobody has seen the rules and which bars access to modern technologies and financial services to punish countries it disagrees with. The West has imposed a series of economic sanctions on Russia in response to the invasion of Ukraine.

"Let's call a spade a spade. Nobody allowed the Western minority to speak on behalf of all humankind," he said.

Thomas-Greenfield, the U.S. ambassador, told the council that Russia's actions during the 14-month war show that the invasion of Ukraine isn't an isolated incident.

"This does not just concern Ukraine or Europe," she said. "It concerns all of us. Because today it's Ukraine, but tomorrow it could be another country, another small nation that is invaded by its larger neighbor."

There were about 50 countries that spoke, and many pointed to the increasing confrontation among U.N. member nations. They stressed the importance of preserving multilateralism, including by reforming the Security Council to reflect the 21st century world instead of the post-World War II power structure.

"The world is standing at a historic crossroads now," China's U.N. Ambassador Zhang Jun told the council. "Humanity is facing unprecedented global challenges. Acts of hegemony and bullying are causing colossal harm to the world. Politics are creating huge divisions and confrontations. It has become all the more urgent and important to uphold the U.N. Charter."

As sand miners prosper in Uganda, a vital lake basin suffers

By RODNEY MUHUMUZA Associated Press

LWERA WETLAND, Uganda (AP) — The excavator grunts in the heart of the wetland, baring its teeth. There are trucks waiting to be loaded with sand, and more almost certainly on the way.

This is how it is here daily in Lwera — a central Ugandan region on the fringes of Lake Victoria: a near-constant demand for sand that's exerting pressure on a wetland that's home to locals and animals and feeds into Africa's largest freshwater lake.

Lwera is a breeding ground for fish, serves as a stop for migratory birds and can store vast amounts of planet-warming carbon dioxide underground. The wetland stretches more than 20 kilometers (12 miles) astride the highway from the Ugandan capital Kampala into the western interior. It has long been worked over by sand miners, both legal and illegal, motivated by demand from the construction industry.

Now, all known corporate operations within the wetland have authorization to be there, giving them a measure of legitimacy that's frustrating environmental activists, local officials and others who say the mining activities must be stopped because they degrade the wetland.

They charge that while the companies are there legally, their activities are in many ways unlawful.

Locals in Lwera's farming community say they reap misery, complaining that mining creates few jobs

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and ruins the land.

Ronald Ssemanda, a local village chairman, pointed to bushy land fenced off with roofing sheets that he said had been cratered badly by sand miners.

"There is no way I can even talk to them," said Ssemanda, referring to owners of mining operations he deems too powerful.

Ssemanda is no longer so vocal in his criticism. He said the matter "is above us."

Sand mining — mostly for use in the construction industry — is big business, with 50 billion tons used globally each year, the United Nations Environment Programme said in a report last year. It warned that the industry is "largely ungoverned," leading to erosion, flooding, saltier aquifers and the collapse of coastal defenses.

Healthy wetlands can help control local climate and flood risk, according to UNEP.

In Uganda, an ongoing construction boom mirrors trends in the wider region. Riverbeds and lake basins — public property — are often the scene of mining operations, although there also are private estates dug up for sand.

But while all wetlands around Lake Victoria are under threat from sand miners, the eponymously named sand from Lwera is favored among builders for its coarse texture that's said to perform better in brickwork mortar.

Some builders are known to turn trucks back, rejecting the sand if they can't prove by feeling it that it's Lwera material.

At least two companies operate formally within Lwera: the Chinese-owned Double Q Co. Ltd. and Seroma Ltd. Both frequently face questions over their allegedly destructive activities there, and members of a parliamentary committee on natural resources threatened to shut them down after an unannounced visit earlier this year.

Both companies were open for business when The Associated Press visited earlier in April. Double Q officials declined to be interviewed at the site and didn't respond to questions.

A representative of Seroma Ltd., production manager Wahab Ssegane, defended their work, saying they have a permit, their operations are 10 kilometers (6 miles) from the lake and that they follow guidelines from the National Environment Management Authority.

NEMA has banned dredging within Lake Victoria but permits sand mining in the wetlands.

"Otherwise, you would have to import sand," said NEMA spokeswoman Naomi K. Namara. Companies caught degrading the environment face stiff financial penalties, she said.

But activists and some locals say no company should be permitted to operate in Lwera, even if it somehow is able to curb environmental concerns.

One key concern relates to the equipment used. Companies are permitted to dig 4 meters (13 feet) into the earth, but some dredging vessels are retrofitted at site to be able to dig deeper, according to some officials at the scene.

"They don't have permits to use those dredgers," said one official who's part of a local government team collecting taxes from miners, who spoke on condition of anonymity to avoid retaliation. "The dredgers are going 12 meters (40 feet) underground," he claimed.

It's hard to refill the open spaces when miners dig that deep, leaving depressions in the earth, he said.

When the pits are not refilled the open spaces naturally fill up with water that then spreads, occasionally flooding people's gardens and homes, said resident Sandra Buganzi.

"The sand people came and dug up the sand and brought for us water, which started going into people's homes," she said. "I feel very bad, and I feel anger and hatred in my heart."

As Buganzi spoke, a neighbor, Fiona Nakacwa, gripped a garden hoe and paved a way for water away from her home.

She worried she could be forced to leave her neighborhood.

"Before they started digging sand, there was no water coming here," Nakacwa said. "This place was dry and there was a garden. I've lived here for seven years and there never used to be water."

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The disruption drew the ire of Republican leaders, who described it as a “riot” and an “insurrection.” Leaders cut the sound on the video feed, and Zephyr remained on the floor holding her microphone as supporters also chanted “Whose House? Our House!” The sergeant-at-arms asked Zephyr to help settle things down — a request he said she rebuffed.

Zephyr did not return to the floor after lawmakers reconvened. She told The Associated Press she was headed to the county jail with the protesters who were arrested. She tweeted that she went there to show “support for those who were arrested defending democracy.”

Supporters of the ban saw Zephyr’s admonishment as unprecedented and personal, yet most have refrained from commenting publicly.

House leadership declined to comment to journalists Monday but released a statement saying they “condemn violence and will always stand for civil debate and respect for our processes of government.”

“Today’s riot by far-left agitators damages our discourse and endangered legislators and staff. Their actions did not represent Montana values,” House Speaker Matt Regier, Speaker pro tempore Rhonda Knudsen and Majority Leader Sue Vinton said in the statement.

The conservative Montana Freedom Caucus, which called for Zephyr to be censured after her comments last week, issued a statement condemning the actions of “the violent protesters” in the Capitol. It said a small minority of people disrupted the legislature’s business, showing “why we must enforce the rules of decorum when engaged in public debate.”

“Zephyr encouraged these actions by standing in the middle of the floor encouraging an insurrection after all members were told to move to the sides,” and people in the gallery were told to leave. The caucus, which includes 21 of the legislature’s 102 Republican lawmakers called for immediate disciplinary action against Zephyr.

Zephyr and her supporters say her statements accurately illustrate the stakes of the legislation under discussion, arguing that restricting gender-affirming care endangers transgender youth, who studies suggest are at greater risk of depression and suicide.

Earlier in the day, Zephyr spoke from the Capitol steps, telling supporters that she planned to continue speaking forcefully against legislation that members of the transgender community, including herself, consider matters of life and death.

“I was sent here to speak on behalf of my constituents and to speak on behalf of my community. It’s the promise I made when I got elected, and it’s a promise that I will continue to keep every single day,” Zephyr said.

She also connected the transgender community’s struggle against gender-affirming care bans to political fights animating other marginalized groups throughout the United States.

“When those communities who see the repercussions of those bills have the audacity to stand up and say, ‘This legislation gets us killed,’ those in power aren’t content with just passing those hateful, harmful bills,” she said. “What they are demanding is silence. We will not be complicit in our eradication,” she said.

Those gathered held signs of support, cheered and waved Pride flags.

After the rally, a 21-year-old teared up as he told Zephyr about his fears of coming out as transgender in his small town in southwestern Montana. Others hugged the lawmaker, thanked her for fighting and apologized for the fact that she had to do so.

Katy Spence, a constituent who drove in from Missoula, said the standoff was about censoring ideas, not decorum.

“She’s been silenced because she spoke the truth about what these anti-trans bills are doing in Montana — to trans youth especially,” Spence said.

The standoff is the latest example of emergent discussions around civility, decorum and how to discuss political issues many perceive as life and death.

Zephyr was silenced and deliberately misgendered by some Republican lawmakers in response to her charge last week. Republican leaders have demanded she apologize and said they won’t let any lawmaker speak whom they don’t trust to uphold decorum — regardless of party or gender. Misgendering is using pronouns that do not match a person’s gender identity.

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Months after Zephyr became the first openly transgender woman elected to the Montana Legislature, the state joined a long list of legislatures passing new restrictions on transgender children. Proposals this year have addressed issues ranging from the health care they can access to the sports teams they can play on to the names they can go by.

Though proceedings have been heated in more than a dozen statehouses, Republican efforts to keep Zephyr from speaking have given such legislative battles newfound attention.

Lawmakers passed the gender-affirming care ban last week, and Gianforte has indicated he will sign it.

The American Civil Liberties Union and Lambda Legal have vowed to challenge it in court before it takes effect in October.

Metz reported from Salt Lake City.

Alabama and Mississippi mark Confederate Memorial Day

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (AP) — Alabama and Mississippi closed most government offices Monday for Confederate Memorial Day as efforts have stalled to abolish state holidays that honor the old Confederacy.

Legislation has been introduced in the ongoing Alabama legislative session to remove, alter or rename Confederate-related holidays, but the effort has so far gained little traction.

Camille Bennett, the founder of Project Say Something, an organization that has worked for the removal of Confederate monuments in Alabama, said the determination to keep Confederate holidays comes at the same time Alabama lawmakers push legislation banning so called "divisive concepts" from being taught in state classrooms and diversity training for state workers.

"On one side, you have white conservative men defining what divisive is and what it means. ... At the same time, you are honoring the Confederacy, which in itself is a divisive concept. It's really hypocritical, quite tone deaf," Bennett said.

An Alabama Senate committee last week rejected a proposal to separate the joint state holiday celebrating Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee and slain civil rights leader the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. on the same day.

"We're trying to separate the holidays of two men whose ideologies were totally separate, from one end of the totem pole to the other. One believed in justice and fairness for all, and another believed in slavery," state Sen. Vivian Davis Figures said.

Figures' bill would have kept Lee's holiday but moved it to Columbus Day in October. "Whoever wants to honor either man will have their own day," she said.

The vote split along racial lines, Figures said at the end of the meeting, with white Republicans voting against it and Black Democrats voting for it.

Several Southern states have ended or renamed Confederate holidays. Louisiana in 2022 removed Robert E. Lee Day and Confederate Memorial Day from the list of state holidays. Georgia in 2015 renamed Confederate Memorial Day to "State Holiday." Arkansas in 2017 ended the practice of commemorating Lee and King on the same day.

Mississippi Public Broadcasting on Monday had historians read Mississippi's secession declaration, which makes clear that slavery was the central issue.

Mary Jane Meadows, a member of the north Mississippi chapter of the Indivisible advocacy group, told Mississippi Public Broadcasting that the group protested Confederate Memorial Day last year and planned to do the same for 2023.

"That means that 25,000 or more state employees have a day off with pay courtesy of the Mississippi taxpayers, 39% of whom are Black persons who are voters and taxpayers," Meadows said.

Some government offices in Mississippi remained open Monday, including courts in majority-Black Hinds County.

Bennett said she believes the continued recognition of Confederate holidays "speaks to the blatant disregard of the humanity of Black Alabamians."

"We experienced a Holocaust, right. We experienced our families being ripped apart, and there is a

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celebration saying, 'We wish things could have stayed the same,' " Bennett said.

Actor Danny Masterson drugged, raped women, prosecutor says

By ANDREW DALTON AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Actor Danny Masterson drugged then raped three women at his Hollywood-area home between 2001 and 2003, a prosecutor told jurors Monday in his opening statement in the retrial of the star of "That '70s Show."

Deputy District Attorney Reinhold Mueller said Masterson put substances into drinks that he gave to a longtime girlfriend and two women he knew through friend circles around the Church of Scientology, all of whom Masterson is charged with raping.

"The evidence will show that they were drugged," Mueller told the jury. The defense denies such evidence exists.

Direct discussion of drugging was missing from the first trial — which ended in a mistrial when a jury deadlocked on all three counts — with Mueller instead having to imply it through the testimony of the women, who said they were woozy, disoriented and at times unconscious on the nights they described the actor raping them.

But Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Charlaine F. Olmedo is allowing the direct assertion at the second trial.

Masterson's attorney, Philip Cohen, said in the defense opening statement that those hazy stories and assertions are all the prosecution has, and he told jurors, "there is no drugging charge in this case."

Attorneys for both sides acknowledged that there is no forensic evidence of any substances Masterson may have given the women because the police investigation that led to the two trials did not begin until about 15 years after the events.

But Mueller said he will call an analyst from the police toxicology unit, "who will tell you how some of the most common drug-facilitated sexual assaults, how some of the most common date rape drugs work, how quickly they're metabolized, what side effects look like."

Cohen responded that "a toxicologist can come in opine to whatever they want, but there is no toxicology report, there's no urine, no blood work, no DNA."

Cohen was not allowed to refer to testimony from the first trial — something Olmedo admonished him several times for doing — but he said he expected testimony this time would show that one of the women Masterson is charged with raping watched him make the allegedly drugged drink her gave her.

Cohen told jurors that another of the women, a young actress who spent an evening alone with Masterson at his house in 2003, made no mention of drugging at the time.

"She spoke to her mom about how her date with Masterson went, she spoke to her friends, she did not ever say to one person, 'I was drugged.' Never," Cohen said.

She would only mention thinking she had been drugged years later after the investigation began, Cohen said.

This and many other similarities between the women's stories come from them talking to each other and "cross-pollinating" the details of their accounts, something they did multiple times even after the detective in the case warned them that such communication could taint the case against Masterson, Cohen said.

The drugging allegations had echoes of the trial of Bill Cosby, where women testified to similar experiences. Cosby's conviction after two trials of his own was permanently thrown out by Pennsylvania's highest court.

The Associated Press does not typically name people who say they have been sexually assaulted.

Masterson, 47, could get 45 years in prison if convicted.

Mueller also told jurors that the women did not immediately go to authorities because they were told not to by officials in the Church of Scientology, and they were told what happened to them was not rape.

Masterson is a prominent member of the church. All three women are former members.

The church said in a statement after the women's testimony in the first trial that it "has no policy prohibiting or discouraging members from reporting criminal conduct of Scientologists, or of anyone, to law enforcement."

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In another difference from the first trial, Olmedo is allowing expert witnesses to testify on those policies. Cohen said that prosecution expert Claire Headley, a former member of the church's leadership group, is someone who works "to rid the world of Scientology, rid people of Scientology," and told jurors they were going to "hear tremendous bias" in her testimony. The expert on the defense witness list is her father-in-law, a current high-level Scientologist.

Actor Leah Remini, a former Scientologist who has become the church's most prominent detractor on social media and through a TV series she hosted featuring dissident ex-members, sat in the front row of the courtroom in support of Masterson's accusers.

Masterson, who has been free on bail since his 2020 arrest, sat at the defense table, with a large coterie of supporters behind him, many if not all church members, who also sat through his first trial. They included his wife, model and actor Bijou Phillips; his sister-in-law, "One Day at a Time" actor Mackenzie Phillips; and his brother, "Malcolm in the Middle" actor Christopher Masterson.

Follow AP Entertainment Writer Andrew Dalton on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/andyjamesdalton>

Prosecutor: Proud Boys viewed themselves as 'Trump's army'

By MICHAEL KUNZELMAN and LINDSAY WHITEHURST Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Ready for "all-out war," leaders of the far-right Proud Boys extremist group viewed themselves as foot soldiers fighting for Donald Trump as the former president clung to power after the 2020 election, a prosecutor said Monday at the close of a historic trial over the U.S. Capitol insurrection.

After more than three months of testimony, jurors began hearing attorneys' closing arguments in the seditious conspiracy case accusing Proud Boys national chairman Enrique Tarrio and four lieutenants of plotting to forcibly stop the transfer of power from Trump to President Joe Biden.

The Proud Boys were "lined up behind Donald Trump and willing to commit violence on his behalf," prosecutor Conor Mulroe told jurors. "These defendants saw themselves as Donald Trump's army, fighting to keep their preferred leader in power no matter what the law or the courts had to say about it."

The prosecution's words underscore how the Justice Department has worked throughout the trial to link the violence on Jan. 6, 2021, to the rhetoric and actions of the former president. Prosecutors have repeatedly shown jurors a video clip of Trump telling the Proud Boys to "stand back and stand by" during his first presidential debate with Joe Biden.

Tarrio is one of the top targets of the Justice Department's investigation of the riot that erupted at the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021. Tarrio wasn't in Washington, D.C., that day but is accused of orchestrating an attack from afar.

One of Tarrio's lawyers is expected to address jurors on Tuesday when the trial resumes for a second day of closing arguments.

Defense attorneys say there's no evidence of a conspiracy or a plan for Proud Boys to attack the Capitol.

Nicholas Smith, attorney for former Proud Boys chapter leader Ethan Nordean, said prosecutors built their case on "misdirection and innuendo." Smith accused prosecutors of repeatedly playing the clip of Trump from the debate to try to manipulate jurors.

"Does that prove some conspiracy by the men here?" Smith asked jurors. "We all know it doesn't."

Seditious conspiracy, a Civil War-era charge that is rare and can be difficult to prove, carries a potential sentence of up to 20 years in prison. The Proud Boys also face other serious charges.

Mulroe said a conspiracy can be an unspoken and implicit "mutual understanding, reached with a wink and a nod."

The Justice Department has already secured seditious conspiracy convictions against the founder and members of another far-right extremist group, the Oath Keepers. But this is the first major trial involving leaders of the far-right Proud Boys, a neofascist group of self-described "Western chauvinists" that remains a force in mainstream Republican circles.

The foundation of the government's case, which started with jury selection in January, is a trove of messages that Proud Boys leaders and members privately exchanged in encrypted chats — and publicly

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posted on social media — before, during and after the Jan. 6 attack.

The messages show Proud Boys celebrating when Trump, a Republican, told the group to “stand back and stand by” during his first debate with Biden, a Democrat. After the 2020 election, they raged online for weeks about baseless claims of a stolen election and what would happen when Biden took office.

“If Biden steals this election, (the Proud Boys) will be political prisoners,” Tarrio posted on Nov. 16, 2020. “We won’t go quietly ... I promise.”

Jurors also saw the string of gleeful messages that Proud Boys members posted during the Jan. 6 riot. A group of Proud Boys marched to the Capitol that day. Some entered the building after the mob of Trump supporters overwhelmed police lines.

“Make no mistake,” Tarrio wrote in one message. “We did this.”

Prosecutors showed multiple videos from Jan. 6 during their closing statements, including one that appeared to show defendant Zachary Rehl spraying police officers with pepper spray outside the Capitol. Confronted with the images during his testimony earlier in the trial, Rehl said he didn’t remember doing such a thing and couldn’t tell whether it was him.

Mulroe said the images show “he did it and he lied under oath about it.” Rehl’s attorney, Carmen Hernandez, said the video isn’t clear enough to prove Rehl used pepper spray then.

Tarrio, a Miami resident, Nordean and Rehl are on trial with Joseph Biggs and Dominic Pezzola. Nordean, of Auburn, Washington, was a Proud Boys chapter president. Biggs, of Ormond Beach, Florida, was a self-described Proud Boys organizer. Rehl was president of a Proud Boys chapter in Philadelphia. Pezzola was a Proud Boys member from Rochester, New York.

Tarrio was arrested in Washington two days before the Jan. 6 riot on charges that he burned a church’s Black Lives Matter banner during an earlier march in the city. Tarrio heeded a judge’s order to leave the nation’s capital after his arrest.

The defense attorneys called several current and former Proud Boys to the stand, trying to portray the group as a drinking club that only engaged in violence for self-defense against antifascist activists.

“If you don’t like what some of them say, that doesn’t make them guilty,” Hernandez told jurors.

Rehl, the first defendant to testify, said the group had “no objective” that day. Pezzola testified that he got “caught up in the craziness” and acted alone on Jan. 6 when he used a riot shield stolen from a police officer to smash a Capitol window.

The prosecutor told jurors that the Proud Boys leaders wanted to stop Congress from certifying Biden’s victory “by any means necessary, including force.”

“You want to call this a drinking club? You want to call a men’s fraternal organization? Ladies and gentlemen, let’s call this what it is ... a violent gang that came together to use force against its enemies” Mulroe said.

Key witnesses for prosecutors included two former Proud Boys members who pleaded guilty to riot-related charges and are cooperating with the government in the hopes of getting lighter sentences.

The first, Matthew Greene, testified that group members were expecting a “civil war” as they grew increasingly angry about the election results. The second, Jeremy Bertino, testified that he viewed the Proud Boys as leaders of the conservative movement and as “the tip of the spear” after the November 2020 election.

The Proud Boys’ defense mirrored arguments made by lawyers for members of the Oath Keepers, who were separately charged with seditious conspiracy. They, too, said there was no evidence of a plan for group members to attack the Capitol.

Over the course of two Oath Keepers trials, prosecutors secured seditious conspiracy convictions against Rhodes and five other members, while three defendants were acquitted of the charge. Those three, however, were convicted of obstructing Congress’ certification of Biden’s electoral victory.

Associated Press writer Alanna Durkin Richer in Boston contributed to this report.

Follow the AP's coverage of the U.S. Capitol insurrection at <https://apnews.com/hub/capitol-siege>.

Montana transgender lawmaker silenced: What to know

By AMY BETH HANSON and SAM METZ Associated Press

HELENA, Mont. (AP) — The latest high-profile example of statehouses deciding who can be heard during legislative debates is playing out in Montana, where a transgender lawmaker has for days been silenced by Republican leaders, despite efforts to speak on various proposals.

Leaders in the GOP-controlled state Legislature on Monday continued denying Rep. Zooey Zephyr the chance to speak during proceedings on Monday, even after protesters chanted "Let Her Speak!" and forced them to adjourn temporarily. The lawmakers are demanding she apologize for telling colleagues they would have "blood on their hands" if they voted for a bill banning gender-affirming care. Zephyr doubled down on her stand in a speech to supporters gathered on the statehouse steps and vowed not to change course.

Montana is among a wave of states passing legislation that opponents say could exacerbate the suffering of transgender teens, who are disproportionately plagued by bullying, depression and high suicide rates.

The measure has passed and is in the hands of Gov. Greg Gianforte, who has indicated he will sign it.

Here's what you need to know:

WHO IS THE TRANSGENDER LAWMAKER AT THE CENTER OF THIS?

Last year, Zephyr became the first openly transgender woman elected to the Montana Legislature — putting her among a record number of transgender lawmakers who began serving across the U.S.

The 34-year-old Democrat is from the left-leaning college town Missoula, where she's been a staffer at the University of Montana. She has spent much of her life advocating for LGBTQ+ rights and worked behind the scenes during the 2021 legislative session to help block efforts to ban gender-affirming health care.

Following her November election, she said she wanted to enlist moderate Republicans to push back on what she called "extreme and dangerous attacks" and help people understand transgender adults like her.

Instead, she and fellow members of the Democratic minority have been powerless to stop Republicans from passing proposals focused on transgender kids. In addition to legislation banning gender-affirming care for minors, lawmakers also passed legislation that says misgendering or deadnaming students is not illegal discrimination unless it rises to the level of bullying.

Deadnaming refers to using the name a transgender person used prior to transitioning.

She has been unfazed by calls from Republican leaders and legislative staffers to apologize, scale back her remarks or calm protesters. In a speech on Monday, Zephyr likened gender-affirming care bans like the one that passed in Montana to "eradication," echoing fears raised throughout the transgender community that stripping transgender youth of access to care endangers their lives and mental health, and attempts to force people and their doctors to maintain their gender assigned at birth.

WHAT STARTED THIS DISPUTE?

On April 18, as the House debated the governor's proposed amendments to a measure banning gender-affirming care for minors, Zephyr spoke against the bill while making a reference to the body's opening prayer.

"I hope the next time there's an invocation, when you bow your heads in prayer, you see the blood on your hands," she said.

House Majority Leader Sue Vinton, a Republican, immediately called Zephyr's comments inappropriate and disrespectful. That evening, a group of conservative lawmakers known as the Montana Freedom Caucus demanded Zephyr's censure and deliberately referred to her using male pronouns in a letter and Tweet. That's known as misgendering — using pronouns that don't match a person's gender identity.

Zephyr previously upset legislative leaders with emotional testimony earlier this session.

She made a similar "blood on your hands" comment the first time the House heard the bill and has also given emotional testimony indicating bills that attack LGBTQ+ rights will lead to suicide.

"When there are bills targeting the LGBTQ community, I stand up to defend my community," Zephyr told The Associated Press after she was silenced Thursday. "And I choose my words with clarity and precision,

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and I spoke to the real harms that these bills bring.”

WHO IS LEADING THE CHARGE TO SILENCE HER?

Though Montana has long leaned Republican, for years voters crossed party lines and elected Democrats to the U.S. Senate and governor’s mansion. But the state has recently shifted rightward. Republicans now command control of state government, which they’ve used to push legislation restricting abortion and loosening gun laws.

One reflection of such a shift is the newly influential Montana Freedom Caucus — a group founded in January that includes at least 21 of the Legislature’s 102 GOP lawmakers.

Its ideological leader is U.S. Rep Matt Rosendale, a hardline conservative who backed former President Donald Trump’s false statements about fraud in the 2020 election and was among a core group of Republicans who opposed electing U.S. Rep. Kevin McCarthy as speaker of the House.

Efforts to punish Zephyr originated in the Freedom Caucus, whose members said Zephyr’s comments displayed a “hateful rhetoric” and called for a “commitment to civil discourse” — similar to criticisms leveled against Democrats who were expelled from the Tennessee statehouse for joining in gun control demonstrations.

Two days after the caucus’ letter, Speaker Matt Regier refused to allow Zephyr to speak against a bill that would put a binary definition of male and female into state code. She was blocked from speaking for a second day Friday during discussion of a bill to prevent minors from seeing pornography online.

Regier said he silenced Zephyr after discussions with other lawmakers. Democrats objected, but the decision was upheld by Republican lawmakers on party-line votes both days.

WHO IS THE HOUSE SPEAKER ENFORCING THE GAG ORDER?

Zephyr’s punishment has thrust leaders in Montana’s Republican-majority Legislature into the spotlight, including Regier, who was elected House Speaker in January.

Throughout his tenure, Regier, a real estate investor from a northwestern Montana political family, has spearheaded legislation to restrict local governments from enacting gun control measures. He also has sought to tighten restrictions on abortion, including pushing a 2022 ballot initiative that, if passed, could have subjected providers to criminal charges.

Regier’s bill to ban the type of abortion most commonly used after 15 weeks of gestation has passed the Legislature this year. Gianforte hasn’t acted on the bill.

Kalispell, where Regier is from and represents, is the largest city in Montana’s deeply Republican Flathead County. Former President Donald Trump received 64% of the vote in the county in 2020. County commissioners there opposed mask requirements to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and library directors and staff have resigned over efforts to ban books about gender identity, sexuality and race.

The region is known for agriculture and as a tourist gateway to Glacier National Park.

Regier’s father, state Sen. Keith Regier, has served in the Legislature since 2009 and is chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee. His sister, Rep. Amy Regier, is in her second session and is chair of the House Judiciary Committee.

SO, HAS ZEPHYR BEEN CENSURED?

Formally, no, but practically, yes.

A censure in the Montana Legislature is a public reprimand. The House did not go through that process. However, Regier used his authority under House rules to decide questions of order, privilege and recognition.

IS THIS RELATED TO THE TENNESSEE LAWMAKERS BEING EXPELLED?

Not directly, but the dispute reflects tensions and harsh rhetoric around culturally divisive issues — including firearms, racial justice and rights for the LGBTQ+ community — that currently dominate much of America’s political discourse.

The Tennessee expulsions stemmed from a dispute over gun control. It drew accusations of racism after Republicans removed two Black lawmakers following their participation in a protest but retained a third lawmaker involved who was white.

WHAT’S NEXT?

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Regier is expected this week to stick to his stance that Zephyr can't speak on the floor until she apologizes. Zephyr has said she stands by her statements. It remains unknown if conservatives and the Montana Freedom Caucus will keep pushing for formal censure. The Montana Legislature is scheduled to end in early May.

AP writer Matt Brown in Billings contributed to this report. Metz reported from Salt Lake City.

Cuba fuel shortages prompt rationing, event cancellations

HAVANA (AP) — Cuba's fuel shortages have increased dramatically with authorities suspending activities, including a concert by the country's national symphony, as well as rationing gasoline sales and moving some universities' classes online.

Cubans have experienced shortages of all kinds of goods amid the recent economic crisis but the cancellation of activities because of fuel shortages had not been reported previously. The cancellations come following days of long lines to get gasoline at filling stations.

Experts say the lack of gasoline and diesel is not due to a lack of crude oil — Cuba produces about half of what it needs and buys the rest from other countries - but to the difficulties refining it.

"There is no lack of crude oil in Cuba," said Jorge Piñón, senior research fellow at the University of Texas at Austin's Energy Institute.

He said Venezuela is selling Cuba a similar amount of crude or even slightly more than it did last year. Cuba has also received oil from Russia, though details of these agreements are unknown.

Piñón said Cuba in April also received two tankers from Mexican state oil company Pemex carrying 300,000 barrels of crude oil each.

He blamed the shortages on technical production problems in the refineries, which were built in 1957.

Cuban authorities have not given a specific reason for the shortages, but in previous days have mentioned difficulties with "inputs," which Piñón said could refer to an additive Cuba gets from Iran needed to refine Venezuela's heavy crude.

The fuel shortages started being critical this weekend.

On Monday afternoon, the commercial director of the state-owned Cubapetroleo, Lidia Rodríguez, warned there are low levels of "refineable crude."

Meanwhile, authorities in Villa Clara said in a statement published on the government's Facebook page that fuel will only be sold to drivers of cars licensed to operate as public carriers and provide basic services, i.e. ambulances, and vehicles used in emergencies or burials.

Universities in the provinces of Villa Clara, Holguín, Sancti Spiritus and Universidad Agraria de La Habana said that starting Monday classes will be temporarily online.

On Sunday, a concert by the Cuban National Symphony in the capital's main theater was canceled due to lack of fuel.

DA to decide on Georgia election probe charges in summer

By KATE BRUMBACK Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — The prosecutor in Atlanta investigating whether then-President Donald Trump and his allies illegally meddled in the 2020 election in Georgia said Monday she expects to announce charging decisions in the case this summer and urged "heightened security."

Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis wrote in a letter to county Sheriff Pat Labat that she expects to announce the decisions sometime between July 11 and Sept. 1. She said she wanted to give Labat time to coordinate with local, state and federal agencies "to ensure that our law enforcement community is ready to protect the public."

"Open-source intelligence has indicated the announcement of decisions in this case may provoke a significant public reaction," Willis wrote in the letter, adding that some could involve "acts of violence that will endanger the safety of our community."

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As leaders, they need to be prepared, she wrote, adding that her team would be in touch to talk about arrangements.

The letter was first reported by The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, which reported that letters were also sent to Atlanta's police chief and the head of the Atlanta-Fulton County Emergency Management Agency.

The Atlanta Police Department confirmed receipt of a letter from Willis and said it would "continue to monitor the potential for unrest throughout our city."

"We stand ready to respond to demonstrations to ensure the safety of those in our communities and those exercising their First Amendment right, or to address illegal activity, should the need arise," a department statement said.

Willis has been investigating whether Trump and his allies broke any laws as they tried to overturn his narrow election loss to Democrat Joe Biden in Georgia.

She opened the investigation in early 2021, shortly after a recording of a phone call between Trump and Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger was made public. In that call, Trump suggested the state's top elections official could help "find" the votes needed to overturn his loss in the state.

It has become clear since then that the scope of her investigation has expanded far beyond that call.

Trump, who last fall announced a 2024 bid for the White House, already faces criminal charges in New York. A Manhattan grand jury in March indicted him on 34 counts of falsifying business records to cover up hush-money payments to a porn actor during the 2016 presidential election.

New York police had said ahead of his arraignment there that they were ready for large protests by the former president's supporters, who believe any charges against him are politically motivated. And while hundreds of onlookers, protesters, journalists and some politicians did show up, fears that unruly crowds would cause chaos ultimately proved unfounded.

Meanwhile in Washington, federal grand juries are investigating efforts by Trump and his allies to undo the results of the 2020 presidential election and the potential mishandling of classified documents by Trump at his Florida estate. Justice Department prosecutors have questioned numerous Trump administration officials before the grand jury. It's not clear when those probes, both overseen by a special counsel appointed last fall, might conclude or who if anyone might be charged.

Trump's legal team in Georgia — Drew Findling, Jennifer Little and Marissa Goldberg — said in a statement that Willis' announcement to law enforcement "does nothing more than set forth a potential timetable" for decisions Willis had already said were coming.

"On behalf of President Trump, we filed a substantive legal challenge for which the D.A.'s Office has yet to respond," the statement said. "We look forward to litigating that comprehensive motion which challenges the deeply flawed legal process and the ability of the conflicted D.A.'s Office to make any charging decisions at all."

Trump's legal team last month filed a motion seeking to toss out a report drafted by a special grand jury that was impaneled to aid Willis' investigation. They also asked the court to prohibit Willis from continuing to investigate or prosecute Trump. A judge gave Willis until May 1 to respond.

Fox News ousts Tucker Carlson, its most popular host

By DAVID BAUDER AP Media Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Fox News on Monday ousted prime-time host Tucker Carlson, whose stew of grievances and political theories about Russia and the Jan. 6 insurrection had grown to define the network in recent years and make him an influential force in GOP politics.

Fox said that the network and Carlson had "agreed to part ways," but offered no explanation for the stunning move, saying that the last broadcast of "Tucker Carlson Tonight" aired last Friday. Carlson ended the show by saying, "We'll be back on Monday."

Yet on Monday night, viewers tuned in to morning anchor Brian Kilmeade, who said that Carlson was gone, "as you may have heard."

"I wish Tucker the best," Kilmeade said. "I'm great friends with Tucker and always will be."

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ming moves under Licht.

He attracted negative attention last fall by saying that the U.S. men's soccer team should be paid more than the women's team, saying that the men were "more interesting to watch."

Lemon had a well-publicized on-air tiff with Collins last December, when he accused her of trying to interrupt him.

Lemon also had a tense on-air interview last week with Republican presidential contender Vivek Ramaswamy where Lemon, who is Black, disputed Ramaswamy's interpretation of racial history.

It's all a bad look for a morning news show, where the audience is primarily women and casts try to depict themselves as a big happy family. The show has made little headway in the ratings against the more popular "Fox & Friends" and "Morning Joe" on cable news competitors.

The lousy vibes were beginning to cost CNN advertising sales and some potential guests were becoming reluctant to appear on "CNN This Morning," said a CNN staff member familiar with the decision to oust Lemon but not authorized to speak publicly.

Some people close to Lemon have suggested that the morning job was essentially a demotion for him, and he was given little support to succeed.

Lemon said he learned of his firing from his agent.

"At no time was I ever given any indication that I would not be able to continue to do the work I have loved at the network," he said.

Associated Press Writer Meg Kinnard contributed reporting from Columbia, South Carolina.

Las Vegas-to-California bullet train gets bipartisan backing

By KEN RITTER Associated Press

LAS VEGAS (AP) — A bipartisan congressional group from Nevada and California asked the Biden administration Monday to fast-track federal funds for a private company to build a high-speed rail line between Las Vegas and the Los Angeles area.

All six of Nevada's elected federal lawmakers and four House members from California sent the letter to U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg. They said they're on board with a proposal from Brightline West to spend more than \$10 billion to lay tracks along the Interstate 15 corridor.

Traffic jams on the interstate often stretch for 15 miles (24 kilometers) near the Nevada-California line as motorists head home after weekend or holiday travel to Las Vegas.

The Mojave Desert is largely open space, and the electric-powered trains could potentially cut the four-hour trip in half, carrying passengers at speeds of nearly 200 mph (322 kph).

"This project is a major priority because it will make southern Nevada more accessible to millions of visitors each year," said U.S. Sen. Jacky Rosen, the Nevada Democrat leading the group. She said it "will boost our economy and create more good-paying jobs."

Union labor will be used during construction, the company and the Southern Nevada Building Trades Union have announced in recent weeks.

Brightline West is seeking \$3.75 billion in federal funding from the Biden administration-backed federal infrastructure law.

The project could be "the blueprint for how we can connect major city pairs that are too short to fly and too far to drive," said Mike Reininger, CEO of Florida-based Brightline Holdings LLC, the only privately owned and operated intercity passenger railroad in the United States.

The lawmakers' letter pointed to company projections of 35,000 construction jobs, 1,000 permanent jobs and reduced planet-warming greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles.

A draft environmental assessment of the Nevada-California project was made public last October 2022 and the Federal Railroad Administration is expected to finalize permits in July. The company said about 70% of funding will be private, using a combination of debt and equity.

Amtrak passenger service to Las Vegas ended in 1997 with the demise of a train called the Desert Wind. The concept of building a bullet train through the Mojave Desert dates back to at least 2005 under various

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Then, he switched to a story on Hunter Biden, the president's son.

The break from Carlson comes amid a cascade of bad legal news for the network. A week ago, Fox agreed to pay more than \$787 million to settle a lawsuit with Dominion Voting Systems over the network's airing of false claims following the 2020 presidential election — shortly before Carlson was expected to be called to testify.

CBS' "60 Minutes" on Sunday aired a report about a man caught up in a Jan. 6 conspiracy theory who said Carlson was "obsessed" with him, and whose lawyer has put Fox on notice of potential litigation. Carlson was also recently named in a lawsuit by a former Fox producer who said the show had a cruel and misogynistic workplace, and that she had been pressured to give misleading testimony in the Dominion case.

Meanwhile, CNN axed its own embattled anchor, Don Lemon, part of a one-day bloodletting in cable television news on Monday. Lemon had been a bad fit with his fellow morning hosts and was forced to apologize to GOP presidential candidate Nikki Haley for his comment that she was past her prime.

Carlson, however, had a greater influence, higher viewer count and more shocking exit. He worked at both CNN and MSNBC earlier in his career, then ditched his bow-tie look and quickly became Fox's most popular personality after replacing Bill O'Reilly in the network's prime-time lineup in 2017.

His populist tone about elites who are out to get average Americans rang true with Fox's predominantly conservative audience, even leading to talk about Carlson becoming a political candidate himself one day.

He did not immediately return a message seeking comment on Monday.

Shares of Fox Corp. slid 4% within seconds of the announcement of Carlson's departure, then recovered to be down 2.9% at the end of trading.

"Tucker Carlson had become even bigger than Fox News," said Brian Stelter, who is writing an upcoming book about Fox, "Network of Lies." "His sudden ouster will have profound consequences for Fox News, for TV news and the Republican Party."

When Carlson's exit was announced during a live showing of the ABC daytime talk show "The View" on Monday, the studio audience applauded. Host Ana Navarro then led the crowd in a singalong to a line from the song, "Na Na Hey Hey Kiss Him Goodbye."

Earlier this year, House Speaker Kevin McCarthy gave Carlson exclusive access to security tapes from the Jan. 6, 2021 Capitol riot, which the show used to conclude: "The footage does not show an insurrection or riot in progress." His interpretation was denounced by many, including Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell.

The "60 Minutes" report Sunday was about Raymond Epps, a former Marine and Trump supporter from Arizona who was in Washington on Jan. 6, 2021. He was later falsely accused of being a government agent conducting a "false flag" operation to start trouble that would be blamed on Trump supporters. Epps and his wife had to sell their business and home because of threats tied to these conspiracy theories.

On CBS, Epps said Carlson was "obsessed" with him and "going to any means possible to destroy my life."

Carlson was expected to be called as a witness if Dominion's case had gone to trial, but the two parties settled last Tuesday on the same day that opening statements were anticipated.

Dominion had contended that some Fox programs had falsely aired allegations that the company had rigged the election against former President Donald Trump, even though several Fox executives and personalities didn't believe them. Carlson's show was not among the chief offenders; he'd be an unlikely candidate to take the fall for that lawsuit.

In several messages, though, Carlson spoke candidly about his distaste for Trump at the time and his fear that the network was losing viewers among the former president's fans.

He was also quoted using profane language to describe Sidney Powell, the Trump supporter and conservative attorney who was given airtime on other Fox shows to spread lies about Dominion, and called her a "psychopath."

Carlson was recently named in a lawsuit filed by Abby Grossberg, a Fox News producer fired after claiming that Fox lawyers had pressured her to give misleading testimony in the Dominion lawsuit. Grossberg had gone to work for Carlson after leaving Maria Bartiromo's Fox show.

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The lawsuit says that Grossberg learned “she had merely traded in one overtly misogynistic work environment for an even crueler one — this time, one where unprofessionalism reigned supreme, and the staff’s distaste and disdain for women infiltrated almost every workday decision.”

On her first day of work at Carlson’s program, Grossberg said in her lawsuit, she was met with large, blown-up images of Rep. Nancy Pelosi in a bathing suit with a plunging neckline.

Fox has called the lawsuit “baseless.”

On his show, Carlson has also been outspoken in questioning the United States support of Ukraine, following its invasion by Russian forces.

“It might be worth asking yourself since it is getting pretty serious: What is this really about?” Carlson said on his show. “Why do I hate Putin so much? Has Putin ever called me a racist? Has he threatened to get me fired for disagreeing with him? Has he shipped every middle-class job in my town to Russia?”

For the time being, “Fox News Tonight” will continue to air in Carlson’s 8 p.m. Eastern prime-time slot, hosted by a rotating array of network personalities.

“We thank him for his service to the network as a host and prior to that as a contributor,” the press release from the network said.

This story has been corrected to show that Carlson replaced O’Reilly in 2017, not 2016.

AP journalist Ali Swenson and researcher Rhonda Shafner in New York contributed to this report.

Ex-officer who fatally shot Breonna Taylor hired as a deputy

By DYLAN LOVAN Associated Press

CARROLLTON, Ky. (AP) — A former Louisville police officer who fired the fatal shot that killed Breonna Taylor has a new job in law enforcement - a controversial hiring that drew protesters to a rural Kentucky county northeast of the city.

The Carroll County Sheriff’s Office on Saturday confirmed the employment of Myles Cosgrove, who was fired from the Louisville Metro Police Department in January 2021 for violating use-of-force procedures and failing to use a body camera during the raid on Taylor’s apartment, according to media reports.

About a dozen people showed up in downtown Carrollton Monday morning to object to his hiring, holding signs and chanting “Cosgrove has got to go.”

“I think he should be in jail,” said Haley Wilson, a 24-year-old resident of the small Kentucky town near the Ohio River. She said it is “absolutely ridiculous” that Cosgrove is now policing her town.

Investigators said that Cosgrove fired 16 rounds into the apartment after Taylor’s front door was breached during a narcotics raid on March 13, 2020. Thinking an intruder was breaking in, Taylor’s boyfriend fired a shot from a handgun at the officers. Officer Jonathan Mattingly was struck in the leg, and the officers returned fire, killing Taylor in her hallway.

An FBI investigation determined that Cosgrove and Mattingly struck Taylor, a 26-year-old Black woman, and that Cosgrove likely fired the fatal shot. Neither officer was charged by a 2020 state grand jury in Taylor’s death, and a two-year investigation by the FBI also cleared Cosgrove and Mattingly of any charges.

The FBI probe found that other superior officers had crafted a faulty drug warrant that contained false information about Taylor. U.S. Attorney Merrick Garland said in August that the officers who went to Taylor’s apartment with the warrant “were not involved in drafting the warrant affidavit and were not aware that it was false.”

Robert Miller, chief deputy in Carroll County, pointed out that Cosgrove was cleared by the state grand jury when speaking of his hiring at the small Kentucky sheriff’s department.

In November, the Kentucky Law Enforcement Council voted not to revoke Cosgrove’s state peace officer certification. That meant he could apply for other law enforcement jobs in the state.

Brett Hankison, an officer who fired shots but didn’t hit anybody during the raid, was found not guilty by a jury of wanton endangerment charges. But he still awaits trial on federal civil rights charges for his

actions during the raid, as do two other officers who were involved in obtaining the warrant. A third officer pleaded guilty to conspiracy in the crafting of the warrant.

There is no national database of officers who resign or are fired in misconduct cases, meaning in a lot of cases they can apply for jobs in other police agencies and departments.

In some cases, agencies that hire officers who were fired somewhere else may be unaware of the officer's history because they failed to do a proper background check, said Ben Grunwald, a Duke University law school professor and co-author of a study published in 2020 on so-called "wandering officers," or those fired by one agency who later find work at another. In Cosgrove's case, however, his history was highly publicized.

In some cases, it's possible the hiring agency sees a previously fired officer's history as a benefit, rather than a risk, Grunwald said.

"Maybe that's exactly what they want," he said. "Maybe they are looking for a cowboy cop who has gotten in trouble in the past, but they think they got a bad shake."

Associated Press reporter Alanna Durkin contributed to this story from Boston.

Oklahoma attorney general to recommend clemency for Glossip

By SEAN MURPHY Associated Press Writer

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — Oklahoma's new Attorney General Gentner Drummond plans to ask the state's Pardon and Parole Board on Wednesday to recommend sparing the life of death row inmate Richard Glossip, a highly unusual move for the state's top prosecutor's office that typically urges the board to reject clemency.

In a letter dated Monday to the five-member board, Drummond wrote that he has serious concerns about the fairness of Glossip's trial and cited two independent reviews of the case that recommended Glossip be granted a new trial.

"I am not aware of an Oklahoma Attorney General ever supporting a clemency application for a death row inmate," Drummond wrote. "In every previous case that has come before this board, the state has maintained full confidence in the integrity of the conviction. That is simply not the case in this matter due to the material evidence that was not disclosed to the jury."

Drummond previously asked the Oklahoma Court of Criminal Appeals to vacate Glossip's conviction, saying in a court filing that although the state is not suggesting Glossip is innocent, he had numerous concerns about the trial, including that the key witness against Glossip lied to the jury about his psychiatric treatment and reasons for taking the mood-stabilizing drug lithium. But the court rejected that request last month, paving the way for Glossip to be executed on May 18.

Glossip's attorney, Don Knight, did not immediately return a message left with his office after hours.

Glossip, now 60, was convicted of the 1997 murder-for-hire killing of his boss, motel owner Barry Van Treese, at two separate trials based largely on the testimony of his co-defendant, Justin Sneed. Sneed admitted robbing and killing Van Treese, but he claims he only did so after Glossip agreed to pay him \$10,000. Sneed received a sentence of life in prison.

The five-member Pardon and Parole Board is expected to consider Glossip's clemency recommendation on Wednesday. If a majority of the board recommends clemency, it will be up to Gov. Kevin Stitt whether to allow the execution to proceed or commute Glossip's sentence to life in prison.

Glossip has been just hours from being executed three times, including once in September 2015 when prison officials realized they had received the wrong lethal drug, a mix-up that helped prompt a nearly seven-year moratorium on the death penalty in Oklahoma.

Follow Sean Murphy on Twitter: @apseanmurphy

AP source: Rockets hire ex-Celtics coach Udoka as new coach

By KRISTIE RIEKEN AP Sports Writer

HOUSTON (AP) — Ime Udoka has been hired as the new coach of the Houston Rockets, a source familiar with the deal told The Associated Press on Monday.

Udoka led the Celtics to the NBA Finals last season, then was suspended for this season after the disclosure of an inappropriate relationship with a female Celtics employee.

The person spoke to the AP on the condition of anonymity because the team had not officially announced the move.

He replaces Stephen Silas, who was fired after three seasons.

The Rockets had the worst record in the previous two seasons and finished tied with the Spurs for the second-worst record this season, earning another lottery pick in this year's draft.

The 45-year-old Udoka led the Celtics to a 51-31 record in his one season in Boston. The Celtics finished the regular season on a 26-6 run and beat Brooklyn, Milwaukee and Miami in the playoffs before falling to Golden State in six games in the NBA Finals.

Udoka wasn't drafted and played professionally in Europe ahead of a seven-year NBA career that included short stints with the Los Angeles Lakers, Knicks and Trail Blazers before he spent three of his last four years with the Spurs.

He then joined coach Gregg Popovich's staff as an assistant, working with San Antonio from 2012-19. Udoka then spent one season each as an assistant with the 76ers and Nets before being hired to replace Brad Stevens in Boston.

Udoka was a candidate to replace Nick Nurse in Toronto before being hired by the Rockets over candidates that included Nurse, Sam Cassell and Frank Vogel.

Udoka takes over a team that made the playoffs in eight straight seasons before the trade of James Harden in January 2021 led to a complete rebuild. General manager Rafael Stone said this month that he plans to pursue some veteran free agents this offseason to add to Houston's young talent as the Rockets try to turn things around.

The Rockets hope to build their team around Jalen Green, the third pick in the 2021 draft and Jabari Smith, taken second in 2022. And they'll get to add another top player this year as one of three teams with the best odds to win the draft lottery and get the No. 1 pick at 14%.

Terms of Udoka's deal were not immediately available.

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

Defamation suit produced trove of Tucker Carlson messages

By The Associated Press undefined

WASHINGTON (AP) — The \$787.5 million settlement between Fox News and Dominion Voting Systems spared executives and on-air talent from taking the stand in a defamation lawsuit that centered on Fox airing false claims of a stolen election in the weeks after former President Donald Trump's 2020 loss.

The lawsuit still revealed plenty of what Fox personalities had been saying about the bogus election claims, including Tucker Carlson, the network's top-rated host who was let go Monday. His unexplained departure has turned a spotlight on what he said in depositions, emails and text messages among the thousands of pages Dominion released in the leadup to jury selection in the case.

Carlson's messages lambasted the news division and management, revealed how he felt about Donald Trump and demonstrated his skepticism of the election lies — so much so that Fox attorneys and company founder Rupert Murdoch held him up as part of their defense of the company. The judge who oversaw the case ruled that it was "CRYSTAL clear" none of the election claims related to Dominion was true.

THOSE SPREADING ELECTION LIES

"Sidney Powell is lying," Carlson told a Fox News producer in a Nov. 16, 2020, exchange before using expletives to describe Powell, an attorney representing Trump.

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"You keep telling our viewers that millions of votes were changed by the software. I hope you will prove that very soon," Carlson wrote to Powell a day later. "You've convinced them that Trump will win. If you don't have conclusive evidence of fraud at that scale, it's a cruel and reckless thing to keep saying." There was no indication that Powell replied.

Fox attorneys noted that Carlson repeatedly questioned Powell's claims in his broadcasts: "When we kept pressing, she got angry and told us to stop contacting her," Carlson told viewers on Nov. 19, 2020.

Carlson told his audience that he had taken Powell seriously, but that she had never provided any evidence or demonstrated that the software Dominion used siphoned votes from Trump to Biden.

Carlson continued to trash Powell and Trump's legal team in a Nov. 23, 2020, text exchange with fellow Fox host Laura Ingraham and also bemoaned what he considered the president's passivity in the face of the two Georgia runoffs.

After saying it was "pretty disgusting" that more attorneys hadn't pushed back on the claims of Trump's attorneys who were trying to overturn the election results, Carlson wrote: "And now Trump, I learned this morning, is sitting back and letting them lose the senate. He doesn't care. I care. I've got four kids and plan to live here."

FOX'S 2020 ELECTION COVERAGE

Fox viewers were outraged when the network called Arizona for Joe Biden on election night, a race call that was accurate. Fox executives and hosts began to worry about ratings as many of those viewers fled to other conservative outlets.

"We worked really hard to build what we have. Those (expletive) are destroying our credibility. It enrages me," Carlson said in a Nov. 6, 2020, exchange with an unidentified person.

On Nov. 8, after Biden was declared the winner, Carlson texted a couple of other employees: "Do the executives understand how much trust and credibility we've lost with our audience? We're playing with fire, for real."

Later in the chain, as others bring up Newsmax as an emerging competitor, Carlson said, "With Trump behind it, an alternative like Newsmax could be devastating to us."

In text messages to a producer on Nov 13, 2020, Carlson braced for a Trump press conference: "He's only good at destroying," Carlson said of the then-president.

He later added, in regard to the fraud allegations being made by Trump and his allies, "He's playing with fire."

TRUMP

In a text exchange with an unknown person on Jan. 4, 2021, Carlson expressed anger toward Trump. He said that "we are very, very close to being able to ignore Trump most nights" and that "I truly can't wait."

Carlson said he had no doubt there was fraud in the 2020 election, but said Trump and his lawyers had so discredited their case — and media figures like himself — "that it's infuriating. Absolutely enrages me."

Addressing Trump's four years as president, Carlson said: "We're all pretending we've got a lot to show for it, because admitting what a disaster it's been is too tough to digest. But come on. There really isn't an upside to Trump."

In texts early on the morning of Jan. 7, 2021, a day after the violent assault on the U.S. Capitol, Carlson and his longtime producer, Alex Pfeiffer, bemoaned how the rioters had believed Trump's election lies.

"They take the president literally," Pfeiffer said. "He is to blame for everything that happened today."

"The problem is a little deeper than that I'd say," Carlson replied.

"Obviously the problems are deep but at the core of it is Trump saying it was stolen," Pfeiffer wrote.

"Not the core," Carlson wrote. "Awful but a symptom."

Later, Carlson writes of Trump: "He's a demonic force, a destroyer. But he's not going to destroy us. I've been thinking about this every day for four years."

FOX NEWS DEPARTMENT

Some of the most heated vitriol was reserved for colleagues in the news division and included conversations with fellow on-air personalities Laura Ingraham and Sean Hannity.

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On Nov. 13, the week after the 2020 election, Ingraham, Carlson and Hannity got into a text message exchange in which they lambasted the news division. It began with Ingraham pointing out a tweet by correspondent Bryan Llenas, saying he had seen no evidence of widespread voter fraud in Pennsylvania.

Carlson replied that Llenas had contacted him to apologize, then added "when has he ever 'reported' on anything."

Ingraham then names another colleague who indicated there was no fraud, with Hannity responding: "Guys I've been telling them for 4 years. News depart that breaks no news ever." In a subsequent Twitter message seconds later, Hannity says, "They hate hate hate all three of us."

Ingraham responds she doesn't "want to be liked by them" and Carlson chimes in, "They're pathetic." The conversation continues with Hannity bemoaning the damage that has been done to the brand: "In one week and one debate they destroyed a brand that took 25 years to build and the damage is incalculable."

Another text conversation by the trio three days later had Ingraham telling her colleagues that her anger at the news channel was "pronounced," followed by an "lol." In response, Carlson attacked two Fox anchors: "It should be. We devote our lives to building an audience and they let Chris Wallace and Leland (expletive) Vittert wreck it. Too much." Wallace and Vittert have since left the network.

The three hosts then started musing about a path forward after Ingraham says they have "enormous power," and that they should think about how, together, they can force a change. Carlson's response: "For sure. The first thing we need to do exactly what we want to do. That's the key. Leland Vittert seems to have the authority to do whatever he wants. We should too."

Associated Press writers Christina A. Cassidy in Atlanta, Randall Chase in Dover, Del., and Gary Fields in Washington contributed to this report.

Don Lemon fired from CNN after divisive morning show run

By DAVID BAUDER AP Media Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — CNN fired longtime host Don Lemon on Monday following his short and disastrous run as a morning show host, a little over two months after he apologized for on-air comments about Republican presidential candidate Nikki Haley being past her prime.

The move quickly turned nasty. While CNN chairman and CEO Chris Licht announced, after Lemon had co-hosted the show Monday, that they had "parted ways," Lemon characterized it as a firing and said it was surprise to him.

"After 17 years at CNN I would have thought someone in management would have the decency to tell me directly," Lemon said. CNN said that Lemon was given the opportunity to meet with management but released a statement on Twitter instead.

CNN offered no public explanation for Lemon's dismissal. During a February discussion on "CNN This Morning" with co-hosts Poppy Harlow and Kaitlan Collins about the ages of politicians, he said that the 51-year-old Haley was not "in her prime." A woman, he said, was considered in her prime "in her 20s, 30s and maybe her 40s."

Harlow challenged Lemon, trying to clarify what he was referencing: "I think we need to qualify. Are you talking about prime for childbearing or are you talking about prime for being president?"

"Don't shoot the messenger, I'm just saying what the facts are," Lemon responded.

Lemon issued a statement the same day saying he regretted his "inartful and irrelevant" comments. He was subsequently absent from the show for three days, returning the following week with a tweeted apology but no mention of the episode on air.

Haley, who had criticized Lemon's statements as sexist and used the incident to fundraise in February, took to Twitter on Monday to call Lemon's ouster "a great day for women everywhere," linking to the beverage sleeves emblazoned with "Past my prime? Hold my beer."

Lemon used to host the prime-time "Don Lemon Tonight" but moved when the network launched "CNN This Morning" last November, just before the U.S. midterm elections, as one of the first major program-

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names. It has seen starts and stops over the years and became sidetracked during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In Florida, Brightline West's sister company began sharing the Florida East Coast freight line between Miami and West Palm Beach in 2014 and is building an extension to Orlando. High-speed trains running through urban areas have drawn criticism for numerous crashes with vehicles at rail crossings. Investigators found deaths were not the railroad's fault, determining that many were suicides or drivers or pedestrians trying to beat the trains.

Other places where high-speed trains have been proposed include the 240 miles (386 kilometers) from Dallas to Houston in Texas, and a 500-mile (805-kilometer) system linking Los Angeles and San Francisco.

The California line depends on funding and other unknowns.

A 2023 report by the California High-Speed Rail Authority says environmental clearance has been obtained for 422 miles (679 kilometers) and construction is underway for 119 miles (191 kilometers) in California's Central Valley.

Cost estimates have swelled to more than \$100 billion — far greater than the \$33 billion that voters approved in 2008.

In Texas, a study published last month by Reason Foundation, a libertarian think tank, concluded the state's fast rail project is stalled by climbing costs, lack of legislative support and opposition from farmers, ranchers, and other landowners "who objected to having their land bisected by a train traveling at 200 miles per hour over 30 times each day." It noted the Texas Legislature passed a law prohibiting spending any funds on the project.

Brightline West trains would connect Las Vegas, Victorville, California, and Rancho Cucamonga — a city in San Bernardino County with a passenger station on a suburban Los Angeles light rail line.

U.S. Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto, a Democrat, and Nevada's four House members including Republican Mark Amodei signed the letter with Rosen seeking federal-state partnership funding through the Federal Railroad Administration's Intercity Rail Grant Program.

California Democratic House members Nanette Barragán and Jimmy Gomez from the Los Angeles area and John Garamendi of the East Bay area signed on, along with Republican Jay Obernolte, who represents the Victorville and San Bernardino County area.

"This bipartisan delegation from Nevada and California are pleased to support the federal resources necessary to develop essential transportation access between this highly trafficked corridor," the lawmakers said.

This story was updated to correct that Amtrak service to Las Vegas ended in 1997, not 1991.

ESPN announces layoffs as part of cost cutting by Disney

By JOE REEDY AP Sports Writer

ESPN began informing employees of layoffs Monday, which are job cuts that are taking place throughout its corporate owner, the Walt Disney Company.

Disney CEO Bob Iger announced in February that the company would reduce 7,000 jobs either through not filling positions or layoffs.

ESPN President Jimmy Pitaro said in a company memo sent to employees that those affected will hear from their supervisor and someone from human relations this week.

"As we advance as a core segment of Disney, with operational control and financial responsibility, we must further identify ways to be efficient and nimble," Pitaro said in the memo. "We will continue to focus our workforce on initiatives that are most closely aligned with our critical priorities and emphasize decision-making and responsibility deeper into the organization."

ESPN was not part of the first phase of Disney reductions last month. Besides this week's layoffs, another round of job cuts will take place by the start of summer. Both phases impact off-air employees.

A round of cuts involving on-air talent will happen over the summer via contracts not being renewed, buyouts or cuts. It is not expected to resemble what happened in April of 2017, when reporters and hosts were informed at one time.

Among the known job cuts from Monday is vice president of communications Mike Soltys, who has been with the company 43 years. Soltys confirmed his departure via social media.

Famous Twitter users disavow Musk over verification return

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Celebrities, professional athletes and other high-profile Twitter users are once again being verified by the social media platform and they don't know why their blue check marks reappeared — nor do they seem too happy about it.

Twitter removed the blue marks last week from accounts that don't pay a monthly fee. But the check marks mysteriously returned for many highly followed accounts over the weekend, leading some prominent users to disavow what's become a divisive symbol of Twitter owner Elon Musk's erratic changes to the platform.

The account belonging to the Auschwitz Memorial, which has 1.5 million followers and regularly tweets out photos and names of Holocaust victims, tweeted on Sunday that after two days of no blue check mark, its account was reverified. The Memorial said it was "obliged to clarify" that it never subscribed and paid for Twitter Blue as the icon implies.

Other high-profile accounts with more than 1 million followers also took to Twitter to make it clear they didn't pay to get their blue check back. Those who chimed in included Massachusetts Institute of Technology, actor Bette Midler, gymnast Simone Biles Owens, writer Neil Gaiman and rapper Lil Nas X.

"On my soul i didn't pay for twitter blue, u will feel my wrath tesla man!" wrote the rapper who has 8 million followers. Added Gaiman, who has 3 million followers: "What a sad, muddled place this has become."

Midler posted on Twitter Sunday: "Yes, Elon gave me back my blue check but I didn't pay for it. Does that make me a good guy or a bad guy? I'm so confused." But by Monday, there was no sign she had a blue check.

On Twitter, the blue check icon appears on accounts next to text that says: "subscribed to Twitter Blue and verified their phone number." Since last week, blue check marks also appeared on profiles of dead public figures, including author and chef Anthony Bourdain, who died in 2018; the actor Chadwick Boseman, who died in 2020; and the journalist Jamal Khashoggi, who was assassinated in 2018.

Under the original blue-check system, Twitter had roughly 400,000 verified users, including Hollywood actors and star athletes as well as journalists, human rights activists and public agencies. In the past, the checks meant that Twitter had verified that users were who they said they were, as a method to prevent impersonation and the spread of misinformation.

But now anyone can buy a Twitter Blue subscription starting at \$8 a month. It no longer means the user is verified — other than confirming a phone number — but promises a number of features including the ability to have more people see their tweets.

Legal experts said Twitter doling out subscriptions to people and institutions that didn't want them, and implying that they paid for it could run afoul of the federal Lanham Act, which prohibits false advertising, as well as other regulations.

The fact that some accounts say they are subscribed to Twitter Blue — even though they have been outspoken about not subscribing — can create a sense of "false endorsement," said Alejandra Caraballo, an instructor at the Cyberlaw Clinic at Harvard Law School's Berkman Klein Center for Internet & Society.

That said, a false endorsement lawsuit would be limited to "actual damages" the person suffered as a result, Caraballo added.

"My guess is the most common thing is that if someone really is upset about this, they could send a cease-and-desist letter to get Twitter to take it down," she said.

Musk has pushed for the premium service as a way to increase revenue and upend what he called a "lords & peasants system" that he believes gave too many people an undeserved status symbol for free. But only a fraction of users — and very few of those who had the blue checks before — are buying the service.

An inability to sell subscriptions or find other ways of making money could present problems for Musk,

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who bought Twitter for \$44 billion last year and has struggled to keep advertisers — its main source of revenue — from fleeing the platform.

Twitter changes stoke Russian, Chinese propaganda surge

By DAVID KLEPPER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Twitter accounts operated by authoritarian governments in Russia, China and Iran are benefiting from recent changes at the social media company, researchers said Monday, making it easier for them to attract new followers and broadcast propaganda and disinformation to a larger audience.

The platform is no longer labeling state-controlled media and propaganda agencies, and will no longer prohibit their content from being automatically promoted or recommended to users. Together, the two changes, both made in recent weeks, have supercharged the Kremlin's ability to use the U.S.-based platform to spread lies and misleading claims about its invasion of Ukraine, U.S. politics and other topics.

Russian state media accounts are now earning 33% more views than they were just weeks ago, before the change was made, according to findings released Monday by Reset, a London-based non-profit that tracks authoritarian governments' use of social media to spread propaganda. Reset's findings were first reported by The Associated Press.

The increase works out to more than 125,000 additional views per post. Those posts included ones suggesting the CIA had something to do with the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks on the U.S., that Ukraine's leaders are embezzling foreign aid to their country, and that Russia's invasion of Ukraine was justified because the U.S. was running clandestine biowarfare labs in the country.

State media agencies operated by Iran and China have seen similar increases in engagement since Twitter quietly made the changes.

The about-face from the platform is the latest development since billionaire Elon Musk purchased Twitter last year. Since then, he's ushered in a confusing new verification system and laid off much of the company's staff, including those dedicated to fighting misinformation, allowed back neo-Nazis and others formerly suspended from the site, and ended the site's policy prohibiting dangerous COVID-19 misinformation. Hate speech and disinformation have thrived.

Before the most recent change, Twitter affixed labels reading "Russia state-affiliated media" to let users know the origin of the content. It also throttled back the Kremlin's online engagement by making the accounts ineligible for automatic promotion or recommendation — something it regularly does for ordinary accounts as a way to help them reach bigger audiences.

The labels quietly disappeared after National Public Radio and other outlets protested Musk's plans to label their outlets as state affiliated media too. NPR then announced it would no longer use Twitter, saying the label was misleading, given NPR's editorial independence, and would damage its credibility.

Reset's conclusions were confirmed by the Atlantic Council's Digital Forensic Research Lab, where researchers determined the changes were likely made by Twitter late last month. Many of the dozens of previously labeled accounts were steadily losing followers since Twitter began using the labels. But after the change, many accounts saw big jumps in followers.

RT Arabic, one of Russia's most popular propaganda accounts on Twitter, had fallen to less than 5,230,000 followers on Jan. 1, but rebounded after the change was implemented, the DFRL found. It now has more than 5,240,000 followers.

Before the change, users interested in seeking out Kremlin propaganda had to search specifically for the account or its content. Now, it can be recommended or promoted like any other content.

"Twitter users no longer must actively seek out state-sponsored content in order to see it on the platform; it can just be served to them," the DFRL concluded.

Twitter did not respond to questions about the change or the reasons behind it. Musk has made past comments suggesting he sees little difference between state-funded propaganda agencies operated by authoritarian strongmen and independent news outlets in the west.

"All news sources are partially propaganda," he tweeted last year, "some more than others."

Kenyan cult deaths at 73, president likens them to terrorism

By EVELYNE MUSAMBI Associated Press

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) — Kenyan President William Ruto on Monday compared the dozens of starvation deaths among the followers of a pastor in the south of the country with the results of terrorist acts, as the new death toll rose to 73.

He maintained that the pastor, Paul Makenzi, who is in police custody, should be in prison.

“What we are seeing ... is akin to terrorism,” Ruto said. “Mr. Makenzi ... pretends and postures as a pastor when in fact he is a terrible criminal.”

Makenzi was arrested on suspicion of telling his followers to fast to death in order to meet Jesus. A group of emaciated people were rescued alive, but some of them later died. Authorities then turned their attention to dozens of shallow graves marked with crosses on Makenzi’s 800-acre ranch.

The total death toll now stands at 73, with 26 new bodies exhumed on Monday, Malindi sub-county police chief John Kemboi told the Associated Press.

Kemboi said investigators had received reinforcements and were able to cover more ground.

The Kenyan Red Cross Society on Sunday said 112 people had been reported missing at a tracing desk set up at Malindi, where the pastor’s main church was located.

Ruto said he had instructed law enforcement agencies to thoroughly investigate the matter as a criminal case not linked to any religion.

Ruto, who was elected in 2022, was hyped as the country’s first evangelical Christian president and has not been shy about his faith, openly praying and weeping in churches before his election.

He has nominated several pastors into parliament and government agencies like the anticorruption commission.

Makenzi remains in custody and a court allowed investigators to hold him for two weeks as a probe into the deaths continues.

The pastor had been arrested twice before — in 2019 and in March of this year — in relation to the deaths of children. Each time, he was released on bond, and both cases are still proceeding through the court.

Local politicians have urged the court not to release him this time, decrying the spread of cults in the Malindi area.

Cults are common in Kenya, which has a largely religious society.

What’s behind the looming ‘x-date’ on the US debt limit?

By JOSH BOAK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — In January, the U.S. government ran up against its legal borrowing limit of \$31.381 trillion, and the Treasury Department began implementing “extraordinary measures” to avoid missing payments on its bills.

That started speculation about the “x-date” — the date when those measures would be exhausted and the government might actually default if the limit on federal borrowing is not lifted. The x-date could be reached as early as June, depending on how much money the IRS collects in April from people filing their taxes.

HOW BIG A PROBLEM IS THIS?

It seems ominous, right?

This might be the time to be getting a bit worried as more than three months have passed with little progress. There is only so long these accounting workarounds can last before President Joe Biden and House Speaker Kevin McCarthy need to reach a deal to lift the debt cap. McCarthy is calling for trillions of dollars in spending cuts over the decade in return for an increase, while Biden insists that any talks about government finances should not occur with the threat of an economy-wrecking default hanging over lawmakers.

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The Democratic president and Republican congressional leader have each tried to assure the public in recent weeks that they don't want the government of the world's largest economy to default. But Biden has resisted McCarthy's calls for negotiations, while McCarthy is pushing a plan that can't pass the Democratic-majority Senate.

These talks often grow heated and go down to the wire, with major economic damage in the balance. But there have been roughly 80 deals to raise or suspend the borrowing cap since the 1960s. What possibly makes this time different is the degree of political polarization, which could possibly lead to the U.S. government missing payments and triggering a global economic meltdown.

WHAT ARE 'EXTRAORDINARY MEASURES'?

To keep the government open, the Treasury Department in January began a series of accounting maneuvers that would put a hold on contributions and investment redemptions for government workers' retirement and health care funds, giving the government enough financial space to handle its day-to-day expenses until roughly June.

By suspending payments, the government can reduce the amount of outstanding debt, enabling the Treasury to keep financing government operations.

What happens if these "extraordinary measures" are exhausted without a debt limit deal is unknown. A prolonged default could be devastating, with crashing markets and panic-driven layoffs if confidence evaporated in a cornerstone of the global economy, the U.S. Treasury note.

HOW COMMON IS THIS?

"Treasury Secretaries in every Administration over recent decades have used these extraordinary measures when necessary," Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen wrote in her initial letter about the measures.

The measures were first deployed in 1985 and have been used at least 16 times since then, according to the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, a fiscal watchdog.

WHY DO WE HAVE A DEBT LIMIT?

Before World War I, Congress needed to approve each bond issuance. The debt limit was created as a workaround to finance the war effort without needing a constant series of votes.

Since then, a tool created to make it easier for the government to function has become a source of dysfunction, stoking partisan warfare and creating economic risk as the debt has increased in size over the past 20 years.

HOW RISKY IS THE BRINKMANSHIP THIS TIME? It looks alarming -- and it's unclear how Biden, McCarthy and the Democratic Senate will find common ground. A default could cause millions of job losses, a deep recession that would reverberate globally and, ironically, higher interest rates that would make it harder to manage the federal debt.

Biden called the plan that McCarthy unveiled last week "wacko," with a White House analysis showing that the spending caps would hurt schooling for children, health care for veterans, food aid for families and seniors and cause housing costs to climb for the country's poorest households. The president's budget plan announced in March would reduce deficits by nearly \$3 trillion over the next 10 years, primarily through tax increases on the wealthy and corporations.

"America is not a deadbeat nation," Biden said. "Take default off the table."

On Fox News, McCarthy defended his plan in a Sunday interview by noting that even Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.V., backed a 1% spending cap on discretionary spending. McCarthy said Biden was putting the country at risk of defaulting by refusing to hold talks.

"The idea that he won't even negotiate for more than 80 days, he is now putting the country in default," McCarthy said. "We are the only ones being responsible and sensible about this."

UAE spacecraft takes close-up photos of Mars' little moon

By MARCIA DUNN AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — A spacecraft around Mars has sent back the most detailed photos yet of the red planet's little moon.

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The United Arab Emirates' Amal spacecraft flew within 62 miles (100 kilometers) of Deimos last month and the close-up shots were released Monday. Amal — Arabic for Hope — got a two-for-one when Mars photobombed some of the images. It was the closest a spacecraft has been to Deimos in almost a half-century.

The spacecraft also observed the little explored far side of the odd-shaped, cratered moon, just 9 miles by 7 miles by 7 miles (15 kilometers by 12 kilometers by 12 kilometers).

Mars' other moon, Phobos, is almost double that size and better understood since it orbits much closer to Mars — just 3,700 miles (6,000 kilometers) away, the closest of any planet's moon in our solar system.

Deimos' orbit around Mars stretches 14,000 miles (23,000 kilometers) out. That's close to the inner part of the spacecraft's orbit — "which is what made observing Deimos such a compelling idea," said the mission's lead scientist Hessa al-Matroushi.

"Phobos has got most of the attention up until now — now it's Deimos' turn!" she added in an email.

Al-Matroushi and other scientists with the UAE Space Agency said these new images indicate Deimos is not an asteroid that got captured in Mars' orbit eons ago, the leading theory until now. Instead, they say the moon appears to be of Martian origin — perhaps from the bigger Martian moon or from Mars itself.

The findings were presented Monday at the European Geosciences Union's general assembly in Vienna.

Amal will continue to sweep past Deimos this year, but not as closely as the March 10 encounter, according to al-Matroushi.

NASA's Viking 2 came within 19 miles (30 kilometers) of Deimos in 1977. Since then, other spacecraft have photographed Deimos but from much farther away.

Amal rocketed to Mars on July 19, 2020, one day shy of the 50th anniversary of humanity's first moon landing — Earth's moon, that is — by Apollo 11's Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin.

____ The Associated Press Health and Science Department receives support from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Science and Educational Media Group. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

Bank rates are up. How to avoid leaving money on the table

By CORA LEWIS Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Moving your savings around by opening a new account and closing an old one can seem like a hassle. But it's a use of time that can pay off.

After years of paying low rates for savers, banks are finally offering better interest on deposits. Though the increases may seem small, compounding interest adds up over the years, and you don't want to miss the moment.

As the Federal Reserve has raised interest rates to try to cool inflation, some banks have improved their terms for savers as well. Even if you're only keeping modest savings in your bank account, you could make more significant gains over the long term by finding an account with a better rate.

Here's what you should think about if you're considering moving your money:

WHAT KIND OF RATES ARE AVAILABLE?

While the biggest national banks have yet to dramatically change the rates on their savings accounts (clocking in at an average of just 0.23%, according to Bankrate), some mid-size and smaller banks have made changes more in line with the Federal Reserve's moves.

Online banks in particular — which save money by not having brick-and-mortar branches and associated expenses — are now offering savings accounts with annual percentage yields of between 3% and 4%, or even higher, as well as 4% or higher on one-year Certificates of Deposit (CDs). Some promotional rates can reach as high as 5%.

WHAT SHOULD I KNOW ABOUT OPENING A NEW ACCOUNT?

Online banking has made moving money easier, so it's fairly straightforward to keep your existing account while opening a new high-yield account at a different institution. Many have low minimums (as low as \$1), so you can transfer the minimum amount required to begin the process while keeping your primary checking account open.

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WHAT ARE SOME REASONS PEOPLE DON'T MOVE THEIR MONEY TO HIGH YIELD SAVINGS ACCOUNTS?

According to Bankrate's Sarah Foster, many Americans simply don't know about high-yield savings accounts and the significant benefits available with the now dramatically higher rates. The average relationship between a consumer and their bank is 17 years, she said, and trust in the largest banks means they're "swimming in deposits" and don't feel a need to offer better rates to attract customers.

Some people don't realize that most high-yield savings accounts are just as safe as traditional banks, she said, as long as they're equivalently FDIC-insured up to \$250,000. You can check at [FDIC.gov](https://www.fdic.gov).

There's a familiarity people have with traditional banks that can inspire a sense of security.

If you have a longstanding relationship with your existing bank, you may simply be comfortable there, as well as aware of the rewards and perks of that institution, such as waiving ATM fees or account management fees, cash back, or other upsides. You likely also have direct deposit and auto-withdrawals set up when it comes to income, bills, and other regular expenses and payments.

Setting up a new high yield savings account doesn't mean you have to immediately switch over all of those auto-pay and deposit transfers, though, according to Ken Tumin, founder of DepositAccounts.Com.

That can take time and energy, so you can do that more slowly, if you choose to do it at all. However, that could also be a chance to review your spending, cancel unwanted subscriptions, auto-payments and services, or negotiate down recurring bills and expenses where possible.

"Some people also say they aren't banking with an online bank because they prefer access to a local branch and the in-person services that come along with that," Foster said.

WHAT DO THOSE INTEREST RATES ADD UP TO, IN REAL NUMBERS?

Let's say you invest \$500 at one of big five banks that have an interest rate of 0.23%. After one year, if you don't touch it and add nothing, you'll have earned \$1.15. After five years, with compound interest, you'll have earned \$5.78. After 10, \$11.62. After 25, \$29.56.

If you deposit the same \$500 in a high-yield savings account with an interest rate of 4%, then, after one year, you'll earn \$20. After five, \$108.33. After 10, \$240.12. And after 25, \$832.92.

With \$1,000, it works out to the following: At .23% — after one year, \$2.33. After five, \$11.55. After ten, \$23.24. And after twenty five, \$59.12.

And at 4%: After one year, \$40. After five, \$216.65. After 10, \$480.24. And after 25, \$1,665.84.

In both cases, that assumes you don't add to the account each year, but a best practice would be contribute even small amounts from each paycheck biweekly, monthly, or yearly.

To make your own calculations, factoring in yearly contributions and changing rates, you can use the SEC's compound interest calculator.

DO YOU PAY TAXES ON EARNED INTEREST?

Yes. Since you've already paid taxes on the deposit balance of the high yield savings account, you only pay additional taxes on the interest you earn each year. That interest is taxed at your earned income rate — so, the same rate your income is taxed at in that year.

COULD THE SAVINGS RATES ON THESE ACCOUNTS CHANGE?

Yes. Banks may advertise one rate for these accounts and then adjust that rate depending on other factors, such as the Federal Reserve's own changing rate. To avoid such changes, and to lock in a guaranteed rate, you could opt for a Certificate of Deposit instead, assuming you don't need to access that money right away. Treasury securities also offer competitive rates.

HOW DOES A CERTIFICATE OF DEPOSIT WORK?

A Certificate of Deposit pays a guaranteed rate for a fixed period, such as one month, six months or a year. CDs can be purchased through most banks, and many run special offers. Those offered rates can be comparable to those at a high yield savings account. However, you typically face a penalty if you want access to the money before the chosen term has ended.

WHAT ABOUT INVESTING IN TREASURIES?

The U.S. Department of the Treasury sells Treasury bills, notes, bonds, Treasury Inflation-Protected Securities (TIPS), and savings bonds through TreasuryDirect.gov. All of these securities are all backed by the full faith and credit of the U.S. government, with varying rates over varying terms. The minimum

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investment is \$100, and some of the rates and yields on these investments are as competitive and safe as the CD's and high yield savings accounts listed above.

Currently, one rate for I bonds, for example — which are savings bonds designed to protect you from inflation — is 6.89%. With an I bond, you earn both a fixed rate of interest and a rate that changes with inflation. Twice a year, the Treasury Department sets the inflation rate for the next six months. You can cash in the bond anytime after twelve months, though you'll lose certain portions of interest if you redeem it in less than five years.

HOW DO I COMPARE BANK RATES FOR DEPOSIT ACCOUNTS?

Trusted sites like DepositAccounts.com, founded by Tumin, can help you comparison shop, ranking banks and accounts by rates and other factors. Other resources include Bankrate.com, NerdWallet, and MyCreditUnion.gov.

Tumin says that if you want to check for yourself that an online bank is insured by the FDIC, you can go to FDIC.gov and search to make sure.

"In addition to finding the highest rate, it also makes sense to make sure these banks have a history of offering a competitive rate on that account for multiple years," he added. "There are a lot of new banks now offering higher rates, but they haven't been around long. If they don't have much history, they may not stay competitive."

You can see all of AP's Financial Wellness coverage at: <https://apnews.com/hub/financial-wellness>

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Comedian Richard Lewis reveals he has Parkinson's disease

By The Associated Press undefined

NEW YORK (AP) — Comedian Richard Lewis is retiring from stand-up following four surgeries and a diagnosis of Parkinson's disease.

The 75-year-old "Curb Your Enthusiasm" star, who is known for wearing all-black and exploring his neuroses onstage, posted a video Monday to Twitter explaining his various health issues.

"For the last three-and-a-half years, I've had sort of a rocky time," he said, adding that he has suffered with back pain, and he had shoulder and hip replacement surgeries.

He also got a brain scan because he was shuffling his feet when he walked. Doctors diagnosed him with Parkinson's. "Luckily, I got it late in life, and they say you progress very slowly if at all, and I'm on the right meds, so I'm cool," he said. "I'm finished with stand-up. I'm just focusing on writing and acting."

Lewis' big screen credits include "Robin Hood: Men in Tights," "Leaving Las Vegas" and "Vamps" and TV appearances on everything from "7th Heaven" to "George Lopez" and "BoJack Horseman" to "Dr. Katz, Professional Therapist."

Supreme Court takes social media cases with echoes of Trump

By JESSICA GRESKO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court said Monday it will decide whether public officials can block critics from commenting on their social media accounts, an issue that previously came up in a case involving former President Donald Trump.

Two years ago the Supreme Court dismissed a case over Trump's efforts to block critics from his personal Twitter account. A lower court had said Trump violated the First Amendment whenever he blocked a critic to silence a viewpoint. But the Supreme Court said the case should be dismissed because there was nothing left to it after Trump was permanently suspended from Twitter and ended his presidential term. The Republican former president's account has since been reinstated.

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Now, the court has agreed to hear two cases involving much lower-profile figures. The first involves two elected members of a California school board, the Poway Unified School District Board of Trustees. The members, Michelle O'Connor-Ratcliff and T.J. Zane, used Facebook and Twitter accounts to communicate with the public. Two parents, Christopher and Kimberly Garnier, left critical comments and replies to posts on the board members' accounts and were blocked. An appeals court said the board members had violated their free speech rights by doing so.

The other case involves James Freed, who became the city manager of Port Huron, Michigan, in 2014. Freed, who was appointed to his position by the mayor and City Council, used a Facebook page to communicate with the public. In 2020, a resident, Kevin Lindke, used the page to comment several times from three Facebook profiles, including criticism of the city's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Freed blocked all three accounts and deleted Lindke's comments. Lindke sued, but lower courts sided with Freed.

Katie Fallow, senior counsel at the Knight First Amendment Institute at Columbia University, which was involved in the Trump case, said that more and more public officials are using social media to communicate about official business.

"As many courts have held, it doesn't matter whether it's the president or a local city manager, government officials can't block people from these forums simply because they don't like what they're saying," Fallow said in a statement. "The Supreme Court should reaffirm that basic First Amendment principle."

The Supreme Court will not hear the new cases before the fall. The justices this week are hearing their last scheduled arguments and will issue decisions in May and June before going on a summer break. The court will resume hearing arguments in October.

Follow the AP's coverage of the U.S. Supreme Court at <https://apnews.com/hub/us-supreme-court>.

The man in a hurry: King Charles III rushes to make a mark

By DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — King Charles III is a man in a hurry.

After waiting nearly 74 years to become king, Charles has used his first six months on the throne to meet faith leaders across the country, reshuffle royal residences, stage his first overseas state visit and hold a sleepover at Windsor Castle that included the coach of the England soccer team. Then there was the big news: He opened the royal archives to researchers investigating the crown's links to slavery.

"We are already surprised by the Prince Charles who was turned into King Charles and who we still call Prince Charles, because that's how we think of him," quipped royal historian Robert Lacey. "But, actually, he's become a monarch quicker than people expected."

With the coronation less than two weeks away, Charles and the Buckingham Palace machine are working at top speed to show the new king at work. And the public is seeing a new kind of sovereign as he tries to slim down the monarchy and show that it is still relevant in a modern, multi-cultural nation where reverence for Queen Elizabeth II muted criticism during her 70 years on the throne.

Out is the matronly decorum that characterized Elizabeth's reign. In is a more human monarch, who held back tears as he addressed the nation after his mother's death and threw a mini-tantrum when a pen leaked on his fingers while signing a book in Northern Ireland. The public had a good laugh. The king now carries his own pen for signing emergencies.

While Elizabeth progressed grandly through meetings with subjects who bowed and curtsied before her, King Charles sat on the floor with the congregation during a visit to a gurdwara, or Sikh house of worship, in Luton, some 30 miles (50 kilometers) northwest of London. On his first state visit, he displayed an ability to properly roll his R's while flipping between German and English in a speech to the Bundestag, the German parliament.

Germans were impressed. Britons were surprised. Who knew he could speak German?

It's as if Charles, long derided as gray and stiff, has just stepped into the room. With extreme subtlety, his personality is starting to show, such as with the ever-changing pocket squares that give a dash of

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color to his conservative suits.

"Charles, the monarch, with his faults and virtues, has become a subject of more genuine interest," said Lacey, the author of "Battle of Brothers: William & Harry and the Inside Story of Family in Tumult."

"I mean, what pocket handkerchief is he going to wear? Maybe this will become the equivalent of the queen's handbag."

One reason Charles is so eager to get started may be because he knows he won't have much time to make his mark.

The man who waited a lifetime to be king alluded to the march of time during a white tie dinner at the presidential palace in Berlin, saying he hoped he and Camilla would "live long enough" to return to see the sapling they had just planted grow into a tree.

But there are speed bumps on the horizon, some linked to history, others to family.

Charles tried to get ahead of the history question by promising openness about the crown's links to slavery, but some think that commitment fell short.

Laura Trevelyan, whose ancestors enslaved at least 1,000 people on the island of Grenada, says the king should do what her family did and apologize.

"I hope that he will use some of the wealth that the royal family accumulated from the slave trade to better the lives of people in the Caribbean and in Britain who are descendants of the enslaved," she told the Times of London.

Then there is family.

Charles continues to fend off criticism from Prince Harry, whose memoir "Spare" painted his father as distant and unsympathetic toward a son who struggled with the death of his mother, Princess Diana. Harry also contended the royal family should have done more to accept his wife, Meghan, a biracial American.

Hugo Vickers, a royal historian and author of "Coronation: The Crowning of Elizabeth II," compared the new king's accession to the throne with being named chairman of a global corporation at a time when most people have retired. It's a job where he will face questions of religion, the armed forces and politics, in addition to running the royal household and mediating family feuds.

"It's a big thing to take on at that age," Vickers said of Charles, who turns 75 in November. "So, yes, I suspect he's a man in a hurry."

But on another level, Charles' long apprenticeship may also be an advantage, giving him more training and experiences to draw upon than his mother, who was just 25 when she became queen.

While Elizabeth, like all British monarchs before her, was educated by tutors, Charles was bundled off to Hill House School in London just shy of age 8 to begin experiencing the world outside the palace.

Richard Townend, the son of the school's founder, was a contemporary of Charles' at Hill House.

Townend said his father created the school as an antidote to what he had seen as a soldier, thinking that children who learned about other cultures would be less likely to wage war as adults.

"What he wanted to do was to make a school, which was quite unlike other schools at the time, in which half the children were not English," Townend said. "They came from all over the world, so the children would learn to live with each other, different nationalities, different people, different colors, different races, different religions."

"He felt passionately that if children learned to live in peace with each other, then the world could only get better."

Charles eventually earned a degree in history from the University of Cambridge and spent six years in the Royal Navy before leaving to focus on his duties as heir to the throne.

As Prince of Wales he founded charities, including one that helps young people get jobs, education and training. He started an organic food company and dabbled in urban planning. Charles was also an early advocate for conservation and environmental protection.

That said, he ruffled feathers when he lobbied government ministers and spoke out against projects he thought threatened Britain's historic architecture, drawing complaints that he had violated the prohibition against royals intervening in politics.

But the biggest controversy of Charles' life was the breakdown of his marriage to Princess Diana amid

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stories about his long-time relationship with the woman who would become his second wife, Camilla Parker-Bowles. Many people still remember Charles' admission of adultery and the leaked tapes of intimate conversations between Charles and Camilla, including one in which he compared himself to a tampon.

It took Charles years to shake off the failure of his first marriage, and many people were slow to accept Camilla.

In "Spare," Harry wrote bitterly of the palace's effort to rehabilitate Camilla's image, suggesting that unflattering and untrue stories about him were leaked to the media in exchange for more glowing portraits of the senior royals.

Over time, Camilla's charity work, her sense of humor and down-to-earth style won over the public, and she moved from being home wrecker to queen.

She will be crowned alongside her husband at Westminster Abbey.

"This is a man who has overcome problems and hurdles," said Lacey, the historical consultant to the Netflix series "The Crown."

"He's loved despite the problems that he's been through. He's loved for his mistakes as well as for his virtues. We're getting a rounded figure, and that's what a personal represented monarchy is all about."

What's behind sexual assault lawsuit against Donald Trump?

By JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — As Donald Trump ran for and served as president, over a dozen women publicly accused him of sexual assault and harassment. Most of those claims — all denied by Trump — were never taken to court. None has gone to trial. But that is about to change.

Jury selection starts Tuesday in E. Jean Carroll's rape lawsuit in a New York federal court. The former Elle magazine advice columnist alleges that Trump raped her in a luxury department store dressing room in the mid-1990s.

Carroll's civil case has taken a winding road to trial. It now comes as Trump is seeking to return to the White House and battling a roster of legal problems, including his recent indictment on charges of doctoring his business' records to conceal hush-money payments to a porn star.

Here's a look at the case and some key questions:

WHAT'S THE CASE ABOUT?

Carroll says a chance meeting with Trump at Bergdorf Goodman suddenly turned into sexual violence in 1995 or 1996. According to her court complaint, Trump ushered her to a fitting room after they joked about trying on a bodysuit, and then he pinned her against the wall and forced himself on her as she tried to break free.

She said she ultimately kneed him away and ran out of the store. Two of Carroll's friends have said she told them about the alleged attack soon afterward. She never informed police or anyone else until she recounted the story in a 2019 memoir and magazine excerpt. (The Associated Press typically does not name people who say they have been sexually assaulted unless they come forward publicly, as Carroll did.)

WHAT DOES TRUMP SAY HAPPENED?

Nothing whatsoever. "She said that I did something to her that never took place. There was no anything," Trump said when Carroll's lawyers questioned him under oath in October. He denies even bumping into her at the store and has accused her of making up the story to sell her book. When her account was first published, Trump said he had no idea who she was, shrugging off a photo that showed the two and their then-spouses interacting at a 1987 social event. When shown the picture again during his questioning in October, Trump misidentified Carroll as his ex-wife Marla Maples. His prior ex, the late Ivana Trump, is in the photo.

ARE THERE EYEWITNESSES? ANY VIDEO? FORENSIC EVIDENCE?

Carroll's legal team says there were no eyewitnesses to the alleged attack, and any security video that might have existed is long gone. For years, Carroll sought to test Trump's DNA against unidentified male genetic material found on a dress that she says she wore and never laundered. His lawyers long fought

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her request for a sample until February, when they offered a deal: To rebut her claim, he'd give the sample if her attorneys turned over the full DNA report on the dress. The judge said it was too late. Jurors won't hear about the DNA and the dress at all.

WILL TRUMP BE AT THE TRIAL?

His presence isn't required and doesn't appear likely. Trump's lawyers have said that he wants to attend but that the security needed for such an appearance would burden the city and court. The judge, for his part, has expressed confidence that Trump can be protected in the lower Manhattan courthouse, where security already is tight.

Even if Trump isn't there, jurors will hear from him via video of his questioning last fall. Carroll, meanwhile, plans to attend every day and to testify, according to her attorneys.

IS THERE A POSSIBILITY OF CRIMINAL PROSECUTION?

No. The legal time limit for pressing criminal charges ran out long ago.

THEN WHY IS THIS CIVIL CASE IN COURT NOW?

It's complicated. When Carroll first came forward, the time limit for suing over a rape had expired. But after Trump reacted to her allegations by saying she was "not my type" and "totally lying," Carroll filed a defamation suit against him in 2019. That case ground along as Trump's lawyers fought it in various ways, including by shifting it from state to federal court and asserting that Trump's remarks were part of his job as president — an argument that could have sunk the defamation claim.

The courts are now weighing that question. But in the meantime, New York gave people a chance to sue over long-ago sexual abuse claims. Carroll was among the first to do so. (Her case remained in federal court, however.) And Trump has continued to publicly portray Carroll as a liar, which has become the basis of a new defamation claim that will also be addressed at the trial.

WHAT DOES CARROLL WANT?

A retraction and unspecified damages.

WHAT ABOUT THE OTHER WOMEN WHO ACCUSED TRUMP OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT?

Two of them are due to testify in Carroll's case. Jurors also are expected to hear the infamous 2005 "Access Hollywood" hot-mic recording of Trump crudely boasting that fame gave him carte blanche to kiss and grope women. Not involved in the case are two other women who sued Trump after going public with claims that he made unwanted sexual advances. Those cases were dismissed or dropped.

NFL Draft Guide: How to watch, who will go No. 1

By DAVID BRANDT AP Sports Writer

The NFL never really stops, so the offseason continues with the draft starting Thursday night.

The Carolina Panthers have the No. 1 overall pick and, as usual, a lot of the hype surrounds the quarterbacks. Alabama's Bryce Young, Ohio State's C.J. Stroud, Kentucky's Will Levis and Florida's Anthony Richardson are among the coveted prospects.

Here's more to know ahead of the NFL draft:

WHEN IS THE NFL DRAFT?

The draft is a three-day extravaganza in Kansas City, Missouri, starting Thursday night.

The first round begins at 8 p.m. Eastern. The second and third rounds are on Friday starting at 7 p.m. The fourth through seventh rounds are on Saturday starting at 12 p.m.

The draft can be viewed on NFL Network, ABC, ESPN and ESPN Deportes.

MOCK DRAFT

Everyone is pretty much asking the same questions about the NFL draft. See how AP's experts on NFL and college football answer them in AP's NFL mock draft.

WHO HAS THE TOP PICKS?

The Panthers have the No. 1 pick in the draft after making a trade with the Chicago Bears.

After that, the Houston Texans select at No. 2, while the Arizona Cardinals are No. 3. The Indianapolis Colts (No. 4) and Seattle Seahawks (No. 5) round out the top 5.

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The Panthers are expected to take a quarterback with the top selection. The candidates include Young, Stroud, Levis and Richardson.

QUIET THURSDAY

Not every team has a draft pick in the first round. The Cleveland Browns, Los Angeles Rams, Denver Broncos, Miami Dolphins and San Francisco 49ers will sit the first night out unless they make a trade.

Four of the five teams are out of the first round because of trades. The one exception is the Dolphins. The NFL punished the franchise by taking away its 2023 first-round and 2024 third-round pick after a probe found the team tampered with quarterback Tom Brady and coach Sean Payton.

BIG DRAFT FOR TEs, RBs?

The most loaded position in this draft might just be tight end. The record for tight ends drafted in the first round is three, most recently done in 2017. There is a chance that gets broken and more tight ends go in the first round than wideouts.

Notre Dame's Michael Mayer, Utah's Dalton Kincaid, Georgia's Darnell Washington and Oregon State's Luke Musgrave all have their fans and could be among those selected Thursday night.

The draft could also be a semi-renaissance for the running back spot. Texas' Bijan Robinson is one of the most coveted prospects at his position in the past decade. Alabama's Jahmyr Gibbs, Texas A&M's Devon Achane, UCLA's Zach Charbonnet and Tulane's Tyjae Spears are also talented prospects.

AP Pro Football Writer Rob Maaddi and AP College Football Writer Ralph D. Russo contributed to this report.

AP NFL: <https://apnews.com/hub/nfl> and https://twitter.com/AP_NFL

Minnesota officer who fatally shot Daunte Wright freed

By The Associated Press undefined

SHAKOPEE, Minn. (AP) — Kim Potter, the former Minnesota police officer who said she mistook her gun for a Taser when she shot and killed Daunte Wright in 2021, was released from prison early Monday.

The Minnesota Department of Corrections said Potter was released at about 4 a.m. "out of an abundance of caution" for Potter's safety. The department confirmed Friday she would be released Monday from the Minnesota Correctional Facility in Shakopee, but declined to say what time due to security concerns.

Potter, a white former officer for the Brooklyn Center Police Department in suburban Minneapolis, fatally shot Wright, who was Black, during a traffic stop in April 2021. The shooting happened during the trial of Derek Chauvin, the officer who killed George Floyd, and Wright's death set off several days of protests.

She was convicted of second-degree manslaughter and given a two-year sentence. Under Minnesota law, those sent to prison typically serve two-thirds of their sentence behind bars and the remaining time on supervised release. In Potter's case, she served 16 months of her two-year sentence behind bars, said Department of Corrections spokesman Andy Skoogman.

Skoogman said Potter will be on supervised release until Dec. 21, and she will live in Wisconsin during that time.

Potter, now 50, appeared much thinner in a new photo released last week by the Department of Corrections. Her attorney, Earl Gray, said Friday he had "no idea" why her appearance had changed.

Potter's two-year sentence from Judge Regina Chu drew strong criticism from Wright's family and their attorney, civil rights lawyer Ben Crump. The state attorney general's office had sought a sentence recommended by state guidelines of just over seven years in prison.

Wright's mother, Katie Wright, said after the sentencing that Potter "murdered my son," adding: "Today the justice system murdered him all over again."

Defense attorneys argued at the sentencing hearing that Potter deserved leniency because Wright was trying to drive away and Potter had the right to defend herself. Chu said at the time that the case was not the same as other high-profile killings, including Floyd's death, which resulted in a 22 1/2-year sentence

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for Chauvin.

"This is a cop who made a tragic mistake," she said of Potter.

Wright, a 20-year-old father, was killed on April 11, 2021, after Brooklyn Center officers pulled him over for having expired license tags and an air freshener hanging from his rearview mirror. Officers discovered he had a warrant for a misdemeanor weapons possession charge and he was shot during a struggle as officers tried to arrest him.

Potter said she thought she was holding her Taser at the time, not her gun. She is heard on video yelling "Taser" several times just before she fires her pistol as Wright tried to drive away.

Potter, a 26-year police veteran, apologized to Wright's family at the sentencing hearing and spoke directly to his mother: "Katie, I understand a mother's love. I'm sorry I broke your heart ... my heart is broken and devastated for all of you."

Civil rights advocates say laws against hanging objects from rearview mirrors have been used as a pretext for stopping Black motorists.

'Dancing With the Stars' judge Len Goodman dies at 78

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Len Goodman, a long-serving judge on "Dancing with the Stars" and "Strictly Come Dancing" who helped revive interest in ballroom dancing on both sides of the Atlantic, has died, his agent said Monday. He was 78.

Agent Jackie Gill said Goodman "passed away peacefully" on Saturday night. He had been diagnosed with bone cancer.

A former professional ballroom dancer and British champion, Goodman was head judge on "Strictly Come Dancing" for 12 years from its launch on the BBC in 2004. The dance competition, which pairs celebrities with professional dance partners, was a surprise hit and has become one of the network's most popular shows.

Goodman's pithy observations, delivered in a Cockney accent, endeared him to viewers. "You floated across that floor like butter on a crumpet," he remarked after one foxtrot. He praised a salsa-dancing couple as "like two sizzling sausages on a barbecue."

Goodman was head judge on the U.S. version of the show, ABC's "Dancing With the Stars," for 15 years until his retirement in November. For several years he judged the British and American shows simultaneously each autumn, criss-crossing the Atlantic weekly.

Buckingham Palace said Camilla, the queen consort, was "saddened to hear" of Goodman's death. The wife of King Charles III is a fan of "Strictly," and danced with Goodman at a 2019 event celebrating the British Dance Council.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's spokesman said Goodman was "a great entertainer" who would be "missed by many."

British broadcaster Esther Rantzen said Goodman had been "astonished and delighted" by his late-life fame.

"One of the reasons he succeeded so well in the States is that he was quintessentially British," she said. "He was firm but fair, funny but a gentleman and I hope the nation will adopt his favorite expostulation of 'pickle me walnuts.'"

Goodman also presented BBC radio programs and made TV documentaries, including a 2012 program about the sinking of the Titanic. As a young man, Goodman had worked as a shipyard welder for the company that built the doomed ship.

BBC director-general Tim Davie said Goodman was "a wonderful, warm entertainer who was adored by millions. He appealed to all ages and felt like a member of everyone's family. Len was at the very heart of Strictly's success. He will be hugely missed by the public and his many friends and family."

Goodman was also a recipient of the Carl Alan Award in recognition of outstanding contributions to dance, and owned the Goodman Academy dance school in southern England.

To help students, some colleges provide double the teachers

By ELLEN DENNIS, The Seattle Times undefined

EVERETT, Wa. (AP) — Terrica Purvis squinted through goggles as her hands carefully guided a pipette full of indigo-tinted fluid into clear glass test tubes.

It was the last chemistry lab of the winter quarter at Everett Community College. Purvis was working through the steps of what chemistry professor Valerie Mosser jokingly refers to as the “post-apocalypse survival” lab — an experiment using boiled red cabbage water to test the acidity of common household chemicals.

Purvis, 27, is in her first year of study for an associate degree in nursing at Everett Community College. She is also one of more than 6,000 Washington community and technical college students enrolled in the state’s Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST) program.

Students who need extra help in subjects such as algebra struggle to learn if the content is taught in an abstract way, educators say. So I-BEST programs feature two teachers in the classroom: One provides job training and the other teaches basic skills in reading, math or English language.

EDITOR’S NOTE: This story is part of Saving the College Dream, a collaboration between AL.com, The Associated Press, The Christian Science Monitor, The Dallas Morning News, The Hechinger Report, The Post and Courier in Charleston, South Carolina, and The Seattle Times, with support from the Solutions Journalism Network.

Nationally, two-year community colleges have the worst completion rates in higher education, with only slightly more than 40% earning degrees within six years.

In Washington state, students in the program graduate at a higher rate. Among students who started college from 2015 to 2018, an average of 52% enrolled in I-BEST classes earned a degree or certificate within four years. That compares with 38% of students who did so while enrolled in traditional adult basic education coursework, according to the state Board for Community and Technical Colleges.

The program is so successful that 12 states have begun implementing an I-BEST model at one or more education institutions.

For Purvis, who hadn’t been in school for nearly a decade, this class meant getting extra math help when she needed it: during a chemistry class.

Each time Mosser gave a lecture or held a lab, she was joined by Candace Ronhaar, who works as a tutor and extra math instructor.

In one session, Ronhaar drew a heart on the whiteboard. She wrote the word “mole” beside it, and explained it is a unit of measurement equivalent to the amount of atoms in 12 grams of carbon-12. She guided students through practice problems, calculating the mass of chemical compounds.

All six students in Chemistry 121 were also taking an entry-level statistics class, and Ronhaar was co-instructor for both courses. Mosser said Ronhaar’s presence was the most valuable part of the I-BEST model.

“I’m an assessment instructor,” Mosser said. “She’s just a helping instructor. In the minds of students, the difference is incalculable. They have a different relationship with her. They’re more willing to go to her, because she doesn’t grade them.”

Purvis said chemistry was the first class that ever “humbled” her. She doesn’t think she would have passed without I-BEST. Students fresh out of high school had an easier time remembering chemistry and math, Purvis said, but she hadn’t studied those subjects for 10 years.

“They couldn’t have picked a better second instructor,” Purvis said of Ronhaar. “I loved it. We went to her office hours all the time.”

After high school, Purvis spent six years as a cook in the Navy, and took classes at a couple other colleges. Last year, she was medically discharged and returned to school at Everett Community College full-time. She plans to go on to pursue a Bachelor of Science in Nursing, and hopes to work in labor and

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delivery at a hospital.

Helping more students graduate from nursing school has a larger societal benefit. In the first year of the pandemic, from 2020 to 2021, the number of working registered nurses in the United States decreased by more than 100,000 — the highest drop in four decades. An estimated 200,000 jobs for registered nurses are expected to open each year in the U.S. through 2031, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported in 2021.

I-BEST was launched as a state pilot program almost 20 years ago as data suggested students needed vocational training to improve job prospects. The program was to change the remediation model in most community colleges, where students who don't do well on placement tests must take pre-college classes in their weak subject — essentially a repeat of high school.

I-BEST enrollment in the state has increased by more than 20% in the past five years, bringing in a diverse group of students. Forty-six percent of its students are students of color, 55% are women and 39% have dependents.

I-BEST opens the door to federal financial aid by making it available to students who didn't graduate from high school. Under financial aid rules, students must either have a high school diploma or prove their "ability to benefit" from aid by being enrolled in a qualifying program, such as I-BEST, where they learn basic skills as part of their career pathway.

Along with nursing, other high-demand I-BEST job pathways include aeronautics, manufacturing and information technologies.

At Bellevue College, I-BEST students enrolled in Business 101 meet with instructor Eric Nacke for an adult basic education class on a separate day. Nacke teaches English in the context of the business world.

Student Forouzan Barfibafeghi moved from Iran to the U.S. in 2020. She holds a bachelor's degree in business from Islamic Azad University in Tehran, where she graduated in 1999. She said Nacke's classes have helped her develop her English skills and given her a sense of community.

"We have created a strong bond between us. That is one of the highlights for me," said Barfibafeghi, who hopes to find work in the insurance industry after completing an associated degree in business.

In Washington, because I-BEST uses a mix of state, federal and other grant funds, the state doesn't know how much the program costs. But the model calling for two instructors does make it more expensive than other adult basic education programs. The program might be more broadly replicated if it weren't so costly, state community college spokesperson Laura McDowell said.

As Purvis prepared for her next quarter of classes, the student said she hoped her future instructors would be as helpful as Ronhaar.

"She's my favorite instructor so far since I've been going to Everett," Purvis said. "We needed her. She had to be there."

The Associated Press education team receives support from the Carnegie Corporation of New York. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

Watchdog: World military spending up to an all-time high

STOCKHOLM (AP) — Global military spending grew for the eighth consecutive year in 2022 to an all-time high of \$2.24 trillion, with a sharp rise in Europe, chiefly due to Russian and Ukrainian expenditure, a Swedish think tank said Monday.

Spending globally increased by 3.7% in real terms, but military expenditure in Europe was up 13% — its steepest year-on-year increase in at least 30 years, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, or SIPRI, said in a report. Military aid to Ukraine and concerns about a heightened threat from Russia "strongly influenced many other states' spending decisions."

The independent Swedish watchdog said that last year, the three largest arms spenders were the United States, China and Russia, who between them accounted for 56% of global expenditure.

'The rise "is a sign that we are living in an increasingly insecure world," said Nan Tian, a researcher with SIPRI's Military Expenditure and Arms Production Program.

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Several states significantly increased their military spending following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, while others announced plans to raise spending levels over periods of up to a decade. Some of the sharpest increases were seen in countries near Russia: Finland (36 %), Lithuania (27%), Sweden (12%) and Poland (11%).

Both Sweden and Finland jointly applied for NATO membership in May 2022, abandoning decades of nonalignment in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. While Finland has been admitted, Sweden's bid to join NATO remains stalled by opposition from Turkey and Hungary.

"While the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 certainly affected military spending decisions in 2022, concerns about Russian aggression have been building for much longer," said Lorenzo Scarazzato, a researcher with SIPRI's Military Expenditure and Arms Production Program.

"Many former Eastern bloc states have more than doubled their military spending since 2014, the year when Russia annexed Crimea."

Russia also has increased its military spending. SIPRI said that grew by an estimated 9.2% in 2022, to around \$86.4 billion. That is equivalent to 4.1% of Russia's gross domestic product in 2022, up from 3.7% the previous year.

Established in 1966, SIPRI is an international institute dedicated to research into conflict, armaments, arms control and disarmament.

Probe ordered after shots fired at errant Instacart driver

By TERRY SPENCER Associated Press

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP) — A Florida prosecutor has ordered an investigation after a homeowner fired shots into a couple's car when they mistakenly turned onto his property while making a late-night Instacart delivery. Police closed the case without consulting the state attorney's office.

No one was injured by the gunfire in an upscale Fort Lauderdale suburb, but it is the latest in a spate of similar shootings across the U.S. where people have mistakenly turned onto the wrong property or gotten in the wrong car. One person has been killed and others seriously wounded. In this case, the shooter told police the car was being driven erratically, struck his leg, and made him fear for himself and his son.

Broward County State Attorney Harold Pryor issued a statement saying police investigators never contacted his office about the April 15 shooting in Southwest Ranches that put at least two bullets into the car driven by 19-year-old Waldes Thomas Jr., who was with his 18-year-old girlfriend, Diamond Darville.

Pryor said his staff members were unaware of the shooting until they were contacted Friday by a reporter from WTVJ-TV, who interviewed the couple. The Davie Police Department has a contract with Southwest Ranches to provide service.

"I contacted the Davie Police Department to request a full investigation," Pryor said Friday, adding that his prosecutors will decide whether charges should be filed.

Davie police declined to comment Sunday but released the lead detective's report. He wrote that without any video, he couldn't determine whether either the shooter or couple committed a crime.

"Each party appeared justified in their actions based on the circumstances they perceived," the report concluded.

The shooting happened on an unlit street in a semi-rural neighborhood at a home sitting on two acres.

According to the police report, Thomas and Darville got lost while delivering groceries for Instacart shortly before 10 p.m. They were on the phone with their customer when Thomas turned their 2014 Honda Civic into an area where the shooter stores equipment for his excavation business. The address they were looking for is across the street.

The shooter and the couple gave investigators conflicting reports about what happened next.

The homeowner told officers he asked his 12-year-old son to tell the driver to leave but soon heard the boy yelling for help. The father said he saw the car driving erratically, banging into logs and boulders, and so he told his son to run.

He said the car then drove toward him and ran over his foot. Saying he feared for his life and his son's,

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the man drew his handgun and fired at the car's tires, but it sped away. He called police.

An officer found Thomas and Darville parked nearby. When he asked what happened, they replied, "We just got shot at." He said that Darville was crying and that Thomas appeared "extremely nervous and scared." The officer said that there were two bullet holes in the car's bumper and that one tire was flat.

The couple told police they thought that they were at the right house and tried to leave after the boy told them they weren't. Thomas said he put the car into reverse and hit a boulder, which was when the shooter approached "aggressively." That's when Thomas said he heard shots and drove away. Darville said she saw the shooter pull his gun and fire.

"I said, 'We got to go, we got to go,'" Darville told WTVJ. "I was scared, I'm not going to lie." She didn't respond to a phone call or emails from The Associated Press.

The AP isn't naming the property resident because he hasn't been charged with a crime. His phone rang unanswered, and he did not return a text message Sunday seeking comment.

Police say they returned the shooter's gun after closing the case. ___

An earlier version incorrectly said the statement was issued Sunday, not Friday.

Today in History: April 25, Union fleet captures New Orleans

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, April 25, the 115th day of 2023. There are 250 days left in the year.

Today's Highlights in History:

On April 25, 1945, during World War II, U.S. and Soviet forces linked up on the Elbe (EL'-beh) River, a meeting that dramatized the collapse of Nazi Germany's defenses.

On this date:

In 404 B.C., the Peloponnesian War ended as Athens surrendered to Sparta.

In 1507, a world map produced by German cartographer Martin Waldseemüller contained the first recorded use of the term "America," in honor of Italian navigator Amerigo Vespucci (veh-SPOO'-chee).

In 1859, ground was broken for the Suez Canal.

In 1862, during the Civil War, a Union fleet commanded by Flag Officer David G. Farragut captured the city of New Orleans.

In 1898, the United States Congress declared war on Spain; the 10-week conflict resulted in an American victory.

In 1901, New York Gov. Benjamin Barker Odell, Jr. signed an automobile registration bill which imposed a 15 mph speed limit on highways.

In 1915, during World War I, Allied soldiers invaded the Gallipoli (guh-LIH'-puh-lee) Peninsula in an unsuccessful attempt to take the Ottoman Empire out of the war.

In 1945, delegates from some 50 countries gathered in San Francisco to organize the United Nations.

In 1990, the Hubble Space Telescope was deployed in orbit from the space shuttle Discovery. (It was later discovered that the telescope's primary mirror was flawed, requiring the installation of corrective components to achieve optimal focus.)

In 1992, Islamic forces in Afghanistan took control of most of the capital of Kabul following the collapse of the Communist government.

In 2002, Lisa "Left Eye" Lopes of the Grammy-winning trio TLC died in an SUV crash in Honduras; she was 30.

In 2019, former Vice President Joe Biden entered the Democratic presidential race, declaring the fight against Donald Trump to be a "battle for the soul of this nation."

Ten years ago: President Barack Obama consoled a rural Texas community rocked by a deadly fertilizer plant explosion that killed 15 people, telling mourners during a memorial service at Baylor University they were not alone in their grief. Obama also joined his four living predecessors to dedicate the George W. Bush Presidential Center in Dallas. Reggaeton star Don Omar was the top winner of the Billboard Latin

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Music Awards in Coral Gables, Florida, taking home 10 prizes.

Five years ago: Ford Motor Co. said it would get rid of most of its North American car lineup as part of a broad plan to save money and make the company more competitive; the Mustang sports car and a compact Focus crossover vehicle would be the only cars sold in the U.S., Canada and Mexico. Danish engineer Peter Madsen was convicted of murder for luring a Swedish journalist onto his homemade submarine before torturing and killing her; Madsen was later sentenced to life in prison.

One year ago: Russia unleashed a string of attacks against rail and fuel installations deep inside Ukraine, far from the front lines of Moscow's new eastern offensive, in a bid to thwart Ukrainian efforts to marshal supplies for the fight. The U.S. moved to rush more weaponry to Ukraine and said the assistance from the Western allies was making a difference in the 2-month-old war. Elon Musk reached an agreement to buy Twitter for roughly \$44 billion, promising a more lenient touch to policing content on the social media platform where he — then the world's richest person — had made a habit of promoting his interests and attacking his critics to his tens of millions of followers.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Al Pacino is 83. Ballroom dance judge Len Goodman (TV: "Dancing with the Stars") is 79. Rock musician Stu Cook (Creedence Clearwater Revival) is 78. Singer Bjorn Ulvaeus (ABBA) is 78. Actor Talia Shire is 78. Actor Jeffrey DeMunn is 76. Rock musician Steve Ferrone (Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers) is 73. Country singer-songwriter Rob Crosby is 69. Actor Hank Azaria is 59. Rock singer Andy Bell (Erasure) is 59. Rock musician Eric Avery (Jane's Addiction) is 58. Country musician Rory Feek (Joey + Rory) is 58. TV personality Jane Clayson is 56. Actor Renee Zellweger is 54. Actor Gina Torres is 54. Actor Jason Lee is 53. Actor Jason Wiles is 53. Actor Emily Bergl is 48. Actor Marguerite Moreau is 46. Actor Melonie Diaz is 39. Actor Sara Paxton is 35. Actor/producer Allisyn Snyder is 27. Actor Jayden Rey is 14.