

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 338 ~ 1 of 102

- [1- Upcoming Events](#)
- [3- Newsweek Bulletin](#)
- [4- Drought Monitor](#)
- [4- Banghart Properties gets Class B license renewed](#)
- [5- South Dakota Average Gas Prices](#)
- [6-Weekly West Nile Update](#)
- [6- First Human West Nile Virus Case of 2023 Reported in Sanborn County](#)
- [7- Brown County 4-H Horse Show Results](#)
- [9- SD News Watch: How weekly newspapers are keeping local news alive](#)
- [15- SD News Watch: Farming carbon: Farm bill presents opportunity to unite farmers, climate activists](#)
- [19- SD SearchLight: Farmers say they can store carbon without pipelines](#)
- [20- SD SearchLight: When it comes to classified docs, Trump and the DOJ, Rounds wants it both ways](#)
- [22- SD SearchLight: US Supreme Court turns down push by states to challenge Biden deportation policy](#)
- [24- SD SearchLight: 'Lobbying for my right to exist': US Senate panel examines how states target trans kids](#)
- [26- Farm Hand Help Wanted Ad](#)
- [27- Weather Pages](#)
- [31- Daily Devotional](#)
- [32- 2023 Community Events](#)
- [33- Subscription Form](#)
- [34- Lottery Numbers](#)
- [35- News from the Associated Press](#)

Groton Community Calendar

Saturday, June 24

Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 10 a.m. ago 4 p.m.

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

Jr. Teener at Britton, 10 a.m. (1);

Cancelled: U10 Baseball Tourney in Groton



"When you start loving yourself and respecting your time and energy, things will change. Get to know your worth, and your value will go up."

GERMANY KENT

Sunday, June 25

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Worship at St. John's, 9 a.m.; Zion at 11 a.m.

United Methodist: Conde Worship, 8:30 a.m.; Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Groton Worship, 10:30 a.m. (Welcome Pastor Rob)

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

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

Amateurs at Miller, 6 p.m.

U12 Baseball Tourney in Groton: 10:00: Groton vs. Clark and Britton vs. Milbank; 11:30: Clark vs. Sisseton and Broge vs. Britton; 1:00: Groton vs. Sisseton and Borge vs. Milbank. Seeded games at 2:30 and 4:00.

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

CLOSED: **Recycling Trailer in Groton**
The recycling trailer is located west of the city shop. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.
© 2023 Groton Daily Independent

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 338 ~ 2 of 102

Monday, June 26

Senior Menu: Sloppy Joe on bun, oven roasted potatoes, mixed vegetables, ice cream sundae, whole wheat bread.

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

Food Pantry open 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Groton Community Center

Senior Citizens meet at Community Center with potluck at noon.

Legion vs. Hamlin at Bryant, 6 p.m. (1); Jr. Legion vs. Hamlin at Bryant, 8 p.m. (1); Jr. Teener at Huron, 5 p.m. (2); Softball at Oakes (U8 at 5:30, U10 at 7:00); U10 R/B hosts Hannigan, 5:30 (2); H8 Blue hosts Hannigan, 5:30 p.m. (2)

Tuesday, June 27

Senior Menu: Chicken Alfredo, broccoli and cauliflower, peaches, whole wheat bread.

United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.

Food Pantry open 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Groton Community Center

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

Jr. Teener at Clark, 6 p.m. (2); Softball at Britton (U8 at 5:30, U10 at 6:00, U12 at 7:00); U12BB hosts Doland, 8 p.m. (1); U110 B/W hosts Doland, 7 p.m. (1); U8 Red hosts Doland, 6 p.m. (1); T-Ball Black hosts Doland, 5 p.m.

Wednesday, June 28

Senior Menu: Salisbury steak, mashed potatoes, carrots and peas, Mandarin oranges, pineapple, whole wheat bread.

United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Project/Game Night, 7 p.m.

Legion hosts Clark, 6 p.m. (1); Jr. Legion hosts Clark, 8 p.m. (1)

Thursday, June 29

Senior Menu: BBQ chicken breast, rice pilaf, mixed vegetables, fruit, cookie, whole wheat bread.

Blood Drive at Groton Community Center, 11:30 a.m. to 5:45 p.m.

Legion hosts Redfield, 5:30 p.m. (1); Jr. Legion hosts Redfield, 7:30 p.m. (1); Us Softball hosts Clark, 6 p.m.; U10 Groton Scrimmage, 7 p.m.; U12BB hosts Borge 12, 5:30 p.m. (2)

Friday, June 30

Senior Menu: Chili, corn bread, coleslaw, vanilla pudding.

Softball hosts Clark (U8 at 6:00); T-Ball B&G Scrimmage, 6 p.m.

Saturday, July 1

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

Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Amateurs hosts Redfield DQ, 7 p.m.

Sunday, July 2

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship with communion, 9 a.m.

United Methodist: Worship with communion (Conde, 8:30 a.m., Groton 10:30 a.m., Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.

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

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

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 338 ~ 3 of 102

The Bulletin by Newsweek

JUNE 12, 2023

World in Brief

Multnomah County in Oregon is suing more than a dozen fossil fuel companies over allegations that their products contributed to pollution that caused a deadly heat wave in 2021.

A Texas postal worker collapsed and died on Tuesday as a major heatwave pounds the state, putting Republican Governor Greg Abbott's recent controversial ban on water breaks under further scrutiny.

A grand jury in Ohio has indicted Chad Doerman, 32, on murder charges after he was accused of fatally shooting his three young sons last week.

A second tropical storm—Tropical Storm Cindy—has formed in the wake of Tropical Storm Bret, which is currently moving across parts of the eastern Caribbean's Lesser Antilles islands. Forecasters say this is the first time two storms have been active in the tropical Atlantic in June since records began.

About 7.5 million Baby Shark children's bath toys have been recalled following reports of at least a dozen puncture, laceration and impalement injuries.

The FIFA Council has chosen the U.S. to host the 2025 Club World Cup taking place that June and July. The 2025 event will mark the first time 32 teams will compete.

TALKING POINTS

"The [Russian] Ministry of Defense is trying to deceive the public and the president and spin the story that there were insane levels of aggression from the Ukrainian side and that they were going to attack us together with the whole NATO block. The special operation was started for a completely different reason," Wagner Group boss Yevgeny Prigozhin said, calling the invasion a "poorly planned operation."

"In this case of this extreme, catastrophic implosion, there is only one explanation—and that is an engineering fault," SubMerge president Ofer Ketter told Newsweek. "This specific submersible was just not designed to withstand the pressure that it went down to."

"I'm really f***** angry. And that is an uncomfortable place to be because of the historical women tropes that so often have been used to, kind of silence and diminish women and our voices. Not only in this country, you know, but throughout human history. But I'm really angry, because we know that women have died," Chelsea Clinton said at the 2023 Aspen Ideas: Health summit while reflecting on the one-year anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court overturning Roe v. Wade.

WHAT TO WATCH IN THE DAY AHEAD

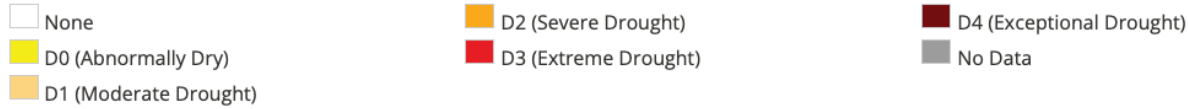
Vice President Kamala Harris will deliver remarks today in Charlotte, North Carolina, to mark one year since the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling overturning Roe v. Wade.

Former President Donald Trump is scheduled to address the Oakland County Republican Party Lincoln Day Dinner on Sunday in Detroit, Michigan.

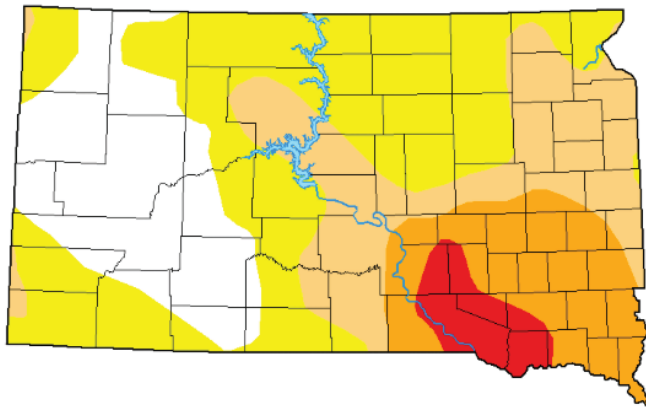
Sunday marks 45 years since the introduction of the original rainbow Pride flag, which debuted at the San Francisco Gay Freedom Day Parade in 1978.

The 2023 Glastonbury Festival continues this weekend with headlining performances by Guns N' Roses and Elton John.

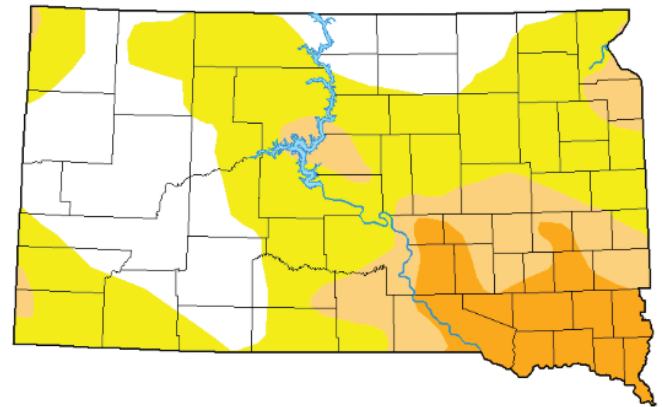
Drought Classification



Drought Monitor



June 20



June 13

Much of the Northern Plains received below average rainfall this week, adding to short-term precipitation deficits. In conjunction with the below average weekly rainfall, above normal temperatures and high winds (typical for this region) only acted to exacerbate worsening drought conditions by increasing evaporation from soils and vegetation. As a result, widespread degradation of abnormal dryness (D0) and drought was warranted this week across the Dakotas. Degradation was also warranted farther southward, extending across the eastern Great Plains all the way to Kansas, despite more seasonal daytime high temperatures this week. Conversely, across western portions of the High Plains region, another round of improvements is warranted, as yet another week of above normal rainfall (with many areas receiving upwards of 2 inches of rainfall, with locally higher amounts) was observed across many areas, leading to improvements to long-term drought conditions.

Banghart Properties gets Class B license renewed

GETTYSBURG, SD, June 22, 2023 – Banghart Properties LLC, a family-owned local agricultural business that prioritizes adding value to economic growth, is pleased to announce that it has been granted a renewed annual Class B license by the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission (SD PUC).

The SD PUC confirmed on June 21, 2023 that Banghart Properties was not guilty of buying grain without a license and did not exceed the statutory limits for a Class B license, which is capped at \$5 million in sales.

“We are more than just a business; we’re part of a community, helping to sustain local economies and promote rural development,” says Jan Banghart, the head of Banghart Properties LLC. “We work tirelessly to ensure South Dakota farmers receive fair value for their produce and labor. This decision by the SD PUC reaffirms our commitment to our farmers and the broader farming community in South Dakota.”

While the SD PUC’s decision is a positive development, Banghart Properties recognizes that challenges remain. We remain committed to working with all stakeholders, including the SD PUC, to ensure a fair and equitable agricultural business environment.

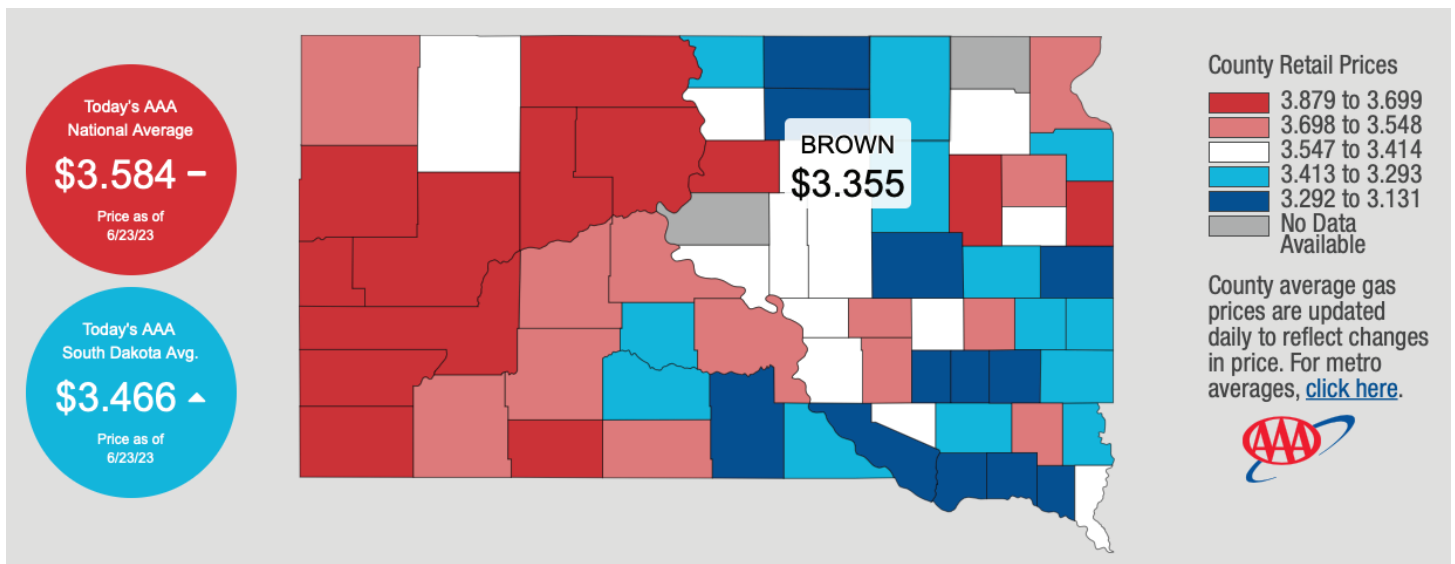
Broton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 338 ~ 5 of 102

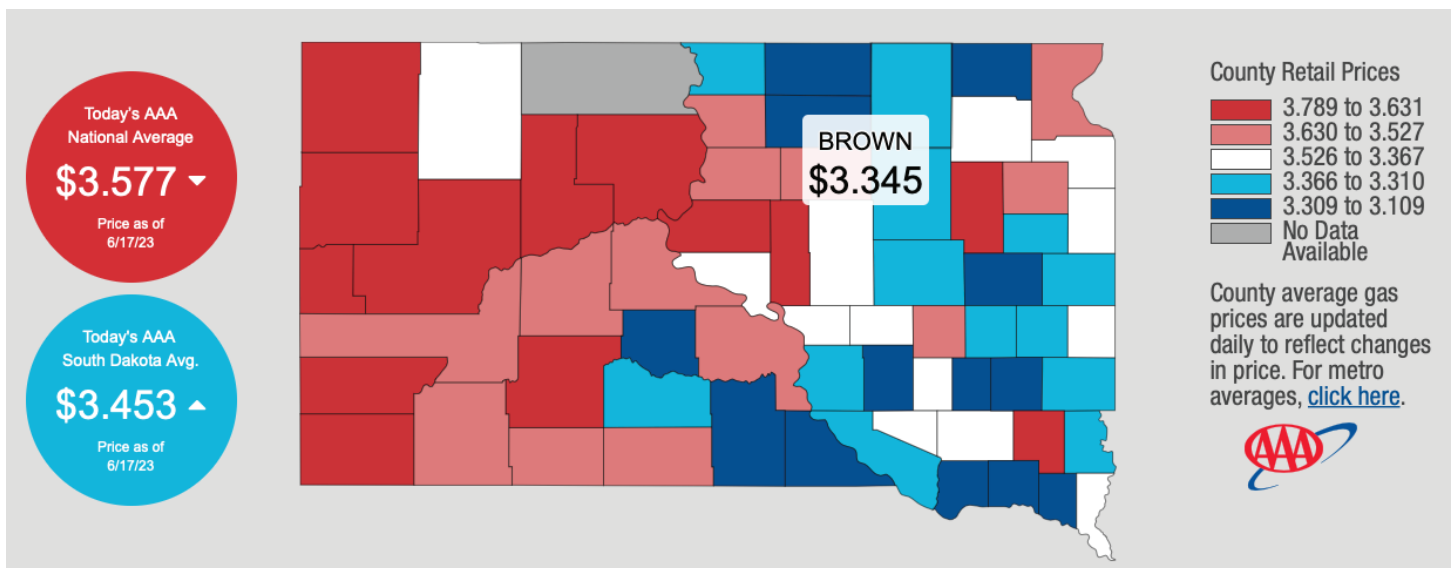
South Dakota Average Gas Prices

	Regular	Mid-Grade	Premium	Diesel
Current Avg.	\$3.466	\$3.636	\$4.105	\$3.723
Yesterday Avg.	\$3.450	\$3.641	\$4.098	\$3.732
Week Ago Avg.	\$3.451	\$3.626	\$4.072	\$3.727
Month Ago Avg.	\$3.439	\$3.571	\$4.056	\$3.792
Year Ago Avg.	\$4.751	\$4.891	\$5.341	\$5.393

This Week



Two Weeks Ago



Weekly West Nile Update

The first West Nile virus human case has been reported in Sanborn County. No West Nile virus positive mosquito pools have been detected at this time. Last year, 2022, there were 35 WNV fever cases, 36 Neuroinvasive cases, 27 hospitalizations, 2 deaths, and 13 positive blood donors reported in South Dakota residents.

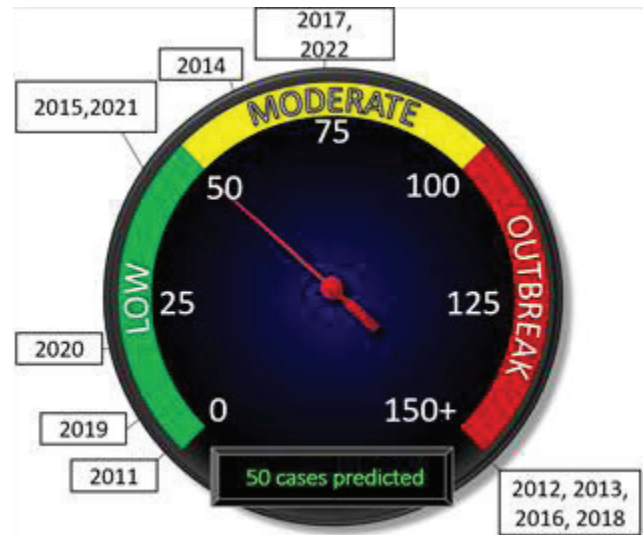
SD WNV (as of June 23):

1 human case reported (Sanborn)

No positive mosquito pools detected

US WNV (as of June 13): 13 cases (AZ, GA, IL, LA, NE, OR, PA, SC, WY)

WNV Prediction Model – Total Number of Cases Projected for 2023, South Dakota (as of June 23)



First Human West Nile Virus Case of 2023 Reported in Sanborn County

PIERRE, S.D. – Yesterday, the South Dakota Department of Health confirmed the first human West Nile virus (WNV) case of the 2023 season in a resident of Sanborn County. South Dakota has reported more than 2,750 human cases and 49 deaths since WNV was first reported in 2002.

“West Nile virus is an infection most commonly spread through mosquito bites,” said Dr. Joshua Clayton, state epidemiologist. “The rate of severe infection that includes swelling of the brain and spinal cord with symptoms of stiff neck, confusion, and muscle weakness is highest in South Dakota and other Midwest states. Raising awareness of human cases can ensure residents and visitors alike take action to reduce their risk.”

Individuals and families can reduce their risk by taking the following actions:

Apply mosquito repellents (DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, 2-undecanone, param-menthane-diol, or IR3535) to clothes and exposed skin. Limit exposure by wearing pants and long sleeves in the evening;

Limit time outdoors from dusk to midnight when mosquitoes are most active. *Culex tarsalis* are the primary carrier of WNV in South Dakota;

Remove standing water that gives mosquitoes a place to breed. Regularly change the water in birdbaths, outside pet dishes, and drain water from other flowerpots and garden containers and stay away from areas near standing water; and

Support local mosquito control efforts.

These precautions are especially important for people at high risk for WNV, including individuals over 50, pregnant women, organ transplant patients, individuals with cancer, diabetes, high blood pressure or kidney disease, and those with a history of alcohol abuse. People with severe or unusual headaches should see their physicians.

“This year, nearly 200 South Dakota cities, counties and tribes will share \$500,000 in grants intended to control mosquitoes and prevent West Nile virus,” added Dr. Clayton.

All applying communities received funding with grants ranging from \$500 to \$20,000. Grant awards were based on the population of the applying jurisdiction and its history of human WNV cases through 2022. This reimbursement grant helps alleviate some of the costs the help control mosquitos that pose a risk of the West Nile virus.

Visit the department’s website for more information about WNV and to learn about which jurisdictions received grant funding. Additionally, the department’s surveillance page includes which counties have reported cases.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 338 ~ 7 of 102

Brown County 4-H Horse Show Results

The 2023 Brown County 4-H Horse show was held on Wednesday, June 21st at the Akkerman Horse Arena. Kristen Gonsoir was the judge.

In Brown County 4-H Horse, youth can participate in the county horse show to learn riding techniques, patterns, and showmanship. Outside of the county horse show, youth can create posters or do demonstrations to show this knowledge. Other skills learned while participating in the horse are horse evaluation, health care, and nutrition.

Joeseph Dutenhoffer

Junior Pole Bending Blue
Junior Barrel Racing Red
Beginner Western Showmanship White

Rayven Dutenhoffer

33: Senior Pole Bending Blue
03: Senior Western Showmanship Blue
30: Senior Barrel Racing Blue

Jazmine Hart-Crissman

Senior Barrel Racing.. . . . Blue
Senior Western Horsemanship Red
Senior Ranch Riding.. . . . Blue
Senior Hunt Seat Equitation Purple GRAND CHAMPION
Senior Trail Blue
Senior Western Showmanship Purple GRAND CHAMPION
Senior English Showmanship.. . . . Purple GRAND CHAMPION
Senior Pole Bending.. . . . Blue

Kylie Johannsen

Senior Pole Bending White
Senior Western Showmanship Blue
Senior Barrel Racing.. . . . Purple RESERVE CHAMPION

Anna Johnson

Senior Ranch Riding.. . . . Purple GRAND CHAMPION
Senior Western Horsemanship Purple GRAND CHAMPION
Senior Reining Purple GRAND CHAMPION
Senior Western Showmanship Purple RESERVE CHAMPION

Morgan Jurgens

Beginner Western Showmanship White
Junior Pole Bending Blue
Beginner Western Horsemanship.. . . . Blue
Junior Barrel Racing Blue

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 338 ~ 8 of 102

Josephine Kiesz

Junior Barrel Racing Blue
Beginner Western Horsemanship.. . . . Purple GRAND CHAMPION
Junior Pole Bending Blue
Beginner Western Showmanship White
Beginner Trail White

Maria Kiesz

Junior Western Horsemanship Red
Junior Western Showmanship Blue
Junior Ranch Riding Blue
Junior Trail White
Junior Barrel Racing Blue

Emily Malsam

Senior Trail Purple GRAND CHAMPION
Senior Ranch Riding.. . . . White
Senior Western Horsemanship Purple RESERVE CHAMPION
Senior Barrel Racing.. . . . Purple GRAND CHAMPION
Senior Western Showmanship Blue
Senior Pole Bending.. . . . White

Hailey Pauli

Junior Western Horsemanship Red
Junior Pole Bending Purple GRAND CHAMPION
Junior Barrel Racing Purple GRAND CHAMPION
Junior Western Showmanship Blue

Parker Zoellner

Beginner Trail Blue
Junior Barrel Racing Purple RESERVE CHAMPION
Beginner Western Horsemanship.. . . . Purple RESERVE CHAMPION
Junior Pole Bending Purple RESERVE CHAMPION
Beginner Western Showmanship Purple GRAND CHAMPION
Junior Ranch Riding Blue

Riley Zoellner

Senior Western Showmanship Blue
Senior Pole Bending.. . . . Blue
Senior Barrel Racing.. . . . Blue
Senior Trail White

Walker Zoellner

Senior Trail Purple RESERVE CHAMPION
Senior Ranch Riding.. . . . Purple RESERVE CHAMPION
Senior Barrel Racing.. . . . Red
Senior Western Horsemanship Red
Senior Pole Bending.. . . . Red
Senior Western Showmanship Purple

How weekly newspapers are keeping local news alive

Bart Pfankuch

South Dakota News Watch

Here is a closer look at how three South Dakota newswomen are helping serve their communities by putting out weekly newspapers.



Karli Paulson, owner of the Clark County Courier, shakes hands with Bill Krikac, who sold the newspaper to Paulson in December 2022 after spending 27 years as publisher and 22 years as owner of the paper in Clark. (Photo: Courtesy Karli Paulson)

December 2022.

While she was intrigued by the challenge of being a small business owner and of running such a prominent local business, Paulson was also well aware that the Courier could have closed, and Clark would have been without a news source, if Krikac couldn't find a buyer.

"Every time someone comes into the office, they compliment me about how the paper is going, and say how glad they are that I took over the paper, and that we still have a paper in Clark," she said.

Paulson does not have a journalism background, so other than helping decide what stories to cover, she leaves the reporting and writing to her full-time reporter.

By largely separating herself from the editorial process, Paulson hopes she can avoid some of the friction felt by Krikac, who wrote the vast majority of articles while also working on the advertising and publishing sides of the business.

Clark County Courier: Running a paper right out of college

If Karli Paulson is the future of weekly newspapers in South Dakota, it appears that the future is bright — and potentially quite long.

Paulson grew up in Clark, a town of about 1,100 people west of Watertown, and graduated from college in Moorhead, Minnesota, in 2021 with an animation degree.

She returned home and took a job as office manager at the Clark County Courier almost on a lark.

But before long, she began to consider the wild idea that she would buy the paper from longtime owner and editor Bill Krikac, who wanted to retire and sell the paper but had spent five years hunting without success for a buyer.

"Four months into my job, I was already considering the idea of buying the paper from him and running it. But I didn't tell Bill for a few months because I wasn't sure about the whole idea," said Paulson, 23.

After some negotiation, gathering of a down payment and approval of a five-year bank loan, Paulson shook hands with Krikac and took ownership of the weekly paper in late

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 338 ~ 10 of 102

"Bill is very beloved in our community, but he was also very opinionated," she said.

Still, Paulson is aware that at some point, she is likely to face criticism or conflict over coverage of touchy topics or an issue that may anger an elected official or a business owner.

"I'm not really sure if anything in my life has prepared me for that," she acknowledged. "I consider myself a kind and understanding person that doesn't like conflict. But if someone were to be angry about something, I would try to talk to them calmly and explain to them, 'It's news, and this is our business, and I'm sorry, but I can't help it.'"

Paulson said that so far, the revenue side of the business has remained in good shape, and she's able to pay the bank, her employees and even herself.

"I do give myself a paycheck. But it also



Three key players at the Clark County Courier include, (L-R), Trudi Gaikowski, proofreader and office manager, Karli Paulson, owner/publish/editor, and Emily Yexley, reporter/writer, (Photo: Courtesy Karli Paulson)

Clark County Courier
The voice of Clark County since 1880

Wednesday, May 10, 2023
Vol. 142, No. 45
www.clarkcountypublishing.com \$4.00
The hometown newspaper of Lois Hubbard, Racine, Wis.

Clark High School senior John Hollinrake hosted two fitness classes for his classmates for community at the start of each class with a short presentation, an 80-minute workout.

John Hollinrake hosted fitness class for capstone senior project

Hollinrake has wanted his senior project to involve a service project, and he wanted to do it for his classmates. He decided to host two fitness classes for his classmates as a capstone project. The classes were held on May 10 and 11 at the school. Hollinrake wanted to give his classmates a chance to get some exercise and have fun. He also wanted to show them that he was still interested in fitness after graduation.

Mother's Day is the second best title, second only to grandma for Kimberly Paulson

Mother's Day is on Sunday, May 14 this year. It is a day to honor mothers and the women who inspire them. For Kimberly Paulson, Mother's Day is a special day because it is a day to honor her mother, who she describes as the best. Paulson says that her mother is the best because she is a hard worker, a great mother, and a wonderful person. Paulson says that her mother is the best because she is the one who has always been there for her, no matter what. Paulson says that her mother is the best because she is the one who has always been there for her, no matter what.

Eighteen seniors to graduate Saturday at Clark High School

Clark High School will hold its graduation ceremony on Saturday, June 24, at 8:00 p.m. in the school gymnasium. Eighteen seniors will be graduating this year. The graduates are: Katelyn Anderson, Taylor Anderson, Troy Anderson, Brady Anderson, Kaitlyn Anderson, Summer Anderson, Preston Anderson, Kelly Miller, Abigail Bell, Summer Bell, Taylor Bell, and the late Taylor Bell. The graduates will receive their diplomas at the ceremony. The ceremony will be held at 8:00 p.m. in the school gymnasium.

Nine Willow Lake seniors bid farewell on May 14

Willow Lake seniors bid farewell on May 14 at a luncheon at the school. The seniors were: Katelyn Anderson, Taylor Anderson, Troy Anderson, Brady Anderson, Kaitlyn Anderson, Summer Anderson, Preston Anderson, Kelly Miller, Abigail Bell, Summer Bell, Taylor Bell, and the late Taylor Bell. The seniors will be graduating this year.

Class of 2023

The Class of 2023 will be graduating on Saturday, June 24, at 8:00 p.m. in the school gymnasium. The graduates are: Katelyn Anderson, Taylor Anderson, Troy Anderson, Brady Anderson, Kaitlyn Anderson, Summer Anderson, Preston Anderson, Kelly Miller, Abigail Bell, Summer Bell, Taylor Bell, and the late Taylor Bell. The graduates will receive their diplomas at the ceremony.

Weather

Forecast	High	Low
May 24	65	45
May 25	70	45
May 26	75	45
May 27	80	45
May 28	85	45
May 29	90	45
May 30	95	45
May 31	100	45

CLARK AREA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
LEAVING A LEGACY

Members: Gabe Wiskey, Tom Laffie, Chad Fjelland, Diane Vanliet, Greg Furness, David Warkentin, Nicole Nelson and student members Summer Seefeldt, Connor Mudgett and Neesh Risher.

An edition of the Clark County newspaper.

helps that I still live with my parents, so I don't have rent and utilities and food for myself at the moment," she said.

Paulson said Kricak warned her before taking ownership that running a weekly newspaper can become all-consuming, and that he felt the business deprived him of precious time with his family and friends.

Paulson listened but so far has kept mostly to a 40-hour work week and isn't too worried about being invested in a business at such a young age.

"The paper is important, and it's my job and I know that. But I still feel like family needs to be more important, so at least at this point, I can say the paper is very important, but it's not going to rule my life," she said.

Her hobbies include reading, watching movies, playing video games, writing fiction and spending time with family. "To be completely honest with you, I'm kind of a hermit, so it doesn't affect my social life because I really didn't have one anyway," she said.

In six very busy months, Paulson believes she has taken the paper in a new direction, publishing more photos and — with her two part-time employees — bringing a different writing style and flair to the news articles and website.

Paulson, who considers herself tech-savvy, has other changes planned to modernize the paper compared with how it was run for years by Kricak, who still wrote articles out longhand on paper.

She intends to reformat the paper and publish it as a tabloid

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 338 ~ 11 of 102

rather than a broadsheet; to digitize the archives; to create a Facebook page and use social media more frequently; to revamp the website; and to remodel the newspaper office and building.

So far, Paulson said, the community shares her excitement for what the future might hold for her and the Clark County Courier.

"From all the comments I've gotten, the paper is really important to the community," she said. "When I get a compliment, I immediately feel really good about what I'm doing and what I will continue to do, and that gives me reassuring hope."

Brandon Valley Journal: 'It's all in my hands'



This cake was made and eaten in 2022 to celebrate the sixth anniversary of the launch of the Brandon Valley Journal.

(Photo: Courtesy Jill Meier)

With her vivacious personality and frequent presence at community events and meetings, Jill Meier is as well known as anyone in Brandon.

To add to her persona, Meier writes a popular slice-of-life column for the Brandon Valley Journal, where she has been editor since the paper launched in August 2016.

"A lot of people tell me, 'I just go right to your column,'" Meier said. "I think they like to laugh at me and do it with me."

Meier doesn't have to wait long for people to recognize her or to hear praise for the important role she and the 1,300-circulation paper play in this rapidly growing community of 11,000 people east of Sioux Falls.

"It is not uncommon for every week or multiple times a week, people will just say, 'I love your newspaper, I really love your newspaper,'" she said. "They're excited to get the paper in their mailbox each week."

Meier grew up in St. James, Minnesota, not far from Mankato, and moved around among weekly and daily newspapers in western Minnesota and eastern South Dakota for years.

After Gannett, publisher of the Argus Leader, shuttered its operation in Brandon, where she was an editor in 2016, Meier was tapped by some local investors to launch the Brandon Valley Journal.

Meier has spent her entire 35-year career in community journalism, which means she doesn't have a regular beat but instead covers everything from local government to crime to schools to business to sports to taking photos of children at play.

"We're here for the little girl that has the lemonade stand on the corner and for the neighborhood that is upset about whatever is going to be built in their backyard," she said.

All those topics are newsworthy for a weekly paper because there is no other media source for people to know what is happening in their own town. And sporadic postings on social media that aren't necessarily factual will never match the accurate reporting in a newspaper, Meier said.

"No disrespect to daily papers or television stations, but they only come out here for the major headline moments, and they're not covering the big pothole on Fourth Street that has taken out three cars and a

Broton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 338 ~ 12 of 102



Jill Meier, publisher/editor of the Brandon Valley Journal newspaper, smiles for a selfie outside the newspaper offices in Brandon. (Photo: Courtesy Jill Meier)

couple kids," Meier said with a laugh.

"I believe there's always going to be a place for your community weekly because who else is going to tell your story? I mean, nobody else, right?"

Putting out a weekly paper requires a commitment far beyond a typical job, which works OK for Meier, who is single and has no children.

"You work seven days a week, though sometimes it's two hours a day and sometimes it's 15," she said.

Meier and other editors and publishers have tried to find new revenue streams to move beyond the traditional but diminishing three sources of income: circulation, advertising and legal notice fees.

Readers can buy reprints of individual photos taken by the newspaper staff via email for about \$10 or get a discount for larger orders.

She recently teamed with her advertising sales person and a freelance writer with an interest in car racing to produce a 38-page

special section that previewed the upcoming season at three area race tracks. About 8,000 copies of the "Checkered Flag" section were handed out to race fans, and the section generated about \$14,000 in new gross revenue, Meier said.

From a young age there was never much doubt that she would take up newspapering as a career. "I was one of the weird kids who was excited when the Sunday paper got plunked on our doorstep.

"I like being part of it all, and there's just something about working at a community weekly that makes it a special place," she said. "This newspaper is truly a community newspaper, and it's all in my hands."

Five community papers: Weekly owner wears many, many hats

In addition to her formal titles of newspaper owner, general manager, advertising sales rep, editor and office manager, Mandy Scherer can probably claim one more moniker: "Hardest working woman in South Dakota newspapers."

Scherer and her husband (but mostly Mandy) own and operate five weekly papers in southwestern South Dakota and northern Nebraska, serving a large swath of ranch territory and Indian Country.

In her day job, Scherer oversees content, advertising, print and distribution of those five papers with a combined circulation of about 4,500. From her home office at the Bennett County Booster in Martin, she remotely manages six full-time and nine part-time employees.

But that's just her normal 8-5 work schedule.

Before she arrives at the newspaper office, and after she goes home to her family ranch, Scherer spends several hours as a ranch hand.

On a recent Friday in June, Scherer, 50, started her morning at 5 a.m., sorting cattle and sending them out on grass. After her shift at the paper, she anticipated working until dusk to wrap up the daily chores at the ranch.

Does she consider herself a hard worker? "I suppose so," Scherer said.

The newspaper ownership gig wasn't part of her life plans, until one day the owner of three local papers where she worked as an office manager and bookkeeper told her he'd had enough and wanted to get out.

She and her husband took out a loan for a downpayment and obtained another loan from the former

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 338 ~ 13 of 102

owner for purchase, and suddenly they were small-town newspaper magnates. The Scherers made the leap, Mandy said, to prevent the papers from falling under chain ownership and also to simply keep them alive.

"It was challenging because I don't feel comfortable with words," said Scherer, a soft-spoken woman who emits a palpable sense of strength. "I'm a bookkeeper, and I like numbers."

So far, the numbers are working out, but there's not much profit in the venture at this point, Scherer said.

They have since bought two more newspapers but have been unable to hire workers. The lack of an advertising rep or someone to bring in new commercial print jobs is cutting into her bottom line.

"We're not going down, but we're just holding steady," she said.

In five years, however, when her notes are paid off, she expects she can begin to develop a nest egg for retirement. While Mandy does most of the newspapering work, her husband and son run the presses each Tuesday to print the five newspaper titles.

Scherer, whose husband, Bob Scherer, is Native American, said publishing newspapers in reservation areas is interesting due to the sovereign nature and laws of Indian tribes.

But otherwise, disseminating news in Indian Country is no different than anywhere else in South Dakota, she said. "It doesn't matter what color you are, we're all in this together."

Though not a journalist by trade or at heart, Scherer said she is keenly aware of how important her newspapers are to the residents and businesses in the communities they serve, including in Bennett, Fall River, Mellette and Todd counties in South Dakota and in Sheridan County in Nebraska.

"It's very important to cover these communities so people know what is happening, both good and bad," she said. "Our advertisers know that people really read our papers, and do so religiously."

One of her papers, the Mellette County News, still contains a column called "Norris Area News," in which freelance writer Carol Ferguson provides dozens of tidbits about which local residents traveled, dined together or experienced something of general interest.

The government oversight role of the Ben-



Weekly newspaper publisher Mandy Scherer stands astride a paper cutting machine still in use in her company office in Martin, S.D. (Photo: Bart Pfankuch / South Dakota News Watch)



Jonni Joyce is the lone full-time reporter for the Bennett County Booster, which has offices in Martin, S.D. (Photo: Bart Pfankuch / South Dakota News Watch)

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 338 ~ 14 of 102

nett County Booster was illustrated recently, Scherer said, when reporter Jonni Joyce attended a local meeting where officials were quietly working outside public purview to merge the city police department in Martin with the sheriff's office in Bennett County.

After Joyce covered the first open discussion, the public interest rose and the process is now being conducted with greater public oversight. Since Joyce's reporting, a county commissioner visited Scherer and expressed "disappointment" over the coverage.

"We don't care if they merge or not, but the public needs to know what's going on," she said. "We're not here to dig up dirt or cause problems, but we are here to report the facts."

On Tuesdays, when the presses in the back of the Bennett County office are rolling, people will start queuing up outside to wait for the latest copy of their local paper, Scherer said. Those readers, she said, give her confidence that weekly newspapers are and will remain a critical part of life in small-town South Dakota.

"I think small weekly papers will be around for quite a while yet," she said. "For now and in the future, we'll just keep trudging forward, because that's all we can do."

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



A few of the weekly newspapers owned by Mandy Scherer. (Photo: Bart Pfankuch / South Dakota News Watch)



ABOUT BART PFANKUCH

Bart Pfankuch, Rapid City, S.D., is the content director for South Dakota News Watch. A Wisconsin native,

he is a former editor of the Rapid City Journal and also worked at newspapers in Florida. Bart has spent more than 30 years as a reporter, editor and writing coach.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Farming carbon: Farm bill presents opportunity to unite farmers, climate activists

Soil health practices help farmers and pull heat-trapping carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - JUNE 23, 2023 12:20 PM



Bryan Jorgensen holds a clod of soil as he explains how carbon dioxide is transformed into energy for plants, which feeds the microbiome in the soil, which in turn feeds the plants nutrients from the soil. (Joshua Haiar/South Dakota Searchlight)

a room with people that know nothing about agriculture, and telling them, 'This is the best way to do it.'"

Jorgensen said the government should encourage more farmers and ranchers to adopt practices like his, perhaps by including incentives in the farm bill that Congress is drafting now. Such incentives hold the potential to unite farmers and ranchers like Jorgensen – who may be skeptical of climate science, but convinced of the value of driving more carbon into their soil – with climate activists who want to pull heat-trapping carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere.

Carbon and healthy soil

Gripping some grass near a barbed-wire fence on his farm recently, Jorgensen pulled a clod of soil from

IDEAL — On the rolling plains southwest of Chamberlain lies a 30-square-mile farm and ranch that serves as a testament to the power of soil health practices.

Bryan Jorgensen has devoted his life to nurturing the soil and maintaining the ecological balance on his family's land.

Jorgensen said the practices not only improve his yields at harvest time but also cut back on the need for pesticides and fertilizers, and drive more carbon into his soil – which is good for the plants.

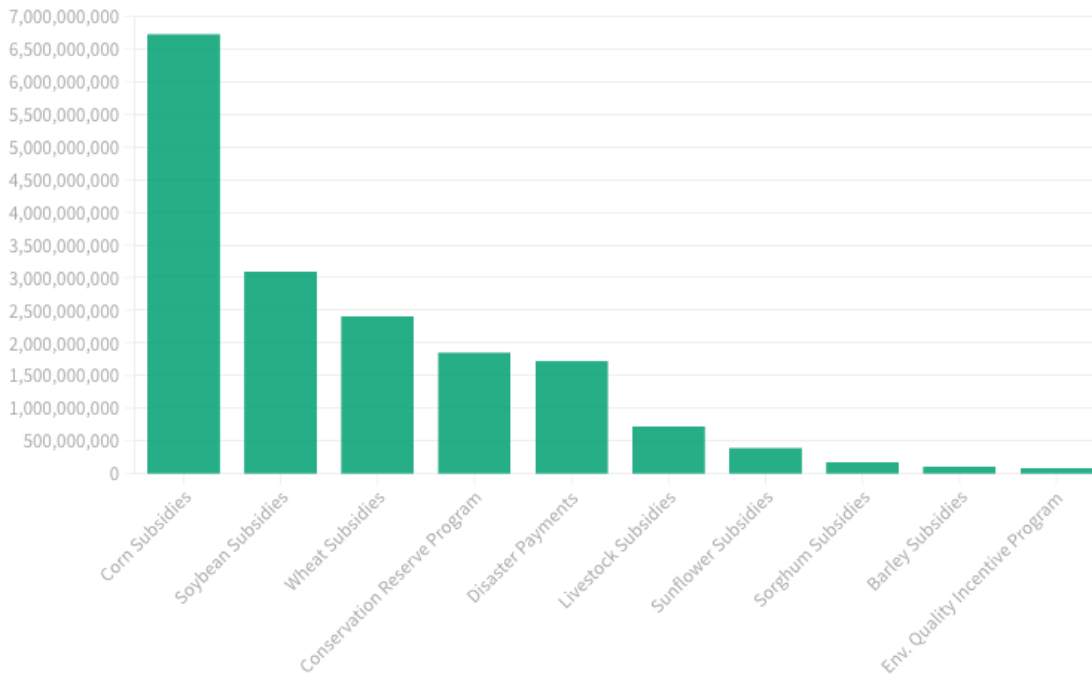
"Carbon is not an enemy," he said. "We have an ecosystem problem, not a carbon problem."

However, Jorgensen said centering farm policy on the health of the ecosystem is an uphill battle against the forces supporting more traditional practices.

"There's too much politics in it," he said. "You have a few powerful lobbying groups walking into

Top subsidy programs in South Dakota, 1995-2020

S.D. farmers received \$18.2 billion in subsidies from 1995 to 2020.



Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture

health: minimizing soil disturbance, maximizing biodiversity, maintaining living roots year-round, keeping the soil covered, and integrating livestock.

Recognizing the importance of minimizing soil disturbance, Jorgensen does not use a plow. That's a technique called "no-till" farming, a method to plant seeds with minimal disturbance.

"When you till up that ground and expose the soil to the elements, it's like a nuclear holocaust to those microorganisms," Jorgensen said.

Another of Jorgensen's practices is trying to maintain living roots in the soil year-round. By integrating "cover crops" – plants grown primarily to cover the soil during winter or between cash crops – he minimizes the soil's exposure to the elements.

This continuous cover helps the soil absorb water, prevents wind and flood erosion, reduces areas for weeds to spread (resulting in less need for pesticides), and keeps plants actively driving carbon into the soil all year long. Climate scientists call that "carbon sequestration" – putting carbon into a place, such as the ground, where it can't trap heat in the atmosphere and contribute to global warming.

Jorgensen also uses crop residues (such as leaves, stalks and husks) as mulch on his fields. By insulating the soil from harsh weather conditions, he maintains a better moisture content, temperature and nutrient balance.

And by planting a diverse rotation of crops and even letting fields turn to grass every few years, Jorgensen is feeding his soil microbiome a more diverse diet of nutrients.

With his livestock, Jorgensen rotates among pastures to ensure the grass is never over-eaten and the soil is not exposed. As the animals graze, their manure replenishes the soil with nutrients, further enhancing the soil's fertility and minimizing the need for chemical fertilizers.

While Jorgensen said he's skeptical of the science regarding climate change, he is certain of the benefits of storing more carbon in his soils.

"This resource could be lost in a heartbeat," Jorgensen said. "It shouldn't just be greenhouse gases we

the earth and explained how healthy soil works.

"Wherever there is a root, there is colonization of biology around it," Jorgensen said. "There are fungi, bacteria, and billions of other one-celled creatures that colonize this. And it's those that are exuding acids and etching away at the silt, sand and rock particles in the soil, breaking them down to create nutrients for the plants."

At the heart of Jorgensen's philosophy lies the South Dakota Soil Health Coalition's five principles of soil

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 338 ~ 17 of 102

worry about. It should be our soil.”

Jorgensen started implementing soil health practices in 1991 when his son, Nick, was born. Nick Jorgensen said their chemical input costs have been cut in half and continue to decline. He points to a chart indicating the amount of carbon-based organic matter stored in their land has grown from 3% in 2014 to 5.2% in 2021.

“We are storing about an additional one and a half tons of carbon in the soil per acre, every year,” he said.

Putting a value on carbon sequestration

David Clay, a distinguished professor of agriculture at South Dakota State University, said a study that took millions of soil samples in multiple states from 2000 to 2020 found the average acre of cropland in South Dakota sequestered 0.22 tons of carbon per year.

Nick Jorgensen took soil samples and deduced that with his family’s soil-friendly farming practices, they’re sequestering a total of about 15,730 more tons per year on their farmland, at 1.5 tons of carbon per acre. That’s after he subtracted an estimated 108 tons emitted by tractors and other aspects of the family’s farming operations, and 30.4 tons emitted by the natural digestion of grazing livestock.

“That is only on our 10,000 acres of farm ground,” he said. “Not our pastures,” which the Jorgensens have yet to measure.

Yet Nick Jorgensen said there is currently no pricing formula for rewarding a farm or ranch that is sequestering more carbon. He advocates that measuring the carbon-based organic matter in the soil is the best way to do it.

For example, if the federal government gave farmers and ranchers \$85 per ton (what the federal government is offering for carbon sequestration via pipelines) of carbon sequestered based on the change in organic matter, Jorgensen’s farm ground would earn about \$1.34 million each year.

Jim Faulstich and his son-in-law ranch and farm about 10,000 acres near Highmore. He said by recognizing native grasses as a “carbon sink”— an area that absorbs more carbon than it releases – lawmakers could do a lot for the state’s ranching community, too.

“We need to keep some grasslands out there and we need to have some incentives to do it,” Faulstich said.

He said cattle prices are too low to act as that incentive, and so are payments from existing government initiatives such as the federal Conservation Reserve Program, which pays landowners to keep marginal agricultural land out of production and instead preserve it in a natural condition.

Conservation or crop insurance

Many farmers benefit from crop insurance and government subsidies that support traditional commodities such as corn and soybeans.

However, with spending on those programs outpacing spending on conservation programs and soil health practices, Bryan Jorgensen thinks a reallocation is in order.

From 1995 to 2020, South Dakota farmers received \$9.8 billion in corn and soybean subsidies and \$1.9 billion for grassland conservation. In 2020, nearly 40 percent of an average U.S. farmers’ net income came

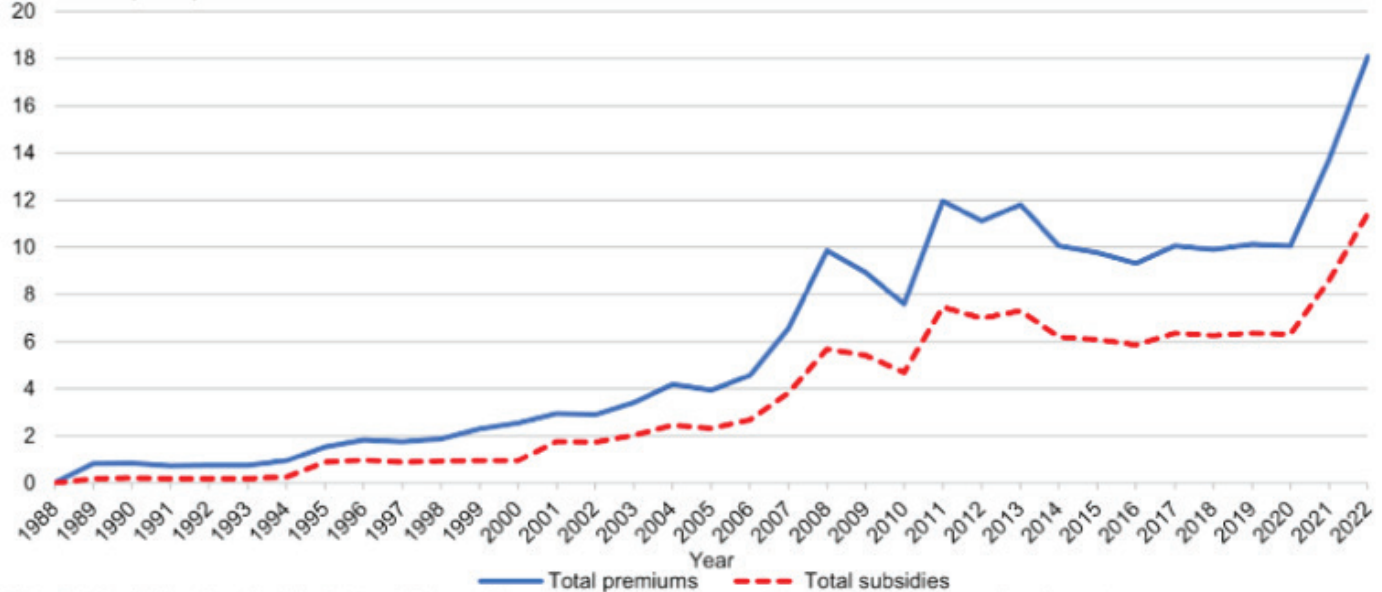


Bryan Jorgensen digs up corn planted between rows of grass. (Joshua Haiar/South Dakota Searchlight).

A farm bill & lobbies

Federal crop insurance premiums and subsidies

U.S. dollars (billion)



Note: Total subsidies do not include State subsidies, additional subsidies, or Emergency Financial Assistance premium discounts.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from USDA, Risk Management Agency, Summary of Business Report, as of September 5, 2022.

directly from the government.

"Our current agricultural industry is driven by too few crops," Jorgensen said. "Because of this, we're losing our organic matter in our soils."

Doug Sombke, president of the South Dakota Farmers Union, agrees.

"The USDA controls the purse strings for conservation and crop insurance," Sombke said. "And they have made crop insurance so good that a few crops out-compete things like grassland conservation."

Robert Bonnie is the undersecretary for farm production and conservation at the U.S. Department of Agriculture. He said that's a misunderstanding of federal ag policy.

"We're not tilting the scale one way or the other," Bonnie said. "We're allowing producers to make their own decisions."

Bonnie said the Biden administration is using \$300 million from the Inflation Reduction Act for research and initiatives to incentivize farmers to adopt soil health practices – like testing what soil health practices work best in different regions.

Additionally, he said the administration's America the Beautiful initiative includes \$3 billion to incentivize more landowners to voluntarily conserve some of their working lands – like grasslands used for grazing livestock.

"We have got to keep a lot of our working lands working," Bonnie said. "And working lands have a really important role to play in climate-smart solutions."

A farm bill & lobbies

Bonnie said another opportunity for more implementation of soil health programs is this year's farm bill. The farm bill is congressional legislation that determines the country's agricultural policies and funding priorities for several years.

He said the primary goal for the USDA is delivering a bill that "maintains robust crop insurance programs and conserves marginal ground."

Sustainable agriculture groups have a number of changes they would like to see in the farm bill. Pro-

posed changes include authorizing permanent easements for land taken out of production, and raising the rental rates the government pays for conserving land. Proposals also include paying farmers more for soil health practices, and eliminating loopholes that allow farmers to avoid crop insurance payment limits and receive multiple payments – such as when multiple family farm members receive payments. Additionally, some groups have proposed improving the insurance programs for specialty crops, like oats and millet, to compete with corn and soybeans.

Rep. Dusty Johnson, R-South Dakota, sits on the House Agriculture Committee. He said it's important to note America already spends more on conservation than any other country. And he said the most substantial environmental solutions will not come from the government.

"We are always going to see the real innovation come from leaders in the private sector, producers who are willing to innovate and find better ways," Johnson said. "And a lot of South Dakotans converted to no-till, not because anyone paid them, but because it provided real and tangible benefits to their operation."

Sen. John Thune, R-South Dakota, is a member of the Senate Agriculture Committee. He recently introduced legislation to discourage the conversion of undisturbed grasslands to cropland. The bill would expand a program that already exists in a handful of states, including South Dakota. The program would make crop insurance less lucrative on marginal lands.

Thune said despite crop insurance and safety net programs being an essential "foundation of our farm policy," tides are shifting as interest in climate change grows.

"I do think you're going to see that," Thune said. "Because I think the emphasis on carbon storage, carbon utilization, looking for options that would pull more of that out of the atmosphere, I think those types of policies are going to increasingly gain favor as we focus on trying to make sure we're doing our part to reduce emissions in the atmosphere."

However, Thune said it takes time to turn an idea into policy.

"Should that be the USDA coming up with a program that's top-down?" Thune said. "Or, should it be more of a voluntary, incentive-based, bottom-up program? And I think that's the model most of the farm groups are supportive of."

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



Charlie Johnson showcases his alfalfa cover crop that maintained living roots in the soil through the winter and early spring. (Joshua Haiar/South

Dakota Searchlight)

Farmers say they can store carbon without pipelines

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - JUNE 23, 2023 12:15 PM

Some farmers who oppose carbon-capture pipelines say there's a better way to put carbon in the ground: Pay farmers to do it.

Two companies are proposing to spend billions on pipelines through South Dakota, to capture carbon dioxide produced at ethanol plants and transport it to underground sequestration sites in North Dakota and Illinois. The projects are eligible for federal tax credits, and could allow ethanol producers to sell their products in places with restrictive emissions standards.

Advocates argue the pipelines would sustain and grow the corn and ethanol industries, and contribute to national climate goals by capturing greenhouse gas emissions.

Some farmers along the proposed pipeline routes fear the potential for toxic carbon dioxide plumes from leaks. They also

resent the use of the courts to obtain farmers' land for the pipelines, through a process called eminent domain. Those positions have pitted farmers along the pipeline routes against some other farmers, who support the pipelines because of their potential to help the ethanol industry.

Charlie Johnson has an organic farm just south of Madison along the route of a proposed pipeline. He said soil health practices are more effective and sustainable solutions for carbon sequestration, because plants remove carbon dioxide out of the air that ends up in the soil, without the need for carbon-capture technology or a pipeline. When farmers engage in soil health practices, they can also reduce chemical usage, limit soil degradation and erosion, and protect wildlife habitat.

"The farming practices where we have more grass, more rotation, more diversity, they can unite us as producers and have us work toward a common goal to improve our soils, and use our soil and plants as a true carbon sink," Johnson said. "Right now, we have farmers protesting against farmers, farmers protesting against ethanol, and farmers protesting against out-of-state interests that want to line their own pockets."

State Rep. Karla Lems, R-Canton, said farmers are in danger of losing out to pipeline companies who saw an opportunity to capitalize on the federal government's interest in sequestering carbon. She described federal tax credits for the pipelines as a boondoggle.

"They don't want that money to go to the landowners," Lems said of the pipeline companies.

Current congressional hearings and negotiations on the next farm bill present an opportunity to consider how carbon sequestration should be incentivized in agriculture.

The state's major ethanol producer, Poet, and the two pipeline companies have expressed support for both natural and pipeline-based sequestration methods.

Elizabeth Burns Thompson, vice president of government and public affairs for Navigator CO2 Ventures, the backer of the Heartland Greenway pipeline, said by doing "all of the above," ethanol will become more valuable, given the lower carbon intensity score as a result.

"It's just not enough to produce green fuels," she said. "We need to be producing green fuels in an increasingly greener fashion."

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

COMMENTARY

When it comes to classified docs, Trump and the DOJ, Rounds wants it both ways

DANA HESS

The federal indictment of former President Donald Trump has elicited a variety of responses from members of the Republican Party. Sen. Mike Rounds has decided to straddle the fence on this one. If he straddles it much harder, he'll get splinters.

After Trump's indictment, Rounds put out a statement, the gist of which is that classified documents need to be protected, but the former president's indictment for walking off with the nation's secrets is politically motivated.

According to Rounds, the news of another indictment against the former president calls into question the integrity of the nation's justice system. He goes on to say: "As a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee and Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, I receive classified briefings multiple times per week. It is unacceptable that sensitive information, which could undermine our national strategy and security, has been treated so carelessly by current and former members of the executive branch."

That last bit about "current and former members of the executive branch" is likely a swipe at President Joe Biden and maybe even former Vice President Mike Pence, both of whom were found to have had classi-

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 338 ~ 21 of 102

fied documents among their papers. Rounds' comparison is an apples and oranges situation as Biden and Pence quickly called the National Archives to come and get the mislaid papers. Trump took box upon box of national secrets, displaying all the worst tendencies of a hoarder.

It's apparent from Rounds' statement that he understands the importance of the correct handling of sensitive information. Read between the lines and it's easy to conclude that there are no boxes of classified documents stacked up in the bathroom at the senator's house. He knows better.

Since he knows better, it's troubling when he says: "The unprecedented action of indicting in federal court a former president, who is also a current candidate for president, cannot be taken lightly as it is inherently political and will have a lasting impact on our nation." So much for the notion that no one is above the law.

Follow the senator's logic and presidential candidates and former presidents should get a free pass from prosecution if it looks like they broke a federal law. Admittedly, it does make this nation look a bit like a banana republic

when the government goes after the leading presidential candidate in the opposition party. However, that characterization could have easily been avoided if Trump had given back the documents he walked off with rather than using them as an excuse to pick a fight with the Department of Justice.

Rounds' insistence in tying himself in rhetorical knots over this indictment is baffling given the fact that he is far from Trump's favorite person. Rounds earned the former president's ire when he was one of the first senators to declare that the 2020 election was fair and that Biden won. In this election cycle, Rounds was the first senator to endorse a presidential candidate that wasn't Donald Trump, throwing his support to the long shot candidacy of Sen. Tim Scott of South Carolina.

What's troubling about Rounds' statement is that he obviously knows that classified documents have to be protected. He proves that every time he has a classified briefing and doesn't stuff his briefcase with secrets. For some reason, Rounds is determined to label Trump's indictment as a political ploy when it's obvious Trump had the documents in his possession and refused to give them back, consequently breaking federal laws.

Not all of Rounds' congressional colleagues felt compelled to release a statement after the federal indictment was released. Maybe some stayed silent because they're intimidated by the former president. Maybe others took the time to read the indictment and, realizing how much trouble Trump's in, decided that discretion was the better part of valor. Maybe that would have been the wiser course of action for Rounds and the least likely to result in a bunch of splinters where he sits.

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



Sen. Mike Rounds, R-South Dakota, speaks with Roger Zakheim, the director of the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Institute, before a hearing with the Senate Armed Services Committee Hearing on Capitol Hill on Feb. 15, 2023, in Washington, D.C. (Anna MoneyMaker/Getty Images)

US Supreme Court turns down push by states to challenge Biden deportation policy

BY: ARIANA FIGUEROA - JUNE 23, 2023 3:46 PM

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Supreme Court on Friday overwhelmingly ruled that Texas and Louisiana lacked the legal standing to challenge the Biden administration's deportation guidelines, granting a win to the White House on immigration policy.

The states objected to the White House's directive to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to prioritize arresting and deporting noncitizens who have recently crossed the border without authorization and noncitizens who pose a threat to public safety.

The White House wanted those guidelines in place rather than a focus on deporting the millions of undocumented people who have lived in the U.S. for years — a departure from a Trump-era policy.

In an 8-1 decision in the case, *United States v. Texas*, Justice Brett Kavanaugh wrote the opinion for the majority, calling the suit Texas and Louisiana brought "an extraordinarily unusual lawsuit."

"They want a federal court to order the Executive Branch to alter its arrest policies so as to make more arrests," Kavanaugh wrote. "Federal courts have not traditionally entertained that kind of lawsuit; indeed, the States cite no precedent for a lawsuit like this."

There are an estimated 11 million undocumented people in the U.S. who have lived in the country for years and sometimes decades. In the DHS guidelines, Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas said the agency did not have the resources to deport every undocumented person in the nation.

Kavanaugh was joined by Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr., and the court's three liberals, Justices Sonia Sotomayor, Elena Kagan and Ketanji Brown Jackson.

Justices Clarence Thomas, Neil Gorsuch and Amy Coney Barrett also agreed, but for different reasons. Justice Samuel Alito Jr. was the lone dissent.

"DHS looks forward to reinstating these Guidelines, which had been effectively applied by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officers to focus limited resources and enforcement actions on those who pose a threat to our national security, public safety, and border security," Mayorkas said in a statement following the decision.

"The Guidelines enable DHS to most effectively accomplish its law enforcement mission with the authorities and resources provided by Congress."

States and feds

During oral arguments in November, Judd Stone, the solicitor general with the Texas attorney general's office, argued that the federal government is required by U.S. immigration law to deport any undocumented immigrant, regardless of a lack of resources.

Elizabeth B. Prelogar, solicitor general with the Department of Justice, argued that the Biden administration's memo does not ignore enforcement laws, but is "prioritizing limited resources" in its enforcement



Immigrants waited overnight next to the U.S.-Mexico border fence to seek asylum in the United States on Jan. 7, 2023 as viewed from Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. (Photo by John Moore/Getty Images)

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 338 ~ 23 of 102

measures.

Muzaffar Chishti, an attorney and director of the Migration Policy Institute office at New York University School of Law, said in an interview with States Newsroom that the court's decision "has certainly put a dent in the ability of states to bring any action against the federal government on immigration."

"Whether the standing principles today that the Supreme Court has laid out will apply equally in all future (cases) that states bring to the Supreme Court, we don't know," he said.

Lena Graber, senior staff attorney for the Immigrant Legal Resource Center, said in a statement that the decision should "shut down further attempts by states from suing the federal government whenever they do not like a federal policy."

Graber said the ruling affirms that the Biden administration has the "discretion to determine when to arrest or deport immigrants and when not to."

"Now, the Biden Administration must reinvest in prosecutorial discretion and prioritize ending immigration arrests, detention, and deportations," Graber said. "The Biden Administration must stop the destructive impact that policing, surveillance and immigration enforcement and detention has on communities."

Agent discretion

The guidelines were first issued in 2021, and the White House gave U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents discretion on whether enforcement actions were needed. ICE agents were told to focus on noncitizens who were suspected terrorists, had already committed crimes or were recently arrested at the border.

"In exercising our discretion, we are guided by the fact that the majority of undocumented noncitizens who could be subject to removal have been contributing members of our communities for years," according to the memo written by Mayorkas.

"They include individuals who work on the frontlines in the battle against COVID, lead our congregations of faith, teach our children, do back-breaking farm work to help deliver food to our table, and contribute in many other meaningful ways," he continued. "The fact an individual is a removable noncitizen therefore should not alone be the basis of an enforcement action against them."

Texas sued and a Texas district court judge halted the policy, determining that it violated federal policy. The Biden administration appealed, but a unanimous three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 5th Circuit in New Orleans kept the block in place.

The Biden administration submitted an emergency appeal to the Supreme Court to block the ruling by the Texas judge, Drew B. Tipton, a Donald Trump appointee. The justices then voted 5-4 to keep the policy on hold until the case could be heard last year before the court.

Jeremy McKinney, the former president of the American Immigration Lawyers Association, said in an interview with States Newsroom that the Supreme Court's decision made it clear that Texas did not have standing.

He said that eight justices agreed that the court could not remedy the harm, known as redress, and therefore the states don't have standing.

"They basically said that the courts can't fix this problem, Texas, it's a policy dispute, and that's something that you settle through the political process and not in court," he said.

McKinney added that the decision could play into another immigration-related case that will determine whether a program to protect undocumented people brought without authorization into the country will be protected.

Those more than 500,000 undocumented people referred to as Dreamers are currently waiting for a Texas judge to determine whether the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program is legal. It's a case that many immigration attorneys are expecting to make its way to the Supreme Court by 2024.

Ariana covers the nation's capital for States Newsroom. Her areas of coverage include politics and policy, lobbying, elections and campaign finance.

'Lobbying for my right to exist': US Senate panel examines how states target trans kids

BY: ARIANA FIGUEROA - JUNE 23, 2023 12:05 PM

WASHINGTON — Harleigh Walker wants U.S. senators to understand she is a typical 16-year-old girl.

She likes Taylor Swift. She enjoys being on her school's debate team. And she listens way too loudly to music in her room.

"I'm just trying to be a teenager in America," she told senators on the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee during a Wednesday hearing.

But while her friends are on vacation during their spring break, Walker is spending her time "lobbying for my right to exist" as a transgender girl. Her home state of Alabama has banned gender-affirming care for transgender kids like herself.

"The laws preventing people like me from having access to the health care that our doctors and parents agree is necessary to keep us healthy don't keep us safe," she said. "They do the opposite."

Democrats on the U.S. Senate panel discussed the need for the passage of legislation to protect LGBTQ people like Walker from discrimination, given the rise in hate crimes against the LGBTQ community and a tide of legislation in the states aiming to curb their rights. Most recent FBI data from 2020 has found that 1 in 5 hate crimes are motivated by anti-LGBTQ bias.

The chair of the committee, Democratic Sen. Dick Durbin of Illinois, said that Congress needs to pass the Equality Act, especially after more than 500 anti-LGBTQ bills have been introduced this legislative session by state lawmakers. The Equality Act would amend the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, gender identity and sexual orientation.

"All of them are part of the same concerted effort, exercising the power of government to target children," Durbin said of the state measures.

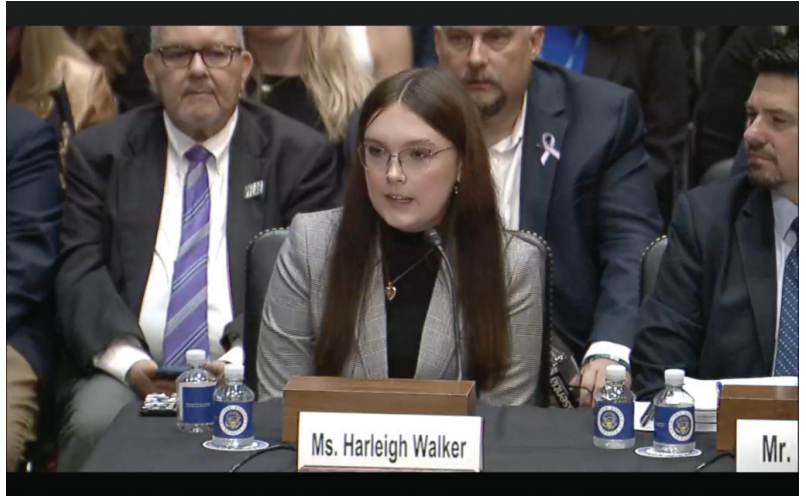
Dozens of states with Republican-led legislatures have passed bills banning transgender children and adults from using bathrooms and competing in sports that align with their gender identity. Some states are now moving to ban gender-affirming care for transgender children.

Democratic lawmakers on Wednesday after the hearing reintroduced the Equality Act. They include Sens. Jeff Merkley of Oregon, Tammy Baldwin of Wisconsin, Cory Booker of New Jersey and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer of New York, as well as Equality Caucus Co-Chair Rep. Sharice Davids of Kansas, Rep. Mark Takano of California, House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries of New York and Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi of California.

Senate Democrats would have to reach the 60-vote threshold to overcome a filibuster and pass the act. A Republican-controlled House is unlikely to bring it up.

Democratic Sen. Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota said during the hearing that the Equality Act is needed because only a patchwork of states have protections for the LGBTQ community.

"Half of LGBTQ adults still report experiencing workplace discrimination based on their identity," she said.



Harleigh Walker, a 16-year-old transgender girl from Alabama, testifies before the U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary about how the Equality Act would protect transgender kids. (Screenshot from

Senate Judiciary Committee webcast)

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 338 ~ 25 of 102

Gender-affirming care

Walker said the main reason she wanted to testify was to dispel much of the misinformation that has been repeated by Republicans in Alabama and by her own governor on the issue of health care for transgender children, referred to as gender-affirming care.

"One of the falsehoods I hear all the time out of those who would keep me from getting my health care is that these doctors pressure or rush you, and they pull you in and start filling you full of hormones, puberty blockers or wanting surgeries — and I want to tell you that none of that happened," she said.

Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey in late May signed a ban on transgender college athletes participating in sports that correlate with their affirmed gender. "Look, if you are a biological male, you are not going to be competing in women's and girls' sports in Alabama," Ivey said in a statement at the time.

In 2022, in signing two other bills aimed at transgender people, Ivey said, "I believe very strongly that if the Good Lord made you a boy, you are a boy, and if he made you a girl, you are a girl."

Democratic Sen. Jon Ossoff of Georgia said he was concerned about the mental health of transgender youth in his home state. He cited a survey from the Trevor Project — an organization that provides a 24/7 crisis hotline for LGBTQ youth — that found 72% of Georgia LGBTQ youth were experiencing severe anxiety and 59% were experiencing depression, with 46% considering suicide.

Ossoff asked Kelley Robinson, the president of the Human Rights Campaign and one of the Democratic witnesses, about the impact on transgender youth "when they're made political targets."

Robinson said "the ways that we've put a target on the back of trans youth" has reminded her of the AIDS epidemic, and how by the 1990s "we had lost a whole generation of gay men."

"I don't want us to repeat that story with our trans youth," she said.

Another Democratic witness, Dr. Ximena Lopez, is a pediatrician who has been providing health care for transgender youth for more than a decade. In Texas, where she lives, she said because of the state laws there and general rhetoric toward health care for transgender people, her patients are considering fleeing or going into hiding.

"The general public should know that a campaign of misinformation has falsely demonized health care for transgender adolescents, which is based on more than two decades of research and clinical practice and is accepted as established medical care by every leading medical organization in this country, including the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Medical Association, and many others," she said.

"There is no professional medical organization involved in the care of transgender youth that opposes this care."

Durbin asked how common it was for gender-affirming surgeries to take place for minors.

Lopez said that surgeries are not recommended for minors and that any treatment has to be approved by a parent.

"At the end of the day, it is the parents that consent to the treatment," she said.

Title IX

Most Senate Republicans focused on transgender athletes and a proposed rule from the Biden administration to amend Title IX. The proposal is meant to protect transgender students' participation in school sports, but it's been met with caution by transgender legal experts.

The proposed rule, once finalized, would invalidate the 21 state laws that bar transgender students from participating in sports that align with their gender identity. Legal challenges are expected from states.

Republican Sen. Marsha Blackburn of Tennessee said the rule would harm women. She asked one of the Republican witnesses, Riley Gaines of Gallatin, Tennessee, about her thoughts on the new Title IX proposed changes.

Gaines said she opposed the Biden administration proposal, arguing that transgender girls should not be able to compete in sports that align with their gender identity.

"That's why this issue has become political for me because I realized that legislation is the way you curb these things," she said.

Since Gaines tied with University of Pennsylvania swimmer Lia Thomas, the first openly trans woman to

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 338 ~ 26 of 102

compete in the NCAA women's division, Gaines has launched campaigns across the U.S. lobbying against letting transgender women compete in sports that align with their gender identity.

House Republicans in April passed a bill to amend Title IX to bar transgender female students from competing in the sports that align with their gender identity, essentially sports at all public schools and universities.

One of the amendments attached in the House bill that bans transgender girls from competing in sports that align with their gender identity was dedicated to Gaines. The amendment by South Carolina Republican Rep. Nancy Mace would allow for a study on the "adverse effects" on women for allowing transgender women to compete in sports that align with their gender identity.

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline and the Crisis Text Line provide 24/7 support for anyone thinking about committing suicide by dialing 988. The Veterans Crisis Line is available by dialing 1-800-273-8255 and pressing 1 or by sending a text message to 838255. The Veterans Crisis Chat is available here.

Ariana covers the nation's capital for States Newsroom. Her areas of coverage include politics and policy, lobbying, elections and campaign finance.

**HELP
WANTED!**

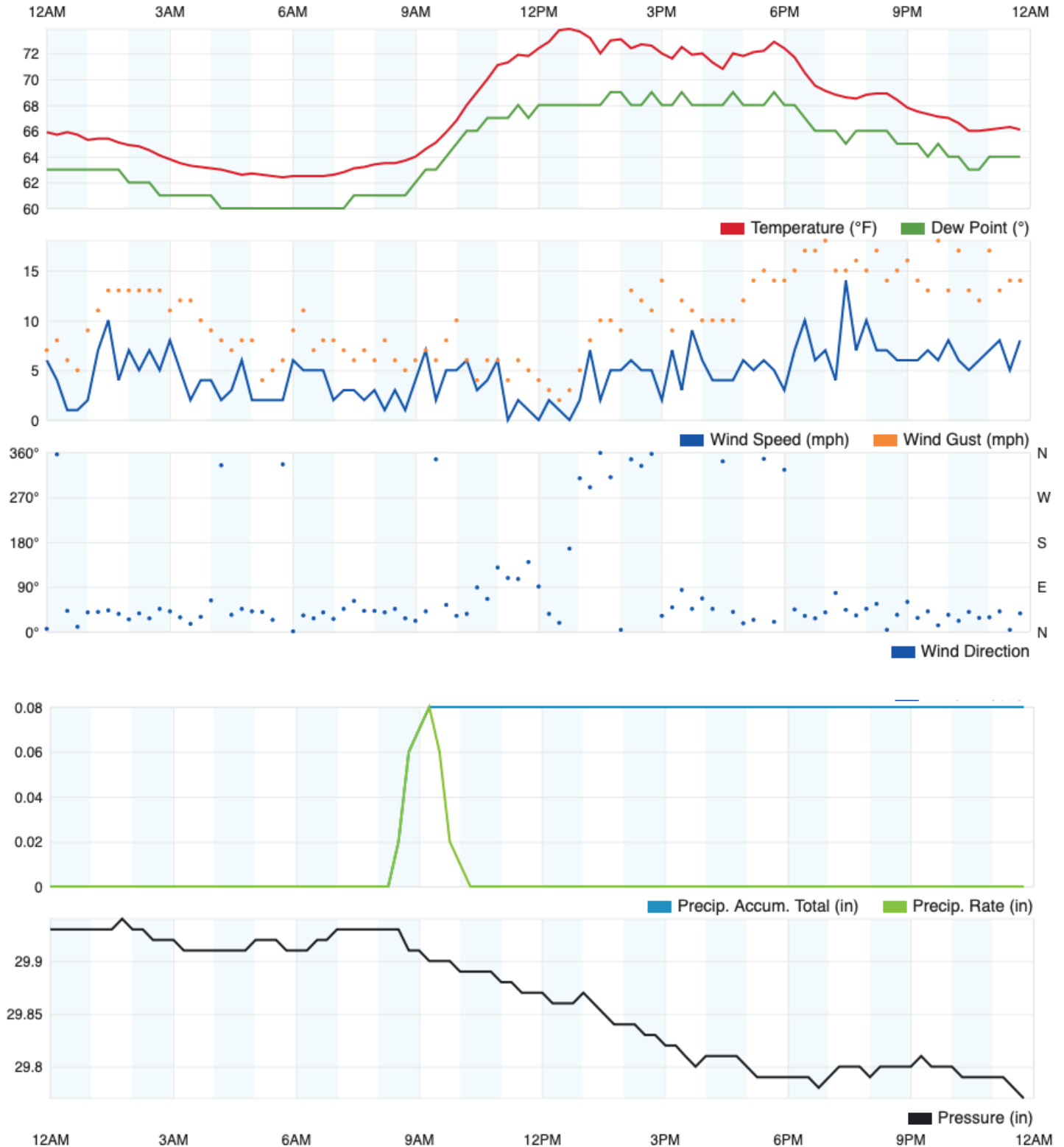
Farm Hand Wanted

Farm hand (Groton, Brown, South Dakota): Plant, cultivate & harvest crops. Apply fertilizers & pesticides. Operate, maintain and repair farm equipment. Repair fences and farm buildings. Follow all work and food safety protocols. Req: 6 mns rel exp. Mail resume to Shawn Gengerke Farms, 12702 406th Ave., Groton, SD 57445.

Groton Daily Independent

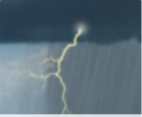
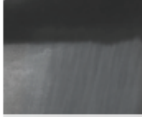
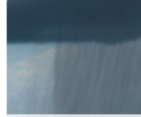




Saturday, June 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 338 ~ 27 of 102

Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 338 ~ 28 of 102

Today	Tonight	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday	Monday Night	Tuesday
 90% → 50%	 70%	 30%	 Partly Cloudy	 Sunny	 Partly Cloudy	 20%
Heavy Rain then Chance T-storms	Showers Likely and Breezy	Chance Showers and Breezy				Mostly Sunny then Slight Chance Showers
High: 73 °F	Low: 58 °F	High: 77 °F	Low: 55 °F	High: 83 °F	Low: 56 °F	High: 84 °F



Showers and Storms Again Today

June 24, 2023
5:27 AM

Severe Possible in Far Eastern South Dakota and Western Minnesota

Showers and storms this morning, with a break possible around midday.

Additional storms this afternoon and evening, with severe possible east of I-29.

Storm chances end from west to east tonight through Sunday.



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

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

More showers and storms today, with a severe threat late this afternoon east of Interstate 29. Showers and storms should end from west to east tonight through Sunday.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 338 ~ 29 of 102

Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 74 °F at 12:53 PM

Low Temp: 62 °F at 5:45 AM

Wind: 18 mph at 6:57 PM

Precip: : 0.08

Day length: 15 hours, 43 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 108 in 1988

Record Low: 39 in 2017

Average High: 82

Average Low: 57

Average Precip in June.: 2.96

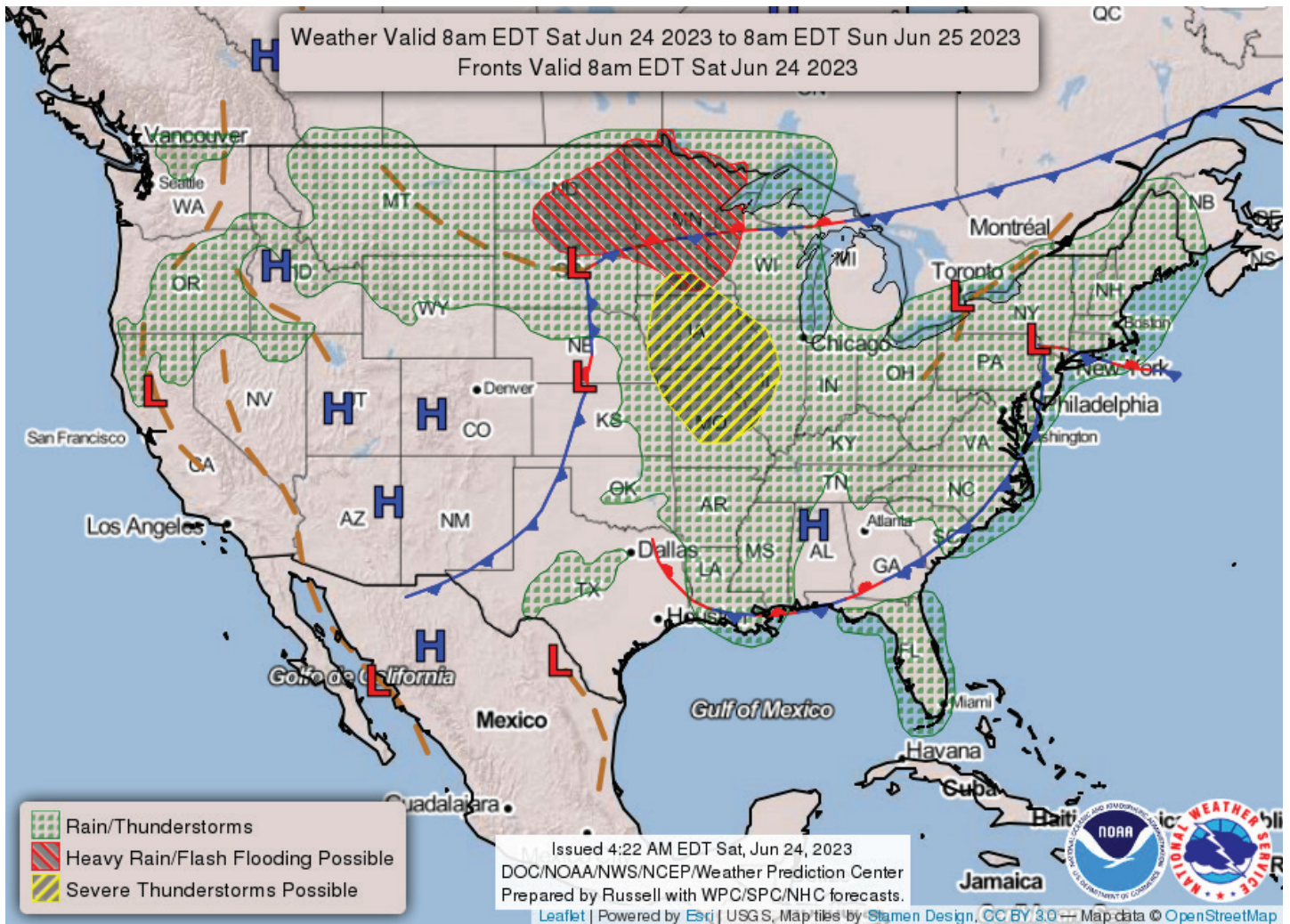
Precip to date in June.: 1.67

Average Precip to date: 10.21

Precip Year to Date: 9.58

Sunset Tonight: 9:26:49 PM

Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:43:15 AM



Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 338 ~ 30 of 102

Today in Weather History

June 24, 1902: Very strong winds occurred during the evening hours over portions of Hand and Stanley, to Turner and Lincoln Counties. Heavy losses occurred to barns and other farm outbuildings, trees, and windmills. One person was killed, and several were injured. A peak wind gust of 67 mph was recorded in Pierre.

June 24, 2003: An F4 tornado destroyed or heavily damaged all buildings, other structures, and vehicles in the small town of Manchester, in Kingsbury County. Propane and fuel oil tanks were destroyed. Many homes were stripped to the foundation. Of the six residents of the town, four were injured and were transported to hospitals. Three were deemed to be seriously injured, but none of the injuries were listed as life-threatening. One of the injured was in a basement, one was blown out of the home on the way to the same basement, and two were in a mobile home which was destroyed. The tornado damaged crops, trees, and power lines south of Manchester before reaching the town. The tornado also heavily damaged several farms north of Manchester, including two farms on which several buildings, including the houses, were destroyed. About 12 cattle were killed and others injured. The amount of crop damage was not known. Throughout the path, the tornado was observed to have multiple vortices. The tornado was seen and videotaped by numerous storm chasers and researchers. Researchers also deployed weather sensors around the town of Manchester. One of these sensors recorded a 100 millibar pressure drop as the tornado passed.

1816 - The cold weather of early June finally gave way to several days of 90 degree heat in Massachusetts, including a reading of 99 degrees at Salem. (David Ludlum)

1924 - Six men at a rock quarry south of Winston-Salem, NC, sought shelter from a thunderstorm. The structure chosen contained a quantity of dynamite. Lightning struck a near-by tree causing the dynamite to explode. The men were killed instantly. (The Weather Channel)

1929: In Durban, South Africa, a storm drops hailstones the size of baseballs. The rattle produced by the storm is described as sounding like "machine gun fire."

1951 - Twelve inches of hail broke windows and roofs, and dented automobiles, causing more than fourteen million dollars damage. The storm plowed 200 miles from Kingman County KS into Missouri, with the Wichita area hardest hit. It was the most disastrous hailstorm of record for the state of Kansas. (David Ludlum)

1952 - Thunderstorms produced a swath of hail 60 miles long and 3.5 miles wide through parts of Hand, Beadle, Kingsbury, Miner and Jerauld counties in South Dakota. Poultry and livestock were killed, and many persons were injured. Hail ten inches in circumference was reported at Huron SD. (The Weather Channel)

1975: An Eastern Airlines Boeing 727 crashed at JFK airport in New York City. 113 of the 124 people on board the aircraft died. Researcher Theodore Fujita studied the incident and discovered that a microburst caused the crash. His research led to improved air safety. The tower never experienced the microburst, which was held back by a sea-breeze front. The plane crashed 2,400 feet short of the runway.

1987 - Thunderstorms spawned six tornadoes in eastern Colorado. Baseball size hail was reported near Yoder, CO, and thunderstorm winds gusting to 92 mph derailed a train near Pratt, KS. The town of Gould, OK, was soaked with nearly an inch and a half of rain in just ten minutes. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Forty-three cities reported record high temperatures for the date. Valentine NE reported an all-time record high of 110 degrees, and highs of 102 degrees at Casper, WY, 103 degrees at Reno, NV, and 106 degrees at Winnemucca, NV, were records for the month of June. Highs of 98 degrees at Logan, UT, and 109 degrees at Rapid City, SD, equalled June records. Lightning killed twenty-one cows near Conway, SC. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Thunderstorms developing along a warm front produced severe weather from Colorado and New Mexico to Kansas and Nebraska. Thunderstorms spawned seven tornadoes, and produced wind gusts to 80 mph at Wood River, NE, and hail three inches in diameter at Wheeler, KS. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 338 ~ 31 of 102

Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

"DOING THE BEST I CAN"

Every now and then we meet someone who believes that they have been called to do something special - something that no one else can do. It makes their lives different, unique.

Charles Schultz created the world-famous comic strip, Peanuts. It grew from the pages of a newspaper to television specials and ultimately a movie. But success came slowly to him. When he was in art school, he barely earned a "C" in a course entitled "The Drawing of Children."

While serving in the armed forces, Schultz designed various cartoons on the letters his friends sent home to their loved ones. He wanted to help them make their letters special. After he returned to civilian life, he submitted a few of them to the Saturday Evening Post. At first, they were rejected, but he refused to give up. Eventually, they became the comic strip, Peanuts.

Once during an interview, he said, "I don't think I am a true artist. But I do think I am doing the best I can with whatever abilities I have been given."

Scripture promised us that "God has given gifts to each of you...manage them well...so His generosity can flow through you." All of us have been given unique gifts from God and He expects us to let them "flow through us" to honor Him, and bless and serve others.

Prayer: We thank You, Father, for the gifts You have given us to use to honor You and serve others. May we use them in ways that will please You and bless others. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. 1 Peter 4:10



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

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 338 ~ 32 of 102

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

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 338 ~ 33 of 102

The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

Subscription Form

All prices listed include 6.5% Sales Tax

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

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

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City _____

State, Zip Code _____

E-mail _____

Phone Number _____

Mail Completed Form to:

Groton Independent

P.O. Box 34

Groton, SD 57445-0034

or scan and email to paperpaul@grotonsd.net

Groton Daily Independent

www.397news.com

Subscription Form

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

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

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City _____

State, Zip Code _____

Phone Number _____

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

E-mail _____

Password _____

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

paypal.me/paperpaul



Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 338 ~ 34 of 102



WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:
06.23.23

13 62 65 67 69 14

MegaPlier: 5x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$343,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
06.21.23

2 13 20 35 48 7

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$4,450,000

NEXT 17 Hrs 29 Mins 29
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
06.23.23

15 23 27 38 48 3

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT 17 Hrs 44 Mins
DRAW: 29 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
06.21.23

1 3 11 20 31

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$112,000

NEXT 17 Hrs 44 Mins
DRAW: 29 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
06.21.23

15 18 23 45 48 10

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT 18 Hrs 13 Mins 29
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
06.21.23

5 11 33 35 63 14

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$427,000,000

NEXT 18 Hrs 13 Mins 29
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the Associated Press

Follow the timeline of the Titan submersible's journey from departure to tragic discovery

By HOLLY RAMER Associated Press

The wrecks of the Titanic and the Titan sit on the ocean floor, separated by 1,600 feet (490 meters) and 111 years of history. How they came together unfolded over an intense week that raised temporary hopes and left lingering questions.

THE BUILDUP

The Polar Prince, a Canadian icebreaker ship, steamed out of Newfoundland on Friday, June 16, towing the experimental Titan submersible and carrying the five-man team headed to explore the iconic ocean liner's watery gravesite. Three missions involving other teams had been scrapped due to bad weather in the previous four weeks, but the latest OceanGate Expeditions group was hopeful.

"A weather window has just opened up and we are going to attempt a dive tomorrow," renowned adventurer Hamish Harding said Saturday on Instagram. "More expedition updates to follow IF the weather holds!"

THE DIVE DOWN

Moving about the Polar Prince, mission participants were required to wear water-activated life vests, bright orange jackets, helmets and steel-toed boots, said Arnie Weissmann, a journalist who spent eight days aboard the support ship in May before his mission was aborted. Just before a dive, they'd change into fleece vests, black flight suits bearing the OceanGate logo and warm socks — no shoes allowed on the submersible.

The team was carried to the Titan's launch and recovery platform by one of two inflatable dinghies named Stewie and Max. Once inside, they would sit on a platform, with their legs crossed or out straight.

"You could not be in that thing if you're claustrophobic," Weissmann said. "It's literally like being in a tin can because it's got rounded sides."

The Titan submerged at 8 a.m. EDT Sunday, according to the U.S. Coast Guard.

"Once the submersible is launched you will begin to see alienlike lifeforms whizz by the viewport as you sink deeper and deeper into the ocean," the company wrote on its website when it advertised the expedition. "The descent takes approximately two hours but it feels like the blink of an eye."

On Sunday, the vessel lost contact with the Polar Prince around 10:45 a.m.

THE SEARCH

At 5:40 p.m., nearly three hours after the Titan was expected to resurface and nearly eight hours after the last communication, the Polar Prince notified the U.S. Coast Guard that the vessel was overdue, setting off an intense international search and rescue.

After the craft was reported missing, the U.S. Navy analyzed its acoustic data and found an anomaly that was "consistent with an implosion or explosion in the general vicinity of where the Titan submersible was operating when communications were lost," a senior Navy official later told The Associated Press. Though it wasn't made public at the time, the Navy passed on that information on Sunday to the Coast Guard, which continued its search because the Navy did not consider the data to be definitive, according to the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive technology.

By Monday afternoon, a C-130 Hercules aircraft from North Carolina and a Canadian P8 aircraft with underwater sonar equipment joined the search. Tuesday brought better weather and increased visibility, and by that morning, 10,000 square miles (25,900 square kilometers) had been searched.

A U.S. Air National Guard crew arrived that day, as did a Bahamian research vessel, Deep Energy, which deployed camera-equipped, remote-operated robots.

Meanwhile, sonar equipment detected banging noises Tuesday night and Wednesday morning, sparking hope that those aboard the Titan were still alive.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 338 ~ 36 of 102

"We are smack dab in the middle of search and rescue, and we'll continue to put every available asset that we have in an effort to find the Titan and the crew members," Captain Jamie Frederick of the First Coast Guard District said at a news conference Wednesday afternoon.

By then, crews had scoured an area twice the size of Connecticut in waters 2½ miles (4 kilometers) deep. More resources were on the way, including multiple remote-operated vehicles, a salvage system capable of recovering heavy undersea objects and a mobile hyperbaric recompression chamber. Time was running out. The submersible was only equipped with enough air to last until sometime the next morning.

THE DISCOVERY:

On Thursday morning, a robotic vehicle discovered the tail cone of the Titan on the ocean floor, followed by the front and back ends of the Titan's hull.

"The debris is consistent with the catastrophic loss of the pressure chamber," said Rear Adm. John Mauger of the First Coast Guard District.

On its website before the expedition, OceanGate told future participants what to expect upon resurfacing.

"Once on deck, you will be welcomed back by the expedition crew and be able to share the story of your incredible accomplishment," said the company, which already had scheduled dates for a 2024 expedition.

On Thursday, the company issued a statement mourning those killed, including company CEO and pilot Stockton Rush. In addition to Rush and Harding, the others on board were Titanic expert Paul-Henri Nargeolet and two members of a prominent Pakistani family, Shahzada Dawood and his son Suleman Dawood.

"These men were true explorers who shared a distinct spirit of adventure, and a deep passion for exploring and protecting the world's oceans," OceanGate said. "We grieve the loss of life and joy they brought to everyone they knew."

Putin calls armed rebellion by mercenary chief a betrayal and vows to defend Russia

By The Associated Press undefined

President Vladimir Putin vowed Saturday to defend Russia against an armed rebellion by mercenary chief Yevgeny Prigozhin, who led his troops out of Ukraine and into a key city south of Moscow.

The uprising, which Putin called "a stab in the back," was the biggest threat to his leadership in over two decades in power.

The private army led by Prigozhin appears to control the military headquarters in Rostov-on-Don, a city 660 miles (over 1,000 kilometers) south of Moscow that runs Russian offensive operations in Ukraine, Britain's Ministry of Defense said in an intelligence briefing.

As the fast-moving events unfolded in Russia, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Moscow is suffering "full-scale weakness" and that Kyiv was protecting Europe from "the spread of Russian evil and chaos."

In his address, Putin called the uprising by Prigozhin, whom he did not mention by name, a "betrayal" and "treason."

"All those who prepared the rebellion will suffer inevitable punishment," Putin said. "The armed forces and other government agencies have received the necessary orders."

Prigozhin called himself a patriot.

"Regarding the betrayal of the motherland, the president was deeply mistaken. We are patriots of our homeland," he said in an audio message on his Telegram channel.

He said his fighters would not turn themselves in at the request of Putin, as "we do not want the country to live on in corruption, deceit and bureaucracy."

Prigozhin's private military contractor, known as Wagner, has been fighting alongside Russian troops in Ukraine. It wasn't immediately clear what his aims were, but the rebellion marks an escalation in Prigozhin's struggle with Russian military leaders, who he has accused of botching the war in Ukraine and hamstringing his forces in the field.

"This is not a military coup, but a march of justice," Prigozhin said.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 338 ~ 37 of 102

Prigozhin confirmed Saturday he and his troops reached Rostov-on-Don after crossing the border from Ukraine.

He posted a video of himself at the Russian military headquarters in Rostov and claimed that his forces had taken control of the air field and other military facilities in the city. Other videos posted on social media showed military vehicles, including tanks, on the streets.

Prigozhin said his forces faced no resistance from young conscripts as they crossed into Russia, saying his troops "aren't fighting against children."

"But we will destroy anyone who stands in our way," he said in one of a series of angry video and audio recordings posted on social media beginning late Friday. "We are moving forward and will go until the end."

Putin condemned the rebellion, which comes at a time when Russia is "fighting the toughest battle for its future" as western governments heap sanctions on Moscow and arm Ukraine.

"The entire military, economic and information machine of the West is waged against us," Putin said.

Russia's security services, including the Federal Security Service, or FSB, called for Prigozhin's arrest after he declared an armed rebellion late Friday.

In a sign of how seriously the Kremlin took the threat, authorities declared a "counterterrorist regime" in Moscow and its surroundings, allowing restricted freedoms and enhancing security in the capital.

It was not immediately clear how Prigozhin was able to enter the southern Russian city or how many troops he had with him.

Prigozhin said his aim was to punish Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu after Russian government forces attacked Wagner field camps in Ukraine with rockets, helicopter gunships and artillery.

Gen. Valery Gerasimov, chief of the General Staff, ordered the attacks following a meeting with Shoigu at which they decided to destroy Wagner, Prigozhin said. He said Wagner's forces shot down a Russian military helicopter that fired on a civilian convoy, but there was no independent confirmation.

Prigozhin said he had 25,000 troops under his command and urged the army not to offer resistance.

After Putin's address, in which he didn't mention concrete steps to suppress the rebellion but rather called for unity, officials and state media personalities in the country sought to publicly reiterate their allegiance to the Kremlin and urged Prigozhin to back down.

Vyacheslav Volodin, speaker of Russia's lower house of parliament, said lawmakers "stand for the consolidation of forces" and support Putin, adding that "Wagner fighters must make the only right choice: to be with their people, on the side of the law, to protect the security and future of the Motherland, to follow the orders of the commander-in-chief."

Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova echoed Volodin's sentiment, saying in a Telegram post that "we have one commander in chief. Not two, not three. One."

Ramzan Kadyrov, the strongman leader of the Chechnya region who used to side with Prigozhin in his criticism of the military, also expressed his full support of Putin's "every word."

"We have the commander in chief, elected by the people, who knows the situation to the slightest detail better than any strategist and businessman," Kadyrov said. "The mutiny needs to be suppressed."

While the outcome of the confrontation was still unclear, it appeared likely to further hinder Moscow's war effort as Kyiv's forces probed Russian defenses in the initial stages of a counteroffensive. The dispute, especially if Prigozhin were to prevail, also could have repercussions for Putin and his ability to maintain unity.

The Wagner forces have played a crucial role in Ukraine, capturing the eastern city of Bakhmut, where the bloodiest and longest battles have taken place. But Prigozhin has increasingly criticized the military brass, accusing it of incompetence and of starving his troops of munitions.

In his Telegram channel, Zelenskyy noted the rebellion and said "anyone who chooses the path of evil destroys himself."

"For a long time, Russia used propaganda to mask its weakness and the stupidity of its government. And now there is so much chaos that no lie can hide it," he said. "Russia's weakness is obvious. Full-scale weakness. And the longer Russia keeps its troops and mercenaries on our land, the more chaos, pain and

problems it will have for itself later.”

Prigozhin’s actions could have significant implications for the war. Orysia Lutsevych, the head of the Ukraine Forum at the Chatham House think tank in London, said infighting between the Defense Ministry and Wagner will create confusion and potential division among the Russian forces.

“Russian troops in Ukraine may well now be operating in a vacuum, without clear military instructions, and doubts about whom to obey and follow,” Lutsevych said. “This creates a unique and unprecedented military opportunity for the Ukrainian army.”

Heavy military trucks and armored vehicles were seen in several parts of central Moscow early Saturday, and soldiers toting assault rifles were deployed outside the main building of the Defense Ministry. The area around the presidential administration near Red Square was blocked, snarling traffic.

But even with the heightened military presence, downtown bars and restaurants were filled with customers. At one club near the headquarters of the FSB, people were dancing in the street near the entrance.

Prigozhin, whose feud with the Defense Ministry dates back years, had refused to comply with a requirement that his forces sign contracts with the ministry before July 1. He said Friday he was ready for a compromise but “they have treacherously cheated us.”

“Today they carried out a rocket strike on our rear camps, and a huge number of our comrades got killed,” he said. The Defense Ministry denied attacking the Wagner camps.

“The evil embodied by the country’s military leadership must be stopped,” he shouted.

Col. Gen. Sergei Surovikin, the deputy commander of the Russian forces in Ukraine, urged the Wagner troops to stop any move against the army, saying it would play into the hands of Russia’s enemies who are “waiting to see the exacerbation of our domestic political situation.”

In Washington, the Institute for the Study of War said “the violent overthrow of Putin loyalists like Shoigu and Gerasimov would cause irreparable damage to the stability of Putin’s perceived hold on power.”

At the White House, National Security Council spokesperson Adam Hodge said the administration was monitoring the situation and will be consulting with allies and partners on the developments.

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

Mix of bravado and access to guns contribute to mass shootings by teens in St. Louis, other cities

By MICHAEL TARM AP Legal Affairs Writer

CHICAGO (AP) — A 1 a.m. shooting at a party in downtown St. Louis kills one and injures nearly a dozen. Gunmen open fire during a fight near Florida’s Hollywood Beach, injuring nine, including a 1-year-old. Bursts of gunfire at a Sweet 16 party in Dadeville, Alabama, kill four and wound more than 30.

What these and other recent mass shootings share in common is they all involve suspects in their teens, highlighting what can be a deadly mix of teenage bravado and impulsiveness with access to guns.

The days when many teens opted to fight out disagreements with fists seem quaint by comparison.

“I remember when I was a child and we had fights — somebody got a black eye or a broken nose and (they) lived to tell about it,” St. Louis Mayor Tishaura Jones told reporters after Sunday’s shooting.

Reaching for a gun is the default these days for some teens who are as quick to take offense as to pull a trigger, agreed Rodney Phillips, a 50-year-old former Chicago Black Disciples leader who works with gang members nationwide to tamp down festering beefs.

“Now, the first thing out of their mouths is, ‘I’m gonna kill you.’ It’s the brazenness of (the shootings), the reckless abandon, doing it in public places,” Phillips said. “It wasn’t like that when I came up.”

The aunt of 17-year-old Makao Moore, who died in the St. Louis shooting, said teens too often express anger with a gun.

“If we don’t figure it out, it’s going to continue to happen,” Sharonda Moore told the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

Among the solutions to reducing teen violence, Jones said, was to keep expanding programs offering young people activities in safe spaces, including movie and music nights.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 338 ~ 39 of 102

More firearms, and even more powerful firearms, have enabled teens, or anyone wielding a gun, to maim and kill more people in single incidents.

A handgun fired at the April Sweet 16 party — in a dance studio crammed with up to 60 people — had been altered to shoot more rapidly, Alabama Special Agent Jess Thornton told a court hearing.

"Witnesses said it sounded like a machine gun," the investigator said. Afterward, 89 bullet casings littered the scene and there was "blood everywhere."

Bullets riddled walls and shattered glass at the shooting in a fifth-floor office in St. Louis. Police released photos of two young men clutching apparent AK-style rifles. One detained suspect was 17.

In many cities, illegal guns are never too far out of reach.

In areas with high gang activity, some guns are stolen from homes, gun stores or trains. To lower the risk of being stopped by police while in possession of guns, gang members typically hide them nearby, tucking the weapons into walls and inside tire rims, he said.

Powerful firearms became more readily available starting in the 1980s, before which knives and low-caliber pistols were often the weapons of choice by teens who killed, said James Alan Fox, a professor of criminology, law and public policy at Northeastern University in Boston.

"With guns, teenagers tend to be trigger happy," he said. "They'll pull the trigger without fully thinking about the consequences."

According to FBI data, around 90% of homicides in 2019 by teens 15 to 17 involved firearms, up from around 60% in 1980. Fox, though, said the rise in homicides by teens hasn't correlated directly with the rising numbers of guns.

Just how many guns are around and available to teens is impossible to know. The Switzerland-based Small Arms Survey estimated in 2018 that there were some 390 million guns held by civilians in the U.S., more than those held by civilians in the other top 25 countries combined.

Mayor Jones said causes of the kind of violence that occurred Sunday are complex. Among the problems she highlighted was a trend of teenagers spilling into downtown St. Louis for late-night parties, with parents sometimes dropping them off.

"Downtown is not a 1 a.m. destination for your 15-year-old," she said. "It's not a place to drop children off unsupervised."

Investigators in St. Louis, Alabama and Florida didn't immediately suggest motives for the respective shootings. But indications are tensions rose suddenly in each.

Donna Rhone, whose son's face was grazed by a bullet in the St. Louis shooting, told KTVI-TV that partygoers had been well-behaved before the shooting.

"Then immediately, that's when everything shifted," Rhone said, citing her son. "It goes from being so lighthearted to pure terror."

When a music speaker fell with a bang at the Alabama party, one person lifted their shirt to display a gun, Thornton said. Shooting began after an announcement telling those with guns to leave. At least three shooting suspects were teens.

Pushing and shoving between two groups preceded the Memorial Day shooting in Florida, when members of one group pulled guns and fired at the other and at bystanders, an affidavit alleged. Among those charged: a 15-year-old, a 16-year-old and an 18-year-old.

For 2020, the first year of the pandemic, numbers of homicides by teens 12 to 17 jumped by nearly 40% compared to the previous year, from 974 to 1,336, according to FBI data. There was a total of around 18,000 homicides in the U.S. in 2020.

Homicides by teens 12 to 17 soared between 1984 and 1994, from 958 to a historic high of 2,800, according to the FBI. After falling to a low of 700 in 2013, numbers crept up, though they remain below mid-90s' numbers.

When teens kill, their victims are often young.

The St. Louis victims were between 15 and 19. Those killed in the Alabama shooting were 17, 18, 19 and 23, while most of more than two dozen others injured ranged in age from 14 to 19.

Homicide in 2019 was the third leading cause of death for those between ages 12 and 17, behind accidents and suicide, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Homicide is now the leading cause of death among African American youth.

Philips said social media is another factor driving teen violence. Feuds fanned in cyberspace with exchanges of insults can spill into the real world with exchanges of gunfire.

In the heat of the moment, peer pressure can contribute to a minor dispute spinning out of control. Fox said around a third of homicides by teens involve two or more people.

"Sometimes, no one individual wants to do the crime but everyone thinks everyone else wants to do it," he said. "No one wants to be ostracized by the group."

Putin calls armed rebellion by mercenary chief a betrayal and promises to defend Russia

Associated Press undefined

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Saturday vowed to defend the country from an armed rebellion declared by mercenary chief Yevgeny Prigozhin, which Putin called a "stab in the back" to Russia.

"All those who prepared the rebellion will suffer inevitable punishment. The armed forces and other government agencies have received the necessary orders," Putin said in televised address to the nation.

Prigozhin, owner of the Wagner private military contractor, confirmed Saturday morning that he and his troops reached a key Russian city after crossing the border from Ukraine.

Prigozhin posted a video of himself in Rostov-on-Don at the Russian military headquarters that oversees the fighting in Ukraine. He claimed that his forces had military facilities in the city under their control, including the air field. Other videos posted on social media showed military vehicles, including tanks, on the streets outside.

Putin condemned the rebellion at a time when Russia was "fighting the toughest battle for its future" with its war in Ukraine. "The entire military, economic and information machine of the West is waged against us," Putin said.

Prigozhin said his forces faced no resistance from young conscripts at checkpoints as they crossed into Russia from Ukraine, saying his troops "aren't fighting against children."

"But we will destroy anyone who stands in our way," he said in one of a series of angry video and audio recordings posted on social media beginning late Friday. "We are moving forward and will go until the end."

Russia's security services had responded to Prigozhin's declaration of an armed rebellion by calling for his arrest. In a sign of how seriously the Kremlin took the threat, authorities declared a "counterterrorist regime" in Moscow and its surroundings, allowing restricted freedoms and enhancing security in the capital.

It was not immediately clear how Prigozhin was able to enter the southern Russian city or how many troops he had with him.

Prigozhin alleged that Wagner field camps in Ukraine were struck by rockets, helicopter gunships and artillery fire on orders from the chief of the General Staff, Gen. Valery Gerasimov, following a meeting in Rostov with Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu at which they decided to destroy Wagner. He also said his forces shot down a Russian military helicopter that fired on a civilian convoy, but there was no independent confirmation.

Prigozhin said he had 25,000 troops under his command and would punish Shoigu in an armed rebellion, and urged the army not to offer resistance: "This is not a military coup, but a march of justice."

While the outcome of the confrontation was still unclear, it appeared likely to further hinder Moscow's war effort as Kyiv's forces were probing Russian defenses in the initial stages of a counteroffensive. The dispute, especially if Prigozhin were to prevail, also could have repercussions for Putin and his ability to maintain a united front.

The Wagner forces have played a crucial role in Russia's war in Ukraine, succeeding in taking the city where the bloodiest and longest battles have taken place, Bakhmut. But Prigozhin has increasingly criticized Russia's military brass, accusing it of incompetence and of starving his troops of weapons and ammunition.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 338 ~ 41 of 102

On Friday, the National Anti-Terrorism Committee, which is part of the Federal Security Service, or FSB, charged Prigozhin with calling for an armed rebellion, punishable by up to 20 years in prison.

The FSB urged Wagner's contract soldiers to arrest Prigozhin and refuse to follow his "criminal and treacherous orders." It called his statements a "stab in the back to Russian troops" and said they amounted to fomenting armed conflict.

Heavy military trucks and armored vehicles were seen in several parts of central Moscow early Saturday, and soldiers toting assault rifles were deployed outside the main building of the Defense Ministry. The area around the presidential administration near Red Square was blocked, snarling traffic.

But even with the heightened military presence, downtown bars and restaurants were filled with customers. At one club near the headquarters of the FSB, people were dancing in the street near the entrance.

Prigozhin, whose feud with the Defense Ministry dates back years, had refused to comply with a requirement that military contractors sign contracts with the ministry before July 1. In a statement late Friday, he said he was ready to find a compromise but "they have treacherously cheated us."

"Today they carried out a rocket strike on our rear camps, and a huge number of our comrades got killed," Prigozhin said. The Defense Ministry denied attacking the Wagner camps.

"The evil embodied by the country's military leadership must be stopped," he shouted.

Col. Gen. Sergei Surovikin, the deputy commander of the Russian group of forces fighting in Ukraine, urged the Wagner forces to stop any move against the army, saying it would play into the hands of Russia's enemies, who are "waiting to see the exacerbation of our domestic political situation."

Tatiana Stanovaya, a political analyst, predicted this would be the end of Prigozhin.

"Now that the state has actively engaged, there's no turning back," she tweeted. "The termination of Prigozhin and Wagner is imminent. The only possibility now is absolute obliteration, with the degree of resistance from the Wagner group being the only variable. Surovikin was dispatched to convince them to surrender. Confrontation seems totally futile."

Lt. Gen. Vladimir Alexeyev, a top military officer, denounced Prigozhin's move as "madness" that threatens civil war.

"It's a stab in the back to the country and the president. ... Such a provocation could only be staged by enemies of Russia," he said.

The Defense Ministry said in a statement that Ukraine was concentrating troops for an attack around Bakhmut to take advantage of "Prigozhin's provocation." It said Russian artillery and warplanes were firing on Ukrainian forces as they prepared an offensive.

In Washington, the Institute for the Study of War said "the violent overthrow of Putin loyalists like Shoigu and Gerasimov would cause irreparable damage to the stability of Putin's perceived hold on power."

At the White House, National Security Council spokesperson Adam Hodge said: "We are monitoring the situation and will be consulting with allies and partners on these developments."

In Kyiv, a Russian missile attack killed at least two people and injured eight Saturday when falling debris caused a fire on several floors of a 24-story apartment building in a central district, Serhii Popko, the head of the city's military administration posted on Telegram.

He said more than 20 missiles were detected and destroyed. Video from the scene showed a blaze in the upper floors of the building and the parking lot strewn with ash and debris.

Long heritage of Native Hawaiian gender-fluidity showcased in Las Vegas drag show

By AUDREY McAVOY and TY O'NEIL Associated Press

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Drag queens donning the white, red and blue of the Hawaiian flag shimmied across the stage to a throbbing techno remix of "Aloha Oe," a song composed by Hawaii's last reigning monarch. Spectators roared as a performer shook her hips in a Tahitian-style dance.

All were "mahu" — a Hawaiian term for people with dual male and female spirit and a mixture of gender traits.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 338 ~ 42 of 102

They starred in a drag show this week called "Mahu Magic" on the sidelines of a Native Hawaiian convention in Las Vegas to remind the world of the respected place gender-fluidity has held in Hawaiian culture for hundreds of years, while also making a foray into the national conversation about transgender rights.

"It's a little different from other drag shows because this one has a very specific purpose," Hialeimoana Wong-Kalu, who is mahu, a community leader and a master teacher of hula and chanting, told the audience midway through the event.

"It is meant to reinstate the rightful place that mahu have between kane and wahine," Wong-Kalu said, using the Hawaiian words for man and woman. The crowd erupted in raucous cheers and applause.

Adam Keawe Manalo-Camp, an ethnohistorian who identifies as mahu and queer, said mahu also can include people who would be nonbinary, would define themselves as third gender and those attracted to someone of the same gender.

"That's what mahu does — mahu offers a space between the concepts of male and female," Manalo-Camp said.

The Hawaiian language makes it easier to inhabit that spot because it doesn't have gendered pronouns. In the Western context, Wong-Kalu uses "she" and "her" but prefers the word "o ia," which is a Hawaiian language pronoun used for all people.

"It doesn't matter whether you're coming from male to female or female to the male, and it doesn't matter what your physical articulation is," Wong-Kalu said. "We have elements of both. Sometimes we completely walk away from one and walk to the other. Sometimes we stay in the middle."

The "Mahu Magic" show on Tuesday was sponsored by the Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement, a nonprofit organization better known for administering rent relief and job training programs. The council normally holds its conventions in Hawaii but met in Nevada for the first time — coincidentally during Pride month — in an acknowledgement that more than half of all Native Hawaiians now live outside the islands.

Council CEO Kuhio Lewis said he wanted to shine a spotlight on gender-fluidity for those who have lost touch with Hawaiian culture because they've had to leave the islands due to rising housing costs and gentrification.

Some Native Hawaiian families now have two or three generations born outside Hawaii and need help connecting to their homeland, Lewis said.

But he also aimed to reach Native Hawaiians who have drifted from their culture in a Hawaii that's increasingly shaped by continental U.S. influences. About one-third of the 1,200 attendees flew to Las Vegas from Hawaii, while the remainder already lived outside the state.

"Unless we do something to honor, to recognize who we are, we're going to lose our identity," Lewis said.

A panel discussion addressed how traditional roles of mahu have evolved over time. More broadly, the convention featured workshops on topics like hula, Hawaiian language and affordable housing.

One dancer in "Mahu Magic" wore a white pantsuit, cape and towering feather headdress while lip-synching to "Sky" by Sonique. A trio danced hula to the modern favorite "Hawaii Calls" in halter-top gowns featuring red and white hibiscus flowers.

All 10 performers live as women. Many other drag shows feature men who live as men but dress as women for the show.

Mahu often have had important roles in Native Hawaiian culture as teachers, healers and keepers of knowledge and traditions.

One story reflecting this history is that of four mahu healers who visited Waikiki from Tahiti more than 500 years ago. Hawaiians placed four boulders on the beach to honor them, which are still visible today.

Despite these deep roots, mahu awareness in Hawaii has faded during centuries of foreign influence. Christian missionaries who first arrived in 1820 taught Hawaiians to shun anything deviating from clearly defined male and female roles. In 1893, businessmen backed by the U.S. government overthrew the Hawaiian monarchy and a few years later prohibited the teaching of Hawaiian language in schools. The U.S. annexed Hawaii in 1898, making it a territory.

Leikia Williams, the drag show's producer and a performer, said mahu was a derogatory word when she was growing up in Honolulu in the 1980s. She remembers people saying, "Stop acting mahu."

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 338 ~ 43 of 102

The support of her “drag house,” consisting of elder mahu and fellow mahu sisters, helped her cope. Williams said her house mother taught her and her sisters to “be who we want to be; be who we are, especially in public. To keep our heads held high.”

There’s more understanding today. Even so, a 2018 state report found transgender youth in Hawaii are three times more likely to consider suicide and make a suicide plan than their peers whose gender matches the one usually associated with the sex they were assigned at birth.

Increasingly, anti-LGBTQ+ language has flowed into Hawaii from states that have enacted laws to keep transgender children off girls sports teams and block them from receiving gender-affirming medical care.

Republican lawmakers introduced a bill at the Hawaii Legislature this year that would have required “separate sex-specific athletic teams or sports” in schools. The measure didn’t get a hearing in either the House or Senate, which are both dominated by Democrats.

Lawmakers overwhelmingly passed legislation enabling the state to replace marriage certificates for people who change their gender or sex. Gov. Josh Green, a Democrat, on Friday indicated he would either sign the bill or let it become law without his signature.

Wong-Kalu said influence from the continental U.S. exacerbates anti-mahu views in Hawaii and highlighting mahu during the Las Vegas event was important in countering the prejudice.

“This, for me, is about decolonizing our people to the degree that we understand our rightful place in our own home, of which we still do not have,” Wong-Kalu said.

Eight performers at “Mahu Magic” were Native Hawaiian and two were of Samoan ancestry, which Lewis said was fitting because the conversation about mahu is also one for broader Oceania. Other parts of Polynesia, such as Samoa and Tonga, have concepts similar to mahu. The Tahitian language even uses the same word.

Mahu also is similar to the term “two-spirit” used by Native Americans, Alaska Natives and First Nations communities in Canada for people who combine traits of men and women.

Williams related how performances can change minds. She shared how she can sense at drag shows when straight men in the audience are uncomfortable with mahu. But that changes when she takes the microphone. Afterward, those same men thank her, offer food and help carry her bags.

“That’s educating people and letting them know that we’re real,” Williams said. “We’re human. We’re here.”

McAvoy reported from Honolulu.

Israeli security forces kill Palestinian gunman who opened fire at military checkpoint

JERUSALEM (AP) — A Palestinian assailant opened fire at an Israeli military checkpoint in the occupied West Bank on Saturday before being shot and killed, Israeli police said, the latest incident in months of escalating violence.

The Palestinian gunman approached Israeli troops stationed at the Qalandiya checkpoint outside Jerusalem early in the morning, pulled out an M16 rifle and opened fire, the Israeli police said.

Israeli security forces said they shot back, killing the suspected assailant. According to the Israeli rescue service, two security guards in their 20s were hospitalized with minor wounds — at least one from bullet fragments. There was no immediate word on the attacker’s identity.

The shooting caps a bloody week in the West Bank that left 15 Palestinians and four Israelis dead.

An hourslong gun battle between Israeli security forces and Palestinian militants in the northern Jenin refugee camp killed seven Palestinians and wounded eight Israeli soldiers earlier this week. Two Palestinian gunmen then killed four Israeli civilians before being shot and killed.

Then, a rare Israeli airstrike by a pilotless drone killed three Palestinian militants in a car while Israeli settler revenge attacks left one Palestinian dead, many wounded and a trail of destruction through Palestinian towns.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 338 ~ 44 of 102

The spiraling violence has increased pressure on Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's far-right government, with its hard-liners calling for a broad military operation against Palestinian militants, as well as on the Palestinian Authority, which has come under criticism for failing to protect Palestinian civilians.

This year has been one of the deadliest for Palestinians in the West Bank in years. At least 136 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli fire in the West Bank so far in 2023, according to a tally by The Associated Press, nearly half of them affiliated with militant groups. As of Saturday, 24 people on the Israeli side have been killed in Palestinian attacks, most of them civilians.

Israel says most of the Palestinian dead this year were militants, but stone-throwing youths protesting the incursions and others not involved in confrontations have also been killed.

Israel captured the West Bank, along with east Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip, in the 1967 Mideast war. The Palestinians seek those territories for a future independent state.

'Rage giving' prompted by the end of Roe has dropped off, abortion access groups say

By THALIA BEATY and GLENN GAMBOA Associated Press

The "rage giving" did not last. Abortion access groups who received a windfall of donations following the Supreme Court's overturning of Roe v. Wade one year ago say those emergency grants have ended and individual and foundation giving has dropped off.

After the Dobbs decision, some major funders of abortion access also have ended or shifted funding from organizations working in states where abortion is now banned, said Naa Amisah-Hammond, senior director of grantmaking with Groundswell Fund, which funds grassroots groups organizing for reproductive justice.

Women's health and foster care nonprofits, who expected increased demand in areas where access to abortion has been eliminated or restricted, say they also haven't seen increased support.

Holly Calvasina said her experience as director of development at the reproductive health clinic CHOICES in Memphis, Tennessee, might provide an explanation. Like many working in the reproductive rights sector, Calvasina said she tried to prepare for the increase in need, even before a draft of the Supreme Court decision was leaked in May last year. While some funders saw the writing on the wall and stepped up support, others wanted to wait and see.

"I think (that) really speaks to kind of a fundamental issue with philanthropy and responding to an emergent crisis," Calvasina said. "Philanthropy moves really slowly and human rights crises unfold quickly."

The rollercoaster of giving also showed up for CHOICES in the \$150,000 in donations to their annual spring appeal last year. That's up from \$2,000 in 2021. This year, the appeal raised \$40,000.

Organizations in states where abortion has been banned or limited have needed to pivot, said Marsha Jones, executive director of The Afiya Center, based in Dallas. Her organization used donations received after the Dobbs decision to expand its birthing center, but she said funders are less interested in supporting maternal health than they were in supporting advocacy and practical support for abortions. She argues, as she has for years, that supporting reproductive justice is more than supporting abortion access.

"It is literally people wanting to choose full bodily autonomy," she said of those choosing to carry a pregnancy to term and others who do not.

Data on last year's charitable giving to any sector is hard to come by. The pandemic has slowed the public release of donor reports to the IRS, though a delay of up to two years was typical even before COVID-19 hit.

Donations to human services and public society benefit organizations, sectors that could include abortion access nonprofits, both declined in 2022, while donations to health organizations increased 5%, which is actually a decline when adjusted for inflation, according to the Giving USA report released last week.

But a special layer of opacity exists around funding for abortion access. Many donors fund anonymously, sometimes requiring grantees not to publicly disclose the source.

The largest historic funder, The Susan Thompson Buffett Foundation, eventually makes gifts public through tax filings, but the organization does not comment on support for abortion access and did not respond to

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 338 ~ 45 of 102

questions about whether or how its funding strategy changed in response to the Dobbs decision.

Another large funder, The David and Lucile Packard Foundation, said it is shifting or ending grants to organizations in most states where abortion is now illegal or significantly restricted. The foundation also allocated an additional \$14.1 million in funding last year in part to "shore up providers in safe haven states," and said it is considering funding maternal health, among other areas, in these states instead.

The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation said it provides steady support to grantees in all states to fund abortion care where it remains legal or advocacy against bans.

In general, giving to organizations specifically serving women and girls represents less than 2% of all donations, according to a research project of the Women's Philanthropy Institute at Indiana University's Lilly Family School of Philanthropy.

Calvasina thinks anonymous funding, especially from the largest foundations, perpetuates inequality within the movement. Others in the sector said donors have many reasons for wanting to be anonymous, including to avoid being targeted by groups opposing abortion.

One measure of the potential amount of funding available to reproductive health organizations is the extent of gifts from donor-advised funds hosted by the Silicon Valley Community Foundation to Planned Parenthood affiliates across the country. Those donations exceeded \$98 million in 2022, according to data from Candid, a nonprofit that compiles information about charitable giving. The foundation declined to speak about the gifts, citing its policy not to comment on DAF grants.

Seeing a drop in giving after a major event is not that unusual, said Una Osili, associate dean for research and international programs at the Lilly Family School.

"If you think about the decision to give, whether it's to a natural disaster or crisis, people hear about it and they want to participate to make a difference," Osili said.

Danielle Gletow, founder and executive director at One Simple Wish, a nonprofit connecting donors with foster children who have specific requests, said people are seeking out groups like hers offering direct support. But she worries that abortion access restrictions may further strain the foster care system.

In Texas, where the state's child welfare program is so overwhelmed that children sometimes sleep in office buildings, foster care workers fear the state's strict laws on abortion may force women to have children for whom they cannot care, adding to the foster children population.

"I don't think it's possible to break anything worse when it's already broken, if I'm being honest," Gletow said. "This is a system that's incredibly broken."

Philanthropic support has surged to states such as New Mexico, which passed laws protecting access to abortion and shielding abortion providers while bordering Texas and Oklahoma, where abortion is now banned. A coalition of local groups publicly asked incoming funders and groups to coordinate with them as recently as February.

Charlene Bencomo, executive director of Bold Futures, a leader of the coalition, said they ask new providers to accept Medicaid, which can cover abortion in the state, and to offer reproductive health services outside of abortion care.

"We continue to look for a higher quality of care, a better quality of care for our folks in New Mexico and for those who need to come here to access care that they cannot in their home state," Bencomo said.

Amissah-Hammond, of the Groundswell Fund, said she's waiting to see if funders who responded with emergency or one-time grants last year will continue to fund abortion access over the long term. For funders concerned about legal liabilities, she suggested they offer general operating support, rather than project-based grants, and accept updates over the phone.

"We're learning a lot from our peer funders who have been funding in global contexts," she said. "Where work for reproductive rights, health and justice has been criminalized for a long time and where LGBTQ rights has been criminalized and work, frankly, for democracy has been criminalized."

Associated Press coverage of philanthropy and nonprofits receives support through the AP's collaboration with The Conversation US, with funding from Lilly Endowment Inc. The AP is solely responsible for this

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 338 ~ 46 of 102

piled oral histories.

Last year, the local government council installed a plaque outside the Hob Inn that outlines the community's relationship with the soldiers, the violence and its aftermath.

The story "just can't be allowed to wither on the vine," Smith said. "As much as it's withered, we're just now trying to rejuvenate it whilst maintaining the accuracy."

THE BATTLE OF BAMBER BRIDGE

Despite their friendships with the GIs, villagers weren't able to head off the violence when Black soldiers, frustrated by their treatment and angry about news of race riots in Detroit, faced off with military police outfitted with batons and sidearms.

On that hot June night, Private Eugene Nunn was sitting at the Hob Inn bar when a white military police officer threatened to arrest him for wearing the wrong uniform. British soldiers and civilians intervened.

"Everyone was saying, 'Leave him alone. He just wants a drink. It's a hot day,'" Fell said as she recounted her mother's story. "People just didn't understand this viciousness."

When Nunn left the pub, the police were waiting. Tempers rose. A bottle smashed against the windshield of the police Jeep. Things escalated from there.

It wasn't until 4 a.m. that order was restored. Military authorities sought severe penalties to head off unrest at other bases.

Thirty-seven Black soldiers were charged with mutiny, riot and unlawful possession of weapons, and some 30 were convicted on some or all of the charges. Most received sentences of between three and 15 years in prison, combined with loss of pay and dishonorable discharges. As the allies prepared for the D-Day landings, many of the sentences were shortened to time served so the men could be cycled back into the war effort.

While the court martial criticized the white officers for poor leadership, the records give no indication that either they or the military police were disciplined.

LONGSTANDING CHANGE

Ken Werrell, a U.S. Air Force Academy graduate and retired professor of history at Radford University in Virginia, studied the court martial proceedings and reviewed other military records for an article published in 1975.

The documents show the accused were badly treated, Werrell told The Associated Press.

But the broader story is that senior generals, focused on improving morale and performance, quickly ordered changes in the treatment of Black troops. Many of the officers commanding Black units were replaced, additional recreation facilities were provided and the army deployed more racially mixed military police patrols.

"In this way, the Bamber Bridge affair was more than just a minor incident in World War II," Werrell wrote. "It was one of a number of incidents in the Black's and America's continuing crusade for freedom."

President Harry Truman in 1948 ordered the end of segregation in the U.S. military, though it took years to fully achieve that goal. Lloyd Austin, a Black man and retired four-star general in the Army, is now secretary of defense.

That progress was too late for Crossland, a former railroad worker was 25 when he died. Evidence in the court martial proceedings provided little detail on how he was killed, saying only that he was found gravely injured with a bullet near his heart. Officers said they believed he had been caught in cross-fire between two groups of Black soldiers.

Investigators placed most of the blame for the violence on the Black soldiers, describing them as a "mob" that was "determined on revenge at any cost," according to reports submitted during the court martial proceedings. But locals say they knocked on doors and told people to stay inside to avoid getting hurt.

RE-ASSESSING HISTORY

Nancy Crosland Adkins, the daughter of one of William's brothers, said she was never told about the circumstances of her uncle's death. The family later changed the spelling of its last name.

Adkins, of Upper Marlboro, Maryland, wants to know more about what happened at Bamber Bridge.

"Having dealt with direct discrimination myself by integrating the school system in North Carolina, and the racial injustice that my parents faced, I would love an investigation," she said.

Aaron Snipe, the spokesman for the U.S. Embassy in London, said he couldn't prejudge any military decision, but President Joe Biden's administration has shown a willingness to "right the wrongs of the past."

The U.S. Navy earlier this month issued a formal apology to the families of 15 Black sailors who were dishonorably discharged in 1940 after complaining that they were forced to serve as mess attendants who made beds and waited on tables. Earlier this month, the Army renamed a base for William Henry Johnson, a Black soldier who was awarded the Medal of Honor, the nation's highest military award, almost a century after he was wounded 21 times while beating back attacking forces during World War I.

Snipe also said he planned to pay tribute to the people of Bamber Bridge at an 80th anniversary event. "Part of this story is about their unwillingness to accept segregation orders or regulations that were pushed on them," he said. "They pushed back ... at a time where it might have been more convenient for local folks to just go along with what the United States, the United States military, had said. They're to be commended for that."

Associated Press writer Ben Finley in Norfolk, Virginia, and researcher Rhonda Shafner in New York contributed to this report.

Kansas' attorney general is moving to block trans people from changing their birth certificates

By JOHN HANNA AP Political Writer

TOPEKA, Kan. (AP) — Transgender people born in Kansas could be prevented from changing their birth certificates to reflect their gender identities if the state's conservative Republican attorney is successful with a legal move he launched late Friday.

Attorney General Kris Kobach filed a request in federal court asking a judge to end a requirement for Kansas to allow transgender people to change their birth certificates.

U.S. District Judge Daniel Crabtree imposed the requirement in 2019 to settle a lawsuit filed by four transgender Kansas residents against three state health department officials over a policy that critics said prevented transgender people from making changes even after transitioning, legally changing their names and obtaining new driver's licenses and Social Security cards.

It wasn't clear whether Kobach's effort would succeed, given a U.S. Supreme Court decision in 2020 declaring a federal law barring sex discrimination in employment also prevents discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

Also in 2022, federal judges in Idaho and Ohio struck down rules against transgender people changing their birth certificates. But this month, federal judges in Tennessee and Oklahoma dismissed challenges to two of the nation's few remaining state policies against such changes.

Kobach's move appears to be in keeping with a new, sweeping Kansas law taking effect July 1 that rolls back transgender rights and was enacted by the Republican-controlled Legislature over Democratic Gov. Laura Kelly's veto. A memo filed electronically with the request by Kobach shortly before midnight cited the law as a reason to revisit the 2019 settlement.

The memo argued Crabtree's order makes it "impossible" to follow the new state law and that since the Legislature "has spoken," the state health department, which handles birth certificates, is now "bound to execute the law as written."

Kobach already had scheduled a Monday afternoon news conference at the Statehouse to discuss enforcement of the new law.

Crabtree's 2019 order blocked a policy imposed by former Republican Gov. Sam Brownback's administration that was among the toughest against birth certificate changes in the U.S. Kelly is a strong supporter of LGBTQ+ rights and her administration agreed to settle the lawsuit less than six months after she took office.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 338 ~ 48 of 102

That decision came almost a year after Crabtree declared the Kansas policy violated transgender people's constitutional rights to due legal process and equal treatment under the law. His order notes that federal courts in Idaho and Puerto Rico had struck down no-change policies. Kobach's memo called those rulings outdated.

The American Civil Liberties Union of Kansas and the LGBTQ+-rights legal group Lambda Legal, representing the four Kansas residents, condemned Kobach's move. Lambda Legal's Omar Gonzalez-Pagan called it "unnecessary and cruel."

Kansas ACLU Executive Director Micah Kubic added in a statement: "Mr. Kobach should rethink the wisdom — and the sheer indecency — of this attempt to weaponize his office's authority to attack transgender Kansans just trying to live their lives."

The new Kansas law is designed to prevent transgender people from using restrooms, locker rooms and other single-gender facilities associated with their identities. At least nine other states have such laws, mostly focused on public schools.

Kobach has said he believes the new Kansas law also prevents transgender people from changing their driver's licenses, though the law contains no specific enforcement mechanisms. Lawmakers wrote the bill so it could prevent transgender people from changing their birth certificates, except for the 2019 federal court order, without specifically mentioning either birth certificates or driver's licenses.

For weeks, a project of Kansas Legal Services, a nonprofit law firm, encouraged transgender Kansans to change their driver's licenses before the new law took effect. Kelly's administration, which oversees the licensing of drivers, hasn't said whether it believes such changes would still be allowed under the new law.

Ellen Bertels, the attorney spearheading the effort, said that while a transgender person could sue after the law takes effect to protect people's right to change their driver's licenses, a lawsuit from a state official against Kelly's administration could seek to prevent such changes.

"That's it's kind of the obvious place that they would end up," Bertels said.

As for birth certificates, the small number of states not allowing transgender people to change them shrunk through previous federal court challenges like the one in Kansas.

The ACLU of Montana plans to challenge a rule imposed there last year barring people from changing the sex listed on their birth certificates, according Alex Rate, one of its attorneys. The state has tightened its rules since GOP Gov. Greg Gianforte took office in 2021, and the dispute there has played out before a state-court judge.

Previously, starting in 2017 when Democrat Steve Bullock was governor, Montana allowed transgender people to change their birth certificates by filling out an affidavit.

LGBTQ+ rights advocates say changing birth certificates, driver's licenses and other records to reflect a transgender person's gender identity is key to affirming their identities and often greatly improves their mental health.

Policies against changing birth certificates and other documents have practical implications for transgender residents, too. For example, Kansas requires voters to show a photo ID at the polls or when obtaining an absentee ballot.

Critics of the new Kansas law contend it is designed to legally erase transgender people.

It declares that state law recognizes only two genders, male and female, and defines them based on a person's "biological reproductive system" at birth. A woman is someone whose system "is designed to produce ova," while a male only is someone with a system "designed to fertilize the ova of a female."

The law then declares "important governmental objectives" of protecting people's health safety and privacy justify having sex-segregated spaces in line with those definitions.

Associated Press Writer Amy Hanson in Helena, Montana, contributed to this story.

Follow John Hanna on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/apjdhanna>

Want a climate-friendly flight? It's going to take a while and cost you more

By DAVID KOENIG AP Airlines Writer

When it comes to flying, going green may cost you more. And it's going to take a while for the strategy to take off.

Sustainability was a hot topic this week at the Paris Air Show, the world's largest event for the aviation industry, which faces increasing pressure to reduce the climate-changing greenhouse gases that aircraft spew.

Even the massive orders at the show got a emissions-reduction spin: Airlines and manufacturers said the new planes will be more fuel-efficient than the ones they replace.

But most of those planes will burn conventional, kerosene-based jet fuel. Startups are working feverishly on electric-powered aircraft, but they won't catch on as quickly as electric vehicles.

"It's a lot easier to pack a heavy battery into a vehicle if you don't have to lift it off the ground," said Gernot Wagner, a climate economist at New York University.

That means sustainable aviation fuel has become the industry's best hope to achieve its promise of net zero emissions by 2050. Aviation produces 2% to 3% of worldwide carbon emissions, but its share is expected to grow as travel increases and other industries become greener.

Sustainable fuel, however, accounts for just 0.1% of all jet fuel. Made from sources like used cooking oil and plant waste, SAF can be blended with conventional jet fuel but costs much more.

Suppliers are "going to be able to kind of set the price," Molly Wilkinson, an American Airlines vice president, said at the air show. "And we fear that at that point, that price eventually is going to trickle down to the passenger in some form of a ticket price."

With such a limited supply, critics say airlines are making overly ambitious promises and exaggerating how quickly they can ramp up the use of SAF. The industry even has skeptics: Nearly one-third of aviation sustainability officers in a GE Aerospace survey doubt the industry will hit its net zero goal by 2050.

Delta Air Lines is being sued in U.S. federal court by critics who say the carrier falsely bills itself as the world's first carbon-neutral airline, and that Delta's claim rests on carbon offsets that are largely bogus. The Atlanta-based airline says the charges are "without legal merit."

Across the Atlantic, a consumer group known by its French acronym, BEUC, filed a complaint this week with the European Union's executive arm, accusing 17 airlines of greenwashing.

The group says airlines are misleading consumers and violating rules on unfair commercial practices by encouraging customers to pay extra to help finance development of SAF and offset future carbon emissions created by flying.

In one case, the group's researchers found Air France charging up to 138 euros (\$150) for the green option.

"Sustainable aviation fuels, they are indeed the biggest technological potential to decarbonize the aviation sector, but the main problem ... is that they are not available," said Dimitri Vergne, a senior policy officer at BEUC.

"We know that before the end of the next decade — at least — they won't be available in massive quantities" and won't be the main source of fuel for planes, Vergne added.

Producers say SAF reduces greenhouse gas emissions by up to 80%, compared with regular jet fuel, over its life cycle.

Airlines have been talking about becoming greener for years. They were rattled by the rise of "flight shaming," a movement that encourages people to find less-polluting forms of transportation — or reduce travel altogether.

The issue gained urgency this year when European Union negotiators agreed on new rules requiring airlines to use more sustainable fuel starting in 2025 and rising sharply in later years.

The United States is pushing incentives instead of mandates.

A law signed last year by President Joe Biden will provide tax breaks for developing cleaner jet fuel, but

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 338 ~ 50 of 102

one of the credits will expire in just two years. Wilkinson, the American Airlines executive, said that was too short to entice sustainable fuel producers and that the credit should be extended by 10 years or longer.

The International Air Transport Association, an airline trade group, estimates that SAF could contribute 65% of the emissions reductions needed for the industry to hit its 2050 net-zero goal.

But very few flights are powered by SAF because of the limited supply and infrastructure.

Just before the Paris Air Show opened, President Emmanuel Macron announced that France would contribute 200 million euros (\$218 million) toward a 1 billion euro (\$1.1 billion) plant to make SAF.

Many airlines have touted investments in SAF producers such as World Energy, which has a plant in Paramount, California, and Finland's Neste.

United Airlines plans to triple its use of SAF this year, to 10 million gallons — but it burned 3.6 billion gallons of fuel last year.

Some see sustainable fuel as a bridge to cleaner technologies, including larger electric planes or aircraft powered by hydrogen. But packing enough power to run a large electric plane would require a fantastic leap in battery technology.

Hydrogen must be chilled and stored somewhere — it couldn't be carried in the wings of today's planes, as jet fuel is.

"Hydrogen sounds like a good idea. The problem is the more you look into the details, the more you realize it's an engineering challenge but also an economics challenge," Richard Aboulafia of AeroDynamic Advisory, an aerospace consultancy, said at the Paris Air Show. "It's within the realm of possibility, (but) not for the next few decades."

Koenig reported from Dallas. AP journalists Jade Le Deley and Tristan Werkmeister in Le Bourget, France, and Kelvin Chan in Toronto contributed.

In Iran, a restorer brings back to life famed Cadillac Sevilles once assembled in the country

By AMIR VAHDAT Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — The sleek, polished dark blue 1978 Cadillac Seville eased slowly out of a showroom near Iran's capital, its driver carefully inserting the 8-track tape that came with it to blast the sounds of a time long since past.

The Sevilles, once assembled in Iran, represented the height of luxury in the country just before the 1979 Islamic Revolution. General Motors had partnered with an Iranian firm to build the sedans, selling them for two-and-a-half times the price in America at the zenith of the country's oil wealth.

Today, Khosro Dahaghin's passion for restoring the cars means he carefully examines each frame, component and stitch of the Sevilles in Iran, a challenge that's only grown as parts become scarce, the vehicles get older and as the country faces U.S. sanctions over its nuclear program.

"The most luxurious and the most special car that was assembled in Iran was Cadillac Iran," Dahaghin told The Associated Press as he wore a necklace bearing the iconic Cadillac crest. "The first time this car was assembled outside U.S. soil was in Iran. At that time I can say no other brand could rival this car in any aspect imaginable."

To the uninitiated, the Seville may seem like a strange pick for a sought-after antique car with its almost boxy frame and wood-accented interior. However, it represented a sea change for Cadillac at a time when American buyers sought the smaller luxury cars coming from European manufacturers. Cadillac had been better known for the massive, finned cars of the past and the Seville's fuel economy and handling caught the attention of drivers.

In the Seville, car buyers got a powerful, fuel-injected V8 engine, a pillowy interior, power seats and automatic door locks and windows. A base model Seville initially sold for \$12,479 in 1975 when it entered the market — the equivalent today of over \$70,000. General Motors produced nearly 57,000 Sevilles in the 1978 model year alone.

content. For all of AP's philanthropy coverage, visit <https://apnews.com/hub/philanthropy>.

UK village marks struggle against US Army racism in World War II

By DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

BAMBER BRIDGE, England (AP) — The village of Bamber Bridge in northwestern England is proud of the blow it struck against racism in the U.S. military during World War II.

When an all-Black truck regiment was stationed in the village, residents refused to accept the segregation ingrained in the U.S. Army. Ignoring pressure from British and American authorities, pubs welcomed the GIs, local women chatted and danced with them, and English soldiers drank alongside men they saw as allies in the war against fascism.

But simmering tensions between Black soldiers and white military police exploded on June 24, 1943, when a dispute outside a pub escalated into a night of gunfire and rebellion that left Private William Crossland dead and dozens of soldiers from the truck regiment facing court martial. When Crossland's niece learned about the circumstances of her uncle's death from an Associated Press reporter, she called for a new investigation to uncover exactly how he died.

The community has chosen to focus on its stand against segregation as it commemorates the 80th anniversary of what's now known as the Battle of Bamber Bridge and America reassesses its past treatment of Black men and women in the armed forces.

"I think maybe it's a sense of pride that there was no bigotry towards (the soldiers)," said Valerie Fell, who was just 2 in 1943 but whose family ran Ye Olde Hob Inn, the 400-year-old thatched-roof pub where the conflict started. "They deserved the respect of the uniform that they were wearing. ... That's how people felt about it."

That was in stark contrast to the treatment Black soldiers received in the wartime Army, which was still segregated by law.

The men of the 1511th Quartermaster Truck Regiment (Aviation) stationed at Bamber Bridge complained that they received poor food and often had to sleep in their trucks when they stopped at white bases, according to evidence presented during the court martial proceedings. They also said white military police harassed Black troops, hassling them for minor transgressions that were often ignored for other soldiers.

EXPORTING SEGREGATION

Black soldiers accounted for about 10% of the American troops who flooded into Britain during the war. Serving in segregated units led by white officers, most were relegated to non-combat roles such as driving trucks that delivered supplies to military bases.

U.S. authorities tried to extend those policies beyond their bases, asking pubs and restaurants to separate the races.

Bamber Bridge, then home to about 6,800 people, wasn't the only British community to resist this pressure. In a country that was almost entirely white, there was no tradition of segregation, and after four years of war people welcomed any help they received from overseas.

What's different about Bamber Bridge is the desire of local people to preserve this story and pass it on to others, said Alan Rice, co-director of the Institute for Black Atlantic Research at the University of Central Lancashire.

"If we're going to have a fight against racism or fascism, these are the stories we need to talk about," Rice said. "If you're fighting fascism, which these people were, it's ludicrous, absolutely ludicrous, that the U.S. Army (were) encouraging a form of fascism — segregation."

Clinton Smith, head of the Black history group in nearby Preston, was among those who revived interest in the Battle of Bamber Bridge in the 1980s when he discovered bullet holes in the side of a bank and started asking long-time residents what had happened.

That helped attract wider interest, with local blogger Derek Rogerson publishing a short book, "The Battle of Bamber Bridge: The True Story," that includes photos of Black troops hosting a Christmas party for village children and watching movies with kids perched on their laps. A filmmaker, Danny Lyons, com-

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 338 ~ 52 of 102

Back then, Iran had the only Cadillac production outside of the United States. GM created General Motors Iran Ltd., which produced the Seville and other vehicles from so-called knock-down kits from Detroit. The Seville represented the most luxurious vehicle on the road assembled in Iran, under the supervision of American engineers.

The Sevilles went for some \$35,000 at the time they were introduced — more than what American consumers paid, in part due to higher import duties.

“As soon as they have the money, they want a pair of Levi’s and a car,” a General Motors official said of Iranians, according to a New York Times story about the Seville there in 1977.

How many were built remains a question among Iran’s car aficionados.

Saeed Shobeiri, the editor-in-chief of Machine Magazine in Tehran, said estimates ranged as high as over 2,600. Michael T. Albano, a Cadillac spokesman in the U.S., said he believed some 2,500 were built.

But the 1979 Islamic Revolution saw the overthrow of the American-backed shah and the installation of Iran’s theocratic government. Americans and GM left the country. Sevilles continued to be built from the remaining knock-down kits for several more years as Iran nationalized the GM Iran plant, creating the manufacturer Pars Khodro that stills exists today.

GM ultimately was awarded some \$20 million from the Iran-United States Claims Tribunal, set up as part of the Algiers Accords that saw the captives taken at the U.S. Embassy in Iran freed. Today, Shobeiri estimated as many as 60 Sevilles are street-worthy, with more than 100 others unable to be driven.

That’s where Dahaghin and his colleagues come in. Since 2013 after being inspired by the former MTV reality show “Pimp My Ride,” Dahaghin restores Cadillac Sevilles at his garage in Roudehen, some 45 kilometers (30 miles) east of downtown Tehran.

There, Seville frames sit outside a shop bearing the Cadillac crest. Inside, Dahaghin runs his hands over every line of a car body, those not yet worked on bearing signs of rust and their age. One of the Seville’s big V8 engines sat alongside.

“Over time, these cars became broken and worn out as a result of poor usage and lack of proper maintenance,” Dahaghin said. “Some of them were destroyed. Now we restore these cars after years and when they are back on streets they are both very beautiful and very special compared to other cars.”

But the restoration is not easy. Each vehicle can take up to a year and a half to finish to Dahaghin’s specifications. Finding components can be a challenge as well, with some occasionally being hand-carried back into Iran by those traveling abroad.

“I will not sell this piece of art to anyone who makes an offer,” Dahaghin said. “The buyer must appreciate the value of this artwork.”

A restored Seville can go for as much as \$40,000 in Iran now, said Mohammad Khorshidzadeh, a classic car specialist. That’s a fortune as the Iranian rial now trades at 492,000 to \$1. However, Iran has shut itself off from the foreign car market since the re-imposition of sanctions since then-President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew America from Tehran’s nuclear deal in 2018. That means a vehicle like a 2016 Mercedes-Benz S-Class can go for \$400,000.

General Motors isn’t selling cars now to Iran to comply with U.S. sanctions, but “should economic situations evolve, GM will assess the market situation and our business priorities,” Albano said.

“We were unaware. However, not surprised” about Iranians rehabilitating old Sevilles, Albano said. “Cadillac’s appeal among young customers continues to increase around the globe.”

For fans of the classics and the Iranian automotive history, like 29-year-old Arsalan Asgharzadeh who recently bought a refurbished Seville from Dahaghin, nothing compares to a vintage Cadillac.

“If you experience driving a Cadillac, you will always want to drive a Cadillac,” Asgharzadeh said.

Associated Press writer Jon Gambrell in Kyiv, Ukraine, contributed to this report.

Nearly 1/3 of the US homeless population lives in California. This veterinarian cares for the pets

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 338 ~ 53 of 102

By JANIE McCAULEY Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP) — An elevated train clangs along tracks above Dr. Kwane Stewart as the veterinarian makes his way through a chain link gate to ask a man standing near a parked RV whether he might know of any street pets in need.

Michael Evans immediately goes for his 11-month-old pit bull, Bear, his beloved companion living beneath the rumbling San Francisco Bay Area commuter trains.

"Focus. Sit. That's my boy," Evans instructs the high-energy puppy as he eagerly accepts Stewart's offer.

A quick check of the dog reveals a moderate ear infection that could have made Bear so sick in a matter of weeks he might have required sedation. Instead, right there, Dr. Stewart applies a triple treatment drop of antibiotic, anti-fungal and steroids that should start the healing process.

"This is my son right here, my son. He's my right-hand man," an emotional Evans says of Bear, who shares the small RV in Oakland. "It's a blessing, really."

"The Street Vet," as Stewart is known, has been supporting California's homeless population and their pets for almost a decade, ever since he spontaneously helped a man with a flea-infested dog outside of a convenience store. Since then, Stewart regularly walks the heart of Los Angeles' infamous Skid Row, giving him a glimpse into the state's homelessness crisis — and also just how much these people cherish and depend on their pets.

After treating Bear, Stewart hands Evans, a Louisiana transplant, a list of the medicine he provided along with contact information in case the dog needs further treatment. Stewart always promises to cover all expenses.

"It was a good catch," Stewart said before heading out on his way to the next stop, in West Oakland.

California is home to nearly a third of the nation's homeless population, according to federal data. About two-thirds of California's homeless population is unsheltered, meaning they live outside, often packed into encampments in major cities and along roadways. Nationally, up to 10% of homeless people have pets, according to an estimate from the advocacy group Pets of the Homeless. Stewart believes that number is greater.

Homeless shelters often don't allow pets, forcing people to make heart-wrenching decisions. Stewart sees it as his mission to help as many of them as he can.

A 52-year-old former college hurdler at New Mexico now living in San Diego, Stewart is a lifelong animal lover who grew up in Texas and New Mexico trying to save strays — or at least feed and care for them. He founded Project Street Vet, a nonprofit charity dedicated to helping homeless pets. Stewart funded the group himself for years, saving a chunk of his paycheck before later gaining sponsors and donors.

There's plenty of heartbreak in Stewart's work, too. He once performed emergency surgery on a pregnant chihuahua and the two puppies didn't make it. But more often than not these pet owners are beyond grateful for Stewart's kindness. He guesses that maybe 1 in 25 times does someone turn down his help.

Stewart hollers "Hello?" outside tents, makeshift structures or campers. He can usually tell there's a pet if he sees a dog bowl or animal toy. He purposely wears his navy scrub top with his name so nobody mistakes him for animal control or other authorities and feels threatened.

"People are reticent, they don't always know why I'm coming up to them. If they're going to you to beg or panhandle, it's different but if you come up on them they don't know if you're law enforcement or you have an agenda," he said, "so I do take it very slow and I'll announce myself from afar."

Approaching Misty Fancher to see if her pit bull, Addie — purchased at a nearby gas station for \$200 — might need shots, Stewart offers, "Can she have treats so we can make friends?"

"Sometimes I pull over and just talk," Stewart explained.

Addie is Fancher's first pet as an adult, and provides the 42-year-old with some comfort that she is safe living in a relatively unstable neighborhood of Oakland.

"She's a very good girl," Fancher said. "She keeps a lot of trouble away. She protects me. She'll bite someone if they act aggressive or anything toward me. She has before. But she just discourages them from even trying."

Stewart notices a puncture on the dog's paw to monitor and also gives her a rabies shot, writing out a certificate for Fancher to keep as proof her dog is vaccinated. He leaves her with tablets for de-worming, treatments for fleas and ticks and — as usual — his contact information.

A little while later, Stewart stops on the outskirts of a park nearby. He walks the perimeter and encounters an RV owned by Eric Clark, who has lived in the same downtown spot for seven years. He has a male bulldog, pregnant pit bull and another pregnant Doberman.

"It's hard to get to the vet," Clark said. "I appreciate you. They're family."

Stewart is happy he can make a small difference like this with a largely misunderstood community. He strives to treat every person on the streets with the same professionalism and care as he would a patient at his veterinary clinic. His mantra: no judgement, just help.

"They live in the shadows. They live amongst us but not with us," he said. "... It is really rewarding. It gets to you a little bit. When they tear up about the tough times they've had, you try to care for them, support them."

Librarian gathering in Chicago includes training to battle book bans in communities and schools

By CLAIRE SAVAGE Associated Press/Report for America

CHICAGO (AP) — Book bans and how to fight them will be a major focus of the American Library Association's annual meeting this weekend in Chicago.

Librarians may attend sessions aimed at helping them confidently counter book challenges, fight legislative censorship and ensure "access to information and the freedom to read." All day Saturday, attendees are invited to climb atop a giant chair to read their favorite banned book.

"With an unparalleled rise in challenges and bans and legislation suppressing access to books and learning materials in libraries, schools, and universities, it is more important than ever to join forces in the fight against banning books!" the event description reads.

The conference brings together authors, educators and librarians as several states push to restrict access to books in schools and libraries, overwhelmingly those about race, ethnicity and LGBTQ+ topics. The association in March released data showing a record 1,269 demands to censor library books in the U.S. in 2022, a 20-year high.

"Addressing book censorship and protecting library users' intellectual freedom, protecting librarians' ability to provide for information in their communities, is at the forefront of this year's meeting," said Deborah Caldwell-Stone, director of ALA's Office for Intellectual Freedom and executive director of the Freedom to Read Foundation.

"We have almost two dozen programs addressing intellectual freedom, advocacy ... attacks on public education and public libraries, all intended to equip our members with the knowledge they need to go out and advocate and defend the right to read in their libraries," she said.

Parents always have the right to choose what their children read, but they don't have the right to restrict access for the whole community, said Christine Emeran, director of the Youth Free Expression Program of the National Coalition Against Censorship, a First Amendment advocacy organization.

"You can't just concede to demands of a particular group of parents and to censor libraries," she said.

Emeran, who is scheduled to be featured in a panel discussion called "Help! They're coming for our books!" at the conference Sunday, began to notice an increase in book bans starting in 2021, at the beginning of President Joe Biden's term. She attributed the shift to "a cultural backlash" against changing views on LGBTQ+ issues, women's rights and the Black Lives Matter movement.

Local libraries are calling in the National Coalition Against Censorship for help now more than ever. In the past, the organization assisted on a few book ban cases per year. "Now we're getting two or three a week," Emeran said.

"Librarians are under pressure and they're feeling frustrated, discouraged," said Emeran, who encouraged

readers to support local libraries, attend school board meetings and get involved in their communities to protect the right to read.

Groups such as Moms for Liberty, No Left Turn in Education and Citizens Defending Freedom have had an outsized effect on what is allowed to be read, she said.

"The majority may oppose censorship as a whole. But the problem is that the majority are silent," Em-eran said.

Savage is a corps member for the Associated Press/Report for America Statehouse News Initiative. Report for America is a nonprofit national service program that places journalists in local newsrooms to report on undercovered issues.

US and Canada start the process of determining how the Titanic-bound submersible imploded

By PATRICK WHITTLE and JENNIFER McDERMOTT Associated Press

Authorities from the U.S. and Canada began the process of investigating the cause of the fatal Titan submersible implosion even as they grappled with questions of who was responsible for determining how the tragedy unfolded.

A formal inquiry has not yet been launched because maritime agencies are still busy searching the area where the vessel was destroyed, killing all five people aboard, the U.S. Coast Guard said Friday. Debris was located about 12,500 feet (3,810 meters) underwater, several hundred feet away from the Titanic wreckage it was on its way to explore.

The U.S. Coast Guard led the initial search and rescue mission, which was a massive international effort that likely cost millions of dollars.

It was not entirely clear Friday who would have the authority to lead what is sure to be a complex investigation involving several countries. OceanGate Expeditions, the company that owned and operated the Titan, is based in the U.S. but the submersible was registered in the Bahamas. OceanGate is based in Everett, Washington, but closed when the Titan was found. Meanwhile, the Titan's mother ship, the Polar Prince, was from Canada, and those killed were from England, Pakistan, France, and the U.S.

The National Transportation Safety Board said Friday that the U.S. Coast Guard has declared the loss of the Titan submersible to be a "major marine casualty" and the Coast Guard will lead the investigation. NTSB spokesperson Peter Knudson said that information was provided to the agency's senior management by Coast Guard officials, and the NTSB has joined the investigation.

The Coast Guard has not confirmed that it will take the lead. Coast Guard headquarters said the Coast Guard First District in Boston will discuss future operations and plans, but did not say when. The First District did not respond to phone and email messages seeking comment Friday.

Meanwhile, the Transportation Safety Board of Canada said Friday that it is launching an investigation into the Polar Prince. Seventeen crew members and 24 others were on board the ship during the Titan's journey.

The deep-sea investigations promise to be long and painstaking, as is the nature of investigations in the murky depths of the ocean.

"This is an incredibly unforgiving environment down there on the seafloor," said Rear Adm. John Mauger, of the Coast Guard First District.

How the overall investigation will proceed is complicated by the fact that the world of deep-sea exploration is not well-regulated. Deep-sea expeditions like those offered by OceanGate are scrutinized less than the companies that launch people into space, noted Salvatore Mercogliano, a history professor at Campbell University in North Carolina who focuses on maritime history and policy.

A key part of any investigation is likely to be the Titan itself. Questions have been raised about whether the vessel was destined for disaster because of its unconventional design and its creator's refusal to submit to independent checks that are standard in the industry

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 338 ~ 56 of 102

The Titan was not registered as a U.S. vessel or with international agencies that regulate safety. And it wasn't classified by a maritime industry group that sets standards on matters such as hull construction.

OceanGate CEO Stockton Rush, who was piloting the Titan when it imploded, complained that regulations can stifle progress.

"Bringing an outside entity up to speed on every innovation before it is put into real-world testing is anathema to rapid innovation," Rush wrote in a blog post on his company's website.

One question that seems at least partially resolved is when the implosion likely happened. After the Titan was reported missing, the Navy went back and analyzed its acoustic data and found an "anomaly" Sunday that was consistent with an implosion or explosion in the general vicinity of where the vessel was operating when communications were lost, said a senior U.S. Navy official.

The Navy passed on the information to the Coast Guard, which continued its search because the data was not considered definitive, according to the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss a sensitive acoustic detection system.

The Titan launched at 8 a.m. that day and was reported overdue that afternoon about 435 miles (700 kilometers) south of St. John's, Newfoundland. Rescuers rushed ships, planes and other equipment to the area.

Any sliver of hope that remained for finding the crew alive was wiped away early Thursday, when the Coast Guard announced that debris had been found near the Titanic.

Killed in the implosion were Rush, two members of a prominent Pakistani family, Shahzada Dawood and his son Suleman Dawood; British adventurer Hamish Harding; and Titanic expert Paul-Henri Nargeolet.

A flurry of lawsuits is expected, but filing them will be complex and it's unclear how successful they will be. Plaintiffs will run into the problem of establishing jurisdiction, which could be tricky, just as it will be for the investigation, said Steve Flynn, a retired Coast Guard officer and director of Northeastern University's Global Resilience Institute.

The implosion happened "basically in a regulatory no man's land," Flynn said.

"There was essentially no oversight," Flynn said.

James Cameron, who directed the blockbuster movie "Titanic" and has made multiple dives to the iconic ship's wreckage, told the BBC that he knew an "extreme catastrophic event" had happened as soon as he heard the submersible had lost navigation and communications at the same time.

"For me, there was no doubt," Cameron said. "There was no search. When they finally got an ROV (remotely operated vehicle) down there that could make the depth, they found it within hours. Probably within minutes."

At least 46 people successfully traveled on OceanGate's submersible to the Titanic wreck site in 2021 and 2022, according to letters the company filed with a U.S. District Court in Norfolk, Virginia, that oversees matters involving the Titanic shipwreck.

But questions about the submersible's safety were raised by both by a former company employee and former passengers.

Associated Press writers Lolita C. Baldor in Washington; Ben Finley in Norfolk, Virginia; Holly Ramer in Concord, New Hampshire; David Sharp, in Portland, Maine; and Gene Johnson in Seattle contributed to this report.

Analysis: Donald Trump's war on truth confronts another test with voters

By DAVID KLEPPER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The cherry tree folklore is too good to be true, but it's no lie that George Washington had a thing for the truth. "I hold the maxim no less applicable to public than to private affairs, that honesty is the best policy," he wrote in his farewell address.

A few decades later, another future president's reputation for veracity earned him a well known nick-

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 338 ~ 57 of 102

name: Honest Abe Lincoln.

Then there's Donald Trump, who during his presidency faced questions about business dealings in Moscow. "I have nothing to do with Russia," he said in 2016. He switched stories when the facts of his decades-long effort to build a luxury tower there emerged. "Everybody" had always known about the project, according to Trump, who suggested only a sucker would drop such a proposal just because they wanted to serve their country as president.

"Why should I lose lots of opportunities?" Trump said.

America has had prevaricators in the Oval Office before, but never one who has been at war with the truth as regularly, on so many different subjects. As a candidate and as president, Trump demonstrated a keen ability to use broadcast and social media to amplify his distortions, and found remarkable success in convincing large chunks of the American public.

As Trump seeks a second term while fighting federal charges, the nation faces the prospects of another campaign riddled with falsehoods and misinformation, and the not-impossible outcome that such a well-documented purveyor like Trump could be returned to the White House by an electorate that either believes his falsehoods, or doesn't care.

"This is a test moment. We haven't been in a situation like this," said Kathleen Hall Jamieson, director of the Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania. Jamieson said that before Trump, the assumption was that certain lies — lies that undermine faith in democracy or the courts, for instance — would be disqualifying for a person seeking public office. "If saying the election was rigged doesn't fall into that category, then what does?"

As a candidate, Trump made misinformation a major campaign tactic, routinely using falsehoods to demean his rivals, as he did when he bizarrely asserted that Ted Cruz's father may have played a role in the Kennedy assassination. Cruz is now an unapologetic Trump supporter.

As a president, Trump misled Americans about economic indicators, about a hurricane, about climate change and about his past actions and meetings with foreign leaders. While leading the nation through the pandemic he underplayed the severity of coronavirus while endorsing fake cures.

In today's fragmented information ecosystem, efforts by journalists to fact-check the president didn't always reach those who accepted his words as truth. That may be changing, according to one Republican strategist who said he thinks his party is waking up to Trump's alternative fact universe.

"To me, he's sort of a tragic 77-year-old individual who is totally out of touch with reality, sort of creates his own reality," said Craig Fuller, who served in the administrations of Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush. Fuller said he believes the relatively large field of Republicans vying with Trump for the GOP endorsement is a sign that many voters want a more honest alternative, even as a large field also improves Trump's chances of winning.

"I think it's almost too dangerous to contemplate," Fuller said when asked to imagine a second Trump term.

A message seeking comment from Trump's campaign was not immediately returned on Friday.

During his presidency, Trump lied so often — in person, on TV, on Twitter — that tallies of his falsehoods quickly crested 100, then 1,000, then 10,000 and then 30,000. An entire wikipedia page was created dedicated to keeping track.

Elections and voting have long been the most frequent target of Trump's mistruths. He won the 2016 race but claimed that it was rigged anyway because he lost the popular vote. He declared the 2020 race rigged even before Election Day, and said before the vote that the only way he could lose the election was due to cheating. Proof was never offered, and after the election, Trump's claims were rejected by dozens of courts, including ones overseen by Trump-appointed judges.

It was Trump's lies about democracy, and about the integrity of elections and the courts, that worry experts on voting, politics and history the most.

"It's not the first step, it's the 100th step on the road to despotism," Jeffrey Engel, director of the Center for Presidential History at Southern Methodist University, said of Trump's attacks on judicial independence

and law enforcement. "What's shocking to me is how open Trump is about it."

Conflicts between presidents, Congress and the courts are a fundamental part of American government, Engel said, and plenty of presidents have shaded the truth about failings personal and public. But none have openly defied another branch in the way that Trump has.

For months before the Jan. 6 attack on the Capitol, Trump implored supporters with a steady stream of false claims about rigged elections, voting by mail and stuffed ballot boxes. He then did little to disperse the violent crowd that soon descended on the Capitol. The congressional investigation into the attack concluded that Trump engaged in a conspiracy to overturn the election.

To activists working to strengthen American democracy, the deadly riot showed what happens when lies are allowed to take the place of truth.

"On Jan. 6 we re-learned how fragile our democracy is," said Nathan Empsall, an Episcopal priest who leads Faithful America, a nonprofit religious organization that has criticized efforts to rewrite the history of Jan. 6. "If we don't remember that, if we forget what happened, we may not be able to hold the line next time."

While Trump didn't create the factors that led to our current era of polarization and misinformation, he did exploit those factors, said Julian E. Zelizer, a Princeton University historian and political scientist.

"I don't know if Donald Trump is the chicken or the egg but I know he's part of the scramble," Zelizer said. "He entered politics in an age of social media and growing issues of distrust and he catalyzed them. He poured gasoline on the smouldering flames, and the statements he makes apparently don't need to be tethered to reality because his believers like his version better."

When Trump was arraigned in April in New York on charges that he falsified business records to obscure hush money payments in an effort to influence the 2016 election, many of his online supporters openly compared the scandal-plagued thrice-married tycoon to Jesus Christ, who Christians believe rose from the dead following his crucifixion.

His vocal online supporters have stayed just as supportive following his federal indictment this month.

Trump may be emblematic of our current era of misinformation, but distrust and political polarization can't be ascribed to one individual and typically arise from deep societal fissures and economic pressures, according to Nealin Parker, executive director of Common Ground USA, a nonprofit that studies ways to bridge America's political divide.

"Often people are looking for a silver bullet: if only we didn't have this one political leader we'd be fine," Parker said. "But that's not how it works."

EDITOR'S NOTE — David Klepper has covered misinformation for The Associated Press since 2019.

Russian mercenary chief says his forces are rebelling, some left Ukraine and entered city in Russia

Associated Press undefined

The owner of the Wagner private military contractor made his most direct challenge to the Kremlin yet, calling for an armed rebellion aimed at ousting Russia's defense minister. The security services reacted immediately by calling for the arrest of Yevgeny Prigozhin.

In a sign of how seriously the Kremlin was taking the threat, security was heightened in Moscow and in Rostov-on-Don, which is home to the Russian military headquarters for the southern region and also oversees the fighting in Ukraine.

While the outcome of the confrontation was still unclear, it appeared likely to further hinder Moscow's war effort as Kyiv's forces were probing Russian defenses in the initial stages of a counteroffensive. The dispute, especially if Prigozhin were to succeed, also could have repercussions for President Vladimir Putin and his ability to maintain a united front.

Prigozhin claimed early Saturday that his forces had crossed into Russia from Ukraine and had reached Rostov, saying they faced no resistance from young conscripts at checkpoints and that his forces "aren't

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 338 ~ 59 of 102

fighting against children.”

“But we will destroy anyone who stands in our way,” he said in one of a series of angry video and audio recordings posted on social media beginning late Friday. “We are moving forward and will go until the end.”

He claimed that the chief of the General Staff, Gen. Valery Gerasimov, scrambled warplanes to strike Wagner’s convoys, which were driving alongside ordinary vehicles. Prigozhin also said his forces shot down a Russian military helicopter that fired on a civilian convoy, but there was no independent confirmation.

And despite Prigozhin’s statements that Wagner convoys had entered Rostov-on-Don, there was no confirmation of that yet on Russian social networks. Video posted online showed armored vehicles, including tanks, stationed on the streets and troops moving into position, but it was unclear whether they were under Wagner or military command. Earlier, heavy trucks were seen blocking highways leading into the city and long convoys of National Guard trucks were seen on a road.

The governor of the Voronezh region, just to the north, told residents that a column of military vehicles was moving along the main highway and advised them to stay off the road.

Prigozhin said Wagner field camps in Ukraine were struck by rockets, helicopter gunships and artillery fire on orders from Gerasimov following a meeting with Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu, at which they decided to destroy Wagner.

The Wagner forces have played a crucial role in Russia’s war in Ukraine, succeeding in taking the city where the bloodiest and longest battles have taken place, Bakhmut. But Prigozhin has increasingly criticized Russia’s military brass, accusing it of incompetence and of starving his troops of weapons and ammunition.

Prigozhin, who said he had 25,000 troops under his command, said his troops would punish Shoigu in an armed rebellion and urged the army not to offer resistance: “This is not a military coup, but a march of justice.”

The National Anti-Terrorism Committee, which is part of the Federal Security Services, or FSB, charged him with calling for an armed rebellion, punishable by up to 20 years in prison.

The FSB urged Wagner’s contract soldiers to arrest Prigozhin and refuse to follow his “criminal and treacherous orders.” It called his statements a “stab in the back to Russian troops” and said they amounted to fomenting armed conflict.

Putin was informed about the situation and “all the necessary measures were being taken,” Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said.

Heavy military trucks and armored vehicles were seen in several parts of central Moscow early Saturday, and soldiers toting assault rifles were deployed outside the main building of the Defense Ministry. The area around the presidential administration near Red Square was blocked, snarling traffic.

But even with the heightened military presence, downtown bars and restaurants were filled with customers. At one club near the headquarters of the FSB, people were dancing in the street near the entrance.

Moscow’s mayor announced Saturday morning that counterterrorism measures were underway, including increased control of roads and possible restrictions on mass gatherings.

Prigozhin, whose feud with the Defense Ministry dates back years, had refused to comply with a requirement that military contractors sign contracts with the ministry before July 1. In a statement late Friday, he said he was ready to find a compromise but “they have treacherously cheated us.”

“Today they carried out a rocket strike on our rear camps, and a huge number of our comrades got killed,” he said. The Defense Ministry denied attacking the Wagner camps.

Prigozhin claimed that Shoigu went to the Russian military headquarters in Rostov-on-Don personally to direct the strike and then “cowardly” fled.

“The evil embodied by the country’s military leadership must be stopped,” he shouted.

Col. Gen. Sergei Surovikin, the deputy commander of the Russian group of forces fighting in Ukraine, urged the Wagner forces to stop any move against the army, saying it would play into the hands of Russia’s enemies, who are “waiting to see the exacerbation of our domestic political situation.”

Tatiana Stanovaya, a political analyst, predicted this would be the end of Prigozhin.

“Now that the state has actively engaged, there’s no turning back,” she tweeted. “The termination of Prigozhin and Wagner is imminent. The only possibility now is absolute obliteration, with the degree of

resistance from the Wagner group being the only variable. Surovikin was dispatched to convince them to surrender. Confrontation seems totally futile."

Lt. Gen. Vladimir Alexeyev, a top military officer, denounced Prigozhin's move as "madness" that threatens civil war.

"It's a stab in the back to the country and the president. ... Such a provocation could only be staged by enemies of Russia," he said.

The Defense Ministry said in a statement that Ukraine was concentrating troops for an attack around Bakhmut to take advantage of "Prigozhin's provocation." It said Russian artillery and warplanes were firing on Ukrainian forces as they prepared an offensive.

In Washington, the Institute for the Study of War, said it appeared that "Prigozhin fully intends for Wagner to move against MoD leadership and forcibly remove them from power, more likely against the Southern Military District command in Rostov-on-Don but possibly also against Moscow."

It added that despite Putin's support for Prigozhin, he would be highly unlikely to accept any armed rebellion: "The violent overthrow of Putin loyalists like Shoigu and Gerasimov would cause irreparable damage to the stability of Putin's perceived hold on power."

At the White House, National Security Council Adam Hodge said: "We are monitoring the situation and will be consulting with allies and partners on these developments."

Michael Kofman, director of Russia Studies at the CAN research group in Arlington, Virginia, tweeted that Prigozhin's actions struck him as "a desperate act, though much depends on whether Prigozhin is alone, or if others that matter join him. I'm skeptical this ends well for him or Wagner."

In Kyiv a Russian missile attack killed at least two people and injured eight Saturday when falling debris caused a fire on several floors of a 24-story apartment building in a central district, Serhii Popko, the head of the city's military administration, posted on Telegram.

He said more than 20 missiles were detected and destroyed. Video from the scene showed a blaze in the upper floors of the building and the parking lot strewn with ash and debris.

In other developments in the war, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy called on other countries to heed warnings that Russia may be planning to attack an occupied nuclear power plant to cause a radiation disaster.

Members of his government briefed international representatives on the possible threat to the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, whose six reactors have been shut down for months. Zelenskyy said he expected other nations to "give appropriate signals and exert pressure" on Moscow.

The Kremlin's spokesman has denied the threat to the plant is coming from Russian forces.

The potential for a life-threatening release of radiation has been a concern since Russian troops invaded Ukraine last year and seized the plant, Europe's largest nuclear power station. The head of the U.N.'s atomic energy agency spent months trying to negotiate the establishment of a safety perimeter to protect the facility as nearby areas came under repeated shelling, but he has been unsuccessful.

The International Atomic Energy Agency noted Thursday that "the military situation has become increasingly tense" amid a Ukrainian counteroffensive that began this month in Zaporizhzhia province, where the namesake plant is located, and in an adjacent part of Donetsk province.

What the Titanic submersible saga and the Greek migrant shipwreck say about our reactions to tragedy

By DAVID SHARP Associated Press

Across the span of nearly a week, the saga of a lost submersible that had gone into the depths of the ocean to see the Titanic wreckage rippled across the national and global conversation — culminating in news that the craft had imploded and its five occupants were dead.

But a far bigger disaster days earlier, the wrecking of a ship off Greece filled with migrants that killed at least 80 people and left a horrifying 500 missing, did not become a moment-by-moment worldwide focus

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 338 ~ 61 of 102

in anywhere near the same way.

One grabbed unrelenting, moment-to-moment attention. One was watched and discussed as another sad, but routine, news story.

What makes these two events at sea different in how they were received? Viewed next to each other, what do they say about human reactions to tragic news? And why did the saga of the submersible grab so much attention?

AN UNKNOWN OUTCOME AND (WE THOUGHT) A TICKING CLOCK

By the time the world learned about the Greek shipwreck, the event had already taken place and, to some extent, the outcome was already known. All that was left was the aftermath.

Conversely, the Titan (the world thought) was an event in the process of happening — something that unfolded in real time with a deadline attached. As with any narrative, a ticking clock increases tension and attention.

The fact that no one could communicate with the submersible — or learn anything about what the people inside were experiencing — only added to the potential for close attention.

A RENOWNED HISTORICAL TRAGEDY BACK IN THE NEWS

Before anything even went awry, the Titan was already venturing into a realm of existing high interest — the wreck of the Titanic, itself the archetype of modern disasters long before James Cameron's popular 1997 film. So there was an interest already baked in that had nothing to do with the submersible itself.

Cameron's reaction to the Titan disaster only made that connection more intense.

He told the BBC in an interview broadcast on Friday that he "felt in my bones" that the Titan submersible had been lost soon after he heard it had lost contact with the surface during its descent to the wreckage of the ocean liner at the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean. He said focus in the media over the next few days about the submersible having 96 hours of oxygen supply — and that banging noises had been heard — were a "prolonged and nightmarish charade."

CLASS AND RACE PLAYED A ROLE

Many reactions and memes this week centered around the notion — fair or not — that one event involved rich people using the ocean as a playground, while the other was a sadly frequent recurrence of misfortune befalling people who lack status, resources or even a voice in the modern marketplace of ideas.

Apryl Alexander, a public health professor at University of North Carolina-Charlotte who has studied trauma and survivors, said the migrants on the ship in Greece didn't seem to engender the same interest from the public as did the wealthy individuals who paid \$250,000 apiece to explore the Titanic.

That reminded Alexander of the differences in news coverage of crime in the United States. Crimes get more attention when the victim is white and wealthy compared to a person of color in poverty, Alexander says.

A SMALL GROUP OF PEOPLE HAD THE MEDIA'S EAR

Tim Recuber, an assistant professor of sociology at Smith College who studies mass media, digital culture and emotions, says people tend to be drawn to stories that allow them to empathize with the suffering of others — and that it's easier to empathize when there are smaller numbers of people involved.

"I think some people are calling out this time around the sort of inequalities that are baked into it around class," Recuber said. "We are able to learn who the people on the sub are because of who they are. They're wealthy and they have access to the press. Divisions of race and national identity matter in terms of who gets empathized with."

THE PUBLIC LIVES VICARIOUSLY THROUGH RISKS OTHERS TAKE

Risk-takers who choose their risks have grabbed headlines almost since there have been headlines. So the public was likely enthralled about others cheating death by doing something dangerous, says Daryl Van Tongeren, a psychology professor at Hope College in Michigan who has studied the meaning around big events and their effect on people.

In other words, he said, readers and viewers can feel alive by living vicariously through others who are taking risks. "There's this fascination with people who engage in these high-risk experiences," Van

Tongeren said. "Even though we know that death is the only certainty in life, we invest in these activities where we get close to death but overcome it. We want to demonstrate our mastery over death." he said.

DISASTER FATIGUE IS A FACTOR, TOO

The pandemic. Mass shootings. Economic problems. War. Climate change. It can be hard for another piece of bad news to punch through. "People are starting to tune out," Alexander said.

In the end, she said, she'd like to see the same level of societal interest in human tragedies regardless of race, religion, demographics, or other factors: "For all of us, we hope that if any of our loved ones go missing that the media and the public would pay the same attention to all stories."

Associated Press journalist Cara Rubinsky contributed to this report.

What happens during a catastrophic implosion? Titan submersible occupants likely died instantly

By The Associated Press undefined

The Titan submersible suffered a catastrophic implosion that likely killed its pilot and four passengers instantly amid the intense water pressure in the deep North Atlantic, experts said.

Maritime researchers called an implosion the worst possible outcome of all the scenarios envisioned during the desperate round-the-clock search to find the missing vessel.

The craft went missing Sunday and probably imploded that same day, according to an "anomaly" detected by a U.S. Navy acoustics system, but the international search effort continued because authorities did not consider the information to be definitive.

The Coast Guard announced the deaths from a "catastrophic implosion" on Thursday. Crews are still looking for evidence of what occurred near the Titanic shipwreck, 12,500 feet (3,800 meters) below the surface.

Experts had cautioned that under intense pressure at extreme depths the Titan's hull could implode, which would result in instant death for anyone aboard the vessel.

"I don't think people can appreciate the amazing energy involved in the destructive process of an implosion," Bob Ballard, a member of the team that found the Titanic wreck in 1985, told ABC News. "It just takes out and literally shreds everything."

While OceanGate Expeditions, which owned and operated the craft, touted the Titan's roomier cylinder-shaped cabin made of a carbon-fiber, industry experts say it was a departure from the sphere-shaped cabins made of titanium used by most submersibles.

A sphere is a "perfect shape" because water pressure is exerted equally on all areas, said Chris Roman, a professor at the University of Rhode Island's Graduate School of Oceanography.

The 22-foot long (6.7-meter long), 23,000-pound (10,432-kilogram) Titan's larger internal volume — while still cramped with a maximum of five seated people — meant it was subjected to more external pressure.

The water pressure at 12,500 feet (3,800 meters) below the surface at the site of the Titanic wreck is roughly 400 atmospheres or 6,000 pounds per square inch.

Arun Bansil, a Northeastern University physics professor, likened that "humongous" pressure to the force of "a whale biting on somebody."

Though the Titan had a composite hull with inbuilt sensors that could withstand high pressures near the sea floor, any defect could result in a "near instantaneous implosion" in less than 40 milliseconds, said associate professor Eric Fusil, director of the Shipbuilding Hub at the University of Adelaide in Australia.

"The passengers probably would have had no idea what happened," Bansil said.

The Titan had made more than two dozen deep-sea dives, which put repeated stress on the hull, said Jasper Graham-Jones, an associate professor of mechanical and marine engineering at the University of Plymouth in the United Kingdom.

That stress could potentially cause delamination, a horizontal splitting of the carbon-fiber hull, he said.

Neither the Coast Guard nor OceanGate Expeditions have provided details on the implosion.

A similar disaster occurred in 1963 when the USS Thresher, a nuclear-powered submarine, likely imploded when it exceeded "test depth" after a series of other failures. Killed were 129 sailors and civilians on a routine test dive off Cape Cod.

US intelligence report on COVID-19 origins rejects some points raised by lab leak theory proponents

By NOMAAN MERCHANT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. officials released an intelligence report Friday that rejected some points raised by those who argue COVID-19 leaked from a Chinese lab, instead reiterating that American spy agencies remain divided over how the pandemic began.

The report was issued at the behest of Congress, which in March passed a bill giving U.S. intelligence 90 days to declassify intelligence related to the Wuhan Institute of Virology.

Intelligence officials under President Joe Biden have been pushed by lawmakers to release more material about the origins of COVID-19. But they have repeatedly argued China's official obstruction of independent reviews has made it perhaps impossible to determine how the pandemic began.

The newest report angered some Republicans who have argued the administration is wrongly withholding classified information and researchers who accuse the U.S. of not being forthcoming.

John Ratcliffe, who served as U.S. director of national intelligence under former President Donald Trump, accused the Biden administration of "continued obfuscation."

"The lab leak is the only theory supported by science, intelligence, and common sense," Ratcliffe said in a statement.

There was newfound interest from researchers following the revelation earlier this year that the Department of Energy's intelligence arm had issued a report arguing for a lab-related incident.

But Friday's report said the intelligence community has not gone further. Four agencies still believe the virus was transferred from animals to humans, and two agencies — the Energy Department and the FBI — believe the virus leaked from a lab. The CIA and another agency have not made an assessment.

Located in the city where the pandemic is believed to have begun, the Wuhan Institute of Virology has faced intense scrutiny for its previous research into bat coronaviruses and its reported security lapses.

The lab genetically engineered viruses as part of its research, the report said, including efforts to combine different viruses.

But the report says U.S. intelligence "has no information, however, indicating that any WIV genetic engineering work has involved SARS-CoV-2, a close progenitor, or a backbone virus that is closely-related enough to have been the source of the pandemic."

And reports of several lab researchers falling ill with respiratory symptoms in fall 2019 are also inconclusive, the report argues.

U.S. intelligence, the report said, "continues to assess that this information neither supports nor refutes either hypothesis of the pandemic's origins because the researchers' symptoms could have been caused by a number of diseases and some of the symptoms were not consistent with COVID-19."

Responding to the report, the Republican chairs of the House Intelligence Committee and a select subcommittee on the pandemic jointly said they had gathered information in favor of the lab leak hypothesis. Reps. Mike Turner and Brad Wenstrup, both of Ohio, credited the U.S. Office of the Director of National Intelligence for taking a "promising step toward transparency."

"While we appreciate the report from ODNI, the corroboration of all available evidence along with further investigation into the origins of COVID-19 must continue," Turner and Wenstrup said.

But Alina Chan, a molecular biologist who has long argued the virus may have originated in the Wuhan lab, noted the public version of the report did not include the names of researchers who fell sick or other details mandated by Congress.

The bill requiring the review allowed intelligence officials to redact information publicly to protect agency sources and methods.

"It's getting very difficult to believe that the government is not trying to hide what they know about #OriginOfCovid when you see a report like this that contains none of the requested info," Chan tweeted.

Amid infighting among Putin's lieutenants, head of mercenary force appears to take a step too far

By The Associated Press undefined

For months, the outspoken millionaire head of the Wagner private mercenary force bombarded Russia's military leaders with expletive-ridden insults in a rift that has weakened the country's forces amid the war in Ukraine.

Yevgeny Prigozhin accused them of not providing him with munitions in the key battle for the eastern city of Bakhmut.

A video in May showed him standing in front of the bloodied bodies of his slain troops yelling obscenities at Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu and the chief of the General Staff Gen. Valery Gerasimov, calling them weak and incompetent, blaming them for the carnage.

"They came here as volunteers and they died to let you lounge in your mahogany offices," Prigozhin declared. "You are sitting in your expensive clubs, your children are enjoying good living and filming videos on YouTube. Those who don't give us ammunition will be eaten alive in hell!"

He even made what some considered a thinly veiled jab at President Vladimir Putin as an oblivious "granddad" thinking the invasion was going well.

On Friday, however, Prigozhin appeared to take a step too far.

He accused Shoigu of ordering a rocket strike on the field camps for his mercenary troops, with a huge number of casualties, and said he would move to punish him.

That's when Russian authorities struck back, with the country's top counterterrorism organization launching a criminal inquiry against Prigozhin and calling for his arrest on charges of fomenting an "armed rebellion" over threats to oust Shoigu.

It was a startling turn of events in Moscow: After more than two decades of rigidly controlled rule by Putin, the worst infighting spilled out in the open among his top lieutenants.

And it came as the war in Ukraine reached the 16-month mark and Kyiv's forces were probing Russian defenses in the initial stages of a counteroffensive.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Putin has been informed about the situation, adding: "All the necessary measures were being taken."

Prigozhin, 62, insisted his actions were not "a military coup, but a march of justice."

Prigozhin said his men would punish the military leaders who ordered the strike and said his troops would fire at any troops trying to stop them.

"The evil embodied by the country's military leadership must be stopped," he shouted in a recorded statement, adding that his forces weren't seeking to challenge Putin and other government structures. "Justice in the armed forces will be restored, and then justice will be restored in all of Russia."

The Defense Ministry denied it had attacked Prigozhin's troops. Then the National Anti-Terrorism Committee, an arm of Federal Security Service, or FSB, announced the investigation against the outspoken millionaire and urged Wagner's own forces to arrest their boss.

Prigozhin's statement was a "stab in the back of the Russian troops," the FSB said, and amounted to fomenting armed conflict in Russia.

Until now, Prigozhin's rants against the military have been met with silence from Putin and the brass. Some saw that failure to squelch the infighting as a sign of potential shifts in Russia's political scene that sets the stage for more internal battles.

The conflict has been ignored by state-controlled TV, where most Russians get their news. But in a shift, Channel 1 showed an unscheduled news broadcast Friday that cited the Defense Ministry's rejection of Prigozhin's claim and describing as fake a video he posted that allegedly showed the aftermath of a rocket strike on a Wagner camp.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 338 ~ 65 of 102

The dispute has been followed closely, however, by politically active, ultrapatriotic Russians on social media networks who share his contempt for military leaders.

Prigozhin's blistering criticism went on even though the Kremlin vigorously cracks down on other critics through fines and imprisonment.

While there are no indications Putin is losing influence, "there are growing signs of deep dysfunction, anxiety, worry about the war and real problems in marshaling the resources necessary to fight it effectively," said Nigel Gould-Davies, a senior fellow for Russia and Eurasia at the International Institute for Strategic Studies.

Prigozhin's feud with military leaders goes back years and spilled into the open amid the battle for Bakhmut that was spearheaded by his mercenaries. It has pushed the man dubbed "Putin's chef" for his lucrative Kremlin catering contracts to the forefront of Russian politics and signaled his growing ambitions.

With his crude remarks, Prigozhin ventured into areas where only Putin had gone before: Over the years, the Russian leader occasionally broke decorum with an earthy remark or off-color joke, while top officials used carefully worded language.

In another recent video, Prigozhin made a statement that some have interpreted as a thinly veiled attack on Putin himself. He declared that while his men were dying due to the Defense Ministry's failure to supply ammunition, a "happy granddad is thinking he's doing well," and then referred to that "granddad" with an obscenity.

The blunt comment caused a social media uproar, where it was seen as a reference to Putin. Prigozhin later said he was talking about Gerasimov.

"Prigozhin is now sailing much closer to the wind than he ever has," Gould-Davies told The Associated Press.

Sergei Markov, a pro-Kremlin political commentator, described Prigozhin as "the second-most popular man after Putin" and a "symbol of Russia's military victory for millions of people."

Putin has needed Prigozhin's mercenaries at a time when the regular military is still recovering from setbacks earlier in the war. The Wagner chief's position was bolstered after his private army captured Bakhmut last month in the war's longest and bloodiest battle, relying on tens of thousands of convicts who were promised pardons if they survived six months of fighting.

"Putin dominates the system, but he still sort of depends upon a small number of big people to implement his will, to provide him with resources to carry out his orders, including fighting the war," Gould-Davies told AP.

While Putin may keep various factions divided and then "decide who wins and who loses, and who's up and who's down," the process erodes the government's authority in wartime, Gould-Davies said.

"If your military forces are divided and if they're not fighting together effectively, then your military operations will suffer accordingly and that's exactly what's happening here," he said.

Mark Galeotti, a London-based expert on Russian politics and security, speculated in a recent podcast that Putin's failure to resolve political disputes could be rooted in a lack of interest, a focus on other issues or, more likely, a reluctance to take sides.

"It also raises questions about his overall capacity to do his job," Galeotti said. "This is the one thing, the one job he can't really outsource, and he's not even trying."

Prigozhin has allied with other hawkish officials, reportedly including Tula Gov. Alexei Dyumin, a former Putin bodyguard seen by many as a potential successor. The Wagner head also has gravitated toward Ramzan Kadyrov, the Moscow-backed regional leader of Chechnya.

Some of those alliances have been shaky.

While Kadyrov initially praised Prigozhin and backed some of his criticisms, he later shifted course and criticized him for sounding defeatist. Kadyrov's lieutenants blasted Wagner's efforts in Bakhmut after Prigozhin made dismissive comments about Chechen fighters in Ukraine. Kadyrov's top aide, Magomed Daudov, said Prigozhin would have been executed for such remarks during World War II.

Prigozhin quickly backed off, saying he was only expressing concern about Russian operations.

He has dodged questions about his political ambitions, but recently toured Russia, continuing his blustery comments.

"There are signs that he seeks some sort of political future," Gould-Davies observed.

Even though Prigozhin owes his position and wealth to Putin, he's playing the role of outsider with his criticism of some leaders and by trying to appeal to the masses amid setbacks in Ukraine, said Andrei Kolesnikov of the Carnegie Endowment.

"Prigozhin is playing an independent politician, raising the stakes and testing the system's limits. But it's only technically and physically possible for as long as Putin finds him useful and is amused by his escapades," Kolesnikov said.

In a show of support for the military, Putin backed the Defense Ministry's demand for all private companies to sign contracts with it — something Prigozhin has refused to do.

Prigozhin has urged all-out war with Ukraine, including a total nationwide mobilization and the introduction of martial law in Russia — calls welcomed by some hawks.

But Kolesnikov notes the vast majority of Russians who are mostly apathetic or unwilling to make larger sacrifices could be frightened and appalled by that message.

He cautions against overestimating Prigozhin's clout and political prospects, and underestimating Putin's authority.

"It's enough for the commander-in-chief to move his finger to make the Wagner chief disappear," Kolesnikov said.

Associated Press writer Danica Kirka in London contributed.

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

Orcas disrupt boat race near Spain in latest display of dangerous, puzzling behavior

By JIMMY GOLEN AP Sports Writer

A pod of killer whales bumped one of the boats in an endurance sailing race as it approached the Strait of Gibraltar, the latest encounter in what researchers say is a growing trend of sometimes-aggressive interactions with Iberian orcas.

The 15-minute run-in with at least three of the giant mammals forced the crew competing in The Ocean Race on Thursday to drop its sails and raise a clatter in an attempt to scare the approaching orcas off. No one was injured, but Team JAJO skipper Jelmer van Beek said in a video posted on The Ocean Race website that it was "a scary moment."

"Twenty minutes ago, we got hit by some orcas," he said in the video. "Three orcas came straight at us and started hitting the rudders. Impressive to see the orcas, beautiful animals, but also a dangerous moment for us as a team."

Team JAJO was approaching the mouth of the Mediterranean Sea on a leg from the Netherlands to Italy when at least three orcas approached the VO65 class sloop. Video taken by the crew showed one of the killer whales appeared to be nuzzling the rudder; another video showed one of them running its nose into the hull.

Scientists have noted increasing reports of orcas, which average from 16-21 feet (5-6½ meters) and weigh more than 8,000 pounds (3,600 kilograms), bumping or damaging boats off the western coast of the Iberian Peninsula in the past four years.

The behavior defies easy explanation. A team of marine life researchers who study killer whales off Spain and Portugal has identified 15 individual orcas involved in the encounters — 13 of them young, supporting the hypothesis that they are playing. The fact that two are adults could support the competing and more sensational theory that they are responding to some traumatic event with a boat.

The sailors were warned of the hazard.

"We knew that there was a possibility of an orca attack this leg," Team JAJO on-board reporter Brend Schuil said. "So we had already spoken about what to do if the situation would occur."

Schuil said there was a call for all hands on deck and the sails were dropped to slow the boat from a racing speed of 12 knots. The crew made noises to scare the orcas off, but not before it had fallen from second to fourth on the leg from The Hague to Genoa, where it is expected to arrive this weekend.

"They seemed more aggressive/playful when we were sailing at speed. Once we slowed down they also started to be less aggressive in their attacks," he said. "Everyone is OK on board and the animals are also OK."

The Ocean Race involves two classes of sailboats at sea for weeks at a time, with the IMOCA 60 boats competing in a six-month, 32,000-nautical mile (37,000-mile, 59,000-km) circumnavigation of the globe. Boats have already contended with a giant seaweed flotilla, catastrophic equipment failure, and a collision that knocked the leader out of the decisive seventh leg.

Although the race course navigates around exclusion zones to protect known marine habitats, there have been previous encounters with whales in The Ocean Race and other high-speed regattas.

However, they usually involve the boats crashing into the animals, and not the other way around.

One of the boats in the around-the-world portion of this year's Ocean Race triggered its hazard alarm after hitting what they suspected was a whale off the coast of Newfoundland in May; two crew members were injured in the collision. At the beginning of the 2013 America's Cup on San Francisco Bay, a whale was reported in the bay and organizers were prepared to delay a race if it wandered onto the course. In 2022, the start of SailGP's \$1 million, winner-take-all Season 2 championship race on the same area of San Francisco Bay was delayed when a whale was spotted on the course.

In 2005, the first South African yacht to challenge for the America's Cup hit a whale with its 12-foot keel during training near Cape Town, stopping the 75-foot sloop dead in the water, injuring two crewmembers and snapping off both steering wheels.

AP Sports Writer Bernie Wilson contributed to this story.

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

Attorney general denies whistleblower claims of interference in Hunter Biden investigation

By LINDSAY WHITEHURST Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Attorney General Merrick Garland pushed back Friday against claims from IRS whistleblowers that the Justice Department interfered with the investigation into Hunter Biden, saying more broadly that attacks on the department's independence are corrosive.

The Republican-led House Ways and Means Committee on Thursday released a transcript of testimony from Gary Shapley, an IRS official who, among other things, claimed that Garland had denied a request from U.S. Attorney David Weiss of Delaware to be appointed special counsel. That designation would have given Weiss the same status as the prosecutor leading the investigation into former President Donald Trump.

Weiss never made such a request, Garland said Friday, and always had full authority to file charges wherever and however he saw fit against President Joe Biden's son. And Garland added that if Weiss — first appointed U.S. Attorney by Donald Trump — agrees to testify before Congress, the Justice Department will not stand in the way.

"He was given complete authority to make all decisions on his own," Garland said. "I don't know how it would be possible for anybody to block him for bringing a prosecution given that he has that authority."

More broadly, Garland forcefully rebutted criticism from Republicans that a plea agreement for the president's son on tax and gun charges made public this week reflects political influence in the American justice system. Republicans have denounced the deal as evidence of a "two-tiered system of justice."

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 338 ~ 68 of 102

"Some have chosen to attack the integrity of the Justice Department ... by claiming we do not treat like cases alike. This constitutes an attack on an institution that is essential to American democracy and essential to the safety of the American people," Garland said. "Nothing could be further from the truth."

In a separate statement Friday, Biden's lawyer denounced the idea that the investigation cut any corners, and said it would be "dangerously misleading" to make conclusions based on the Shapley transcript.

The transcript included a message Hunter sent to a business associate alluding to "sitting with his father," seemingly suggesting that his father was aware of his business dealings. Shapley acknowledged the investigation didn't turn up evidence to prove that, instead finding that it was likely untrue.

Joe Biden has said he's never spoken to his son about his foreign business. Asked Friday if the president stands by those comments, White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre replied: "What I will say is nothing has changed. Nothing has changed, and I will leave it there."

Weiss' office referred request for comment about the whistleblower testimony to a June 7 letter he wrote to House Judiciary Committee Chairman Jim Jordan saying he had "ultimate authority" over the investigation.

The testimony from IRS agent Shapley and a second unnamed agent who worked on the case detailed what they called a pattern of "slow-walking investigative steps" and delaying enforcement actions in the Hunter Biden case, though it was unclear whether the conflict they described amounted to internal disagreement or a pattern of preferential treatment.

Shapley said Weiss told him and others during an October 2022 meeting that he had been denied special counsel status and didn't have final authority on charging decisions. Transcripts released Thursday include an email with Shapley's notes from the meeting, and a response from a supervisor saying his notes "covered it all."

A representative for Shapley called on Weiss and the Justice Department to explain the discrepancy.

Biden's attorney, for his part, said claims the investigation wasn't thorough are "preposterous and deeply irresponsible."

The Hunter Biden plea deal came days after the special counsel on the Trump case filed a historic 37-count indictment alleging mishandling of classified documents, which the former president has denied. Trump has likened the Hunter Biden agreement to a "mere traffic ticket."

Associated Press writers Farnoush Amiri and Aamer Madhani contributed to this report.

Police in California aren't immune from certain misconduct lawsuits, high court rules

By TRÂN NGUYỄN Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — Police in California are not immune from civil lawsuits for misconduct that happens while they investigate crimes, the state Supreme Court ruled this week, overruling a precedent made by lower courts that had helped protect law enforcement from litigation for decades.

The justices on Thursday unanimously rejected an argument by Riverside County that its sheriff's deputies couldn't be sued for leaving a man's naked body lying in plain sight for eight hours while officers investigated his killing.

California law protects police from being sued for any harm that happens during a prosecution process — even if the officer acted "maliciously and without probable cause." Now, the Supreme Court says police can be sued for misconduct during investigations.

The ruling cites previous case law that defined investigatory actions as those before charges are filed.

"The potential for factual overlap between investigations and prosecutions does not justify treating them as one and the same," Justice Leandra Kruger wrote in the ruling.

Kruger noted the court issued a similar ruling in 1974. But in 1994, a state appeals court adopted a broader interpretation to shield police from lawsuits stemming from conduct during investigations. Lower courts have been relying on that ruling to dismiss misconduct lawsuits against law enforcement that did

not involve prosecutions.

A lawyer representing Riverside County in the case did not immediately respond to a request for comment Friday.

This particular case centered on Jose Leon, who was shot and killed by a neighbor in 2017 southeast of Los Angeles in Riverside County. Shortly after sheriff's deputies arrived at the shooting, they heard several gunshots nearby and dragged Leon's body behind a police vehicle, causing his pants to fall down and exposing his genitals, according to the lawsuit. His wife Dora Leon sued the county for negligence and emotional distress, saying police had left her husband's naked body in plain view for hours. The case was dismissed by lower courts that ruled state law provides immunity to law enforcement officers and agencies for police conduct during investigations.

The Supreme Court reinstated Dora Leon's lawsuit. Kruger wrote that the lower courts' decision was wrong, saying police investigations cannot be interpreted as part of the prosecution process.

Many local police departments have routinely argued that they are immune from damage claims "the moment a police officer arrives on the scene of a crime," said Richard Antognini, a lawyer representing Leon.

If the Supreme Court had ruled in favor of the county, "it would have essentially immunized them for almost anything," he said.

The recent ruling helps remove an obstacle for victims seeking damages from police misconduct, Antognini said. California laws still provide immunity to certain aspects of police investigations.

The ruling was praised by John Burris, a California civil rights attorney who has represented more than 1,000 victims of police misconduct across the country.

"This should have a positive impact on police reform, because now the law has spoken," Burris said. "Police should be trained and be better informed as to what their obligations are."

Associated Press writer Claudia Lauer in Philadelphia contributed to the report.

UN Security Council calls for halt to fighting in Sudan and protection of civilians

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The U.N. Security Council called Friday for a halt to fighting in Sudan and the protection of civilians.

The brief press statement followed closed consultations by the U.N.'s most powerful body.

The council also called for the scaling up of humanitarian assistance to Sudan and neighboring countries, support for humanitarian workers, and respect for international humanitarian law.

Sudan descended into conflict in mid-April after months of worsening tensions exploded into open fighting between rival generals seeking to control the African nation. The war pits the military, led by Gen. Abdel-Fattah Burhan, against the Rapid Support Forces, a paramilitary force commanded by Gen. Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo.

A three-day cease-fire brokered by the United States and Saudi Arabia expired Wednesday morning and a protest group and residents said clashes resumed between the army and the paramilitary force in and around the capital, Khartoum.

The conflict has been centered largely in the capital and western Sudan's Darfur region, which have seen ethnically motivated attacks on non-Arab communities by the Rapid Support Forces and allied militias, according to U.N. officials.

The fighting has killed thousands of people and forced more than 2.5 million people to flee their homes to safer areas in Sudan and neighboring countries, according the U.N. migration agency.

The U.N. said Thursday that in the two months after the conflict began, some 85 humanitarian groups reached 2.8 million people across Sudan with vital assistance, including food, water, health services, education, sanitation, hygiene, non-food supplies and protection services.

"Partners are delivering medical supplies and providing support to health facilities that are still operating. Between 15 April and 15 June, 19 organizations reached more than 470,000 people," U.N. deputy

spokesman Farhan Haq said.

How the unconventional design of the Titan sub may have destined it for disaster

By MARK PRATT Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — The deadly implosion of the Titan submersible raises questions about whether the vessel exploring the Titanic wreckage was destined for disaster because of its unconventional design and its creator's refusal to submit to independent checks that are standard in the industry.

All five people aboard the Titan died when it was crushed near the world's most famous shipwreck, U.S. Coast Guard Rear Adm. John Mauger said Thursday, bringing an end to a massive multinational search that began Sunday when the vessel lost contact with its mother ship in the unforgiving North Atlantic.

The Titan, owned and operated by OceanGate Expeditions, first began taking people to the Titanic in 2021. It was touted for a roomier cylinder-shaped cabin made of a carbon-fiber — a departure from the sphere-shaped cabins made of titanium used by most submersibles.

The sphere is "the perfect shape," because water pressure is exerted equally on all areas, said Chris Roman, a professor at the University of Rhode Island's Graduate School of Oceanography. Roman had not been on the Titan but has made several deep dives in Alvin, a submersible operated by the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute in Massachusetts.

The 22-foot long (6.7-meter long), 23,000-pound (10,432-kilogram) Titan's larger internal volume — while still cramped with a maximum of five seated people — meant it was subjected to more external pressure.

Elongating the cabin space in a submersible increases pressure loads in the midsections, which increases fatigue and delamination loads, said Jasper Graham-Jones, an associate professor of mechanical and marine engineering at the University of Plymouth in the United Kingdom.

Fatigue, he said, is like bending a wire back and forth until it breaks. Delamination, he said, is like splitting wood down the grain, which is easier than chopping across the grain.

Furthermore, the Titan's 5-inch thick (12.7 centimeters) hull had been subjected to repeated stress over the course of about two dozen previous dives, Graham-Jones said.

Each trip would put tiny cracks in the structure. "This might be small and undetectable to start but would soon become critical and produce rapid and uncontrollable growth," he said.

OceanGate promoted the Titan's carbon fiber construction — with titanium endcaps — as "lighter in weight and more efficient to mobilize than other deep diving submersibles" on its website. It also said the vessel was designed to dive four kilometers (2.4 miles) "with a comfortable safety margin," according to court documents.

But carbon composites have limited life when subject to excessive loads or poor design which leads to stress concentrations, Graham-Jones said.

"Yes, composites are extremely tough. Yes, composites are extremely long lasting. But we do have issues with composites and the fact that composites fail in slightly different ways than other materials," he said.

OceanGate was also warned that a lack of third party scrutiny of the vessel during development could pose catastrophic safety problems.

David Lochridge, OceanGate's then-director of marine operations, said in a 2018 lawsuit that the company's testing and certification was insufficient and would "subject passengers to potential extreme danger in an experimental submersible."

He advocated for "nondestructive testing," such as ultrasonic scans, but the company refused.

Ultrasonic testing can help spot areas inside the structure where the composites are coming apart, said Neal Couture, executive director of a professional organization called the American Society for Nondestructive Testing.

"Once this thing is going down and going under stress, it'll affect those materials, it'll affect those composites," Couture said Friday. "Nondestructive testing is how you would then assess those structures and say, 'OK, they're still viable,' or, 'they're still susceptible.'"

The Marine Technology Society, an organization of ocean engineers, technologists, policymakers and educators, also expressed concern to OceanGate about the size of the Titan, the construction material and the fact that the prototype wasn't being examined by a third party.

"We were very afraid that without that certification process, they might be missing something," Will Kohnen, the organization's chairman said Friday. He sent a letter to the company in 2018 warning that its "current experimental approach ... could result in negative outcomes (from minor to catastrophic) that would have serious consequences for everyone in the industry."

Graham-Jones said it's standard procedure in engineering to seek outside expertise to ensure that vessels conform to the highest industry standards.

In a 2019 company blog post, OceanGate criticized the third-party certification process as one that is time-consuming and stifles innovation.

"Bringing an outside entity up to speed on every innovation before it is put into real-world testing is anathema to rapid innovation," the post said.

Famed undersea explorer Robert Ballard, who first located the Titanic wreckage in 1985, called the lack of outside certification and classification a "smoking gun" in the vessel's failure.

"We've made thousands and thousands and thousands of dives with other countries as well to these depths and have never had an incident," he said Friday on ABC's "Good Morning America."

"Titanic" director James Cameron, who has made multiple descents to the wreck, said there are several possible reasons for the submersible's destruction, but the most likely is a failure of the composite hull.

"The question is, was it the primary failure, or a secondary failure from something else happening?" he told "Good Morning America" on Friday. "And I'm putting my money on the composite because you don't use composites for vessels that are seeing external pressure."

Speaker McCarthy supports expunging Trump's impeachments over Ukraine and Jan. 6

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Speaker Kevin McCarthy said Friday he supports the idea of expunging the two impeachments of Donald Trump as hard-right Republican allies of the former president introduce a pair of proposals to declare it as though the historic charges never happened.

McCarthy told reporters that he agrees with Reps. Marjorie Taylor Greene and Elise Stefanik who want to erase the charges against Trump from the former president's impeachments of 2019 and 2021.

"I think it is appropriate," said McCarthy, the Republican from California. "Just as I thought before — that you should expunge it, because it never should have gone through."

Pressed on his views, McCarthy said he agreed with expunging both of Trump's impeachments — the abuse of power charges in 2019 over pressing Ukraine's president to dig up dirt on rival Joe Biden and the 2021 charge that Trump incited the Jan. 6, 2021 insurrection at the Capitol as Trump supporters tried to overturn Biden's election.

In both cases, Trump was acquitted by the Senate after his impeachment by the House. But expunging the charges from his record would be an action he could further tout as vindication as he seeks another term in the White House.

The effort is the latest by Trump's allies to rewrite the narrative of the defeated president's tenure in office. And it underscores the pressure McCarthy is under from his right flank.

Just this week, McCarthy beat back a proposal from Rep. Lauren Boebert, R-Colo., to impeach President Biden, sending it instead to committees for review.

In explaining his views, McCarthy said the first Trump impeachment, in 2019, should have never happened, conflating it with a separate investigation by the Justice Department into Russian interference into the 2016 election.

As for the 2021 trial that was conducted swiftly in the week after the riot at the Capitol, he said: "The second impeachment had no due process."

The speaker gave no indication he would move quickly to bring forward the proposals from Greene,

R-Ga., and Stefanik, R-N.Y., who is the fourth-ranking GOP leader, for House votes. Pressed if the proposals were a priority, he shifted to listing other GOP goals.

Asked if he had spoken to Trump about expunging the impeachment record, McCarthy said he had not.

Trump, who is campaigning to return to the White House, is the first president in U.S. history to be twice impeached by the House, though he was acquitted by the Senate of all charges.

Democrats have defended their decision to quickly impeach Trump a second time after the mob attack at the Capitol in 2021. They argue that the evidence played out for the world to see as the defeated president rallied his supporters to Washington and encouraged them to march to the Capitol as Congress was certifying Biden's election.

Trump was first impeached in 2019 after it was disclosed that he encouraged Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to dig up political dirt on then-White House rival Biden ahead of the 2020 presidential campaign — while Trump was withholding U.S. military aid to Ukraine as it faced Russia.

What role will liability waivers play in the aftermath of the Titan sub tragedy?

By MICHAEL CASEY Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — Before they boarded the submersible that imploded near the Titanic wreck, the passengers who died this week were most likely asked to sign liability waivers.

One of the waivers, signed by a person who planned to go on an OceanGate expedition, required passengers to acknowledge risks involved with the trip on the Titan vessel and any support vessels. The waiver, which was reviewed by The Associated Press, said that passengers could experience physical injury, disability, emotional trauma and death while on board the Titan.

Passengers also waive the right to take action for "personal injury, property damage or any other loss" that they experience on the trip.

The form also makes it clear that the vessel is experimental and "constructed of materials that have not been widely used for manned submersibles."

The waiver could play an outsized role as families of those who died consider their legal options. Legal experts said that what the investigation into the disaster uncovers will determine much about the case, including what caused the vessel to implode.

WHAT IS A LIABILITY WAIVER?

Sometimes referred to as a release form, liability waivers are typical before doing recreational activities that carry some measure of risk, like sky diving or scuba diving. By signing the document, passengers generally accept the risk and dangers related to the activity and if they are injured, absolve the company's owner of liability.

Matthew Shaffer, a trial lawyer with the maritime personal injury law firm Schechter, Shaffer & Harris, said the forms are commonplace before doing any kind of "ultra-hazardous recreational activity."

"A good release will cover any and all potential harm and you are going to spell it out in simple language as possible," he said. "You can get killed. You can get hurt. You can get maimed and you are not going to have any recourse. You're releasing us of any liability for anything bad that is going to happen to you as a result of you engaging in this activity."

HOW IMPORTANT ARE THESE FORMS IN COURT?

The legality of these documents depend on the state where they are signed, legal experts have said. Some states recognize them while others don't. Signed waivers have been upheld in cases involving scuba divers in Florida and skiers in Colorado.

Either way, a court weighs the document against other factors, including whether the person signing it understood the form and the risks they were taking, as well as how unusual and dangerous the activity.

A court, Shaffer said, will also consider whether an owner or operator withheld information from the passenger, or knowingly exposed the passenger to "probable harm." Another question is whether there

was "gross negligence involved."

Regardless of whether or not there was a waiver, Shaffer and others have said they expect families of those who died on the submersible to sue not only OceanGate, which operated the Titan, but also the maker of the vessel and companies that provided parts.

"The waiver is certainly going to be a significant factor stemming from this disaster and it depends a lot on the court and the facts that come out," he said.

WILL TITAN WAIVERS HOLD UP IN COURT?

In the case of the Titan, a complicating factor is that the disaster happened in international waters. According to the waiver the AP reviewed, any disputes would be governed by the laws of the Bahamas, where the company, OceanGate Expeditions, Ltd, is registered.

"If the law of the Bahamas is not favorable to the families, then I predict they will bring a lawsuit in the United States or their home countries," said Kenneth Abraham, the Harrison Distinguished Professor of Law at the University of Virginia School of Law, who is aware of the waiver's terms. Declaring the waiver to be invalid in the U.S. could then become part of the legal argument, he said.

But Steve Flynn, a retired Coast Guard officer and director of Northeastern University's Global Resilience Institute, said possible lawsuits might not succeed given the challenges of establishing jurisdiction.

The implosion happened "basically in a regulatory no man's land," Flynn said.

"There was essentially no oversight," Flynn said. "To some extent, they leveraged the murkiness of jurisdiction to not have oversight."

Another problem is whether OceanGate survives and, if so, who to sue, Flynn said. Among the five passengers dead was CEO of the company who led the expedition, Stockton Rush.

Even if it does survive, OceanGate is unlikely to be held liable in court unless the company misrepresented the safety of the vessel, said Richard Daynard, distinguished professor at Northeastern University School of Law.

Otherwise, the case is a prime example of assumption of risk on the part of the explorers, Daynard said.

The company, which closed its Washington office in the aftermath of the revelations about the implosion, might also not have the ability to pay damages, Daynard said. "If they were held liable, my guess would be they would be unlikely to have the many, many millions of dollars that if I were on a jury I would award," he said.

Associated Press writers Holly Ramer in New Hampshire and Patrick Whittle in Portland, Maine contributed to this report.

Family of missing actor Julian Sands releases 1st statement since his hiking disappearance

SAN BERNARDINO, Calif. (AP) — The family of actor Julian Sands has released its first statement five months after he disappeared while hiking in California.

"We continue to hold Julian in our hearts with bright memories of him as a wonderful father, husband, explorer, lover of the natural world and the arts, and as an original and collaborative performer," the statement said.

Sands, the 65-year-old British-born actor best known for his role in the 1985 film "A Room With a View," has been married for more than three decades to journalist Evgenia Citkowitz, and has three adult children.

They said they were "deeply grateful to the search teams and coordinators who have worked tirelessly to find Julian."

A June 17 search for Sands on Southern California's Mount Baldy, the eighth organized search since his disappearance, was unsuccessful, authorities said. But the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department said the case remains active.

Sands, a longtime avid hiker and mountaineer, was reported missing January 13 after setting out to hike

on the massive mountain, which rises more than 10,000 feet (3,048 meters) east of Los Angeles and was pounded by severe storms during winter.

Authorities said that while warmer weather made the latest search possible, parts of the mountain remain inaccessible due to dangerous conditions.

Newly released body camera footage shows Border Patrol agents shooting a tribal member in Arizona

By ANITA SNOW Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — U.S. Customs and Border Protection has released body camera footage that shows Border Patrol agents were concerned that a tribal member they fatally shot last month may have been carrying a handgun during an encounter on a remote corner of the Tohono O’odham Nation in southern Arizona.

The man, Raymond Mattia, 58, died shortly after the shooting the night of May 18 outside a home in the reservation’s Menagers Dam community near the U.S.-Mexico border. Audio of a telephone call included with the video confirms the agency’s earlier report that the Tohono O’odham Nation Police Department called agents for help responding to a report of shots fired.

The video released late Thursday shows Mattia throwing a sheathed machete at the foot of a tribal officer and then holding out his arm, actions that the CBP mentioned in its earlier account of events. Although the time stamp lists when the incident occurred as early May 19, the time is adjusted to -0400, which is four hours behind UTC and the same as EST.

After Mattia was shot and on the ground, an agent declares: “He’s still got a gun in his hand.”

The footage also shows several agents asking repeatedly whether anyone had found a firearm as they moved in to handcuff Mattia. There was no sign a handgun was found.

CBP said earlier that the three Border Patrol agents who opened fire and at least seven others at the scene were wearing body cameras and activated them during the shooting. The agents involved in the shooting are on leave with pay.

The Pima County Medical Examiner separately released its examination report Friday, which said Mattia had nine gunshot wounds. An accompanying toxicology report showed Mattia had a high blood alcohol level and drugs in his system, including amphetamine and oxycodone.

The FBI and Tohono O’odham Nation are investigating the shooting but have not released any findings. The shooting is also under review by CBP’s Office of Professional Responsibility.

No air ambulance was available to take Mattia to a hospital because of bad weather, CBP said, and despite lifesaving efforts, he was declared dead at the scene after consultation with a physician at a Tucson hospital.

CBP says it has issued about 7,000 body cameras to agency workplaces under a program launched in August 2021.

This year, it has released body camera video of several fatal shootings involving its agents, most recently a fatal shooting near Las Cruces, New Mexico, on April 2.

In that case, agents shot a man they say came after them with a wooden club after he went through a checkpoint without stopping and led them on a nearly 23-mile (37-kilometer) chase.

Jennifer Lawrence on ‘No Hard Feelings,’ the R-rated comedy made with the Oscar winner in mind

By LINDSEY BAHR AP Film Writer

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Jennifer Lawrence has wanted to do a big comedy for years. She has always been funny and vibrant in her television appearances. And while she has brought humor and physical comedy to many of her roles for David O. Russell and others, she also hasn’t exactly gotten the big, broad “Dumb and Dumber” or “Anchorman” experience, to cite some of her favorites (or at least the ones she’s memorized).

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 338 ~ 75 of 102

That changes Friday with "No Hard Feelings," a classic, raunchy R-rated comedy that was tailor made for the Oscar winner.

"I've always wanted to do a comedy. And I've read a lot of them," Lawrence told The Associated Press during an interview about the highly anticipated summer movie season. "I just didn't read anything that was funny enough."

"No Hard Feelings" was inspired by a real Craigslist ad posted by parents who were seeking a woman to "date" their son to bring him out of his shell the summer before he went to college. There are debates over just how real the "real ad" was, but thinking about the woman who might answer an ad like that was a premise funny enough to catch the attention of several producers and writer-director Gene Stupnitsky.

Stupnitsky, an Emmy-nominated alum of "The Office" who also directed and co-wrote the 2019 hit "Good Boys," knew just who to take it to. He told Lawrence about the idea one night at dinner with friends in which, he estimated, they had had about "eight or nine martinis between us."

The two met over a decade ago, through a mutual friend, at Medieval Times of all places. Lawrence, he remembered, was dressed in a full wizard costume. And they soon became actual friends. He even introduced Lawrence to her husband.

"I owed him one," Lawrence said. "That's why I did this film."

Stupnitsky, sitting next to Lawrence, added: "There's probably some truth to that."

With Lawrence attached to star and produce, the movie became a hot commodity, with streaming services and studios vying for the rights to make it. Ultimately, they went with Sony and a traditional theatrical release.

"The reason I wrote this movie for her is because I knew how funny she was and I wanted everyone else to know. I mean, people know she's funny but they wanted her in a comedy. I thought, yes I know how to do this. I know how to write her voice," Stupnitsky said. "I remember I told her, 'I really want you to experience a feeling of sitting in a theater with hundreds of people laughing.' She's had many, many experiences in film, but she hasn't quite had this one."

In "No Hard Feelings," Lawrence's character Maddie is having a rough stretch with money. As an Uber driver without a car she's in a pressing bind. So when she finds this ad with the promise of a Buick Regal as payment, she takes the bait. In a clip that Sony debuted for theater owners at the CinemaCon convention last week, Maddie meets 19-year-old Percy (Andrew Barth Feldman) for the first time wearing a slim, hot pink mini dress and high heels and acting overtly flirty and available.

"She's dressed like what she thinks is a 19-year-old's idea of a sex fantasy. And she's wrong," Stupnitsky said. "He's like the one kid who she can't seduce."

The situation escalates from there as she tries to give him a ride home. He thinks he's being abducted and, as anyone who has watched the red-band trailer knows, it ends with her getting pepper sprayed. But there's a sweet core to the film too.

"He is longing for a connection, which is what she needs as well but doesn't know it yet," Stupnitsky said. "She wants to get the car and move on with her life. But he's forcing her to kind of take things slow and get to know him and be intimate, in a way, with him in a platonic sort of way."

The experience, Lawrence said, was a blast, helped by her connection with her younger co-star.

"We just laughed all day long," she said. "Sometimes I would get in bed after work and just like, giggle before going to sleep, just thinking about the day. I was also sad for making it because I was like, 'God, I'm just I'm not going to have one of these again. This is this is so singular.'"

As a producer on the film, Lawrence has already gotten to watch it with an audience and experience that big, communal laughter that Stupnitsky promised.

"I went to a test screening and sat in back," she said. "It was pretty extraordinary."

Every film, she knows, is a gamble but she's pretty confident about "No Hard Feelings."

"You really never know. You might think audiences want this and they don't. And I've certainly had my experiences with that," she said. "It's a mix of instinct and looking at the information that you have. I knew what we had was the funniest movie that anybody would have ever seen — I have no doubts about

that—and I knew that Gene was the one that could do it.”

It’s also Lawrence’s first major theatrical release in a few years, since the 2019 X-Men movie “Dark Phoenix.” Her recent films have been primarily streaming releases with Netflix’s “Don’t Look Up” and Apple’s “Causeway,” which she also produced.

“I think audiences are really going to remember why they love her,” Stupnitsky said.

Lawrence laughed: “I look much better 12 feet high.”

Pence calls for his 2024 rivals to back a 15-week federal abortion ban on eve of Dobbs anniversary

By WILL WEISSERT and MICHELLE L. PRICE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Former Vice President Mike Pence used a Friday gathering of some of the nation’s leading Christian conservatives to urge his rivals for the Republican presidential nomination to support a 15-week federal abortion ban at minimum.

The exhortation at the Faith & Freedom Coalition’s annual conference, coming a day before the first anniversary of the Supreme Court decision that overturned Roe v. Wade, amounted to a challenge for the GOP front-runner, Donald Trump, who has been reluctant to endorse a federal abortion ban. The former president is addressing the evangelical assembly on Saturday night.

“We must not rest and we must not relent until we restore the sanctity of life to the center of American law in every state in this country,” Pence said. “Every Republican candidate for president should support a ban on abortion before 15 weeks as a minimum nationwide standard.”

Pence was among a number of 2024 Republican presidential hopefuls — including Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis and Sen. Tim Scott of South Carolina — to speak Friday before a ballroom of about 500 attendees. All of the candidates emphasized their anti-abortion credentials while urging like-minded activists to stay on the political offensive, even as leading Democrats insist their party’s defense of abortion rights will be a 2024 boon to them.

DeSantis, who signed a law in Florida banning abortions after six weeks of pregnancy, touted the measure with a nod toward Trump’s veiled criticism last month that it is “too harsh.”

“It was the right thing to do,” DeSantis told the crowd. “Don’t let anyone tell you it wasn’t.”

DeSantis has been less clear on where he stands on a federal abortion ban.

Not far from the conference site in Washington, President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris were rallying Friday with abortion rights supporters to mark the anniversary of the Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization decision.

That ruling, issued June 24, 2022, ended federal constitutional abortion protections and paved the way for near-total bans in some Republican-led states. Democrats have vowed to codify the right to an abortion in federal law, but don’t have the votes in Congress to do so.

“Since that dark June day last year, each one of you has worked tirelessly to fight back,” Biden told activists from reproductive rights groups. “You ain’t seen nothing yet.”

Referring to supporters of Trump’s Make America Great Again movement, the president added, “What’s really remarkable is despite the will of the American people, MAGA Republicans made it clear that they won’t stop with the Dobbs decision.”

After stronger-than-expected results in last year’s midterm elections, Democrats believe issues surrounding abortion access can energize their base, attract moderates alienated by GOP hardliners and help the party hold the Senate, flip the House and reelect Biden

Even Trump has suggested that increased abortion restrictions are a weakness for Republicans, despite his three Supreme Court nominees making up the majority of justices who voted to overturn Roe last year.

He posted on his social media site in January that the party’s underwhelming midterm performance “wasn’t my fault” and blamed “the ‘abortion issue,’ poorly handled by many Republicans, especially those that firmly insisted on No Exceptions, even in the case of Rape, Incest, or Life of the Mother.”

Yet the mood at Friday’s Faith & Freedom Coalition session was jubilant, with attendees cheering every

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 338 ~ 77 of 102

mention of Roe v. Wade's reversal. "Thank God almighty for the Dobbs decision," Scott told the crowd.

Ralph Reed, founder and chairman of the Faith & Freedom Coalition, said the conference's dates were set years ago, so the fact that it spans the Dobbs anniversary is a "serendipitous coincidence." Still, he said the gathering is out to ensure top Republican candidates don't get complacent when it comes to opposing abortion.

"We're certainly going to do everything that we can, as an organization and as a pro-life and pro-family movement, to give our candidates a little bit of a testosterone booster shot and explain to them that they should not be on the defensive," Reed said in an interview before the conference began. "Those who are afraid of it need to, candidly, grow a backbone."

Reed drew sustained cheers when he opened the gathering by saying that "after 50 years of prayer, and fasting and knocking on doors and electing candidates and registering voters and changing the culture of our country, Roe v Wade has been overturned."

Michigan Sen. Gary Peters, head of the Democrats' Senate campaign arm, said this week that top Republican presidential candidates will back a nationwide ban to win support in their GOP primaries, then shift to a more moderate position for the general election.

"They're not going to get away with that," Peters said.

Among GOP candidates, Pence has previously said he'd support banning abortion nationally after just six weeks of pregnancy, before many women know they are pregnant.

His declaration Friday that a ban at 15 weeks should be the "minimum nationwide standard" mirrors a call from the anti-abortion group Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America. The organization has vowed not to support any White House candidate who doesn't support a 15-week federal ban at a minimum.

Scott also has praised South Carolina's six-week ban and backs a 15-week federal prohibition. Former U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley supports a federal ban but hasn't said at what point in pregnancy she would seek to ban abortions.

Trump has avoided specifying what national limits, if any, he would support on abortion.

A deeply devout, evangelical Christian, Pence was greeted far more warmly at this year's Faith & Freedom Coalition conference than he was the last time he addressed the group in 2021. Then, he was booed by some and faced shouts of "traitor." That event, held in Florida, came months after the Jan. 6 insurrection at the U.S. Capitol, when Pence defied Trump's unprecedented demands to overturn Biden's victory in the 2020 election.

The tamer reaction came after Reed warned Friday's audience about booing or verbally expressing disagreement with any presidential candidates: "If they're not where they need to be, then let's just love them and pray them right where they need to go."

Not everyone heeded that warning. Former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, who has built his 2024 candidacy around criticizing Trump, drew boos when he said the former president is more interested in promoting himself than the country's interests.

A woman near the stage bellowed "We love Trump" and a few others tried to start chants of "Trump! Trump! Trump!" but Christie was able to finish his speech.

"You can boo all you want but here's the thing, our faith teaches us that people have to take responsibility for what they do," said Christie, who is Catholic. "People have to stand up and take accountability for what they do."

Interstate 95 reopens less than two weeks after deadly collapse in Philadelphia

By MICHAEL RUBINKAM and TASSANEE VEJPONGSA The Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Interstate 95 reopened Friday less than two weeks after a deadly collapse in Philadelphia, a quicker-than-expected rebuild to get traffic flowing again on a heavily traveled stretch of the East Coast's main north-south highway.

Workers put the finishing touches on an interim six-lane roadway that will serve motorists during con-

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 338 ~ 78 of 102

struction of a permanent bridge. Crews worked around the clock and wrapped up ahead of schedule, allaying fears the critical highway would be closed for many weeks.

Traffic began flowing in one direction a little past 12:30 p.m. Friday, according to live video from the site, and all lanes were open a short time later.

"This was a moment of civic pride for Philly and Pennsylvania. We all came together and we proved that we could do big things again in Pennsylvania," Gov. Josh Shapiro said at a news conference at the site. "We show that when we work together, we can get s— done here in Pennsylvania."

After he spoke, a procession of fire engines — one carrying Philadelphia's pro sports mascots — and police vehicles crossed the northbound lanes of I-95, christening the new roadway as hard-hatted construction workers looked on.

Motorists like Dean Chamberlain were happy and relieved, saying the loss of I-95 had created chaos on the roads. "The traffic has been horrible," said Chamberlain, gassing up at a station just off the interstate.

The elevated section of I-95 collapsed early on June 11 after a tractor-trailer hauling gasoline flipped on an off-ramp and caught fire. State transportation officials said the driver, who was killed, lost control around a curve. There were no other deaths or injuries.

The closure of an important commercial artery snarled traffic in and around Philadelphia and threatened to raise the cost of consumer goods as truckers were forced to detour around the area. State and federal officials pledged quick action to minimize the economic impact and inconvenience.

To get I-95 operating again as quickly as possible, workers used about 2,000 tons (1,814 metric tons) of lightweight glass nuggets to fill the underpass and bring it up to surface level, then paved over to create three lanes of travel in each direction.

"We enjoy doing the work, getting things done like this and making sure that we get Philly back up on its feet," construction worker April Allen said Friday, high-fiving colleagues as the first vehicles crossed the new roadway.

President Joe Biden joined Shapiro on a helicopter tour of the site a little more than a week after the collapse and called the first-term governor, a fellow Democrat, on Friday. In a statement, Biden said he was "proud of the hard-working men and women on site who put their heads down, stayed at it, and got I-95 reopened in record time."

With rain threatening to delay the reopening, a truck-mounted jet dryer normally used to keep moisture off the track at Pocono Raceway was brought in to keep the fresh asphalt dry enough for lines to be painted.

The 24-hour construction work was live-streamed, drawing thousands of viewers online.

The temporary roadway was posted at 45 mph (about 72 kph), with no shoulders and relatively narrower lanes, and the Pennsylvania transportation department on Friday urged motorists on the high-speed interstate to slow down through that section.

The Philadelphia disaster echoed a similar situation in Atlanta, where an elevated portion of Interstate 85 collapsed in a fire in 2017. It took authorities there 43 days to replace it.

In Oakland, California, a collapsed highway ramp was replaced in 26 days.

In Philadelphia, the reconstruction took just 12 days.

"The speed with which I-95 is reopening today speaks to just how critical the interstate is throughout the region and along the East Coast for commuters, tourists and commerce," said AAA spokesperson Jana Tidwell, praising the "collaborative, all-hands-on-deck efforts" of federal, state and local officials and the building trades.

To view live video of the construction work via the state Department of Transportation, go to: <https://www.penndot.pa.gov/RegionalOffices/district-6/Pages/AlertDetails.aspx>

Rubinkam reported from northeastern Pennsylvania.

Animal sedative xylazine in fentanyl is causing wounds and

scrambling efforts to stop overdoses

By MATTHEW PERRONE AP Health Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — A powerful animal sedative in the illicit drug supply is complicating the U.S. response to the opioid crisis, scrambling longstanding methods for reversing overdoses and treating addiction.

Xylazine can cause severe skin wounds, but whether it is leading to more deaths — as suggested by officials in Washington — is not yet clear, according to health and law enforcement professionals on the front lines of efforts in New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania. In fact, early data suggests the drug may inadvertently be diluting the effects of fentanyl, the synthetic opioid behind most overdose deaths.

There is broad agreement, however, that much more information is needed to understand xylazine's impact, to craft ways of disrupting illegal supplies and to develop medicines to reverse its effects.

"We don't know whether xylazine is increasing the risk of overdose or reducing the risk of overdose," said Dr. Lewis Nelson of Rutgers New Jersey Medical School, who advises federal regulators on drug safety. "All we know is that there are a lot of people taking xylazine and a lot of them are dying, but it doesn't mean that xylazine is doing it."

In almost all cases, xylazine — a drug for sedating horses and other animals — is added to fentanyl, the potent opioid that can be lethal even in small amounts. Some users say the combination, dubbed "tranq" or "tranq dope," gives a longer-lasting high, more like heroin, which has largely been replaced by fentanyl in U.S. drug markets.

Like other cutting agents, xylazine benefits dealers: It's often cheaper and easier to get than fentanyl. Chinese websites sell a kilogram for \$6 to \$20, no prescription required. Chemicals used to produce fentanyl can cost \$75 or more per kilogram.

"Nobody asked for xylazine in the drug supply," said Sarah Laurel, founder of Savage Sisters, a Philadelphia outreach group. "Before anybody knew it, the community was chemically dependent on it. So now, yes, people do seek it out."

From a storefront in Philadelphia's Kensington neighborhood, Laurel's group provides first aid, showers, clothes and snacks to people using drugs.

Xylazine's effects are easy to spot: users experience a lethargic, trance-like state and sometimes black out, exposing themselves to robbery or assault.

"It's a delayed reaction, I could be walking down the street, it's 45 minutes later," says Dominic Rodriguez, who is homeless and battling addiction. "Then I wake up, trying to piece together what happened."

U.S. regulators approved xylazine in 1971 to sedate animals for surgery, dental procedures and handling purposes.

In humans, the drug can cause breathing and heart rates to drop. It's also linked to severe skin ulcers and abscesses, which can lead to infections, rotting tissue and amputations. Experts disagree on the exact cause of the wounds, which are much deeper than those seen with other injectable drugs.

In Philadelphia, the drug's introduction has created a host of new challenges.

Naloxone, a medication used to revive people who have stopped breathing, doesn't reverse the effects of xylazine. Philadelphia officials stress that naloxone should still be administered in all cases of suspected overdose, since xylazine is almost always found in combination with fentanyl.

With no approved reversal drug for xylazine, the Savage Sisters group has taken to carrying oxygen tanks to help revive people.

Meanwhile, a roaming van staffed by local health workers and city staffers aims to treat the skin wounds before they require hospitalization.

The wounds can make it harder to get people into addiction treatment programs, which typically don't have the expertise to treat deep lesions that can expose tissue and bone.

"If you have someone out there who's ready to come in for treatment, you really want to act on that quickly," said Jill Bowen, who runs Philadelphia's behavioral health department.

The city recently launched a pilot program where hospitals treat patients for wounds and then directly transfer them into addiction treatment.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 338 ~ 80 of 102

Xylazine can be addictive and patients who stop taking it report severe withdrawal symptoms, including anxiety and distress. There's no approved treatment but physicians have been using the blood pressure-lowering drug clonidine, which is sometimes prescribed for anxiety.

In April, federal officials declared xylazine-laced fentanyl an "emerging threat," pointing to the problems in Philadelphia and other northeastern cities. Testing is far from uniform, but the drug has been detected in all 50 states and appears to be moving westward, similar to earlier waves of drug use.

Officials describe the drug's toll in stark terms and statistics: Fatal overdoses involving xylazine increased more than 1,200% percent between 2018 and 2021. But that largely reflects increased testing, since most medical examiners weren't looking for the drug until recently.

"What it is doing is making the deadliest drug we've ever seen, fentanyl, even deadlier," Anne Milgram, head of the Drug Enforcement Administration, told attendees at a recent conference.

But those who have studied the problem closely aren't so sure.

One of the only studies looking at the issue reached a startling conclusion: People who overdosed on a combination of fentanyl and xylazine had "significantly less severe" outcomes than those taking fentanyl alone.

It was the opposite of what Dr. Jennifer Love and her colleagues expected, given xylazine's dangerous effects on breathing. But their analysis of more than 320 overdose patients who received emergency care found lower rates of cardiac arrest and coma when xylazine was involved.

Love, an emergency medicine physician at New York's Mount Sinai hospital, suggested xylazine may be reducing the amount of fentanyl in each dose. She stressed that this is only one possible explanation, and more research is needed into xylazine's long-term effects. She also noted that the study didn't track downstream effects of xylazine that could be deadly, including skin infections and amputations.

But hints that xylazine could be blunting fatal overdoses are showing up elsewhere.

In New Jersey, about one-third of the opioid supply contains xylazine, based on testing of drug paraphernalia. But less than 8% of fatal overdoses involved xylazine in 2021, the latest year with complete data.

Police Capt. Jason Piotrowski, who oversees the analysis of state drug data, said xylazine's ability to extend users' high may be a factor in why it's showing up less than expected in fatal overdoses.

"If xylazine is lasting longer and that's why people are using it, then they're not going to need as many doses," he said. "So now their exposure to the more deadly fentanyl decreases."

Like other experts, Piotrowski stressed that this is only one theory and xylazine's impact is far from clear. Philadelphia officials see no upside to the drug.

"I don't frankly see a plus side to xylazine," said Dr. Cheryl Bettigole, the city's health commissioner. "It seems to increase the risk of overdose and it causes these severe, debilitating wounds that interfere with peoples' ability to get into treatment."

Philadelphia's annual toll of fatal overdoses has climbed by 14% since xylazine became a significant part of the local drug market around 2018. In 2021, the city reported 1,276 overdose deaths. Bettigole expects final 2022 figures to show another increase.

More than 90% of lab-tested opioids in Philadelphia contain xylazine, according to city figures.

Even as Savage Sisters and other advocates deal with xylazine's toll, they are seeing newer drugs circulate, including nitazenes, a synthetic opioid that can be even more potent than fentanyl.

A shifting mix of opioids, stimulants and sedatives has come to define the U.S. drug epidemic, making it harder to manage a crisis that now claims more than 100,000 lives a year.

The Biden administration and Congress are considering changes to try to limit xylazine prescribing and distribution.

But past restrictions didn't solve the problem: When regulators cracked down on painkillers like OxyContin, people largely shifted to heroin and then fentanyl.

"First we had pills, then we had heroin and then we had fentanyl," Piotrowski said. "Now we have everything. And xylazine is just a part of that."

Follow Matthew Perrone on Twitter: @AP_FDWriter

AP journalists Tassanee Vejpongsa and Matt Rourke in Philadelphia contributed to this story.

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.

The Oscars best picture rules are changing. Here's how it'll affect contenders and movie theaters

By LINDSEY BAHR AP Film Writer

The theatrical requirements for movies vying for the Oscars top prize are getting a little tougher.

Starting with the 97th Academy Awards in 2025, best picture hopefuls will have to spend more time in theaters to qualify for film's top prize. The changes, announced by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences this week, come after three years of adjusted release standards due to the pandemic.

On top of the current one week "qualifying run" in one of six U.S. cities — New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Atlanta, San Francisco or Miami — best picture contenders would now must also now play for an additional seven days in 10 of the top 50 U.S. markets. Additionally, there's several other new rules about when the movies must play in theaters.

"It is our hope that this expanded theatrical footprint will increase the visibility of films worldwide and encourage audiences to experience our art form in a theatrical setting," Academy CEO Bill Kramer and Academy President Janet Yang said in a statement.

It's part gesture to theaters still struggling from the pandemic, partly for audiences in markets outside of New York and Los Angeles who don't always get theatrical access to best picture contenders, and partly a statement to deep pocketed streaming services that theaters remain paramount for Hollywood's top prize.

The film academy's leaders also say the decision was born out of many conversations with industry partners and that they feel that this "evolution benefits film artists and movie lovers alike."

But some in the industry questioned what it really changes, who it benefits and who it might hurt.

Michael O'Leary, the President and CEO of the National Association of Theater Owners, applauded the "important initiative." In a statement, O'Leary said it "affirms that theatrical exhibition is the keystone of the industry."

For traditional studios, from the big ones like Warner Bros., Universal and Disney, to the smaller players, like A24 and Neon, behind recent best picture winners "Everything Everywhere All At Once" and "Parasite," it likely affects very little.

For streaming services, it could be a case-by-case adjustment depending on the company but not a hurdle. Amazon is already planning to release 12 to 15 movies theatrically every year, as they've already done with Ben Affleck's "Air." Apple is also set to spend \$1 billion a year on movies that will land in cinemas before streaming, including Ridley Scott's "Napoleon."

Netflix has had a bigger theatrical footprint lately too. Not only do they control two U.S. theaters — New York's Paris Theater and Los Angeles' American Cinematheque — but they've also historically given theatrical runs to their awards hopefuls. All of Netflix's nominees since "Roma" have met the requirement. Its most recent best picture nominee, "All Quiet on the Western Front," played in hundreds of theaters.

The new rule may weed out the possibility of a grassroots campaign on behalf of a very small film, however. Independent theaters and those willing to play independent films have become rarer and the competition is fierce for those screens in the major markets. Some of the bigger indie stalwarts are even scheduling major studio films, leaving fewer times and screens available for true independents.

Much like the diversity requirements that went into effect this year, few could think of recent best picture players that wouldn't have met this threshold. Apple's best picture winner "CODA" played in about 40 theaters. Even non-traditional Oscar "underdogs" like "Drive My Car" and "RRR" had substantial theatrical runs.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 338 ~ 82 of 102

"It's important to consider that qualifying is merely a first step in a long process that involves robust and costly campaigning," said Dan Berger, the president of the independent film company Oscilloscope. "I think it's fair to say that nearly any film that doesn't meet these parameters never stood a chance in a best picture race anyway."

Berger added: "Hopefully the result of this isn't more robust and more costly campaigning that only serves to further divide merit based results from campaign based results."

There are a lot of unknowns about the specifics of the expansion, including whether there will be minimum of showtimes and screens. Could companies simply rent out eight screens that will play to minimal or no crowds in densely populated areas that are relatively cheap and that are also not historically great for indie films? It'll check the box, but will it help theaters, the films or audiences? And will it lead to an even greater year-end bottleneck of releases?

Questions also remain about how it will affect the eligibility of animated films and documentaries, which wouldn't have to meet these requirements to qualify in their individual categories but now might have to adopt a different strategy to be in contention for best picture.

Others are more hopeful and know that the academy's board of governors meet often to reassess rules as the landscape continues to change.

"It's about time that the academy made a move to recommit to theatrical. The Oscars were inching closer and closer to becoming the Emmys," said one top awards strategist and academy member who requested anonymity to speak candidly about the changes. "Could they have gone further? Of course. But it's a good faith step in the right direction."

Follow AP Film Writer Lindsey Bahr on Twitter: www.twitter.com/lldbahr.

Serbia again threatens armed intervention in Kosovo as tension escalates

By DUSAN STOJANOVIC Associated Press

BELGRADE, Serbia (AP) — Serbia on Friday reiterated a threat to intervene militarily in its former province of Kosovo if NATO-led peacekeepers there fail to protect minority Serbs from what Belgrade called the terrorist threat of Kosovo's ethnic Albanian authorities.

In a brief televised address, the Serbian army chief-of-staff, Gen. Milan Mojsilovic, said Kosovo Serbs can no longer "tolerate the terror" of the Kosovo government, and that Serbia's military stands ready to fulfil its tasks "in accordance" with the Serbian constitution and any orders from President Aleksandar Vucic.

Serbia has put its troops on the border with Kosovo on the highest state of alert amid a series of recent clashes between Kosovo Serbs on one side and Kosovo police and NATO-led peacekeepers, known as KFOR, on the other. In recent weeks, NATO has sent in reinforcements amid fears of an open clash between ethnic Albanians and Serbs.

Serbia's armed intervention in Kosovo would mean a direct clash with some 4,000 NATO troops currently stationed there.

Serbia and its former province of Kosovo have been at odds for decades. Their 1998-99 war left more than 10,000 people dead, mostly Kosovo Albanians. Belgrade has refused to recognize Kosovo's 2008 declaration of independence.

Tensions flared anew last month after Kosovo police seized local municipality buildings in northern Kosovo, where Serbs represent a majority, to install ethnic Albanian mayors who were elected in a local election that Serbs overwhelmingly boycotted.

The latest flareup focused on Kosovo police arresting at least eight Serbs who are suspected of taking part in last month's violent clashes with the NATO troops and Kosovo police, leaving dozens of injured on all sides.

In his brief address to the nation on Friday, the Serbian army chief-of-staff said that Kosovo Serbs can no longer "tolerate the terror of the regime of" Kosovo Prime Minister Albin Kurti.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 338 ~ 83 of 102

"According to the facts, I informed the commander of KFOR that we demand urgent measures to protect the Serbian people," Mojsilovic said. "This is our request to KFOR and other international organizations."

In their meeting in Brussels on Thursday, the leaders of Serbia and Kosovo made no breakthrough in EU-hosted emergency talks amid fears of a return to open conflict.

EU's foreign policy chief Josep Borrell described the soaring ethnic tensions in northern Kosovo as alarming. "Despite yesterday's crisis meeting, escalation continues (and) is becoming dangerous," he said Friday on Twitter. "We will not tolerate it."

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg on Thursday vowed that the alliance's peacekeepers "will continue to act impartially" and increase its presence to ensure environment and freedom of movement for all communities in Kosovo.

Both Serbia and Kosovo are seeking EU membership, and need to normalize their relations to do so.

There are fears that Serbia's ally Russia could inflame another armed conflict in central Europe to divert at least part of the international focus from Moscow's aggression in Ukraine.

Why are the Texas Rangers the only MLB team without a Pride Night?

By The Associated Press undefined

All but one of the 30 of the Major League Baseball teams are hosting Pride Nights this season, most during Pride Month, which celebrates and supports LGBTQ+ culture and rights.

The Texas Rangers are the only team without a Pride Night. They say they are committed to making everyone feel welcome at all games.

HAVE THE RANGERS EVER HOSTED A PRIDE NIGHT?

No. In September 2003, two years after the Chicago Cubs hosted what is considered the first Pride game, the Rangers invited local LGBTQ+ groups to a game as part of a fundraising event, similar to what they do for all kinds of groups throughout each season. There were some Rangers fans who expressed opposition through a website beforehand and, while not widespread, there were some protests outside the stadium before that game.

WHAT DO THE RANGERS SAY ABOUT NOT HOSTING A PRIDE NIGHT?

The team has been consistent with its response when asked: "Our commitment is to make everyone feel welcome and included in Rangers baseball. That means in our ballpark, at every game, and in all we do — for both our fans and our employees. We deliver on that promise across our many programs to have a positive impact across our entire community."

WHAT ROLE COULD TEXAS POLITICS PLAY IN THE DECISION?

Texas has been dominated by Republicans for a generation, and state lawmakers and Gov. Greg Abbott this year joined the push from many conservative states to limit LGBTQ+ rights.

The Legislature this year passed new laws expanding definitions of prohibited sexual content in public performances and in school books, and activists fear those measures will be used to target drag shows and ban LGBTQ+ literature from libraries and classrooms.

Texas become the most populous of at least 19 states to ban gender-affirming care for minors. And Texas public universities must dismantle diversity, equity and inclusion offices and training starting in 2024.

Abbott also signed into law the "Save Women's Sports Act" that bars transgender college athletes from competing on teams that match their gender identity. Texas already had a similar law for high school athletes.

Amid that conservative political landscape, there is less outside resistance in their home market to the Rangers not having a Pride Night.

Rangers majority owner Ray C. Davis has donated at least \$225,000 to Texans for Greg Abbott since July 2021, according to state campaign finance records.

WHY DO THE HOUSTON ASTROS HAVE A PRIDE NIGHT, BUT RANGERS DO NOT?

The Astros hosted their first Pride Night in 2021. Houston, the state's most-populated city with about

2.3 million people in a metro area of about 6.7 million, is one of the biggest strongholds for Democrats in Texas. Another is Dallas, not far from the Rangers' home ballpark.

A majority of the elected officials in Houston and Dallas are Democrats. The Rangers' ballpark in Arlington, Texas, is just off Interstate 30, halfway between downtown Fort Worth and downtown Dallas.

DO THE RANGERS DO ANYTHING TO SUPPORT THE LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY?

The Rangers were a sponsor of the NAGAAA Gay Softball World Series last August when the event took place in Dallas and Waxahachie. The club participated in the opening ceremonies in Dallas and worked with the local organizers and NAGAAA officials on several initiatives for the event.

The team is working on initiatives with local groups, including the Pegasus Slow-Pitch Softball Association, which promotes quality amateur softball at all levels of play with a special emphasis on the participation of members of the LGBTQ+ community.

That softball organization is promoting on its website a PSSA night at Globe Life Field next month, with the group reserving a large block of tickets like any groups are able to do. In those cases, the groups, not the team, handle the promotion and coordination of tickets.

The Rangers have worked for several years with the Resource Center, which provides programs and assistance to LGBTQ+ communities and anyone impacted in North Dallas by HIV/AIDS through advocacy, health and education. Team employees volunteer and support Resource Center events.

An Inclusion and Community Impact Council was developed by the team to foster conversations, ideas and programs to support employees internally and to the community externally. Rangers employees participate in anti-harassment programs, and education programs offered by MLB.

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

Supreme Court rejects a lawsuit from states demanding that Biden administration boost deportations

By MARK SHERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court on Friday rejected a Republican-led challenge to a Biden administration policy that prioritizes the deportation of immigrants who are deemed to pose the greatest risk to public safety or were picked up at the border.

The justices voted 8-1 to allow the long-blocked policy to take effect, recognizing there is not enough money or manpower to deport all 11 million or so people who are in the United States illegally.

The case was one of two immigration cases decided Friday, the other upholding a section of federal law used to prosecute people who encourage illegal immigration..

In the deportation case, Louisiana and Texas had argued that federal immigration law requires authorities to detain and expel those in the U.S. illegally even if they pose little or no risk.

But the court held that the states lacked the legal standing, or right to sue, in the first place.

Justice Brett Kavanaugh wrote in his opinion for the court that the executive branch has no choice but to prioritize enforcement efforts.

"That is because the Executive Branch invariably lacks the resources to arrest and prosecute every violator of every law and must constantly react and adjust to the ever-shifting public-safety and public welfare needs of the American people," Kavanaugh wrote.

At the center of the case is a September 2021 directive from the Department of Homeland Security that paused deportations unless individuals had committed acts of terrorism, espionage or "egregious threats to public safety." The guidance, issued after Joe Biden became president, updated a Trump-era policy to remove people who were in the country illegally, regardless of criminal history or community ties.

Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas applauded Friday's decision, saying it would allow immigration officers "to focus limited resources and enforcement actions on those who pose a threat to our national security, public safety and border security."

The case displayed a frequently used litigation strategy by Republican attorneys general and other of-

ficials that has succeeded in slowing Biden administration initiatives by going to Republican-friendly courts.

Texas and Louisiana claimed in their lawsuit that they would face added costs of having to detain people the federal government might allow to remain free inside the United States, despite their criminal records.

Last year, a federal judge in Texas ordered a nationwide halt to the guidance and a federal appellate panel in New Orleans declined to step in.

A federal appeals court in Cincinnati had earlier overturned a district judge's order that put the policy on hold in a lawsuit filed by Arizona, Ohio and Montana.

But 11 months ago, when the administration asked the Supreme Court to intervene, the justices voted 5-4 to keep the policy on hold. At the same time, the court agreed to hear the case, which was argued in December.

In Friday's decision, Kavanaugh's opinion spoke for just five justices, including Chief Justice John Roberts and the three liberals. Justices Clarence Thomas, Neil Gorsuch and Amy Coney Barrett agreed with the outcome for other reasons.

Justice Samuel Alito filed a solo dissent, writing that the decision improperly favors the president over Congress. "And it renders states already laboring under the effects of massive illegal immigration even more helpless," Alito wrote.

In a separate immigration-related decision also issued Friday, the court upheld a section of federal law that is used against people who encourage illegal immigration.

The justices by a 7-2 vote reinstated the criminal conviction of a California man, Helaman Hansen, who offered adult adoptions he falsely claimed would lead to U.S. citizenship. At least 471 people paid Hansen between \$550 and \$10,000 each, or more than \$1.8 million in all, the government said.

He was prosecuted under a section of federal immigration law that says a person who "encourages or induces" a non-citizen to come to or remain in the United States illegally can be punished by up to five years in prison. That's increased to 10 years if the person doing the encouraging is doing so for personal financial gain. The justices rejected an appeals court ruling that the law is too broad and violates the Constitution.

Defense industry dollars flowed to a Democratic senator after he gained a key role on spending

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — As Democrat Jon Tester headed for a surprise victory in his 2006 U.S. Senate race, he attacked his incumbent Montana Republican rival's close ties to lobbyists and committed himself to a rigorous ethics standard.

Now as he looks to win a fourth term in a race that could decide control of the Senate, Tester is embracing a practice he once held against his opponent: taking contributions from lobbyists and executives of corporations while helping craft a government spending package that directs billions of dollars.

After Tester became chair of the Senate Defense Appropriations subcommittee in 2021, he received campaign contributions totaling over \$160,000 from employees and committees representing the defense industry. At one point last year, 49 Lockheed Martin executives and lobbyists — none of whom had given to the senator in the past — gave Tester's campaign a combined total of nearly \$50,000.

There is no indication the contributions swayed Tester's decision making or that he committed any wrongdoing. But the donations came at a crucial juncture for both the defense budget and Lockheed Martin.

Senators at the time were crafting an \$858 billion military package, and the Defense Department had submitted a late request for \$1.4 billion for its F-35 fighter jet program after the cost for Lockheed to make the aircraft had overrun what was budgeted due to inflation and the pandemic. Without the extra funding, the previously approved planes were at risk of being canceled. The aircraft manufacturer was also looking to close out a multi-year deal with the Defense Department for the next round of its premier fighter jet.

Tester's subcommittee successfully pushed to add \$1.8 billion "for the restoration of all 19 at-risk aircraft," according to an explanatory statement from the Senate Appropriations Committee.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 338 ~ 86 of 102

Tester's office declined interview requests with the senator for this story. Spokeswoman Sarah Feldman said in a statement, "Every decision he makes is based on one thing: what's in the best interest of Montana and our national security, and he'll never back down from defending the Montana way of life or defending this country from enemies that want to do us harm."

Tester's fundraising haul from federal contractors after he became chair of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee is just a recent example of the way money flows to senior figures in Washington.

Most all lawmakers, Republicans and Democrats alike, accept campaign donations from lobbyists and corporations. Two other lawmakers who hold key roles on committees that determine military spending — Republican Sen. Roger Wicker of Mississippi and Democrat Rep. Rosa DeLauro of Connecticut — each took in more than \$60,000 in campaign contributions from Lockheed employees last year.

In recent campaign cycles, Democrats have faced calls to reject checks from corporate political action committees. But Tester is also under reelection pressure as he faces a potentially challenging race back home in Montana, where his small-town farming roots and populist reputation have helped him survive the state's increasingly conservative tilt.

Republicans tried to defeat Tester in 2018, attacking him for accepting money linked to corporations, but he still defeated the GOP nominee, Matt Rosendale, by four percentage points.

Rosendale is considered to be eyeing another run, as is Montana Republican Rep. Ryan Zinke, the former Interior secretary. Top Senate Republicans have also tried to recruit Tim Sheehy, a military veteran and CEO of a Montana-based provider of aerial firefighting and wildfire surveillance services, who could self-finance a campaign.

Tester has proven politically resilient, now as the only Democrat to hold statewide office in Montana.

Calling himself a "seven-fingered dirt farmer" after losing three fingers in a meat grinder as a child, Tester still returns home to work a farm in Big Sandy, Montana, that his family has held for three generations. When he is in Washington, he ambles the Capitol halls with a signature flattop haircut, seasons his statements to reporters with curse words and files bills aimed at "cleaning up" the lobbying industry as part of a mission to "reduce the power of big-moneyed interests in politics."

He was among a group of Democrats who swept their party to the Senate majority in 2006, knocking off incumbent Republican Sen. Conrad Burns.

Tester in that race positioned himself as a fighter for the middle class who could take on a government that had become "an auction where the folks who get representation isn't based on what's right but who can write the biggest campaign check."

Burns was linked through campaign contributions to lobbyist Jack Abramoff, who was convicted of conspiracy and fraud charges, and also faced scrutiny for working closely with lobbyists to craft spending packages.

In a 2006 debate, Tester accused Burns of casting "votes based on money that's passed to you."

"That is wrong, and it shows the fact that Sen. Burns has lost touch with Montana," Tester said, adding: "Washington has changed him, it will not change me."

After defeating Burns, Tester committed to having a judge conduct regular audits of his office's relationships with interest groups. Feldman, Tester's spokeswoman, said the audits have found no cause for concern, though a review for 2021 through 2022 has not yet been completed. Over the years, his office has intermittently released the reviews to the public.

Tester also abides by a commitment to post a public schedule of all the official meetings he takes, and in 2018 successfully proposed a requirement for senators to electronically file quarterly financial reports.

Feldman said those actions and others show he "holds himself to the highest standard of honesty, integrity and personal responsibility, going above and beyond his colleagues in Congress to crack down on lobbyist influence and increase accountability and transparency."

The senator's campaign touts his fundraising, which totaled \$8 million since 2021, as a "grassroots effort" powered by Montanans. Tester has also received over \$1 million from industry groups, including those representing the financial industry, pharmaceutical corporations, defense contractors and boutique

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 338 ~ 87 of 102

lobbying firms.

Business interests have shown up on Tester's list of campaign donors before. When he joined a bipartisan group of senators in 2018 to roll back bank regulations, he held meetings with executives from Bank of America, Citigroup, Discover and Wells Fargo, as well as dozens of Montana banks. That year, he received \$302,770 from the banking industry.

Tester's office said he has repeatedly pushed legislation that industry opposes, including by regulating pharmaceutical pricing, supporting enhanced safety regulations on railroads and working to increase competition among meatpackers.

Saurav Ghosh, who directs the Campaign Legal Center's advocacy for campaign finance reform, said there's nothing surprising about defense contractors donating to Tester's campaign after he received a senior role crafting military spending.

"In some ways getting your voice heard in Washington often involves money," Ghosh said, adding that corporate campaign committees and employees are within their rights to support candidates seen as friendly to their interests.

But he added: "When you take money from an industry that you're responsible for regulating, that sends a message to the public that really calls into question whether you're making policy decisions that are in the public's best interest."

The series of contributions to Tester from Lockheed employees came in November and December as Congress was crafting its broad military spending package. Among the programs at stake in the massive bill were 19 F-35 fighter jets that could have been cut from a Department of Defense contract with Lockheed Martin because the plane's production costs had increased. The Pentagon in November requested that Congress provide \$1.4 billion in the military's budget to make up the funding shortfall.

Tester's subcommittee included \$1.8 billion to cover the higher production costs "once all relevant factors are considered," though it also called for more congressional oversight of the F-35 program.

In a statement at the time, Tester praised the funding package for boosting pay, training and equipment for soldiers, as well as "shifting resources toward cutting-edge programs that'll maintain our fighting edge over adversaries like China and Russia." He also said the bill would bring \$182 million to Montana universities and businesses with Defense Department contracts.

Tester has long pushed for robust military spending as well as medical care for veterans as a way to deliver for his home state, where the Malmstrom Air Force Base in Great Falls oversees the Minuteman missile program.

The expensive F-35 weapon system is seen by many lawmakers, including Tester, as crucial to keeping a fighting edge over potential adversaries. But the program has also faced criticism from some in Congress after repeated delays in its development.

Earlier in 2022, the military suggested, in an "unfunded priority list" — representing spending above the Defense Department's proposed budget — adding still another 19 F-35 aircraft to the 61 it planned to purchase. At one point, Tester proposed adding six of those 19 jets to the budget, but Feldman, his spokeswoman, noted that by the end of the year, none of those additional jets made it into the final spending package.

Still, the spending package directed billions to defense contractors, Lockheed Martin among them. The corporation was looking to close a \$30 billion, multi-year contract with the Defense Department for 398 F-35 aircraft. Congress also included funding for 16 of Lockheed's C-130J Super Hercules aircraft in the legislation.

Lockheed Martin CEO James Taiclet, who gave \$1,000 to Tester's campaign in November, told investors in a year-end call that passage of the budget package was "positive for the future."

Is Twitter ready for Europe's new Big Tech rules? EU official says it has work to do

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 338 ~ 88 of 102

By KELVIN CHAN AP Business Writer

Twitter needs to do more work to fall in line with the European Union's tough new digital rulebook, a top EU official said after overseeing a "stress test" of the company's systems in Silicon Valley.

European Commissioner Thierry Breton said late Thursday that he noted the "strong commitment of Twitter to comply" with the Digital Services Act, sweeping new standards that the world's biggest online platforms all must obey in just two months.

However, "work needs to continue," he said in a statement after reviewing the results of the voluntary test at Twitter's San Francisco headquarters with owner Elon Musk and new CEO Linda Yaccarino.

Breton, who oversees digital policy, is also meeting other tech bosses in California. He's the EU's point person working to get Big Tech ready for the new rules, which will force companies to crack down on hate speech, disinformation and other harmful and illegal material on their sites. The law takes effect Aug. 25 for the biggest platforms.

The Digital Services Act, along with new regulations in the pipeline for data and artificial intelligence, has made Brussels a trailblazer in the growing global movement to clamp down on tech giants.

The mock exercise tested Twitter's readiness to cope with the DSA's requirements, including protecting children online and detecting and mitigating risks like disinformation, under both normal and extreme situations.

"Twitter is taking the exercise seriously and has identified the key areas on which it needs to focus to comply with the DSA," Breton said, without providing more details. "With two months to go before the new EU regulation kicks in, work needs to continue for the systems to be in place and work effectively and quickly."

Twitter's global government affairs team tweeted that the company is "on track to be ready when the DSA comes into force." Yaccarino tweeted that "Europe is very important to Twitter and we're focused on our continued partnership."

Musk agreed in December to let the EU carry out the stress test, which the bloc is offering to all tech companies before the rules take effect. Breton said other online platforms will be carrying out their own stress tests in the coming weeks but didn't name them.

Despite Musk's claims to the contrary, independent researchers have found misinformation — as well as hate speech — spreading on Twitter since the billionaire Tesla CEO took over the company last year. Musk has reinstated notorious election deniers, overhauled Twitter's verification system and gutted much of the staff that had been responsible for moderating posts.

Last month, Breton warned Twitter that it "can't hide" from its obligations after the social media site abandoned the bloc's voluntary "code of practice" on online disinformation, which other social media platforms have pledged to support.

Combating disinformation will become a legal requirement under the Digital Services Act.

"If laws are passed, Twitter will obey the law," Musk told the France 2 TV channel this week when asked about the DSA.

Breton's agenda Friday includes discussions about the EU's digital rules and upcoming artificial intelligence regulations with Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg and OpenAI CEO Sam Altman, whose company makes the popular AI chatbot ChatGPT. But a briefing for journalists was canceled.

The DSA is part of a sweeping update to the EU's digital rulebook aimed at forcing tech companies to clean up their platforms and better protect users online.

For European users of big tech platforms, it will be easier to report illegal content like hate speech, and they will get more information on why they have been recommended certain content.

Violations will incur fines worth up to 6% of annual global revenue — amounting to billions of dollars for some tech giants — or even a ban on operating in the EU, with its 450 million consumers.

Breton also is meeting Jensen Huang, CEO of Nvidia, the dominant supplier of semiconductors used in AI systems, for talks on the EU's Chips Act to boost the continent's chipmaking industry.

The EU, meanwhile, is putting the final touches on its AI Act, the world's first comprehensive set of rules

on the emerging technology that has stirred fascination as well as fears it could violate privacy, upend jobs, infringe on copyright and more.

Final approval is expected by the end of the year, but it won't take effect until two years later. Breton has been pitching a voluntary "AI Pact" to help companies get ready for its adoption.

Tony-winning lyricist Sheldon Harnick 'Fiddler on the Roof' creator, dies at 99

By MARK KENNEDY AP Entertainment Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Tony- and Grammy Award-winning lyricist Sheldon Harnick, who with composer Jerry Bock made up the premier musical-theater songwriting duos of the 1950s and 1960s with shows such as "Fiddler on the Roof," "Fiorello!" and "The Apple Tree," has died. He was 99.

Known for his wry, subtle humor and deft wordplay, Harnick died in his sleep Friday in New York City of natural causes, said Sean Katz, Harnick's publicist.

Broadway artists paid their respects on social media, with "Schmigadoon!" writer Cinco Paul calling him "one of the all-time great musical theater lyricists" and actor Jackie Hoffman lovingly writing: "Like all brilliant persnickety lyricists he was a pain in the tuchus."

Bock and Harnick first hit success for the music and lyrics to "Fiorello!," which earned them each Tonys and a rare Pulitzer Prize in 1960. In addition, Harnick was nominated for Tonys in 1967 for "The Apple Tree," in 1971 for "The Rothschilds" and in 1994 for "Cyrano — The Musical." But their masterpiece was "Fiddler on the Roof."

Bock and Harnick were first introduced at a restaurant by actor Jack Cassidy after the opening-night performance of "Shangri-La," a musical in which Harnick had helped with the lyrics. The first Harnick-Bock musical was "The Body Beautiful" in 1958.

"I think in all of the years that we worked together, I only remember one or two arguments — and those were at the beginning of the collaboration when we were still feeling each other out," Harnick, who collaborated with Bock for 13 years, recalled in an interview with The Associated Press in 2010. "Once we got past that, he was wonderful to work with."

They would form one of the most influential partnerships in Broadway history. Producers Robert E. Griffith and Hal Prince had liked the songs from "The Body Beautiful," and they contracted Bock and Harnick to write the score for their next production, "Fiorello!," a musical about the reformist mayor of New York City.

Bock and Harnick then collaborated on "Tenderloin" in 1960 and "She Loves Me" three years later. Neither was a hit — although "She Loves Me" won a Grammy for best score from a cast album — but their next one was a monster that continues to be performed worldwide: "Fiddler on the Roof." It earned two Tony Awards in 1965.

Based on stories by Sholom Aleichem that were adapted into a libretto by Stein, "Fiddler" dealt with the experience of Eastern European Orthodox Jews in the Russian village of Anatevka in the year 1905. It starred Zero Mostel as Teyve, had an almost eight year run and offered the world such stunning songs as "Sunrise, Sunset," "If I Were a Rich Man" and "Matchmaker, Matchmaker." The most recent Broadway revival starred Danny Burstein as Tevye and earned a best revival Tony nomination.

In a masterpiece of laughter and tenderness, Harnick's lyrics were poignant and honest, as when the hero Tevye sings, "Lord who made the lion and the lamb/You decreed I should be what I am/Would it spoil some vast eternal plan/If I were a wealthy man?"

Harvey Fierstein, who played Tevye in a Broadway revival starting in 2004 said in a statement that Harnick's "lyrics were clear and purposeful and never lapsed into cliché. You'd never catch him relying on easy rhymes or 'lists' to fill a musical phrase. He always sought and told the truth for the character and so made acting his songs a joy."

Bock and Harnick next wrote the book as well as the score for "The Apple Tree," in 1966, and the score for "The Rothschilds," with a book by Sherman Yellen, in 1970. It was the last collaboration between the

two: Bock decided that the time had come for him to be his own lyricist and he put out two experimental albums in the early 1970s.

Harnick went on to collaborate with Michel Legrand on "The Umbrellas of Cherbourg" in 1979 and a musical of "A Christmas Carol" in 1981; Mary Rodgers on a version of "Pinocchio" in 1973; Arnold Black on a musical of "The Phantom Tollbooth;" and Richard Rodgers on the score to "Rex" in 1976, a Broadway musical about Henry VIII.

He also wrote lyrics for the song "William Wants a Doll" for Marlo Thomas' TV special "Free to Be... You and Me" and several original opera librettos, including "Captain Jinks of the Horse Marines" and "Love in Two Countries." He won a Grammy for writing the libretto for "The Merry Widow" featuring Beverly Sills.

His work for television and film ranged from songs for the HBO animated film "The Tale of Peter Rabbit" in 1991 with music by Stephen Lawrence, to lyrics for the opening number of the 1988 Academy Awards telecast. He wrote the theme songs for two films, both with music by Cy Coleman: "The Heartbreak Kid" in 1972 and "Blame it On Rio" in 1984.

In 2014, off-Broadway's The York Theatre Company revived some of Harnick's early works, including "Malpractice Makes Perfect," "Dragons" and "Tenderloin." "She Loves Me" was last revived on Broadway in 2016 in a Tony-nominated show starring Zachary Levi.

Harnick was born and raised in Chicago and earned a bachelor's degree in music from the Northwestern University School of Music after serving in the army during World War II. Trained in the violin, he decided to try his luck as a songwriter in New York.

His early songs included "The Ballad of the Shape of Things," later recorded by the Kingston Trio, and the Cole Porter spoof, "Boston Beguine," from the revue "New Faces of 1952."

He and his wife, artist Margery Gray Harnick, had two children, Beth and Matthew, and four grandchildren. Harnick had an earlier marriage to actress Elaine May. He was a longtime member of the Dramatists Guild and Songwriters Guild.

Kristin Chenoweth, who starred in a 2006 revival of "The Apple Tree," on Twitter called it "one of my favorite professional experiences of my career," adding about Harnick: "I loved his musings. His writings. His soul."

Mark Kennedy is at <http://twitter.com/KennedyTwits>

Infowars 'War Room' host Owen Shroyer pleads guilty to entering restricted area during Capitol riot

By MICHAEL KUNZELMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Infowars host Owen Shroyer, who promoted baseless claims of 2020 election fraud on the far-right internet platform, pleaded guilty on Friday to joining the mob of Donald Trump supporters who rioted at the U.S. Capitol.

Shroyer, who didn't enter the Capitol but led rioters in chants near the top of the building's steps, pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor charge of illegally entering a restricted area. The charge carries a maximum sentence of one year behind bars.

U.S. District Judge Timothy Kelly scheduled a Sept. 12 sentencing hearing for the 33-year-old Shroyer, who has hosted a daily show called "The War Room With Owen Shroyer" for the website operated by conspiracy theorist Alex Jones.

Outside the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, Shroyer stood in front of a crowd with a megaphone and yelled that Democrats are "tyrants."

"And so today, on January 6, we declare death to tyranny! Death to tyrants!" he shouted.

Near the top of steps on the Capitol's east side, Shroyer, who's from Austin, Texas, led hundreds of rioters in chants of "USA!" and "1776!" He later said in an affidavit that he stood with Jones as Jones tried to deescalate the situation.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 338 ~ 91 of 102

But, prosecutors wrote in a court filing, "Harkening to the last time Americans overthrew their government in a revolution while standing on the Capitol steps where elected representatives are certifying a Presidential Election you disagree with does not qualify as deescalation."

Hundreds of people have been charged with storming the Capitol on Jan. 6, disrupting a joint session of Congress for certifying the 2020 presidential election victory by Biden, a Democrat, over Trump, a Republican. Shroyer, who was charged in August 2021 with four misdemeanor counts, is among a few defendants who neither went inside the Capitol nor were accused of engaging in violence or destruction.

Shroyer's attorney has accused prosecutors of trampling on Shroyer's constitutional rights to "protest, speak freely and report the news." Defense attorney Norm Pattis said Shroyer attended Trump's "Stop the Steal" rally as a journalist who intended to cover the event for his Infowars show.

"The First Amendment permits and protects the rights of individuals to assemble and engage in demonstrations that confront and criticize the government, even when those demonstrations become rowdy or unruly," Pattis wrote.

Prosecutors said the First Amendment doesn't protect the conduct for which Shroyer was charged.

"Shroyer's claimed status as a journalist does not immunize him from criminal prosecution," prosecutors wrote.

Shroyer, who has worked at Infowars since 2016, said he went to Washington, D.C., with Jones and others who worked for the website. Jones hasn't been charged with any Jan. 6-related crimes.

An Infowars video promoting "the big D.C. marches on the 5th and 6th of January" ended with a graphic of Shroyer and others in front of the Capitol.

A day before the Capitol insurrection, Shroyer called in to a live Infowars broadcast and internet program and said, "Everybody knows this election was stolen."

"Are we just going to sit here and become activists for four years or are we going to actually do something about this, whatever that cause or course of cause may be?" he added, according to prosecutors.

Shroyer said in an affidavit that he accompanied Jones and his security detail to Capitol grounds on Jan. 6.

"I walked with Mr. Jones up several steps and stood near him as he addressed the crowd from a bullhorn urging them to leave the area and behave peacefully," Shroyer said.

Phone records showed that leaders of the far-right Proud Boys extremist group were in contact with Jones and Shroyer before and during the Jan. 6 riot, according to the House committee that investigated the attack. Enrique Tarrío, who was the Proud Boys' national chairman, texted with Jones three times and Shroyer five times during the riot, and Proud Boys chapter leader Ethan Nordean exchanged 23 text messages with Shroyer in the two days before Jan. 6, the committee said.

Tarrío, Nordean and two other Proud Boys leaders were convicted in May of seditious conspiracy charges for what prosecutors said was a violent plot to stop the transfer of power from Trump to Biden after the 2020 election.

Shroyer is one of two Infowars employees arrested on Capitol riot charges. Samuel Montoya, who worked as a video editor for Jones' website, was sentenced in April to four months of home detention. Montoya entered the Capitol and captured footage of a police officer fatally shooting a rioter, Ashli Babbitt.

Also on Friday, a Colorado man who marched to the Capitol with members of the Proud Boys and was one of the first rioters to enter the building was sentenced to four years in prison for attacking police officers with a chemical spray as they tried to hold off the mob of Trump supporters.

Robert Gieswein, of Woodland Park, Colorado, was wearing a helmet, a flak jacket and goggles and was carrying a baseball bat when he stormed the Capitol. Gieswein, then 24, marched to the building from the Washington Monument with the Proud Boys but wasn't a member of the group.

Gieswein repeatedly sprayed an "aerosol irritant" at police officers and pushed against a line of police, according to a court filing accompanying his guilty plea to assault charges.

"You were a foot soldier in one of the most disturbing riots our nation has seen in years," U.S. District Judge Trevor McFadden told Gieswein, who gets credit for the more than two years that he already has served in custody.

Federal authorities have said Gieswein appeared to be an adherent of the Three Percenters militia movement and ran a private paramilitary training group called the Woodland Wild Dogs.

More than 1,000 people have been charged with federal crimes related to the Capitol riot. Over 600 of them have pleaded guilty, while over 100 others have been convicted after a trial.

Follow the AP's coverage related to the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection at the U.S. Capitol at <https://apnews.com/hub/capitol-siege>.

Oklahoma death row inmate plans to reject chance for clemency despite maintaining his innocence

By SEAN MURPHY Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — A man scheduled to be executed in September for the 1996 killing of a University of Oklahoma dance student plans to reject his chance for a clemency hearing, saying there is little hope the state's Republican governor would spare his life.

Anthony Sanchez, 44, said in a telephone interview with The Associated Press on Thursday from Oklahoma's death row that even in the rare case when the five-member Pardon and Parole Board recommends clemency, Gov. Kevin Stitt is unlikely to grant it.

"I've sat in my cell and I've watched inmate after inmate after inmate get clemency and get denied clemency," Sanchez said. "Either way, it doesn't go well for the inmates."

Sanchez cited the recent cases of Bigler Stouffer and James Coddington, both of whom were executed after the board voted 3-2 for clemency that was later rejected by Stitt.

"They went out there and poured their hearts out, man," Sanchez said. "Why would I want to be a part of anything like that, if you're going to sit there and get these guys' hopes up?"

"Why wouldn't I try to prove my innocence through the courts," he added.

Stitt granted clemency to a condemned inmate once, commuting Julius Jones death sentence in 2021 to life in prison without parole. Jones' case had drawn the attention of reality television star Kim Kardashian and professional athletes with Oklahoma ties, including NBA stars Russell Westbrook, Blake Griffin and Trae Young, and NFL quarterback Baker Mayfield. All of them urged Stitt to commute Jones' death sentence and spare his life.

Sanchez, who maintains his innocence, said he is no longer working with his court-appointed attorneys, but Mark Barrett, who represents Sanchez, said he was appointed by a federal judge.

"If we'd been hired and the client didn't want us anymore, that would be the end of it," Barrett said. "When there is an appointment, the judge has to release you from your appointment."

The Oklahoma Court of Criminal Appeals in April rejected a request from Sanchez's attorneys for an evidentiary hearing in which they claimed Sanchez's late father, Thomas Glen Sanchez, was the actual killer of 21-year-old Juli Busken.

Busken, from Benton, Arkansas, had just completed her last semester at OU when she was abducted on Dec. 20, 1996, from her Norman apartment complex. Her body was found that evening. She had been raped and shot in the head.

The slaying went unsolved for years until DNA recovered from her clothes linked Anthony Sanchez to the crime. He was convicted of rape and murder and sentenced to die in 2006.

A private investigator hired by an anti-death penalty group contends the DNA evidence may have been contaminated and that an inexperienced lab technician miscommunicated the strength of the evidence to a jury.

But former Cleveland County District Attorney Tim Kuykendall has said there was other evidence linking Anthony Sanchez to the killing, including ballistic evidence and a shoe print found at the crime scene.

"I know from spending a lot of time on that case, there is not one piece of evidence that pointed to anyone other than Anthony Sanchez," Kuykendall said. "I don't care if a hundred people or a thousand people confess to killing Juli Busken."

Oklahoma resumed carrying out the death penalty in 2021, ending a six-year moratorium brought on by concerns about its execution methods.

Oklahoma had one of the nation's busiest death chambers until problems in 2014 and 2015. Richard Glossip was hours away from being executed in September 2015 when prison officials realized they received the wrong lethal drug. It was later learned the same wrong drug had been used to execute an inmate in January 2015.

The drug mix-ups followed a botched execution in April 2014 in which inmate Clayton Lockett struggled on a gurney before dying 43 minutes into his lethal injection and after the state's prisons chief ordered executioners to stop.

Follow Sean Murphy on Twitter: @apseanmurphy

Starbucks union calls strike over Pride displays, but the company calls it a misinformation campaign

By MICHELLE CHAPMAN AP Business Writer

Workers at 150 Starbucks locations will strike in the coming week over what their union says is a clash over decor supporting LGBTQ+ causes, but the company denies it's banned any such displays and accused the union of using misinformation as a tactic in labor talks.

Starbucks Workers United said in a tweet Friday that 3,500 workers will be on strike over the next week, starting with the flagship location in Seattle.

The union has tried to establish a foothold at Starbucks for some time and at least 358 Starbucks stores have petitioned the National Labor Relations Board to hold union elections. A Starbucks in Buffalo, New York, became the first to unionize early last year.

But those efforts have slowed in recent months with pushback from some workers who have resisted organization efforts. Starbucks on Friday said Workers United is using misinformation about its support for LGBTQ+ causes as part of ongoing contract negotiations.

"Workers United continues to spread false information about our benefits, policies and negotiation efforts—a tactic used to seemingly divide our partners and deflect from their failure to respond to bargaining sessions for more than 200 stores," Starbucks said in a written statement.

Starbucks, based in Seattle, said last week that there had been no change to any policy on the matter and that its support for LGBTQ+ causes is "unwavering." The company has been outspoken in its support for LGBTQ+ employees for decades. It extended full health benefits to same-sex partners in 1988 and added health coverage for gender reassignment surgery in 2013.

Starbucks Corp. is also currently selling Pride-themed tumblers in its stores designed by Toronto artist Tim Singleton, who is gay.

Workers United says that store managers around the country have curtailed or removed displays during a monthlong celebration of LGBTQ+ people. In some cases, the union said, managers told workers that Pride displays were a safety concern, citing recent incidents at Target where some angry customers tipped over merchandise and confronted workers.

Starbucks said recent anti-LGBTQ+ social media campaigns against brands like Disney, Target and Bud Light in some parts of the country have not changed its stance.

Brands like Chick-fil-A, which closes on Sundays for a day of "rest and worship," and Cracker Barrel Old Country Store, have also been targeted online by anti-LGBTQ+ groups and individuals.

What to stream this weekend: 'And Just Like That,' Kelly Clarkson, 'Perfect Find' and Final Fantasy

By The Associated Press undefined

Albums from Kelly Clarkson and Portugal. The Man, as well as the new season of "And Just Like That"

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 338 ~ 94 of 102

are among the new television, movies, music and games headed to a device near you.

Among the offerings worth your time as selected by The Associated Press' entertainment journalists are "The Bear" back for a second helping, Gabrielle Union leading "The Perfect Find" and the Criterion Channel delving into the cliché of the gay best friend.

NEW MOVIES TO STREAM

— In "The Perfect Find," Gabrielle Union stars as a 40-year-old fashion editor who hits it off with a young man (Keith Powers) only to find out later that he's the son of her new boss, a media mogul played by Gina Torres. The film, out now on Netflix, is directed by Numa Perrier and based on Tia Williams' novel of the same name.

— Last year saw a number of excellent memory-drenched autobiographical dramas, like Steven Spielberg's "The Fabelmans" and Richard Linklater's "Apollo 10 1/2." Best of the bunch, though, may have been James Gray's "Armageddon Time," an acutely observed tale of 1980s Queens, New York. Rather than a wistfully nostalgic film, Gray's movie interrogates his own past, sifting through societal currents of politics and privilege. Jeremy Strong and Anne Hathaway play the parents of 11-year-old Paul (Banks Repeta), whose schooling experience vastly differs from that of his Black friend (Jaylin Webb). Anthony Hopkins also radiantly co-stars as his grandfather. In her review, AP Film Writer Lindsey Bahr called the film "essential." It's now streaming on Prime Video.

— The gay best friend has a times been dismissed as a familiar trope of Hollywood. But a new film series on the Criterion Channel finds much to appreciate and lament in a queer movie legacy that existed only on the margins for much of the 20th century. "Queersighted: The Gay Best Friend" pulls together films from seven decades of American film, from 1937's "Easy Living" to 1996's "Irma Vep" to trace the evolution of a stereotype that, as curator and author Mark Harris discuss in an accompanying conversation, offered both relief and dismay for gay moviegoers.

— AP Film Writer Jake Coyle

NEW MUSIC TO STREAM

— Kim Petras caps a remarkable few months with her debut album, "Feed the Beast," out Friday. She was just on top of the Billboard Hot 100 with "Unholy" with Sam Smith, performed at the Grammys and "Saturday Night Live," attended the Met Gala, and made the cover of Sports Illustrated Swimsuit Issue. The new 15-track album includes the buzzy single "Alone" featuring Nicki Minaj, the body-positive "Coconuts" and the beat-heavy single "Brrr." "Feed the Beast" also includes a collaboration with alt-pop star Banks.

— Portland-based Portugal. The Man return with an album touched by loss. "Chris Black Changed My Life," also out Friday, is dedicated to Portugal. The Man's late friend and honorary band member, Chris Black, who died in May 2019. Singles include the dance-floor ready "Dummy" and the mid-tempo wistful groove "Plastic Island," with the lyrics "Is it the end, my friend/Or is it coming around/Around again?" Collaborators include Paul Williams, Sean Leon, Asa Taccone, Black Thought, Unknown Mortal Orchestra, Jeff Bhasker and Natalia Lafourcade.

— Loss also informs "Chemistry," Kelly Clarkson's post-breakup album. "You can take my money drag my name 'round town/I don't mind I changed it anyway," she sings in the kiss-off single "Red Flag Collector." Clarkson previously released "Favorite Kind of High" and "I Hate Love," which both feature on "Chemistry," an album where she gets a little help from comedian and banjoist Steve Martin. "This album takes you down every path that chemistry could lead you down," she wrote on Instagram.

— Summer and Big Freedia were made to be together and she's offering us the 16-track "Central City" just in time for backyard parties. The New Orleans-raised queen of Bounce music has brought along some friends — collaborators include Lil Wayne, Faith Evans, Ciara and Kelly Price — and promises a new sound. "My new album is something I call Bigga Bounce. Welcome to Central City, y'all, where I pay homage to my city, my roots, hip-hop, and to the art of creating a new sound." Singles include the breezy "\$100 Bill" and aggressive "Bigfoot."

— AP Entertainment Writer Mark Kennedy

NEW SERIES TO STREAM

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 338 ~ 95 of 102

— Max has already publicized two big reveals for season two of "And Just Like That": the return of John Corbett as Aidan Shaw and Kim Cattrall filmed a scene as Samantha Jones. Although details around each are scarce, we do know Cattrall declined involvement in a third "Sex & the City" film and reportedly wasn't included in plans for the spinoff series. Fans likely won't mind how they see Samantha as long as she appears. See how the new episodes of "And Just Like That" on Thursdays.

— Robert Downey Jr. combines two of his passions, classic cars and fighting climate change in the new Max docuseries "Downey's Dream Cars." Viewers go along for the ride as experts help the actor make his vintage car collection not only functional, but environmentally-friendly. The show premiered Thursday with two episodes.

— Actor-comedian Anthony Anderson is a proud mama's boy and loves to dote on his mother, Doris. Cameras rolled as the "black-ish" star took his mom on a six-week dream vacation to Europe visiting England, France and Italy. "It's the best and worst decision I've ever made," declares Anderson in the trailer. "Trippin' with Anthony Anderson and Mama Doris" debuted Thursday on E!

— The critically-acclaimed series "The Bear," which debuted last summer and was an immediate word-of-mouth hit, is back for a second helping. The show stars Jeremy Allen White as a classically trained chef named Carmy who returned home to Chicago to run his family's sandwich spot called The Beef. In season two, which started Thursday on FX on Hulu, Carmy and his staff are tasked with leveling up The Beef to become a fine dining establishment named The Bear. Carmy's changes will require adjustment for all the characters. A central theme for season two, says creator Christopher Storer, is what happens when you get what you want?

— Alicia Rancilio

NEW VIDEO GAMES TO PLAY

— Final Fantasy XVI, the new chapter in the groundbreaking role-playing series, takes place in a land fueled by magic crystals whose light has begun to fade. Publisher Square Enix is hoping it can prevent such a fate from befalling its marquee franchise, whose previous installment in 2016 was met with mixed critical reaction (though it still sold millions of copies). The most significant change to the formula is in the combat: Protagonist Clive Rosfield fights mostly on his own, rather than assembling the usual party of warriors and spellcasters, and the turn-by-turn skirmishes that once defined Final Fantasy have been replaced by zippier swordplay. Trailers promise a darker storyline — the producer has acknowledged the influence of "Game of Thrones" — but fans can still expect dazzling scenery and epic sweep. Your latest chance to save the world is available now on PlayStation 5.

— Lou Kesten

Catch up on AP's entertainment coverage here: <https://apnews.com/apf-entertainment>.

Ohio father accused of killing his 3 young sons indicted on murder charges, could face death penalty

BATAVIA, Ohio (AP) — A grand jury has indicted an Ohio man accused of fatally shooting his three young sons on murder charges — charges he could face the death penalty for.

Chad Doerman, 32, was indicted Thursday on charges of aggravated murder, kidnapping and assault for the June 15 deaths of his sons, according to Clermont County court records.

Clayton Doerman, 7, Hunter Doerman, 4, and Chase Doerman, 3, were all killed. Prosecutors say he admitted to planning the shooting, but at a Friday arraignment, Doerman entered a not-guilty plea.

"This was the man that everyday they woke up looking to for protection, love and guidance in all things," Clermont County's chief prosecutor of Municipal Court, David Gast, said at a previous hearing.

"He was their world, he was their guardian and he executed them in cold blood," Gast said.

The sheriff's office said the 34-year-old mother, who was not identified, was outside the home and was shot in the hand while trying to shield her sons from their father.

The three little boys were described in their obituary as full of unconditional love for each other and anyone they met. They loved fishing, baseball, staying up past their bedtime and laughing together, the obituary stated.

Officials have not released a motive for the slayings, which occurred in Monroe Township, about 75 miles (120 kilometers) west of Columbus. Doerman is being held without bail and is currently in the Clermont County Jail.

Court records did not indicate whether he was represented by a lawyer at his most recent arraignment. Clermont County's public defender's office declined to say whether they represent him.

Supreme Court upholds federal law used to prosecute people who encourage illegal immigration

By JESSICA GRESKO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court on Friday upheld a section of federal law used to prosecute people who encourage illegal immigration, ruling against a California man who offered adult adoptions he falsely claimed would lead to U.S. citizenship.

The court by a 7-2 vote rejected arguments that the law is too broad and violates the Constitution.

The case involves a section of federal immigration law that says a person who "encourages or induces" a non-citizen to come to or remain in the United States illegally can be punished by up to five years in prison. That's increased to 10 years if the person doing the encouraging is doing so for personal financial gain.

Writing for a majority of her colleagues Justice Amy Coney Barrett said that while a lower court had found the section of the law was unconstitutionally overbroad, "That was an error." Two of the court's three liberal justices, Justice Sonia Sotomayor and Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson, dissented.

The case in front of the court involved Helaman Hansen, who lived in Elk Grove, California, near Sacramento. The federal government says that from 2012 to 2016, Hansen deceived hundreds of non-citizens into believing that he could guarantee them a path to citizenship through adult adoption.

Based on Hansen's promises, officials say, people either came to or stayed in the United States in violation of the law, even though Hansen knew that the adult adoptions he was arranging would not lead to citizenship. The government says that at least 471 people paid him between \$550 and \$10,000 each and that in total he collected more than \$1.8 million.

Hansen was ultimately convicted of encouragement charges as well as fraud charges. He was sentenced to 10 years in prison on the encouragement charges and 20 years on the fraud charges. But a federal appeals court ruled that the law on encouragement is overbroad and violates the free speech clause of the First Amendment and overturned just those convictions.

In her opinion, Barrett wrote that "Hansen asks us to throw out too much of the good based on a speculative shot at the bad." She said: "This is not the stuff of overbreadth."

The case is United States v. Helaman Hansen, 22-179.

Follow AP's coverage of the U.S. Supreme Court at <https://apnews.com/hub/us-supreme-court>.

'Titanic' director James Cameron says the search for the missing sub became a 'nightmarish charade'

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — "Titanic" director James Cameron says the search operation for a deep-sea tourist sub turned into a "nightmarish charade" that prolonged the agony of the families of the passengers.

Cameron told the BBC in an interview broadcast on Friday that he "felt in my bones" that the Titan submersible had been lost soon after he heard it had lost contact with the surface during its descent to the wreckage of the ocean liner at the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean.

He said focus in the media over the next few days about the submersible having 96 hours of oxygen

supply — and that banging noises had been heard — were a “prolonged and nightmarish charade.”

“That was just a cruel, slow turn of the screw for four days as far as I’m concerned,” he said. “Because I knew the truth on Monday morning.”

The Titan launched at 8 a.m. on Sunday, and was reported overdue that afternoon about 435 miles (700 kilometers) south of St. John’s, Newfoundland. On Thursday, U.S. Coast Guards said debris had been found on the ocean bed. Authorities said all five people aboard the submersible died when the vessel imploded.

Cameron, who has made more than 30 dives to the wreckage of the Titanic, said he knew an “extreme catastrophic event” had happened as soon as he heard the submersible had lost navigation and communications during its descent.

“For the sub’s electronics to fail and its communication system to fail, and its tracking transponder to fail simultaneously — sub’s gone,” he told the British broadcaster.

“For me, there was no doubt. I knew that sub was sitting exactly underneath its last known depth and position, and that’s exactly where they found it. There was no search. When they finally got an ROV down there that could make the depth, they found it within hours. Probably within minutes.”

The filmmaker has been an oceanography enthusiast since childhood and has made dozens of deep-sea dives, including one to the deepest point on Earth -- the bottom of the Mariana Trench in the Pacific Ocean.

Cameron said that “one of the saddest aspects of this is how preventable it really was.”

“We now have another wreck that is based on, unfortunately, the same principles of not heeding warnings,” he said.

Deep-sea explorers have voiced concerns about OceanGate Expeditions’ Titan submersible, saying it was too experimental to carry passengers.

OceanGate co-founder Guillermo Söhnlein told Times Radio that chief executive Stockton Rush, who was one of those onboard the Titan, was “extremely committed to safety.”

“He was also extremely diligent about managing risks, and was very keenly aware of the dangers of operating in a deep ocean environment,” said Söhnlein , who no longer works for OceanGate.

The US has tons of leftover food. Upcycling turns would-be trash into ice cream and pizza

By HAVEN DALEY Associated Press

LOS GATOS, Calif. (AP) — At Tyler Malek’s ice cream parlors, one cook’s trash is another chef’s frosty treat.

The head ice cream maker at the Portland, Oregon-based Salt & Straw uses the whey leftover from yogurt makers in upstate New York to make his lemon curd flavor. For chocolate barley milk, he mixes in the remnants of rice and grains from beer brewing to give it a light and creamy taste.

“Instead of calling this food waste, we need to call it wasted food and start decreasing how much wasting we’re doing,” Malek said.

Malek’s ice cream chain is among those at the forefront of the upcycling movement, the process of creating high-quality products from leftover food. Malek’s shops from the Pacific Northwest to Miami now feature flavors like “Cacao Pulp & Chocolate Stracciatella Gelato,” which is made from leftover cacao pulp from chocolate production that otherwise would have gone to waste.

It’s a trend gaining ground as consumers spend more time reading packaging labels and menu ingredients to learn where their food comes from and how it affects the environment. More than 35 million tons (31 million metric tons) of food are wasted every year in the U.S. — about 40% of the country’s food production — costing the national economy more than \$200 billion, according to the Upcycled Food Association.

Upcycled food is becoming increasingly common in cake mixes and veggie chips at natural grocery stores. Ingredients include fruits and vegetables from farms nationwide that are perfectly edible but often rejected by restaurants and grocery stores because of their shape or color, like white strawberries, wilted greens and ugly mushrooms.

The Upcycled Food Association, which will celebrate World Upcycling Day on Saturday, issues an official

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 338 ~ 98 of 102

"Upcycling Certified" seal to qualifying products. These seals, which adorn the new Salt & Straw upcycled flavors, raise awareness with consumers that the company making the food used such ingredients.

The association initially certified about 30 products in 2021 and now has 450 carrying the label.

"A lot of the food that is uneaten or thrown away in our supply chain is actually due to archaic cosmetic standards or sort of perceptions that what we think is edible or quality food," said Angie Crone, the association's chief executive. "So this is a mark that you can see on the products wherever you go shopping, to be able to understand how that company is reducing food waste in their supply chain."

The association's seal also is featured on all products made by Renewal Mill, an Oakland-based company turning byproducts from plant-based milk into pantry staples like baking flour to reduce waste at the manufacturing level.

"Our first product is the pulp leftover from making soy milk. We turn that into a high fiber gluten-free flour called okara flour," co-founder Caroline Cotto said. "And then we use that flour to make things like baking mixes and ready-to-eat cookies."

The company's okara flour is featured in Salt & Straw's new "Salted Caramel & Okara Cupcakes" flavor.

The movement isn't confined to recycled products found in a trendy ice cream store, farmers market or natural grocery. In San Francisco, a restaurant serving pizza and wine focuses on upcycled ingredients such as ugly mushrooms, misshapen peppers and discolored tomatoes, as well as offcuts of meat for menu stars like beef heart meatballs.

"I think so many people think about dumpster diving or using rotten ingredients, but we have this wildly overproductive food system that accounts for a ton of waste," said Kayla Abe, co-owner of Shuggie's Trash Pie. "Some people might not read that it's a beef heart meatball and they just might see meatball. They order it and they're like, that was the best meatball I've ever had in my life."

Andrew Tate to remain under house arrest in Romania as human trafficking case drags on

BUCHAREST, Romania (AP) — A Romanian court on Friday extended by 30 days the house arrest of Andrew Tate, the divisive social media personality and former professional kickboxer who was charged this week with rape, human trafficking, and forming a criminal gang to sexually exploit women.

The Bucharest Tribunal's decision comes days after prosecutors from Romania's anti-organized crime agency, DIICOT, formally indicted the 36-year-old social media star after filing their criminal investigation to a Bucharest court.

Tate, who has amassed nearly 7 million Twitter followers and is known for expressing misogynistic views and hate speech online, was initially arrested near Romania's capital, Bucharest, in late December, along with his brother, Tristan. Two Romanian women are also charged in the case.

All four defendants will remain under house arrest for 30 days, the court ruled, but the decision can be appealed within 48 hours.

DIICOT requested this week that judges extend the house arrest measure as they filed their investigation. Under Romanian law, judges have 60 days to decide whether the case is sent to trial, but nonetheless often takes longer.

The agency alleges that the four defendants formed a criminal group in 2021 "in order to commit the crime of human trafficking" in Romania, as well as in the United States and Britain. All four have denied the allegations against them.

There are seven female victims in the case, DIICOT said, who were lured with false pretenses of love and transported to Romania, where the gang sexually exploited and subjected them to physical violence. One defendant is accused of raping a woman twice in March 2022, according to the agency. The women were allegedly controlled by "intimidation, constant surveillance" and claims they were in debt, prosecutors said.

The Tate brothers, who are dual British-U.S. citizens, won an appeal on March 31 to be moved to house arrest after spending three months in police detention.

Andrew Tate, who is known to peddle conspiracy theories online to his mostly young male followers, has

repeatedly claimed that prosecutors have no evidence against him and that there is a political conspiracy designed to silence his views.

In a video posted on Thursday to his Twitter account, he labeled the charges against him as a "level 10 matrix attack" and said, "They're trying to destroy me without evidence."

Tate was previously banned from several prominent social media platforms for expressing hate speech and misogynistic comments, including that women should bear responsibility for getting sexually assaulted.

Several women in Britain also are pursuing civil claims to obtain damages from Tate, alleging they were victims of sexual violence.

During their investigations, prosecutors have ordered the confiscation of the Tate brothers' assets, including 15 luxury cars, luxury watches and about \$3 million in cryptocurrency.

Why some doctors stay in US states with restrictive abortion laws and others leave

By LAURA UNGAR AP Science Writer

Dr. Kylie Cooper chokes up thinking about the patients she left behind in Idaho.

One who often comes to mind is Kayla Smith.

Smith said she chose to end a desperately wanted pregnancy last year after discovering her fetus had potentially deadly heart defects and other problems. But Idaho banned nearly all abortions after the U.S. Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade in June, so Smith had to go to Washington state. Cooper felt "deeply saddened" she couldn't care for her the way she normally would have.

And this is one of the reasons Cooper, a maternal-fetal specialist, moved in April to Minnesota, which has broad abortion rights.

"Obviously it was a very difficult decision for me and my family," she said. But they needed to be "where we felt that reproductive health care was protected and safe."

Post-Roe, many maternal care doctors in restrictive states face the same stark choice: Stay or go? They must weigh tough questions about medical ethics, their own families and whether they can provide the best care without risking their careers or even winding up in prison. They know a lot is at stake for patients, too, due to current and projected widespread maternal care shortages in the U.S.

Some doctors make a different choice than Cooper. OB-GYN Dr. Alecia Fields moved back to her native Kentucky around the time news first leaked about the Supreme Court's ruling. She practices in a conservative rural county and can no longer provide abortions part-time in Louisville like she once did.

Fields feels an intense connection to her state and hopes to foster change from within. Plus, she said, "there's a big need for providers in general in terms of reproductive health care."

Nationally, 44% of counties had low or no access to obstetric providers, according to a 2022 March of Dimes report based on data gathered before the Supreme Court ruling. That figures jump to more than 50% in Kentucky, Idaho and some other states with restrictive abortion laws.

Federal projections show a widening gulf between supply and demand for OB-GYNs nationally through 2035. And among the 24 states that have taken steps to restrict abortion, all but Ohio will see an even bigger need by then, according to The Associated Press' analysis of the federal data.

Abortion restrictions, combined with the challenges of practicing in rural areas, threaten to expand so-called "maternal care deserts," said Dr. Amy Domeyer-Klenske, who chairs the Wisconsin section of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.

This won't just affect people seeking abortions, said McKay Cunningham, who teaches reproductive rights and constitutional law at the College of Idaho. "It has ramifications that really just affect every woman, every family, that wants to have children."

STAYING IN KENTUCKY

As the midday sun glistened on Lake Cumberland, Fields knelt down to feed her backyard chickens. She and her husband, who is a stay-at-home dad, bought a house and barn on three acres to raise their two little boys.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 338 ~ 100 of 102

That's how Fields, 36, grew up — shuttling from her parents' house in Lexington to her grandparents' house in the country. "You could just run and go anywhere and play anywhere," she said. "Everybody kind of knew each other, came over for Sunday dinners and it just had a real warm feeling to it."

At the University of Kentucky and later in medical school, Fields became an advocate for reproductive rights. She served on the board of Medical Students for Choice and learned abortion care during her residency in Rochester, New York. When she worked at a health center in Indianapolis, she drove to Louisville monthly to provide abortions at Planned Parenthood.

Then last spring, she got a job offer from a health center in Somerset, Kentucky. It was a chance to serve a county where nearly 1 in 5 people live in poverty and some drive an hour or two for care.

But Fields said the abortion decision leak brought up "a lot of fears" and made her wonder: "What is this going to mean on the ground? Am I going to be criminalized?"

She decided to risk it.

Now, she tries to provide the best care possible given the limitations. She said her goal is to "create a really safe space that's very open-ended," where patients can share whether their pregnancies are planned, how they feel about them and what they want to do. If necessary, she can point them toward information on out-of-state abortion providers and travel funds. She can also prescribe birth control and offer permanent sterilization — something more of her patients are seeking.

And if an emergency puts a mother's life in danger, abortion is allowed. "The hard thing is, waiting until that moment puts the patient at a lot of risk," Fields said.

Despite constraints on her practice, patients regularly thank Fields at the clinic or when she bumps into them at Walmart. One expressed her gratitude publicly on Facebook, describing how she hemorrhaged while delivering her baby — and Fields saved them both.

Fields displays her love for Kentucky on her dining room shelves, where she's placed a wooden cutout and colorful picture in the shape of the state, a horse statue and the framed saying "home sweet home." She envisions staying for a long time and caring for generations of local families.

"I want to be settled," she said. "To kind of put down roots and build on them."

LEAVING IDAHO

Cooper, like Fields, wanted to practice where she was needed and "make a huge impact."

She moved to Boise in 2018, and the job proved extremely rewarding. She handled the toughest cases, shepherding some women through loss and helping others welcome healthy babies despite serious pregnancy complications. She made deep connections with patients, families and coworkers.

Her family loved Idaho. She and her husband, also a stay-at-home dad, lived in a great neighborhood and had a group of friends. The kids, 9 and 6, did well in school.

"We just had a good life," Cooper, 39, said. "We had no plans to leave."

That changed after Idaho banned abortion. Under state law, doctors who perform the procedure can be charged with a felony and have their medical license revoked.

For some of Cooper's patients, abortion was the best option and the only way to preserve life and health.

"The idea of not being able to help them the way that I should was just terrifying," she said.

She was already having to run some cases by hospital attorneys and feared she might soon be forced to choose between her patients' welfare and her own. If she went to prison, she realized, her children might go years without a mom. And the family's income would disappear.

All she and her husband would talk about, she said, "was abortion care and my job and just all the stress of it."

A new poll by KFF, a nonprofit that does health care research, found 61% of OB-GYNs in states with abortion bans say they are very or somewhat concerned about their own legal risk when making decisions about patient care and whether abortions are necessary.

One of Cooper's colleagues in Idaho also decided to leave, surveyed other maternal care professionals and found dozens more were considering moving out of the state within the next year.

Cooper's family is now settling into a new house in Minnesota. They're still unpacking. They're figuring out new schedules and looking for new friends. "Basically," Cooper said, "we're trying to find what we

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 338 ~ 101 of 102

had in Idaho.”

She said she still worries a lot about her former patients, over which “lots of tears were shed and still are.” Smith misses Cooper just as much. The doctor cried with her when she chose to end her second pregnancy after realizing halfway through that her fetus likely wouldn’t live. And Cooper helped her cope with the loss of baby Brooks, who lived a few moments after induced labor.

When Smith learned Cooper was leaving, she stopped by her office to thank her for everything and give her flowers and a hug.

“I’m just really sad. She was so kind. She changed our lives,” said Smith, who is also considering moving away. “I don’t blame her for leaving. But it sucks for everyone here.”

The Associated Press Health and Science Department receives support from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute’s Science and Educational Media Group and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

Today in History: June 24, Cabot spots North America

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Saturday, June 24, the 175th day of 2023. There are 190 days left in the year.

Today’s Highlight in History:

On June 24, 1497, the first recorded sighting of North America by a European took place as explorer John Cabot spotted land, probably in present-day Canada.

On this date:

In 1509, Henry VIII was crowned king of England; his wife, Catherine of Aragon, was crowned queen consort.

In 1807, a grand jury in Richmond, Virginia, indicted former Vice President Aaron Burr on charges of treason and high misdemeanor (he was later acquitted).

In 1939, the Southeast Asian country Siam changed its name to Thailand. (It went back to being Siam in 1945, then became Thailand once again in 1949.)

In 1940, France signed an armistice with Italy during World War II.

In 1946, Fred M. Vinson was sworn in as the 13th chief justice of the United States, succeeding the late Harlan F. Stone.

In 1948, Communist forces cut off all land and water routes between West Germany and West Berlin, prompting the western allies to organize the Berlin Airlift.

In 1957, the U.S. Supreme Court, in *Roth v. United States*, ruled 6-3 that obscene materials were not protected by the First Amendment.

In 1973, President Richard Nixon concluded his summit with the visiting leader of the Soviet Union, Leonid Brezhnev, who hailed the talks in an address on American television.

In 1983, the space shuttle Challenger — carrying America’s first woman in space, Sally K. Ride — coasted to a safe landing at Edwards Air Force Base in California.

In 1992, the Supreme Court, in a 5-4 decision, strengthened its 30-year ban on officially sponsored worship in public schools, prohibiting prayer as a part of graduation ceremonies.

In 2015, a federal judge in Boston formally sentenced Boston Marathon bomber Dzhokhar Tsarnaev (joh-HAHR’ sahr-NEYE’-ehv) to death for the 2013 terror attacks. (A federal appeals court later threw out the sentence; the Supreme Court reinstated it.)

In 2020, three white men were indicted on murder charges in the killing of Ahmaud Arbery, a Black man who was shot while running in a neighborhood near Georgia’s coast. (All three were convicted.)

Ten years ago: Opening statements took place in the Sanford, Florida, trial of George Zimmerman, accused of murdering 17-year-old Trayvon Martin. (Zimmerman was acquitted.) The Chicago Blackhawks won the Stanley Cup with a stunning 3-2 comeback victory in Game 6 over the Boston Bruins. In one of

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, June 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 31 - No. 338 ~ 102 of 102

Wimbledon's greatest upsets, an ailing Rafael Nadal (rah-fay-ehl nah-DAHL') was knocked out in straight sets by 135th-ranked Steve Darcis of Belgium, 7-6 (4), 7-6 (8), 6-4.

Five years ago: President Donald Trump compared people entering the U.S. from Mexico to invaders and said they should be immediately sent back without appearing before a judge. Women in Saudi Arabia were able to drive for the first time, as the world's last remaining ban on female drivers was lifted.

One year ago: The Supreme Court ended constitutional protections for abortion that had been in place nearly 50 years — a decision by its conservative majority to overturn the court's landmark abortion cases. The outcome overturning Roe v. Wade was expected to lead to abortion bans in roughly half the states. Star slugger Aaron Judge and the New York Yankees agreed to a \$19 million, one-year contract, avoiding an arbitration hearing.

Today's Birthdays: Rock singer Arthur Brown is 81. Actor Michele Lee is 81. Actor-director Georg Stanford Brown is 80. Rock singer Colin Blunstone (The Zombies) is 78. Musician Mick Fleetwood is 76. Actor Peter Weller is 76. Rock musician John Illsley (Dire Straits) is 74. Actor Nancy Allen is 73. Reggae singer Derrick Simpson (Black Uhuru) is 73. Actor Joe Penny is 67. Singer-musician Andy McCluskey (Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark) is 64. R&B/pop singer-songwriter Siedah (sy-EE'-dah) Garrett is 63. Actor Iain Glen is 62. Rock singer Curt Smith (Tears for Fears) is 62. Actor Danielle Spencer is 58. Actor Sherry Stringfield is 56. Singer Glenn Medeiros is 53. Actor Carla Gallo is 48. Actor Amir Talai (TV: "LA to Vegas") is 46. Actor-producer Mindy Kaling is 44. Actor Minka Kelly is 43. Actor Vanessa Ray is 42. Actor Justin Hires is 38. Actor Candice Patton is 38. Singer Solange Knowles is 37. Actor Max Ehrich is 32. Actor Beanie Feldstein is 30.