

Groton Daily Independent

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Groton Community Calendar

Tuesday, July 4

Olive Grove: His/Her Firecracker Tourney.

Wednesday, July 5

Senior Menu: Beef stew, biscuit, Waldorf salad, muffin, tomato juice.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Circles potluck and joint Bible study, 6 p.m.; Game/Project night, 7 p.m.

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

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

Chamber Meeting, noon, at City Hall

Olive Grove: Kid's Lessons

Jr. Legion hosts Watertown, DH, 5 p.m.

U12BB hosts Borge, DH, 5:30 p.m.

U10 R/W hosts Webster, DH, 6 p.m.

Thursday, July 6

Senior Menu: Ham, au gratin potatoes, broccoli and cauliflower blend, fruit, cookie.

U8 R&B hosts Hannigan/Borge, DH, 5:30 p.m.

City Council meeting, 7 p.m.

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PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445

Paul's Cell/Text: 605-397-7460

Friday, July 7

Senior Menu: Chicken strips, tri-tators, peas and carrots, fruit, whole wheat bread.

Jr. Teeners at Vern Jark Memorial Tournament in Aberdeen

U12 State Tournament at Webster

T-Ball Scrimmage (B&G), 6 p.m.

Saturday, July 8

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

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

Avantara Summer Event, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Jr. Teeners at Vern Jark Memorial Tournament in Aberdeen

U12 State Tournament at Webster

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

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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.

Help Wanted

THE GROTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT has openings for the following certified positions for the 23-24 school year: K-12 Vocal Music Teacher, HS Agriculture Teacher/FFA Advisor. Applicants should complete and submit the certified staff application form along with a current cover letter, resume, and three letters of recommendation. All materials should be submitted to Joe Schwan, Superintendent PO Box 410 Groton, SD 57445. EOE

GROTON'S EVENTS



July 4 Firecracker
Tourney at Olive
Grove Golf Course

July 9 Summer
Fest/Car Show at
the City Park



July 20 Pro Am
Tourney at Olive
Grove Golf Course

July 20 Summer
Downtown Sip &
Shop



Aug. 4 Wine on Nine
at Olive Grove Golf
Course

Aug. 10 Family Fun
Fest

COME SPEND A WEEKEND IN GROTON!

- 5 camping spots with full-service hookups
- play centers and permanent corn hole boards
- swimming pool with slide and diving board
 - 3 diamond baseball complex
- 9-hole golf course • bowling alley

GROTON
Chamber Of Commerce

120 N Main St., Groton, SD 57445

605-397-8422

GrotonChamber.com

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Julianna Kosel took this photo of the moon rising up over a lake.



FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Galatians 5:22-23

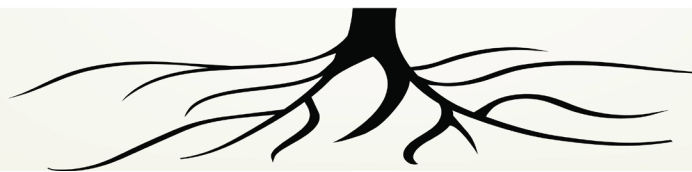


Photo from KSFY featuring Charle Imrie who was deployed to help out after Hurricane Harvey hit in 2017.

Fruit of the Spirit

Ladies Luncheon & Program

Wednesday, July 12 at Noon

Bethesda Lutheran Church, Bristol

Silent Auction 10:30 - 11:30

Door Prizes

**Charla Imrie from The American Red Cross
will be the guest speaker**

Advance tickets required \$15.00

Call Kay Espeland 605-492-3507 or

Jane Goehring 605-290-1420



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

South Dakota's 'tax holiday' may be shorter than expected

BY DANA HESS - JULY 4, 2023

Recently a news release from Gov. Kristi Noem heralded a "tax holiday" that started on July 1. On that date, the state sales tax dipped from 4.5% to 4.2%. If that doesn't sound like a big savings, that's because it's not. At the new rate, spend \$100 and you'll save 30 cents on your sales tax bill.

That's not a "holiday." At best it's the equivalent of a long lunch or that time you got to leave work an hour early on a Friday.

While she dubbed it a "tax holiday," it's apparent from her news release that Noem was not in a holiday mood. Cutting the state sales tax by three-tenths of a percentage point was not at all what the governor wanted. During her reelection campaign, Noem declared her support for eliminating the state's 4.5% state sales tax on groceries. She was accused in some quarters of a political ploy by usurping an issue traditionally supported by the Democratic Party. However, during the legislative session she stuck to her belief that eliminating the sales tax on groceries was best for South Dakotans.

Republican majorities in the House and Senate didn't see it that way. They defied the leader of their party by defeating the plan Noem supported and opted to drop the overall state sales tax to 4.2%. According to that legislation, the tax holiday that started on July 1 will sunset on June 30, 2027. The sunset clause was included because lawmakers knew about an effort to cut the state sales tax on groceries via an initiative that could be on the ballot in 2024.

The 2024 ballot could have two measures on it designed to eliminate the state sales tax on groceries. Those who favor cutting the tax are covering all their bases by offering both an initiated measure and a constitutional amendment to voters. Anyone who followed the last legislative session may expect Noem to be helping with the ballot efforts to eliminate the state sales tax on groceries. However, according to a South Dakota News Watch story, instead of cheering for their passage, Noem will most likely be working for their defeat.

Because of the way the ballot measures are written, about \$20 million that the state gets annually from a settlement with major cigarette manufacturers would be jeopardized, according to an attorney general's opinion. The AG also says that the way the measures are worded, it could jeopardize the revenue the state receives from the streamlined sales tax agreement that allows South Dakota to collect sales taxes on internet purchases.

The "tax holiday" amounts to about \$104 million annually in relief for taxpayers. Consequently, it's \$104 million in revenue that the state won't have. Cutting the state sales tax on groceries would save consumers an estimated \$124 million. That's another large chunk of change that the state won't have. While the state has been flush with cash lately, largely due to an influx of federal pandemic funds, there's no way the state budget can sustain both tax cuts at the same time.

During her attempt to get the sales tax on groceries eliminated during the legislative session, Noem was quick to point out that polls showed the tax cut was popular with voters across demographic groups and with members of both political parties. That popularity with voters could bring some embarrassing moments for the governor and legislators.

With the state sales tax cut on the ballot — threatening the cigarette settlement funds and internet tax revenue — Noem may find herself in the awkward position of trying to explain to voters why the tax cut she promised them in her reelection campaign and fought for in the Legislature is no longer a good idea.

Should the state sales tax cut find favor with voters, lawmakers will be faced with the chore of moving up

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the sunset on the tax cut they recently approved and finding the money to replace the tobacco settlement funds. They'll also have to ask themselves what, if anything, they gained by so publicly and resoundingly defying the governor's wishes on tax reform.

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.

SD receives share of millions to help small meat processors

BY: ROBIN OPSAHL AND SEARCHLIGHT STAFF - JULY 3, 2023 2:34 PM

A new round of federal grants to help smaller meat and poultry processors fight industry consolidation includes \$15 million for the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and \$834,000 for a five-state region including South Dakota.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture will provide \$115 million in total grants, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced recently.

Vilsack held a roundtable with producers and businesses last week in Des Moines. He announced 15 awards in 17 states aimed at growing independent processing plants' capacities, starting up new plants and expanding rural workforces.

The grant for the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe will go toward a revolving loan fund to support the meat and poultry industry within the reservation's eight districts. The Oyate Community Development Corporation will administer the fund.

The \$834,000 grant for the Farmers Union Foundation will go toward a revolving loan fund for independent small- and medium-sized meat processors. The money will be available for use throughout a five-state region of Minnesota, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wisconsin.

The grants are part of a \$1 billion initiative from President Joe Biden's administration to make the meat-packing industry more competitive. Currently, four corporations process 85% of the nation's beef supply.

The grants are also part of President Joe Biden's pitch on "Bidenomics" heading into the 2024 presidential campaign. Biden last week touted initiatives like the Inflation Reduction Act and the American Rescue Plan that he said helped the American economy recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Those policies are focused on helping middle-class Americans and small businesses, Biden said. Vilsack told reporters the new USDA investments are focused on helping those same groups in the food industry as a part of the Biden administration's "Investing in America" agenda.

"While American farmers and ranchers have been responding to the demand to produce more, their communities have struggled to see their share of the benefits," Vilsack said in a news release.

Vilsack said that in 2022, 89% of all farming income went to 7.5% of farms — a breakdown even the farms benefitting from the current system would likely find unfair, he said. He said small and mid-sized farms are the "muscular core" of the country's agriculture system, and that these grants go toward strengthening those producers.

There was some discussion of more funding for these projects, but the debt ceiling negotiations stymied some of the USDA's expected investments, he said. But providing more support to these smaller organizations is necessary to help bring costs of food and agriculture production down, he said, to help combat inflation and prevent situations like the rapid increase in fertilizer costs due to the Russia-Ukraine war from occurring in the future.

"Are we comfortable with a situation where income continues to be concentrated, with the understanding that folks who are large-scale production agriculture have enormous risk financially ... or are we big enough and smart enough and innovative enough to basically create another alternative option so that folks can have a choice?" Vilsack said.

The former Iowa governor also said he expects to see Congress to move on a farm bill by the end of the year.

"The interesting thing about agriculture is its under-appreciated aspect of every state economy. You can go to any state in the country and what you're gonna find is agriculture is the top part of the economy,"

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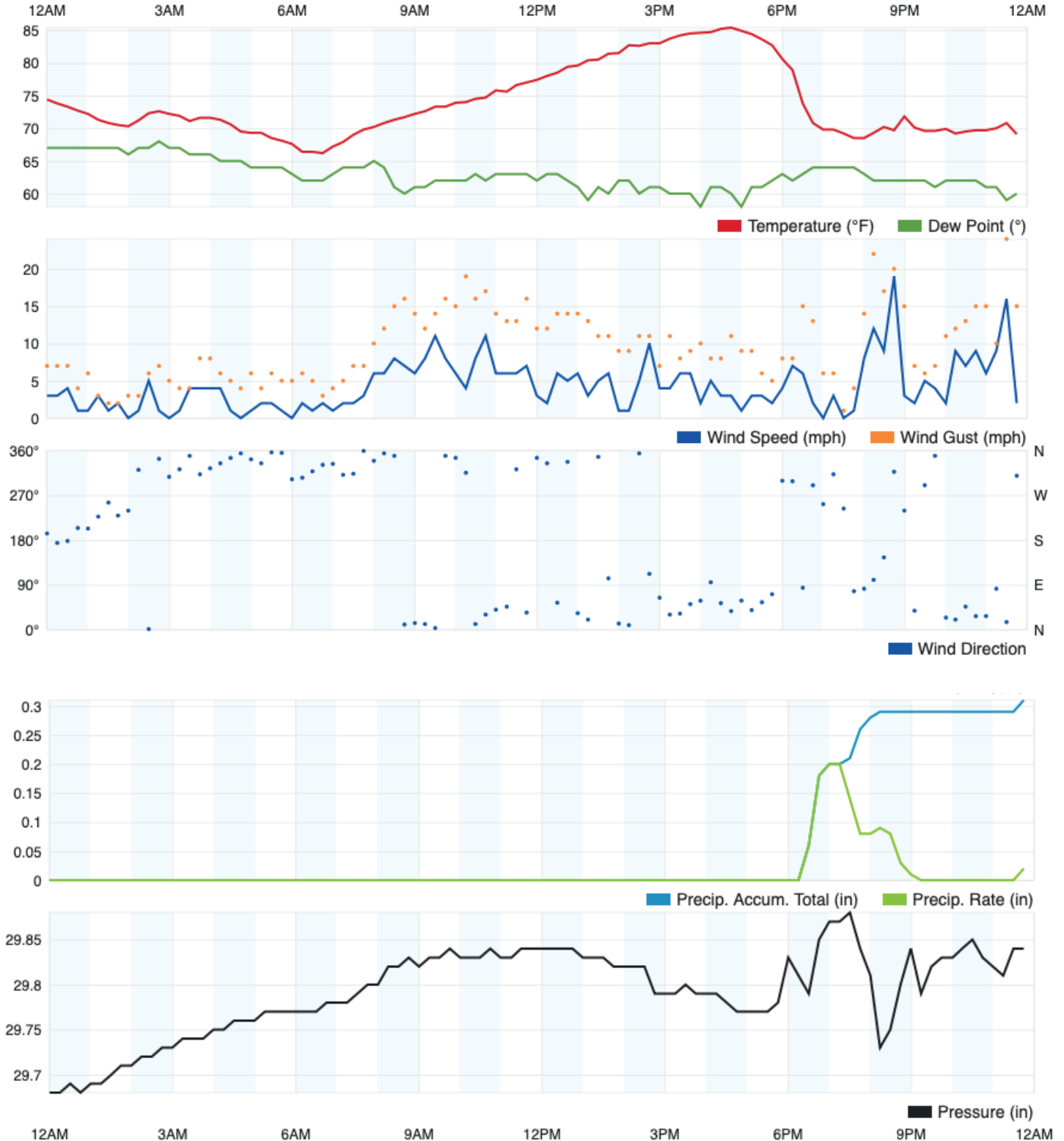
he told reporters. "... and as a result of that, I think there's an understanding and appreciation of the need to get a farm bill done."

Robin Opsahl is an Iowa Capital Dispatch reporter covering the state Legislature and politics. Robin has experience covering government, elections and more at media organizations including Roll Call, the Sacramento Bee and the Wausau Daily Herald, in addition to working on multimedia projects, newsletters and visualizations. They were a political reporter for the Des Moines Register covering the Iowa caucuses leading up to the 2020 presidential election, assisting with the Register's Iowa Poll, and reporting on Iowa's 4th District elections.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Independence Day



60% → 20%

T-storms Likely then Slight Chance T-storms

High: 75 °F

Tonight



Partly Cloudy

Low: 50 °F

Wednesday



Sunny

High: 71 °F

Wednesday Night



Mostly Clear

Low: 49 °F

Thursday



Sunny

High: 79 °F

Thursday Night



Partly Cloudy

Low: 57 °F

Friday



20%

Mostly Sunny then Slight Chance T-storms

High: 79 °F



Severe Weather Threat Today

July 4, 2023
3:55 AM

Mainly this afternoon

Timing/Location

Scattered showers/storms are expected through this morning, but the highest chances for severe weather will exist early this morning and again late afternoon over eastern SD, western MN

Tornado Potential

Very Low Low Medium High

Max Hail Size

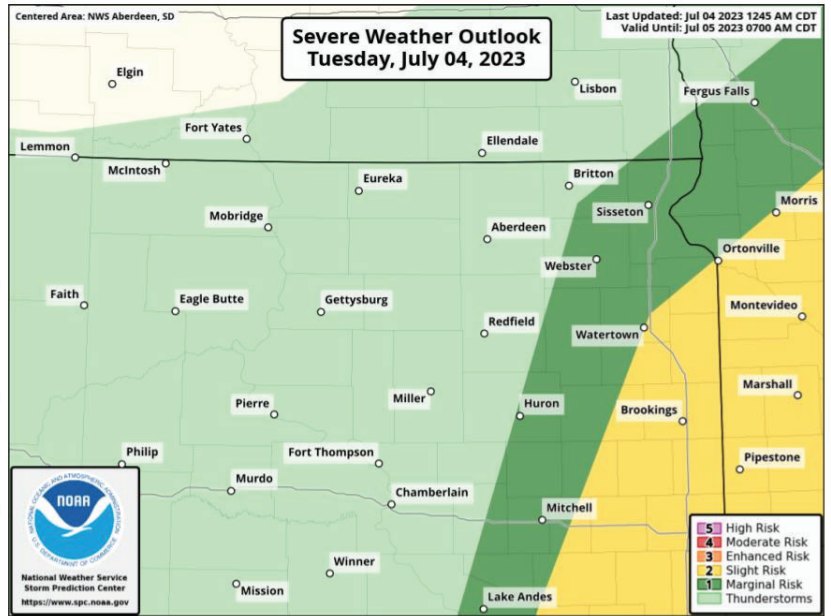
Dimes Quarters Golfball Baseball

Max Wind Speed

< 60 mph 60-70 mph 70-80 mph > 80mph

Heavy Rain/Flooding Potential

Very Low Low Medium High



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Isolated to scattered storms are expected this evening into the overnight hours. A slight risk for severe weather is in place over our entire forecast area. Please have multiple ways to receive warnings.

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Today's Temps & Rain Chances

July 4, 2023
2:15 AM

	3 Hourly Temperatures Today							
	7/4 Tue							7/5 Wed
	3am	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am
Aberdeen	63	62	67	71	74	75	68	60
Britton	65	61	66	69	72	73	66	59
Brookings	68	69	74	77	78	73	67	62
Chamberlain	71	68	74	76	78	75	70	65
Clark	62	61	75	75	75	74	69	64
Eagle Butte	64	59	63	69	72	71	65	58
Ellendale	67	62	65	68	72	72	66	57
Eureka	64	59	65	69	73	71	63	55
Gettysburg	64	62	66	70	73	72	65	58
Huron	69	67	74	75	77	75	68	64
Kennebec	72	65	72	75	77	77	71	63
McIntosh	59	58	65	70	70	68	61	53
Milbank	67	65	71	76	74	71	67	62
Miller	64	64	73	75	77	76	69	60
Mobridge	63	61	66	73	74	73	65	57
Murdo	69	62	67	72	75	75	68	61
Pierre	65	64	71	74	77	76	72	63
Redfield	65	64	71	74	77	76	70	63
Sisseton	66	62	69	74	74	74	69	61
Watertown	65	64	73	76	74	72	68	63
Webster	68	62	71	73	73	73	67	60
Wheaton	65	62	68	73	73	73	69	61



	3 Hourly Rain Chances For Today							
	7/4 Tue							7/5 Wed
	3am	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am
Aberdeen	85	70	30	20	15	10	5	5
Britton	85	80	45	30	20	15	10	5
Brookings	25	65	70	55	65	50	35	15
Chamberlain	75	40	20	25	25	15	10	5
Clark	60	70	35	30	30	15	5	10
Eagle Butte	65	50	20	20	10	10	5	5
Ellendale	80	70	40	20	15	10	10	5
Eureka	75	55	25	20	10	15	5	5
Gettysburg	70	50	20	20	10	5	5	5
Huron	80	75	60	40	40	15	10	5
Kennebec	55	50	20	20	10	5	10	10
McIntosh	75	50	20	20	20	10	5	0
Milbank	50	70	65	50	65	30	5	5
Miller	70	55	20	20	15	10	5	5
Mobridge	70	50	25	20	15	10	5	0
Murdo	50	50	20	20	10	5	10	10
Pierre	65	50	20	20	10	5	10	5
Redfield	70	65	25	25	15	10	5	5
Sisseton	65	80	55	30	25	20	10	5
Watertown	50	65	50	45	55	30	10	5
Webster	75	80	40	35	25	20	10	5
Wheaton	60	80	65	30	30	15	10	5



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

SLIGHT RISK

Scattered severe storms possible.

Short-lived and not widespread -- isolated intense storms possible.

Plan ahead if you have outdoor plans and have a way to get NWS warnings.

weather.gov



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 86 °F at 4:54 PM

Low Temp: 66 °F at 6:35 AM

Wind: 30 mph at 8:45 PM

Day length: 15 hours, 37 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 105 in 1988

Record Low: 40 in 1967

Average High: 84

Average Low: 59

Average Precip in July.: 0.47

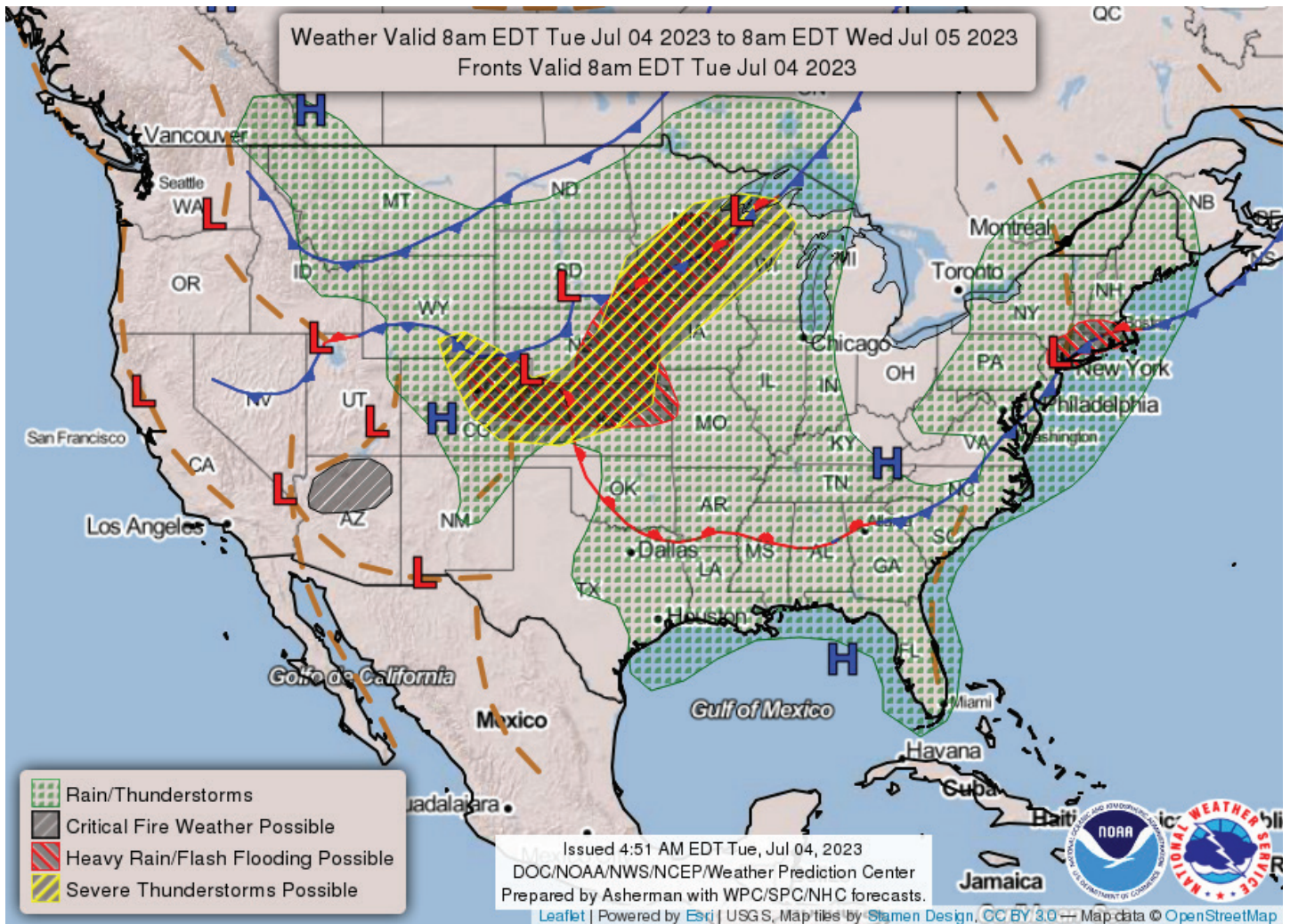
Precip to date in July.: 1.09

Average Precip to date: 11.48

Precip Year to Date: 12.44

Sunset Tonight: 9:25:45 PM

Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:48:37 AM



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Today in Weather History

July 4, 1936: Several record highs were seen on this day, including; 113 degrees 4NW of Gann Valley; 111 in Murdo; 107 in Castlewood; 106 in Clark and Highmore; 105 near Onida; 104 in Faulkton and Miller; 103 degrees 6SE of McIntosh; 101 in Pollock.

July 4, 1988: Several record highs were set on this day, including; 103 degrees in Ipswich and Britton; 102 in Webster; 101 in Summit and Artichoke Lake, MN; 99 in Leola; 98 degrees in Clear Lake and Waubay.

1776: Thomas Jefferson purchased a thermometer from a local merchant before signing the Declaration of Independence. According to his weather memorandum book, at 1 PM it was cloudy and 76 degrees.

1911: Record temperatures are set in the northeastern United States as a deadly heat wave hits the area that would go on to kill 380 people. In Nashua, New Hampshire, the mercury peaked at 106 degrees. Other high-temperature records were set all over New England during an 11-day period.

1956 - A world record for the most rain in one minute was set at Unionville, MD, with a downpour of 1.23 inches. (The Weather Channel) (The National Severe Storms Forecast Center)

1987 - Thunderstorms around the country provided extra fireworks for Independence Day. Thunderstorms produced wind gusts to 82 mph at Clearwater, KS, eight inches of rain in four hours at Menno SD, and three inches of rain in just fifteen minutes at Austin, KY. Morning thunderstorms drenched Oneonta AL with 8.6 inches of rain, their greatest 24 hour total in thirty years of records. The heavy rain caused mudslides and serious flooding, claiming two lives. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Thunderstorms produced heavy rain over the Central Gulf Coast Region for the second day in a row. Monroe, LA, was deluged with 3.75 inches in two hours. Aberdeen and Rapid City, SD, reported record high temperatures for the date, with readings of 105 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Independence Day was hot as a firecracker across parts of the country. Nineteen cities, mostly in the north central U.S., reported record high temperatures for the date, including Williston ND with a reading of 107 degrees. In the southwestern U.S., highs of 93 at Alamosa, CO, 114 at Tucson, AZ, and 118 at Phoenix, AZ, equalled all-time records for those locations. (The National Weather Summary)

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Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

NOT US

Leaving church one Sunday morning, a husband and wife said to the pastor, "That was a great sermon, one of your very best. I only wish that our neighbors had been here with us. Everything you said applied specifically to them. They needed to hear it, not us!"

Far too many individuals come to church with a shield or sieve, not a wagon or wheelbarrow. Instead of taking the message with them and applying it to their lives, they deflect anything that applies to them or allow only little bits and pieces of carefully sifted material to enter their minds or hearts.

One of the important parts of a healthy lifestyle is an annual physical examination by a physician. It is designed as an "early warning system" to detect any life-threatening disease. Many times illnesses can be stopped immediately and effectively before they become deadly.

That is why we need a Scriptural check-up, using God's Word as the "standard" of our Spiritual health. Paul wrote, "Examine yourselves...test yourselves" - with His word as the measure - to see if you are truly living a God-honoring, Spirit-filled, Christian life. A Scriptural checkup done daily will help us to recognize "which direction we are growing." There must be an awareness of Christ's presence and power in our lives by the way we are living and how we are honoring God. If we are not getting closer to God every day, we are moving farther away from Him. It's one way or the other - either/or. It cannot be both!

Prayer: Help us, Father, to be honest with ourselves about the "condition" of our salvation and our relationship with You. May we be true Christians, not imposters. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you-unless, of course, you fail the test? And I trust that you will discover that we have not failed the test. 2 Corinthians 13:5-6



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

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2023 Community Events

- 01/29/2023 Groton Robotics Pancake Feed, 10am-1pm, Community Center
- 01/29/2023 85th Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm (Last Sunday of January)
- 01/31/2023-02/03/2023 Lion's Club Prom & Formal Dress Consignment Drop Off 6-9pm, Community Center
- 02/04/2023-02/05/2023 Lion's Club Prom & Formal Dress Consignment Sale 1-5pm, Community Center
- 02/25/2023 Littles and Me, Art Making 10-11:30am, Wage Memorial Library
- 03/25/2023 Spring Vendor Fair, 10am-3pm, Community Center
- 04/01/2023 Dueling Duo Baseball/Softball Fundraiser at the Legion Post #39 6-11:30pm
- 04/06/2023 Groton Career Development Event
- 04/08/2023 Lion's Club Easter Egg Hunt 10am Sharp at the City Park (Saturday a week before Easter)
- 04/22/2023 Firemen's Spring Social at the Fire Station 7pm-12:30am (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
- 04/23/2023 Princess Prom 4:30-8pm (Sunday after GHS Prom)
- 05/06/2023 Lion's Club Spring Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm (1st Saturday in May)
- 05/29/2023 Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services (Memorial Day)
- 06/16/2023 SDSU Alumni and Friends Golf Tournament
- 06/17/2023 Groton Triathlon
- 07/04/2023 Couples Firecracker Golf Tournament
- 07/09/2023 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm (Sunday Mid-July)
- 07/26/2023 GGA Burger Fundraiser Lunch at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 08/04/2023 Wine on Nine 6pm
- 08/11/2023 GHS Basketball Golf Tournament
- 09/09/2023 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
- 09/10/2023 Couples Sunflower Golf Tournament
- 10/14/2023 Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm
- 10/31/2023 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm (working day on or closest to Halloween)
- 10/31/2023 United Methodist Church Trunk or Treat 5:30-7pm
- 11/23/2023 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm (Thanksgiving)
- 12/02/2023 Tour of Homes & Holiday Party
- 12/09/2023 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services 9-11am

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The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

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.

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State, Zip Code _____

E-mail _____

Phone Number _____

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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

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- 1 Month \$15.98
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- 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



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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:
06.30.23

13 22 47 51 55 9

MegaPlier: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$400,000,000

NEXT 14 Hrs 23 Mins 24
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
07.03.23

12 27 37 42 43 6

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$5,070,000

NEXT 1 Days 13 Hrs 38
DRAW: Mins 24 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
07.03.23

12 14 25 29 43 3

TOP PRIZE:
\$7,000/week

NEXT 13 Hrs 53 Mins 25
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
07.01.23

14 19 20 26 27

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$130,000

NEXT 1 Days 13 Hrs 53
DRAW: Mins 25 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
07.03.23

15 37 50 55 69 9

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT 1 Days 14 Hrs 22
DRAW: Mins 25 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
07.03.23

15 26 31 38 61 3

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$546,000,000

NEXT 1 Days 14 Hrs 22
DRAW: Mins 25 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the Associated Press

Gunman opens fire at random on Philadelphia streets, killing 5 before he is arrested, police say

By TASSANEE VEJPONGSA Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — A heavily armed gunman in a bulletproof vest opened fire on the streets of Philadelphia on Monday night, seemingly at a random, killing five people and wounding two boys before surrendering, police said.

The shootings took place over several city blocks in the southwestern neighborhood of Kingsessing. Responding officers chased the suspect as he continued to fire, and he was arrested in an alley after giving himself up, Police Commissioner Danielle Outlaw said at a news conference.

“Thank God our officers were on the scene and responded as quickly as they did. I can’t even describe the level of bravery and courage that was shown, in addition to the restraint that was shown here,” Outlaw said.

No connection was immediately known between the victims and the shooter, she said. He had a bulletproof vest, an “AR-type rifle,” multiple magazines, a handgun and a police scanner.

Officers were flagged down at about 8:30 p.m., and multiple calls of shots fired came in from Kingsessing. Police found some gunshot victims, and as they were attending to them, they heard more gunfire, Outlaw said. Police later told Fox 29 that a fifth victim was found. He was chased into his home and shot to death. Bullet casings were found outside the home.

The suspected shooter was identified as a 40-year-old man. A second person was also taken into custody who may have returned fire at the suspect, but police did not know whether there was a connection between the two people, Outlaw said.

The chief said dozens of shell casings were found across an eight block area.

“You can see there are several scenes out here,” Outlaw said. “We’re canvassing the area to get as much as we can, to identify witnesses, to identify where cameras are located and to do everything to figure out the why,” Outlaw said.

Three of the dead were 20 to 59 years old, while the fourth, who had not yet been identified, was estimated to be between 16 and 21. The victim found in his home was 31 years old. All were male.

The two hospitalized victims are boys, ages 2 and 13. They were in stable condition, Outlaw said.

The shooting occurred a day after gunfire erupted at a holiday weekend block party in Baltimore, about 100 miles (160 kilometers) to the southwest, killing two people and wounding 28 others. The wounded in that shooting ranged in age from 13 to 32, with more than half minors, according to officials.

The Philadelphia violence is the country’s 29th mass killing in 2023, according to a database maintained by The Associated Press and USA Today in partnership with Northeastern University, the highest on record by this time in the year.

The numbers people killed in such events is also the highest by this time in the year.

There have been more than 550 mass killings since 2006, according to the database, in which at least 2,900 people have died and at least 2,000 people have been injured.

Retailers, beware: Resumption of student loan payments could lead some buyers to pull back

By PAUL WISEMAN AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The reprieve is over. Just as the American economy is struggling with high inflation and interest rates, the coming resumption of student loan payments poses yet another potential challenge.

The suspension of federal student loan payments, which took effect at the height of the pandemic in 2020, expires late this summer. Interest will start accruing again in September. Payments will resume in

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October.

Though many hoped their loans might at least be lightened, the Supreme Court last week struck down a Biden administration plan that would have given millions of people some relief from the return of the loan payments. The Biden plan would have canceled up to \$20,000 in federal student loans for 43 million borrowers; 20 million would have had their loans erased entirely. The court ruled that the plan exceeded the government's authority.

The restart of those payments will force many people to start paying hundreds of dollars in loans each month — money they had been spending elsewhere for the past three years. Their pullback in spending on goods and services won't likely make a serious dent in the \$26 trillion U.S. economy, the world's largest. Any pain instead will likely be concentrated in a few industries, notably e-commerce companies, bars and restaurants and some major retailers.

Even if all that won't be enough to weaken overall economic growth, the shift in spending by many young adults could inject further uncertainty into an economy already beset by uncertainties, from whether the Fed will manage to tame inflation and halt its interest rate hikes to whether a recession is destined to strike by next year, as many economists still fear.

Josh Bivens, chief economist at the Economic Policy Institute think tank, suggested that the likely hit to the economy might amount to perhaps one-third of a percentage point of gross domestic product — the nation's total output of goods and services — or about \$85 billion or \$90 billion a year.

It's "not trivial, but it's not huge," Bivens said. "At the macro level, my guess is that it won't be a game-changer."

The continued willingness of consumers to spend has kept the economy humming despite more than a year of dramatically rising interest rates. Consumers have had the financial wherewithal to load up Amazon shopping carts, go out for dinner and buy everything from lawn furniture to new refrigerators, in part because the government spent around \$5 trillion since 2020 to cushion the economic damage from COVID-19.

But those pandemic relief programs, including the student loan moratorium, are ending and adding to the obstacles the economy is facing.

The suspension of loan payments "had given people a bit more money in the pocket, and they've gone out and they've spent that money," said Neil Saunders, managing director of the GlobalData Retail consultancy.

Deutsche Bank analysts who follow the retail industry estimate that the resumption of the loan payments could shrink consumer spending by \$14 billion a month, or an average of \$305 per borrower. The biggest blow, they say, will likely be absorbed by online commerce and mail-order companies and by restaurants and bars.

Among the individual companies that could be hurt, according to the Deutsche Bank analysis, are Macy's, Target and Kohl's. The largest retailer, Walmart, is thought to be insulated from major damage because of its grocery business. (Walmart is also the nation's largest grocer.)

Dollar stores and other discounters might even benefit if more financially squeezed consumers turn to bargain-hunting.

Jan Hatzius, chief economist at Goldman Sachs, and his colleagues say they expect the end of the student loan moratorium to impose a "modest drag" on the economy, shaving 0.2% off growth in consumer spending this year. The dent to spending would have been half as much, they say, if the Supreme Court had allowed the Biden debt forgiveness program to proceed.

The economy has endured a wild ride since COVID-19 hit in early 2020. A deep recession engulfed the economy in March and April that year. Massive government aid fueled a rebound of surprising speed, strength and resilience.

But it came at a price: Surging demand from consumers overwhelmed the world's factories, ports and freight yards, resulting in delays, shortages — and much higher prices. Inflation surged last year to heights not seen since the early 1980s.

In response, the Fed began jacking up its benchmark short-term rate in March 2022. Since then, it's raised its key rate 10 times. Higher borrowing costs have had the intended effect of slowing the economy and price acceleration. From a year-over-year peak of 9.1% in June 2022, consumer price inflation fell to

4% in May. Yet that's still twice the Fed's 2% target. So the central bank has signaled that more rate hike are likely this year.

At the same time, the government has been phasing out pandemic relief. Extended unemployment aid ended in September 2021. An expansion of the food stamps program ended this year.

The savings that Americans had socked away beginning at the peak of the pandemic — when they were receiving government relief checks and saving money while hunkered down at home — are evaporating. Fed researchers have reported that any "excess" pandemic savings probably dried up in the first three months of 2023.

Despite everything, the economy has proved surprisingly durable. The government last week sharply upgraded its estimate of January-through-March economic growth to a 2% annual rate and said consumers were spending at their fastest pace in nearly two years. Factor in a still-robust job market — employers keep hiring briskly, and unemployment, at 3.7%, is barely above a half-century low — and the economy has repeatedly outrun predictions, first sounded more than a year ago, that a recession was inevitable.

"The economy has really powered through it," Bivens said. "So what is the straw that breaks the camel's back? My guess is it's not this. I don't think it's a big-enough thing."

Still, Bivens said, he worries about the Fed rate hikes and federal cutbacks, including the end of the student loan payment moratorium, "throwing more contractionary shocks" at an American economy that has defied the doubters — at least for now.

AP Retail Writer Anne D'Innocenzio contributed to this report from New York.

Palestinian attacker wounds 4 in Tel Aviv as Israel presses on with West Bank operation

By MAJDI MOHAMMED Associated Press

JENIN, West Bank (AP) — A Palestinian man careened his car into pedestrians in Tel Aviv on Tuesday, wounding at least four people, in an attack praised by the Islamist militant group Hamas as a response to Israel's ongoing military operation in the occupied West Bank.

Israeli paramedics said at least four people were wounded when a car careened into pedestrians on a sidewalk in the seaside city. Police spokesman Eli Levi told Kan public radio that the incident was a deliberate attack, and that a civilian shot and killed the driver at the scene.

The Hamas militant group praised the attack as "heroic and revenge for the military operation in Jenin."

Israeli media identified the attacker as Hasin Halila, 23, a Palestinian man from a village near the West Bank city of Hebron.

The attack came as Israeli troops pressed ahead with their hunt for Palestinian militants and weapons in a West Bank refugee camp, after military bulldozers tore through alleys and thousands of residents fled to safety. The two-day Palestinian death toll rose to 10.

The large-scale raid of the Jenin camp, which began Monday, is one of the most intense military operations in the occupied West Bank in nearly two decades. It bore hallmarks of Israeli military tactics during the second Palestinian uprising in the early 2000s and came as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu faces growing pressure from his ultranationalist political allies for a tough response to recent attacks on Israeli settlers, including a shooting last month that killed four people.

Earlier in the day, rubble littered the streets of Jenin and there were reports of damage to shops. Columns of black smoke periodically punctuated the skyline over the camp in the northern West Bank city, long a Palestinian militant stronghold.

Jenin Mayor Nidal Al-Obeidi said that around 4,000 Palestinians had fled the Jenin refugee camp, finding accommodation in the homes of relatives and in shelters. Residents said there was no water or electricity in the camp.

Across the West Bank, Palestinians observed a general strike to protest the Israeli raid.

Meanwhile, the Palestinian Health Ministry said Tuesday that the two-day death toll rose to 10, with two

more deaths reported overnight. The Israeli military has claimed all were militants, but did not provide details.

During Tuesday's operations, the military said it had seized weapons and demolished tunnels beneath a mosque in the Jenin refugee camp.

A spokesman for the Israeli military, Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, said Monday that Israel had launched the operation because some 50 attacks over the past year had emanated from Jenin.

The Jenin camp and an adjacent town of the same name have been a flashpoint since Israeli-Palestinian violence began escalating in spring 2022. It was also a hotbed of Palestinian military activity in the second Palestinian uprising in the early 2000s.

On Tuesday, hundreds of Israeli troops continued to operate in the camp, seizing weapons and explosives and destroying tunnels and command posts, the army said.

Israeli media reported that the army had arrested at least 120 suspected Palestinian militants since Monday.

The Palestinian self-rule government in the West Bank and three Arab countries with normalized ties with Israel – Jordan, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates – condemned Israel's incursion, as did the 57-nation Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

More than 140 Palestinians have been killed this year in the West Bank, part of more than a yearlong spike in violence that has seen some of the worst bloodshed in the area in nearly two decades. Palestinian attacks targeting Israelis have killed at least 26 people.

Israel says the raids are meant to crack down on Palestinians militants and thwart attacks. The Palestinians say such violence is inevitable in the absence of any political process with Israel and increased West Bank settlement construction and violence by extremist settlers.

Israel says most of those killed have been militants, but stone-throwing youths protesting the incursions and people uninvolved in confrontations have also died.

Israel captured the West Bank, east Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip in the 1967 Mideast war. The Palestinians seek those territories for their hoped-for independent state.

Putin says Russia is 'united as never before' at meeting of Russia- and China-led security group

By ASHOK SHARMA and KRUTIKA PATHI Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — President Vladimir Putin claimed Tuesday that the Russian people were "united as never before," as he sought to project confidence in the wake of a short-lived revolt, at a meeting of a rare international organization where he can find a sympathetic audience.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization meeting, hosted via videoconference by India, was Putin's first multilateral summit since an armed rebellion rattled Russia and comes as he is eager to show that the West has failed to isolate Moscow over its 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

The Asian security grouping, founded by Russia and China to counter Western alliances, also welcomed Iran as a new member, bringing its membership to nine nations.

Speaking via video link from the Kremlin, Putin praised the organization for "playing an increasingly significant role in international affairs, making a real contribution to maintaining peace and stability, ensuring sustainable economic growth of the participating states, and strengthening ties between peoples."

He thanked the member states for supporting the Russian authorities during the short-lived armed mutiny mounted by Wagner chief Yevgeny Prigozhin, and said the West had turned Ukraine into "a virtually hostile state — anti-Russia." Putin has frequently lashed out at the West for its support of Ukraine in the war.

The summit presents an opportunity for Putin to show he is in control after an insurrection that left some wondering about divisions among Russian elites.

"The Russian people are united as never before," he said. "The solidarity and responsibility for the fate of the fatherland was clearly demonstrated by the Russian political circles and the entire society by standing as a united front against the attempted armed rebellion."

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Earlier speakers avoided directed references to the war, while bemoaning its global consequences.

In his opening speech, Prime Minister Narendra Modi warned of global challenges to food, fuel and fertilizer supplies but did not mention the war in Ukraine. Trade in all three has been disrupted by the war.

He also took a veiled swipe at Pakistan, saying the group should not hesitate to criticize countries that are "using terrorism as an instrument of its state policy."

"Terrorism poses a threat to regional peace and we need to take up a joint fight," Modi said without naming Pakistan. India regularly accuses Pakistan of training and arming insurgent groups, a charge Islamabad denies.

In his speech, Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif denounced terrorism and defended his country's role in the fight against it. "While the sacrifices made by Pakistan in fighting terrorism are without parallel, this scourge continues to plague our region and remains a serious obstacle to the maintenance of peace and stability," Sharif said. "Any temptation to use it as a cudgel for diplomatic point scoring must be eschewed."

Sharif also hailed the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, part of China's Belt and Road Initiative, saying it could be a "game-changer for connectivity, stability, peace and prosperity in the region."

The SCO also includes the four Central Asian nations of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, all former Soviet republics in which Russian influence runs deep. India and Pakistan became members in 2017. Belarus is also in line for membership.

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said in a message that the summit was taking place amid growing global challenges and risks. "But at a time when the world needs to work together, divisions are growing, and geopolitical tensions are rising."

"These differences have been aggravated by several factors: diverging approaches to global crises; contrasting views on nontraditional security threats; and, of course, the consequences of COVID-19 and Russia's invasion of Ukraine," he said.

Chinese President Xi Jinping called on members to work toward "long-term peace and stability in the region," according to a readout of his speech posted by state broadcaster CCTV.

He said that China wants to "better synergize" the country's Belt and Road Initiative — a trillion-dollar infrastructure investment project criticized in the West for burdening smaller countries with large amounts of debt — with other nations' own development strategies and regional cooperation initiatives.

Days after his return from a high-profile visit to the United States, Modi on Friday had a telephone conversation with Putin about recent developments in Russia, India's External Affairs Ministry said.

Modi reiterated calls for dialogue and diplomacy between Russia and Ukraine, ministry spokesman Arindam Bagchi said.

India has avoided condemning Russia for its war on Ukraine and abstained from voting on U.N. resolutions against Russia.

When SCO foreign ministers met in India last month, Russia's war in Ukraine barely featured in their public remarks, but analysts say the fallout for developing countries on food and fuel security remains a concern for members of the group.

Associated Press Writer Munir Ahmed contributed from Islamabad, Pakistan, and Dasha Litvinova contributed from Tallinn, Estonia.

Meta is set to take on Twitter with a rival app called Threads

LONDON (AP) — Meta is poised to unveil a new app that appears to mimic Twitter — a direct challenge to the social media platform owned by Elon Musk.

A listing for the app, called Threads, appeared on Apple's App Store, indicating it would debut as early as Thursday. It is billed as a "text-based conversation app" that is linked to Instagram, with the listing teasing a Twitter-like microblogging experience.

"Threads is where communities come together to discuss everything from the topics you care about today to what'll be trending tomorrow," it said.

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Instagram users will be able to keep their user names and follow the same accounts on the new app, according to screenshots displayed on the App Store listing. Meta declined to comment on the app.

Musk replied "yeah" to a tweet from Twitter co-founder Jack Dorsey saying, "All your Threads are belong to us," along with a screenshot from the App Store's privacy section showing what personal information might be collected by the new Meta app.

Threads could be the latest headache for Musk, who acquired Twitter last year for \$44 billion and has been making changes to the platform that have unnerved advertisers and turned off users.

In the latest such tweak, Twitter said Monday that it will require users to be verified before they can use the online dashboard TweetDeck. The new policy takes effect in 30 days and appears to be aimed at raising extra revenue because users need to pay have their accounts verified under Musk's changes.

TweetDeck is popular with companies and news organizations, allowing users to manage multiple Twitter accounts.

Twitter is already facing backlash after Musk announced that Twitter has limited the number of tweets users can view each day — restrictions that the billionaire Tesla CEO described as an attempt to stop unauthorized scraping of potentially valuable data.

Musk's rivalry with Meta Platforms also could end up spilling over into real life. In an online exchange between Musk and Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg, the two tech billionaires seemingly agreed to a cage match face-off, though it's unclear if they will actually make it to the ring.

'Liberty, equality, fraternity' for all? New riots make France confront an old problem

By JOHN LEICESTER Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity": The lofty ideals to which France has long aspired are embossed on coins and carved above school doors across the land. Yet they are the polar opposite of what some French people who are Black or brown saw in a shocking video of a police officer shooting and killing a 17-year-old delivery driver of north African descent during a traffic stop.

That kid, some said to themselves, could have been me — or my children, or my friends. Within hours, the first fires of anger and revenge were lighting up the night skies of Nanterre, the Paris suburb where the teenager, Nahel, was declared dead at 9:15 a.m. last Tuesday. His left arm and chest had been pierced from left to right by a single shot fired before the yellow Mercedes he was driving then slammed into barriers on Nelson Mandela Square.

From the town on the fringe of the French capital's high-rise business district, with its disadvantaged housing projects, glaring wealth gaps, and melting-pot mix of races and cultural influences imported from France's former colonies, the flames of fury quickly spread.

More than 200 cities and towns reported arson attacks on public buildings, vehicle fires, clashes with police, looting and other mayhem in six nights of unrest. The violence was nationwide — from blue-collar ports on France's northern coast to southern towns overlooking the Pyrenees, from de-industrialized former mining basins to Nantes and La Rochelle on the western Atlantic coast, once hearts of the French slave trade.

After more than 3,400 arrests and signs that the violence is now abating, France is once again facing a reckoning — as it did after previous riots in mixed-race, disadvantaged neighborhoods in the 1980s, 1990s, 2000s and 2010s.

And the uncomfortable central question remains the same: What is France doing wrong that prevents chunks of its population, particularly among non-whites, from being able to buy into its promise of equality and fraternity for all?

THE PROBLEMS ARE BOTH OLD AND NEW

Among the factors being blamed and hotly disputed are problems both old and new: racism in police ranks and French society more broadly, poverty made more desperate by rising costs related to the war in Ukraine, decades of urban neglect, breakdowns in marriages and parental authority, and the ripples of

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the COVID-19 pandemic. Young teenagers whose schooling was interrupted by virus curfews and teaching shutdowns were among those smashing, burning, stealing and fighting with police — and reveling in the mayhem on social media.

For Yazid Kherfi, who spends his time driving from one housing project to the next, speaking to young people about how to avoid the route that he took into crime and prison, the violence was a cry of distress from a generation he says feels unloved and left by the wayside.

The minivan Kherfi uses has a quote from Martin Luther King painted on the back: "We must learn to live together as brothers or we will all perish together as fools." But on his rounds, Kherfi says he frequently hears young people complain that police single them out because of their color.

"The police aren't well trained to work in difficult neighborhoods. Some police are racist. There are violent police. They exist. I'm not saying all the police but it's still a certain number," he says. "Blacks and Arabs are stopped far more frequently than whites."

"We are a long way from liberty, equality, fraternity," he adds. "The reality is that people find all these situations very, very hard. It's been like this for more than 40 years. So of course, every time there are riots in France, it's linked to a young person's death related to a policing operation. And the police rarely blames itself."

From French President Emmanuel Macron down, government officials were quick to condemn the actions of the officer now incarcerated on a preliminary charge of voluntary homicide. Macron called the shooting "inexplicable and inexcusable." The officer's lawyer says his client feared, when the vehicle they'd stopped started moving again, that he and his colleague would be dragged along with it and crushed.

HOW TO TACKLE RACISM WHEN IT CAN'T BE MEASURED?

Measuring the scale of racism and racial inequality in France is complicated by its official policy of color blindness, with strict limits on data that can be collected. For critics, that guiding philosophy has made the state oblivious to discrimination. France's census has no questions about race or ethnicity.

Still, inequalities are too glaring to be ignored. The government's statistics agency found in 2020 that death rates among immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa doubled in France and tripled in the Paris region at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic — an acknowledgement of the virus's punishing and disproportionate impact on Black immigrants and members of other systemically overlooked minority groups. Other research has also exposed racism in workplaces and hiring.

"For 40, 45 years there have been warning signs about discrimination," says Abel Boyi, head of a group called "All Unique, All United" that aims to reconcile young people with France and its republican values.

Boyi, who is Black, decries the state's colorblindness as "a French hypocrisy." He says he regularly encounters young people of color and also white people from disadvantaged neighborhoods who apply for dozens of jobs but aren't hired "because the family name sounds foreign, because the address isn't a good one."

"Unfortunately, when there's an injustice, there's always a radical fringe that tips into violence. We saw these young people, aged 12 to 19 ... at 1, 2, 3 o'clock in the morning burning cars, stoning police officers, stoning buses. It's terrible," Boyi says. "The anger is righteous but the method is wrong."

THE VISUALS ADDED FUEL TO THE FLAMES

The video of Nahel's death also helps explain the rapid spread and sudden intensity of the violence. As was also the case with the footage of George Floyd's killing in the United States, the images left some people wondering whether police abuses sometimes go unpunished because they aren't captured on camera. Spray-painted graffiti in Nanterre read: "Without video, Nahel would be a statistic."

Police officer Walid Hrar says, however, that the relationship between France's forces of law and order and disadvantaged neighborhoods he works in isn't as broken as the rioting made it seem.

He runs a volunteer group of officers, The Guardians of Fraternity, who meet with neighborhood kids to try to build understanding and help them see that behind their uniforms, they are people, too. "Sometimes, the talks are very hard, very stormy," he acknowledges.

But Hrar, who is of Moroccan descent and Muslim, says the police force has "changed enormously" and become more diverse since he joined up.

That was in 2004. France was swept by rioting the following year. He has spent his career in Paris' northern suburbs where that violence first erupted, when 15-year-old Bouna Traoré and 17-year-old Zyed Benna were electrocuted while hiding from police in a power substation in Clichy-sous-Bois.

One difference between then and now, Hrar says, is that the new generation of rioters seems to know no limits, trashing schools, town halls, police stations and other symbols of authority.

"With some, the breakdown is total, that is true," Hrar says. "There is real groundwork that needs to be done."

Another key difference: social networks. This generation weaned on TikTok and Snapchat not only celebrated mayhem in short videos but, the government says, sometimes organized on their networks, too. Memes and hashtags about looting quickly swamped references about justice for Nahel. Macron said some rioters seemed to be acting out "the video games that have intoxicated them."

It all adds up to something toxic and dangerous, with deep cracks in the foundations of a country still unreconciled with its often violent colonial past and with engrained discrimination and inequalities that defy quick fixes.

"How do we bring together the multitude of histories into one common history that concerns us all, regardless of skin color and origin?" said Boyi. "That is France's great challenge for the 21st century."

Paris chief correspondent John Leicester has reported from France for The Associated Press since 2002.

Russia says it foiled Ukrainian drone attack on Moscow as Kyiv's counteroffensive grinds on

By The Associated Press undefined

Russian air defenses on Tuesday foiled a Ukrainian drone attack on Moscow that prompted authorities to briefly close one of the city's international airports, officials said, as a Western analysis said that Russia has managed to slow Kyiv's recently launched counteroffensive.

The drone attack, which follows previous similar raids on the Russian capital, was the first known assault on the city since an abortive mutiny launched 11 days ago by mercenary chief Yevgeny Prigozhin. His Wagner troops marched on Moscow in the biggest — though short-lived — challenge to Russian President Vladimir Putin in more than two decades of his rule.

Authorities in Ukraine, which generally avoid commenting on attacks on Russian soil, didn't say whether it launched the drone raid.

The Russian Defense Ministry said that four of the five drones were downed by air defenses on the outskirts of Moscow and the fifth was jammed by electronic warfare means and forced down.

There were no casualties or damage, Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin said.

As with previous drone attacks on Moscow, it was impossible to verify the Russian military's announcement that it downed all of them.

The drone attack prompted authorities to temporarily restrict flights at Moscow's Vnukovo airport and divert flights to two other Moscow main airports. Vnukovo is about 15 kilometers (nine miles) southwest of Moscow.

In May, two daring drone attacks jolted the Russian capital, in what appeared to be Kyiv's deepest strikes into Russia.

The raid came as Ukrainian forces have continued probing Russian defenses in the south and the east of their country in the initial stages of a counteroffensive.

Oleksiy Danilov, the secretary of Ukraine's Security and Defense Council, said that the military was currently focusing on destroying Russian equipment and personnel, and that the last few days of fighting have been particularly "fruitful." He provided no evidence and it wasn't possible to independently verify it.

The Ukrainians are up against minefields, anti-tank ditches and other obstacles, as well as layered defensive lines reportedly up to 20 kilometers (12 miles) deep in some places as they attempt to dislodge Russian occupiers.

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The U.K. Defense Ministry said Tuesday the Kremlin's forces have "refined (their) tactics aimed at slowing Ukrainian armored counteroffensive operations in southern Ukraine."

Moscow has placed emphasis on using anti-tank mines to slow the onslaught, the assessment said, leaving the attackers at the mercy of Russian drones, helicopters and artillery.

"Although Russia has achieved some success with this approach in the early stages of Ukraine's counteroffensive, its forces continue to suffer from key weaknesses, especially overstretched units and a shortage of artillery munitions," the assessment said.

Western analysts say the counteroffensive, even if it prospers, won't end the war, which started with Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022.

Russia, meanwhile, has continued its missile and drone barrage deep behind the front line.

Oleksandr Lysenko, mayor of the city of Sumy in northeastern Ukraine, said that three people were killed and 21 others were wounded in a Russian drone strike on Monday that damaged two apartment buildings.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said the attack also damaged the regional headquarters of the Security Service of Ukraine, the country's main intelligence agency. He argued that the country needs more air defense systems to help fend off Russian raids.

Putin referred to the recent mercenary rebellion that rattled the Kremlin during a video call Tuesday with leaders of the countries of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, or SCO, which is a security grouping dominated by Moscow and Beijing.

Putin said that "Russian political circles, the entire society have shown unity and responsibility for the fate of the motherland by putting up a united front against the attempted mutiny."

He thanked the SCO members for what he described as their support during the uprising.

Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu also said that a united front thwarted Prigozhin's mutiny. He said Monday in his first public comment about the episode that it "failed primarily because the armed forces personnel have remained loyal to their military oath and duty." He said that the uprising had no impact on the war in Ukraine.

In contrast, Prigozhin said that he had the public's backing for his "march of justice" toward Moscow.

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

Hong Kong leader says 8 pro-democracy activists who now live in the West 'will be pursued for life'

By KANIS LEUNG Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — Hong Kong's leader said Tuesday that eight pro-democracy activists who now live in the United States, Britain, Canada and Australia will be pursued for life for alleged national security offenses, dismissing criticism that the move to have them arrested was a dangerous precedent.

Chief Executive John Lee expressed his support for the police efforts to arrest the eight. At his weekly media briefing, Lee said anyone, including their friends and relatives, who offered information leading to their arrests would be eligible for the bounties offered by the police.

"The only way to end their destiny of being an abscondee who will be pursued for life is to surrender," he said.

The arrest warrants were issued for former pro-democracy lawmakers Nathan Law, Ted Hui and Dennis Kwok, lawyer Kevin Yam, unionist Mung Siu-tat and activists Finn Lau, Anna Kwok and Elmer Yuen. They were accused of breaching the Beijing-imposed national security law by committing offenses such as collusion with foreign powers and inciting secession.

More than 260 people have been arrested under the law enacted in 2020 as part of a broad crackdown on dissent in the territory, but the rewards of 1 million Hong Kong dollars (\$127,600) for information leading to each arrest were the first under the law.

The move quickly drew ire from the U.S. and British governments, which took issue with the extrater-

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ritorial application of the security law. The U.S. said it marked a dangerous precedent that threatened human rights. Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong tweeted that her country was "deeply concerned" by reports of Hong Kong authorities issuing arrest warrants for democracy advocates.

But Lee insisted extraterritorial power exists in the national security laws of many countries. He said his government will not be swayed by comments of overseas officials and politicians.

"I'm not afraid of any political pressure that is put on us because we do what we believe is right," he said.

In Beijing, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said China strongly deplored other countries' "flagrant slandering" against its national security law for Hong Kong. "Justice will never be delayed or absent," she said.

The row reflects a fresh source of contention between Beijing and the West over the alleged overseas reach of China's enforcement agencies. China was reported to be running secret overseas police stations across North America, Europe and in other countries where Chinese communities include critics of the Communist Party who have family or business contacts in China. Beijing denied they are police stations, saying they exist mainly to provide citizen services such as renewing driver's licenses.

Hong Kong's Secretary for Security Chris Tang doubled down on the crackdown against the eight activists, saying authorities were seeking to cut access to their finances including freezing and confiscating their assets. Investigations will be conducted to find out those who support them financially in Hong Kong and overseas, Tang said.

He warned that anyone who assists them in endangering national security may be violating the law.

Hong Kong's action did not stop the activists from speaking up.

Law, who is accused of foreign collusion and inciting secession, said on his Facebook that the latest development signaled he was again being targeted by China's Communist Party and that he felt the "invisible pressure." However, he refused to surrender.

"All I did was reasonable, justifiable and peaceful advocacy work," the British-based activist said.

Yam told Australian media that the move was not completely unexpected. "The only remaining voices of dissent are now outside Hong Kong, and that's where they're expanding to next," he said.

Mung also pledged in a statement that he would not cease advocacy work for Hong Kong labor rights abroad.

"If I were ever found guilty, my only 'crime' would be speaking the truth for my fellow Hong Kongers," he said.

Anna Kwok tweeted she would not back down. She reiterated her call to bar Lee, who was sanctioned by Washington over his involvement in the harsh crackdown on rights in Hong Kong, from attending the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation meetings in November in the U.S.

Hong Kong, a former British colony that returned to Chinese rule in 1997, has come under increasingly tight scrutiny by Beijing following months of mass pro-democracy protests in 2019.

Police on Monday acknowledged they will not be able to arrest the eight if they remain overseas.

Eunice Yung, a pro-Beijing lawmaker and the daughter-in-law of Yuen, supported the police move and reiterated she had already cut ties with Yuen last August.

"All his acts have nothing to do with me," she said on her Facebook page.

Associated Press video producer Liu Zheng in Beijing contributed to this report.

In a polarized US, how to define a patriot increasingly depends on who's being asked

By GARY FIELDS, MARGERY BECK and REBECCA BOONE Associated Press

Millions of Americans will attend parades, fireworks and other Independence Day events on Tuesday, celebrating the courage of the nation's 18th century patriots who fought for independence from Great Britain and what they considered an unjust government. Those events also will honor the military and those who sacrificed in other conflicts that helped preserve the nation's freedom over its 247-year history.

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That is only one version of a "patriot." Today, the word and its variants have morphed beyond the original meaning. It has become infused in political rhetoric and school curriculums, with varying definitions, while being appropriated by white nationalist groups. Trying to define what a patriot is depends on who is being asked.

THE ORIGINAL PATRIOTS

While the word's origins come from ancient Greece, its basic meaning in American history is someone who loves his or her country.

The original patriots come from the American Revolution, most often associated with figures such as Sam Adams and Benjamin Franklin. But enslaved people who advocated for abolition and members of native communities trying to recover or retain their sovereignty also saw themselves as patriots, said Nathaniel Sheidley, president and CEO of Revolutionary Spaces in Boston. The group runs the Old State House and Old South Meeting House, which played central roles in the revolution.

"They took part in the American Revolution. There were working people advocating for their voices to be heard in the political process," Sheidley said.

The hallmark of patriotism then, he said, was "a sense of self-sacrifice, of caring more about one's neighbors and fellow community members than one's self."

PATRIOTISM HAS HAD MORE THAN ONE MEANING

In some ways, the view of patriotism has always been on parallel tracks with civic and ethnic nationalism, historians say.

"Patriotism really depends on which American is describing himself as patriotic and what version or vision of the country they hold dear," said Matthew Delmont, a historian at Dartmouth.

Opposition to government and dissent have been common features of how patriotism has been defined, he said. He cited the example of Black military members who fought in World War II and advocated for civil rights when they returned. They also saw themselves as patriots.

"Part of patriotism for them meant not just winning the war, but then coming home and trying to change America, trying to continue to fight for civil rights and to have actual freedom and democracy here in the United States," Delmont said.

For many white Americans who see themselves as patriotic, "They're thinking of other white Americans as the true definition of Americans," Delmont said.

HOW THE DEFINITION HAS EVOLVED

Far-right and extremist groups have branded themselves with American motifs and the term "patriot" since at least the early 20th century, when the second Ku Klux Klan became known for the slogan "100% Americanism," said Mark Pitcavage, senior research fellow at the Anti-Defamation League's Center on Extremism.

By the 1990s, so many antigovernment and militia groups were using the term to describe themselves that watchdog groups referred to it as the "Patriot movement."

That extremist wave, which included Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh, faded in the late 1990s and early 2000s. But many such groups resurfaced when Barack Obama became president, according to the Southern Poverty Law Center, which closely tracked the movement.

Since then, many right-wing groups have called themselves "patriots" as they've fought election processes, LGBTQ+ rights, vaccines, immigration, diversity programs in schools and more. Former President Donald Trump frequently refers to his supporters as "patriots."

HOW WHITE NATIONALIST GROUPS USE IT

The term works as a branding tool because many Americans have a positive association with "patriot," which harkens back to the Revolutionary War soldiers who beat the odds to found the country, said Kurt Braddock, an American University professor and researcher at the Polarization and Extremism Research & Innovation Lab.

One example is the white supremacist militia group Patriot Front, which researchers say uses patriotism as a sort of camouflage to hide racist and bigoted values. Some white nationalist groups may genuinely

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"I would really like to know if that's true," said Mathias, who previously served in the U.S. Coast Guard. "As a military veteran, I think a lot of people disagree on what it means to be devoted to America. I think a lot of people think that blind devotion is the same thing as patriotism. I don't."

Fields reported from Washington, Beck from Omaha, Nebraska, and Boone from Boise, Idaho. Associated Press writers Steve LeBlanc in Boston, and Linley Sanders and Ali Swenson in New York contributed to this report.

The Associated Press receives support from several private foundations to enhance its explanatory coverage of elections and democracy. See more about AP's democracy initiative here. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

Vietnam bans 'Barbie' movie due to an illustration showing China's territorial claim

HANOI, Vietnam (AP) — Vietnam's state media have reported that the government banned distribution of the popular "Barbie" movie because it includes a view of a map showing disputed Chinese territorial claims in the South China Sea.

The newspaper Vietnam Express and other media said posters advertising "Barbie" were removed from movie distributors' websites after Monday's decision. With Margot Robbie playing Barbie opposite Ryan Gosling's Ken in Greta Gerwig's comedic look at their "perfect" world, "Barbie" was supposed to open July 21 in Vietnamese theaters.

The reports cited Vi Kien Thanh, director general of the Vietnam Cinema Department, as saying the National Film Evaluation Council made the decision. It said a map in the film shows China's "nine-dash line," which extends Beijing's territorial claims far into waters that fall within areas claimed by Vietnam and other countries.

The "nine-dash line" is an arcane but sensitive issue for China and its neighbors that shows Beijing's maritime border extending into areas claimed by other governments and encompasses most of the South China Sea. That has brought it into tense standoffs with the ASEAN nations of Indonesia, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and the Philippines, with Chinese fishing boats and military vessels becoming more aggressive in the disputed waters.

Asked about the issue at a daily briefing on Tuesday, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said, "China's position on the South China Sea issue is clear and consistent."

"We believe that the countries concerned should not link the South China Sea issue with normal cultural and people-to-people exchanges," Mao said.

However, China is exceedingly sensitive when it comes to how its national image and border claims are portrayed in entertainment and by businesses. For example, it has routinely retaliated against companies from hotels to airlines that it believes have suggested that self-governing Taiwan – with its own political system, country code and currency — is anything other than a part of China.

Companies almost always acquiesce to Chinese complaints, fearing they risk being locked out of the huge, lucrative Chinese market. That includes Hollywood films deleting or adding scenes based on the expected response on the ruling Communist Party and the highly nationalistic public.

When an international court ruled in 2016 that the "nine-dash line" has no basis in law and the Philippines was entitled to an exclusive economic zone in part of the area claimed by Beijing, China rejected the ruling.

Warner Bros. offices were closed Tuesday for the July 4 holiday.

In 2019, Vietnam ordered showings of "Abominable" canceled after moviegoers complained about a scene showing the "nine-dash line." Politicians in the Philippines called for a boycott of all DreamWorks releases to protest the scene, and Malaysia ordered the scene to be cut from the movie.

The wait for US passports is creating travel purgatory and snarling summer plans

By LAURIE KELLMAN, REBECCA SANTANA and DAVID KOENIG Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Seeking a valid U.S. passport for that 2023 trip? Buckle up, wishful traveler, for a very different journey before you step anywhere near an airport.

A much-feared backup of U.S. passport applications has smashed into a wall of government bureaucracy as worldwide travel rebounds toward record pre-pandemic levels — with too few humans to handle the load. The result, say aspiring travelers in the U.S. and around the world, is a maddening pre-travel purgatory defined, at best, by costly uncertainty.

With family dreams and big money on the line, passport seekers describe a slow-motion agony of waiting, worrying, holding the line, refreshing the screen, complaining to Congress, paying extra fees and following incorrect directions. Some applicants are buying additional plane tickets to snag in-process passports where they sit — in other cities — in time to make the flights they booked in the first place.

So grim is the outlook that U.S. officials aren't even denying the problem or predicting when it will ease. They're blaming the epic wait times on lingering pandemic-related staffing shortages and a pause of online processing this year. That's left the passport agency flooded with a record-busting 500,000 applications a week. The deluge is on-track to top last year's 22 million passports issued, the State Department says.

Stories from applicants and interviews by The Associated Press depict a system of crisis management, in which the agencies are prioritizing urgent cases such as applicants traveling for reasons of "life or death" and those whose travel is only a few days off. For everyone else, the options are few and expensive.

So, 2023 traveler, if you still need a valid U.S. passport, prepare for an unplanned excursion into the nightmare zone.

'PLENTY OF TIME' TO 'WE'LL STILL BE OK' TO BIG PROBLEMS

It was early March when Dallas-area florist Ginger Collier applied for four passports ahead of a family vacation at the end of June. The clerk, she said, estimated wait times at eight to 11 weeks. They'd have their passports a month before they needed them. "Plenty of time," Collier recalled thinking.

Then the State Department upped the wait time for a regular passport to as much as 13 weeks. "We'll still be okay," she thought.

At T-minus two weeks to travel, this was her assessment: "I can't sleep." This after months of calling, holding, pressing refresh on a website, trying her member of Congress — and stressing as the departure date loomed. Failure to obtain the family's passports would mean losing \$4,000, she said, as well as the chance to meet one of her sons in Italy after a study-abroad semester.

"My nerves are shot, because I may not be able to get to him," she said. She calls the toll-free number every day, holds for as much as 90 minutes to be told — at best — that she might be able to get a required appointment at passport offices in other states.

"I can't afford four more plane tickets anywhere in the United States to get a passport when I applied in plenty of time," she said. "How about they just process my passports?"

THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT HAS A CULPRIT: COVID

By March, concerned travelers began asking for answers and then demanding help, including from their representatives in the House and Senate, who widely reported at hearings this year that they were receiving more complaints from constituents on passport delays than any other issue.

The U.S. secretary of state had an answer, of a sort.

"With COVID, the bottom basically dropped out of the system," Antony Blinken told a House subcommittee March 23. When demand for travel all but disappeared during the pandemic, he said, the government let contractors go and reassigned staff that had been dedicated to handling passports.

Around the same time, the government also halted an online renewal system "to make sure that we can fine tune it and improve it," Blinken said. He said the department is hiring agents as quickly as possible, opening more appointments and trying to address the crisis in other ways.

Passport applicants lit up social media groups, toll-free numbers and lawmakers' phone lines with

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questions, appeals for advice and cries for help. Facebook and WhatsApp groups bristled with reports of bewilderment and fury. Reddit published eye-watering diaries, some more than 1,000 words long, of application dates, deposits submitted, contacts made, time on hold, money spent and appeals for advice.

It was 1952 when a law required, for the first time, passports for every U.S. traveler abroad, even in peacetime. Now, passports are processed at centers around the country and printed at secure facilities in Washington, D.C. and Mississippi, according to the Government Printing Office.

But the number of Americans holding valid U.S. passports has grown at roughly 10% faster than the population over the past three decades, according to Jay Zagorsky, an economist at Boston University's Questrom School of Business.

After passport delays derailed his own plans to travel to London earlier this year, Zagorsky found that the number of U.S. passports per American has soared from about three per 100 people in 1989 to nearly 46 per 100 people in 2022. Americans, it turns out, are on the move.

"As a society gets richer," says Zagorsky, "the people in that society say, 'I want to visit the rest of the world.'"

FOR AMERICANS AND OTHERS ABROAD, IT'S NO PICNIC EITHER

At U.S. consulates overseas, the quest for U.S. visas and passports isn't much brighter.

On a day in June, people in New Delhi could expect to wait 451 days for a visa interview, according to the website. Those in Sao Paulo could plan on waiting more than 600 days. Aspiring travelers in Mexico City were waiting about 750 days; in Bogota, Colombia, it was 801 days.

In Israel, the need is especially acute. More than 200,000 people with citizenship in both countries live in Israel. It's one appointment per person, even for newborns, who must have both parents involved in the process, before traveling to the United States.

Batsheva Gutterman started looking for three appointments immediately after she had a baby in December, with an eye toward attending a family celebration in July, in Raleigh, N.C.

Her quest for three passports stretched from January to June, days before travel. And it only resolved after Gutterman paid a small fee to join a WhatsApp group that alerted her to new appointments, which stay available for only a few seconds. She ultimately got three appointments on three consecutive days — bureaucracy embodied.

"We had to drive the entire family with three small children, an hour-and-a-half to Tel Aviv three days in a row, taking off work and school," she said. "This makes me incredibly uneasy having a baby in Israel as an American citizen, knowing there is no way I can fly with that baby until we get lucky with an appointment."

Recently, there appeared to be some progress. The wait for an appointment for a renewed U.S. passport stood at 360 days on June 8. On July 2, the wait was down to 90 days, according to the web site.

FRUSTRATING TALES EMERGE FROM THE TRENCHES

Back in the U.S., Marni Larsen of Holladay, Utah, stood in line in Los Angeles, California, on June 14, in hopes of snagging her son's passport. That way, she hoped, the pair could meet the rest of their family, who had already left as scheduled for Europe, for a long-planned vacation.

She'd applied for her son's passport two months earlier and spent weeks checking for updates online or through a frustrating call system. As the mid-June vacation loomed, Larsen reached out to Sen. Mitt Romney's office, where one of four people he says is assigned full-time to passport issues were able to track down the document in New Orleans.

It was supposed to be shipped to Los Angeles, where she got an appointment to retrieve it. That meant Larsen had to buy new tickets for herself and her son to Los Angeles and reroute their trip from there to Rome. All on a bet that her son's passport was indeed shipped as promised.

"We are just waiting in this massive line of tons of people," Larsen said. "It's just been a nightmare."

They succeeded. But not everyone has been so lucky.

Miranda Richter applied in person to renew passports for herself and her husband, as well as apply a new one on Feb. 9 for a trip with their neighbors to Croatia on June 6. She ended up canceling, losing more than \$1,000.

Her timeline went like this: Passports for her husband and daughter arrived in 11 weeks, while Richter's photo was rejected. On May 4, she sent in a new one via priority mail. Then she paid a rush fee of \$79, which was never charged to her credit card. Between May 30 and June 2, four days before travel, Richter and her husband spent more than 12 hours on the national passport line while also calling their congressman, senators and third-party couriers.

Finally, she showed up in person at the federal building in downtown Houston, 30 minutes before the passport office opened. Richter said there were at least 100 people in line.

"The security guard asked when is my appointment, and I burst out in tears," she recalls. She couldn't get one. "It didn't work."

FINALLY: A HAPPY ENDING

"I just got my passports!" Ginger Collier texts.

She ended up showing up at the passport office in Dallas with her daughter-in-law at 6:30 a.m. and being sorted into groups and lined up against walls. Finally they were called to a window, where the agent was "super nice" and pulled all four of the family's applications — paperwork that had been sitting in the office since March 17. More than seven hours later, the two left the office with directions to pick up their passports the next day.

They did — with four days to spare.

"What a ridiculous process," Collier says. Nevertheless, the reunion with her son in Italy was sweet. She texted last week: "It was the best hug ever!"

Kellman reported from Tel Aviv, Israel, Santana reported from Washington, and Koenig reported from Dallas. Follow Kellman on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/APLaurie Kellman>, Santana at <http://twitter.com/russkygal> and Koenig at <http://twitter.com/airlinewriter>.

Legitimacy of 'customer' in Supreme Court gay rights case raises ethical and legal flags

By ALANNA DURKIN RICHER and COLLEEN SLEVIN Associated Press

A Christian graphic artist who the Supreme Court said can refuse to make wedding websites for gay couples pointed during her lawsuit to a request from a man named "Stewart" and his husband-to-be. The twist? Stewart says it never happened.

The revelation has raised questions about how Lorie Smith's case was allowed to proceed all the way to the nation's highest court with such an apparent misrepresentation and whether the state of Colorado, which lost the case last week, has any legal recourse.

It has served as another distraction at the end of a highly polarizing term for a Supreme Court marked by ethical questions and contentious rulings along ideological lines that rejected affirmative action in higher education and President Joe Biden's \$400 billion plan to cancel or reduce federal student loan debts.

Here's a look at the legal questions surrounding the mysterious would-be customer, "Stewart:"

WHAT ROLE DID THE CLAIM PLAY IN THE CASE?

About a month after the conservative legal group Alliance Defending Freedom filed the case in Colorado federal court in 2016, lawyers for the state said it should be dismissed partly because Smith hadn't been harmed by the state's anti-discrimination law. Smith — who did not plan to start creating wedding websites until her case was resolved — would first have to get a request from a gay couple and refuse, triggering a possible complaint against her, the state argued.

Smith's lawyers maintained that she didn't have to be punished for violating the law before challenging it. In a February 2017 filing, they revealed that though she did not need a request to pursue the case, she had, in fact, received one. An appendix to the filing included a website request form submitted by Stewart on Sept. 21, 2016, a few days after the lawsuit was filed. It also included a Feb. 1, 2017, affidavit from Smith stating that Stewart's request had been received.

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Two documents Smith filed with the Supreme Court briefly mention that she had received at least one request to create a website celebrating a same-sex wedding but do not elaborate.

The request stated that Stewart and his fiancé Mike were looking for design work on things like invitations and place setting cards for their upcoming wedding. "We might also stretch to a website," the form said.

Lawyers for Colorado wrote in their brief to the Supreme Court in August that it did not amount to an actual request for a website and the company did not take any steps to verify that a "genuine prospective customer submitted the form." It's not clear whether the state took any steps to verify whether Stewart — whose contact information was included in court papers — was a real potential customer.

Stewart told The Associated Press last week that he didn't even know his name had been invoked in the case until he was contacted by a reporter for The New Republic, which first reported his denial. Stewart, who declined to give his last name for fear of harassment and threats, said he was incredibly surprised, adding he has been married to a woman for 15 years.

COULD THE REVELATION IMPACT THE CASE NOW?

It's highly unlikely. The would-be customer's request was not the basis for Smith's original lawsuit, nor was it cited by the high court as the reason for ruling in her favor. Legal standing, or the right to bring a lawsuit, generally requires the person bringing the case to show that they have suffered some sort of harm. But pre-enforcement challenges — like the one Smith brought — are allowed in certain cases if the person can show they face a credible threat of prosecution or sanctions unless they conform to the law.

The 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, which reviewed the case before the Supreme Court, found that Smith had standing to sue. That appeals court noted that Colorado had a history of past enforcement "against nearly identical conduct" and that the state decline to promise that it wouldn't go after Smith if she violated the law.

"If there are other places where you can get standing, then legally speaking I don't think it actually does make a difference," said Jessica Levinson, a professor at Loyola Law School.

However, it could have affected the case by undermining the credibility of Smith's legal team, potentially causing the judge to look more skeptically at everything else they filed, Levinson said. It could also result in potential sanctions against Smith's legal team if it turns out they knew Stewart's request was false, Levinson said.

While the revelation cannot change the decision, "it's something that should've come up in the litigation," said Erwin Chemerinsky, the dean of Berkeley Law, "because then what the court should have done is say we have doubts about this, we can't resolve it, we send it back to the federal district court."

Kristen Waggoner — the president of Alliance Defending Freedom, who argued the case before the high court— has said her client doesn't have a way of doing background checks on those requesting business nor is it her responsibility to do so. On Monday, Waggoner slammed suggestions that her client made up the request, adding that "the more likely scenario" is that "Stewart' or another activist did in fact submit the request."

"To say that Lorie Smith or ADF fabricated a request for a same-sex wedding website is a lie," she said in an emailed statement. "It would make no sense to have fabricated a request because one wasn't required for the court to decide her case."

HAS ANYTHING LIKE THIS HAPPENED BEFORE?

An error like that — especially at the level of the Supreme Court — is highly unusual, legal experts say. "Assuming the allegation is correct that this was something that was factually inaccurate ... I've never seen anything that blatant happen before," said Adam Feldman, who follows the court as the creator of the Empirical SCOTUS blog.

Lawyers have, however, had to walk back statements made to the court before.

The solicitor general, who represents the government before the Supreme Court, apologized in a court filing this year for an "inaccurate statement" made to the court during oral arguments over a 2017 patent case. Solicitor General Elizabeth Prelogar wrote that the lawyer was given wrong information by the United States Patent and Trademark Office, adding: "We regret any misimpression inadvertently created by the answer that was given."

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view themselves as pushing back against tyranny — even if in reality they are “very selective” about what parts of the Constitution they want to defend, Braddock said.

Gaines Foster, a historian at Louisiana State University, said patriotism at one point was seen as a civic nationalism that held the belief “that you’re an American because you believe in democracy, you believe in equality, you believe in opportunity. In other words, you believe certain things about the way the government works, and that’s a very inclusive vision.”

He said the violent Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol was the most dramatic example of how the view of patriotism has shifted in recent years, saying “people began to lean less toward a commitment to democracy and more to the notion in the Declaration of Independence that there is a ‘right of revolt,’ and that becomes patriotism.”

HOW PATRIOTISM GETS LINKED TO CONSPIRACY THEORIES

Bob Evnen has been active in Nebraska Republican politics for nearly 50 years and was instrumental a decade ago in enacting a requirement for the Pledge of Allegiance to be recited in schools. The measure doesn’t force students to participate, but does require schools to set aside time each class day for the pledge to be recited.

He pushed for the pledge policy to be included in the state’s social studies curriculum standards, despite criticism from some lawmakers and civil rights organizations who labeled it “forced patriotism.”

The intent, he said, is “to teach our children to become young patriots who have an intellectual understanding of the genius of this country and who feel an emotional connection to it.”

“Somewhere along the line, we lost that — to our detriment, I believe,” Evnen said.

Now Evnen is Nebraska’s secretary of state overseeing elections and he is sometimes the target of election conspiracy theorists — usually fellow Republicans. They have made unfounded accusations of election rigging across the country and often question his patriotism for disagreeing.

Evnen finds those accusations maddening. To him, patriotism is unifying around “the idea of liberty and freedom and of self-governance.” He said today’s national debate on what constitutes patriotism flies in the face of reason.

“They’re now just personal attacks in an effort to shut down debate,” he said. “Anyone who strays from orthodoxy is labeled unpatriotic.”

PATRIOTISM IS A HOT BUTTON IN SCHOOLS

In Idaho, Gov. Brad Little and Superintendent of Public Instruction Debbie Critchfield, both Republicans, announced in June that the state had purchased a new “patriotic” supplemental history curriculum that would be made available, free, to all public schools.

“It’s more important than ever that Idaho children learn the facts about American history from a patriotic standpoint,” Little wrote on Facebook. He said the lessons would help to “truly transform our students here in Idaho.”

Little’s office referred questions about the supplement to the state’s education department.

“The Story of America” curriculum was developed by conservative author and former Reagan-era education secretary Bill Bennett. In a 2021 press release, Bennett said the curriculum was needed because “an anti-American ideology that radically misrepresents U.S. history has infiltrated our education system and misled our kids.”

It’s difficult to compare the supplemental curriculum against the lessons that Idaho schools currently use because each district selects its own texts and lesson plans.

The new curriculum emphasizes that talking about American history and teaching the subject should be done with the intent to “cultivate a respect and love of your country,” Critchfield said.

“It’s not to change history, but to honor the history we had,” she said.

Democratic state Rep. Chris Mathias, a member of the House education committee, hasn’t seen the supplemental curriculum yet, but said history lessons should teach the good and the bad, and discuss — without shaming — the uncomfortable aspects of history.

Saying one curriculum is “patriotic” suggests that others currently in use are not, he said.

The court has also included errors in its own rulings. In 2017, ProPublica published a review of several dozen cases in which they found several "false or wholly unsupported factual claims." Among them was an error in *Shelby County v. Holder*, which struck down part of the Voting Rights Act. The publication reported that Chief Justice John Roberts included incorrect data in a comparison of voter registration among Black people and white people in certain states.

Associated Press reporter Jesse Bedayn contributed from Denver.

Viola Ford Fletcher, oldest living Tulsa Race Massacre victim, publishes memoir

By AARON MORRISON AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Being a centenarian hasn't slowed down Viola Ford Fletcher's pursuit of justice.

In the last couple of years, Fletcher has traveled internationally, testified before Congress and supported a lawsuit for reparations — all part of a campaign for accountability over the massacre that destroyed Tulsa, Oklahoma's original "Black Wall Street" in 1921, when she was a child.

Now, at age 109, Fletcher is releasing a memoir about the life she lived in the shadow of the massacre, after a white mob laid waste to the once-thriving Black enclave known as Greenwood. The book will be published by Mocha Media Inc. on Tuesday and becomes widely available for purchase on Aug. 15.

In a recent interview with The Associated Press, she said fear of reprisal for speaking out had influenced years of near-silence about the massacre.

"Now that I'm an old lady, there's nothing else to talk about," Fletcher said. "We decided to do a book about it and maybe that would help."

Her memoir, "Don't Let Them Bury My Story," is a call to action for readers to pursue truth, justice and reconciliation no matter how long it takes. Written with graphic details of the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre that she witnessed at age seven, Fletcher said she hoped to preserve a narrative of events that was nearly lost to a lack of acknowledgement from mainstream historians and political leaders.

"The questions I had then remain to this day," Fletcher writes in the book. "How could you just give a mob of violent, crazed, racist people a bunch of deadly weapons and allow them — no, encourage them — to go out and kill innocent Black folks and demolish a whole community?"

"As it turns out, we were victims of a lie," she writes.

Tensions between Tulsa's Black and white residents inflamed when, on May 31, 1921, the white-owned Tulsa Tribune published a sensationalized news report of an alleged assault by a 19-year-old Black shoeshine on a 17-year-old white girl working as an elevator operator.

With the shoeshine under arrest, a Black militia gathered at a local jail to prevent a lynch mob from kidnapping and murdering him. Then, a separate violent clash between Black and white residents sparked an all-out war.

Over 18 hours, between May 31 and June 1, the enlarged mob carried out a scorched-earth campaign against Greenwood. The death toll has been estimated to be as high as 300. More than 35 city blocks were leveled, an estimated 191 businesses were destroyed, and roughly 10,000 Black residents were displaced.

In her memoir, Fletcher writes of the bumpy ride out of town in a horse-drawn buggy, as her family escaped the chaos. She witnessed a Black man being executed, his head exploded like "a watermelon dropped off the rooftop of a barn."

The shooter had also fired his shotgun at her family's buggy.

"We passed piles of dead bodies heaped in the streets," she writes in the book. "Some of them had their eyes open, as though they were still alive, but they weren't."

Victims' descendants believed that, once the conspiracy of silence around it was pierced decades later, justice and reparations for Tulsa's Black community would follow. That hasn't happened just yet — Fletcher and two other centenarian survivors are currently plaintiffs in a lawsuit against the city of Tulsa.

Ike Howard, Fletcher's grandson and co-author of the memoir, said systemic racism has prevented Tulsa's

Black community from fully recovering from the massacre.

"They want to be made whole," Howard said. "We speak for everybody that went through a similar situation, who are not here to tell their stories."

"You can learn a lot from 'Don't Let Them Bury My Story.' And we know that history can repeat itself if you don't correct and reconcile issues," he added.

Fletcher notes in her memoir just how much history she has lived through — from several virus outbreaks preceding the coronavirus pandemic, to the Great Depression of 1929 and the Great Recession of 2008 to every war and international conflict of the last seven decades. She has watched the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. lead the national Civil Rights Movement, seen the historic election of former President Barack Obama and witnessed the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement.

In 2020, Howard purchased his grandmother a brand new color TV for her birthday. Several months later, on Jan. 6, the images of the mob attack on the U.S. Capitol following the historic election of President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris retraumatized her.

"With that horrific scene, all of what occurred back in 1921 in Greenwood came flooding back into my mind," Fletcher writes in the book.

In the AP interview, Fletcher attributed her active lifestyle at an advanced age to her reliance on faith and family. While in New York last month to publicize the book with Howard and her younger brother, 102-year-old Hughes Van Ellis, Fletcher saw the cover of her memoir advertised on jumbo screens in Times Square.

Van Ellis, a massacre survivor and World War II veteran whose words from his 2021 testimony to Congress serve as the foreword to his sister's memoir, said he believes justice is possible in his lifetime.

"We're getting pretty close (to justice), but we aren't close enough," he said. "We've got a lot more work to do. I have to keep on battling. I'm fighting for myself and my people."

Aaron Morrison is a member of AP's Race and Ethnicity team. Follow him on Twitter: <https://www.twitter.com/aaronmorrison>.

The American flag wasn't always revered as it is today. At the beginning, it was an afterthought

By HILLEL ITALIE AP National Writer

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — In the bedroom of the Betsy Ross House, a reconstruction of where the upholsterer worked on her most famous commission, a long flag with a circle of 13 stars hangs over a Chipendale side chair and extends across the floor. Over the weeks in 1776 needed to complete the project, Ross would have likely knelt on the flag, stood on it and treated it more like an everyday banner — not with the kind of reverence we'd expect today.

"She would not have worried about it touching the floor or violating any codes," says Lisa Moulder, director of the Ross House. "The flag did not have any kind of special symbolism."

Flags proliferate every July 4. But unlike the right to assemble or trial by jury, their role was not prescribed by the founders. They would have been rare during early Independence Day celebrations. Only in the mid-19th century does the U.S. flag become a permanent fixture at the White House, scholars believe; only in the mid-20th century was a federal code established for how it should be handled and displayed; only in the 1960s did Congress pass a law making it illegal to "knowingly" cast "contempt" on the flag.

The flag's evolution into sacred national symbol, and the ongoing debates around it that inspire so much passion and anger, reflect the current events of a given moment and the country's transformation from a loose confederation of states into a global superpower.

'AN AFTERTHOUGHT'

"The flag was really an afterthought," says Scot Guenter, author of "The American Flag, 1777-1924" and a professor emeritus of American Studies at San Jose State University. In the beginning, Guenter says, the Continental Congress was more concerned about developing a "Great Seal" because it was needed

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for papers it would issue.

Congress passed its first flag act on June 14, 1777: "Resolved, that the Flag of the thirteen United States shall be thirteen stripes, alternate red and white; that the Union be thirteen stars, white on a blue field, representing a new constellation." But the flag is otherwise peripheral to the country's beginnings.

A spokesman for Independence Hall in Philadelphia says no records exist of a U.S. flag being present for the signing of the Constitution in 1787, or any indications that a national flag would have flown during the following decade at what is now called Congress Hall — a decade when Philadelphia was the country's capital. Researchers at George Washington's home have no evidence that the flag was displayed there in his lifetime. (Volunteers there now regularly raise and lower U.S. flags, which are sold at the gift shop as having "flown over Mount Vernon").

According to the White House Historical Association, no precise date exists for when the flag first had a permanent home at the presidential residence. Researchers at the historical association say the best guess is June 29, 1861, early in the Civil War, when President Lincoln dedicated a flagpole on the South Grounds.

The Civil War, followed by the country's centennial in 1876, helped mythologize the flag. Americans were in the mood for a good story, and William J. Canby, grandson of Betsy Ross, had one. In a speech given to the Pennsylvania Historical Society, Canby drew upon family memories in narrating the quiet, heroic tale of Betsy Ross, who had died little known beyond her immediate community.

"As an example of industry, energy and perseverance, and of humble reliance upon providence, though all the trials, which were not few, of her eventful life, the name of Elizabeth Claypoole (her married name at the time of her death) is worthy of being placed on record for the benefit of those who should be similarly circumstanced," Canby stated.

LEGEND OUTWEIGHS FACT

The Ross House bills itself as "the birthplace of the American Flag," but its origins are uncertain. We have no definitive account. Many credit Francis Hopkinson, a congressman from New Jersey, but others, including Ross, may have added details — and, unlike the Declaration of Independence, we have no original artifact. Whether Ross or another produced the first one, its ultimate destination is unknown.

"We think it would have ended up on a ship mast, to signify that it was an American ship," Moulder says.

Ross' place in history also remains in question, even among government institutions. An essay entitled "The Legend of Betsy Ross," on the website for the Smithsonian National Postal Museum, says her tale is "shrouded in as much legend as fact," with no substantial evidence of her involvement. Says the museum: "While it makes for a nice story, sadly, it is most likely false."

Ross, who died in 1836, left behind no diary or contemporary accounts of her whereabouts, officials at the Ross House acknowledge. But she was very much a real person who produced various flags before and after the alleged time she was approached by a commission that included George Washington and asked to sew a flag to represent the new country. Officials at the Ross house have no direct proof of Washington contacting Ross in 1776, but they note that a ledger unearthed in 2015 revealed Washington had engaged in business two years earlier with Ross and her husband and fellow upholster, John Ross.

"We know that Washington wanted the Rosses to make bedrooms curtains for his home in Mount Vernon," Moulder says. "And curtains are the kind of job that Betsy would have taken on."

As the country grew more nationalized and nationalistic, Ross was added to the early pantheon and the flag's presence expanded like so much territory across the continent — into state ceremonies and buildings, sporting events, schools and private homes.

THE FLAG TAKES CENTER STAGE

In the midst of fierce labor battles and rising fears of immigration, the minister Francis Bellamy composed the Pledge of Allegiance in 1892. It was tied to the 400th anniversary of Christopher Columbus' landing but also, as historian Richard White has written, addressed "a time of intense social conflict in an increasingly diverse nation" and was intended "as a hopeful affirmation of America's future."

Throughout the 20th century, regulations were proposed and enacted. The first national flag code was drafted in 1923 and signed into law by President Franklin D. Roosevelt during World War II, with recom-

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mentations on everything from how to salute the flag to how to carry it. In the mid-1950s, President Dwight Eisenhower endorsed legislation adding "under God" to the Pledge of Allegiance, a Cold War action with origins 20 years earlier.

"In the 1930s, you had conservatives arguing that the New Deal represented slavery and that the counterpoint was freedom under God," says Kevin M. Kruse, a professor of history at Princeton University whose books include "One Nation Under God," published in 2015. "So there was a corporate-fueled drive against the regulatory state and it takes on religious tones. In the 1950s, that gets appropriated by the anti-communists."

Burning American flags dates back at least to the Civil War. But only in July 1968, in response to Vietnam War protesters, did Congress pass legislation making it illegal (the Supreme Court overturned the ban in 1989) and adding other restrictions against "publicly mutilating" the flag. Three months later, the radical activist Abbie Hoffman was arrested for wearing a Stars and Stripes shirt, charges later dropped on appeal.

"He showed up in the shirt for a meeting of the House Committee on Un-American Activities," says Mark Kurlansky, author of "1968: The Year That Rocked the World," a social history. "He just thought it would be funny."

Last month, the Biden administration hosted a Pride Day gathering on the White House South Lawn and hung a Pride Progress flag between U.S. flags on the Truman balcony. Rep. Mike Collins, a Georgia Republican, denounced the prominence of an "alphabet cult battle flag." Other Republicans alleged that Biden officials had broken federal regulations, which call for the American flag to be "at the center and at the highest point" when grouped with other flags. Defenders of Biden noted that a U.S. flag was flying above from atop the White House.

"The flag is so important because it helps define what we believe in. You have Democrats and Republicans trying to attach meaning to it," Guenter says. "The flag can intersect with issues of gender and race and sexuality. There's so much there to think about, and it reveals so much about who we are."

Highland Park marks 1 year after July 4 shooting with community walk reclaiming parade route

By CLAIRE SAVAGE Associated Press/Report for America

Highland Park, Ill. (AP) — One year after a shooter terrorized July Fourth parade-goers in Highland Park, Illinois, community members are planning to gather to honor the seven people who were killed, commemorate the day and reclaim the space to move forward.

In collaboration with the park district, the city is hosting a series of events during the holiday Tuesday aimed at giving people "an opportunity to engage with the day and gather as a community in the way that feels most comfortable to them," city communications manager Amanda Bennett said. The city approached the event planning with a trauma-informed perspective, Bennett said.

A 10 a.m. Remembrance Ceremony at City Hall is set to include remarks from Mayor Nancy Rotering, a musical performance and a moment of silence at 10:14 a.m. to mark the exact time police say the first shot was fired. Then, attendees may walk the parade route.

"The Community Walk will symbolize the reclaiming of the 2022 parade route as we build resiliency together," the city said on its website.

A community picnic at Sunset Woods Park is scheduled for 11:30 a.m., Gary Sinise & the Lt. Dan Band will perform at 7:30 p.m., and a drone show called "We Are Highland Park" is scheduled for 9:30 p.m.

There will be no floats, performers or giveaways.

"This is not a parade," Bennett said at a June 14 media briefing. Media helicopters are not permitted to fly overhead to capture footage; reporters are asked not to film in areas touched by gun violence, and to avoid running footage of last year's event to avoid re-traumatizing participants.

Security is tight: Attendees must register prior to each event and show a QR code to enter the secured event space. Those who are not comfortable attending in person may watch the events via Zoom.

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.

Hong Kong police offer rewards for arrests of 8 pro-democracy activists who live abroad

By ZEN SOO Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — Hong Kong police on Monday accused eight self-exiled pro-democracy activists of violating the territory's harsh National Security Law and offered rewards of 1 million Hong Kong dollars (\$127,600) each for information leading to their arrests. The U.S. and Britain strongly condemned the move.

The rewards are the first for suspects accused of violating the Beijing-imposed legislation since it took effect in June 2020. It outlaws subversion, secession, collusion with foreign forces and terrorism.

The eight activists are former pro-democracy lawmakers Nathan Law, Ted Hui and Dennis Kwok, lawyer Kevin Yam, unionist Mung Siu-tat and activists Finn Lau, Anna Kwok and Elmer Yuen, police announced at a news conference.

They are currently living in the U.S., Britain, Canada and Australia after some were earlier accused of various other offenses.

Steven Li, chief superintendent of the police's National Security Department, said arrest warrants have been issued for the eight under the National Security Law. He acknowledged that police will not be able to arrest them if they remain overseas but urged them to return to Hong Kong and surrender for a reduction in their sentences.

Li said the new charges and rewards are not intended to spread fear but are merely "enforcing the law."

He cited articles of the security law which state that police have extraterritorial jurisdiction, and said they would pursue people overseas who endanger Hong Kong's national security.

The news conference came less than two weeks after the state-owned Ta Kung Pao newspaper issued an editorial stating that the National Security Law applies to people outside Hong Kong, and that China, as a member of Interpol, could request assistance from other countries in arresting fugitives.

Hong Kong, a semi-autonomous Chinese city, has come under increasingly tight scrutiny by Beijing following months of political strife in 2019. Authorities have cracked down on dissent with over 260 people, including many pro-democracy figures, arrested under the National Security Law.

Hong Kong's political system has also undergone a major overhaul to ensure that only "patriots" loyal to Beijing can hold office.

The police force said it has evidence that the eight violated the National Security Law.

According to the warrants, lawyer Yam, former legislator Dennis Kwok and activists Yuen, Lau and Anna Kwok are accused of foreign collusion for allegedly calling for sanctions against Hong Kong officials.

Former lawmaker Hui is accused of inciting secession, subversion and foreign collusion for allegedly calling for Hong Kong and Taiwan's independence on social media, as well as for sanctions against city officials.

Law, who is currently living in Britain, is also accused of foreign collusion and inciting secession for allegedly calling for sanctions and the city's separation from China in meetings with foreign officials and in open letters, petitions, social media posts and media interviews.

Unionist Mung is accused of inciting secession for allegedly advocating Hong Kong's separation from the mainland.

Law said the new charges are an attempt to suppress dissident voices.

"I ask Hongkongers not to cooperate with any related pursuit or bounty actions. We should not limit ourselves, self-censor, be intimidated, or live in fear," he tweeted.

Britain's Foreign Secretary James Cleverly said the U.K. "will not tolerate any attempts by China to intimidate and silence individuals in the U.K. and overseas."

"We call on Beijing to remove the National Security Law and for the Hong Kong authorities to end their targeting of those who stand up for freedom and democracy," Cleverly said in a statement.

The U.S. condemned the move and said extraterritorial application of the security law was a dangerous precedent that threatened human rights.

"We call on the Hong Kong government to immediately withdraw this bounty, respect other countries' sovereignty, and stop the international assertion of the National Security Law imposed by Beijing," said Matthew Miller, a spokesperson for the U.S. State Department.

Israel launches most intense military operation in West Bank in years; at least 8 Palestinians dead

By NASSER NASSER and JOSEF FEDERMAN Associated Press

JENIN, West Bank (AP) — Israel on Monday launched its most intense military operation in the occupied West Bank in nearly two decades, carrying out a series of drone strikes and sending hundreds of troops on an open-ended mission into a militant stronghold. At least eight Palestinians were killed and dozens wounded.

The crackdown was reminiscent of Israeli military tactics during the second Palestinian uprising in the early 2000s and came at a time of growing domestic pressure for a tough response to recent attacks on Israeli settlers, including a shooting last month that killed four Israelis.

The operation took place in the Jenin refugee camp — an area in the northern West Bank that has long been known as a bastion of militants. The fighting, which began shortly after midnight, continued past nightfall.

Throughout the day, black smoke rose from the crowded streets of the camp, a densely populated neighborhood that is home to some 14,000 people, while exchanges of fire rang out and drones could be heard buzzing overhead. Military bulldozers plowed through narrow streets, damaging buildings as they cleared the way for Israeli forces.

"There are bulldozers destroying the streets, snipers are inside and on roofs of houses, drones are hitting houses and Palestinians are killed in the streets," said Jamal Huweil, a political activist in the camp, predicting the operation would fail.

The military blocked traffic in and out of Jenin, and the city resembled a ghost town. Streets were empty as armored Israeli vehicles patrolled. Piles of burning tires and garbage containers littered traffic circles. Power and water supplies were knocked out in the camp.

Palestinian youths occasionally threw stones at army vehicles before darting away.

With the sound of shooting and explosions in the background, at least 10 ambulances rushed to the overwhelmed local hospital as relatives checked to see if loved ones were inside. One ambulance arrived with a bullet hole in front.

The Palestinians and three Arab countries with normalized ties with Israel — Jordan, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates — condemned the incursion, as did the 57-nation Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

Late Monday, the Palestinian leadership in the West Bank held an emergency meeting and said it was halting its already limited contacts with Israel. Leaders said a freeze on security coordination would remain in place, and they vowed to step up activity against Israel in the United Nations and international bodies. They also planned to minimize contacts with the United States.

Israel's prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, was unswayed.

"In recent months, Jenin has turned into a safe haven for terrorism. We are putting an end to this," he said. He said the troops were destroying militant command centers and confiscating weapons supplies and factories. He claimed the operation was taking place with "minimum harm to civilians."

Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, the chief military spokesman, said there were a total of about 10 airstrikes — most of them aimed at keeping gunmen away from ground troops. He accused militants of operating next to a United Nations building and storing weapons inside of a mosque.

He said Israel launched the operation because some 50 attacks over the past year had emanated from Jenin.

Neither the prime minister nor Hagari gave any indication when the operation would end.

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U.N. Mideast envoy Tor Wennesland warned that the escalation in the West Bank was "very dangerous." Asked about the Israeli drone attacks on residential areas, U.N. spokesman Farhan Haq said: "Attacks on heavily populated areas are violations of international humanitarian law."

Lynn Hastings, the U.N. humanitarian coordinator in the Palestinian areas, said on Twitter that she was "alarmed by scale of Israeli forces operation" and noted the airstrikes in a densely populated refugee camp. She said the U.N. was mobilizing humanitarian aid.

UNRWA, the U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees, said many camp residents were in need of food, drinking water and milk powder.

Late Monday, hundreds of Palestinians left the camp to flee the fighting. The Israeli army said it was allowing people who wanted to leave to do so. The Palestinian Red Crescent rescue service said as many as 3,000 people had left by midnight, and they expected the exodus to continue.

The Palestinian Health Ministry said at least eight Palestinians were killed and 50 people were wounded — 10 critically. The dead were identified as young men and Palestinian youths, including a 16-year-old boy and two 17-year-olds.

Separately, a 21-year-old Palestinian was killed by Israeli fire near the West Bank city of Ramallah, the ministry said.

The Jenin camp and an adjacent town of the same name have been a flashpoint since Israeli-Palestinian violence began escalating in spring 2022.

Israel says it has stepped up activity because the Palestinian Authority is too weak to maintain quiet. It also accuses its archenemy Iran of funding militant groups involved in the fighting.

Palestinians reject such claims, saying the violence is a natural response to 56 years of occupation, including stepped-up settlement construction by Israel's government and increased violence by Jewish settlers.

Jenin was a major friction point in the last Palestinian uprising.

In 2002, days after a Palestinian suicide bombing during a large Passover gathering killed 30 people, Israeli troops launched a massive operation in the camp. For eight days and nights, they fought militants street by street, using armored bulldozers to destroy rows of homes, many of which had been booby-trapped.

Monday's raid came two weeks after another violent confrontation in Jenin that included the shooting death of a 15-year-old girl and after the military said a pair of rockets were fired from the area last week.

But there also may have been political considerations at play. Leading members of Netanyahu's far-right government, which is dominated by West Bank settlers and their supporters, have called for a broader military response to the ongoing violence in the area, particularly after the June 20 shooting that killed four people in the Jewish settlement of Eli.

"Proud of our heroes on all fronts and this morning especially of our soldiers operating in Jenin," tweeted National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, an ultranationalist who recently called for Israel to kill thousands of militants if necessary. "Praying for their success."

Israeli military experts said they expected the operation to wrap up within a day or two. Prolonged violence and heavy casualties would risk attracting increased international criticism and drawing militants from the Gaza Strip or even Lebanon into the fighting.

Islamic Jihad, a militant group with a large presence in Jenin, threatened to launch attacks from its Gaza Strip stronghold if the fighting dragged on. Lebanon's militant Hezbollah group also made threats, saying the Palestinians have "many alternatives and means that will make the enemy regret its acts." Hezbollah fought a monthlong war against Israel in 2006.

More than 130 Palestinians have been killed this year in the West Bank, part of more than a yearlong spike in violence that has seen some of the worst bloodshed in the area in nearly two decades.

Israel says the raids are meant to beat back militants. The Palestinians say such violence is inevitable in the absence of any political process with Israel and increased West Bank settlement construction and violence by extremist settlers.

Israel says most of those killed have been militants, but stone-throwing youths protesting the incursions and people uninvolved in confrontations have also died.

Israel captured the West Bank, east Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip in the 1967 Mideast war. The Palestin-

ians seek those territories for their hoped-for independent state.

Crowds across France show solidarity at town halls targeted in rioting following police shooting

By CARA ANNA and NICOLAS GARRIGA Associated Press

NANTERRE, France (AP) — Crowds gathered at town halls across France Monday to show solidarity with local governments targeted in six nights of violence touched off by the fatal police shooting of a 17-year-old in suburban Paris.

The unrest, which appeared to be easing on Sunday night, was driven by a mainly teenage backlash in the suburbs and urban housing projects against a French state that many young people with immigrant roots say routinely discriminates against them. In all, 99 town halls have been attacked in the violence, the Interior Ministry said, including a weekend attempt to ram the home of one mayor and apparently set it afire.

In the municipality of l'Hay-les-Les Roses in the southern suburbs of Paris, hundreds of people gathered Monday to support Mayor Vincent Jeanbrun, whose wife and one of his young children were injured when a car set afire by rioters rammed into his home early Sunday while they slept.

It was an unusually personal attack that authorities said would be prosecuted as an attempted homicide, and it prompted an outpouring of support for local governments in many towns where the city hall is often literally central to public life.

"We saw the real face of the rioters, that of assassins," Jeanbrun said in an emotional speech. France and "democracy itself" were being attacked in days of rioting. "This won't last last," the mayor said, adding that the "silent majority" is speaking out to say "Stop. This is enough!" The crowd responded with the chant "Enough!"

President Emmanuel Macron made a surprise visit to a northern Paris district reportedly to thank security officials for their work, according to French media reports. Video showed Macron and Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin entering the building in the 17th district where a specialized night brigade is headquartered.

There has been little in the way of organized protests beyond a march last week for Nahel, the 17-year-old French man of Algerian descent who was killed last Tuesday in the Paris suburb of Nanterre by a white police officer. Instead, the anger has manifested in young people targeting police, with both sides using increasingly aggressive tactics.

The average age of the 3,354 people arrested over the past week was 17, the interior minister said. But the problem of discrimination strikes all ages, according to Ahmed Djamai, a 58-year-old born in Nanterre who attended a solidarity gathering Monday at the town hall.

Djamai said police stopped him not long ago and demanded a residence permit, even though he neither has nor needs one as a French citizen. He said the problem won't go away even as the violence subsides.

"Our second, third and fourth-generation children face the same problem when they go out to get a job, when they go to prestigious universities," he said. "They're not accepted. So even now, the problem is social, but it's also one of identity. It goes much deeper than that."

President Macron was meeting Tuesday with mayors of 220 towns from across the country which were hit by violence. Across France, 34 buildings — many of them linked to the government — were attacked from Sunday into Monday, along with 297 vehicles.

Macron last week blamed social media for the spread of the unrest and called on parents to take responsibility for their teenagers. Justice Minister Eric Dupond-Moretti told France Inter radio that parents who abdicated that responsibility, "either through disinterest or deliberately," would be prosecuted.

The anger has descended into attacks against symbols of the state, widespread arson and nighttime looting. The interior minister said during a visit to a town in central France that he's been proven right to put 45,000 police on the streets in recent nights — and did so again Monday night. But he added that police "can't educate children in the place of their parents."

"We know all too well that this violence penalizes first and foremost the children, the people and the

families of our neighborhoods and all of the residents of our city," Nanterre Mayor Patrick Jarry said. "We want justice to be done for Nahel and for the appeal by the family and notably by his grandmother for an end to the violence and destruction to be heard and respected."

In all, according to the Interior Ministry, there were 157 arrests overnight out of a total of 3,354 since last Tuesday, and two law enforcement stations were attacked, among other damage.

The interior minister said children as young as 12 or 13 had been detained for attacking law enforcement and setting fires.

In the Paris suburb of Clichy-sous-Bois, where a fire also struck the town hall, residents over the weekend said anger had simmered for years and many said the government had done little to help them.

"Young people are afraid to die by the hands of police. They are hopeless. They are bored and they need something to distract them so they don't hang out in the streets," said Samba Seck, 39.

Oleg Cetinic and Alex Turnbull contributed from L'Hay-les-Roses, France. Jade Le Deley contributed from Clichy-sous-Bois, France. Lori Hinnant contributed from Paris.

Baltimore samaritan who bandaged a shooting victim from block party says 'All they know is guns'

By JULIET LINDERMAN Associated Press

BALTIMORE (AP) — Authorities searched Monday for the suspects who opened fire during a holiday weekend block party in Baltimore that killed two people, wounded 28 others and prompted one resident to jump into action when she found a wounded teenage girl on her doorstep.

Police identified the deceased as 18-year-old Aaliyah Gonzalez and 20-year-old Kylis Fagbemi. The 28 injured victims ranged in age from 13 to 32, with more than half younger than 18, officials said.

Charlene Bowie, 66, who lives close to where the shooting took place, said she saw a huge crowd, largely made up of teenagers.

"They were having fun in the beginning, but you know kids ... they started drinking and they was getting all out of order," she said.

Bowie said she called the police and told her 15-year-old granddaughter to come inside. They heard gunshots a little while later, and a bullet struck her air conditioner, breaking off a piece of it and hitting her granddaughter in the back. The girl was unhurt, and they both laid on the floor, Bowie said.

"Then I heard some banging on the door — boom, boom, boom, real loud — so I come down and got the door. The little girl (was) laying on my steps, shot," she said.

Bowie said she ran inside to get a rag, then tied a makeshift tourniquet around the girl's leg.

"I just kept talking to her so she wouldn't get panicky, you know," she said.

Learning that young people were killed in the shooting was especially painful for Bowie because she lost her son, 19, and her grandson, 15, to gun violence in separate shootings years ago.

"It hurts so bad because they haven't begun to live. They don't even know what life is, they don't. All they know is guns. That's all they know, and it's sad," she said.

The circumstances leading up to the shooting early Sunday remained under investigation after police spent hours combing a massive crime scene in the Brooklyn Homes area in the southern part of the city.

No arrests had been made by early Monday. Richard Worley, Baltimore's acting police commissioner, said it wasn't clear if the shooting was targeted or random, but he said police believe there were multiple shooters.

"We don't know exactly how many, but we do know more than one person was shooting," Worley said.

The event has been held for decades, but no permit was issued this year and police didn't find out about it ahead of time, as they have in past years, Worley said.

"Obviously, the conversation to deploy more resources was too late," Worley said Monday. "By the time we got there, the incident already occurred."

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The shooting comes amid gatherings around the country leading up to the July Fourth holiday. A shooting in Kansas left seven people with gunshot wounds and two more victims hospitalized after being trampled as people rushed out of a nightclub early Sunday morning, police there said.

The violence in Baltimore occurred the same week federal prosecutors there touted efforts to reduce violent crime in the city. Police have reported nearly 130 homicides and close to 300 shootings so far this year, though that's down from the same time last year.

James Townes was sitting in his car when he heard gunshots, and immediately began driving around looking for his two children, 16 and 11, who were both at the block party. Townes, whose 18-year-old son was fatally shot two years ago, said all he could think about was his other children hearing the gunfire and being in the middle of the violence. As he searched for them, he saw injured people being put on gurneys.

Townes eventually found his children safe. "I think I held them for like 10 minutes," he said.

Gov. Wes Moore said his "heart breaks for these victims, their families, and the Baltimore community that is coping with the loss."

Several residents said police had been stationed at the block party in past years. The event is held every July to celebrate the South Baltimore neighborhood, a mix of modest row houses and public housing.

Anthony Lewis, 64, said he was getting into the shower when a bullet ripped through a window in his house and into his bathroom wall. Another bullet came through a downstairs window.

Lewis said his girlfriend thought he had been shot and collapsed on the floor. He had been thinking about moving out of the city, and those plans are more urgent now.

"I gotta get away from it," he said.

This story corrects the spelling of Aaliyah Gonzalez' last name throughout.

This story corrects throughout the number of injured to 28, not 30.

Ramer reported from Concord, New Hampshire. Kimberlee Kruesi in Nashville, Tennessee, contributed to this report.

Mexico's old ruling party fractures following election loss

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Mexico's old ruling party fractured Monday, with four leading senators resigning amid internal disputes and the loss of the last major state the party governed.

The Institutional Revolutionary Parties held the presidency and almost all statehouses in Mexico without interruption for 70 years.

But the PRI, as the party is known, has been reduced to a shadow of its former self by the rise of President Andrés Manuel López Obrador's Morena party, which won the governorship of the last major PRI bastion, the State of Mexico, last month.

Morena has seized on the combination of handout programs and nationalism that the PRI once espoused, and has largely replaced it.

On Monday, four leading PRI senators and dozens of supporters announced they are quitting the party. Senators led by former interior secretary Miguel Osorio Chong announced they will form a new group called "Congruence for Mexico." The new group will not be able to compete in the 2024 presidential elections.

The PRI, which now governs only two sparsely populated states, is now Mexico's fourth biggest party, trailing Morena, the conservative National Action Party and the centrist Citizen's Movement.

Chong and the other senators had objected to attempts by current PRI party leader Alejandro Moreno to hold onto power.

A Texas man who went missing as a teen in 2015 has been found alive, his family and police say

By JUAN A. LOZANO Associated Press

HOUSTON (AP) — A Texas man who went missing as a teenager in 2015 after last being seen walking his dogs in Houston has been found alive, his family and police said Monday.

Police and firefighters found Rudolph "Rudy" Farias IV around 10 p.m. Thursday after getting a call of a person lying on the ground in front of a church in southeast Houston, police spokesman John Cannon said.

It was not immediately known where Farias had been the last eight years, Cannon said. Police investigators had not yet spoken with Farias, 25, who remained hospitalized.

"What we do know is at the time of his recovery, a good Samaritan located him unresponsive and immediately called police and 911. My son Rudy is receiving the care he needs to overcome his trauma, but at this time, he is nonverbal and not able to communicate with us," Janie Santana, Farias' mother, said in a statement.

In a tweet Monday afternoon, Houston police said it planned on speaking with Farias and his family on Wednesday.

The news that Farias had been found was first reported in a tweet on Saturday by the Texas Center for the Missing, which was handling public communications on behalf of Farias' family.

"We do know when a loved one goes missing this is the day all families hope for and dream of – RE-UNIFICATION. We are thankful that Rudy has been found and receiving the care he needs," the center said in a statement Monday.

Farias was 17 years old when he was reported missing on March 6, 2015, after taking his two dogs for a walk near his family's home in northeast Houston. The dogs were later found.

Houston police, along with Texas Equusearch, a civilian search and recovery team, looked for Farias but found no signs of him.

When Farias first went missing, Texas Equusearch reported that he suffered from depression and anxiety, and he might have been disoriented because he wasn't taking his medication. Farias also had asthma and walked with a slight limp because of an injured right leg.

"According to his mother he is very wary around strangers," Texas Equusearch said in 2015.

Cannon said Farias' family did report to police investigators that they had seen him in September 2018, staying behind the home of a relative.

Police investigators followed up on the 2018 sighting and went to the relative's home. But "they could not observe him. They could not locate him," Cannon said.

Since police were not able to find Farias after the 2018 sighting, the investigation remained open as a missing person case, Cannon said.

Possible sightings like the one Houston police followed up in 2018 were common in the case, said Martin Renteria, a private investigator with Checkmate Investigative Field Services in suburban Houston who had been hired by Farias' mother a few months after Farias went missing.

Renteria recalled at least a dozen such reports that turned up nothing. Renteria, who worked the case with his wife, Barbara, also followed up on possible sightings in other cities.

"After a couple of years ... we finally just had to give up on it," Renteria said Monday. He added he also considered that Farias, who had become an adult in the time he was missing, might have run away and didn't want to be found.

Santana and other family members were not available for comment Monday.

"We are asking for privacy during this difficult time but will share more details as Rudy continues to heal," Santana said in her statement.

Maternal deaths in the US more than doubled over two decades. Black mothers died at the highest rate

By LAURA UNGAR AP Science Writer

Maternal deaths across the U.S. more than doubled over the course of two decades, and the tragedy unfolded unequally.

Black mothers died at the nation's highest rates, while the largest increases in deaths were found in American Indian and Native Alaskan mothers. And some states — and racial or ethnic groups within them — fared worse than others.

The findings were laid out in a new study published Monday in the Journal of the American Medical Association. Researchers looked at maternal deaths between 1999 and 2019 — but not the pandemic spike — for every state and five racial and ethnic groups.

"It's a call to action to all of us to understand the root causes — to understand that some of it is about health care and access to health care, but a lot of it is about structural racism and the policies and procedures and things that we have in place that may keep people from being healthy," said Dr. Allison Bryant, one of the study's authors and a senior medical director for health equity at Mass General Brigham.

Among wealthy nations, the U.S. has the highest rate of maternal mortality, which is defined as a death during pregnancy or up to a year afterward. Common causes include excessive bleeding, infection, heart disease, suicide and drug overdose.

Bryant and her colleagues at Mass General Brigham and the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation at the University of Washington started with national vital statistics data on deaths and live births. They then used a modeling process to estimate maternal mortality out of every 100,000 live births.

Overall, they found rampant, widening disparities. The study showed high rates of maternal mortality aren't confined to the South but also extend to regions like the Midwest and states such as Wyoming and Montana, which had high rates for multiple racial and ethnic groups in 2019.

Researchers also found dramatic jumps when they compared maternal mortality in the first decade of the study to the second, and identified the five states with the largest increases between those decades. Those increases exceeded:

— 162% for American Indian and Alaska Native mothers in Florida, Illinois, Kansas, Rhode Island and Wisconsin;

— 135% for white mothers in Georgia, Indiana, Louisiana, Missouri and Tennessee;

— 105% for Hispanic mothers in Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota and Tennessee;

— 93% for Black mothers in Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, New Jersey and Texas;

— 83% for Asian and Pacific Islander mothers in Georgia, Illinois, Kansas, Michigan and Missouri.

"I hate to say it, but I was not surprised by the findings. We've certainly seen enough anecdotal evidence in a single state or a group of states to suggest that maternal mortality is rising," said Dr. Karen Joynt Maddox, a health services and policy researcher at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis who wasn't involved in the study. "It's certainly alarming, and just more evidence we have got to figure out what's going on and try to find ways to do something about this."

Maddox pointed to how, compared with other wealthy nations, the U.S. underinvests in things like social services, primary care and mental health. She also said Missouri hasn't funded public health adequately and, during the years of the study, hadn't expanded Medicaid. They've since expanded Medicaid — and lawmakers passed a bill giving new mothers a full year of Medicaid health coverage. Last week, Missouri Gov. Mike Parson signed budget bills that included \$4.4 million for a maternal mortality prevention plan.

In neighboring Arkansas, Black women are twice as likely to have pregnancy-associated deaths as white women, according to a 2021 state report.

Dr. William Greenfield, the medical director for family health at the Arkansas Department of Health, said the disparity is significant and has "persisted over time," and that it's hard to pinpoint exactly why there was an increase in the state's maternal mortality rate for Black mothers.

Rates among Black women have long been the worst in the nation, and the problem affects people of

all socioeconomic backgrounds. For example, U.S. Olympic champion sprinter Tori Bowie, 32, died from complications of childbirth in May.

The pandemic likely exacerbated all of the demographic and geographic trends, Bryant said, and “that’s absolutely an area for future study.” According to preliminary federal data, maternal mortality fell in 2022 after rising to a six-decade high in 2021 — a spike experts attributed mainly to COVID-19. Officials said the final 2022 rate is on track to get close to the pre-pandemic level, which was still the highest in decades.

Bryant said it’s crucial to understand more about these disparities to help focus on community-based solutions and understand what resources are needed to tackle the problem.

Arkansas already is using telemedicine and is working on several other ways to increase access to care, said Greenfield, who is also a professor of obstetrics and gynecology at the University of Arkansas Medical Center in Little Rock and was not involved in the study.

The state also has a “perinatal quality collaborative,” a network to help health care providers understand best practices for things like reducing cesarean sections, managing complications with hypertensive disorders and curbing injuries or severe complications related to childbirth.

“Most of the deaths we reviewed and other places have reviewed ... were preventable,” Greenfield said.

AP Public Health Collaborations Editor Erica Hunzinger contributed to this report

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Senegalese President Macky Sall says he won’t seek a third term in 2024 elections after protests

By BABACAR DIONE Associated Press

DAKAR, Senegal (AP) — Senegalese President Macky Sall declared Monday evening that he will not run for a third term in next year’s elections, ending years of uncertainty over his political future that had helped fuel deadly opposition protests last month.

Top opposition leader Ousmane Sonko already had called for more demonstrations around the West African country in the event Sall had instead announced his intention to run again in February.

In a speech carried live on his official Facebook page, Sall maintained that Senegal’s constitution would have allowed his candidacy despite having already been elected to a second term in 2019.

“Even if I have the right, I felt that my duty is not to contribute to destroying what I have built for this country,” Sall said. “I had said that the 2019 mandate was my last mandate. I know that this decision will come as a surprise to all those who have a friendship with me. Senegal is more than just me, it’s full of people capable of taking Senegal to the next level.”

Sonko had long called for the president to bow out of the 2024 election publicly, accusing Sall’s government of bringing court cases against the opposition leader in an effort to sideline the competition ahead of February’s election.

There have been widespread fears that Sall’s declaration about his political future could spark new waves of unrest throughout the West African nation long viewed as a bastion of stability in an otherwise politically turbulent region.

Already, a wave of deadly protests erupted last month over a court case in which Sonko was sentenced to two years in prison after being convicted of corrupting youth. The government says at least 16 people died in the unrest, while the opposition has put the figure higher at 19.

Sall became Senegal’s president in 2012 after prevailing against an incumbent president, Abdoulaye Wade, whose decision to seek a controversial third term prompted violent street demonstrations. Wade ultimately conceded defeat after a runoff between him and Sall, his former protege.

In 2016, Sall amended Senegal’s Constitution to set a two-term presidential limit. His supporters main-

tained that his first term under the prior constitution shouldn't count though. As recently as this past weekend, Sall was heard saying that the country's Constitutional Council would allow for his candidacy, fueling speculation he would announce his third term bid.

In his speech Monday, Sall asked the government to do everything possible to organize a transparent election in February. It was not immediately clear who might run on the ticket of Sall's political party.

A number of African presidents already have tried staying in power in recent years by modifying their constitutions first, including Ivory Coast's Alassane Ouattara, who won a third term in 2020. Another, Alpha Conde of Guinea, won a third term that same year too but didn't stay for long: A military coup removed him from power less than a year later.

Bolle Fall, who works as a guard in the Plateau district of Dakar near the presidency, said he was hoping Sall would win a third term.

"What I want is to leave him be," Fall said, expressing concern about the recent opposition protests that shuttered local businesses for days at a time. Influencing youth to "attack people, break stores, keep people from working, it's not good ... we have to be civilized," he added.

Associated Press writers Krista Larson and Zane Irwin contributed.

Activists spurred by affirmative action ruling challenge legacy admissions at Harvard

By COLLIN BINKLEY AP Education Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — A civil rights group is challenging legacy admissions at Harvard University, saying the practice discriminates against students of color by giving an unfair boost to the mostly white children of alumni.

The practice of giving priority to the children of alumni has faced growing pushback in the wake of last week's Supreme Court's decision ending affirmative action in higher education. The NAACP added its weight behind the effort on Monday, asking more than 1,500 colleges and universities to even the playing field in admissions, including by ending legacy admissions.

The civil rights complaint was filed Monday by Lawyers for Civil Rights, a nonprofit based in Boston, on behalf of Black and Latino community groups in New England, alleging that Harvard's admissions system violates the Civil Rights Act.

"Why are we rewarding children for privileges and advantages accrued by prior generations?" said Ivan Espinoza-Madriral, the group's executive director. "Your family's last name and the size of your bank account are not a measure of merit, and should have no bearing on the college admissions process."

Opponents say the practice is no longer defensible without affirmative action providing a counterbalance. The court's ruling says colleges must ignore the race of applicants, activists point out, but schools can still give a boost to the children of alumni and donors.

The complaint, submitted with the Education Department's Office for Civil Rights, draws on Harvard data that came to light amid the affirmative action case that landed before the Supreme Court. The records revealed that 70% of Harvard's donor-related and legacy applicants are white, and being a legacy student makes an applicant roughly six times more likely to be admitted.

It draws attention to other colleges that have abandoned the practice amid questions about its fairness, including Amherst College and Johns Hopkins University.

The complaint alleges that Harvard's legacy preference has nothing to do with merit and takes away slots from qualified students of color. It asks the U.S. Education Department to declare the practice illegal and force Harvard to abandon it as long as the university receives federal funding.

"A spot given to a legacy or donor-related applicant is a spot that becomes unavailable to an applicant who meets the admissions criteria based purely on his or her own merit," according to the complaint. If legacy and donor preferences were removed, it adds, "more students of color would be admitted to Harvard."

Harvard said it would not comment on the complaint.

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"Last week, the University reaffirmed its commitment to the fundamental principle that deep and transformative teaching, learning, and research depend upon a community comprising people of many backgrounds, perspectives, and lived experiences," the university said in a prepared statement. "As we said, in the weeks and months ahead, the University will determine how to preserve our essential values, consistent with the Court's new precedent."

The complaint was filed on behalf of Chica Project, African Community Economic Development of New England, and the Greater Boston Latino Network.

Also Monday, the NAACP launched a campaign aiming to get universities across the nation to promote campus diversity. The group called on 532 public and 1,134 private colleges and universities to end legacy preferences, eliminate "racially biased" entrance examinations, recruit diverse faculty, and support low-income and first-generation students with scholarships and mentoring, among other steps.

"It is our hope that our nation's institutions will stand with us in embracing diversity, no matter what," said Derrick Johnson president and CEO of the NAACP. "Regardless, the NAACP will continue to advocate, litigate and mobilize to ensure that every Black American has access to the resources and opportunities they need to thrive."

That effort joins another campaign urging the alumni of 30 prestigious colleges to withhold donations until their schools end legacy admissions. That initiative, led by Ed Mobilizer, also targets Harvard and other Ivy League schools.

President Joe Biden suggested last week that universities should rethink the practice, saying legacy admissions "expand privilege instead of opportunity."

Several Democrats in Congress demanded an end to the policy in light of the court's decision, along with Republicans including Sen. Tim Scott of South Carolina, who is vying for the GOP presidential nomination.

It's unclear exactly which schools provide a legacy boost and how much it helps. In California, where state law requires schools to disclose the practice, the University of Southern California reported that 14% of last year's admitted students had family ties to alumni or donors. Stanford reported a similar rate.

An Associated Press survey of the nation's most selective colleges last year found that legacy students in the freshman class ranged from 4% to 23%. At four schools — Notre Dame, USC, Cornell and Dartmouth — legacy students outnumbered Black students.

Supporters of the policy say it builds an alumni community and encourages donations. A 2022 study of an undisclosed college in the Northeast found that legacy students were more likely to make donations, but at a cost to diversity — the vast majority were white.

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

This story has been corrected to reflect the challenge was filed as a civil rights complaint with the Education Department's Office for Civil Rights, and not a lawsuit against Harvard.

The aftermath of mass shootings infiltrates every corner of survivors' lives

By CLAIRE SAVAGE Associated Press/Report for America

CHICAGO (AP) — More than a year after 11-year-old Mayah Zamora was airlifted out of Uvalde, Texas, where she was critically injured in the Robb Elementary school shooting that killed 19 children and two teachers, the family is still reeling.

Knocks on the door startle Mayah into a panic. The family is skipping Fourth of July celebrations to avoid booming fireworks. An outing to the Little Mermaid movie requires noise-canceling headphones.

Since 2016, thousands of Americans have been wounded in mass shootings, and tens of thousands by gun violence, with that number continuing to grow, according to the Gun Violence Archive. Beyond the colossal medical bills and the weight of trauma and grief, mass shooting survivors and family members

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contend with scores of other changes that upend their lives.

Survivors talked to The Associated Press about the mental and physical wounds that endure in the aftermath of shootings in Uvalde; Las Vegas; Colorado Springs, Colorado; and the Chicago suburb of Highland Park, Illinois, during a Fourth of July parade last year.

They describe staggering medical bills that in Mayah's case top \$1 million, abandoning a dream career after 20 years, uprooting families and struggling to hold down a job, walk pets or even leave the house.

UVALDE

Mayah suffered wounds to her chest, back, both hands, face and ear, and needed so many surgeries her parents said they stopped counting. The family relocated to San Antonio, where Mayah spent 66 days in the hospital and still needs care.

"Her hospital bill is insane," said Mayah's mother, Christina Zamora. "It reaches close to \$1,000,000, maybe over," not including rehabilitation, follow-up visits and counseling.

A year later, Christina and Mayah's father, Ruben, said they don't know what bills will be covered by insurance and how much they will need to pay. When Mayah was discharged, they realized one parent needed to stay home to care for her.

Christina quit her job. Facing daunting bills with one income instead of two is scary, she said. The relocation also has separated the family: Ruben works seven days on, seven off in Uvalde. The couple's oldest son, Ruben Jr., stayed in Uvalde to attend college and work. Zach, 12, "misses him. He misses our old normal life."

Mayah is terrified to return to Uvalde.

"It's heartbreaking when your little one can't enjoy the things that she did before, and all these other kids are able to do," the elder Ruben said. "It tears you up."

COLORADO SPRINGS

Ashtin Gamblin was working the front door at Club Q in Colorado Springs on Nov. 19 when a person armed with a semiautomatic rifle shot and killed five people and injured 17 more, including Gamblin.

"I was shot nine times. Five to my left arm. Twice to my right arm. Twice to my left breast. Both of my humerus were shattered. So two broken arms," the 30-year-old said. Six months later, "my right arm is still fractured. My left hand, we're still working on function."

Tasks that were once simple, such as walking her dogs, are now challenging and the loss of autonomy has been difficult, Gamblin said.

She has battled with health insurance, the hospital and worker's compensation officials to figure out who would foot the \$300,000 medical bill.

Gamblin also no longer felt safe in her apartment, where she could sometimes hear gunshots outside. She bought a house in a quieter neighborhood: "a house I wasn't prepared to buy," she said. "I bought a \$380,000 safe space."

She lists other unexpected post-shooting costs: a flooded basement, a service animal, a new car to get to doctor's appointments.

Half a year later she is not mentally recovered enough to return to work.

"I just can't be there... I don't feel safe going to the grocery store. I don't feel safe being in public," she said. "I have no idea what I'm doing with my life currently."

So far in 2023, nearly 400 people in the U.S. have been wounded in mass shootings, according to the Gun Violence Archive. And 140 people have died in mass killings this year, which is on track to surpass 2019, the deadliest year on record for mass killings since 2006, according to a database maintained by The Associated Press and USA Today in a partnership with Northeastern University.

"There is a lot of focus on the people that are killed. And I'm grateful for that. Those are my friends and they deserved all of the attention and more," Gamblin said. "The downfall is the rest of us are still suffering."

LAS VEGAS

Tia Christiansen had worked in the music industry for more than 20 years when a gunman unleashed the deadliest mass shooting in modern U.S. history at a Las Vegas music festival she helped organize in

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October 2017.

The shooter rained gunfire from the windows of a high-rise casino hotel into an outdoor concert crowd, killing 58 people and injuring more than 850.

Christiansen was scheduled to be at the festival that day. But she felt ill and stayed in her room, two doors down from where the gunman fired.

"The room was shaking. It was incredibly loud. There was actually a moment when the gunfire was so loud that I literally instinctively ducked and put my hands over my head because I thought that the walls or the ceiling would come crumbling down," Christiansen said. "I completely reconciled my life and thought, 'Am I ready to die?'"

She was physically unscathed. But her life turned upside down. After the shooting, she worked a few more festivals, until she "had a complete, total breakdown on site crying."

"What I came to understand about myself in that moment was, I don't know if I can do this anymore," she said.

At concerts, Christiansen no longer focused on fans' joy, instead fixating on emergency exits and whether people could get to safety. She has since given up her career in the music industry, letting go of her dreams.

Her lingering PTSD and need to control her environment also has affected Christiansen's relationships with her friends and family.

"My personality changes. I get very short tempered, and I get very judgmental. I'm quick to be snippy," she said. "That is heavy energy to be around."

Christiansen, who is based in South Deerfield, Massachusetts, turned to spending. She bought a new bed to try to find more comfort and relied on delivered meals to avoid leaving her home.

"The financial aspect of it is crushing, absolutely crushing," she said. "I don't know how many years it's gonna take to pay that off."

Now Christiansen is part of a mentorship program for the Everytown Survivors Network, which connects thousands of gun violence survivors to resources and aims to end gun violence.

"The trauma doesn't go away," she said. "Even if you're not wounded in the moment, there is injury."

HIGHLAND PARK

Leah Sundheim, 29, was a night manager at a hotel in Las Vegas when she got "the worst phone call you can ever receive."

Her mother, Jacquelyn Sundheim, had been killed at a shooting during Highland Park's 2022 Fourth of July parade, along with six other people.

"That flight home broke me," Sundheim said.

She then moved back to Highland Park to be close to her father.

"I couldn't be away from my family," Sundheim said. "I can't do another flight like that ever."

Mass shootings cause a variety of trauma, she said. Her experience is different from that of her aunt and cousins, who were sitting next to Jacquelyn Sundheim when she died.

"They have the visual and sound... of watching her be murdered, and my dad has the trauma of receiving the phone call and then subsequent hours trying to get to her body. My trauma is waking up to my phone ringing and hearing that my mom was killed," she said.

Whichever type of trauma survivors experience, she said, "it shatters the sense of security that you have in the world."

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.

The Democratic Party promised to overhaul its primaries. Doing that has been anything but simple

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — New Hampshire is in open rebellion. Georgia is all but out.

South Carolina and Nevada are on board but face stiff Republican pushback. Michigan's compliance may mean having to cut the state legislative session short, despite Democrats controlling both chambers and the governor's mansion.

Then there's Iowa, which is looking for ways to still go first without violating party rules.

Months after the Democratic Party approved President Joe Biden's plan to overhaul its primary order to better reflect a deeply diverse voter base, implementing the revamped order has proven anything but simple. Party officials now expect the process to continue through the end of the year — even as the 2024 presidential race heats up all around it.

"Despite the fact that it looked like relatively smooth sailing for the president when he proposed it ... the kind of backlash you're hearing, the reactions, are exactly what we would have expected," said David Redlawsk, chair of the political science department at the University of Delaware and co-author of the book "Why Iowa? How Caucuses and Sequential Elections Improve the Presidential Nominating Process."

The DNC says it prepared for an arduous process, but is not too concerned by the uncertainty, in part because Biden faces only minor primary challengers in self-help author Marianne Williamson and anti-vaccine activist Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

Biden's political advisers say the president doesn't expect to campaign extensively in the Democratic primary and instead will focus on the general election. But the primary calendar drama might nonetheless prove a headache for Democrats who want to project unity ahead of 2024 and might spell trouble for 2028 — when the party has promised to revisit its primary calendar anew.

Jim Roosevelt, co-chairman of the DNC's Rules and Bylaws Committee, said he "was not surprised" at the objections of Iowa and New Hampshire since they are losing their leadoff spots, and that the committee is "definitely able to work around" the protests of Republicans in places adjusting to new rules or new slots on the calendar.

"I think having a sitting president is the most likely time to make a fundamental change to make the process more representative," said Roosevelt, who also noted that the party last enforced a reordering of its primary calendar ahead of a competitive presidential primary in 2008.

It will get that chance again, though, since a potential reorder next cycle will come when, no matter what happens in 2024, there won't be an incumbent Democratic president seeking reelection.

Another long, contentious new calendar process then might mean uncertainty with real electoral consequences — perhaps even making it difficult for Democrats running in a competitive presidential primary to know where to campaign, hire staff and advertise. The party can try and mitigate that by starting its 2028 calendar discussions early, potentially even weeks after next year's election.

The prospect of another drawn-out fight won't deter the party, though: "Definitely we'll see this again in 2028," Roosevelt said.

In the meantime, the DNC isn't planning to alter the 2024 plan it approved in February stripping Iowa's caucus of the leadoff spot it held since 1972, and replacing it with South Carolina, which is set to have its primary Feb. 3. Going second, three days later, were supposed to be New Hampshire and Nevada, which is scrapping its caucus in favor of a primary.

The new order had them being followed by Georgia's primary on Feb. 13 and Michigan's two weeks after that. Those states would precede most of the rest of the country, which would vote on Super Tuesday in early March — giving them enormous influence on deciding which primary candidates can make it that far.

But New Hampshire responded by pointing to its state law mandating that it hold the nation's first presidential primary — which Iowa only circumvented for five decades because it held a caucus — and threatening to jump ahead.

Georgia, meanwhile, likely won't take its place in the new top 5 because the state's Republicans rejected

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calls to move their party's primary to comply with Democrats' new date.

While South Carolina Democrats are set to go first, the state's Republicans delayed their party's primary until three weeks later, on Feb. 24. In Nevada, Republicans have sued to maintain their party-run presidential caucus, even as the state shifts to a primary system. Michigan has also approved its new date, but its Legislature may adjourn early to make that work.

And Iowa has proposed holding a caucus before anyone else, yet may not release the results of its presidential contest until later in deference to new party rules.

This year's shakeup followed the 2020 Iowa caucus meltdown. Iowa responded by proposing new rules allowing Democrats to submit their presidential choices by mail, breaking with past caucus rules requiring in-person participation.

Scott Brennan, an Iowa attorney and member of the DNC's rules committee, said his state "knew the deck was stacked against us" from the start of the primary calendar shakeup — but its Democrats have since attempted to avoid open defiance of national party plans.

"We're trying to remain flexible as long as we can," Brennan said, "to see if there's a way to fix this."

Republicans are still leading off their 2024 primary with Iowa's caucus, and the Iowa GOP could set its caucus date next month. That would then allow Iowa Democrats to tell the DNC when it plans to hold its caucus, even if the presidential results aren't released until later.

Iowa Democrats hope their more flexible attitude could see the state let back into the Democratic primary's top 5, if Georgia and New Hampshire vacate their spots. That would mean Iowa filling a potential gap between when Nevada votes on Feb. 6 and Michigan does on Feb. 27 — through Roosevelt said such a scenario is unlikely.

"I give Iowa a lot of credit for trying to work flexibly," he said. "If Iowa were to find a way to fully comply with the new rules, that would be considered. Frankly I think it's too late for that."

Roosevelt also noted that one of the reasons the largely white state was moved out of the No. 1 spot "was demographics, and that's not going to change."

New Hampshire has struck a harsher tone, saying its Republican governor and GOP-controlled Legislature won't change state law requiring it to hold the nation's first primary.

"We don't have a choice to delay the primary. Maybe Iowa's different," said New Hampshire Democratic National Committeeman Bill Shaheen.

If New Hampshire presses forward with its plan to go first, and Biden opts not to campaign there, one of his challengers could see a bump in support. That would be potentially embarrassing to the president, though Biden supporters have pointed to polling showing the state's primary remains far from really competitive.

"I don't think the DNC is going to do anything that's going to change what we're going to do," Shaheen said of the national party's continuing work to overhaul its primary. "We just don't like getting pushed around much."

Biden's reelection campaign has refused to discuss his primary challengers or whether they might be buoyed by success in an unsanctioned New Hampshire primary. Iowa Democrats, by contrast, have suggested they'll list Biden among the presidential preferences in their caucus whether he campaigns there or not — potentially sparing the president embarrassment there.

Redlawsk said the fact that Democrats have made it this far in their calendar shakeup means "the battle will continue, but I think it's far more likely that change will now happen" and that the impact could be profound.

"These early states really do condition the campaign. The early states don't guarantee a winner, but they tell us who is going to lose, at least in the first rounds," Redlawsk said. "The winnowing is very likely to be different if the first state is South Carolina, or Nevada, or some combination, than if it were Iowa or New Hampshire."

Police confirm two more Wichita club shooting victims, bringing total to 11 hurt

By The Associated Press undefined

WICHITA, Kan. (AP) — Two additional gunshot victims have emerged from a weekend shooting at a Kansas nightclub, bringing the total number of injured people to 11, Wichita police said Monday.

Meanwhile, a St. Louis-area man was arrested in connection with the shooting, and police are working to “identify all individuals involved in the shooting and hold them accountable,” according to a news release.

Several shooters opened fire just before 1 a.m. Sunday inside the City Nightz club in downtown Wichita, according to police. Seven people were initially listed as injured by gunfire, and two others were trampled in the rush to escape.

Two additional shooting victims arrived at hospitals later Sunday with minor injuries, Officer Juan Rebolledo said. All of the victims are expected to survive, he said.

One suspect, a 31-year-old man from Florissant, Missouri, was arrested on suspicion of aggravated criminal battery. He had not been formally charged as of late Monday morning.

Shots were fired from at least four guns inside the club, police said. Four guns were recovered and police were working to determine if they were the weapons used by the shooters.

The gunshot victims — seven men and two women — ranged in age from 22 to 34, police said. The two people trampled were a 30-year-old woman and a 31-year-old male.

Detective Chris Merceau said at a news conference Sunday morning that police have been called about a dozen times this year to the nightclub, including for a report of aggravated battery and a drive-by shooting on May 21.

He said police met with the club’s owner after the May shooting and discussed the importance of using electronic wands to detect weapons on patrons and surveillance cameras. He said investigators will work to determine if any of those recommendations were followed.

The club has not returned messages left by The Associated Press.

Wichita is a city of nearly 400,000 people about 200 miles (320 kilometers) southwest of Kansas City, Missouri.

A year of fighting between Israel and the Palestinians just escalated. Is this an uprising?

By TIA GOLDENBERG Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — Airstrikes targeting Palestinian militants in a crowded residential area. Armored bulldozers plowing through narrow streets, crushing cars and piling up debris. Protesters burning tires. A mounting death toll.

Israel’s large-scale military raid into the Jenin refugee camp in the occupied West Bank on Monday had undeniable similarities with the second Palestinian uprising of the early 2000s — a period that claimed thousands of lives.

But the current fighting is also different from those intense years of violence. It’s more limited in scope, with Israeli military operations focused on several strongholds of Palestinian militants.

It’s also a symptom of a conflict with no foreseeable end. The Palestinian leadership is weakened, and the Israeli government has been accelerating the expansion of settlements that have eroded any chance of Palestinian statehood.

WHAT IS AN INTIFADA?

The word that means “shaking off” in Arabic was coined to describe an uprising against Israel’s military occupation that erupted in 1987. It ended in 1993 with an agreement of mutual recognition between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization.

What became known as the first intifada was marked by widespread Palestinian protests and a fierce Israeli response. In the second uprising, which began in 2000, Palestinian militants carried out deadly suicide bombings on buses and at restaurants and hotels, eliciting crushing Israeli military reprisals.

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The second uprising pitted Palestinian militant groups against a far more powerful Israeli military. Over 4,000 people died, including vast numbers of civilians. Roughly three times as many Palestinians as Israelis were killed.

Israeli crackdowns upended Palestinian lives, including placing tight restrictions on movement that choked the fledgling economy. For Israelis, especially during the frequent bombings of the second intifada, stepping onto a bus or going out to a restaurant was terrifying.

Those events were initially fueled by widespread participation. Many Palestinians in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and east Jerusalem — areas captured by Israel in 1967 and claimed by the Palestinians for their state — joined in the protests.

The protests were also driven by the Palestinian leaders, including President Yasser Arafat, whom Israel accused of encouraging and abetting militants. The intifada petered out after Arafat died in 2004 and the current Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas, took power.

WHAT IS HAPPENING NOW?

In the spring of 2022, a spate of Palestinian attacks against Israelis prompted Israel to launch near-nightly raids into Palestinian areas of the West Bank.

Israel said the raids were meant to stamp out militant networks. But Palestinian attacks have continued, and the death toll on both sides has risen, making last year one of the deadliest for Palestinians in the West Bank since the second intifada.

The violence has only intensified since Israel's current far-right government, which is made up of hard-line ultranationalist settlement supporters, took power late last year.

The Palestinian death toll this year in the West Bank and east Jerusalem stands at more than 135, according to a tally by The Associated Press, nearly matching the death toll for all of 2022. Hundreds of Palestinians have been arrested. Some 24 people have been killed in Palestinian attacks against Israelis.

SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

The region has not seen such a sustained cycle of violence since the second uprising, which lasted about five years. More recent periods of bloodshed have not lasted this long or involved such a strong show of force by the military.

The tactics seen Monday, with airstrikes, armored bulldozers and a brigade of troops, were a mainstay of the second uprising.

But analysts say that's where the similarities end.

For one, a monthlong Israeli operation in 2002 that was seen as the peak of the fighting during the second intifada involved an intense clampdown on most cities in the West Bank. Israel's raids over the last year have been smaller in scale. Israel's targets are also more limited to local armed groups and militant cells.

Other differences, analysts say, include the weakened Palestinian leadership and the lack of popular participation. While protests have erupted in response to the raids, they have not engulfed the entire West Bank.

"Intifada is a people's uprising. It's a society that fights," said Amir Avivi, president and founder of Israel Defense and Security Forum, a hawkish group of former military commanders. Avivi, who served as a battalion commander in the northern West Bank during the 2002 operation, claimed that the current fighting is dominated by militant groups that are funded by Israel's archenemy, Iran.

Ziyad Abu Zayad, a Palestinian analyst and former Cabinet minister, said the fighting is best described as "waves" of Palestinian anger, not an uprising.

"The problem is not security, but rather political. And as long as there is no political solution, these waves will continue," he said. "People, mainly young people, want to live in freedom and dignity. They see no future for themselves, and they only see oppression from the occupation."

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

There is no end in sight to the fighting. The military raids have tended to fuel more attacks that prompt even more raids.

As attacks against Israelis have mounted, including one that killed four settlers last month, government

members have called for a harsher response. They have also intensively advanced settlement building, further dimming hopes for a negotiated solution to the conflict.

The last 16 months, including Monday's large-scale raid, showed Israel lacks a long-term vision for how to deal with the Palestinians, said Michael Milshtein, a former military official and head of the Palestinian Studies Forum at Tel Aviv University.

"We need to start thinking strategically about the Palestinian issue," he said. "We can't just keep plastering over it."

Abu Zayad, the Palestinian analyst, said Israel's government is instead pushing the Palestinians "toward more extremism and violence."

"If there is opposition to the idea of a Palestinian state, these waves are likely to remain for long periods to come."

Associated Press writers Julia Frankel and Josef Federman contributed to this report from Jerusalem.

Shooting in France shows US is not alone in struggles with racism, police brutality

By CLAUDIA LAUER and ALANNA DURKIN RICHER Associated Press

A police killing caught on video. Protests and rioting fueled by long-simmering tensions over law enforcement treatment of minorities. Demands for accountability.

The events in France following the death of a 17-year-old shot by police in a Paris suburb are drawing parallels to the racial reckoning in the U.S. spurred by the killings of George Floyd and other people of color at the hands of law enforcement.

Despite the differences between the two countries' cultures, police forces and communities, the shooting in France and the outcry that erupted there this week laid bare how the U.S. is not alone in its struggles with systemic racism and police brutality.

"These are things that happen when you're French but with foreign roots. We're not considered French, and they only look at the color of our skin, where we come from, even if we were born in France," said Tracy Ladjji, an activist with SOS Racisme. "Racism within the police kills, and way too many of them embrace far-right ideas so ... this has to stop."

In an editorial published this week, the French newspaper Le Monde wrote that the recent events "are reminiscent" of Floyd's 2020 killing by a white Minneapolis police officer that spurred months of unrest in the U.S. and internationally, including in Paris.

"This act was committed by a law enforcement officer, was filmed and broadcast almost live and involved an emblematic representative of a socially discriminated category," the newspaper wrote.

The French teen, identified only as Nahel, was shot during a traffic stop Tuesday in the Paris suburb of Nanterre. Video showed two officers at the window of the car, one with his gun pointed at the driver. As the teenager pulled forward, the officer fired once through the windshield.

Nahel's grandmother, who was not identified by name, told Algerian television Ennahar TV that her family has roots in Algeria.

Preliminary charges of voluntary homicide were filed against the officer accused of pulling the trigger, though that has done little to quell the rioting that has spread across the country and led to hundreds of arrests. The officer said he feared he and his colleague or someone else could be hit by the car as Nahel attempted to flee, a prosecutor has said.

Officials have not disclosed the race of the officer. His lawyer said he did what he thought was necessary in the moment. Speaking on French TV channel BFMTV, the lawyer said the officer is "devastated," adding that "he really didn't want to kill."

Nahel's mother, identified only as Mounia M., told France 5 television she's not angry at the police in general. She's angry at the officer who killed her only child.

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"He saw an Arab-looking little kid. He wanted to take his life," she said.

Police shootings in France are significantly less common than in the U.S. but have been on the rise since 2017. Several experts believe that correlates with a law loosening restrictions on when officers can use lethal force against drivers after a series of terrorist attacks using vehicles.

Officers can shoot at a vehicle when a driver fails to comply with an order and when a driver's actions are likely to endanger their lives or those of others. French police have also been regularly criticized for their violent tactics.

Unlike the U.S., France does not keep any data on race and ethnicity as part of its doctrine of colorblind universalism — an approach purporting to see everyone as equal citizens. Critics say that doctrine has masked generations of systemic racism.

"I can't think of a country in Europe that has more longstanding or pernicious problems of police racism, brutality and impunity," Paul Hirschfield, director of the criminal justice program at Rutgers University, said of France. Hirschfield has published multiple papers comparing policing practices and killings in America to those in other countries.

Experts said the video of the shooting — which appeared to contradict initial statements from police that the teen was driving toward the officer — pushed leaders to quickly condemn the killing. French President Emmanuel Macron called the shooting "inexcusable" even before charges were filed against the officer.

That's nothing new for Americans, who even before the excruciating footage of George Floyd's death under a Minneapolis police officer's knee had seen many videos of violent police encounters that were often taken by witnesses and at times contradicted the initial statements of police.

"I've never seen a case where the interior minister was so quick to condemn a shooting. In previous killings, there was unrest, but there was no video. It changes everything," Hirschfield said.

Police in France typically go through training that runs for about 10 months, which is long compared with many U.S. cities, but one of the shortest training requirements in Europe.

However, experts said they did not believe French police receive training that is equivalent to the implicit bias training required of many U.S. police officers as an effort to improve policing in diverse communities, though many U.S. critics have questioned the training's effectiveness.

France and other European countries have growing African, Arab and Asian populations.

"If you are in a country with a colonial past, it carries a stigma. And if that is painful enough that you can't handle having that conversation about race, of course you aren't going to have relevant training for officers," Tracie Keese, co-founder of the Center for Policing Equity, who serves on the United Nations' International Expert Mechanism to Advance Racial Justice and Equality in Law Enforcement.

Bertrand Cavallier, the former commander of France's national gendarmerie training school, said French law enforcement should not be judged by the actions of one officer.

"This is the case of a police officer who made a mistake and didn't have to do it. But he was arrested, and that, I think, should be a clear message concerning the will of the government," he said.

This story was first published on July 1, 2023. It was updated on July 3, 2023, to correct the first name of Tracie Keese.

Associated Press writers Alex Turnbull and Jeffrey Schaeffer in Nanterre, France; and John Leicester in Le Pecq, France, contributed to this report.

Leandro De Niro Rodriguez, grandson of Robert De Niro, dies at 19

NEW YORK (AP) — Leandro De Niro Rodriguez, a grandson of Robert De Niro, has died at 19.

His mother, Drena De Niro, announced the news Monday in an Instagram post.

"I don't know how to live without you but I'll try to go on and spread the love and light that you so made me feel in getting to be your mama," she wrote. "You were so deeply loved and appreciated and I wish that love alone could have saved you."

Drena De Niro shared Leandro with artist Carlos Mare, who posted black squares sans caption on his Instagram accounts.

"I'm deeply distressed by the passing of my beloved grandson Leo. We're greatly appreciative of the condolences from everyone. We ask that we please be given privacy to grieve our loss of Leo," Robert De Niro said in a statement.

Further details were not immediately available. Later Monday, De Niro's publicist shared another statement from Drena De Niro.

"It is with immeasurable shock and and sadness that we say goodbye to our beloved son Leo. We thank you for the outpouring of love and support and ask that we are given privacy at this time to process this inconsolable grief," she said in the statement.

In response to a request to confirm a TMZ report that Leandro was found in a New York apartment, New York City police wrote that "an 18-year-old male was found unconscious, unresponsive and was pronounced deceased by EMS on scene" at a Wall Street address that houses the Cipriani Club Residences. Leandro only recently turned 19, news outlets report.

The medical examiner's office will determine the cause of death.

Drena De Niro, 51, is the oldest of Robert De Niro's now seven children (the 79-year-old welcomed a baby earlier this year). The actor adopted her when he married her mother, Diahnne Abbott, his first wife. Drena De Niro is also an actor, with roles in "Joy," "The Intern" and "Mozart in the Jungle," among a long list of credits.

Leandro also had acting credits to his name, with roles in three projects also featuring his mother: 2005's "The Collection," and 2018's "Cabaret Maxime" and "A Star Is Born." In Bradley Cooper's remake, the mother and son played mother and son — wife and child to Dave Chappelle's character.

Elon Musk put new limits on tweets. Users and advertisers might go elsewhere

By MATT O'BRIEN undefined

TikTok and Instagram users can scroll with abandon. But Twitter owner Elon Musk has put new curfews on his digital town square, the latest drastic change to the social media platform that could further drive away advertisers and undermine its cultural influence as a trendsetter.

Keeping up with a sports game, extreme weather conditions or a major news event is getting harder under Musk's new rules, which cap the number of tweets you can view as part of an apparent attempt to relieve the company's overloaded web infrastructure.

"The joke on Twitter is that people are going to go outside instead, but the reality is that they're going to go to another app," said Jasmine Enberg, an analyst with Insider Intelligence. "By sending users elsewhere, Musk is killing the main proposition Twitter has had for advertisers — a highly engaged user base, especially around news and events."

Musk recently hired longtime NBC Universal executive Linda Yaccarino as Twitter's CEO to try to win back advertisers annoyed by a host of changes since Musk bought the platform for \$44 billion last year. But she's been silent about the new restrictions that lock users out if they view too many tweets in a day, leaving Musk to announce and explain them.

The moves are "remarkably bad for Twitter's users and advertisers," decimating the reach and engagement that advertisers depend on, according to a statement from Forrester analyst Mike Proulx.

"The advertiser trust deficit that Linda Yaccarino needs to reverse just got even bigger. And it cannot be reversed based on her industry credibility alone," Proulx said.

An Associated Press inquiry on Monday about how long the limits will last triggered a crude automated reply that Twitter sends to most media queries without addressing the question.

Musk had tried on Saturday to describe how the limits work, saying accounts that don't pay for a monthly subscription will temporarily be restricted to reading 600 posts per day, while verified accounts will be able

to scroll through up to 6,000.

After facing backlash, he tweeted that the thresholds would be raised to 800 posts for unverified accounts and 8,000 for verified accounts before later settling on 1,000 and 10,000 tweets, respectively.

Many unverified users are "going to hit that limit fast," said Enberg, because most Twitter users are consuming, not creating posts, and "typically scroll through an enormous number of tweets in a short period of time."

Enberg said Musk should be doing whatever he can to encourage engagement to show Twitter is still viable as it faces growing competition from upstart rivals, as well as a new Twitter-like service coming from Facebook and Instagram parent Meta. "Instead, he's throttling it," she said.

Proulx, of Forrester, said the "real reason behind Musk's temporary rate limits" is still unclear.

Musk over the weekend explained the new restrictions as an attempt to prevent unauthorized scraping of potentially valuable data from the social media platform. He said it was a temporary measure that was taken because "we were getting data pillaged so much that it was degrading service for normal users!"

The site is now requiring people to log on to view tweets and profiles — a change in its longtime practice to allow everyone to peruse the chatter on what Musk has frequently touted as the world's digital town square.

Musk has pushed back on what he calls misuse of Twitter data to train popular artificial intelligence systems like ChatGPT. They scour reams of information online to generate human-like text, photos, video and other content.

The higher tweet-viewing threshold allowed on verified accounts is part of an \$8-per-month subscription service that Musk rolled out earlier this year in an effort to boost Twitter revenue. It has fallen sharply since the billionaire Tesla CEO took over the company and laid off roughly three-fourths of the workforce to cut costs and stave off bankruptcy.

Advertisers have since curbed their spending on Twitter, partly because of changes that have allowed more hateful or prickly content that offends a wider part of the service's audience.

Car crashes into New Hampshire restaurant, injures dozens, pins man in bathroom

LACONIA, N.H. (AP) — A car crashed into a busy New Hampshire restaurant and injured more than a dozen patrons inside, authorities said.

The vehicle struck the Looney Bin Bar & Grill a little after 12:40 p.m. Sunday and came to a stop well inside, pinning one man inside the bathroom, restaurant owner Michelle Watson said.

"Everybody jumped right in and helped," she told WHDH-TV. "Everybody jumped in to make sure everybody was okay."

Police Chief Matt Canfield said the crash involved three vehicles: One was making a left turn out of a parking lot across the street while a second was in the center lane. The driver making the turn didn't see a third oncoming vehicle, and the ensuing collision sent that third vehicle crashing into the restaurant.

Emergency responders transported 14 people to area hospitals with non-life-threatening medical issues including significant lower leg injuries, cuts and bruises. Another 20 people were evaluated at the scene by emergency personnel but did not require hospital treatment, the Laconia Fire Department said.

"There were a lot of people inside due to it being lunchtime and a holiday weekend," Fire Capt. Chad Vaillancourt said in the statement.

The building, which is on Highway 3 north of Concord, sustained significant damage.

"I don't know when we're going to be able to open again, but we will," Watson said.

Drag queens are out, proud and loud in a string of coal towns, from a bingo hall to blue-collar bars

By CAROLYN KASTER and CALVIN WOODWARD Associated Press

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SHAMOKIN, Pa. (AP) — Deep in Pennsylvania coal country, the Daniels drag family is up to some sort of exuberance almost every weekend.

They're hosting sold-out bingo fundraisers at the Nescopeck Township Volunteer Fire Co.'s social hall, packed with people of all ages howling with laughter and singing along. Or they're lighting up local blue-collar bars and restaurants with Mimosas & Heels Drag Brunches for bridal parties, members of the military, families and friends.

Or they're reading in gardens to children dressed in their Sunday best — Dolly Parton's "Coat of Many Colors" is a favorite book for performers and kids alike.

In a string of towns running along a coal seam, the sparkle of small-town drag queens and kings colors a way of life rooted in soot, family and a conservative understanding of the world.

Here two very old traditions mingle — and mostly happily, it seems, in contrast to the fierce political winds ripping at drag performances and the broader rights of LGBTQ+ people in red states from Utah and Texas to Tennessee and Florida.

One tradition is the view of family as mom, dad and kids, plain and simple.

The other, back to before Shakespearian times, is drag, a loud, proud and seismically flamboyant artistic expression of gender fluidity. Not plain, not simple, but also bedrock, rising above ground only in culturally adventurous cities.

Yet the Daniels drag family is firmly woven in the fabric of the larger community in this area, where voters went solidly for Donald Trump, a Republican, in the last election. Their trouble is more apt to come from politicians who are increasingly passing laws restricting what they can do.

So far, no bans have surfaced that curb the Daniels family's performances. A bill was introduced in the state Senate aimed at banning drag shows in public places, but it remains stalled in a committee with little prospect of advancing.

Alexus Daniels, the matriarch, was the child of a coal miner and a textile worker who was "born with a female spirit." She works at the local hospital as an MRI aide tech.

Jacob Kelley, who performs as drag queen Trixy Valentine, is an LGBTQ+ activist and educator with a master's in human sexuality.

Harpy Daniels, Trixy's twin, is a U.S. Navy sailor who's had three deployments on the aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan. Soon that seaman, Petty Officer 1st Class Joshua Kelley, who just reenlisted, moves from a base in Norfolk, Virginia, to one in Spain, with plans to pack a wig "and maybe one or two cute outfits but nothing over the top" for Harpy-style shore leave.

Apart from the twins, the drag performers in this circle are family by choice, not genes. Theirs is an oasis of belonging.

"I never had a person like me growing up," Trixy said, "and now I get to be that for everyone else.

"There was a curse being a queer person in a rural town — the curse is that we'll move ... because there's no one like us here, there's no one that can understand us.

"And drag now can be a place or a thing to show people like you that you don't have to go to the cities. It's here in your backyard."

The Associated Press followed the Daniels family for more than a year. Among them:

Alexus Daniels, drag queen

Daniels' first memory is of her great-grandmother's jewelry box. With Cyndi Lauper and the Pointer Sisters blasting, she would wrap herself in knitted blankets to lip-sync and dance for her family. "I had no idea that it was drag or gay," she says. "I was just having a day!"

Alexus hit high school and upped her Halloween game. She soon entered her first drag performance in the small Pennsylvania coal town of Weishample.

"I still was not out at this point," Alexis says. "I wasn't even sure if I was gay. I knew I was attracted to boys and loved all things feminine! I kept this side of me to myself and my best friends growing up, who really didn't see anything strange about it."

Trixy Valentine, aka Jacob Kelley, drag queen

In their teens, Joshua was the first to turn to drag. Jacob started about six months later, in a white

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Marilyn Monroe dress at an amateur pageant in 2014.

Trixy's drag style is eclectic, but whether silly or fierce, there's glitter: "I just want to shine when the light hits me."

"I came out as non-binary a few years ago because I started learning, like, what do I love so much about drag?" Kelley says. "It's that femininity, that so-simple touch."

"I'm not a man," Kelley says. "I never will see myself as a man. And I don't see myself as a woman, either. But I see myself as beyond that."

In March, the Daniels drag family hosted bingo at the Nescopeck fire hall, packed with more than 300 people in a fund-raiser for a nearby theater.

A small group of protesters could be watched on social media from the bingo hall, holding signs and praying the rosary across from the theater. Trixy addressed the bingo crowd.

"There's hundreds of us in this room and only nine of them on that street," Trixy said. "So all I have to say is I don't care what you believe in. But do not force it down my throat and tell me I shouldn't be here because you think I'm wrong."

"The Lord gave birth to me, too."

Trixy was in a long blue wig and Morgan Wells catsuit with an overskirt, a raised fist in the colors of the Pride flag on the chest.

"Alright, let's call some numbers!" Trixy said. "Let's play some bingo!" The crowd cheered.

Harpy Daniels, aka Joshua Kelley, U.S. Navy petty officer first class, drag queen

Until 2011, the armed forces applied the "don't ask, don't tell" policy, which accepted LGBTQ+ people only if they stayed mum about their sexual orientation.

But after Kelley enlisted in 2016, he encountered the opposite — call it "ask and tell." A commander asked what pronoun they prefer. Joshua, relieved by the acceptance implied by the question, told him any pronoun will do.

Now, the sailor is a social media sensation who was named a "digital ambassador" by the Navy, doing outreach to the LGBTQ+ community and others who have been marginalized: "I'm very proud to wear this uniform."

Kitty DeVil, aka Emily Poliniak, drag queen

Kitty, a trans woman, describes her drag style as "punk and a lot of storytelling." Her inspiration: Adore Delano, a 2014 finalist on "RuPaul's Drag Race."

"She was what I wanted to be — this badass punker chick looking gorgeous without sacrificing her style," Kitty says.

Kitty says her performances are high-energy fun but also "a lighthouse."

"Because even in our LGBTQ community, there are outcasts and people who don't feel like they're like anybody else," Kitty says. "So I wanted to make a beacon for all those people who feel weird and feel different and can't really find their place in society."

Xander Valentine, aka Gwen Bobbie, drag king

More than a decade after she was transfixed by seeing her first drag show, Xander was invited by Trixy to join the drag family.

Xander has an energetic, family-friendly side as well as a sexy, sultry side. Confusing people about gender is intentional, a barrier-breaker.

"I try to create a consistent theme of masculinity in my performances," Xander says. "Although I paint my face, wear wigs and adorn myself with rhinestones, I usually perform to songs sung by men and tailor my costumes more toward suits and ties."

"My personal goal as a king is to have the audience question my off-stage gender identity."

Why? It's to convey the message, Xander says, that "it's OK to not immediately know how a person identifies or who they are attracted to, and still be kind to them."

"It's OK to accept someone as different, even if you don't fully understand it."

Woodward reported from Washington. Associated Press writer Lynn Berry contributed to this report

from Washington.

Baltimore block party shooting victims include more than a dozen minors, police say

By JULIO CORTEZ and HOLLY RAMER Associated Press

BALTIMORE (AP) — Gunfire erupted at a block party in Baltimore on Sunday — killing two people, wounding 28 and leaving an extensive crime scene that marred the U.S. holiday weekend, police said. Three of the wounded were in critical condition and more than a dozen were under 18.

The shooting took place just after 12:30 a.m. when at least two people opened fire at a block party in the Brooklyn Homes area in the southern part of the city, said Richard Worley, Baltimore's acting police commissioner. No arrests had been made by late afternoon. It wasn't clear if the shooting was targeted or random, Worley said.

The shooting comes amid gatherings around the country leading up to the July Fourth holiday. Elsewhere, a shooting in Kansas left seven people with gunshot wounds and two more victims hospitalized after being trampled as people rushed out of a nightclub early Sunday morning, police there said.

The violence in Baltimore occurred as federal prosecutors there this week touted their efforts to reduce violent crime in the city. Police have reported nearly 130 homicides and close to 300 shootings so far this year, though that's down from the same time last year. Authorities have vowed to crack down aggressively on repeat violent offenders.

Nine of Sunday's victims were taken by ambulance and 20 walked into area hospitals with injuries from the shooting, Worley said. Nine remained hospitalized Sunday afternoon.

The deceased victims were identified as 18-year-old Aaliyah Gonzalez and 20-year-old Kylis Fagbemi, police said Sunday. Gonzalez died at the scene, and Fagbemi died at the hospital. The 28 injured ranged in age from 13 to 32, with more than half of them being younger than 18, officials said.

"I want those who are responsible to hear me, and hear me very clearly," Mayor Brandon Scott said at the scene. "We will not stop until we find you, and we will find you. Until then, I hope that every single breath you take, that you think about the lives that you took, think about the lives that you impacted here tonight."

Scott asked anyone with information to come forward to help investigators locate the "cowards" who were responsible for the shooting.

Gov. Wes Moore said his "heart breaks for these victims, their families, and the Baltimore community that is coping with the loss."

"Maryland has had enough of watching gun violence continue to ravage our state and our nation," Moore said in a statement. "The fact that these horrific shootings continue to take place is abominable. We as a state will continue to do everything we can to prevent senseless acts of violence like the one we saw last night."

Authorities said the crime scene was extensive and that it took some time for detectives to work it.

Hours after the shooting, a number of officers remained working behind police tape amid densely packed two-story housing blocks. Folding tables and plastic cups were scattered on the street, apparently left behind when people ran from the gunshots.

Lakell Nelson said there had been several false alarms of people mistaking the sounds of fireworks for gunfire earlier in the night while she was at the block party. The actual shooting started as she was getting to her car.

"The shots were just going on and on and on," she said.

That's when two young women approached her and said they had been shot, with one woman showing how a bullet had gone through her shorts.

Nelson said she told the women to get in the car, and she sped through red lights to get to the nearest hospital.

"When I pulled up to the door of the hospital, my car was almost getting ready to be inside the hospital,

because I was determined to get those babies in that hospital," Nelson said.

A police union official said in an email Sunday there were no officers specifically assigned to the gathering. "There were only three officers assigned to the Brooklyn area of Baltimore City's Southern District. This is a large area, and to police it safely and effectively you need about seven to eight officers per shift," said Mike Mancuso, president of the Baltimore City Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 3.

Mancuso said about 2,800 officers are needed to effectively police the city, but staffing is down to about 2,100.

Worley said Sunday afternoon that the department hadn't been aware in advance that the event was happening, and he said organizers hadn't received a permit. He said that the department would examine its response.

Ramer reported from Concord, New Hampshire. Kimberlee Kruesi in Nashville, Tennessee, contributed to this report.

This story was first published on July 2, 2023. It has been updated July 3, 2023, to correct the misspelling of the last name of the woman killed. Her correct name was Aaliyah Gonzalez, not Aaliyah Gonzales.

What's 'Bidenomics'? The president hopes a dubious nation embraces his ideas condensed into the term

By JOSH BOAK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden has long struggled to neatly summarize his sprawling economic vision.

It's been hard for voters to digest the mix of roads-and-bridges spending, tax hikes on big companies, tax credits for parents, tax breaks for renewable energy, grants to build computer chip factories, insulin price caps and slogans like "Build Back Better."

And that barely covers the full breadth of what the administration is doing and trying to do.

Last week, the president gave a speech on "Bidenomics" in hopes that the term will lodge in voters' minds ahead of the 2024 elections. But what is Bidenomics? Let's just say the White House definition is different from the Republican one — evidence that catchphrases can be double-edged.

Biden says his economic philosophy is the opposite of a Republican approach that favors broad tax cuts to spur growth. He sees the government as using the tax code in a more targeted fashion and fashioning other programs to foster investment in new technologies, create jobs and boost upward mobility. He wants to do more to educate workers and foster competition within the U.S. economy in hopes of reducing prices.

"I came into office determined to change the economic direction of this country, to move from trickle-down economics to what everyone in The Wall Street Journal and Financial Times began to call 'Bidenomics,'" the president said. "I didn't come up with the name. I really didn't."

But to Republicans, "Bidenomics" is a slur they can deploy. It's a philosophy of government spending and anti-oil policies that they say fueled a spike in inflation last summer to a four-decade high. High prices have left U.S. adults deeply pessimistic about the economy, with just 34% approving of Biden's leadership on the issue, according to a new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs.

Based on follow-up interviews with poll respondents, they're far more aware of gasoline and grocery store prices than the details of Biden's policies. When asked over the course of multiple polls, a few could cite the bipartisan infrastructure package that Biden signed into law. But the Inflation Reduction Act as well as the CHIPS and Science Act have yet to fully surface on the public radar, despite outreach by the administration and news coverage.

GOP lawmakers were faster to embrace the catch-term than the president.

"Instead of priming the pump, Bidenomics has emptied the tank," future House Speaker Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., said in a 2021 floor speech. "From inflation to gas lines, the American economy today looks more like it did in 1979 than 2019."

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In case you're wondering, McCarthy's 1979 dig refers to high prices under then President Jimmy Carter, who in the 1980 election was bested by Republican Ronald Reagan.

A White House official, insisting on anonymity, said the term Bidenomics was not poll-tested.

The administration says it came from media reports, with The New York Times, National Public Radio, Bloomberg News, The Economist, and even AP using it in reports before the president took the oath of office.

Nor is the phrasing all that novel. Commentators have given the American public the portmanteau words Nixonomics, Carteronomics, Reaganomics, Clintonomics, Bushonomics, Obamanomics. When the conservative economists Arthur Laffer and Stephen Moore wrote a book to describe the policies of then President Donald Trump, they entitled it "Trumponomics: Inside the America First Plan to Revive Our Economy."

President Gerald Ford went with "Whip Inflation Now," or WIN, in the mid-1970s. Ford's push had a bit more fanfare than the Bidenomics launch did with the president's speech this past week at the Old Chicago Main Post Office.

For Ford's effort, Meredith Willson — famous for writing the musical "The Music Man" — crafted a song entitled "WIN!" In 1974, The New York Times published the lyrics: "Win! Win! Win! We'll win together, Win together, that's, the true American way, today. Who needs inflation? Not this nation."

But, of course, Biden is trying to offer the country a doctrine rather than a jingle.

Democratic strategist Jesse Ferguson said the president wants to show the voters that he has plans and solutions for their troubles, not that he's necessarily fixed everything.

"For 40 years people have been clamoring for an approach to the economy that puts working people at the center instead of prioritizing the wealthy and that's what he's delivering on," Ferguson said. "So the story that he can tell is a different approach to the economy and the proof is in the pudding. It's also so core to who he is. People believe he's the guy who'd make the economy work as hard for working people as working people work for the economy."

AP White House Correspondent Zeke Miller contributed to this report.

NATO readies military plans to defend against bruised but unbowed Russia

By LORNE COOK Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — Russia's armed forces are bruised but by no means beaten in the war in Ukraine, a top NATO military officer said Monday, as he laid out the biggest revamp to the organization's military plans since the Cold War should Moscow dare to widen the conflict.

"They might not be 11 feet tall, but they are certainly not 2 feet tall," the Chair of the NATO Military Committee, Admiral Rob Bauer, told reporters. "So, we should never underestimate the Russians and their ability to bounce back."

U.S. President Joe Biden and his NATO counterparts are set to endorse a major shakeup of the alliance's planning system at a summit in the Lithuanian capital Vilnius next week.

NATO, as an organization, does not provide weapons or ammunition to Ukraine. It's sought to avoid being dragged into a wider war with nuclear-armed Russia. At the same time, it is massively reinforcing the security of member countries near Russia, Ukraine and Belarus.

Around 40,000 troops are on standby from Estonia in the north down to Romania on the Black Sea. About 100 aircraft take to the skies in that territory each day, and a total of 27 warships are operating in the Baltic and Mediterranean Seas. Those numbers are set to rise.

Under its new plans, NATO aims to have up to 300,000 troops ready to move to its eastern flank within 30 days. The plans divide its territory into three zones — the high north and Atlantic area, a zone north of the Alps, and another in southern Europe.

Bauer said that NATO's new planning is based on the strength of the Russian army before President Vladimir Putin launched the war on Ukraine almost 17 months ago. He said the war has depleted Russia's

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army, but not its navy or air force.

Of Russia's ground forces, around "94% is now engaged in the war in Ukraine," Bauer said.

"What we see in general is that the Russians are careful around NATO. They are not for seeking a conflict with NATO. I think that is a sign that they are very, very busy," he said. "In the land domain, I don't think they have a lot of forces available to do anything to anyone else."

"But we are convinced that the Russians are going to reconstitute," he said. "We will continue to look at them as a serious threat, in the maritime, and in the air especially, and in space, they are still very, very, capable, let alone of course in nuclear."

A revolt by Wagner mercenaries in Russia late last month raised deep security concerns in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland after a deal was reached for their leader, Yevgeny Prigozhin, to be allowed to take refuge in Belarus.

Lithuanian President Gitanas Nausėda said that neighboring countries would face a heightened danger if the Wagner Group deploys its "serial killers" just over their border.

Vilnius lies around 35 kilometers (22 miles) from the Belarus border.

Lithuania wants to have a permanent NATO presence on its territory. Germany signaled last week that it would be prepared to base soldiers there if requested. For the moment, though, NATO sees no imminent threat coming from Belarus.

"We're confident we know what's going on, and right now we see no changes. But that doesn't take our eye off what we need to do every day," Major General Matthew Van Wagenen told reporters. "If we needed to change posture, we could do it rapidly."

NATO's 31 member countries took part in a "force generation conference" last week in an effort to understand how many troops and how much equipment the alliance might have at its disposal to respond to any Russian attack, both in the short and longer term.

Both officers were upbeat about the results, although they declined to provide details for security reasons. Experts and some NATO diplomats, however, have expressed doubt about the willingness of member countries to put a total of 300,000 troops on standby.

"I would classify it as highly successful," Van Wagenen said. "I can assure you, we are in a position right now that we know what's missing and how we need to grow this in the future."

In terms of NATO's ability to execute the plans, should they be needed in the future, Bauer welcomed the expected commitment in Vilnius by Biden and his counterparts to boost defense spending, which should help provide commanders with the equipment they need.

In 2014, NATO committed to move toward spending 2% of GDP on their military budgets by 2024. At their July 11-12 summit, the leaders will set the 2% figure as a spending floor, rather than a ceiling to aim for.

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

Today in History: July 4, Declaration of Independence adopted in Philadelphia

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, July 4, the 185th day of 2023. There are 180 days left in the year. This is Independence Day.

Today's Highlight in History:

On July 4, 1776, the Declaration of Independence was adopted by delegates to the Second Continental Congress in Philadelphia.

On this date:

In 1802, the United States Military Academy officially opened at West Point, New York.

In 1826, 50 years to the day after the Declaration of Independence was adopted, former presidents John Adams and Thomas Jefferson both died.

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In 1831, the fifth president of the United States, James Monroe, died in New York City at age 73.

In 1863, the Civil War Siege of Vicksburg, Mississippi, ended as a Confederate garrison surrendered to Union forces.

In 1910, in what was billed as "The Fight of the Century," Black world heavyweight boxing champion Jack Johnson defeated white former champ "Gentleman" Jim Jeffries in Reno, Nevada.

In 1912, the 48-star American flag, recognizing New Mexico statehood, was adopted.

In 1939, Lou Gehrig of the New York Yankees delivered his famous farewell speech in which he called himself "the luckiest man on the face of the earth."

In 1976, America celebrated its bicentennial with daylong festivities; President Gerald R. Ford made stops in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, Independence Hall in Philadelphia and New York, where more than 200 ships paraded up the Hudson River in Operation Sail.

In 1987, Klaus Barbie, the former Gestapo chief known as the "Butcher of Lyon," was convicted by a French court of crimes against humanity and sentenced to life in prison (he died in September 1991).

In 1995, the space shuttle Atlantis and the Russian space station Mir parted after spending five days in orbit docked together.

In 2009, Serena Williams beat her big sister, Venus, 7-6 (3), 6-2 for her third Wimbledon title and 11th Grand Slam championship.

In 2016, NASA received a radio signal from the solar-powered Juno spacecraft confirming that it was in orbit around the planet Jupiter after a trip of nearly five years and 1.8 billion miles.

Ten years ago: Egypt's interim president, Adly Mansour, was sworn in following the ouster of Mohammed Morsi, the Islamist leader overthrown by the military after just one year in office. The Statue of Liberty reopened on the Fourth of July, eight months after Superstorm Sandy shuttered the national symbol of freedom. Bernadette Nolan, 52, a member of the singing sister act the Nolans who had a worldwide hit in 1979 with "I'm In The Mood For Dancing," died in Surrey, England.

Five years ago: British police said two Britons who fell critically ill in the town of Amesbury were exposed to nerve agent Novichok, the same material used to poison a former Russian spy in a nearby area months earlier. A protest against U.S. immigration policy forced the evacuation of the Statue of Liberty on the Fourth of July, with a group unfurling a banner from the pedestal and a woman holding police at bay for hours after she climbed the base.

One year ago: A gunman on a rooftop opened fire on an Independence Day parade in suburban Chicago, killing seven people and wounding more than 20 as hundreds of marchers, parents with strollers and children on bicycles fled in terror. U.S. said they had concluded that the bullet that killed veteran Al Jazeera reporter Shireen Abu Akleh was likely fired from an Israeli position. But they said the bullet was too badly damaged to reach an absolute determination, and that there was "no reason to believe" she was deliberately targeted.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Eva Marie Saint is 99. Actor Ed Bernard is 84. Actor Karolyn Grimes is 83. R&B singer Annette Beard (Martha and the Vandellas) is 80. Broadcast journalist Geraldo Rivera is 80. Vietnam War veteran and peace activist Ron Kovic is 77. R&B musician Ralph Johnson (Earth, Wind and Fire) is 72. Rock musician Domingo Ortiz (Widespread Panic) is 71. Singer John Waite is 71. Rock musician Kirk Pengilly (INXS) is 65. International Tennis Hall of Famer Pam Shriver is 61. Christian rock singer Michael Sweet is 60. Actor-playwright-screenwriter Tracy Letts is 58. Actor Al Madrigal is 52. Actor Jenica Bergere is 49. Actor-singer John Lloyd Young is 48. Singer Stephen "Ste" McNally (BBMak) is 45. Actor Becki Newton is 45. Actor Mo McRae is 41. TV personality Mike "The Situation" Sorrentino is 41. R&B singer Melanie Fiona is 40. Malia Obama is 25.