

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, July 22, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 028 ~ 1 of 81

- [1- Upcoming Events](#)
- [2- Newsweek Bulletin](#)
- [3- Groton Legion Ad](#)
- [4- Avantara Help Wanted](#)
- [5- Columbia Comets Pee Wee Team Wins Three-Rivers Tournament photo](#)
- [6- Columbia Fest Ad](#)
- [7- Drought Monitor](#)
- [8- South Dakota Average Gas Prices](#)
- [9- Brown County Commission Agenda](#)
- [10- Governor Noem Appoints Chas Olson as Director of South Dakota Housing](#)
- [10- South Dakota Breaks U.S Record for Lowest Unemployment Rate](#)
- [11- GFP Commission Holds July Meeting](#)
- [12- Fall Athletics Meeting for GHS](#)
- [13- SD News Watch: Impact of landmark sales tax case difficult to calculate five years later](#)
- [17- SD SearchLight: State has one record of acting on 44-year-old foreign ag land law](#)
- [20- Weather Pages](#)
- [24- Daily Devotional](#)
- [25- 2023 Community Events](#)
- [26- Subscription Form](#)
- [27- Lottery Numbers](#)
- [28- News from the Associated Press](#)

Saturday, July 22

10 a.m.: Groton 10U Baseball Round Robin Games
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.
Region 6B Legion Tournament in Northville
State Jr. Teener Tournament in Corsica

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

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



Sunday, July 23

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m.
Groton CM&A: Sunday School at 9:15 a.m., Worship Service at 10:30 a.m.
Catholic: SEAS Confession, 7:45-8:15 a.m., SEAS Mass, 8:30 a.m.; Turton Confession, 10:30-10:45 a.m.; Turton Mass, 11 a.m.
United Methodist: Conde worship at 8:30 a.m., coffee hour 9:30 a.m.; Groton worship at 10:30 a.m.
St. John's worship, 9 a.m.; Zion Lutheran worship, 11 a.m.
Amateur District in Groton
Region 6B Legion Tournament in Northville
State Jr. Teener Tournament in Corsica

Monday, July 24

Senior Menu: Meatballs, mashed potatoes with gravy, mixed vegetables, tropical fruit, whole wheat bread.
Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.
Food Pantry open 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Groton Community Center
Senior Citizens meet at Community Center with potluck at noon.
Amateur District in Groton
Jr. Legion Region Tourney, at Northville

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, July 22, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 028 ~ 2 of 81

The Bulletin by Newsweek

World in Brief

President Joe Biden plans to nominate Adm. Lisa Franchetti to become the next chief of naval operations, the White House announced. If Franchetti is confirmed, she would become the first woman to join the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The federal judge handling the Mar-a-Lago classified documents case against former President Donald Trump has announced that the trial will begin May 20, 2024 in Florida.

Texas A&M University's president has resigned in the wake of controversy surrounding the hiring process for alumna and veteran journalist Kathleen McElroy. McElroy, who is Black, has said the terms of her job offer changed amid concerns raised over her past work on newsroom diversity and inclusion.

Michael Cohen has agreed to settle his lawsuit against the Trump Organization, according to The New York Times. The lawsuit, which former President Donald Trump's former attorney filed years ago over unpaid legal fees, was due to go to trial next week.

In the ongoing war in Ukraine, CIA Director Bill Burns said he would be "surprised if [Wagner group leader Yevgeny] Prigozhin escapes further retribution" from the Kremlin for his aborted mutiny, calling Russian President Vladimir Putin the "ultimate apostle of payback."

TALKING POINTS

"I've listened to him. I know him. I have no idea why anyone thinks he should be president. What I do know is, his candidacy is an embarrassment. Let's not be distracted, again, by somebody's vanity project," said Jack Schlossberg, the grandson of former President John F. Kennedy, of Democratic presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

"The horrible thing was, what he said was about the whole business of artificial intelligence. And he was told in no unfirm terms that they would keep his image and do what the f*** they like with it. Now, that is a completely unacceptable position, and that is the position that we should be really fighting against," Succession actor Brian Cox said following a message he received about an actor involved in negotiations to end the Hollywood actors' and writers' strike.

"So sad to hear of Tony's passing. Without doubt the classiest singer, man, and performer you will ever see. He's irreplaceable. I loved and adored him," musician Elton John said in commemorating the passing of jazz singer Tony Bennett.

WHAT TO WATCH IN THE DAY AHEAD

Prince George, the eldest son of the U.K.'s Prince William and Kate Middleton, will celebrate his 10th birthday on Saturday.

Spain's snap general election takes place on Sunday as voters decide who will be their next prime minister. Incumbent socialist Pedro Sánchez is facing another leftist candidate and two right-wing candidates.

The Discovery Channel's Shark Week kicks off on Sunday.



American Legion Post 39 Groton would like to thank the following contributors to the painting of the US Flag on the new Groton Water Tower.

- Bierman Farm Service
- Dacotah Bank Groton
- Flihs Farms - Larry & Val Flihs
- Groton Chamber of Commerce
- James Valley Telecommunications
- Pharis Farms
- Rix Farms Inc
- Sippel Farms
- Strom Johnson Farms - Johnson Family
- Strom Johnson Farms – Strom Family
- Voss Farms Inc



AVANTARA



AVANTARA OF GROTON

has the following positions open:

- part-time house-keeping
- cook
- resident concierge

Apply at www.avantaragroton.com.

Columbia Daily Independent

Saturday, July 22, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 028 ~ 5 of 81



Columbia Comets Pee Wee Team Wins Three-Rivers Tournament

Front row left to right: Colton Pullan, Garret Faehn, Paxton Eichler, Shaylee Gilchrist, Saylor Gilchrist, Henry Pharis, Lillian Davis, Ethan Faehn, Arthur Eichler, Cooper Burst

Back row left to right: Coach Tony Bisbee, Connor Shafner, Kayson Hofer, Coach Josh Larson, Bennett Roettele, Rylee Hofer, Easton Larson, Jackson Helvig, Cody Meyer, Hudson Eichler, Coach Colin Eichler. (Columbia Baseball Facebook photo) (Amanda and Tony Bisbee for assistance)

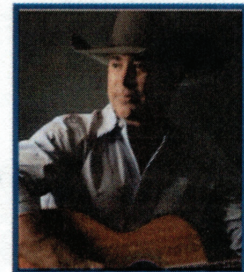
2ND ANNUAL **COLUMBIA FEST** & PARKS DEDICATION “A BLAST FROM THE PAST” **JULY 29, 2023**



COME FOR A FULL DAY OF FUN!

- 10:00 AM.....PARADE!
- 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM.....Vendors
- 11:00 AM.....Parks Dedication
- 12:00 - 3:00 PM.....Ballgames
- 3:00 - 4:00 PM.....Home Run Derby
- 4:00 - 5:00 PM.....Harry Luge Performs
- 5:00 PM.....Duck Race
- 6:00 - 8:00 PM.....Karaoke
- 9:00 PM.....Harry Luge

Lots of **GREAT ENTERTAINMENT, DELICIOUS FOOD** and **FUN ACTIVITIES**. Bring your lawn chairs and picnic blanket.



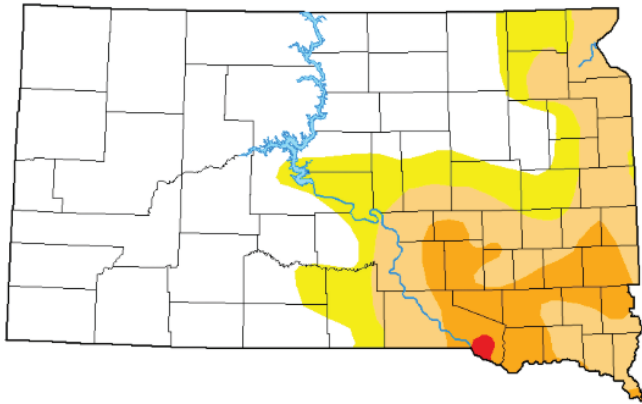
Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, July 22, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 028 ~ 7 of 81

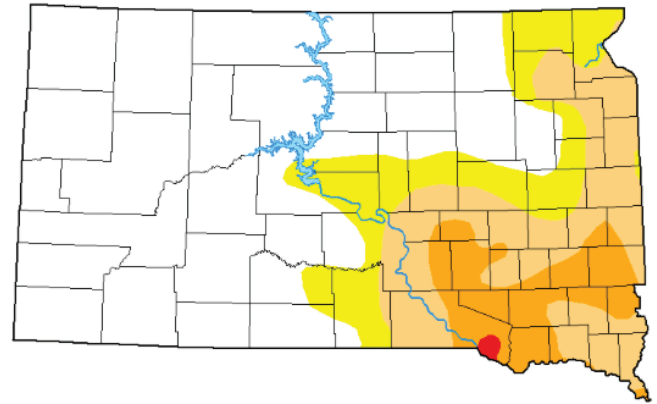
Drought Classification

- None
- D0 (Abnormally Dry)
- D1 (Moderate Drought)
- D2 (Severe Drought)
- D3 (Extreme Drought)
- D4 (Exceptional Drought)
- No Data

Drought Monitor



July 18



July 11

Drought remained widespread across Kansas, Nebraska outside the Panhandle, and southeastern South Dakota, with some swaths of improvement incurred in eastern parts of Nebraska and Kansas. Meanwhile, dryness and drought expanded slightly across northern North Dakota, and with the Southwest Monsoon off to a slow start, abnormal dryness has developed over a large part of the southwest quarter of Colorado. Other parts of the central Rockies and most of the Dakotas are unchanged from this past week. In South Dakota, 31 percent of Spring Wheat and 19 percent of oats are in poor or very poor condition, along with 15 percent of Spring Wheat in North Dakota.

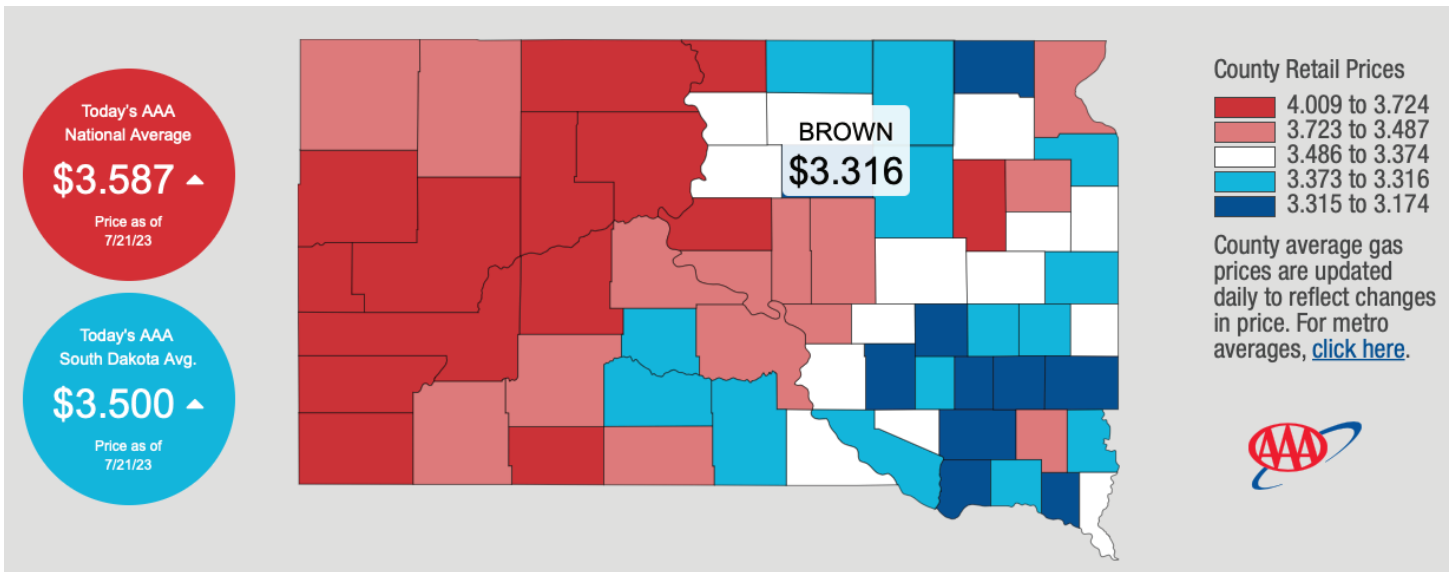
Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, July 22, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 028 ~ 8 of 81

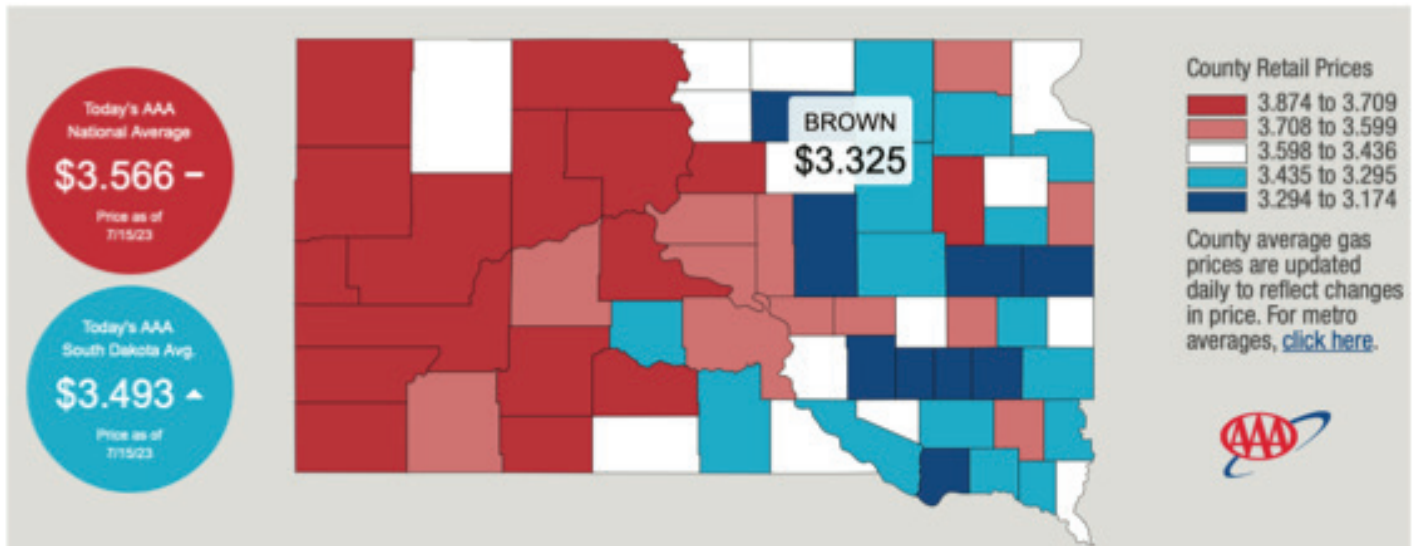
South Dakota Average Gas Prices

	Regular	Mid-Grade	Premium	Diesel
Current Avg.	\$3.500	\$3.675	\$4.136	\$3.692
Yesterday Avg.	\$3.492	\$3.677	\$4.141	\$3.694
Week Ago Avg.	\$3.489	\$3.649	\$4.127	\$3.674
Month Ago Avg.	\$3.456	\$3.649	\$4.093	\$3.733
Year Ago Avg.	\$4.476	\$4.638	\$5.145	\$5.237

This Week



Two Weeks Ago



Broton Daily Independent

Saturday, July 22, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 028 ~ 9 of 81

BROWN COUNTY
BROWN COUNTY COMMISSION AGENDA
REGULAR MEETING TUESDAY

July 25, 2023, 8:45 A.M.

COMMISSIONER'S CHAMBERS, COURTHOUSE ANNEX - 25 MARKET STREET, ABERDEEN SD

1. Call To Order - Pledge of Allegiance
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Opportunity for Public Comment
4. Stacy Gossman – Update on buildings and properties at business locations
5. Kari Stickelmyer and Robin - SD Dept. of Health Biannual Report
6. Consent Calendar
 - a. Approval of General Meeting Minutes from July 18, 2023
 - b. Claims
 - c. HR Report
 - d. Claim Assignments
 - e. Zoning Ordinances – Set Hearing Date/Authorize Publication
 - f. Plats
 - g. Approve & Authorize Auditor to sign Agreement to Satisfy Creditor Claims
 - h. Approve NSU Gypsy Day Parade Request
 - i. Approve & Authorize Chairman to sign:
 - i. Attorney Fee Agreement for Quiet Title Action
 - ii. Aberdeen City Zoning Application
7. Other Business
8. Executive Session (if requested per SDCL 1-25-2)
9. Adjourn

Brown County Commission Meeting

Please join my meeting from your computer, tablet, or smartphone.

<https://meet.goto.com/BrCoCommission>

You can also dial in using your phone. United States: +1 (872) 240-3311

Access Code: 601-168-909 #

Get the app now and be ready when your first meeting starts: <https://meet.goto.com/install>

Public comment provides an opportunity for the public to address the county commission - Presentations may not exceed 3 minutes.

Public comment will be limited to 10 minutes (or at the discretion of the board)

Public comment will be accepted virtually when the virtual attendance option is available.

Official Recordings of Commission Meetings along with the Minutes can be found at <https://www.brown.sd.us/node/454>

2024 Budget Work Session to follow the Commission Meeting

Governor Noem Appoints Chas Olson as Director of South Dakota Housing

PIERRE, S.D. – Friday, Governor Krisi Noem announced that Chas Olson will be the new Executive Director of the South Dakota Housing. He has served as Interim Director of South Dakota Housing since April.

“As interim director, Chas has been very proactive in reaching out to communities and working to roll out funding as quickly as possible,” said Governor Noem. “I am confident that he will continue to cut red tape and streamline state government for the people of South Dakota as executive director.”

Olson previously served as the Director of Rental Housing Development and worked as a Housing Development Officer prior to his appointment. Before joining SDHDA in 2014, Olson worked for seven years in various roles at a national bank.

Olson is a native of Pierre and graduated from T.F. Riggs High School in 2002. He attended the University of South Dakota where he obtained a bachelor’s in finance. He also has a Housing Development Finance Professional Certification from the National Development Council.

“It’s an honor to be appointed by Governor Noem, and I want to thank her for the opportunity to serve as the Executive Director of SDHDA,” said Chas Olson.

“We have an outstanding staff and board of commissioners at SDHDA, and I look forward to continuing my work with them in this new capacity. Together, we will ensure that all South Dakotans have a place to call home.”

Chas Olson and his wife, Sheila, have two children. Olson enjoys golfing, hunting, and spending time with family and friends in the Black Hills and on the Missouri River.



South Dakota Breaks U.S Record for Lowest Unemployment Rate

PIERRE, S.D. – South Dakota has officially broken the record for the lowest unemployment rate in United States history with a June unemployment rate of 1.8%. South Dakota had previously tied the record of 1.9% unemployment rate over the past several months. Employment grew by 1,300 in June.

“South Dakotans are the hardest working folks I know, and this record low unemployment rate is proof of that,” said Governor Noem. “South Dakota is setting an example for the rest of the nation. We are showing that work ethic and traditional American values still have a place in the United States of America.”

South Dakota currently has more than 24,000 job openings. The “Freedom Works Here” nationwide workforce recruitment campaign is encouraging freedom-loving people from across the nation to live, work, and raise their families right here in South Dakota. By welcoming new South Dakotans into our winning workforce, we are ensuring the continued growth and economic success of our state.

“Unemployment in South Dakota is the lowest that this country has ever seen,” said South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation Secretary Marcia Hultman. “I am grateful that Governor Noem kept our state ‘Open for Business,’ and allowed South Dakotans to keep on working during the pandemic. Our economic success is truly thanks to the people that get up and work hard every single day. With the great response we’re seeing to the Freedom Works Here workforce recruitment campaign, we’re hopeful this healthy growth can continue.”

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, July 22, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 028 ~ 11 of 81

GFP Commission Holds July Meeting

PIERRE, S.D. – The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) Commission held their July meeting at Cedar Shore Resort in Oacoma on July 20.

WILDLIFE PROPOSALS

Antelope and Turkey Drawings

The Commission continued their discussion on their proposal to restrict the number of applications a person may submit during the third draw from up to five applications to one application for Prairie Spring Turkey, Fall Turkey, and Prairie Antelope. This creates consistency among turkey and antelope draws, creates more opportunity for more unique hunters, and reduces the amount of returned licenses.

Bait Proposal

The Commission proposed clean-up language to clarify what can be taken for use as bait, using traps, seines, dip nets, lift nets, and cast nets, and associated limits.

Lake Sturgeon Catch and Release Season

The Commission proposed to allow for a catch and release Lake Sturgeon season on Big Stone Lake. The proposed season would run from June 16 through April 14.

Hoop Net, Trap, Setline, and Floatline Licenses

The Commission proposed to list the cost of resident hoop net, trap, and setline licenses with other fishing license fees. The proposal also clarifies that floatline fishing is allowed with a setline/floatline license.

Landowner Fisheries Management

The Commission proposed to better clarify that a resident is not in violation of any fish season, daily, or possession limit in a man-made water body on land owned by the resident, provided that the resident owns the entire bed of the water body.

Dip Nets for Invasive Carp and Rough Fish

The Commission also proposed to allow invasive carp and rough fish to be taken with dip nets.

Lake Francis Case Paddlefish

The Commission proposed to increase the number of resident paddlefish tags for the Lake Francis Case snagging/archery season from 350 to 500.

Trout Spearing

The Commission proposed to allow rainbow trout to be harvested by legal spearing methods from reservoirs within the Black Hills Fish Management Area.

Mountain Lion Season-Expanded Use of Hounds

The Commission accepted a petition to expand the use of hounds for the mountain lion season. The petition would allow the use of dogs within the Black Hills Fire Protection District for residents only with a harvest limit of 12 cats: 6 males and 6 females. This would be included within the overall Black Hills Fire Protection District harvest limit. The petition is now a proposal, and will enter the rule promulgation process.

Public Comments Being Accepted

To hear the discussion on these proposals, audio from the meeting is available through South Dakota Public Broadcasting and will soon be available on the GFP website as part of the meeting archive.

To see these proposals in their entirety, visit gfp.sd.gov/commission/information.

To be included in the public record and to be considered by the Commission, comments must include a full name and city of residence and be submitted by 11:59 p.m. CDT on September 3.

The next GFP Commission meeting will be held in Watertown September 7-8.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, July 22, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 028 ~ 12 of 81



GROTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT - FALL ATHLETICS

As we get ready to turn up the heat next week, it is time to begin our fall activities. We know that students involved in at least one extra-curricular activity perform better academically, socially, and emotionally, and we encourage all students to find something to be involved in.

The fall athletics meeting is scheduled for Thursday, July 27, 2023 at 7:00 PM in the GHS Arena. The meeting is for student-athletes competing in High School level athletics in the fall. We will discuss general athletics expectations, review the waiver and participation requirements, and meet with the coaches to begin preparations for the new season.

As a reminder, students are required to have a pre-participation physical examination by a licensed medical provider a minimum of once every three years. That typically means that student-athletes entering grades 7 and 10 are required to see a provider for an exam. Students in grades 8, 9, 11, and 12 generally must only complete the interim health questions. Form packets are available at the HS office during regular business hours, can be printed from the website, or can be picked up at the meeting on Thursday evening. All exams and paperwork must be completed prior to beginning practices.

SDHSAA Waiver Documents - Physical Form
SDHSAA Waiver Documents - Interim Health Form

Program Start Dates
Boys and Girls Soccer: Monday, July 31
Boys Football: Thursday, August 3
Boys Golf: Monday, August 7
Girls Volleyball: Thursday, August 10
Boys and Girls Cross Country: Thursday, August 10

Fall game schedules are being finalized for all fall activities and will be published in the very near future.

We're excited for a great year of student activities and look forward to seeing you on Thursday evening as we get rolling.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Impact of landmark sales tax case difficult to calculate five years later

2018 Supreme Court decision affirmed right to collect from 'remote sellers'

BY: JOHN HULT - JULY 21, 2023 3:50 PM

South Dakota has pulled in more than \$416 million in sales tax revenue from "remote sellers" since winning a case in the U.S. Supreme Court over the right to collect it.

That figure, however, does not represent the financial impact of South Dakota vs. Wayfair, which five years ago paved the way for states all across the country to force certain online retailers to pay their share of state sales taxes.

The state Department of Revenue is unable to calculate how much of the \$416 million figure was a direct result of the Wayfair case.

The reason is tied to what a "remote seller" is, what the Wayfair decision did, and the slippery categories for online sales tax collections, both before and after the case was decided.

Wayfair challenged the notion that for retailers without a "physical presence" in a state – think stores, offices and in-state sales staff – the collection and remittance of sales taxes represents an "undue burden" that unfairly harms constitutionally protected interstate commerce.

Until Wayfair, that notion was the law of the land, as decided in the 1992 case Quill vs. North Dakota.

In 2016, South Dakota lawmakers purposely passed a law directly at odds with the Quill decision, with the express purpose of challenging it. In its legal briefs, South Dakota argued that it was missing out on between \$48 million and \$58 million in annual revenue.

In 2018, the state won its case, which was argued by Attorney General Marty Jackley and bolstered by "friend of the court" briefs from a host of states and supportive organizations.

Jackley, who launched an unsuccessful bid for governor in 2018 but has since been re-elected as South Dakota's attorney general, sent a press release in June commemorating the fifth anniversary of the vic-



Amazon Public Relations Manager Scott Seroka explains a sorting system during a tour of the company's Sioux Falls fulfilment center on Feb. 16, 2023. The company, which formerly had no physical location in South Dakota but now does, is an example of why the impact of "remote seller" sales tax collections is difficult to pin down. (John Hult/South Dakota Searchlight)

Hult/South Dakota Searchlight)

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, July 22, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 028 ~ 14 of 81

tory “for states’ rights and fairness for Main Street businesses.” The win was a team effort, he said.

“This case could not have been brought forth without the support of former Gov. Dennis Daugaard, legislators, the South Dakota Retailers Association, education leaders, and others,” Jackley said in the release.

‘Remote seller’ category a moving target

Whether the state has benefitted from the Wayfair windfall to the level its legal briefs suggested is an open question.

In truth, South Dakota had been collecting sales taxes from some “remote sellers” for more than a decade before Jackley stepped before the Supreme Court to assert its right to do so.

Prior to the Wayfair case, some remote sellers had voluntarily remitted sales taxes, either registering directly with the state or with the Streamlined Sales Tax Governing Board, a multi-state nonprofit that works to simplify state-level sales tax collections for online sellers. From January of 2018 to July 2018, the month Wayfair was decided, South Dakota had already pulled in nearly \$30 million in remote seller sales tax revenues.

But the number of remote sellers is ever-changing,



Sketch of South Dakota Attorney General Marty Jackley in front of the U.S. Supreme Court in the South Dakota v. Wayfair case on April 17, 2018. (Sketch by Al Lien, courtesy of South Dakota Attorney General’s Office)

because of companies like Amazon. The company began to voluntarily remit sales taxes as a remote seller after the 2016 law took effect. It opened a warehouse in Sioux Falls last year, which moved it out of the remote seller category and into the same sales tax category as Walmart, Scheels, Best Buy and other retailers with a physical presence in the state.

In other words, the number of “remote sellers” registered either with Streamline or directly with the state for taxation purposes is a moving target.

That, in turn, means that the \$416 million in remote seller sales tax revenues collected since Wayfair is not an exact reflection of the case’s fiscal impact. It also means that the \$42 million in total remote sales tax growth since January of 2019 is a similarly inexact reflection.

Confusion upends hope of tax relief after Wayfair

That reality hampered the Legislative Research Council’s efforts to determine whether the provisions of a 2016 tax compromise known as the Partridge amendment ought to kick in.

The compromise was inked to secure passage of a sales tax hike meant to boost teacher salaries. It required the state to lower its sales tax rate by .1% for every \$20 million in additional remote seller sales tax revenue generated after a victory in the Wayfair case.

But the amendment only mentioned revenue growth specifically from “remote sellers,” calculated after such sellers were “obligated” to remit taxes.

Prior to Wayfair and the fall 2018 special legislative session that cleared a path for tax collections, remote sellers had no such obligation, putting any growth in voluntary tax remittances outside the bounds of the Partridge amendment. That same 2018 special session saw the creation of a taxable category of business called a “marketplace provider,” that acts as a go-between for sellers and buyers.

“Marketplace providers” like eBay are taxed like remote sellers, but state law’s definition of such businesses does not include the term “remote seller,” putting tax revenues from companies like eBay outside the bounds of the \$20 million growth calculations.

The LRC concluded in its November 2019 report on the matter that the intermingling of retailer categories and a lack of guidance on which agency should make the call on revenue growth stood in the way of analysts’ ability to offer an authoritative judgment on whether remote seller revenues were high enough to trigger tax relief.

The Partridge amendment “is silent regarding who makes the determination of whether each increment of \$20 million is reached for purposes of triggering the required reduction in sales tax rates,” the report reads.

The Partridge amendment was struck from the law by the 2023 legislature, which passed a bill to lower the state sales tax rate from 4.5% to 4.2%. Gov. Noem signed that bill, and the lower rate took effect at the start of this month.

Growth in registrants, sales tax revenues

While the remote seller tax figures themselves aren’t definitive, some of the players involved in bringing the case to the Supreme Court point to a handful of figures they say offer proof of its value to state budgets.

Deb Peters was a Senate leader in 2016 and the prime sponsor of the bill that would lead to the Wayfair case. She began to work with the Streamlined Sales Tax Governing Board in the mid-2000s to help make sure the state’s tax laws fit within the nonprofit’s framework.

Peters acknowledged the difficulty in pinning down Wayfair’s effect on state coffers, but suggested that overall sales tax growth could offer a hint.

In 2015, the year before lawmakers opted to force the remote seller sales tax issue, overall sales tax growth stood at 3.53%. Collections dropped for the two years that followed, then jumped to 6.01% in 2018. Growth hit a high of 13.66% in 2021.

“I would argue that a majority of that growth is tied to South Dakota vs. Wayfair,” Peters said.

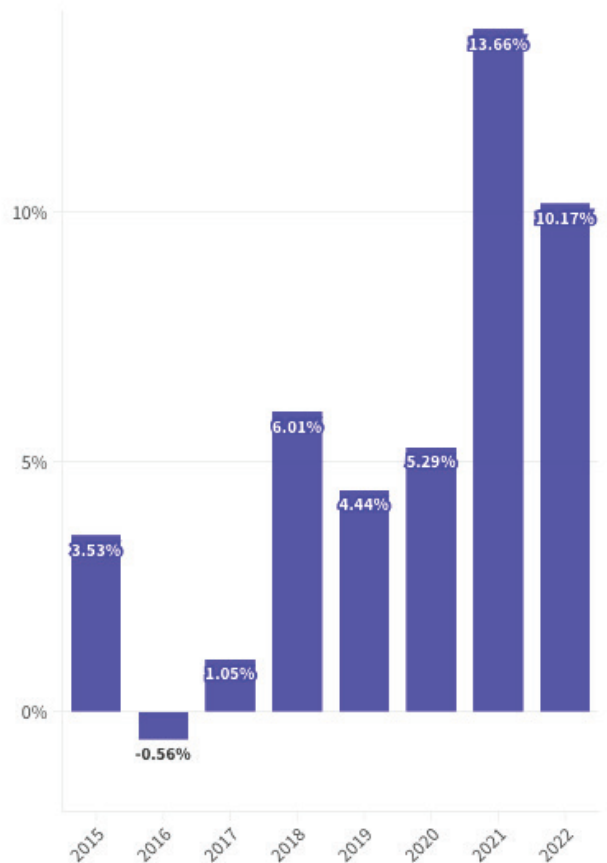
Peters also pointed out that Wayfair was a culmination of years of effort in South Dakota and elsewhere, and that a handful of other states passed or considered legislation similar to South Dakota’s to force the issue at the Supreme Court level.

Those national efforts to realign sales tax expectations for online retailers in light of consumers’ changing shopping habits, she said, likely pushed retailers to work with the Streamlined group to collect and remit taxes or to register with the state.

“The writing was on the wall,” Peters said.

Craig Johnson, meanwhile, offered a few other numbers as proof of impact. Johnson is director of the Streamlined

Sales tax growth rate



Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, July 22, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 028 ~ 16 of 81

Sales Tax Governing Board, and he said the impact is evident in the number of companies registered through his organization.

Before Wayfair, Johnson's group had 4,000 companies registered to remit sales taxes to the 24 states who are members of the compact. Today, the number is "pushing 25,000," Johnson said.

That figure includes 9,750 remote sellers registered to do business in South Dakota through Johnson's organization. Another 11,504 remote sellers are registered directly with the state, according to the Department of Revenue. Spokeswoman Kendra Baucom said the number of registrants in prior years was not available.

Johnson also pointed to a nationwide growth in remote seller tax collections through Streamline. Before Wayfair, he said, the group funneled between \$400 million and \$500 million each year to states from remote sellers.

"Now they're bringing in more than \$2 billion a year," Johnson said.

A South Dakota Searchlight records request on remote sellers sent to the South Dakota Department of Revenue revealed a trend of growth, but the growth wasn't quite as dramatic.

The figures show a jump from \$58.4 million in 2018, the last year with voluntary remittal for remote sellers, to \$90.8 million in 2022.

Cities, meanwhile, pulled in \$37.6 million in 2022 sales tax revenue from remote sellers. In 2018, the number was \$26.8 million.

Johnson and Peters each mentioned one other complicating factor for sales tax collections: the COVID-19 pandemic. With shoppers staying home for much of 2020 and much of 2021, Johnson said, states might have seen severe losses without remote seller revenue.

For states like South Dakota that lack an income tax and rely solely on sales tax money, the impact could have been dramatic.

"Had Attorney General Jackley not been successful, I'm not sure where those states would have come down with the COVID pandemic," Johnson said.

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

State has one record of acting on 44-year-old foreign ag land law

Review of federal data indicates easements comprise much of foreign-held land

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - JULY 21, 2023 5:44 PM

In the late 1970s, amid national worry that foreigners might be buying up agricultural land and driving up the price, South Dakota lawmakers decided to act. They passed a law limiting foreign ownership of farm and ranch land to 160 acres.

Now, 44 years later, as the issue of foreign ownership is back in the public eye, that law is little known and rarely used. State officials say they can only find records of a single time when they acted on the law, in 2022.

A Searchlight review also found 88% of foreigners' ag-land acquisitions in South Dakota

have involved less than a 100% ownership stake, or have involved the purchase of an easement rather than actual ownership. An easement is an agreement that grants a right to use somebody else's land for a single purpose, like erecting a wind turbine.

Meanwhile, South Dakota's state and federal lawmakers have increasingly characterized foreign ownership of ag land as a threat in recent years and, in some cases, have introduced legislation on the topic while seemingly ignoring or being unaware of the existing state law.

One recent bill came from Gov. Kristi Noem, who last winter tried to convince legislators to establish a state board to vet foreign purchases of ag land.

"With this new process, we will be able to prevent nations who hate us – like Communist China – from buying up our state's agriculture land," Noem said in a news release at the time.

The state Senate rejected the bill. Doug Sombke, president of the South Dakota Farmers Union, said the issue has become politicized.

"Governor Noem is putting on a show when she pretends to care about foreign ag land," Sombke said.

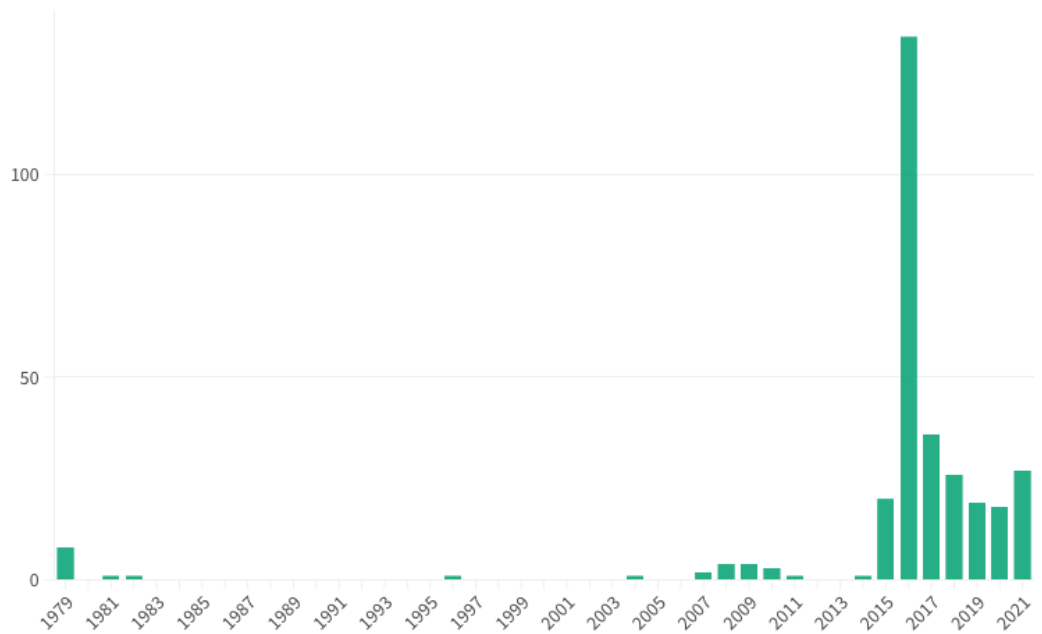
What existing law says

The existing state law, which dates to 1979, prohibits foreign people and governments from owning more than 160 acres of agricultural land in South Dakota. There are exceptions for land that's inherited or held as security for debt, for foreign people and governments whose right to hold land is secured by treaties, and for foreigners who've established residency in the United States.

The law also requires the state Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources to monitor annual federal government reports on foreign ownership of ag land. The department is required to scrutinize the reports for any indications of illegal ownership, and to refer such findings to the state attorney general. The attorney general is supposed to investigate the findings and take appropriate legal action, poten-

Number of foreign acquisitions over 160 acres in SD

Since 1979

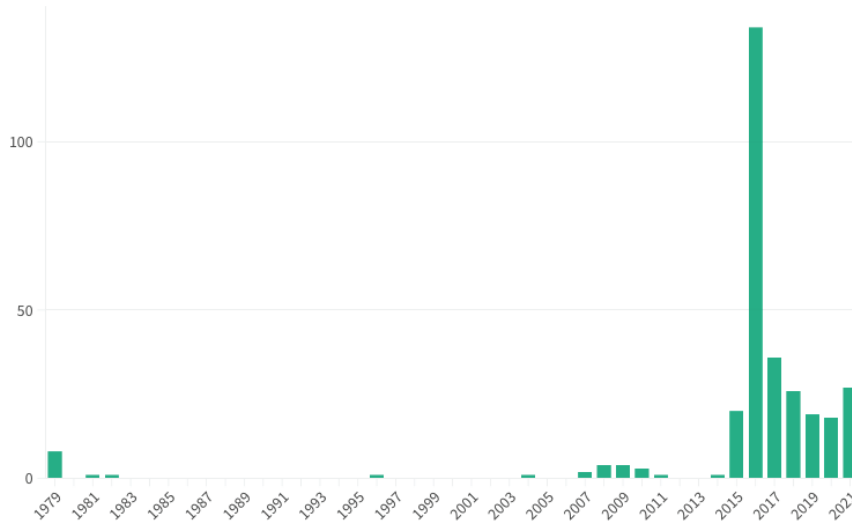


Source: USDA, AFIDA,

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, July 22, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 028 ~ 18 of 81

Number of foreign acquisitions over 160 acres in SD
Since 1979



Source: USDA, AFIDA,

of heightened national scrutiny of foreign ag-land ownership, sparked by a Chinese company's attempt to purchase land near an Air Force base in North Dakota.

South Dakota Searchlight also asked the Attorney General's Office for records of referrals it has received from the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources, and for records of investigations or enforcement actions pursued. A joint written statement from spokesmen for both offices said that "the Attorney General's Office has no record of receiving any USDA reports with sufficient evidence of noncompliance to initiate an investigation based on the existing South Dakota law."

Federal law and data

Beyond the state law, federal laws require disclosure of foreign ownership. Congress and the president enacted the Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act in 1978. It requires the federal Department of Agriculture to produce annual reports on foreign acquisitions of U.S. ag land. The data is reliant on self-reporting, and the USDA does not check it for completeness or accuracy.

According to the most recent federal data, South Dakota has had 307 instances of foreign people or entities acquiring more than 160 acres of ag land since the passage of the federal and state laws in the late 1970s. The latest USDA report says the total area of South Dakota agricultural land held by foreigners stands at about 380,000 acres, or about 595 square miles — representing a 3,000% increase from when the laws were enacted over four decades ago, but comprising less than 1% of all the land in the state.

Most of those acquisitions happened after 2015. Primarily, they involved European and Canadian wind energy companies.

About one-third of the foreign-controlled ag land in South Dakota was acquired by Canadians, with the majority of the remainder being from European countries including the United Kingdom, France, Spain and Germany. The rest totals less than 4,000 acres held by people or entities scattered across locations including the Bahamas, Mexico and Saudi Arabia.

Federal reports do not list any Chinese-owned ag land in South Dakota, although a Chinese company does own the Smithfield meatpacking plant in Sioux Falls, which is zoned as industrial land.

One of the entities listed in the USDA reports is Engie, a French wind energy company with over 50,000 acres in Roberts and Grant counties, including easements and some land owned for operations buildings and substations. A spokesperson for the company said he had not heard of the state law limiting ownership by foreign entities.

tially including the forfeiture of illegally owned land.

South Dakota Searchlight asked the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources to disclose the number of times it has referred information to the attorney general, and to provide copies of any such records.

"Prior to 2022, DANR has no records responsive to your request," the department replied in writing. "Since 2022, DANR has record of one referral attempt made to the Attorney General's office."

The department declined to disclose further information about that one "referral attempt," citing state laws that exempt investigatory records from public disclosure.

That referral happened during a time

Broton Daily Independent

Saturday, July 22, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 028 ~ 19 of 81

Wind energy projects have to obtain permits from South Dakota's Public Utilities Commission. One of the commissioners, Chris Nelson, said he had not heard of the 1979 state law prior to it coming up recently; however, he said when a wind farm is developed, the only land that's bought is typically for electrical substations or operations sheds. And that land could be under the 160-acre legal limit.

"What they do purchase is easements for the location of their wind towers and connector lines," Nelson said. "And easements are considered to be real estate, but how they fit into that statute, I have no idea."

A closer look at the latest federal report shows that among the 307 ag-land acquisitions over 160 acres in South Dakota by foreigners, only 24 involve an ownership stake greater than zero, with the rest presumably being easements.

The federal report lists foreign wind energy companies holding land in Deuel, Hyde, Roberts and Grant counties. Representatives of the register of deeds or equalization offices in each county told South Dakota Searchlight that all of those companies primarily have easements, not actual land ownership, with the exception of operations buildings and electrical substations. An example is Dakota Range III, of France, which owns 5.2 acres for its operating building in Grant County.

Mary Etsep, USDA's Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act program manager, did not reply to South Dakota Searchlight's multiple requests for information about how easements are handled in the federal data.

Lawmakers' response

State Sen. Lee Schoenbeck, R-Watertown, is the Senate president pro tempore. He contends the state knowingly does not enforce the existing state laws on foreign ag-land ownership because, in his opinion, they're unconstitutional.

"People knew the law exists, I knew the law exists," Schoenbeck said. "Nobody cared. This is still America. What, are we supposed to tell people who they can sell their land to?"

But not every leading lawmaker knew the laws existed. Rep. Tony Venhuizen, R-Sioux Falls, who previously served in the Noem and Dugaard gubernatorial administrations, said he first heard of the laws during the most recent legislative session.

House Majority Leader Will Mortenson, R-Pierre, views the laws as useful.

"The law prioritizes South Dakotans and recognizes the importance of our ag land," Mortenson said. "What could be more American than that?"

Rep. Karla Lems, R-Canton, said she'd never heard of the 1979 laws, despite all the recent rhetoric she's heard about foreign-owned land. She was surprised to learn there's only one known instance of state officials acting on the law.

"This is absolutely breathtaking," Lems said. "Wow."

1979 bill sponsor's response

Former legislator Kent Frerichs, a Democrat from Wilmot, sponsored the 1979 bill that created the state's current laws. Congress had recently passed the law requiring USDA reports of foreign purchases of ag land, and those reports showed 11,201 acres in the state were under foreign ownership at the time — up by 8,302 acres in the preceding two years. Frerichs said many South Dakotans were worried at the time about the rising cost of land and how foreign ownership was impacting supply and demand.

Frerichs said politicians today are more interested in looking like they're concerned about the problem of foreign ownership than actually solving it.

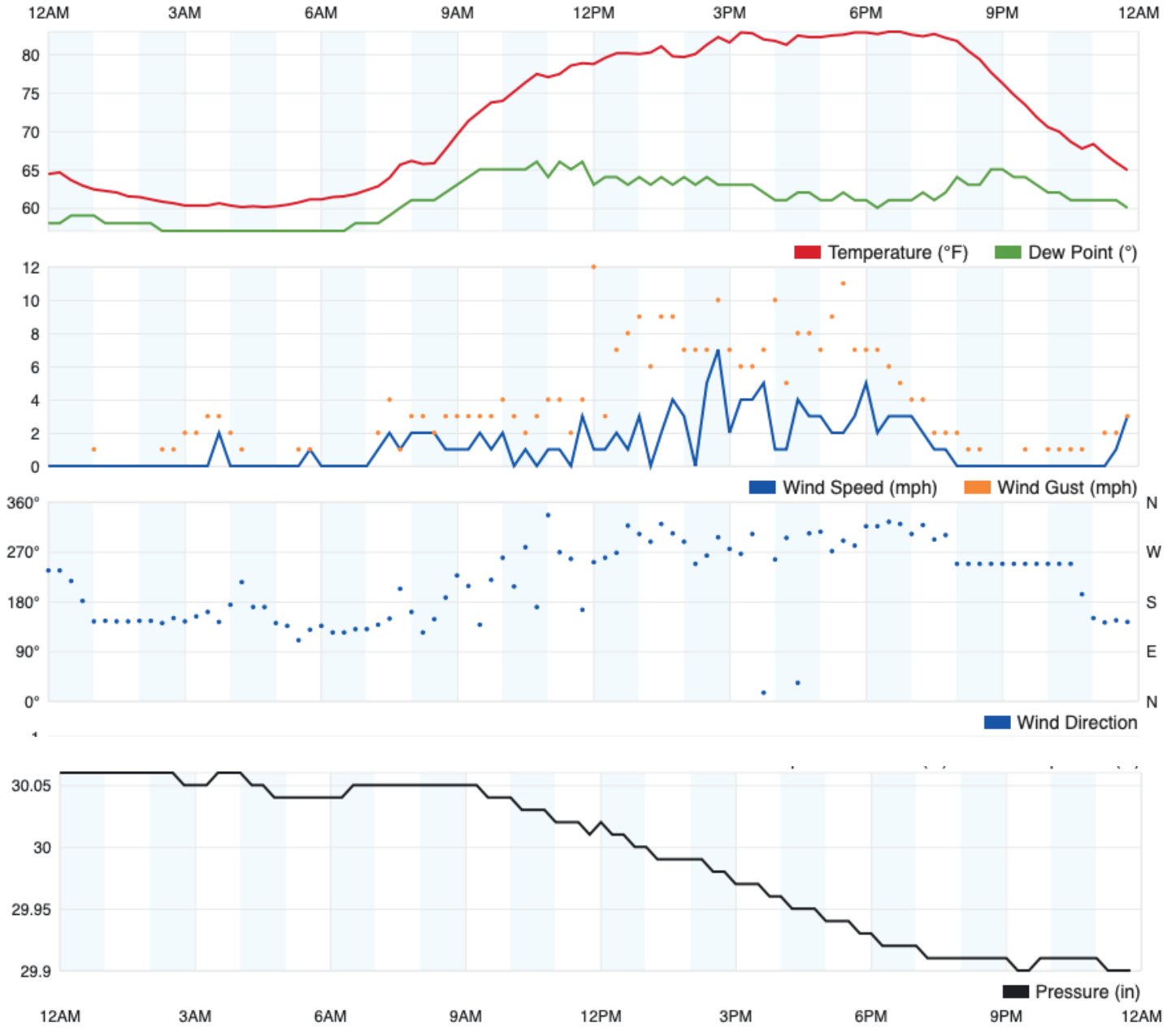
"Looks to me like they forgot all about this law, or ignored it," Frerichs said. "But instead of starting from square one as they have been, they need to start with enforcing the laws we already have."

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

Groton Daily Independent








Saturday, July 22, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 028 ~ 20 of 81

Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



Broton Daily Independent

Saturday, July 22, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 028 ~ 21 of 81

Today	Tonight	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday	Monday Night	Tuesday
						
Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Hot	Mostly Clear	Hot	Partly Cloudy	Hot
High: 89 °F	Low: 59 °F	High: 93 °F	Low: 63 °F	High: 92 °F	Low: 65 °F	High: 95 °F

Mostly Dry Through The Weekend

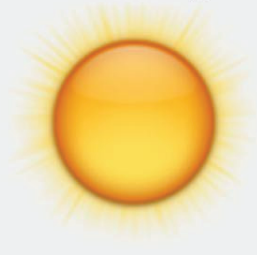
Today



20% Chance

Mid 80s To Mid 90s

Sunday



Upper 80s To Near 100

Heat Index Forecast

	7/24 Mon				7/25 Tue				7/26 Wed												
	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am	3am	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm								
Aberdeen	74	85	92	93	84	74	68	65	75	89	94	94	86	78	73	71	83	96	103	100	87
Britton	72	83	87	88	79	70	67	65	74	87	90	89	82	74	71	69	78	93	98	98	85
Brookings	72	85	89	90	82	72	68	65	74	83	88	90	82	74	71	68	77	91	96	96	86
Chamberlain	74	89	95	97	86	75	72	69	76	91	96	98	90	77	73	69	77	95	102	103	91
Clark	72	83	87	88	79	72	69	66	75	86	90	89	83	75	73	70	78	92	97	97	87
Eagle Butte	76	85	89	90	83	76	71	68	75	86	91	93	85	77	72	68	77	90	93	92	84
Ellendale	70	83	87	88	79	72	66	64	73	84	89	91	83	76	72	69	77	92	97	96	84
Eureka	71	83	88	88	81	72	68	65	73	85	89	89	83	76	71	67	76	91	97	93	83
Gettysburg	73	84	89	90	82	73	69	65	73	86	92	93	83	75	71	68	76	91	98	94	82
Huron	73	87	94	95	84	74	71	68	75	87	94	94	86	77	73	70	77	92	100	101	91
Kennebec	74	87	92	93	85	75	71	67	75	89	93	95	87	77	72	68	77	94	100	101	89
McIntosh	71	83	88	89	81	73	69	66	73	85	92	92	83	75	71	68	77	87	91	89	81
Milbank	72	85	90	90	79	71	67	65	74	87	91	91	83	73	70	69	78	95	101	100	88
Miller	73	87	91	92	82	73	69	65	74	89	94	94	85	76	74	70	78	96	102	100	88
Mobridge	73	86	92	92	83	75	70	67	75	87	94	94	86	76	73	69	76	92	98	96	85
Murdo	75	87	92	93	84	75	71	68	75	87	95	96	88	77	72	68	77	93	100	98	86
Pierre	75	89	95	95	86	77	72	68	76	91	96	98	89	79	75	72	79	96	102	101	89
Redfield	73	86	93	92	83	74	69	65	75	89	94	95	86	76	73	69	79	95	103	100	89
Sisseton	73	85	89	88	81	72	69	67	75	86	90	89	82	74	72	71	82	94	99	98	84
Watertown	73	85	89	90	82	73	68	65	75	87	91	91	83	75	71	68	79	95	100	99	88
Webster	72	82	86	87	79	71	68	66	75	85	88	88	81	74	71	69	78	91	95	95	84
Wheaton	71	83	87	88	79	71	66	64	74	85	89	88	81	73	70	68	77	92	95	96	84

One more seasonally mild day with just a low chance for moisture. Sunday we start to see the heat (though with low humidity). That heat continues through the week with a slow increase in humidity which could lead to potentially dangerous heat index values by mid-week #

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, July 22, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 028 ~ 22 of 81

Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 83 °F at 5:50 PM

Low Temp: 60 °F at 4:10 AM

Wind: 12 mph at 11:58 AM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 15 hours, 10 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 111 in 1934

Record Low: 46 in 1980

Average High: 85

Average Low: 60

Average Precip in July.: 2.36

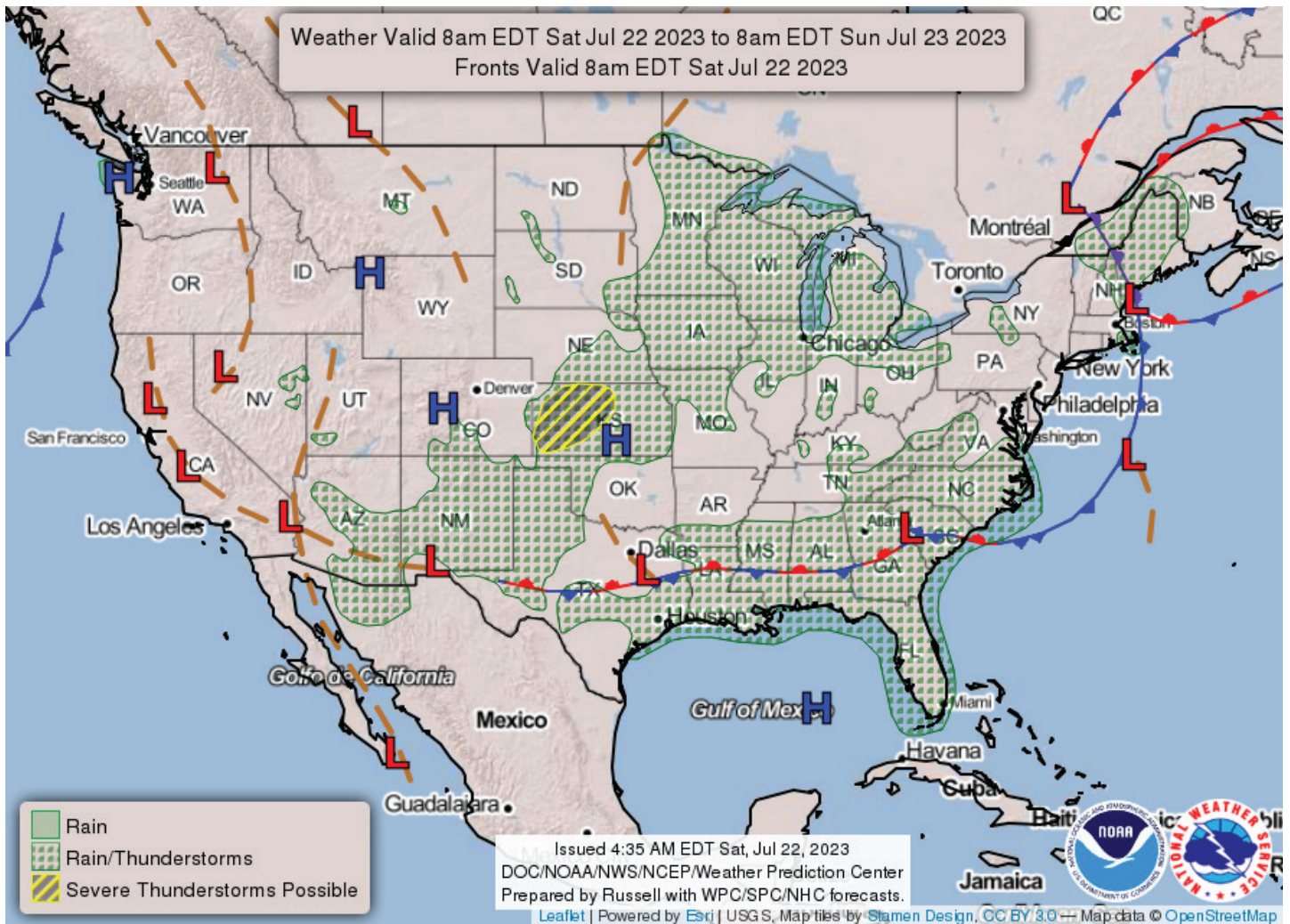
Precip to date in July.: 1.32

Average Precip to date: 13.37

Precip Year to Date: 12.67

Sunset Tonight: 9:13:56 PM

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:04:54 AM



Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, July 22, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 028 ~ 23 of 81

Today in Weather History

July 22, 1926: An estimated F2 tornado moved east across the northern part of Hyde County, destroying two barns.

July 22, 1999: An F0 tornado touched down briefly on a farm southeast of Onida. Over half of the roof of a 40 by 45-foot building was torn off and deposited in a tree belt 200 yards to the north. A grain auger was also damaged when it was pushed up against a granary. A semi-trailer was blown over. About 400 acres of ripe wheat was also flattened, and some sunflowers suffered damage as a result of the tornado.

July 22, 2011: Numerous severe thunderstorms brought hail up to the size of golf balls, damaging winds over 70 mph, along with flash flooding to parts of north central and northeast South Dakota. Most of the hail occurred in Grant and Codington counties. Several roads were flooded by nearly 4 inches of rain in Grant County. Five miles west of South Shore in Codington County, over 3 inches of rain brought flash flooding to several roads. The strong winds were observed in Corson, Walworth, and McPherson counties. About 9 miles west of Long Lake, eighty mph winds ripped a grain bin from the fasteners, pushed the north wall of a garage in, snapped several corral poles, moved a semitrailer four feet, and caused some minor damage to the house. Also, many branches were broken off along with several trees uprooted.

1918 - A single bolt of lightning struck 504 sheep dead in their tracks at the Wasatch National Forest in Utah. Sheep often herd together in storms, and as a result the shock from the lightning bolt was passed from one animal to another. (David Ludlum)

1986 - Hurricane Estelle passed 120 miles south of the Hawaiian Islands creating a ten to twenty foot surf. The large swells resulted from a combination of high tides, a full moon, and 50 mph winds. The hurricane also deluged Oahu Island with as much as 6.86 inches of rain on the 24th and 25th of the month. (Storm Data)

1987 - Barrow, AK, receives 1.38 inches in 24 hours on the 21st and 22nd, an all-time record for that location. The average annual precipitation for Barrow is just 4.75 inches. Thunderstorms in Montana produced 4 to 6 inches of rain in Glacier County causing extensive flooding along Divide Creek. Missoula, MT, received 1.71 inches of rain in 24 hours, a record for the month of July. (The National Weather Summary) (The Weather Channel)

1988: Dust devils are not a unique phenomenon, but usually they stay minimal. This was not the case in Dickinson County, Iowa where a powerful dust devil developed on the edge of Lake Okoboji. It picked up whole sections of several docks and swept away all of the loose dirt in the area. Estimated winds exceeded 60 mph.

1988 - Six cities in the south central U.S. reported record low temperatures for the date, including Pueblo, CO, with a reading of 48 degrees. Thunderstorms over the Atlantic Coast Region drenched Wilmington, NC, with 6.49 inches of rain in about eight hours. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Showers and thunderstorms prevailed across the southeastern third of the country. Afternoon thunderstorms in Florida produced wind gusts to 86 mph at Zephyrhills, and gusts to 92 mph at Carrollwood and Lutz. Thunderstorm winds gusting to 69 mph at Crystal Lake damaged nineteen mobile homes. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1993: The levee, holding back the flooding Mississippi River at Kaskaskia, Illinois, ruptures, forcing the town's people to flee on barges. The incident at Kaskaskia was the most dramatic event of the flood. At 9:48 a.m., the levee broke, leaving the people of Kaskaskia with no escape route other than two Army Corp of Engineers barges. By 2 p.m., the entire town was underwater.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, July 22, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 028 ~ 24 of 81

Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

FAITH FACTOR

The family gathered around the table for the Sunday meal after church. Young James appeared as though he was deep in thought. Finally, he said, "Dad, we have thermometers and barometers. Wouldn't it be great if we had faithometers?"

"What do you mean, Son?" he asked.

"Well, the preacher talked about having faith and trusting God to answer our prayers. How do we know how much faith we have when we pray and don't get any answers?" he asked. The father was unable to respond to his question. But our Lord did.

Jesus once said, "You can pray for anything and if you have faith you will receive it." This implies that Jesus is making an unconditional guarantee that God will hear and answer our prayers.

Prayer does three things for us. First, it enables us to do or accomplish things that we may have thought were beyond our abilities because we do not claim God's power and strength. Second, it can also enable us to accept life as Jesus did when He asked His Father to "let this cup pass from me," and it didn't. It was the agony of the cross that led to the glory of the resurrection. So, sometimes we have to suffer and do without. And, third, it prepares us to endure things and ultimately discover that "His grace is sufficient."

Prayer: Teach us, Father, to pray earnestly in faith believing, trusting only in You. May we come to accept the fact that Your grace and mercy can sustain us until we know Your will. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: You can pray for anything, and if you have faith, you will receive it. Matthew 21:22



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

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, July 22, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 028 ~ 25 of 81

2023 Community Events

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

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, July 22, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 028 ~ 26 of 81

The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

Subscription Form

All prices listed include 6.5% Sales Tax

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

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

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City _____

State, Zip Code _____

E-mail _____

Phone Number _____

Mail Completed Form to:

Groton Independent

P.O. Box 34

Groton, SD 57445-0034

or scan and email to paperpaul@grotonsd.net

Groton Daily Independent

www.397news.com

Subscription Form

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

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

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City _____

State, Zip Code _____

Phone Number _____

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

E-mail _____

Password _____

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

paypal.me/paperpaul



Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, July 22, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 028 ~ 27 of 81



WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:
07.21.23

29 40 47 50 57 25

MegaPlier: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$820,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
07.19.23

9 12 16 33 40 4

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$6,120,000

NEXT 16 Hrs 5 Mins 46
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
07.21.23

1 13 28 30 41 7

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT 16 Hrs 20 Mins
DRAW: 46 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
07.19.23

10 16 19 22 30

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$20,000

NEXT 16 Hrs 20 Mins
DRAW: 46 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
07.19.23

13 15 28 43 57 25

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT 16 Hrs 49 Mins
DRAW: 46 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
07.19.23

7 10 11 13 24 24

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$20,000,000

NEXT 16 Hrs 49 Mins
DRAW: 46 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the Associated Press

Idaho judge sentences 5 from white nationalist group to jail for conspiracy to riot at Pride event

COEUR D'ALENE, Idaho (AP) — Five members of the white nationalist hate group Patriot Front have been sentenced to several days in jail for conspiring to riot at a Pride event in Idaho.

Judge James Stow sentenced each of the men on Friday to five days in jail with credit for two days already served, the Coeur d'Alene Press reported. Forrest Rankin, Devin Center, Derek Smith, James Julius Johnson and Robert Whitted are also not allowed to be within 2 miles (3.2 kilometers) of the Coeur d'Alene City Park while on unsupervised probation for a year.

The men were also fined \$1,000 each. If they successfully complete probation they will be able to have the charges dismissed.

A Kootenai County jury on Thursday found them guilty of the riot charge after about an hour of deliberation. The men were accused of planning to riot at the Coeur d'Alene LGBTQ+ Pride event in 2022.

A total of 31 Patriot Front members, including one identified as its founder, were arrested June 11, 2022, after someone reported seeing people loading into a U-Haul van like "a little army" at a hotel parking lot in Coeur d'Alene, police have said.

Police found riot gear, a smoke grenade, shin guards and shields in the van after pulling it over near where the North Idaho Pride Alliance was holding a Pride in the Park event, Coeur d'Alene Police Chief Lee White has said.

The group's documents reportedly outlined a plan to form a column outside City Park and proceed inward, "until barriers to approach are met." Once "an appropriate amount of confrontational dynamic had been established," the column would disengage and head down Sherman Avenue.

Defense attorney Robert Sargent said in court Thursday that the men were citizens "who had a right to have their words heard and did not have an intent to harm anyone," the Coeur d'Alene Press reported. "We don't convict citizens on mere suspicion."

But prosecutors said law enforcement prevented the group from carrying out their plan to violently disrupt the event.

Those arrested came from at least 11 states, including Idaho, Washington, Oregon, Texas, Utah, Colorado, South Dakota, Illinois, Wyoming, Virginia and Arkansas. Nearly all of the others arrested are awaiting trial.

Alexander Sisenstein, of Midvale, Utah, pleaded guilty to the same riot charge in November and was sentenced to two years of unsupervised probation and ordered to pay a \$500 fine.

Rioting is generally a misdemeanor in Idaho. Conspiracy to riot is punishable by up to one year in jail, as well as a \$5,000 fine and up to two years of probation.

Founded after the deadly "Unite the Right" rally in 2017, Patriot Front's manifesto reportedly calls for the formation of a white ethnostate in the United States.

Drinking water in South Dakota's 3rd largest city has an increased risk of disease, officials say

ABERDEEN, S.D. (AP) — Officials in South Dakota's third most populous city, Aberdeen, are warning residents that their drinking water contains an elevated risk of disease.

The Aberdeen Water Works Treatment Plant experienced mechanical malfunctions in two filters used to clean water and make it drinkable for residents, resulting in "an increased chance of disease-causing organisms in the drinking water," according to a public notice from the city, The Argus Leader reported Thursday.

The city noticed the malfunctions after a water sample taken July 10 tested at 5.35 nephelometric turbidity units — used to measure the presence of particles in water — which is more than five times the 1

NTU standard for safe drinking water in the state, according to The Argus Leader.

The city's notice said it's not necessary for residents to boil or decontaminate their water, but that people with severely compromised immune systems, infants and older people are at increased risk of getting sick and should contact their health care providers before drinking the water.

One of the two malfunctioning water filters has been repaired, while the other filter remains offline until it can be fixed, according to the notice.

Russian strikes kill at least 8 civilians as fierce fighting continues in Ukraine's south and east

By FELIPE DANA Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russian attacks on 11 regions across Ukraine overnight killed at least eight civilians and wounded others, authorities said Saturday, as fierce fighting continues in Ukraine's attempts to dislodge Russian forces from territory they have occupied.

The regional prosecutor's office in the eastern Donetsk region said that at least four people, including a married couple, were killed as Russian forces on Friday night shelled the settlement of Niu-York, south of the city of Bakhmut — the site of the war's longest and bloodiest battle until it fell to Moscow in May. Three other Niu-York residents were hospitalized.

Also on Saturday morning, Ukraine's interior ministry said that two civilians died as Russian forces Friday struck Kostiantynivka, a city in the Donetsk region, from multiple rocket launchers. In a post on its official Telegram channel, the ministry said that another civilian was wounded in the same attack, which also destroyed 20 private homes, cars and a gas pipeline.

Two people were also killed near the northern city of Chernihiv, some 100 kilometers (62 miles) from the Russian border, as Russian cruise missiles destroyed the local cultural center and damaged apartment blocks, the regional military administration reported on Saturday morning. It did not specify the exact time of the attack, saying only it took place within the previous 24 hours.

Three civilians were wounded as Russian troops overnight shelled a town neighboring the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, local Gov. Serhiy Lysak reported Saturday.

Ukrainian officials have regularly accused Moscow of using the Zaporizhzhia plant, which Russian forces captured early in the war, as a base for firing on Ukrainian-held territory nearby. Fears have also mounted that Russia might sabotage the plant — Europe's largest — in an attempt to stymie Ukraine's ongoing counteroffensive, which has focused on the Zaporizhzhia region as well as the country's industrial east.

The night passed quietly in the Ukrainian capital, with AP journalists in Kyiv witnessing no air raid alerts.

The Ukrainian air force on Saturday morning said that it had overnight brought down 14 Russian drones, including five Iranian-made ones, over the country's southeast, where battles are raging. In a regular social media update, the air force said that all Iranian-made Shahed exploding drones launched by Russian troops during the night were brought down, pointing to Ukraine's increasing success rate in neutralizing them.

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

Protesters try to storm Baghdad's Green Zone over the burning of Quran and Iraqi flag in Denmark

By ALI JABAR and JARI TANNER Associated Press

BAGHDAD (AP) — Hundreds of protesters attempted to storm Baghdad's heavily fortified Green Zone, which houses foreign embassies and the seat of Iraq's government, early Saturday following reports an ultranationalist group burned a copy of the Quran in front of the Iraqi Embassy in Copenhagen.

Security forces pushed back protesters, who blocked the Jumhuriya bridge leading to the Green Zone, preventing them from reaching the Danish Embassy.

The protest came two days after people angered by the planned burning of the Islamic holy book in

Sweden stormed the Swedish Embassy in Baghdad. Protesters occupied the diplomatic post for several hours, waving flags and signs showing the influential Iraqi Shiite cleric and political leader Muqtada al-Sadr, and setting a small fire. The embassy staff had been evacuated a day earlier.

Hours later, Iraq's prime minister cut diplomatic ties with Sweden in protest over the desecration of the Quran.

An Iraqi asylum-seeker who burned a copy of the Quran during a demonstration last month in Stockholm had threatened to do the same thing again Thursday but ultimately stopped short of setting fire to the book. He did, however, kick and step on it, and did the same with an Iraqi flag and a photo of Sadr and of Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

On Friday afternoon, thousands protested peacefully in Iraq and other Muslim-majority countries.

Also on Friday, according to Danish media reports, members of the ultranationalist group Danske Patriotere burned a copy of the Quran and an Iraqi flag in front of the Iraqi Embassy in Copenhagen, livestreaming the action on Facebook.

Copenhagen police spokeswoman Trine Fisker told The Associated Press that "a very small demonstration" with less than 10 people took place Friday afternoon across the street from the Iraqi embassy and that a book was burned.

"We do not know what book it was," she said. "Apparently they tried to burn the Iraqi flag and after that, somebody stepped on it."

Fisker said the "political angle is not for the police to comment" on, but the "event was peaceful ... from a police perspective."

The incident prompted the protests in Baghdad overnight. Chanting in support of Sadr and carrying images of the prominent leader and the flag associated with his movement, along with the Iraqi flag, hundreds of protesters attempted to enter the Green Zone and clashed with security forces before dispersing.

In a statement on Saturday, the Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs condemned "in strong and repeated terms, the incident of abuse against the Holy Quran and the flag of the Republic of Iraq in front of the Iraqi Embassy in Denmark."

It called the international community "to stand urgently and responsibly towards these atrocities that violate social peace and coexistence around the world," the statement read.

Another protest is scheduled to take place in Baghdad at 6 pm.

Associated Press writer Abdulrahman Zeyad in Baghdad and Abby Sewell in Beirut contributed to this report. Tanner reported from Helsinki, Finland.

Fierce protests have been rocking Israel for months. What's fueling them?

By JULIA FRANKEL Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Oceans of Israeli flags, steady drumbeats, cries of "Democracy!" Water cannons, police on horseback, protesters dragged off the ground.

For seven straight months, tens of thousands of Israelis have taken to the streets in the most sustained and intense demonstrations the country has ever seen.

The protesters are part of a grassroots movement that rose out of opposition to a contentious judicial overhaul spearheaded by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his far-right allies.

The overhaul calls for sweeping changes aimed at curbing the powers of the judiciary, from limiting the Supreme Court's ability to challenge parliamentary decisions, to changing the way judges are selected.

While the government says the overhaul is needed to reduce the powers of unelected judges, protesters, who make up a wide cross section of Israeli society, say the overhaul will push Israel toward autocracy.

With a key portion of the overhaul nearing a final vote early next week, protesters are vowing further "days of disruption" and calling for strikes and general unrest.

Here's a look at why they are still protesting, months into the government's efforts:

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, July 22, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 028 ~ 31 of 81

WHAT'S IN THE OVERHAUL?

Netanyahu's ultranationalist and ultra-Orthodox religious allies say the package is meant to restore power to elected officials. Critics say it is a power grab fueled by various personal and political grievances by Netanyahu, who is on trial for corruption charges, and his partners, who want to deepen Israel's control of the occupied West Bank and perpetuate controversial draft exemptions for ultra-Orthodox men.

The proposals include a bill that would allow a simple majority in parliament to overturn Supreme Court decisions. Another would give parliament the final say in selecting judges.

On Monday, parliament is expected to vote on a key bill that would prevent the Supreme Court from striking down government decisions on the basis that they are "unreasonable."

Proponents say the current "reasonability" standard gives judges excessive powers over decision making by elected officials. But critics say that removing the standard, which is invoked only in rare cases, would allow the government to pass arbitrary decisions, make improper appointments or firings and open the door to corruption.

Protesters say Netanyahu and his allies want to change the law so they can appoint cronies to government posts — and particularly so that they can fire the country's independent attorney general, according to Amir Fuchs, a senior researcher at the Israel Democracy Institute, a Jerusalem think tank. Supporters see Attorney General Gali Baharav-Miara as a bulwark against the overhaul.

The measures "make it more difficult to conduct oversight" over arbitrary decisions of elected officials, said Yohanan Plesner, the institute's president. "This is one chapter of a broader plan and program of the government to weaken the checks and balances."

In a speech Thursday, Netanyahu dismissed accusations that the plan would destroy Israel's democratic foundations as absurd. "This is an attempt to mislead you over something that has no basis in reality," he said.

WHY ARE THERE STILL PROTESTS?

Netanyahu's government took office in December and almost immediately unveiled its plans to weaken Israel's Supreme Court.

Protests sprang up in major cities, business leaders balked at the plan and, perhaps most critically, military reservists in Israel's air force and other key units threatened to stop reporting for duty if it passed.

The protests prompted Netanyahu to pause the overhaul in March and enter talks with opposition lawmakers. After talks broke down last month, Netanyahu announced in June the overhaul would move forward.

Protesters accuse Netanyahu of changing tactics, but not his broader goals, by moving forward in a slower and more measured way in a bid to lull the protesters and dull their opposition.

"The government got smarter," said Josh Drill, a spokesman for the protest movement. "They saw the fallout of trying to ram the overhaul through, and they decided instead to do it piece by piece."

Protests have intensified as the coalition's efforts to make the overhaul into law have moved forward.

On Tuesday, protesters crippled the city's main highway and blocked train stations, and thousands of people marched nearly 50 miles (80 kilometers) from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem over the weekend ahead of Monday's vote.

WHY ARE PROTESTERS SO DETERMINED TO PROTECT THE JUDICIARY?

With a relatively weak system of checks and balances, the judiciary plays a large role in checking executive power in Israel.

In the U.S. for example, Congress has two houses that operate independently of the president and can limit his power. But in Israel, the prime minister and his majority coalition in parliament work in tandem.

That leaves the judiciary as "the only check on governmental power," according to constitutional law professor Amichai Cohen.

Israel also has minimal local governance and lacks a formal constitution. This means that most of the power is centralized in parliament, Cohen said. The "basic laws" — foundational laws that experts describe as a sort of informal constitution — can be changed at any time by a bare majority.

With the overhaul, Cohen said, the Israeli parliament now threatens to further consolidate its power by

weakening the judiciary.

"The government can do whatever it wants, because it controls the ability to change even the basic laws," Cohen said.

Historically, the Israeli judiciary has played a role in protecting the rights of minorities, from Palestinian citizens of Israel to noncitizens and African asylum seekers, Cohen said.

By weakening the judiciary, critics say, Israel's government — led by a male-dominated coalition whose members have advocated full annexation of the occupied West Bank, discriminating against LGBTQ+ people and Palestinian citizens of Israel, and limiting the rights of women — will be granted near-total control.

"It will be a hollow democracy," said Fuchs.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Over the weekend, Israeli media reported that the country's defense minister, Yoav Gallant, alarmed by the growing refusals to serve in the military, was pushing for a delay in Monday's vote. It was unclear if others would join him.

If the "reasonability" bill is passed, it will mark the first major part of the legislation to become law.

Fuchs predicted the law would be appealed to the Supreme Court. If the court strikes it down, Netanyahu's coalition will have to decide whether to accept the ruling. That could set the stage for a "constitutional crisis."

In the meantime, the protests that have rocked the country for seven months will likely grow in intensity.

Sick of hearing about record heat? Scientists say those numbers paint the story of a warming world

By SETH BORENSTEIN AP Science Writer

The summer of 2023 is behaving like a broken record about broken records.

Nearly every major climate-tracking organization proclaimed June the hottest June ever. Then July 4 became the globe's hottest day, albeit unofficially, according to the University of Maine's Climate Reanalyzer. It was quickly overtaken by July 5 and July 6. Next came the hottest week, a tad more official, stamped into the books by the World Meteorological Organization and the Japanese Meteorological Agency.

With a summer of extreme weather records dominating the news, meteorologists and scientists say records like these give a glimpse of the big picture: a warming planet caused by climate change. It's a picture that comes in the vibrant reds and purples representing heat on daily weather maps online, in newspapers and on television.

Beyond the maps and the numbers are real harms that kill. More than 100 people have died in heat waves in the United States and India so far this summer.

Records are crucial for people designing infrastructure and working in agriculture because they need to plan for the worst scenarios, said Russell Vose, climate analysis group director for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. He also chairs a committee on national records.

In the past 30 days, nearly 5,000 heat and rainfall records have been broken or tied in the U.S. and more than 10,000 records set globally, according to NOAA. Texas cities and towns alone have set 369 daily high temperature records since June 1.

Since 2000, the U.S. has set about twice as many records for heat as those for cold.

"Records go back to the late 19th century and we can see that there has been a decade-on-decade increase in temperatures," said Gavin Schmidt, director of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies, keeper of the agency's climate records. "What's happening now is certainly increasing the chances that 2023 will be the warmest year on record. My calculations suggest that there's, right now, a 50-50 chance."

The larger the geographic area and the longer stretch of time during which records are set, the more likely the conditions represent climate change rather than daily weather. So the hottest global June is "extremely unlikely" to happen without climate change, as opposed to one city's daily record, Texas state climatologist John Nielsen-Gammon said.

Still, some local specifics are striking: Death Valley has flirted this summer with the hottest temperature

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, July 22, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 028 ~ 33 of 81

in modern history, though that 134 degree Fahrenheit (56.7 Celsius) record is in dispute.

Phoenix grabbed headlines among major U.S. cities on Tuesday when it marked a 19th consecutive day of unrelenting mega heat: 110 degrees Fahrenheit (43.3 Celsius) or more. It kept going, reaching a 22nd straight day on Friday. The daytime heat was accompanied by a record stretch of nights that never fell below 90 Fahrenheit (32.2 Celsius).

"Everybody's drawn to extremes," Vose said. "It's like the Guinness Book of World Records. Human nature is just drawn to the extreme things out of curiosity."

But the numbers can be flawed in what they portray.

The scientific community "doesn't really have the vocabulary to communicate what it feels like," said Stanford University climate scientist Chris Field, who co-chaired a groundbreaking United Nations report in 2012 warning of the dangers of extreme weather from climate change.

"I don't think it captures the human sense, but it really does underscore that we live in a different world," Field said of the records.

Think of the individual statistics as brush strokes in a painting of the world's climate, Cornell University climate scientist Natalie Mahowald said. Don't fixate on any specific number.

"The details of course matter, but the thing that really matters, especially for the impressionist painting, is when you step back and take a look at everything that's happening," Mahowald said.

She and other climate scientists say long-term warming from burning coal, oil and natural gas is the chief cause of rising temperatures, along with occasional boosts from natural El Nino warmings across parts of the Pacific, like the planet is experiencing this year.

El Nino is a natural temporary warming of parts of the Pacific that changes weather patterns worldwide and adds an extra warm boost. An El Nino formed in June and scientists say this one looks strong. For the previous three years El Nino's cool flip side, La Nina, dampened a bit of the heat humans are causing.

A super El Nino spiked global temperatures in 1998, then was followed by less warming and even some flat temperatures for a few years until the next big El Nino, Mahowald said.

Weather won't worsen each year and that should not become a common expectation, but it will intensify over the long run, she said.

The University of Michigan's Richard Rood used to blog about climate records for Weather Underground, but in 2014 he got sick of continuously new extremes and stopped.

"I think we need to get away from that sort of record-setting sensationalism at some level and really be getting down to the hard work," he said, addressing the need for people to adapt to a warmer world and get serious about slashing emissions causing hotter, more extreme weather.

NOAA tracks weather observations from tens of thousands of stations throughout the U.S. and its global calculations incorporate data from more than 100,000 stations, Vose said.

When those records come in, the agency checks their quality and calculates where the numbers fit historically. NOAA's National Center for Environmental Information in North Carolina is the arbiter of national records, while the local National Weather Service offices handle those for individual cities, Vose said.

A special international committee deals with world records and, at times, scientists disagree on the reliability of 100-year-old data. Those disagreements come into play over questions such as determining the hottest temperature recorded on Earth.

Validating records takes time. Because of a backlog of extreme weather events to analyze, officials haven't finished approving 130 degree Fahrenheit records from 2020 and 2021 at Death Valley, Vose said.

"Our primary job is keeping score, meaning what happened? How unusual was it?" he asked. "It's not like we take great joy in saying it was the warmest year on record. Again."

It's the bigger picture that matters, Northern Illinois University climate scientist Victor Gensini said.

"Look at them all together in the aggregate sense of the atmospheric orchestra," Gensini said. "There are so many clear signs that we are just not living in the same type of climate that we were."

Follow AP's climate and environment coverage at <https://apnews.com/hub/climate-and-environment>

Follow Seth Borenstein on Twitter at @borenbears

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

A man lies in a Kenya morgue. His family says he's one of at least 35 shot dead by police this month

By EVELYNE MUSAMBI Associated Press

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) — At the morgue, the bullet was still lodged in Douglas Kalasinga's head. His family said they couldn't afford an autopsy. At least 35 civilians have been shot dead by police in Kenya this month during protests over new taxes and the rising cost of living, and Kalasinga's loved ones believe he's one of them.

"It is as if the police wanted to kill him because they aimed straight at his head," his uncle, David Wangila, told The Associated Press on Friday.

An interior ministry spokesperson referred requests for comment to the police, who didn't respond.

Wangila said the 27-year-old was struck on Thursday while at work, pushing a handcart of water cans instead of taking part in the national demonstrations called by the political opposition.

As his family viewed his body, Kenyan human rights groups raised a chorus of outrage.

Data shared with the AP by a police watchdog, the Independent Medico-Legal Unit, showed 35 people were killed by police across the country in such demonstrations this month. All but one, who suffocated from tear gas, were shot dead. Most were young men.

"All the fatal shootings happened in slums," the watchdog said.

It was not clear how much money Kalasinga made per day as he carted water through one such neighborhood in Kenya's capital, Nairobi. Friends said he was "living hand to mouth" with his few belongings of buckets, clothes and shoes strewn across his one-roomed house made of corrugated iron sheets.

He was the oldest child in his family and never studied past primary school because of the lack of money to pay school fees. He came to Nairobi as a teenager in search of menial jobs. He was one of millions of people that President William Ruto, elected last year, described as fellow hustlers as he appealed to those of humble background and vowed to lower the cost of living.

Many Kenyans now accuse the president of making life unbearable with new taxes on fuel and other essentials, while food prices rise.

Ruto on Thursday hailed the police for a "good job" done in maintaining peace amid the protests.

A day later, as criticism rose, the president cautioned police against extrajudicial killings but warned that no public anarchy would be allowed. His administration has accused the opposition for any chaos and charged more than 300 people this week alone with crimes that include looting, destroying property and assaulting police.

Human rights organizations expressed concern over the police killings, arbitrary arrests and detentions reported in the demonstrations this month and urged the policing oversight body to investigate and prosecute the officers found guilty.

"We are witnessing a disturbing pattern of police operation that exposes the country to civil strife and informal repression," a joint statement by more than 20 groups said Friday, adding that "President Ruto had promised to end the era of police killer squads."

A separate statement by religious leaders strongly condemned the "excessive force and use of live bullets by police when containing the chaos."

It is a longstanding problem in Kenya. For decades, police officers have been accused of extrajudicial killings during protests or with the aim of silencing critics. This week, police told the AP they had been ordered not to report deaths during the crackdown.

One of the latest victims, Kalasinga, was described by loved ones as "nonconfrontational, hardworking" and providing for his parents back home in western Kenya.

Now his family wants justice.

"We want action to be taken against the police officer who was shooting randomly. ... He was a calm young man, an artist, a water vendor who was fending for himself and not a thief," his uncle Rasto Sakulo said.

The family said it hoped well-wishers could help transport the young man's body back to his hometown for burial, another cost they said they couldn't afford.

Body of girl found in river believed to be that of 2-year-old lost in Pennsylvania flash flood

WASHINGTON CROSSING, Pa. (AP) — The body of a young girl was recovered Friday in the Delaware River and was believed to be a 2-year-old who was one of two children swept away from their family's vehicle by a flash flood last weekend, authorities said.

The body was found in the early evening near a Philadelphia wastewater treatment plant about 30 miles (50 kilometers) from where Matilda Sheils was carried away, authorities said in a nighttime news conference.

By physical description, authorities believe the body to be Matilda's. The Philadelphia coroner will conduct an autopsy Saturday.

The search continues for Matilda's 9-month-old brother, Conrad.

The family from Charleston, South Carolina, was visiting relatives and friends when they got hit by a "wall of water," according to Upper Makefield Fire Chief Tim Brewer.

Their mother, 32-year-old Katie Seley, was also killed in the flood, authorities said.

The children's father, Jim Sheils, grabbed the couple's 4-year-old son, while Seley and a grandmother grabbed the other children, Brewer said. Sheils and their toddler son made it to safety, but Seley and the grandmother were swept away. The grandmother survived.

Four other people drowned in the area, according to the Bucks County Coroner's office: Enzo Depiero, 78, and Linda Depiero, 74, of Newtown; Yuko Love, 64, of Newtown; and Susan Barnhart, 53, of Titusville, New Jersey.

The deaths and the search for the children have led to an outpouring of support, particularly in social media, in the suburb about 35 miles (60 kilometers) north of Philadelphia.

Spanish general election tipped to put the far right back in office for the first time since Franco

MADRID (AP) — Voters in Spain go to the polls Sunday in an election that could make the country the latest European Union member to swing to the populist right, a shift that would represent a major upheaval after five years under a left-wing government.

Here's what you need to know about the vote.

WHAT IS AT STAKE?

Opinion polls indicate the political right has the edge going into the election, and that raises the possibility a neo-fascist party will be part of Spain's next government. The extreme right has not been in power in Spain since the transition to democracy following the death of former dictator Francisco Franco in 1975.

With no party expected to win an absolute majority, the choice for voters is basically between another leftist governing coalition or one between the right and the far right.

The right-of-center Popular Party, the front-runner in the polls, and the extreme right Vox party are on one side. They portray the vote as a chance to end "Sanchismo" — a term the PP uses to sum up what it contends are the dictatorial ways of Socialist Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez, the left's radical ideology and numerous lies by the government.

In the other corner are the Socialists and a new movement called Sumar that brings together 15 small leftist parties for the first time. They warn that putting the right in power will threaten Spain's post-Franco changes.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, July 22, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 028 ~ 36 of 81

WHY WERE EARLY ELECTIONS CALLED?

Socialist Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez called the early election a day after his Spanish Socialist Workers' Party and its small far-left coalition partner, Unidas Podemos (United We Can), took a hammering in local and regional elections May 28.

Prior to that, Sánchez had insisted he would ride out his four-year term, indicating that an election would be held in December. But after the May defeat, he said it was only fair for Spaniards to decide the country's political future without delay.

WHAT HAPPENED SINCE MAY 28?

The Popular Party emerged from the local and regional elections as the most-voted party by far, giving it the right to take office in all but a handful of towns and one or two regions.

Since then, the PP and Vox have agreed to govern together in some 140 cities and towns as well as to add two more regions to the one where they already co-governed.

The Socialists and other leftist parties lost political clout across the country, but after weathering the initial shock, they have regrouped and recovered some ground, leaving the vote outcome Sunday still an unknown.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR EUROPE?

A PP-Vox government would mean another EU member has moved firmly to the right, a trend seen recently in Sweden, Finland and Italy. Countries such as Germany and France are concerned by what such a shift would portend for EU immigration and climate policies.

Spain's two main leftist parties are pro-EU participation. On the right, the PP is also in favor of the EU, but Vox is not.

The election comes as Spain holds the EU's rotating presidency Sánchez had hoped to use the six-month term to showcase the advances his government had made. An election defeat for Sánchez could see the PP taking over the EU presidency reins.

WHAT ARE THE CAMPAIGN THEMES?

The campaign has been dominated by mudslinging from all sides, with both the left and right accusing each other of lying about their policies and past records.

The PP has managed to put Sánchez's honorability in question by highlighting the many U-turns he has made and his alliances with small regional secessionist parties, something that alienates even some left-wing voters.

The left has sought to convince voters that there is little difference between the two right-wing parties and that a victory for them would set Spain back decades in terms of social progress.

Nearly every poll has put the PP firmly ahead of the Socialists and Vox ahead of Sumar for third place. But 30% of the electorate is said to be undecided.

With the election taking place at the height of summer, millions of citizens are likely to be vacationing away from their regular polling places. But postal voting requests have soared, and officials are estimating a 70% election turnout.

IS THERE ANY CHANCE FOR A SURPRISE?

A surprise factor that could upset poll predictions is Sumar: the brand new, broad-based movement of 15 small left-wing parties, including Podemos and prominent social figures.

Sumar is headed by highly popular Labor Minister Yolanda Díaz, who is also the second deputy vice president and the only woman among the leaders of the four main parties.

This is the first time small left parties have ever come together on a joint ticket in Spain. Their earlier fragmentation was blamed for many of the town and regional losses in the May election, and they hope

that joined together they can make a bigger showing.

Sumar's big goal is to beat out Vox for the potential king-making third place finish. That would allow Sumar to give valuable support for another leftist coalition government. Surveys consistently suggested during the campaign that an absolute majority for Popular Party and Vox is very possible.

Ukraine wants ships to keep exporting its grain despite Russian attacks. Some are interested

By COURTNEY BONNELL AP Business Writer

LONDON (AP) — Russia has repeatedly fired missiles and drones at Ukrainian ports key to sending grain to the world. Moscow has declared large swaths of the Black Sea dangerous for shipping. Even the U.S. said ships are at risk of being targeted.

There is still interest from ship owners in carrying Ukrainian grain through the Black Sea — if they can mitigate the risk, according to a major shipping group. And that's a big if.

Despite the warnings and port attacks, which have leveled grain infrastructure, "shipping has always been very, very resilient in the face of these sorts of risks," said John Stawpert, senior manager of environment and trade for the International Chamber of Shipping, which represents 80% of the world's commercial fleet.

This week's strikes came after Russia pulled out of a wartime accord that the U.N. and Turkey brokered last year to provide safeguards for shipping companies in a bid to end a global food crisis. Ukraine — which, along with Russia, is a major supplier of wheat, barley and vegetable oil to developing nations — shipped 32.9 million metric tons of grain to the world and supplied 80% of the World Food Program's wheat for humanitarian aid so far this year.

Following the grain deal's collapse, Ukraine sent a letter to the U.N. International Maritime Organization establishing its own temporary shipping corridor, saying it would "provide guarantees of compensation for damage."

But Russia warned this week that ships traversing parts of the Black Sea would assume to be carrying weapons to Ukraine. In a seeming tit-for-tat move, Ukraine said vessels heading to Russian Black Sea ports would be considered "carrying military cargo with all the associated risks."

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Vershinin said Friday that the navy will check vessels to ensure they are not carrying weapons before taking other action.

Continued shipments from Ukraine will depend on vessels getting insurance for potential damage or injuries and deaths to crew members and how the safety risks play out. Ships that were exporting Ukrainian grain can be worth tens of millions of dollars, have 20 to 22 sailors on board and carry food also worth tens of millions, according to Jayendu Krishna, deputy head of maritime advisers at Drewry, a maritime research consultancy.

All ships go through threat assessments to allow crews to protect against problems before setting sail, which have grown in importance as ships deal with piracy, terrorism and war zones.

For the Black Sea, the risks for ships would be: explosive mines, becoming collateral damage at ports or being targeted themselves, which Stawpert said would be "a huge escalation."

"The million-dollar question is whether the threats to merchant shipping are serious and whether they'll be followed through. And there's no firm way of knowing that until it actually happens," Stawpert said, adding that he has not yet heard from insurers.

With Russia's warnings, "it is unlikely that underwriters will want to cover that risk," said the International Union of Marine Insurance, which represents national and international marine insurers.

The group thought it was unlikely owners would put their ships and crews in danger, echoed by Munro Anderson, head of operations for Vessel Protect, which assesses war risks at sea and provides insurance with backing from Lloyd's, whose members make up the world's largest insurance marketplace.

He didn't directly speak to whether underwriting businesses like his would take on the risk but said without protections for ships like they had under the grain deal, "safety conditions cannot be guaranteed."

Krishna said the only way to mitigate risk was through insurance from the 12 providers making up the

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, July 22, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 028 ~ 38 of 81

International Group of P&I Clubs, which offers liability coverage for about 90% of the world's cargo shipped by sea, according to its website.

"P&I clubs will be wary of even insuring" without a guarantee from the U.N. or some other body, he said.

The International Group of P&I Clubs said its CEO was the only one who could comment and that he was on vacation. Individual clubs either declined to comment or did not respond to calls or emails.

The head of the seafarers division of the International Transport Workers' Federation, a union for crew members, said the question should be whether it's too risky right now to ask sailors to go to Ukrainian ports.

"The minds of seafarers won't be on questions of insurance cover, but more likely on whether their lives are safe amidst the fighting," David Heindel said in a statement, adding that crews "should never be targeted just for doing their job."

In the meantime, some analysts expect most of what Ukraine was going to ship through the Black Sea will get out by road, rail and river through Europe, but the transportation costs will be higher and likely lead to lower production by Ukrainian farmers.

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said Thursday that Ukraine has made progress in improving those routes but that the best way to export grain is through the Black Sea. That's how 75% of the country's grain got to the world before the war, analysts say.

Plus, the routes have created divisions in the European Union, with five countries saying Wednesday that they want to extend a ban on Ukrainian grain imports through the end of the year.

While Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria would keep allowing grain to move through their borders to world markets, their bans could create challenges like infrastructure backups that might give preference to local grain before Ukraine's products, said Carlos Mera, head of agricultural commodities markets at Rabobank.

The five countries say Ukrainian grain has flooded their markets, leading to a glut that drove down prices for their farmers and stirring protests. They signed a joint declaration ahead of EU talks next week, urging officials to work out ways of getting Ukrainian food to the world without hurting their agricultural industries.

It's another hurdle for Ukraine — and possibly for developing countries already struggling with high local food prices, which are helping drive hunger.

Wheat prices have risen about 17% over the last week, and poorer nations that are forced to pay more on world markets for the ingredient for staples like bread and pasta means "many millions of people being pushed into food insecurity," Mera said.

Mega Millions jackpot grows to \$820 million with a possible cash payout of \$422 million

ST. LOUIS (AP) — Mega Millions has upped the ante by another \$100 million.

The lack of a jackpot winner in the lottery game's latest drawing on Friday night sent the top prize soaring to an estimated \$820 million.

The numbers drawn late Friday were: 29, 40, 47, 50, 57 and gold Mega Ball 25. No tickets were sold hitting all those numbers for the estimated grand prize of \$720 million.

The estimated \$820 million in the next drawing on Tuesday night would only be distributed to a winner who chooses an annuity paid over 29 years. Nearly all grand prize winners opt to take a cash payout, which for Tuesday's drawing is an estimated \$422 million.

The potential jackpot is the fifth largest in the history of the game, Mega Millions said in a statement early Saturday.

Despite the game's long odds of 1 in 302.6 million, players continue to purchase tickets as the size of the grand prize grows.

The last time a Mega Millions player hit the top prize was April 18.

Friday's drawing resulted in eight tickets matching five white balls for a \$1 million prize. Two each were sold in Florida, New Jersey and North Carolina, with one in California and another in Michigan, Mega Mil-

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, July 22, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 028 ~ 39 of 81

area locally referred to as “Valley of the Sun” — are easy to navigate because the land is flat. All has been designed in such a way that it feels like one big giant grid.

Then the summer comes, and daily life must change drastically. Biking, hiking, camping and numerous other outdoor activities common during eight months, all but come to a halt. Construction workers do shifts that begin in the middle of the night and finish by the early morning. Kids go to trampoline parks, gyms and inside camps.

People with pools at home take dips early in the morning and at night, as during the day the sun can make the water feel like a jacuzzi. Residents with means take their vacations out of state during the summer, or make weekend trips to Flagstaff, a two-hour drive north where temperatures are about 25 degrees cooler than Phoenix because of the high elevation.

SOME PARTING THOUGHTS BEFORE DEPARTURE

While most people figure out ways to cope, some are left behind. Homeless people, a population that has been growing, are particularly exposed. Shelters and cooling centers, which are essentially public buildings like libraries kept open for long hours, are all part of attempts to get them off the streets. With good reason: most heat-related deaths in Phoenix are not from people in their homes, but rather people outside.

But for most residents, while the summers are brutal, we get into a flow because the weather has a rhythm.

For several days at a time, the temperatures will top 110 degrees, sometimes into the high teens or get to 120 (49 degrees Celsius). But then, from one day to the next, the daily high temperatures will drop to the low 100s or even high 90s (32 to 38 degrees Celsius), which, after days of more intense heat, feels kind of breezy.

The drops happen from cooler winds coming in, or intense bursts of rain, called monsoons. We all go outside, particularly in the mornings and late evenings, when temperatures drop enough to be outside and not feel like your body is trapped in an oven.

After a few days of partial relief, the intense heat comes back. And we all go back inside and wait it out. We repeat the cycle while looking forward to the fall. That pattern of intense heat and temporary drops held even during 2020, also a record-breaking summer with 53 total days over 110.

What worries me about this heat wave is that it's not breaking. This could be a harbinger of future heat waves, in both Phoenix and around the world. As of Saturday, it's 23 straight days of temperatures over 110 degrees; forecasts show the extreme heat could continue at least another 10 days. So far, city officials and most Phoenix residents, seem to be managing. But even if the city gets by largely unscathed, this period may well be viewed as the beginning of major changes — ones that are not for the better.

And for those of you who have stayed with me this long, let's not forget about the strange case of the sun-baked quesadilla. Did it cook? The answer: In 15 minutes, the cheese had melted into clumps, and the flour tortilla was hardened.

“Gross,” said the 12-year-old. “I’ll take a bite,” I responded.

Turns out he was right. We got rid of the quesadilla. Then, standing there in the Phoenix sun, we did the only sensible thing possible given everything around us: We went back inside and resumed packing, with our goodbye to this strangely baked city just ahead of us.

Associated Press climate and environmental coverage receives support from several private foundations. See more about AP's climate initiative here. The AP is solely responsible for all content. Follow Peter Prengaman on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/peterprengaman>

Lionel Messi scores a sensational game-winning goal on a free kick in his Inter Miami debut

By TIM REYNOLDS AP Sports Writer

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP) — Some people paid hundreds of dollars to be able to say they were in the stadium for Lionel Messi's debut for Inter Miami. Some paid thousands for their seats. The team's owners committed well over \$100 million just to have a chance at moments like this.

So far, it looks like money well spent.

From the you-can't-make-this-up department, Messi capped the opening night with his new club by delivering the unforgettable. His magical left foot sent a free kick into the upper left corner of the net in the 94th minute Friday night, giving Inter Miami a 2-1 win over Mexican club Cruz Azul in a Leagues Cup match.

"What I saw was the goal," Messi said in an on-field interview amid the postgame celebration. "I saw the goal. I knew that I had to score."

He makes it sound so easy. Made it look so easy, too.

The game's greatest active player — a seven-time Ballon d'Or winner and a World Cup champion — sent the ball over a wall of four Cruz Azul defenders for the winning goal, unquestionably the greatest moment in Inter Miami's brief history. Fireworks shot into the night sky, and play resumed for roughly a minute before the referee's whistle blew.

"It's a movie that we have seen before," Inter Miami coach Tata Martino said.

Messi was a showman throughout his debut for his Major League Soccer club. He waved at fans while he was seated on the bench. Waved at them while he was warming up. Waved at them while he was actually in the game.

And if that wasn't enough, he saved his best moment for the end. He watched the ball sail into the net, something he's done about 800 times before for club and country, then sprinted to the right corner of the field and leaped into the arms of teammates.

The team's owners — David Beckham, Jorge Mas and Jose Mas — were waiting as he left the pitch; Jorge Mas planted a kiss onto the superstar's sweat-coated cheek. Some Cruz Azul players stood in silence and just watched; they'll have a story to tell, too, about how it took an incredible Messi moment to defeat them.

It took Inter Miami four years of planning and two years of actual pursuing to bring Messi to the club.

"Worth it," Beckham said earlier in the week.

How right he was.

"It's such a moment for this country," Beckham said. "It's such a moment for the league. And it's a very proud moment for us."

Nobody even left their seats when the halftime whistle blew. The reason: Messi was on the field. He warmed up for about 5 minutes during intermission with the other reserves before they all left for the locker room.

That's when the fans, finally, could put their phones down and take a breath. Temporarily, anyway. The wait was officially on: When was Messi coming in? He resumed warmups while the second half was getting under way, jogging around behind the end line near Miami's supporter section, and fans roared in delight when he gave them a wave.

And about eight minutes into the second half, the answer: It was Messi time.

Messi checked in early in the second half with Inter Miami leading 1-0. He hugged the player he was replacing, midfielder Benjamin Cremaschi, then trotted onto the field as the estimated crowd of 21,000 all seemed to be standing, almost all of them with phones out to chronicle the moment.

Had he missed the free kick, the game would have gone to a penalty shootout. Instead, Messi ended it on his terms.

"It was the last play of the game and I wanted to score so I didn't go to penalties," Messi said.

The first Inter Miami goal of the Messi era was scored by Robert Taylor, who took a long cross from Robbie Robinson, moved into the box and sent a low drive off the inside of the far post and into the back of the net for a 1-0 lead late in the first half.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, July 22, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 028 ~ 41 of 81

Messi leaped from his seat, threw his hands in the air, applauded several times and broke into a wide smile.

Cruz Azul tied the game shortly after Messi checked in and had plenty of chances to take a late lead. But the final act belonged to Messi, a storybook ending if there ever was one.

"It's common for him, you know," Martino said. "It looks absolutely normal, but it's not ... we're speaking about the GOAT."

It was a gathering of GOATs at Messi's debut match: LeBron James and Serena Williams were there — like Messi in soccer, they're in the conversation of "greatest of all time" when it comes to the NBA and tennis. Music legends Gloria and Emilio Estefan showed up, as did Miami Dolphins quarterback Tua Tagovailoa, and Kim Kardashian arrived saying one of her sons had a particular reason why he had to attend.

"He's so excited to see Messi," Kardashian said.

Everyone was. James — who knows a thing or two about making a highly celebrated move to Miami, after he joined the Heat in 2010 and won his first two NBA titles in a four-year stay — greeted Messi with a long embrace as the teams took the field. And after the goal, James acknowledged the greatness.

"INCREDIBLE," James tweeted, with a goat emoji for emphasis.

No matter what, it was a massive night for soccer in the U.S. — Messi making his first Miami appearance while, on the other side of the globe, the U.S. women's team opened its World Cup title defense in New Zealand by beating Vietnam 3-0.

Messi signed a 2 1/2-year contract that will pay him between \$50 million and \$60 million annually — and almost certainly more than \$1 million per match.

Messi arrived with the team about two hours before game time, dressed in the team colors — pink T-shirt, black shorts. He stopped for a few photos and handshakes as he entered the tunnel leading to the locker room.

As the match started, Messi took his seat and watched his new team, in the all-pink jersey, shorts and socks, start his new era. Almost every seat was filled, many by people wearing newly acquired Miami jerseys with Messi's name on the back. They chanted his name a few times, waved flags bearing his name and number.

The excitement kept building, all the way to the end. And Messi made sure his new fans went home happy. "It was very important," Messi said, "for us to get this win."

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

Nervous Republicans turn to New Hampshire in hopes of stopping Trump

By STEVE PEOPLES AP National Political Writer

HUDSON, N.H. (AP) — They acknowledge Donald Trump's dominance, but weary Republicans across New Hampshire — even inside the governor's office — are fighting to stop the former president from winning the first-in-the-nation primary.

For now, however, they're relying on little more than hope and prayers.

Look no further than Mike Pence, Trump's former vice president, who repeatedly appealed to voters' faith this week as he tried to resurrect his anemic presidential campaign while courting a few dozen voters in a former state lawmaker's backyard.

"I truly do believe that different times call for different leadership," Pence told his modest crowd. "I know you all are going to do your job, because I have faith. I have faith in the American people."

More than a dozen high-profile Republicans are looking to New Hampshire, the state long known for shining on political underdogs, to help stop Trump's march toward a third consecutive Republican presidential nomination. But so far, none has cracked the veneer of inevitability that has followed Trump through the early states on the presidential primary calendar despite — or perhaps because of — his mounting legal

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, July 22, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 028 ~ 42 of 81

challenges.

A significant portion of the Republican electorate remains open to a new presidential nominee with less baggage than Trump. But months after many of them entered the race, there is little sign that the former president's rivals are breaking through.

The strongest Trump alternative on paper, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, has already begun to lay off staff amid unexpected financial challenges and stagnant poll numbers. Others have failed to break out of the single digits in early polls. And as Trump braces for the possibility of a third criminal indictment, his hold on the party appears to be stronger than ever.

Pence, perhaps more than anyone, has been dragged down by the powerful undertow of Trumpism that has reshaped the political landscape for much of the last decade.

Pence barely registered in a new poll released this week by the University of New Hampshire. And he admitted this week that he does not yet have enough donors to qualify for the opening presidential debate next month, an extraordinary position for a former vice president to find himself in. During multiple stops in New Hampshire this week, he appealed to voters to donate even \$1 to boost his numbers.

"Obviously, he wishes he was doing better," said New Hampshire Republican Gov. Chris Sununu. "You're not going to find a better character and a better person than someone like Mike Pence. He's just such a great guy. But his message, for whatever reason, isn't quite resonating with folks."

Pence has managed to draw the wrath of Trump loyalists and critics alike.

Among those who dislike Trump, Pence is viewed as a Trump acolyte who enabled his bad behavior for four years. And those who love Trump blame Pence for not blocking the certification of Joe Biden's presidential victory on Jan. 6, 2021 — a power that the former vice president did not have.

Trump loyalists infamously chanted, "Hang Mike Pence" while storming the U.S. Capitol and his political standing within the Republican Party has never recovered.

"I think Mike Pence is genuinely destroyed," said former New Hampshire GOP chair Jennifer Horn. "He cannot win. There's no circumstance and no race that Mike Pence will ever win. It's sad."

New Hampshire, a state that has traditionally shied away from the type religious conservatism Pence espouses, would be an unlikely staging ground for a comeback for the evangelical Christian who launched his 2024 campaign in Iowa. Still, politicians of all stripes have managed to break through over the years in a state that has often rewarded those willing to invest time and attention.

Former President Bill Clinton became the "comeback kid" after finishing second here in 1992. The state also helped resurrect Republican John McCain's struggling campaign in 2008. Texas Sen. Ted Cruz, a religious conservative like Pence, scored a strong second place finish in 2016.

Still, the road to relevance for anyone not named Trump in 2024 will be steep.

Pence is essentially trying to reinvent himself as he reintroduces himself to New Hampshire voters. He and his staff have embraced a new mantra: "He is well-known but not known well."

At his first New Hampshire stop this week, Pence largely avoided talking about his years as vice president and did not utter Trump's name. He introduced himself this way: "I'm Mike Pence. I'm from Indiana. And I'm running for president."

Pence's message on the stump is a throwback of sorts to the GOP's conservative platform before Trump's big-government populism took over.

He called for a muscular foreign policy, a recommitment to social conservative values and a sharp reduction in federal spending. He did not mention his support for a federal abortion ban. Breaking from Trump, he also endorsed changes to Social Security for people under 40 to ensure the government-backed safety net program is financially stable.

He spoke with authority, but Pence's political challenges loomed over his New Hampshire tour.

The host of Wednesday's event, former state Senate majority leader Bob Clegg, encouraged every attendee to donate \$1 to the Pence campaign to ensure he reaches the 40,000 individual donor threshold set by the Republican National Committee to qualify.

"They can give more," Pence quipped with a smile. He later added, "We're working around the clock to

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, July 22, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 028 ~ 43 of 81

make sure we get enough donors to be up on that debate stage.”

Despite some chuckles, Pence’s allies privately acknowledge that failing to qualify for the first GOP debate would be a political death sentence.

Pence’s national chairman, veteran Republican strategist Chip Saltsman, would say only, “We’re getting there” when asked how close the campaign was to the donor threshold.

Saltsman dismissed Pence’s struggles as a byproduct of the crowded field, which includes wealthy candidates like North Dakota Gov. Doug Burgum, who offered donors gift cards, and others like DeSantis, whose allied super PAC raised more than \$100 million.

“It’s a lot of ebb and flow,” Saltsman said. “And one thing I know for a fact is I haven’t seen a frontrunner in the summer make it to the Iowa caucus or the New Hampshire primary in the winter yet.”

Sununu, the New Hampshire governor, is also betting on the weight of history to help stop Trump. He noted that primary voters typically wait until a few weeks before the primary to finalize their decision.

New Hampshire’s primary is still six months away.

In an interview, Sununu warned that Trump has no chance of winning the general election and would drag down the rest of the party with him if he’s on the November ballot.

“I’m hoping that most people come to their senses,” Sununu said. “There’s still plenty of time for this roller coaster ride to play out.”

Meanwhile, Pence is seeking the assistance of a higher power.

“This is a nation of faith,” he told the modest collection of primary voters gathered in Clegg’s backyard. “If we will steer our party to a future built on those time-honored conservative principles that have carried our party to victory and to success for the American people over the last 50 years, and if we renew our faith in Him who has guided this great nation since they first set foot on Plymouth Rock — not too far from here — I truly do believe the best days for the greatest nation on earth are yet to come.”

Tony Bennett left his heart to generations of music fans

By DAVID BAUDER AP Entertainment Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — What do Paul McCartney, Queen Latifah, Lady Gaga and Stevie Wonder have in common?

Oh, and Aretha Franklin, k.d. lang, Bono and Billy Joel. Not to mention Carrie Underwood, Judy Garland, John Legend and Placido Domingo. And let’s not forget...

Stop. Listing all of the musicians who performed duets with Tony Bennett would take up our remaining space. His place in music history is already secure.

Bennett, who died at 95 on Friday, was indeed “the last of the great saloon singers of the mid-20th century,” as Charles J. Gans wrote for The Associated Press. Yet that summation befits a man frozen in time, consigned to a specific era, and Tony Bennett was anything but that.

Instead, Bennett transcended generations in a way few musicians have.

He was rightly beloved by older listeners for the way he interpreted the works of songwriters Irving Berlin, Cole Porter, Jerome Kern and George Gershwin in a strong and stalwart voice that remained true into his 90s. He was influenced by and helped popularize jazz, and marched with the Rev. Martin Luther King to fight for civil rights.

He was also admired by those who, if they left their hearts in San Francisco, it was at the corner of Haight-Ashbury, or a trendy dance club.

“I have to think it comes down to the man itself,” said singer Ben Folds, at age 56 four decades younger than Bennett was at the end.

“You hear his voice, it’s super kind, casual and in the moment,” Folds said. “His phrasing is that way, too. There’s nothing that sounds uptight. It’s very generous. A lot of people in his generation didn’t have that appeal because at the end of the day, you didn’t feel that they cared about you.”

Many of Bennett’s successful late-career duets were a tribute to the savvy marketing of his son and manager, Danny, who kept his dad’s career going long past most peers hit their expiration date.

lions said.

The Powerball jackpot also was approaching near-record levels before a tiny neighborhood store in downtown Los Angeles sold the winning ticket for Wednesday's drawing, worth an estimated \$1.08 billion. Mega Millions is played in 45 states, Washington, D.C., and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

As he leaves Phoenix's blistering sun, AP's climate news director reflects on desert life

By PETER PRENGAMAN Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — I blink, and the edges of my eyelids feel like they are being singed. My cheeks burn as if they are being pressed with a hot iron ready to tackle a pile of wrinkled shirts. It is 4 p.m. I look at my 12-year-old son, whose face is flushed. He lets out a groan and puts his hand on his forehead to shield his eyes from the blistering sun.

It is 117 degrees Fahrenheit (47 degrees Celsius).

My family knows being in temperatures like this is dangerous. We've lived here for four years. This time, though, we are outside for only a few minutes to conduct an important experiment: How long will it take to cook a quesadilla on the sidewalk?

Such is life these days in Phoenix, one of the hottest cities in the world. But for us, this summer is our last here; this weekend, I'm moving with my family to New York for my job as — wait for it — The Associated Press' global climate and environment news director.

I'M LEAVING TOWN DURING A UNIQUE SUMMER FOR PHOENIX

Working with AP journalists around the globe on climate change stories, as I have for the past year since taking on this role, I recognize the irony. I'm leaving a city that is having a major climate change moment during a summer we may remember as an inflection point in both in the advancement of global warming and its devastating extreme weather impacts and the developed world's consciousness of what is happening. Developing countries have long been hit particularly hard by climate change.

Earlier this week, Phoenix broke its own record for a major city with consecutive days over 110 degrees Fahrenheit (43 degrees Celsius). That isn't just something for the record books, a quirky factoid for weather buffs. It's significant because there is no end in sight to the heat — and all of July could see 110-degree temperatures or higher.

That would be uncharted territory even for a city accustomed to dealing with extreme heat. It also raises questions about the long-term viability of a metropolitan area that was America's fastest growing between 2010 and 2020, according to the U.S. Census.

For decades, scientists have been warning that the continued burning of fossil fuels would lead to a warming of the planet and more frequent and more intense extreme weather events. We have seen this play out in weather-related disasters around the globe, and Phoenix is not immune. But when the already extreme becomes super extreme, it provides a window into what could be a scary future.

A 'DESERT RAT' MOVES ON

"I'm a desert rat," I've heard friends say, and four years in I know what they mean.

The throngs that have moved here haven't just come for the jobs, though booms in tech, higher education and other industries have brought many. Nor are they just here for cheaper housing compared to other major Western U.S. cities (it doesn't exist anymore; Phoenix has gotten very expensive).

Many people have a deep desire to be here, which may sound strange to many Americans who know only of the city's infamous extreme summer heat. The Arizona desert, filled with giant saguaro cactuses, looming palm trees and menacing terrain, with the powerful sun always beaming above, has a beauty that evokes feelings of freedom and possibility.

Eight months a year, Phoenix weather is nothing short of amazing. Sunny, temperatures ranging from 60 to 85 degrees Fahrenheit (16 to 29 degrees Celsius) and clear skies. Just about every day. The city and surrounding cities like Mesa, Gilbert, Scottsdale, Tempe, Chandler — all part of the larger metropolitan

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, July 22, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 028 ~ 45 of 81

But famous duet partners could have said no. Few did.

Don't think they didn't notice the sweet and tender manner he brought to the studio working with people like Lady Gaga and Amy Winehouse, Folds said. Bennett's duet with Winehouse on "Body and Soul" was the last studio recording she made before she died.

Gaga, the New Yorker born Stefani Germanotta who could appreciate the New Yorker born Anthony Benedetto, became like family and ushered him through musical triumphs with love even as he suffered from Alzheimer's Disease. Bennett drew and signed an image of Miles Davis' trumpet that Gaga wears as a tattoo on her arm.

k.d. lang's formidable voice bowed to no one when she brought it to a series of memorable performances with Bennett in the 1990s.

"He was a place of refuge for the American songbook," lang told the Associated Press. "He made sure that he loved a song. He would not sing any song that he didn't love."

Make no mistake: Bennett brought the goods. Watch a video of him coming on to a Shea Stadium stage to sing "New York State of Mind" with Billy Joel. His guest steals the song, and Joel beams as he watches.

His handiwork has just been blessed by Tony Bennett.

At a San Francisco fundraiser a few years ago, with Alzheimer's insidious impact already apparent, Folds watched stunned as Bennett switched from remarks to a few bars of "I Left My Heart in San Francisco," in perfect pitch.

Bennett exuded an older generation's class, always performing in a tuxedo or tailored suit. In a Los Angeles hotel room in 1994 when an earthquake hit before dawn, Bennett took the time to change into a suit before joining bathrobe-wearing evacuees, the Los Angeles Times noted.

In all of the work he did with contemporary artists, he never sounded age inappropriate, said music critic Jim Farber. Bennett always bent them to his musical will, never the other way around, he said.

"There's this multitude of singers, from Gaga to Diana Krall to John Mayer," lang said. "Now they can carry a certain understanding that they received firsthand from him."

Something more important was usually happening in the audience.

Two years ago, writer Christine Passarella recalled sitting in lawn chairs in a Brooklyn park in the 1980s with her mother and baby daughter, listening to Bennett sing.

"Seeing him live felt like watching an uncle embracing me and my mom, as his music helped us remember my father, my mom's one and only love," she wrote.

Countless numbers of people remember similar moments with family over the years, hearing Bennett's voice wash warmly over them while sitting with a mother or father, a son or daughter. I'm among them.

That is, ultimately, a legacy to be treasured above all.

While North Korea fires cruise missiles, it stays mum on US soldier who crossed into the country

By KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea fired several cruise missiles toward its western sea Saturday, South Korea's military said, marking the second launch event this week, apparently in protest of the docking of a nuclear-armed U.S. submarine in South Korea.

While adding to its barrage of missile launches in recent months, North Korea remained publicly silent for a fifth day on the fate of an American soldier who bolted into the North across the heavily armed Korean border this week.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said the launches were detected beginning around 4 a.m. but did not immediately report how many missiles were fired or how far they flew. It said the United States and South Korean militaries were closely analyzing the launches.

North Korea in recent years has been testing newly developed cruise missiles it describes as "strategic," implying an intent to arm them with nuclear weapons. Experts say the main mission of those weapons would include striking naval assets and ports. Designed to fly like small airplanes and travel along land-

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, July 22, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 028 ~ 46 of 81

scape that would make them harder to detect by radar, cruise missiles are among a growing collection of North Korean weapons aimed at overwhelming missile defenses in the South.

On Wednesday, North Korea fired two short-range ballistic missiles from an area near its capital, Pyongyang. They flew about 550 kilometers (340 miles) before landing in waters east of the Korean Peninsula.

The flight distance of those missiles roughly matched the distance between Pyongyang and the South Korean port city of Busan, where the USS Kentucky on Tuesday made the first visit by a U.S. nuclear-armed submarine to South Korea since the 1980s.

Also Tuesday, American soldier Pvt. Travis King sprinted across the border into North Korea while on a tour of an inter-Korean truce village.

North Korea's state media has yet to comment on King and the country has not responded to U.S. requests to clarify where he is being kept and what his condition is. U.S. officials have expressed concern about King's well-being, considering North Korea's previous rough treatment of some American detainees. It could be weeks, or even months, before North Korea releases meaningful information about King, analysts say, as the country could drag out his detention to maximize leverage and add urgency to U.S. efforts to secure his release.

Some experts say the North may try to use King for propaganda or as a bargaining chip to coax political and security concessions from Washington, possibly tying his release with the United States cutting back its military activities with South Korea.

"With so many moving pieces, it's important not to attribute causation to mere correlation of events. But North Korea's missile provocations do not foreshadow an easy negotiation to secure Travis King's release," said Leif-Eric Easley, a professor at South Korea's Ewha University. "Unauthorized border crossings endanger personnel, risk a political and even military incident, and can be exploited by North Korean hostage diplomacy."

The United States and South Korea have been expanding their combined military exercises and have agreed to increase the regional deployment of U.S. strategic assets like bombers, aircraft carriers and submarines in a show of force against North Korea, which has test-fired around 100 missiles since the start of 2022.

The allies also kicked off new rounds of nuclear contingency planning meetings that are partially aimed at easing fears among the South Korean public about the North's growing nuclear threat and suppressing voices within the country that it should pursue its own deterrent.

North Korea's defense minister issued a veiled threat Thursday suggesting the docking of the Kentucky in South Korea could be grounds for a nuclear attack by the North. North Korea has used such rhetoric before, but the comments underscored how much relations are strained now.

South Korea's Defense Ministry on Friday described the deployment of the Kentucky and the nuclear contingency planning meetings between Washington and Seoul as "defensive response measures" to counter the North Korean threat. The ministry said in a statement it "strongly warns" that any nuclear attack by the North on the allies would face an "immediate, overwhelming and decisive response ... that would bring an end to the North Korean regime."

Barbie mania sweeps Latin America, but sometimes takes on a darker tone

By MARK STEVENSON Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Latin America is taking Barbie mania to an extreme, with everything from pink-colored tacos and pastries, commercial planes bearing the Barbie logo, political ads and even Barbie-themed protests.

But it's not all high heels and pom-poms: Barbie mania in the region has taken on a darker, macabre tone.

In Peru, anti-government demonstrators this week dressed up two women in pink and put them in giant Barbie boxes in the main square of Lima, the capital, to protest current President Dina Boluarte, under

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, July 22, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 028 ~ 47 of 81

whose administration police have often clashed with protesters.

One actress, whose box was labeled "Barbie Dictator," held a pink gun. The doll, according to the box legend, "includes tear gas and dum-dum bullets." Another protester's box was labeled "Genocidal Barbie."

Meanwhile, stores, street vendors and restaurants throughout Latin America are offering up all sorts of Barbie-themed goodies.

In Mexico, there are Barbie tortillas (the corn dough is colored pink with beet juice, with some imprinted with an edible-dye pony-tailed Barbie silhouette); Barbie pastries and Barbie tacos (marinated pork meat served in pink tortillas and accompanied by a strawberry milkshake).

An entire Barbie-themed restaurant opened this week in Guayaquil, Ecuador; it is — of course — built to resemble Barbie's house.

Volaris, a Mexican airline, has painted one of its jets with a Barbie logo and, according to a promotional video, the plane will be piloted by Barbie, not Ken.

The pink craze in the region is such that Barbie mania has now spread into politics.

In Guatemala, presidential candidate Sandra Torres shared a musical TikTok video pitching her as a Barbie who "wants prosperity for all."

Mexican street sellers are peddling a Barbie doll modeled on presidential hopeful Claudia Sheinbaum, a real-life scientist-turned-politician whose own (real) ponytail has become her branding trademark.

The office of Colombian President Gustavo Petro recently raised hackles with a Barbie-theme video — including clips from the film's trailer — to promote an independence day tour of the country. His office quickly removed the poorly made video.

Beyond the pony tails and fun food, there is a darker undercurrent.

In Mexico, a Barbie homage doll sparked controversy when a sister of one of Mexico's 111,000 missing people began sewing Barbie outfits to costume the doll as a "Searching Mother" — a member of a group of volunteers who fan out across Mexico's dusty plains to search for gravesites that might contain their children's remains. Most of the missing appear to have been abducted — and killed — by drug cartels or kidnapping gangs.

This Barbie is clad in a wide-brimmed hat and a sun hood, wears a T-shirt bearing the photo of a missing man and camouflage pants and comes equipped with a shovel. Her creator, volunteer searcher Delia Quiroa, hopes to publicize the plight of mothers who have to carry out the searches and investigations police won't do, and at the same time raise money to continue searching.

One group of volunteer searchers in the western state of Jalisco — the state with the highest number of missing people — questioned whether casting Barbie as the victim of a horrible crime is appropriate.

Barbie "has evolved into a representation of strong, independent women who can do what they want and chase their dreams," the volunteer search group Light of Hope wrote in a statement. "Nobody who is searching for a missing child, spouse or a sibling is doing what they want to do, much less chasing a dream."

"It seems to us an abomination that girls see being a Searching Mother as something normal," the group added.

Quiroa, from the northern border state of Tamaulipas, said her creation is almost an anti-Barbie.

"Barbie is everything a person wants to be, but this is a Barbie who doesn't want to be," she said. "She is what nobody wants to be. Nobody wants to be a searcher, nobody wants to be looking for a family member."

Quiroa has been looking for her brother Roberto since he was kidnapped by drug cartel gunmen in March 2014. Despite carrying out its own searches and pressuring authorities to investigate, the family knows nothing about his whereabouts.

"I think of this as a doll more directed to women, to us, not for girls to play with," Quiroa said.

Vanessa Munguía, widely regarded as Latin America's leading Barbie collector — she numbers her collection in the thousands — says Barbie is particularly popular in Latin America because, until a couple of decades ago, most girls' toys here depicted maternal, home-maker roles.

"Barbie was the only toy I found that told me that there were a million other possibilities. I could be an astronaut, I could be a teacher," said Munguía, who became lawyer.

Asked about depicting Barbie as a "Searching Mother" or any of the other incarnations of the doll, Munguía says she finds it a very valid expression.

"I think that's exactly what we like in Barbie, that we can make her out to be whatever we need her to be at that moment," she said.

___ Associated Press writer Franklin Briceño in Lima, Peru, contributed to this report from Lima, Peru

Russia comes under pressure at UN to avoid global food crisis and revive Ukrainian grain shipments

By EDITH M. LEDERER Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Russia came under pressure at the United Nations Security Council on Friday from its ally China and developing countries as well as Western nations to avert a global food crisis and quickly revive Ukrainian grain shipments.

Moscow was also criticized by the U.N. and council members for attacking Ukrainian ports after pulling out of the year-old grain deal and destroying port infrastructure — a violation of international humanitarian law banning attacks on civilian infrastructure.

In response to Russia declaring wide areas in the Black Sea dangerous for shipping, the U.N. warned that a military incident in the sea could have "catastrophic consequences."

Russia said it suspended the Black Sea Grain Initiative because the U.N. had failed to overcome obstacles to shipping its food and fertilizer to global markets, the other half of the Ukraine grain deal. The Kremlin said it would consider resuming Ukrainian shipments if progress is made in overcoming the obstacles, including in banking arrangements.

China's deputy U.N. ambassador Geng Shuang noted U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres' commitment to make every effort to ensure that both Ukrainian grain and Russian food and fertilizer get to world markets. He expressed hope that Russia and the U.N. will work together to resume exports from both countries "at an early date" in the interest of "maintaining international food security and alleviating the food crisis in developing countries in particular."

U.S. Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield accused Russia of using the Black Sea as "blackmail" and playing political games, pointing to Moscow's export of more grain than ever before at higher prices. She called on the Security Council and all 193 U.N. member nations to come together and urge Russia to resume negotiations in good faith.

Several developing countries warned of the impact of the cutoff in Ukrainian grain shipments, which has already led to a rise in wheat prices.

Gabon's U.N. Ambassador Michel Biang said the grain deal had avoided a spark in grain prices and calmed the risk of food insecurity in the drought-affected Horn of Africa and other regions. He urged talks "to break the current deadlock" and avoid a humanitarian crisis.

Mozambique's U.N. Ambassador Pedro Afonso said Russia's action is certain "to amplify global socio-economic stresses in a world already grappling with a perfect storm of conflict, climate change" and a loss of confidence in multilateral solutions.

Russia's deputy U.N. ambassador Dmitry Polyansky said Russia stands ready to consider rejoining the deal if seven principles from the Russia-U.N. memorandum are implemented. He listed them as "the real not theoretical" lifting of Western sanctions on Russian grain and fertilizer exports, and the lifting of obstacles to Russian banks that service exports, including the immediate connection to the SWIFT global banking system.

Russia also wants the delivery of spare parts for agricultural production to resume, a resolution to issues related to chartering vessels for Russian exports including insurance, the war-damaged ammonia pipeline from Russia to Ukraine to be fixed and other fertilizer issues resolved, Russian assets linked to agricultural production unfrozen, and "the resumption of the initial humanitarian nature of the grain deal," he said.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, July 22, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 028 ~ 49 of 81

Under the deal, Ukraine was given a green light to ship grain from three Black Sea ports, but following Monday's withdrawal Russia said it will consider a ship traveling to Ukrainian ports as being laden with weapons and will treat the country of its flag as a participant in the conflict on Kyiv's side. Ukraine announced that it will also treat ships traveling to Russian Black Sea ports as military targets.

Thomas-Greenfield told the council the United States has information that Russia laid additional sea mines in the approaches to Ukrainian ports and that Russia's military may attack civilian shipping in the Black Sea "and lay blame on Ukraine for these attacks."

U.N. political chief Rosemary DiCarlo strongly condemned Russian attacks on Ukraine's Black Sea ports and urged Moscow to stop them immediately. She said threats to target civilian vessels "are unacceptable" and warned that sea mines can endanger civilian navigation.

"We strongly urge restraint from any further rhetoric or action that could deteriorate the already dangerous situation," she said. "Any risk of conflict spillover as a result of a military incident in the Black Sea – whether intentional or by accident – must be avoided at all costs, as this could result in potentially catastrophic consequences to us all."

China's Geng called on the parties "to remain calm and exercise restraint," abide by international humanitarian law and refrain from attacking civilian infrastructure, "and make every effort to curb the expansion of the conflict to prevent a larger scale humanitarian crisis."

U.N. humanitarian chief Martin Griffiths told the council that a record 362 million people in 69 countries need assistance, "a number that has never been reached anywhere before," requiring an unprecedented \$55 billion. He said the cutoff of Ukrainian grain shipments has already brought not only killings and injuries to civilians and damage to port infrastructure but a 9% spike in wheat prices on Wednesday, the largest since Russia's February 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

The "humanitarian catastrophe" in Ukraine continues to reverberate around the world, Griffiths said, and for many of the 362 million people who need help, a cutoff in critical Ukrainian and Russian grain threatens the future of their families. "Some will go hungry, some will starve, many may die as a result of these decisions," he said.

He came face to face with an alleged serial killer. 12 years later, his tip helped crack the case

By JAKE OFFENHARTZ Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — In the winter of 2010, shortly after police discovered the remains of his roommate and three other women buried on a remote stretch of Long Island shoreline, Dave Schaller provided detectives with a description of the person he believed to be the killer.

More crucially, Schaller told them about his truck.

The man they were looking for was a towering, Frankenstein-like figure with an "empty gaze" who drove a first-generation Chrysler Avalanche, Schaller recalled telling investigators. The man's size stuck out, as did his unusual pick-up truck, which he'd used to flee the house Schaller shared with Amber Costello.

On that night, Schaller said he came home to find the stranger threatening Costello, an occasional sex worker, who had locked herself in the bathroom. The two men came to blows, with the hulking intruder eventually leaving in the truck.

Prosecutors say Costello was last seen alive on Sept. 2, 2010, as she left her home to meet that same client. A witness saw a dark-colored truck drive by the house again shortly after she left.

"When they told me she was dead, he was the first person who jumped in my head," Schaller told The Associated Press. "I've been picturing his face for 13 years."

On July 14, police arrested Rex Heuermann on charges of killing Costello and two other women, Melissa Barthelemy and Megan Waterman. He is the prime suspect in the death of a fourth woman, Maureen Brainard-Barnes. Heuermann, an architect who worked in Manhattan, has pleaded not guilty to the charges.

The arrest marked a stunning breakthrough in the hunt for a serial killer who had eluded investigators and whose crimes gripped Long Islanders since the bodies of four women — all of them sex workers —

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, July 22, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 028 ~ 50 of 81

were found wrapped in burlap near Gilgo Beach.

Within months, the remains of six other bodies, including a toddler, were discovered elsewhere along the same beach highway. Heuermann has not been accused in any of those cases. Police have said the deaths may be the work of multiple killers.

The arrest has brought a measure of relief to families of the victims at a moment when the trail appeared to have gone cold. But as new details emerge about how police finally caught the alleged killer, they've also raised questions about whether investigators adequately pursued a key lead — Schaller's description of the stranger and his truck — that may have helped solve the case sooner.

"This was crucial information, and I don't know why they didn't share it," said Rob Trotta, a county legislator who worked as a Suffolk County Police detective until 2013. "They made some serious blunders here."

Suffolk County District Attorney Ray Tierney, who inherited the investigation when he took office in 2022, said the key to unraveling the case was the description of the truck, discovered by a state investigator after the launch of a new task force formed to take a fresh look at the evidence.

When they ran it through a vehicle records database, one of the results turned up a hit: A man who owned a Chevy Avalanche lived in a neighborhood that investigators were already zeroing in on as the suspect's likely location because of a sophisticated analysis of cellphone location data and call records. Heuermann fit the physical description provided by Schaller, too: He was 6 feet, 4 inches (193 centimeters) tall and weighed 240 pounds (109 kilograms).

Tierney told the AP he did not know why police had not run a search earlier, but suggested the piece of information may have been "lost within a sea of other tips and information."

He stressed there were other elements that ultimately helped investigators arrest Heuermann, including new technology that helped match samples of DNA to the suspect.

"What solved this case was a lot of dedicated investigators, analysts and attorneys from a bunch of agencies getting together and collaborating," he said.

But for Schaller, any feelings of relief over the arrest were soon eclipsed by anger and confusion.

Speaking out for the first time since the arrest, he said he had met with homicide detectives on multiple occasions during the initial years of the investigation.

During one of their final meetings, roughly two years after the women went missing, he said he picked the truck's model out of a line-up of photographs provided by the detectives.

"I gave them the exact description of the truck and the dude," he said. "I mean come on, why didn't they use that?"

The question has vexed some law enforcement officials as well. Two high-ranking officials who worked closely on the case and attended briefings between 2011 and 2013 said they never heard anything about a witness statement describing the suspect and his vehicle.

The law enforcement officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to disclose information about the investigation.

According to a vehicle history report, Heuermann bought the pickup — a dark green, first-generation edition — at a Chevrolet dealer on Long Island in 2002 and transferred ownership to his brother, Craig, in South Carolina in 2012.

Authorities seized the vehicle last week. In a search warrant, they said they were looking for other clues in the vehicle or at property the brothers owned in Chester County, South Carolina, such as DNA, fluids, fingerprints, phones and what they described as possible "trophies" that may have belonged to the victims — clothing, jewelry, Bibles or photos.

Investigators said they were also looking for any electronics, video recordings and writings related to the killings; burlap; duct tape; guns and ammunition; cutting tools; and a specific type of paper towel from the Bounty Modern Print Collection.

While it's not clear whether investigators pursued the tip about the vehicle before last year, those involved in the case pointed to fierce divisions between the various law enforcement agencies — as well as overlapping scandals that engulfed Suffolk County — as a potential explanation for a key clue slipping

through the cracks.

Shortly after taking over the Suffolk County police department in 2012, James Burke moved to end cooperation with the FBI amid federal scrutiny of his own misconduct.

Four years later, Burke was sentenced to 46 months in prison after he was found to have conspired to cover-up his beating of a man who had discovered sex toys and pornography inside his car.

The federal inquiry would also lead to prison sentences for Suffolk County District Attorney Thomas Spota, who oversaw the early years of the Gilgo Beach case, as well as the county's top anticorruption prosecutor, Christopher McPartland.

"This was a dark cloud over the community," recalled Tim Sini, who succeeded Burke as police commissioner and later became the county's district attorney. "When you have the police department and the district attorney's office blocking the FBI, that does not engender trust in law enforcement."

Sini said he inherited an investigation that was "in disarray," with detectives blocked from cooperating not only with federal investigators, but with the neighboring police department in Nassau County, where Heuermann lived.

He declined to say if he knew about the description of a suspect and its vehicle, but noted that his office invested heavily in technology that allowed investigators to track data from cellphone towers used by the suspect's burner phone.

The arrest, Sini said, was the result of painstaking detective work that spanned multiple administrations and relied on a wide range of evidence. But, he added, "I wouldn't call it a major success. The case should've been solved earlier."

Associated Press journalists Michael R. Sisak, Robert Bumsted and Julie Walker contributed to this report.

Texas A&M University president resigns after Black journalist's hiring at campus unravels

By JIM VERTUNO Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Texas A&M University on Friday announced the resignation of its president in the fallout over a Black journalist who said her celebrated hiring at one of the nation's largest campuses quickly unraveled due to pushback over her past work promoting diversity.

President Katherine Banks said in a resignation letter that she was retiring immediately because "negative press has become a distraction" at the nearly 70,000-student campus in College Station.

Her departure after two years as president followed weeks of turmoil at Texas A&M, which only last month had welcomed professor Kathleen McElroy with great fanfare to revive the school's journalism department. McElroy is a former New York Times editor and had overseen the journalism school at the more liberal University of Texas at Austin campus.

But McElroy said soon after her hiring — which included a June ceremony with balloons — she learned of emerging pushback because of her past work to improve diversity and inclusion in newsrooms.

Her exit comes as Republican lawmakers across the U.S. are targeting diversity, equity and inclusion programs on college campuses. That includes Texas, where Republican Gov. Greg Abbott signed a bill in June that dismantles program offices at public colleges.

The A&M System said in a statement that Banks told faculty leaders this week that she took responsibility for the "flawed hiring process." The statement said "a wave of national publicity" suggested McElroy "was a victim of 'anti-woke' hysteria and outside interference in the faculty hiring process."

"I'm deeply grateful for the groundswell of support I've received, especially from Aggies of all majors, and my former and current students," McElroy said in a statement. "There's much more I could say and will say about what has unfolded. But for now, I'll reserve those statements for a future date."

American Association of University Professors President Irene Mulvey criticized Texas A&M's handling of McElroy's hiring, and called efforts against diversity, equity and inclusion in higher education a "misguided culture war."

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, July 22, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 028 ~ 52 of 81

"This will surely result in chilled conditions for academic freedom in teaching and research," said Mulvey, a mathematics professor at Fairfield University.

McElroy previously told The Texas Tribune that she had been "damaged by this entire process" and that she believed she was "being judged by race, maybe gender. And I don't think other folks would face the same bars or challenges."

Her work at the New York Times included research into the relationship between news media and race, notably in newsroom practices, Pulitzers, obituaries and sports.

Gary Bledsoe, president of the Texas NAACP, called Banks' resignation a "wakeup call for all of us" and that Texas A&M's reputation had been damaged. Hart Blanton, the head of Texas A&M's department of communication and journalism, said in a statement Friday that he initiated McElroy's recruitment and claimed that race had played a part in the "unusual scrutiny" of her hiring.

"The failed effort to hire Dr. McElroy is a great loss to A&M and surely caused her great unnecessary suffering," Blanton said.

McElroy said the initial offer of a tenure-track position had been reduced to a five-year post, then again to a one-year job from which she could be fired at any time. The 1981 Texas A&M graduate rejected that offer and chose to stay at the University of Texas as a journalism professor.

In an interview with NPR in 2021, McElroy said journalists should be pushed to find information from beyond what she called traditional sources that "skewed white patriarchy."

"We can't just give people a set of facts anymore," she said. "I think we know that and we have to tell our students that. This is not about getting two sides of a story or three sides of a story, if one side is illegitimate. I think now you cannot cover education, you cannot cover criminal justice, you can't cover all of these institutions without realizing how all these institutions were built."

A right-leaning outlet in Texas highlighted those comments in a story after McElroy's hiring and the publisher Friday said it helped expose a "woke agenda" at Texas A&M.

"Just as a little sunlight sends the cockroaches scurrying, exposing the statements and writings of these #HigherEd propagandists sends them into fits of hysteria," tweeted Michael Quinn Sullivan, the publisher of Texas Scorecard and previous head of a conservative group backed by wealthy GOP donors.

The Rudder Association, which describes itself as a collection of Texas A&M students, former students, faculty and staff who are "dedicated Aggies committed to preserving and perpetuating the core values and unique spirit of Texas A&M," also has acknowledged complaining to school administrators about McElroy's hiring.

"TRA believes that a department head should embrace the egalitarian and merit-based traditions that characterize Texas A&M's values, rather than the divisive ideology of identity politics," the group wrote last week.

At a meeting with university faculty on Wednesday, Banks said she was not involved in the changes to McElroy's contract offer. The faculty then voted to set up a panel to investigate the matter.

According to the university, of its 4,062 faculty members, 2,156, or 53%, are white, and 139, or 3%, are Black. Asians made up 8% of faculty, and Hispanics or Latinos 5%. In fall 2022 student enrollment, 51% were white, 23% were Hispanic, 10% were Asian and 3% were Black.

On Monday, José Luis Bermúdez, interim dean of the Texas A&M College of Arts and Sciences, also announced he would leave that job and return to his faculty position. McElroy said Bemudez had warned her about mounting "hysteria" about diversity, equity and inclusion at Texas A&M and advised her to stay on at Texas.

Banks is the second major university president to resign this week amid turmoil. Stanford President Marc Tessier-Lavigne said Wednesday he would resign Aug. 31, citing an independent review that cleared him of research misconduct but found "serious flaws" in five scientific papers on subjects such as brain development in which he was the principal author.

Associated Press reporter Acacia Coronado contributed to this report.

Tornado damage to Pfizer plant unlikely to cause major drug supply shortages, FDA says

By HANNAH SCHOENBAUM Associated Press/Report for America

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — Most of the destruction from a tornado that tore through eastern North Carolina Wednesday and struck a large Pfizer pharmaceutical plant affected its storage facility, rather than its medicine production areas, the company said Friday.

The drugmaker's ability to salvage production equipment and other essential materials could mitigate what experts feared would be a major blow to an already strained system as the United States grapples with existing drug shortages.

"We do not expect there to be any immediate significant impacts on supply given the products are currently at hospitals and in the distribution system," U.S. Food and Drug Administration Commissioner Robert Califf said Friday.

An EF3 tornado touched down Wednesday near Rocky Mount, ripping the roof off a Pfizer factory responsible for producing nearly 25% of the American pharmaceutical giant's sterile injectable medicines used in U.S. hospitals, according to the drugmaker.

Pfizer said Friday that a warehouse for raw materials, packaging supplies and finished medicines awaiting release had endured most of the damage to its 1.4 million square foot plant. An initial inspection by the company found no major damage to its medicine manufacturing areas, and all 3,200 local employees are safe and accounted for.

Pfizer Chairman and CEO Dr. Albert Bourla said staff are rushing products to nearby sites for storage and identifying sources to rapidly replace raw materials lost in the storm. The drug company says it is also exploring alternative manufacturing locations across its U.S. network to fill gaps in production while the North Carolina site remains closed for repairs.

The FDA's initial analysis identified fewer than 10 drugs for which Pfizer's North Carolina plant is the sole source for the U.S. market, Califf said.

The Rocky Mount plant produces anesthesia and many other drugs needed for surgeries but does not make or store Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine or the Comirnaty and Paxlovid treatments. Medications produced at that facility alone account for nearly 8% of all sterile injectables used in U.S. hospitals, Pfizer said on its website.

The FDA said it will complete in the coming days a more extensive evaluation of the products that might be affected and the current domestic supply of those medications. "Many weeks' worth" of the destroyed drugs should be available in Pfizer's other warehouses, Califf said.

Hannah Schoenbaum 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.

Alabama lawmakers refuse to create 2nd majority-Black congressional district

By KIM CHANDLER and JEFF AMY Associated Press

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (AP) — Alabama on Friday refused to create a second majority-Black congressional district, a move that could defy a recent order from the U.S. Supreme Court to give minority voters a greater voice and trigger a renewed battle over the state's political map.

Lawmakers in the Republican-dominated House and Senate instead passed a plan that would increase the percentage of Black voters from about 31% to 40% in the state's 2nd District. The map was a compromise between plans that had percentages of 42% and 38% for the southeast Alabama district. GOP Gov. Kay Ivey quickly signed it.

State lawmakers faced a deadline to adopt new district lines after the Supreme Court in June upheld a

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, July 22, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 028 ~ 54 of 81

three-judge panel's finding that the current state map — with one majority-Black district out of seven in a state that is 27% Black — likely violates the federal Voting Rights Act.

Voting rights advocates and Black lawmakers said the plan invoked the state's Jim Crow history of treating Black voters unfairly.

Former U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder, chairman of the National Democratic Redistricting Committee, said the map, "and the Republican politicians who supported it, would make George Wallace proud," referring to the segregationist former Alabama governor.

"It arrogantly defies a very conservative United States Supreme Court decision ... from just weeks ago," Holder said in a statement.

Republicans argued that their proposal complies with the directive to create a second district where Black voters could influence the outcome of congressional elections. Opponents said it flouted a directive from the panel to create a second majority-Black district or "something quite close to it" so that Black voters "have an opportunity to elect a representative of their choice."

The 140-seat Alabama Legislature has 33 Black lawmakers. All but one are Democrats.

"There's no opportunity there for anybody other than a white Republican to win that district. It will never, ever elect a Democrat. They won't elect a Black. They won't elect a minority," said Sen. Rodger Smitherman, a Democrat from Birmingham.

Republicans have been reluctant to create a Democratic-leaning district and are engaging in a high-stakes wager that the panel will accept their proposal or that the state will prevail in a second round of appeals. Republicans argued that the map meets the court's directive and draws compact districts that comply with redistricting guidelines.

"If you think about where we were, the Supreme Court ruling was 5-4, so there's just one judge that needed to see something different. And I think the movement that we have and what we've come to compromise on today gives us a good shot," House Speaker Nathaniel Ledbetter said.

Republican Senate President Pro Tem Greg Reed said he believed the changes to the district make it a so-called opportunity district.

"I'm confident that we've done a good job. It will be up to the courts to decide whether they agree," Reed said.

The debate in Alabama is being closely watched across the nation, and could be mirrored in fights in Louisiana, Georgia, Texas and other states.

The three-judge panel ruled in 2022 that the current legislative map likely violates the federal Voting Rights Act and said any map should include two districts where "Black voters either comprise a voting-age majority" or something close. The Supreme Court concurred.

Now that the plan has passed, the fight will shift quickly back to the federal court to debate whether Alabama's congressional districts comply with federal law and offer a fair opportunity to Black voters and candidates in a political landscape dominated by white Republicans.

Black Alabama lawmakers say it's crucial that their constituents have a better chance of electing their choices.

"I have people in my district saying their vote doesn't count, and I understand why they say that," Rep. Thomas Jackson, a Thomasville Democrat, said during debate Friday. "The person they want to elect can never get elected because they are in the minority all the time."

Black lawmakers disputed that the changes to the 2nd District, an area with deep ties to agriculture and home to military bases, would easily become a swing district. They speculated that state Republicans were seeking to mount another challenge to federal voting law.

"This is designed to protect a few people and ultimately to finish off the Voting Rights Act," said Rep. Chris England, a Democratic lawmaker from Tuscaloosa.

An analysis by The Associated Press, using redistricting software, shows that the 2nd District proposed Friday has mostly voted for Republicans in recent statewide elections. Donald Trump won the district by nearly 10 percentage points in his 2020 reelection bid.

Experts have said the GOP proposals fall short of what the Supreme Court said last month is required. "They have pretended as though the court didn't say what it said," said Kareem Crayton, senior director for voting and representation at New York University's Brennan Center for Justice, which filed a brief supporting the plaintiffs before the Supreme Court.

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.

New report points to homicide rate declines in US cities after pandemic-era spike

By LINDSAY WHITEHURST Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Homicides are declining in a cross-section of American cities, though their numbers remain higher than before the coronavirus pandemic took hold, according to a new report analyzing data from 30 U.S. cities.

Homicides on average dropped 9.4% during the first half of 2023 as compared to the same period last year, the nonpartisan Council on Criminal Justice found in a report released this week.

The numbers remained about 24% higher than they were in 2019, and motor vehicle thefts were up sharply in the analyzed cities.

"We're seeing a continuing decline in homicides, but most cities are not back to levels that prevailed prior to the pandemic," said Richard Rosenfeld, a professor of criminology and criminal justice at the University of Missouri-St. Louis and co-author of the report.

The report is based on crime data posed online by police departments in 37 cities of varying sizes around the country. Several of the nation's largest cities, including New York, Los Angeles and Chicago, are represented, but researchers didn't have immediate access to data for others, like Houston and San Diego. Of the cities that did post crime data online, 30 included homicide numbers and 20 of those showed declines.

While the analysis doesn't capture the entire country, it's another piece of evidence that U.S. crime rates overall are trending downward after a historic jump during the pandemic, said Jeff Asher, a crime analyst and consultant at AH Datalytics who wasn't involved in producing the report. He maintains a crime database of murder rates in about 100 cities and has made similar findings.

"It's been a widespread decline. It's not everywhere, but it's been widespread enough that it's not simple randomness," he said.

The homicide declines come after an increase in 2020 of 29%, according to FBI data. It was largest one-year jump since the agency's record-keeping began, though still below historic highs of the 1990s.

That increase came during the COVID-19 pandemic, which created huge social disruption and upended support systems. The rise in crime defied easy explanation, though experts pointed to several possible factors, including unprecedented pressures of the pandemic on both citizens and the police, gun violence, social unrest after high-profile incidents of police violence and deep economic turmoil.

FBI crime data, typically the country's most comprehensive, has pointed to violent crime rates beginning to level out in 2021, but the agency's most recent data was incomplete. Nearly 40% of agencies, including big cities like New York, Los Angeles and Miami, didn't send in their data for 2021 due to an overhaul in the FBI reporting system.

The Fargo shooter used a binary trigger. Here's what to know about the device that's worrying police

By CLAUDIA LAUER Associated Press

Sitting in a parked car with an arsenal of weapons and ammunition, the man who fired on police officers in North Dakota earlier this month chose to use the one gun in his vehicle that was modified with

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, July 22, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 028 ~ 56 of 81

a binary trigger. The device allowed the gun to fire so rapidly that it sounded like an automatic weapon. The July 14 shooting in Fargo, which killed one officer and wounded two others and a civilian, has put a spotlight on the device and other trigger modifications that are a growing concern for law enforcement.

Mohamad Barakat, 37, opened fire on the officers as they responded to a car accident. He shot from his vehicle loaded with guns, a homemade grenade, gasoline canisters, propane tanks containing improvised explosives, and more than 1,800 rounds of ammunition, police said. Barakat was killed by a fourth officer who returned fire.

North Dakota Attorney General Drew Wrigley said on Friday that he believes the violence could have been the beginning of a bigger attack, as the Downtown Fargo Street Fair and the Red River Valley Fair were underway.

Wrigley noted that Barakat had four semi-automatic handguns and three semi-automatic rifles, but only one of them — the one he picked to go on his shooting rampage — had a binary trigger.

Here's a look at the device, regulations around binary triggers and how they differ from bump stocks:
WHAT ARE BINARY TRIGGERS?

A binary trigger is a modification that allows a weapon to fire one round when the trigger is pulled and another when it is released — in essence doubling the firing capacity, firearms experts and weapons manufacturers say.

The modifications are relatively inexpensive, running a few hundred dollars depending on the model. They are also a relatively new technology, first released in 2015 partly in response to federal regulators seeking to expand the scope of banning modifications that create automatic weapons.

WHAT REGULATIONS EXIST ON BINARY TRIGGERS?

They are legal in most states and at the federal level. Federal regulations don't yet cover the sale of binary trigger modifications, said Robert Spitzer, a professor at the College of William & Mary Law School whose research focuses on gun policy and politics.

"It's a matter of technology outrunning regulation, which is not a new thing," Spitzer said.

Some states do ban the purchase of binary triggers specifically or modifications like binary triggers generally. The manufacturer websites note that they cannot sell them to civilians in 12 states, including California, New York, Florida and others or in Washington D.C. At least one other state not listed on the seller websites has a partial ban on similar modifications, firearm law experts said.

HOW DO BINARY TRIGGERS DIFFER FROM BUMP STOCKS?

Bump stocks are a frame or component added onto the back of semi-automatic weapons that allow them to fire like machine guns by using the recoil from an initial trigger pull to fire multiple rounds.

Under former President Donald Trump's administration, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives moved to ban bump stocks after the 2017 mass shooting at a Las Vegas music festival where a gunman using bump stock-modified weapons killed 60 people. Federal regulators argued that bump stocks fell under 1934 and 1986 federal regulations on automatic weapons.

The ban survived multiple challenges around the country until January, when a U.S. Appeals Court in New Orleans ruled in favor of challengers who argued the federal regulations against machine guns don't specifically cover bump stocks.

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives has also made moves to regulate what are called "forced reset triggers," saying they also created, in essence, machine guns out of semi-automatic weapons by adding a spring to a trigger, allowing it to reset and fire faster.

Greg Wallace, a professor at the Campbell University Norman Adrian Wiggins School of Law who has studied firearm laws, said binary triggers work on a completely different mechanism than forced reset triggers. He said binary triggers modify the component of the trigger that holds the hammer or striking mechanism back.

Wallace said he agreed with several articles that have called binary triggers a gimmick "having little, if any, practical real-world use."

—

Associated Press writer Heather Hollingsworth in Mission, Kansas, contributed to this report.

New Jersey sues federal highway officials in bid to stop New York City's plan to charge big tolls

TRENTON, N.J. (AP) — New Jersey has filed a federal lawsuit aimed at stopping New York's plan to charge big tolls to drive into the most visited parts of Manhattan, arguing that New Jersey residents and towns will bear the brunt without benefiting.

New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy announced his state's plans on Friday. The lawsuit against the Federal Highway Administration claims the agency's approval of the plan last month was "misguided" and violates the National Environmental Policy Act. New Jersey also wants a more comprehensive environmental study conducted for the plan.

New York officials have said the first-in-the-nation plan is part of an effort to reduce traffic, to improve air quality and to raise funds for the city's public transit system. Murphy, though, said commuters headed in to the city will instead find different ways to avoid paying higher tolls, resulting in more traffic and more pollution.

"(The FHA) finding that the MTA congestion pricing program will not have any significant impacts is an error," Murphy, said. The Democratic governor also called the tolls "anti-environmental, anti-commuter, and anti-business."

The federal Department of Transportation declined to comment on the lawsuit, but the MTA called it "baseless."

John J. McCarthy, the MTA's external relations chief, said the 4,000-page Environmental Assessment performed by the MTA, New York State DOT and New York City DOT "was supervised at every stage and specifically approved by the Biden administration." The MTA statement also said the review covered "every conceivable potential traffic, air quality, social and economic effect," and responded to more than 80,000 comments and submissions.

People headed into Manhattan already pay big tolls to use many of the bridges and tunnels connecting commuters across the Hudson, East and Harlem Rivers. The special tolls for the southern half of Manhattan would come on top of those existing charges. Taxi and car service drivers have objected to the plan, saying it would make fares unaffordable.

The new tolls are expected to generate another \$1 billion yearly, which would be used to finance upgrading the subway, bus and commuter rail systems operated by the MTA.

The state Legislature approved a conceptual plan for congestion pricing back in 2019, but the coronavirus pandemic combined with a lack of guidance from federal regulators stalled the project.

Man who ambushed Fargo officers likely had bigger and bloodier attack in mind, attorney general says

By JACK DURA and HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH Associated Press

FARGO, N.D. (AP) — The heavily armed man who ambushed Fargo police officers investigating a fender bender last week likely had a bigger and bloodier attack in mind, with at least two fairs taking place at the time in and around North Dakota's largest city, authorities said Friday.

Mohamad Barakat killed one officer and wounded two others and a bystander before a fourth officer shot and killed him, ending the July 14 attack.

Over the past five years, Barakat, 37, searched the internet for terms including "kill fast," "explosive ammo," "incendiary rounds," and "mass shooting events," state Attorney General Drew Wrigley said Friday during a news conference in Fargo, a city of about 125,000 people. But perhaps the most chilling search was for "area events where there are crowds," which on July 13 brought up a news article with the headline, "Thousands enjoy first day of Downtown Fargo Street Fair."

Had Officer Zach Robinson not killed Barakat, authorities said they shudder to think how much worse

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, July 22, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 028 ~ 58 of 81

the attack might have been. All evidence suggests that Barakat came upon the traffic crash by “happencence” and that his ensuing ambush was a diversion from his much bigger intended target, Wrigley said.

“The horrible winds of fate sometimes,” he said. “Those events fell into place and fell into his path.”

On the day of the attack, the downtown fair was in its second day and was less than 3 miles (5 kilometers) from the crash scene. It’s unclear if it was the intended target, though, as Barakat also searched for information on the Red River Valley Fair, which was just a 6-mile (10-kilometer) drive from the scene, the attorney general said.

After driving by the fender bender, Barakat pulled into an adjacent parking lot to watch from his parked car, Wrigley said. He said Barakat’s car was loaded with guns, a homemade grenade, more than 1,800 rounds of ammunition, three “largish” containers full of gasoline, plus two propane tanks, one completely filled and the other half-filled not with propane, but with “explosive materials concocted at home, purchased lawfully.”

With police and firefighters busy helping, Barakat watched for several minutes until the officers walked by him, when he lifted a .223-caliber rifle out of his car window and began firing, Wrigley said.

The rifle had a binary trigger that allowed it to fire so rapidly that it sounded like an automatic weapon, he said. A binary trigger is a modification that allows a weapon to fire one round when the trigger is pulled and another when it is released — in essence doubling a gun’s firing capacity. The three officers who were shot had no time to react and fell in rapid succession. He also shot and wounded a fleeing woman, Karlee Koswick, who had been involved in the fender bender, he said.

Robinson, who was badly outgunned but was the only officer at the scene who hadn’t been shot, engaged Barakat in a two-minute shootout. It ended with Robinson shooting and killing Barakat as bystanders crouched nearby.

Wrigley described Robinson as “the last man standing in that blue line at that moment.”

“What he was standing between was not just the horrible events that were unfolding there, but between the horrible events that Mohamad Barakat had envisioned, planned and intended and armed himself for — beyond fully — that day,” he said.

Barakat killed Officer Jake Wallin, 23, who served in Iraq and Afghanistan with the Minnesota Army National Guard, and wounded Officers Andrew Dotas and Tyler Hawes. Wallin and Hawes were so new that they were still undergoing field training.

Barakat was a Syrian national who came to the U.S. on an asylum request in 2012 and became a U.S. citizen in 2019, Wrigley said, adding that he didn’t appear to have any ties to the Muslim community in Fargo. He said Barakat had some family in the U.S., but not in the Fargo area, and that investigators are still looking into his history before he arrived in the country.

In recent years, Barakat amassed his arsenal. And his internet searches about causing mayhem date back to 2018, with periods in which they abated before picking back up, the attorney general said. Nothing from online, Barakat’s phones, the community or his family suggested he had a hatred of the police, he said.

At this stage in the investigation, it seems all of his weapons were purchased legally, and he had many of them in his car on the day of the shooting, Wrigley said. The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives is looking into whether he got any of the gun components illegally.

Wrigley said Barakat was wearing a vest that was “absolutely stuffed” with magazines and that he “was putting the finishing touches on his shooting skills in the last hours before this assault.”

As for the propane tanks, Wrigley said it was “quite dramatic” when the bomb squad detonated them. He suggested the tanks contained something similar to Tannerite, a commercial explosive that can be easily detonated with a shot from a high-powered rifle.

“Obvious motive to kill,” Wrigley said. “I mean, driven by hate. Driven by wanting to kill. Not particularized to some group that we can discern at this moment, not particularized to one individual that we can see.”

Barakat had worked odd jobs, and briefly trained as an emergency responder at a nearby community college. He had no criminal record or social media presence and had so little contact with other people that the only photo law enforcement could provide was a blurry image of him lifted from a video.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, July 22, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 028 ~ 59 of 81

He had, however, been reported to something called the Guardian Threat Tracking System. The FBI routinely opens what it refers to internally as assessments -- the lowest level, least intrusive and most elementary stage of a terrorism-related inquiry -- when it receives unconfirmed information about potentially suspicious behavior.

That information is catalogued in the Guardian system. During the assessment stage of an investigation, FBI agents are permitted to take certain basic investigative steps such as conducting online research or visual surveillance, but more sophisticated tools such as wiretaps cannot be undertaken without additional evidence of wrongdoing.

Mac Schneider, the U.S. attorney for North Dakota, said the Guardian system is a way for members of the public to engage with local law enforcement about "things of concern." But he provided no additional details.

Whether Barakat had intended to survive the attack was unclear. He wore no body armor but did have a way to monitor what was happening at his apartment from afar, perhaps suggesting he had a plan, Wrigley said.

He added that there was no immediate indication that anyone had helped Barakat.

"There are lone wolves," Wrigley said. "That's a real concept."

Wrigley said Koswick was badly injured and will have a difficult recovery. Zibolski said the wounded officers were briefly able to stand up out of their hospital beds on Thursday.

Meanwhile, a funeral service is planned for Saturday for Wallin, whose body was cremated in his police uniform.

Associated Press reporters Steve Karnowski in Minneapolis and Eric Tucker in Washington in contributed to this report.

North Korea is a land of stories that don't often get told. Here are some that did

By The Associated Press undefined

With a U.S. soldier crossing the border into North Korea at the border town of Panmunjom and in custody this week, talk turns to the nation itself — a country that is known for its suspicion of outsiders but also rejects frequent descriptions of it as reclusive.

In some ways, North Korea is a nation like many others; it is also definitively its own thing, sometimes strikingly different from the rest of the world.

For six years until his death in 2019, longtime Associated Press Asia correspondent Eric Talmadge was the news organization's Pyongyang bureau chief. In that role, with regular access unusual for a journalist from the West, he wrote many stories that explored the nation's culture, politics and economics during the rule of third-generation leader Kim Jong Un.

As the drama around the American soldier plays out, here is a selection of some of Talmadge's AP coverage that pulls back the curtain on a society that few around the world see.

-
- The real revolution in North Korea is the rise of consumer culture.
 - This AP word cloud reveals the patterns in North Korean propaganda.
 - Yes, canned soup may be fueling North Korea's air force.
 - With its options limited, North Korea is lit by flashlights and a creaky grid.
 - First person: How the Pyeongchang Olympics might feel to a North Korean.
 - North Korean economics 101: How much is a dollar worth?
 - Postcard from Pyongyang: The airport now has Wi-Fi, sort of.
 - K-pop and fancy sneakers: Kim Jong Un's cultural revolution.
 - Swedes keep a room ready for U.S. diplomats in Pyongyang.
 - North Korea's construction boom may build more than a skyline.

— North Korea learns to embrace its inner consumer.
— World's tallest empty hotel lit up by North Korean propaganda.
Additionally, former AP Pyongyang photographer Wong Maye-E made this series of portraits of North Koreans that offer a glimpse into the nation's people and culture.

Find more AP North Korea news here. To see Talmadge's Instagram images of North Korea, click here.

CLIMATE GLIMPSE: Here's what you need to see and know today

By The Associated Press undefined

As the U.S.-Mexico border region baked in a heat wave, Associated Press photographer Gregory Bull took to the streets of cities there. Bull photographed a homeless man talking with Maribel Padilla of the Brown Bag Coalition after receiving a wet towel in Calexico, Calif. Once temperatures hit 113 degrees Fahrenheit (45 Celsius), Padilla's nonprofit provides cool towels and refreshments to unhoused people.

In India, rescuers found five more bodies Friday in western Maharashtra state, raising the death toll from a landslide triggered by torrential rains to at least 21 with many others feared trapped under the debris. And in Switzerland, authorities closed airspace in a sliver of the country after recreational hang gliders hampered efforts to fight a persistent wildfire.

Here's what's happening related to extreme weather and the climate right now:

—In the United States, coral reefs around the Florida Keys are losing their color early this summer because of record-high water temperatures, and federal scientists are already seeing some bleaching, report Terry Spencer and Patrick Whittle.

—With global warming, scientists are warning that disease-carrying mosquitos are on the move around the world, Mary Katherine Wildeman reports in an AP collaboration with Grist.

—In the United States and India, there are efforts to install solar panels over canals to produce clean energy and reduce evaporation of precious water, report Brittany Peterson and Sibi Arasu.

—As temperatures sizzle around the world, people seek sometimes creative ways to get relief from the heat. AP photo gallery.

QUOTABLE:

"The corals are pale, it looks like the color's draining out. And some individuals are stark white. And we still have more to come." – researcher Katey Lesneski, who has observed some Florida Keys coral reefs losing their color weeks earlier than normal this summer from record high water temperatures.

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

Amazon, Google, Meta, Microsoft and other tech firms agree to AI safeguards set by the White House

By MATT O'BRIEN and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden said Friday that new commitments by Amazon, Google, Meta, Microsoft and other companies that are leading the development of artificial intelligence technology to meet a set of AI safeguards brokered by his White House are an important step toward managing the "enormous" promise and risks posed by the technology.

Biden announced that his administration has secured voluntary commitments from seven U.S. companies meant to ensure that their AI products are safe before they release them. Some of the commitments call for third-party oversight of the workings of the next generation of AI systems, though they don't detail who will audit the technology or hold the companies accountable.

"We must be clear eyed and vigilant about the threats emerging technologies can pose," Biden said, adding that the companies have a "fundamental obligation" to ensure their products are safe.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, July 22, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 028 ~ 61 of 81

"Social media has shown us the harm that powerful technology can do without the right safeguards in place," Biden added. "These commitments are a promising step, but we have a lot more work to do together."

A surge of commercial investment in generative AI tools that can write convincingly human-like text and churn out new images and other media has brought public fascination as well as concern about their ability to trick people and spread disinformation, among other dangers.

The four tech giants, along with ChatGPT-maker OpenAI and startups Anthropic and Inflection, have committed to security testing "carried out in part by independent experts" to guard against major risks, such as to biosecurity and cybersecurity, the White House said in a statement.

That testing will also examine the potential for societal harms, such as bias and discrimination, and more theoretical dangers about advanced AI systems that could gain control of physical systems or "self-replicate" by making copies of themselves.

The companies have also committed to methods for reporting vulnerabilities to their systems and to using digital watermarking to help distinguish between real and AI-generated images or audio known as deepfakes.

Executives from the seven companies met behind closed doors with Biden and other officials Friday as they pledged to follow the standards.

"He was very firm and clear" that he wanted the companies to continue to be innovative, but at the same time "felt that this needed a lot of attention," Inflection CEO Mustafa Suleyman said in an interview after the White House gathering.

"It's a big deal to bring all the labs together, all the companies," said Suleyman, whose Palo Alto, California-based startup is the youngest and smallest of the firms. "This is supercompetitive and we wouldn't come together under other circumstances."

The companies will also publicly report flaws and risks in their technology, including effects on fairness and bias, according to the pledge.

The voluntary commitments are meant to be an immediate way of addressing risks ahead of a longer-term push to get Congress to pass laws regulating the technology.

Some advocates for AI regulations said Biden's move is a start but more needs to be done to hold the companies and their products accountable.

"A closed-door deliberation with corporate actors resulting in voluntary safeguards isn't enough," said Amba Kak, executive director of the AI Now Institute. "We need a much more wide-ranging public deliberation, and that's going to bring up issues that companies almost certainly won't voluntarily commit to because it would lead to substantively different results, ones that may more directly impact their business models."

While voluntary, agreeing to submit to "red team" tests that poke at their AI systems is not an easy promise, said Suleyman.

"The commitment we've made to have red-teamers basically try to break our models, identify weaknesses and then share those methods with the other large language model developers is a pretty significant commitment," Suleyman said.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., has said he will introduce legislation to regulate AI and is working closely with the Biden administration "and our bipartisan colleagues" to build upon the pledges made Friday.

A number of technology executives have called for regulation, and several attended an earlier White House summit in May.

Microsoft President Brad Smith said in a blog post Friday that his company is making some commitments that go beyond the White House pledge, including support for regulation that would create a "licensing regime for highly capable models."

Some experts and upstart competitors worry that the type of regulation being floated could be a boon for deep-pocketed first-movers led by OpenAI, Google and Microsoft as smaller players are elbowed out by the high cost of making their AI systems adhere to regulatory strictures.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, July 22, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 028 ~ 62 of 81

The White House pledge notes that it mostly only applies to models that “are overall more powerful than the current industry frontier,” set by recent models such as OpenAI’s GPT-4 and image generator DALL-E 2 and similar releases from Anthropic, Google and Amazon.

A number of countries have been looking at ways to regulate AI, including European Union lawmakers negotiating sweeping AI rules for the 27-nation bloc that could restrict applications deemed to have the highest risks.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres recently said the United Nations is “the ideal place” to adopt global standards and appointed a board that will report back on options for global AI governance by the end of the year.

Guterres also said he welcomed calls from some countries for the creation of a new U.N. body to support global efforts to govern AI, inspired by such models as the International Atomic Energy Agency or the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

The White House said Friday that it has consulted on the voluntary commitments with a number of countries.

The pledge is heavily focused on safety risks but doesn’t address other worries about the latest AI technology, including the effect on jobs and market competition, the environmental resources required to build the models, and copyright concerns about the writings, art and other human handiwork being used to teach AI systems how to produce human-like content.

Last week, OpenAI and The Associated Press announced a deal for the AI company to license AP’s archive of news stories. The amount it will pay for that content was not disclosed.

O’Brien reported from Providence, Rhode Island.

DeSantis downplays Jan. 6, says it wasn’t an insurrection but a ‘protest’ that ‘ended up devolving’

By MICHELLE L. PRICE Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis on Friday downplayed the deadly Jan. 6, 2021, attack at the U.S. Capitol, saying it was not an insurrection but rather a “protest” that “ended up devolving, you know, in a way that was unfortunate, of course.”

DeSantis, speaking in an interview on the podcast of comedian Russell Brand, said the idea that Jan. 6 “was a plan to somehow overthrow the government of the United States is not true, and it’s something that the media had spun up.”

The violent attack by a mob of supporters loyal to then-President Donald Trump was fueled by lies that the 2020 election was stolen. Rioters stormed the building in an attempt to stop Congress from certifying Joe Biden’s election victory, breaking windows, fighting police officers and forcing lawmakers and former Vice President Mike Pence to flee for their lives. Nine deaths were linked to the attack, including four officers who later died by suicide.

“If somebody is honestly doing an insurrection against the U.S. government, then prove that that’s the case and I’ll be happy to accept it, but all you’re showing me is that there were a lot of protesters there and it ended up devolving, you know, in a way that were unfortunate, of course. But to say that they were seditionists is just wrong,” said DeSantis, a Republican presidential candidate who was campaigning in Utah on Friday.

Six Oath Keepers, including the group’s founder, Stewart Rhodes, were convicted of seditious conspiracy over the course of two trials for what prosecutors said was a plot to stop the transfer of power from Trump to Biden. Former Proud Boys national chairman Enrique Tarrio and three other members of that extremist group were convicted of the seditious conspiracy charge in May.

They were convicted on the Civil War-era charge, which requires prosecutors to prove people conspired to overthrow the government, for orchestrating a weeklong plot that culminated in the attack.

More than 1,000 people have been charged with federal crimes related to the Capitol riot. Over 600

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, July 22, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 028 ~ 63 of 81

of them have pleaded guilty, while approximately 100 others have been convicted after trials decided by judges or juries. More than 550 riot defendants have been sentenced, with over half receiving terms of imprisonment ranging from six days to the 18 years Rhodes received.

More than 250 people have been charged with assaulting or impeding law enforcement who were trying to protect the Capitol, including more than 85 accused of using a deadly or dangerous weapon or causing serious bodily injury to an officer.

DeSantis, in his comments Friday, also said it was "ridiculous" how much money was being provided for the U.S. Capitol police in the wake of the attack.

The Florida governor is now challenging both Trump and Pence for the 2024 Republican presidential nomination.

Trump, who has praised the rioters as "patriots," broke the news earlier this week that he has been informed he is a target of the Justice Department's investigation into efforts to overturn the results of the 2020 presidential election, including the events leading up to the Jan. 6 attack.

Pence has denounced Trump over Jan. 6, saying that the former president endangered his family and everyone else at the Capitol that day and that history will hold him accountable.

DeSantis comments are in line with other Republican supporters of Trump who've minimized the attack to varying degrees. DeSantis has been seeking to appeal to Trump supporters as he campaigns for the White House, often portraying Trump as having failed to follow through on his own policies.

The Florida governor has made similar comments in the past dismissing that the attack was an insurrection, saying at a January 2022 news conference that it was "an insult to people" to call it an insurrection when "nobody has been charged with that."

At a campaign event in June in New Hampshire, DeSantis said he "didn't enjoy seeing" what happened on Jan. 6 but said "we've got to go forward on this stuff. We cannot be looking backwards."

Earlier this week, DeSantis criticized Trump's actions on Jan. 6, saying, "He should have come out more forcefully," but questioned whether Trump's behavior was a crime.

AI is the wild card in Hollywood's strikes. Here's an explanation of its unsettling role

By ANDREW DALTON AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Artificial intelligence has surged to the forefront of Hollywood's labor fights. Standing alongside more traditional disputes over pay models, benefits and job protections, AI technology is the wild card in the contract breakdowns that have led actors and writers unions to go on strike.

The technology has pushed negotiations into unknown territory, and the language used can sound utopian or dystopian depending on the side of the table. Here's a look at what the unions and their employers each say they want.

WHY IS ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE SUCH A HOT-BUTTON ISSUE?

As the technology to create without creators emerges, star actors fear they will lose control of their lucrative likenesses. Unknown actors fear they'll be replaced altogether. Writers fear they'll have to share credit or lose credit to machines.

The proposed contracts that led to both strikes last only three years. Even at the seeming breakneck pace at which AI is moving, it's very unlikely there would be any widespread displacement of writers or actors in that time. But unions and employers know that ground given on an issue in one contract can be hard to reclaim in the next.

Emerging versions of the tech have already filtered into nearly every part of filmmaking, used to de-age actors like Harrison Ford in the latest "Indiana Jones" film or Mark Hamill in "The Mandalorian," to generate the abstracted animated images of Samuel L. Jackson and a swirl of several aliens in the intro to "Secret Invasion" on Disney+, and to give recommendations on Netflix.

All sides in the strikes acknowledge that use of the technology even more broadly is inevitable. That's why all are looking now to establish legal and creative control.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, July 22, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 028 ~ 64 of 81

Actor and writer Johnathan McClain said the battle echoes fights over automation across other industries, but foretells many more to come as tech becomes better.

"It's easy to marginalize what we do because it's entertainment" McClain said on the picket lines outside Warner Bros. Studios. "And I get it. But I feel on some level we are, as far as this tech conversation is concerned, a little bit of a canary in a coal mine. This is an important moment and we've got to really make a decisive stand."

THE ACTORS' TAKE

AI discussions between the Screen Actors Guild–American Federation of Television and Radio Artists and the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers, which represents employers, went from a theoretical framework to a bitter battle that spilled into the public when the strike broke out July 13.

In a description widely shared by outraged actors on social media, SAG-AFTRA released this characterization of the studios' AI position, which the AMPTP called a deliberate distortion:

"We want to be able to scan a background performer's image, pay them for a half a day's labor, and then use an individual's likeness for any purpose forever without their consent," the union said. "We also want to be able to make changes to principal performers' dialogue, and even create new scenes, without informed consent. And we want to be able to use someone's images, likenesses, and performances to train new generative AI systems without consent or compensation."

The AMPTP said in a statement in response that its offers included an "AI proposal which protects performers' digital likenesses, including a requirement for performers' consent for the creation and use of digital replicas or for digital alterations of a performance."

SAG-AFTRA used similar language in describing what they wanted, emphasizing the need to protect "human-created work" including alterations to the "voice, likeness or performance" of an actor.

It may be fitting that "voice" comes first on that list. While many viewers still cringe at the visual avatars of actors like Hamill and Jackson, the aural tech feels further along.

The voices of the late Anthony Bourdain and the late Andy Warhol have both been recreated for recent documentaries.

Union members who make a living doing voiceovers have taken note.

WRITERS WANT THEIR LINE OF CREDIT

In screenwriters' contract talks, which broke down in early May, the Writers Guild of America said it would allow for the use of AI — but only insofar as it was a tool for them to use in their own work.

They would be willing, potentially, to shape stories with help from AI software. But they do not want it to affect the credits that are essential to their prestige and pay.

The guild wants to prevent raw, AI-generated storylines or dialogue from being regarded as "literary material" — a term in their contracts for scripts and other story forms a screenwriter produces. This means they wouldn't be competing with computers for credit — or for an original screenplay Oscar.

The writers also don't want those storylines or dialogue to be considered "source material" — their contractual language for the novels, video games or other works that writers may develop into scripts.

The AMPTP said in a document outlining its position that writers "want to be able to use this technology as part of their creative process, without changing how credits are determined, which is complicated given AI material can't be copyrighted."

The studios also emphasized that previous writers' contracts established that any "corporate or impersonal purveyor" of literary is not a screenwriter.

"Only a 'person' can be considered a writer," the AMPTP said. "AI-generated material would not be eligible for writing credit."

While this position could assuage writers' worries about sharing credit with AI, it could also lead to no one getting credit when they "collaborate" with AI.

Modern screenwriting contracts, and who gets what credit, are already a bramble that the guild often has to step in and sort out. Detailed legal language is pulled out to determine whose name is preceded by "written by," whose name comes before "story by" or whose name follows "from characters created by."

Putting artificial intelligence into the mix threatens to turn each of those terms into an even stickier thicket.

Associated Press journalist Krysta Fauria contributed from Burbank, California.

Biden names CIA Director William Burns to his Cabinet

By NOMAAN MERCHANT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden elevated CIA Director William Burns to his Cabinet on Friday, a symbolic move that underscores the intelligence chief's influence and his work in U.S. support for Ukraine.

In a statement, Biden said Burns had "harnessed intelligence to give our country a critical strategic advantage" and credited his "clear, straightforward analysis that prioritizes the safety and security of the American people."

Burns has been a central figure in the Biden administration, particularly in the White House strategy to declassify intelligence findings that Russia was intending to launch a full-scale invasion of Ukraine. A career diplomat and former ambassador to Russia, Burns was sent to Moscow months before the war to warn Russian President Vladimir Putin of Washington's analysis.

In the nearly 18 months since Putin invaded, the U.S. has provided intelligence support to Ukraine along with weapons and ammunition. Burns has gone to Kyiv repeatedly to meet with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. He was also sent in November 2022 to warn Russia not to use nuclear weapons in the conflict.

Burns is known to meet with Biden regularly and often briefs him directly on Ukraine and other world issues. As a Cabinet member, he will serve alongside Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines, whose office sets direction for the CIA and other members of the U.S. intelligence community.

"The President's announcement today recognizes the essential contributions to national security the Central Intelligence Agency makes every day, and reflects his confidence in our work," Burns said in a statement. "I am honored to serve in this role, representing the tremendous work of our intelligence officers."

Not all administrations have had top intelligence officials in their Cabinet. Former President Donald Trump included his directors of national intelligence and CIA directors.

Judge sets a trial date for next May in Trump's classified documents case in Florida

By ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A federal judge in Florida has scheduled a trial date for next May for former President Donald Trump in a case charging him with illegally retaining hundreds of classified documents.

The May 20, 2024, trial date, set Friday by U.S. District Judge Aileen Cannon, is a compromise between a request from prosecutors to set the trial for this December and a bid by defense lawyers to put it off indefinitely until sometime after the 2024 presidential election.

If the date holds, it would follow close on the heels of a separate New York trial for Trump on dozens of state charges of falsifying business records in connection with an alleged hush money payment to a porn actor. It also means the trial would not start until deep into the presidential nominating calendar and probably well after the Republican nominee is clear — though before that person is officially nominated at the Republican National Convention.

In pushing back the trial from the Dec. 11 start date that the Justice Department had asked for, Cannon wrote that "the Government's proposed schedule is atypically accelerated and inconsistent with ensuring a fair trial." She agreed with defense lawyers that the amount of evidence that would need to be sifted through before the trial, including classified information, was "voluminous and likely to increase in the normal course as trial approaches."

"The Court finds that the interests of justice served by this continuance outweigh the best interest of the public and Defendants in a speedy trial," Cannon wrote.

In a statement referring to the Department of Justice, the Trump campaign called Cannon's order "a major setback to the DOJ's crusade to deny President Trump a fair legal process. The extensive schedule

allows President Trump and his legal team to continue fighting this empty hoax.”

Trump could yet face additional trials in the coming year. He revealed this week that he had received a letter informing him that he was a target of a separate Justice Department investigation into efforts to undo the results of the 2020 presidential election, an indication that charges could be coming soon.

The target letter referred to multiple distinct statutes Trump could be charged with violating, including conspiracy to defraud the government, according to a person familiar with the matter who insisted on anonymity to discuss private correspondence.

Trump’s new lawyer in that investigation, John Lauro, told Fox News on Friday that prosecutors appeared to be accusing Trump of “some kind of effort to obstruct” the Jan. 6, 2021, counting of state electoral votes and “whether or not President Trump intimidated anyone or ballot stuffed.” He said Trump would not be appearing before a grand jury because “he did absolutely nothing wrong.”

“He’s done nothing criminal,” Lauro said. “And he’s made his case that he was entitled to take these positions as president of the United States. When he saw all these election discrepancies and irregularities going on, he did what any president was required to do because he took an oath to do exactly that.” Multiple judges appointed by Trump and Trump’s own attorney general said there was no evidence of widespread fraud that could have affected the outcome of the election.

Prosecutors in Georgia, meanwhile, plan to announce charging decisions within weeks in an investigation into attempts by Trump and his allies to subvert the vote in that state.

The trial before Cannon would take place in a federal courthouse in Fort Pierce.

It arises from a 38-count indictment last month, filed by Justice Department special counsel Jack Smith, that accused Trump of willfully hoarding classified documents, including top secret records, at his Mar-a-Lago estate in Palm Beach and conspiring with his valet, Walt Nauta, to hide them from investigators who demanded them back.

Trump and Nauta have both pleaded not guilty.

Associated Press writers Jill Colvin and Michael R. Sisak in New York contributed to this report.

Biden picks female admiral to lead Navy. She’d be first woman on Joint Chiefs of Staff

By LOLITA C. BALDOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden has chosen Adm. Lisa Franchetti to lead the Navy, an unprecedented choice that, if she is confirmed, will make her the first woman to be a Pentagon service chief and the first female member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Biden’s decision goes against the recommendation of his Pentagon chief. But Franchetti, the current vice chief of operations for the Navy, has broad command and executive experience and was considered by insiders to be the top choice for the job.

In a statement Friday, Biden noted the historical significance of her selection and said “throughout her career, Admiral Franchetti has demonstrated extensive expertise in both the operational and policy arenas.”

Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin recommended that Biden select Adm. Samuel Paparo, the current commander of the Navy’s Pacific Fleet, several U.S. officials said last month. But instead, Biden is nominating Paparo to lead U.S. Indo-Pacific Command.

A senior administration official said Biden chose Franchetti based on the broad scope of her experience at sea and ashore, including a number of high-level policy and administrative jobs that give her deep knowledge in budgeting and running the department.

At the same time, the official acknowledged that Biden understands the historical nature of the nomination and believes that Franchetti will be an inspiration to sailors, both men and women. The official spoke earlier on condition of anonymity because the nomination had not been made public.

Franchetti’s nomination will join the list of hundreds of military moves that are being held up by Repub-

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, July 22, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 028 ~ 67 of 81

lican Sen. Tommy Tuberville of Alabama. He is blocking confirmation of military officers in protest of a Defense Department policy that pays for travel when a service member has to go out of state to get an abortion or other reproductive care.

Biden, in his statement, blasted Tuberville for prioritizing his domestic political agenda over military readiness.

"What Senator Tuberville is doing is not only wrong — it is dangerous," Biden said. "He is risking our ability to ensure that the United States Armed Forces remain the greatest fighting force in the history of the world. And his Republican colleagues in the Senate know it."

Franchetti is slated to serve as the acting Navy chief beginning next month when Adm. Michael Gilday, the current top naval officer, retires as planned.

Several women have served as military service secretaries as political appointees, but never as their top uniformed officer. A woman, Adm. Linda L. Fagan, is currently the commandant of the Coast Guard. She, however, is not a member of the Joint Staff. The Coast Guard is part of the Department of Homeland Security, not the Pentagon.

The news last month that the defense chief had recommended Papara stunned many in the Pentagon because it was long believed that Franchetti was in line for the top Navy job.

In a statement Friday, Austin praised the nomination, saying, "I'm very proud that Admiral Franchetti has been nominated to be the first woman Chief of Naval Operations and member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, where she will continue to inspire all of us."

A surface warfare officer, she has commanded at all levels, heading U.S. 6th Fleet and U.S. Naval Forces Korea. She was the second woman ever to be promoted to four-star admiral, and she did multiple deployments, including as commander of a naval destroyer and two stints as aircraft carrier strike group commander.

Papara, who if confirmed will replace Adm. John Aquilino, is a naval aviator and a TOPGUN graduate with more than 6,000 flight hours in Navy fighter jets and 1,100 landings on aircraft carriers. A Pennsylvania native, he graduated from Villanova University and was commissioned into the Navy in 1987.

Prior to his Pacific tour, he was commander of naval forces in the Middle East, based in Bahrain, and also previously served as director of operations at U.S. Central Command in Florida.

Biden also said he will nominate Vice Adm. James Kilby to be the vice chief of the Navy and tap Vice Adm. Stephen Koehler to head the Pacific Fleet.

Russia arrests a hard-line nationalist who accused Putin of weakness in Ukraine

MOSCOW (AP) — A prominent hard-line nationalist who accused Russian President Vladimir Putin of weakness and indecision in Ukraine was arrested Friday on charges of extremism, a signal the Kremlin has toughened its approach with hawkish critics after last month's abortive rebellion by the Wagner mercenary company.

Igor Strelkov, a retired security officer who led Moscow-backed separatists in eastern Ukraine in 2014 and was convicted of murder in the Netherlands for his role in the downing of a Malaysia Airlines passenger jet that year, has argued that a total mobilization is needed for Russia to achieve victory. He recently criticized Putin as a "nonentity" and a "cowardly mediocrity."

Moscow's Meshchansky District Court ordered the 52-year-old Strelkov, whose real name is Igor Girkin, to be held in custody for two months pending a probe on charges of making calls for extremist activities. He faces up to five years in prison if convicted.

Strelkov rejected the charges, but asked the judge to place him under house arrest, citing health issues.

Strelkov's arrest comes nearly a month after a short-lived mutiny launched by mercenary chief Yevgeny Prigozhin that saw his Wagner troops capture military headquarters in the southern city of Rostov-on-Don and then drive as close as 200 kilometers (125 miles) to Moscow to demand the ouster of Russia's top military leaders. Prigozhin agreed to end the June 23-24 rebellion under a deal that offered amnesty to

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, July 22, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 028 ~ 68 of 81

him and his mercenaries and allowed them to move to Belarus.

The revolt posed the most serious threat to Putin's 23-year rule, eroding his authority and exposing government weakness.

Like Prigozhin, Strelkov harshly criticized Russia's military leaders for incompetence, but he also denounced the Wagner's chief and described his action as treason and a major threat to the Russian state. The two repeatedly had traded insults, and Strelkov's supporters said a criminal inquiry into his statements has been initiated by one of Wagner's mercenaries.

Strelkov has over 875,000 subscribers on his messaging app channel. The Club of Angry Patriots, a recently created hard-line group he belonged to, issued a statement protesting his detention as a "provocation" that "undermines the population's trust in law enforcement organs" and "carries extremely negative consequences for the country's stability."

Strelkov served in the Russian military during the Chechen separatist wars and later joined the country's top domestic security agency, the Federal Security Service, where he reached the rank of colonel.

After he retired from service, he took part in the Kremlin's annexation of Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula and then led fighters in eastern Ukraine during the first months of a Moscow-backed separatist rebellion there in 2014.

Last year, a Dutch court convicted him and two other men of murder in absentia for their role in downing Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 with a Russian surface-to-air missile, killing all 298 people aboard the Boeing 777 as it flew over separatist-controlled eastern Ukraine on July 17, 2014. They were accused of bringing the Buk air defense missile system from a Russian military base into Ukraine and putting it into position for launch.

The Dutch Public Prosecution Service said it was watching the developments "with interest, although we cannot verify what is going on."

"We would, of course, like nothing more than for this man, who has been sentenced to life imprisonment in the Netherlands, to serve his prison sentence here. The victims of MH17 and their relatives deserve that," the statement said. "But the fact is that Russia does not extradite its citizens, and this event unfortunately does not bring that any closer."

Strelkov, whose adopted name is rooted in the word "shooter," had a penchant for war history and was among the Russians who take part in military reenactments, appearing in the uniform of an imperial Russian officer from World War I and toting historic weapons.

Amid the fighting in Ukraine, he has mocked Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu as a "plywood marshal," an apparent reference to Shoigu's hobby of woodcutting.

Strelkov long has spoken with contempt about Putin, accusing him of incompetence and kowtowing to Western interests, and he toughened his criticism after the start of Moscow's action in Ukraine. He predicted Russia would face imminent defeat because of Putin's reluctance to declare a massive mobilization and put the country on full military footing.

"A lot of empty talk, the minimum of action and the utter lack of responsibility for failures — that is Putin's style of late," Strelkov said recently. "A nonentity that has managed to cheat a large part of the population has been at the country's helm for 23 years."

He warned that "the country will not survive another six years under the rule of that cowardly mediocrity," a reference to Putin's expected bid to run for another six-year term in a presidential vote in March 2024.

Tatiana Stanovaya, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Russia Eurasia Center, said Wagner's rebellion has given the military brass an opportunity to go after its critics.

"Strelkov had overstepped all conceivable boundaries a long time ago, sparking the desire among security forces — from the FSB to military chiefs — to apprehend him," she said on Twitter. "This is a direct outcome of Prigozhin's mutiny: the army's command now wields greater political leverage to quash its opponents in the public sphere."

She predicted that while "it's unlikely that there will be massive repressions against 'angry patriots,' ... the most vehement dissenters may face prosecution, serving as a cautionary tale for others."

Hops for beer flourish under solar panels. They're not the only crop thriving in the shade.

By MATTHIAS SCHRADER and DANA BELTAJI Associated Press

AU in der HALLERTAU, Germany (AP) — Bright green vines snake upwards 20 feet (six meters) toward an umbrella of solar panels at Josef Wimmer's farm in Bavaria.

He grows hops, used to make beer, and in recent years has also been generating electricity, with solar panels sprawled across 1.3 hectares (32 acres) of his land in the small hop-making town of Au in der Hallertau, an hour north of Munich in southern Germany.

The pilot project — a collaboration between Wimmer and local solar technology company Hallertauer Handelshaus — was set up in the fall of last year. The electricity made at this farm can power around 250 households, and the hops get shade they'll need more often as climate change turbocharges summer heat.

Solar panels atop crops has been gaining traction in recent years as incentives and demand for clean energy skyrocket. Researchers look into making the best use of agricultural land, and farmers seek ways to shield their crops from blistering heat, keep in moisture and potentially increase yields. The team in Germany says its effort is the first agrivoltaic project that's solely focused on hops, but projects have sprouted around the world in several countries for a variety of grains, fruits and vegetables.

Beer-making hops can suffer if exposed to too much sun, said Bernhard Gruber, who's managing the project's solar component — and since there were already solar installations on the farm, it made sense to give them a second purpose by mounting them on poles above the crops.

In addition to shielding plants from solar stress, the shade could mean "water from precipitation lasts longer, leaving more in the soil" and that "the hops stay healthier and are less susceptible to diseases," Gruber said. A scientific analysis of the benefits for the plants will be concluded in October.

The farm is working with researchers to understand how to get the balance right, so the hops get enough shade and sunlight for the best harvests each year.

In the U.K., where weather is also getting hotter and more variable, a team of researchers is looking at how to retrofit solar panels onto greenhouses or polytunnels — frames covered in plastic where crops grow underneath — with semi-transparent or transparent installations.

"You can get your renewables from the land that you do have covered and you don't need to do these massive solar arrays on good agricultural land, which is what you've tended to see around to date," said Elinor Thompson, a reader at Greenwich University who's leading the research.

Thompson, a plant biologist, and her team are working with a fruit farm in Kent in southern England to make sure the plants also get the best out of solar structures.

"Nobody can afford to lose crop, especially in current conditions," she said. "We are assuming that British summers are going to get hotter, we have a problem with water shortages, we need to be efficient in all parts of agriculture."

Having shade where it's useful and monitoring the effects of different arrangements of solar panels on a variety of crops will help the world prepare for a more climate-variable future, Thompson said.

In East Africa, which has suffered from a long and punishing drought that scientists said was worsened by human-caused climate change, solar panels can also help keep moisture in plants and soil and reduce the amount of water needed, said Richard Randle-Boggis, a research associate at the University of Sheffield who's developing two agrivoltaic systems in Kenya and Tanzania.

Randle-Boggis said the systems can be used for "climate change resilience and a way of improving the growing environment for crops, while also providing low carbon electricity." He said that some of the crops under the partial shade of solar panels are using around 16% less irrigation.

The solar-covered farms saw increased yields for maize, Swiss chard and beans, and while growers experienced lower yields for onions and sweet peppers, they still had the added benefit of clean electricity generation.

But crop yields can also "vary depending on the weather conditions because we're seeing the climate

changing," said Randle-Boggis, although he added he was "really surprised and impressed with some of the results that we're seeing" for solar-covered crops.

"Maize is grown by about 50% of farmers in Tanzania. Maize is also a sun loving plant. So the fact that we had an 11% yield increase in maize ... is a phenomenal result," he said.

And Randle-Boggis said these projects can continue to be replicated around the world for many different crops, as long as systems are "designed with the local context in mind."

A future with more crops under solar is Gruber's hope for beer-making hops, too.

"At the end of the year we will set up another solar park over hops," which will have about 10 times the electricity-generating potential as the current project, Gruber said.

But that's still just the beginning.

"We're getting lots of inquires from hop farmers," he said, "even from abroad."

Beltaji reported from London.

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

Northeast floods devastate 'heartbroken' farmers as months of labor and crops are swept away

By STEVE LeBLANC Associated Press

Well before it was warm enough to plant seedlings in the ground, farmer Micah Barritt began nursing crops like watermelon, eggplant and tomatoes — eventually transplanting them from his greenhouse into rich Vermont soil, hoping for a bountiful fall harvest.

Within a few hours last week, those hopes were washed away when flood waters inundated the small farm, destroying a harvest with a value he estimated at \$250,000. He still hopes to replant short-season crops like mustard greens, spinach, bok choy and kale.

"The loss of the crops is a very tangible way to measure the flood, but the loss of the work is hard to measure," said Barritt, one of five co-owners of Diggers' Mirth Collective Farm in Burlington, Vermont. "We're all grieving and heartbroken because of this."

That heartbreak was felt by farmers in several Northeast states after floods dealt a devastating blow at the worst possible time — when many plants were too early to harvest, but are now too late to replant in the region's abbreviated growing season.

Storms dumped up to two months' worth of rain over a couple of days in parts of the region, surpassing the amount that fell when Tropical Storm Irene blew through in 2011, causing major flooding. Officials have called last week's flooding Vermont's worst natural disaster since floods in 1927.

Atmospheric scientists say floods occurring in different parts of the world are fueled by climate change, with storms forming in a warmer atmosphere, making extreme rainfall more frequent. The additional warming scientists predict is coming will only make it worse.

Diggers' Mirth is one of seven commercial organic farms located at the Intervale Center, according to Melanie Guild, development director of the center, which manages 350 acres (142 hectares) in the heart of Burlington.

Operators of the center, located near the Winooski River, have long been aware of the threat of flooding. As the forecast called for heavy rains, the center reached out to hundreds of volunteers to harvest as much as possible.

"This is smack dab in the middle of the growing season so anything that was ready to harvest was pulled. Whatever was left was lost," Guild said. "There were cabbages just floating around in the flood."

All seven farms were washed out. Losses will likely run higher than Irene, where losses tallied about \$750,000, she said.

Not all farms that suffered losses grew vegetables or flowers.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, July 22, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 028 ~ 71 of 81

The Maple Wind Farm in Richmond, Vermont, which produces pasture-raised animals, was also struck. Beth Whiting, who owns the farm with her husband, said even with predicted heavy rains they assumed their turkeys would be OK because they'd never seen flooding reach the area where they kept the birds.

Then at about 3:30 a.m. on July 10, the nearby Winooski River crested higher than they'd ever imagined, Whiting said. Workers in a canoe were able to rescue about 120 of 500 turkeys. Workers also saved about 1,600 chickens, but lost 700 at a second farm.

"We had no idea the flood was going to be so dramatic," she said.

The flooding forced many farmers into tough choices, according to Vermont Secretary of Agriculture Anson Tebbetts. Dairy farmers who found roads to processing plants impassable were forced to dump milk.

Another problem is the loss of corn, a key source of food for the dairy industry. Thousands of acres were completely or partially underwater or flattened and unusable, he said. Flower farms were also destroyed.

"Some blueberry bushes are under water. That is very important for pick-your-own operations. Once produce is underwater it can't be used," he said.

As of Friday, about 200 Vermont farmers had reported more than 9,400 acres (3,804 hectares) in crop damage, Tebbetts said. He added that, as the state waits to hear on a requested flood-related disaster declaration from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, it's been granted a different one following a late-season frost that wiped out vineyards and orchards in May.

In Massachusetts, at least 75 farms have been hurt by flooding, with about 2,000 acres (809 hectares) in crop losses at a minimum value of \$15 million, according to the state Department of Agricultural Resources. That number is expected to climb as more damage is assessed and longer-term impacts set in.

Damaged farms ranged from community farms to a farm with 300 acres (121 hectares) of potatoes that were a total loss just weeks before harvest to a 230-member "community supported agriculture" farm only five weeks into a 30-week program.

Massachusetts Gov. Maura Healey said the disaster requires an unprecedented effort to chase federal, state and private money. On Thursday she announced a Massachusetts Farm Resiliency Fund, a partnership between philanthropic organizations and private foundations.

"It's just such a shame," Healey said after touring flooded farms this week. "Unlike Irene, this happened right on the cusp of harvest, so the crops are ruined for this year."

In Connecticut, Bryan Hurlburt, the state's agriculture commissioner, said the flooding impacted about 2,000 acres (809 hectares) of farmland, much of it in the Connecticut River valley.

The flooding is part of a larger environmental crisis, according to Connecticut Gov. Ned Lamont.

"What the hell is going on here?" Lamont said, speaking in front of a flooded farmer's field in Glastonbury. "Look behind us. We were irrigating that a couple of months ago, desperate for water in the middle of a drought. And today it's Lake Wobegon. And so what do you do?"

Kate Ahearn, who runs Fair Weather Growers along the Connecticut River in Rocky Hill, said the flood waters took a heavy toll.

"This is our livelihood that is at stake," she said. "Fair Weather Growers is going to lose about 300 acres (121 hectares) of crops and more than half of our labor force, plus all of our wholesale accounts."

In Pennsylvania, officials have been monitoring rainfall.

"When water is rising, that's the big concern because you get a lot of standing water and the soil starts to loosen up, turns into mud and the mud starts to wash away. When dirt and soil washes away, crops do as well," said David Varner from the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau.

Recently, a farmer called the Penn State Extension in Bucks County saying his crops looked wilted, as if they hadn't been watered in a while, said Margaret Pickoff, horticulture extension educator.

It was the opposite: The soil was so full of water, the plant roots were unable to take in any oxygen, and were dying off.

Associated Press contributors include Pat Eaton-Robb in Hartford, Connecticut, and Brooke Schultz in Philadelphia.

A notorious Indonesian animal market has ended its brutal dog and cat meat trade, campaigners say

By MOHAMMAD TAUFAN Associated Press

TOMOHON, Indonesia (AP) — Authorities on Friday announced the end of the “brutally cruel” dog and cat meat slaughter at a notorious animal market on the Indonesian island of Sulawesi following a years-long campaign by local activists and world celebrities.

The Tomohon Extreme Market will become the first such market in Indonesia to go dog and cat meat-free, according to the anti-animal cruelty group Humane Society International, or HSI. Images of dogs and cats being bludgeoned and blow-torched while still alive had sparked outrage.

The permanent end of the slaughter and trade was announced on Friday by the Regional Secretary of the city of Tomohon, Edwin Roring. HSI said they will be rescuing all the remaining live dogs and cats from the slaughterhouse suppliers and taking them to sanctuaries.

“We hope that Tomohon will be totally free from dog and cat meat trades,” Roring said in his remarks. “We believe the way to reduce people’s interest in consuming dog and cat meat in Tomohon is to stop selling it in markets.”

He urged people to consume animal food sources that are more hygienic and do not cause rabies, such as pork, beef and chicken. He vowed to deploy law enforcement officers in the markets to ensure there were no more dog and cat meat sellers in the city.

The Tomohon Extreme Market had previously been touted as a tourist attraction and listed on TripAdvisor as a destination that also sells cat meat and the carcasses of wild and protected species such as bats, snakes and other reptiles.

HSI and Indonesian groups operating under the banner of Dog Meat Free Indonesia are campaigning to end the trade in live dogs for human consumption as rabies could spread to humans during the slaughter or contact with infected meat.

Videos shot by the campaigners at two markets in North Sulawesi province in 2018 showed dogs cowering in cages as workers pulled the howling animals out and bludgeoned their heads with wooden batons. Often still moving, the animals are then blasted with blowtorches to remove their hair in preparation for butchering and sale.

The welfare groups called the treatment of the animals at the markets “brutally cruel” and like “walking through hell,” generating sympathy among Indonesians and around the world.

International actors and celebrities in 2018 appealed to President Joko Widodo to close the markets, saying if Indonesia joined other Asian nations that have already banned the trade, it would be “celebrated globally” and end a stain on the country’s reputation.

Actress Cameron Diaz, talk show host Ellen DeGeneres, talent spotter Simon Cowell, comedian Ricky Gervais, Indonesian pop singer Anggun and musician Moby are among the more than 90 celebrities listed in the letter.

“These animals, many of them stolen pets, are subjected to crude and brutal methods of capture, transport and slaughter, and the immense suffering and fear they must endure is heartbreaking and absolutely shocking,” the letter said, prompting Indonesia’s central government to issue a regulation saying that dog meat is not food and thus local administrations should act to ban the trade.

North Sulawesi province is home to more than 2.6 million people, who are mainly Christian in the mostly Muslim archipelago nation. Eating dog and cat meat with special spices is a hereditary tradition for most people in the province which has been very difficult to get rid of, said Frank Delano, a local animal welfare activist.

Thousands of dogs and cats are slaughtered weekly in North Sulawesi, according to the anti-animal cruelty groups.

“I’m disappointed, but what else can I do? I have to comply with government regulations,” said Melki Pongo, the slaughterhouse owner who has supplied tons of dog and cat meat to the city’s markets for more than 30 years. He said that he will replace them with pork.

Karanganyar district in Central Java became the first to issue a formal ban in 2019, followed by other regions in 2020 and 2021. Most recently, authorities in Indonesia's capital, Jakarta, announced in March they have banned the dog and cat meat trades. But the dog and cat markets were on Sulawesi.

Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim country, might not seem a likely hub of dog meat cuisine as nearly 90% of the country's 270 million people are followers of Islam, which considers and view dog products as haram, or forbidden, in the same way as pork. Most Muslims won't touch a dog, much less eat one.

But the archipelagic nation is also home to many other faiths, some of whom consider dog meat a traditional delicacy or believe it has health properties. As much as 7% of Indonesians eat dog, according to Dog Meat Free Indonesia, mostly in North Sulawesi, North Sumatra and East Nusa Tenggara provinces that have a majority of the population identifying as Christian.

About 30 million dogs were killed each year in China, South Korea and many other Asian countries, said Lola Webber, the HSI's Director of Campaign to End Dog Meat.

Many countries and territories across Asia—such as the Philippines, Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong, Thailand and Malaysia—have already banned the dog meat trade and consumption of dogs, according to the HSI.

Associated Press writer Niniek Karmini in Jakarta, Indonesia, contributed to this report.

Tony Bennett, masterful stylist of American musical standards, dies at 96

By CHARLES J. GANS Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Tony Bennett, the eminent and timeless stylist whose devotion to classic American songs and knack for creating new standards such as "I Left My Heart In San Francisco" graced a decades-long career that brought him admirers from Frank Sinatra to Lady Gaga, died Friday. He was 96, just two weeks short of his birthday.

Publicist Sylvia Weiner confirmed Bennett's death to The Associated Press, saying he died in his hometown of New York. There was no specific cause, but Bennett had been diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease in 2016.

The last of the great saloon singers of the mid-20th century, Bennett often said his lifelong ambition was to create "a hit catalog rather than hit records." He released more than 70 albums, bringing him 19 competitive Grammys — all but two after he reached his 60s — and enjoyed deep and lasting affection from fans and fellow artists.

Bennett didn't tell his own story when performing; he let the music speak instead — the Gershwins and Cole Porter, Irving Berlin and Jerome Kern. Unlike his friend and mentor Sinatra, he would interpret a song rather than embody it. If his singing and public life lacked the high drama of Sinatra's, Bennett appealed with an easy, courtly manner and an uncommonly rich and durable voice — "A tenor who sings like a baritone," he called himself — that made him a master of caressing a ballad or brightening an up-tempo number.

"I enjoy entertaining the audience, making them forget their problems," he told The Associated Press in 2006. "I think people ... are touched if they hear something that's sincere and honest and maybe has a little sense of humor. ... I just like to make people feel good when I perform."

Bennett was praised often by his peers, but never more meaningfully than by what Sinatra said in a 1965 Life magazine interview: "For my money, Tony Bennett is the best singer in the business. He excites me when I watch him. He moves me. He's the singer who gets across what the composer has in mind, and probably a little more."

He not only survived the rise of rock music but endured so long and so well that he gained new fans and collaborators, some young enough to be his grandchildren. In 2014, at age 88, Bennett broke his own record as the oldest living performer with a No. 1 album on the Billboard 200 chart for "Cheek to Cheek,"

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, July 22, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 028 ~ 74 of 81

his duets project with Lady Gaga. Three years earlier, he topped the charts with "Duets II," featuring such contemporary stars as Gaga, Carrie Underwood and Amy Winehouse, in her last studio recording. His rapport with Winehouse was captured in the Oscar-nominated documentary "Amy," which showed Bennett patiently encouraging the insecure young singer through a performance of "Body and Soul."

His final album, the 2021 release "Love for Sale," featured duets with Lady Gaga on the title track, "Night and Day" and other Porter songs.

For Bennett, one of the few performers to move easily between pop and jazz, such collaborations were part of his crusade to expose new audiences to what he called the Great American Songbook.

"No country has given the world such great music," Bennett said in a 2015 interview with Downbeat Magazine. "Cole Porter, Irving Berlin, George Gershwin, Jerome Kern. Those songs will never die."

Ironically, his most famous contribution came through two unknowns, George Cory and Douglass Cross, who in the early '60s provided Bennett with his signature song at a time his career was in a lull. They gave Bennett's musical director, pianist Ralph Sharon, some sheet music that he stuck in a dresser drawer and forgot about until he was packing for a tour that included a stop in San Francisco.

"Ralph saw some sheet music in his shirt drawer ... and on top of the pile was a song called 'I Left My Heart In San Francisco.' Ralph thought it would be good material for San Francisco," Bennett said. "We were rehearsing and the bartender in the club in Little Rock, Arkansas, said, 'If you record that song, I'm going to be the first to buy it.'"

Released in 1962 as the B-side of the single "Once Upon a Time," the reflective ballad became a grassroots phenomenon staying on the charts for more than two years and earning Bennett his first two Grammys, including record of the year.

By his early 40s, he was seemingly out of fashion. But after turning 60, an age when even the most popular artists often settle for just pleasing their older fans, Bennett and his son and manager, Danny, found creative ways to market the singer to the MTV Generation. He made guest appearances on "Late Night with David Letterman" and became a celebrity guest artist on "The Simpsons." He wore a black T-shirt and sunglasses as a presenter with the Red Hot Chili Peppers at the 1993 MTV Music Video Awards, and his own video of "Steppin' Out With My Baby" from his Grammy-winning Fred Astaire tribute album ended up on MTV's hip "Buzz Bin."

That led to an offer in 1994 to do an episode of "MTV Unplugged" with special guests Elvis Costello and k.d. lang. The evening's performance resulted in the album, "Tony Bennett: MTV Unplugged," which won two Grammys, including album of the year.

Bennett would win Grammys for his tributes to female vocalists ("Here's to the Ladies"), Billie Holiday ("Tony Bennett on Holiday"), and Duke Ellington ("Bennett Sings Ellington — Hot & Cool"). He also won Grammys for his collaborations with other singers: "Playin' With My Friends — Bennett Sings the Blues," and his Louis Armstrong tribute, "A Wonderful World" with lang, the first full album he had ever recorded with another singer. He celebrated his 80th birthday with "Duets: An American Classic," featuring Barbra Streisand, Paul McCartney and Stevie Wonder among others.

"They're all giants in the industry, and all of a sudden they're saying to me 'You're the master,'" Bennett told the AP in 2006.

Long associated with San Francisco, Bennett would note that his true home was Astoria, the working-class community in the New York City borough of Queens, where he grew up during the Great Depression. The singer chose his old neighborhood as the site for the "Fame"-style public high school, the Frank Sinatra School of the Arts, that he and his third wife, Susan Crow Benedetto, a former teacher, helped found in 2001.

The school is not far from the birthplace of the man who was once Anthony Dominick Benedetto. His father was an Italian immigrant who inspired his love of singing, but he died when Anthony was 10. Bennett credited his mother, Anna, with teaching him a valuable lesson as he watched her working at home, supporting her three children as a seamstress doing piecemeal work after his father died.

"We were very impoverished," Bennett said in a 2016 AP interview. "I saw her working and every once in a while she'd take a dress and throw it over her shoulder and she'd say, 'Don't have me work on a bad

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, July 22, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 028 ~ 75 of 81

dress. I'll only work on good dresses."

He studied commercial art in high school, but had to drop out to help support his family. The teenager got a job as a copy boy for the AP, performed as a singing waiter and competed in amateur shows. A combat infantryman during World War II, he served as a librarian for the Armed Forces Network after the war and sang with an army big band in occupied Germany. His earliest recording is a 1946 air check from Armed Forces Radio of the blues "St. James Infirmary."

Bennett took advantage of the GI Bill to attend the American Theater Wing, which later became The Actors Studio. His acting lessons helped him develop his phrasing and learn how to tell a story. He learned the more intimate Bel Canto vocal technique which helped him sustain and extend the expressive range of his voice. And he took to heart the advice of his vocal coach, Miriam Spier.

"She said please don't imitate other singers because you'll just be one of the chorus whoever you imitate whether it's Bing Crosby or Frank Sinatra and won't develop an original sound," Bennett recalled in the 2006 AP interview. "She said imitate musicians that you like, find out how they phrase. I was particularly influenced by the jazz musicians like (pianist) Art Tatum and (saxophonists) Lester Young and Stan Getz."

In 1947, Bennett made his first recording, the Gershwins' standard "Fascinatin' Rhythm" for a small label under the stage name Joe Bari. The following year he gained notice when he finished behind Rosemary Clooney on the radio show "Arthur Godfrey's Talent Scouts." Bennett's big break came in 1949 when singer Pearl Bailey invited him to join her revue at a Greenwich Village club. Bob Hope dropped by one night and was so impressed that he offered the young singer a spot opening his shows at the famed Paramount Theater, where teens had swooned for Sinatra. But the comedian didn't care for his stage name and thought his real name was too long for the marquee.

"He thought for a moment, then he said, 'We'll call you Tony Bennett,'" the singer wrote in his autobiography, "The Good Life," published in 1998.

In 1950, Mitch Miller, the head of Columbia Records' pop singles division, signed Bennett and released the single, "The Boulevard of Broken Dreams," a semi-hit. Bennett was on the verge of being dropped from the label in 1951 when he had his first No. 1 on the pop charts with "Because of You." More hits followed, including "Rags to Riches," "Blue Velvet," and Hank Williams' "Cold, Cold Heart," the first country song to become an international pop hit.

Bennett found himself frequently clashing with Miller, who pushed him to sing Sinatra-style ballads and gimmicky novelty songs. But Bennett took advantage of the young LP album format, starting in 1955 with "Cloud 7," featuring a small jazz combo led by guitarist Chuck Wayne. Bennett reached out to the jazz audience with such innovative albums as the 1957 "The Beat of My Heart," an album of standards that paired him with such jazz percussion masters as Chico Hamilton, and Art Blakey. He also became the first white male singer to record with the Count Basie Orchestra, releasing two albums in 1958. Sinatra would later do the same.

Bennett's friendship with Black musicians and his disgust at the racial prejudice he encountered in the Army led him to become an active supporter of the Civil Rights Movement. He answered Harry Belafonte's call to join Martin Luther King Jr.'s 1965 Selma-to-Montgomery voting rights march and perform for the protesters.

Bennett's early career peaked in the 1960s as he topped the charts with "San Francisco" and became the first male pop solo performer to headline at Carnegie Hall, releasing a live album of the 1962 concert.

In 1966, he released "The Movie Song Album," a personal favorite which featured Johnny Mandel's Oscar-winning song "The Shadow of Your Smile" and "Maybe September," the theme from the epic flop "The Oscar," noteworthy because it marked Bennett's first and only big-screen acting role.

But as rock continued to overtake traditional pop, he clashed with Columbia label head Clive Davis, who insisted that the singer do the 1970 album "Tony Sings the Great Hits of Today," with such songs as "MacArthur Park" and "Little Green Apples." Bennett left Columbia in 1972, and went on to form his own record label, Improv, which in 1975-76 produced two duet albums with the impressionistic pianist Bill Evans now considered jazz classics.

Despite artistic successes, Improv proved a financial disaster for Bennett, who also faced difficulties

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, July 22, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 028 ~ 76 of 81

in his personal life. His marriage to artist Patricia Beech collapsed in 1971. He wed actress Sandra Grant the same year, but that marriage ended in 1984. With no recording deals, his debts brought him close to bankruptcy and the IRS was trying to seize his house in Los Angeles. After a near-fatal drug overdose in 1979, he turned to his son, Danny, who eventually signed on as his manager. Bennett kicked his drug habit and got his finances in order, moved back to New York and resumed doing more than 200 shows a year.

He is survived by his wife Susan, daughters Johanna and Antonia, sons Danny and Dae and nine grandchildren.

Bennett was named a Kennedy Center Honoree in 2005 and a National Endowment for the Arts Jazz Master in 2006. He also won two Emmy Awards — for “Tony Bennett Live By Request: A Valentine Special” (1996) and “Tony Bennett: An American Classic” (2007).

Besides singing, Bennett pursued his lifelong passion for painting by taking art lessons and bringing his sketchbook on the road. His paintings, signed with his family name Benedetto — including portraits of his musician friends and Central Park landscapes — were displayed in public and private collections, including the Smithsonian Museum of American Art.

“I love to paint as much as I love to sing,” Bennett told the AP in 2006. “It worked out to be such a blessing in my life because if I started getting burnt-out singing ... I would go to my painting and that’s a big lift. ... So I stay in this creative zone all the time.”

Gans, the principal writer of this obituary, is a former Associated Press journalist. AP National Writer Hillel Italie contributed to this story.

Sunak’s Conservatives suffer 2 big defeats but avoid a wipeout in trio of UK special elections

By JILL LAWLESS and PAN PYLAS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Voters weary of economic pain and political turmoil handed Britain’s governing Conservatives two thumping defeats Friday in a trio of special elections that point toward likely defeat for the party in the next national election.

The Conservatives avoided a wipeout by holding onto former premier Boris Johnson’s seat in suburban London — a sliver of comfort for Prime Minister Rishi Sunak’s party.

Sunak said the results showed that the next general election, due by the end of 2024, was not “a done deal.”

But elections expert John Curtice said the Conservatives were “in a deep electoral hole” after the main opposition Labour Party and the smaller centrist Liberal Democrats overturned huge Conservative majorities to win a seat apiece.

The three results show the Conservatives losing ground across a broad range of voters: suburban Londoners, smalltown-dwellers in the north of England and rural residents in the southwest. If replicated at a general election, the results would see Labour become the biggest single party, possibly with an overall majority.

“We hear that cry for change away from the chaos, away from those rising bills, the crumbling public services — a cry for change and we will deliver,” Labour leader Keir Starmer said alongside the party’s 25-year-old winning candidate, Keir Mather, in the northern seat of Selby and Ainsty.

“The first time we’ve won here is the first time we’ve overturned a 20,000 majority, the biggest majority we’ve ever turned over in the history of the Labour Party,” Starmer added.

The Liberal Democrats took the rural seat of Somerton and Frome in southwest England with a similarly large swing away from the Conservatives.

“The people of Somerton and Frome have spoken for the rest of the country who are fed up with Rishi Sunak’s out-of-touch Conservative government,” said Liberal Democrat leader Ed Davey. He congratulated candidate Sarah Dyke beside a confetti-firing mock circus cannon emblazoned “get these clowns out of No. 10,” the prime minister’s 10 Downing St. residence.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, July 22, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 028 ~ 77 of 81

The Conservatives won Uxbridge and South Ruislip in west London by 495 votes — down from a majority of 7,000 under Johnson — after a campaign that focused on an unpopular local green levy imposed by London's Labour mayor.

Sunak headed straight to the scene of his party's sole electoral success and noted that governments often find midterm elections difficult.

"The message I take away is that we've got to double down, stick to our plan and deliver for people," he said during a visit to a cafe in the constituency.

The defeats don't mean a change of government, since the Conservatives still have a chunky majority in the House of Commons. But they confirm the trend of opinion polls, which for months have given Labour a lead of up to 20% nationwide over the Conservatives, who have been in power since 2010.

The two defeats also showed electors voting tactically, backing the party most likely to defeat the Conservative candidate. That will leave many Conservative lawmakers rattled ahead of a national vote.

Tim Bale, professor of politics at Queen Mary University of London, said it was tempting "for Conservative spin doctors to emphasize Uxbridge and the result that they got there. But I think really they will be deluding themselves if they think that that bodes well for the next general election."

The right-of-center governing party has been plagued by the fallout from the tumultuous terms of Johnson and his successor Liz Truss, who quit within weeks after her plan for unfunded tax cuts alarmed financial markets, worsening a a cost-of-living crisis and sending mortgage costs soaring.

Johnson triggered one of the special elections when he quit as a lawmaker last month, almost a year after resigning as prime minister, when a standards watchdog concluded he'd lied to Parliament about lawbreaking parties in his office during the coronavirus pandemic. The former lawmaker in Selby, a Johnson ally, followed him out the door, while the legislator in Somerton resigned amid sex and drugs allegations.

The bruising defeats make it likely that Sunak will shake up his government with a Cabinet shuffle when Parliament returns from its summer recess in September. Under Britain's parliamentary system, Sunak can call a national election whenever he feels the time is right, though it must be within five years of the last one, held in December 2019.

There are also questions for Starmer, who has been cautious in laying out his plans for government, to the frustration of some Labour supporters.

Labour's defeat in Uxbridge will likely stoke concern over Mayor Sadiq Khan's plan to expand an anti-pollution zone first introduced when Johnson was mayor to outer boroughs of London, slapping a daily emissions charge on older gas and diesel vehicles.

Starmer acknowledged the levy was the reason Labour lost in Uxbridge. He said "the mayor needs to reflect. And it's too early to say what should happen next."

Bale said Labour "will worry a little bit, since much of the party's economic message is built around green issues."

But he said the Conservatives should be more concerned, because many voters who backed them in 2019 had become disillusioned.

"We got used to the idea that somehow there was this big realignment in British politics and the Conservatives were capable of winning seats where they weren't before," he said. "I think the Conservatives now should be quite worried"

Rescuers find more bodies in landslide-hit village in western India, bringing the death toll to 21

RAIGAD, India (AP) — Rescuers found five more bodies Friday in India's western Maharashtra state, raising the death toll from a landslide triggered by torrential rains to at least 21 with many others feared trapped under the debris, officials said.

Scores of rescuers and trekkers have been deployed to search for people trapped by the landslide, which occurred late Wednesday night, the state's deputy chief minister, Devendra Fadnavis, tweeted. Harsh weather conditions have hampered rescue efforts and authorities have sent in medical teams to

help the injured, he said.

Search operations were suspended Thursday night due to heavy rainfall plus the threat of further landslides in the dark, the National Disaster Response Force said.

It said rescuers resumed search operations on Friday and found five bodies, raising the confirmed death toll to 21.

Ten other rescued people have been hospitalized, it said. It didn't say how many people were feared trapped under the rubble.

An official told the Press Trust of India news agency that 75 people have been rescued and many others remain trapped.

The landslide hit Irshalwadi village in Raigad district and buried 17 of the 50 houses there.

The hilly terrain has made the task of rescuers difficult because heavy equipment to remove the rubble can't be moved easily. From the base of the hill, it takes about 90 minutes to reach Irshalwadi due to a lack of paved roads.

India's weather department placed Maharashtra under alert as the state was lashed by incessant rains this week. The downpours have disrupted life for many in the state, including in the capital, Mumbai, where authorities shut schools on Thursday.

Local train service has been disrupted, with water flowing inside stations and over tracks, local media reported.

Record monsoon rains killed more than 100 people in northern India over the last two weeks, officials said, as the downpours caused roads to cave in and homes to collapse.

Monsoon rains across the country have already brought about 2% more rainfall this year than normal, the weather agency said.

India regularly experiences severe floods during the monsoon season, which runs between June and September and brings most of South Asia's annual rainfall. The rains are crucial for rain-fed crops planted during the season but often cause extensive damage.

Scientists say monsoons are becoming more erratic because of climate change, leading to frequent landslides and flash floods in India's Himalayan north.

Some critics see Trump's behavior as un-Christian. His conservative Christian backers see a hero

By DAVID CRARY AP National Writer

For eight years, Donald Trump has managed to secure the support of many evangelical and conservative Christians despite behavior that often seemed at odds with teachings espoused by Christ in the Gospels.

If some observers initially viewed this as an unsustainable alliance, it's different now.

Certain achievements during Trump's presidency – notably appointments that shifted the Supreme Court to the right – have solidified that support. He's now the clear front-runner for the 2024 Republican presidential nomination, even after he recently was found liable for sexually abusing a New York woman in 1996 and was indicted in a criminal case related to hush money payments to a porn actress.

Robert Jeffress, pastor of an evangelical megachurch in Dallas, has been a staunch supporter of Trump since his first campaign for president and is sticking by him even as rivals like South Carolina Sen. Tim Scott and former Vice President Mike Pence tout their Christian faith.

"Conservative Christians continue to overwhelmingly support Donald Trump because of his biblical policies, not his personal piety," Jeffress told The Associated Press via email. "They are smart enough to know the difference between choosing a president and choosing a pastor."

"In many ways, Christians feel like they are in an existential cultural war between good and evil, and they want a warrior like Donald Trump who can win," Jeffress added.

In rural southwest Missouri, pastor Mike Leake of Calvary of Neosho – a Southern Baptist church – says support for Trump within the mostly conservative congregation seems to strengthen the more he is criti-

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, July 22, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 028 ~ 79 of 81

cized and investigated.

"It further convinces them of their rhetoric that there is a leftist plot to undermine our nation," Leake said. "So if everybody from the Left hates Trump, well, he must be on to something."

Leake said many of his congregation members who strongly support Trump "are not our most dedicated members."

"Anytime we've seen someone go full on MAGA, we lose them," Leake added. "Attendance and involvement drops. Giving drops. It's all consuming -- just as with any other idol."

Robert Franklin, professor of moral leadership at Emory University's Candler School of Theology in Atlanta, said Trump benefits from a perception among some of his followers that he is suffering on their behalf.

"The more he complains of persecution, the more people dig in to support him, and for a few, fight for him and make personal sacrifices (of money and freedom) for his advancement," Franklin said via email.

Franklin also noted that some evangelicals, since early in Trump's presidency, have likened him to Cyrus the Great, the Persian king who, according to the Bible, enabled Jews to return to Israel from their exile in Babylon.

"This is a powerful trope, the bad man who makes good things possible, and is hence praised as a hero," Franklin said. "Unfortunately, under this narrative, Trump can literally do no wrong. His wrong is right. No other politician gets that kind of pass."

Trump's great achievements, in the eyes of many evangelicals, include moving the U.S. Embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, and – more profoundly – appointing three Supreme Justices who have helped repeal the nationwide right to abortion and broaden religious-freedom protections in several cases involving conservative Christians.

Trump is eager to tout his faith-based record.

"No president has ever fought for Christians as hard as I have," he told the Faith & Freedom gala in Washington in June. "I'll fight hard until I'm back behind that desk in the Oval Office."

The political results are widely viewed as the key to Trump's evangelical support.

"I am certain that many Christians in the MAGA movement earnestly believe Trump has been 'anointed' for this purpose — to bring about certain political outcomes they desire," said Robert Millies, a Chicago-based Catholic scholar whose books include "Good Intentions: A History of Catholic Voters' Road from Roe to Trump."

"The embrace of Trump is really, finally a cynical calculation concerned with power, one that has the thinnest of possible Scriptural justifications," Millies added.

Back in February 2017, just two weeks after Trump's inauguration, the Rev. Peter Daly – a retired Catholic priest of the Archdiocese of Washington – wrote a column for the National Catholic Reporter titled "Donald Trump's gospel is not the Gospel of Jesus."

In the piece, Daly depicted Trump as an uncharitable bully, prone to lying, lacking in empathy and tolerance.

"He sees every opponent as someone to be shouted down or roughed up," Daly wrote. "He is not a peacemaker."

Six years later, Daly tries to comprehend why so many conservative Christians remain in Trump's camp despite behavior and rhetoric "that are antithetical to everything they stand for."

Some pro-Trump pastors have relished the proximity to power afforded during White House visits or special political events, Daly said.

And some rural, white Christians "feel like nobody speaks for them," Daly added. "They think, 'Here's Donald Trump. He'll be our champion' ... It has nothing to do with being Christian. It's the politics of grievance."

Serene Jones is president of Union Theological Seminary in New York, which describes itself as "a progressive religious institution with many LGBTQ students."

Asked about Trump's popularity among conservative Christians, Jones evoked the numerous recent victories for evangelical and conservative causes in the courts and Republican-controlled state legislatures.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, July 22, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 028 ~ 80 of 81

"Our nation is seeing a rampage of attacks on reproductive rights, LGBTQ+ rights, and the separation of church and state," Jones said via email. "Even though certain evangelical Christians might harbor some discomfort about particular politicians, they may believe these social and political successes far outweigh the concerns."

In Iowa, where evangelical support is crucial in the caucuses that launch the GOP nomination process, Trump seems far better positioned than in 2016.

A Des Moines Register Iowa Poll in March found that he was viewed favorably by 58% of evangelicals, compared to 19% ahead of the 2016 caucuses.

"President Trump has stood up for the values that we hold dear," Brad Sherman, a pastor from Williamsburg, Iowa, told The Associated Press in April. "Then we need to pray for him that his personal life comes in line with that."

As strong as Trump's support is among conservative Christians, some prominent figures in those ranks are seeking alternatives in the GOP campaign.

The Rev. Albert Mohler, president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, backed Trump in 2020 but said recently on his radio show that he's now had enough.

"Christians begin with the clear biblical truth that no sinful human being has a perfect character, but even as we grade presidents on something of a curve, some stand out as particularly lacking in character," Mohler said. "Donald J. Trump is certainly one of those presidents."

"I do not want Donald J. Trump to be the 2024 Republican nominee," Mohler added. "There is simply too much baggage ... A statesman would realize that fact and make way for someone else to lead. That does not appear likely."

Trump was raised as a Presbyterian, but told Religion News Service in 2020 that he had shifted to identifying as a nondenominational Christian. He has not claimed membership in any particular congregation, and during his presidency he attended worship services infrequently.

When in Florida, Trump has sometimes attended an Episcopal church in Palm Beach for Easter and Christmas Eve services. On the campaign trail, he has visited churches of various denominations, including some new-age churches with music and dancing.

Jeffress, the Dallas megachurch pastor, admires Trump as a political battler. But Jeffress says that during eight years of friendship, "I have seen a side to him that many people never see. I've watched him interact with strangers, as well as his own family, with warmth and kindness."

Associated Press writers Thomas Beaumont in Iowa and Jill Colvin in Washington contributed to this report.

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

Today in History: July 24, Apollo 11 returns home from the moon

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Monday, July 24, the 205th day of 2023. There are 160 days left in the year.

On July 24, 1915, the SS Eastland, a passenger ship carrying more than 2,500 people, rolled onto its side while docked at the Clark Street Bridge on the Chicago River. An estimated 844 people died in the disaster.

In 1847, Mormon leader Brigham Young and his followers arrived in the Salt Lake Valley in present-day Utah.

In 1866, Tennessee became the first state to be readmitted to the Union after the Civil War.

In 1911, Yale University history professor Hiram Bingham III found the "Lost City of the Incas," Machu Picchu, in Peru.

In 1937, the state of Alabama dropped charges against four of the nine young Black men accused of raping two white women in the "Scottsboro Case."

In 1959, during a visit to Moscow, Vice President Richard Nixon engaged in his famous "Kitchen Debate" with Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, July 22, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 028 ~ 81 of 81

In 1969, the Apollo 11 astronauts — two of whom had been the first men to set foot on the moon — splashed down safely in the Pacific.

In 1974, the U.S. Supreme Court unanimously ruled that President Richard Nixon had to turn over subpoenaed White House tape recordings to the Watergate special prosecutor.

In 1975, an Apollo spacecraft splashed down in the Pacific, completing a mission which included the first docking with a Soyuz capsule from the Soviet Union.

In 1998, the movie "Saving Private Ryan," starring Tom Hanks and directed by Steven Spielberg, was released.

In 2010, a stampede inside a tunnel crowded with techno music fans left 21 people dead and more than 500 injured at the famed Love Parade festival in western Germany.

In 2016, Ken Griffey Jr. and Mike Piazza were inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame.

In 2019, in a day of congressional testimony, Robert Mueller dismissed President Donald Trump's claim of "total exoneration" in Mueller's probe of Russia's 2016 election interference.

Ten years ago: The House narrowly rejected a challenge to the National Security Agency's secret collection of hundreds of millions of Americans' phone records. A high-speed train crash outside Santiago de Compostela in northwest Spain killed 79 people. Pope Francis made an emotional plea in Aparecida, Brazil, for Roman Catholics to shun materialism in the first public Mass of his initial international trip as pontiff. It was announced that the newborn son of Prince William and Kate, the Duchess of Cambridge, would be named George Alexander Louis. Virginia Johnson, half of the renowned Masters and Johnson team of sex researchers, died in St. Louis at age 88.

Five years ago: The Trump administration said it would provide \$12 billion in emergency relief to farmers hurt by trade disputes with China and other countries. Brian Kemp, a self-described "politically incorrect conservative" carrying the endorsement of President Donald Trump, won Georgia's GOP gubernatorial runoff; he would go on to defeat Democrat Stacey Abrams in the general election. A federal judge in New York ordered the release of an Ecuadorean immigrant, Pablo Villavicencio, who'd been held for deportation after delivering pizza to a U.S. Army installation in Brooklyn; the immigrant had applied to stay in the country after marrying a U.S. citizen with whom he had two young girls. Ivanka Trump announced the shutdown of her fashion line, which had been targeted by boycotts and prompted concerns about conflicts of interest.

One year ago: Pope Francis began a visit to Canada to apologize to Indigenous peoples for abuses by missionaries at residential schools, a key step in the Catholic Church's efforts to reconcile with Native communities and help them heal from generations of trauma. Francis flew from Rome to Edmonton, Alberta, where his welcoming party included Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Mary May Simon, an Inuk who was Canada's first Indigenous governor general. The top American military officer said the Chinese military had become significantly more aggressive and dangerous over the previous five years as he began a trip to the Indo-Pacific, where the United States aimed to strengthen ties as a counterbalance to Beijing.

Today's Birthdays: Political cartoonist Pat Oliphant is 88. Comedian Ruth Buzzi is 87. Actor Mark Goddard is 87. Actor Dan Hedaya is 83. Actor Chris Sarandon is 81. Actor Robert Hays is 76. Former Republican national chairman Marc Racicot (RAWS'-koh) is 75. Actor Michael Richards is 74. Actor Lynda Carter is 72. Movie director Gus Van Sant is 71. Former Sen. Claire McCaskill, D-Mo., is 70. Country singer Pam Tillis is 66. Actor Paul Ben-Victor is 61. Basketball Hall of Famer Karl Malone is 60. Retired MLB All-Star Barry Bonds is 59. Actor Kadeem Hardison is 58. Actor-singer Kristin Chenoweth is 55. Actor Laura Leighton is 55. Actor John P. Navin Jr. is 55. Actor-singer Jennifer Lopez is 54. Basketball player-turned-actor Rick Fox is 54. Director Patty Jenkins ("Wonder Woman") is 52. Actor Jamie Denbo (TV: "Orange is the New Black") is 50. Actor Eric Szmanda is 48. Actor Rose Byrne is 44. Country singer Jerrod Niemann is 44. Actor Summer Glau is 42. Actor Sheaun McKinney is 42. Actor Elisabeth Moss is 41. Actor Anna Paquin is 41. Actor Sarah Greene is 39. NHL center Patrice Bergeron is 38. Actor Megan Park is 37. Actor Mara Wilson is 36. Actor Sarah Steele is 35. Rock singer Jay McGuinness (The Wanted) is 33. Actor Emily Bett Rickards is 32. Actor Lucas Adams is 30. TV personality Bindi Irwin is 25.