

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 061 ~ 1 of 70

- [1- Upcoming Events](#)
- [1- M-P VB Schedule Change](#)
- [2- Newsweek Bulletin](#)
- [3- Today on GDILIVE.COM](#)
- [4- West Nile Update](#)
- [5- Pheasants Forever Unveils New Hunting Access Program](#)
- [6- Department of Education launches statewide effort to build better readers](#)
- [6- Names Released in Moody County Fatal Crash \(August 4\)](#)
- [7- Local Beef at Groton Area](#)
- [8- Kory is turning 40](#)
- [9- SD SearchLight: 'You get what you pay for' with government services](#)
- [10- SD SearchLight: During debate with lawmaker, carbon pipeline executive calls eminent domain a 'last resort'](#)
- [11- SD SearchLight: Trump absent but still dominates as GOP presidential rivals clash at first debate](#)
- [15- Weather Pages](#)
- [19- Daily Devotional](#)
- [20- 2023 Community Events](#)
- [21- Subscription Form](#)
- [22- Lottery Numbers](#)
- [23- News from the Associated Press](#)

M-P VB Schedule Change

The Mobridge/Pollock volleyball match has been moved to Monday, October 2nd. C game will be at 4pm, JV game at 5pm, Varsity to follow

JH will now play M/P at home on Monday, September 11th with both 7th and 8th grade at 5pm

Thursday, Aug. 24

School Breakfast: Breakfast pizza.

School Lunch: Chicken strips, fries.

Senior Menu: Salisbury steak, mashed potatoes, carrots, apricots, whole wheat bread.

Volleyball hosts Hamlin, 6 p.m.

Friday, Aug. 25

School Breakfast: Biscuits.

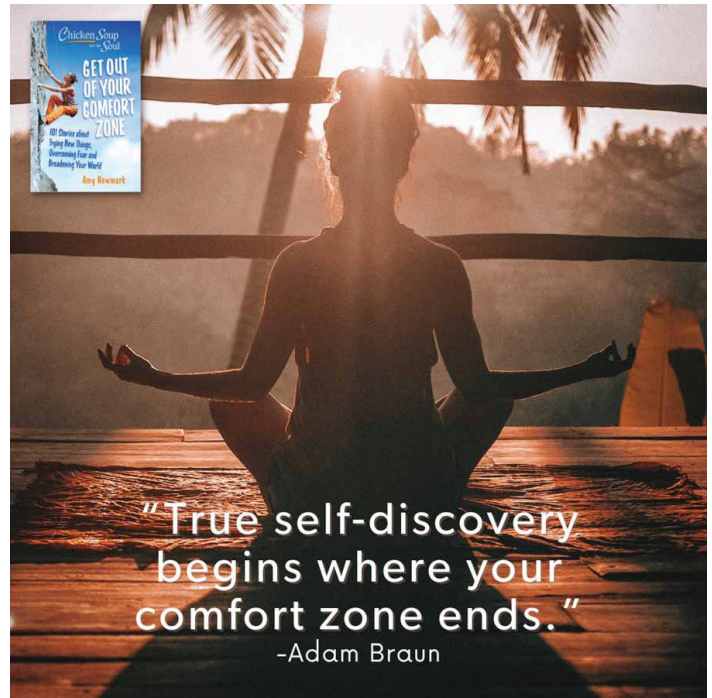
School Lunch: Lasagna hot dish, corn.

Senior Menu: Hamburger gravy over mashed pota-

Groton Daily Independent

PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445

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



toes, green beans, tropical fruit, whole wheat bread.
Football at Redfield, 7 p.m.

Saturday, Aug. 26

Girls Soccer at Vermillion, 1 p.m.

Boys Soccer at Vermillion, 2:30 p.m.

Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 209 N Main, open 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

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

Sunday, Aug. 27

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m.

United Methodist: Conde worship, 8:30 a.m.; Coffee hour, 9:30 a.m.; Groton worship, 10:30 a.m.

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

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

First Presbyterian Church: Bible Study, 9:30 a.m.; Worship, 11 a.m.

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 061 ~ 2 of 70

The Bulletin by Newsweek

World in Brief

charges related to the 2020 election interference case. (See his mugshot). He agreed to a \$150,000 bail. A judge rejected Chief of Staff Mark Meadow's request to avoid arrest in Fulton County.

China announced a ban on all seafood imports from Japan after the country began releasing treated water from the Fukushima nuclear plant into the Pacific Ocean.

India made history as the first country to land near the moon's south pole. The rover of Chandrayaan-3 exited the spacecraft to explore the lunar surface.

South Carolina's Supreme Court upheld a ban on most abortions after six weeks of pregnancy in a 4-1 ruling Wednesday.

North Korea's second attempt to launch a spy satellite into space failed due to a malfunction during "the third-stage flight," months after the first launch crashed into the sea. Pyongyang will attempt again in October.

In the ongoing war in Ukraine, Russian President Vladimir Putin reportedly appointed Colonel-General Viktor Afzalov as acting head of the air force, replacing General Sergei Surovikin who hasn't been sighted since the Wagner Group's mutiny..

TALKING POINTS

"They're savage animals. They are people that are sick. Really sick. You have great people in the Democrat Party, you have great people that are Democrats. But I've seen what they do, I've seen the lengths that they go to... People in that crowd said it was the most beautiful day they've ever experienced. There was love in that crowd. There was love and unity. I have never seen such spirit and such passion and such love. And I've also never seen, simultaneously, and from the same people, such hatred of what they've done to our country." Donald Trump repeated his election claims and praised the Jan. 6 crowd during an online interview as he skipped the first Republican primary debate in Milwaukee.

"Russia is a Mafia organization, and none of these people trust each other. I think a lot of people will be anxious tonight and worried about their own safety. This is good news for Ukraine, of course. Further evidence of the fraying of the Kremlin power structure." Retired U.S. Army General Ben Hodges tells Newsweek after the reported death of Wagner Group chief Yevgeny Prigozhin..

WHAT TO WATCH IN THE DAYS AHEAD

Donald Trump plans to surrender to authorities in Georgia, ahead of a Friday deadline, on charges stemming from his efforts to overturn the 2020 election.

Durable good for July, and the weekly report on initial jobless claims is on the economic calendar.

Leaders of the BRICS nations will conclude their three-day summit in Johannesburg, South Africa. The countries agreed to mechanisms for considering new members into the bloc as they seek to campaign the Global South.

Wagner Group leader Yevgeny Prigozhin, who led a short-lived rebellion against Russian President Vladimir Putin, was on a private plane that crashed in western Russia, the aviation agency said. All 10 passengers on board were killed.

Republican presidential hopefuls exchanged attacks during the first primary debate. Most candidates said they would support Donald Trump if convicted and clashed over abortion, crime, and other topics. Trump, who skipped the debate, praised Jan. 6 supporters and repeated his election lies in an online interview.

Rudy Giuliani surrendered to Georgia authorities on

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 061 ~ 3 of 70

GDILIVE.COM

6:00

GT
Groton Area
Tigers

**JV Sponsored by
Kellie Locke & Family**

Varsity match to follow

Hc

**Hamlin
Chargers**



Volleyball
Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 061 ~ 4 of 70

West Nile Update – South Dakota, August 23, 2023

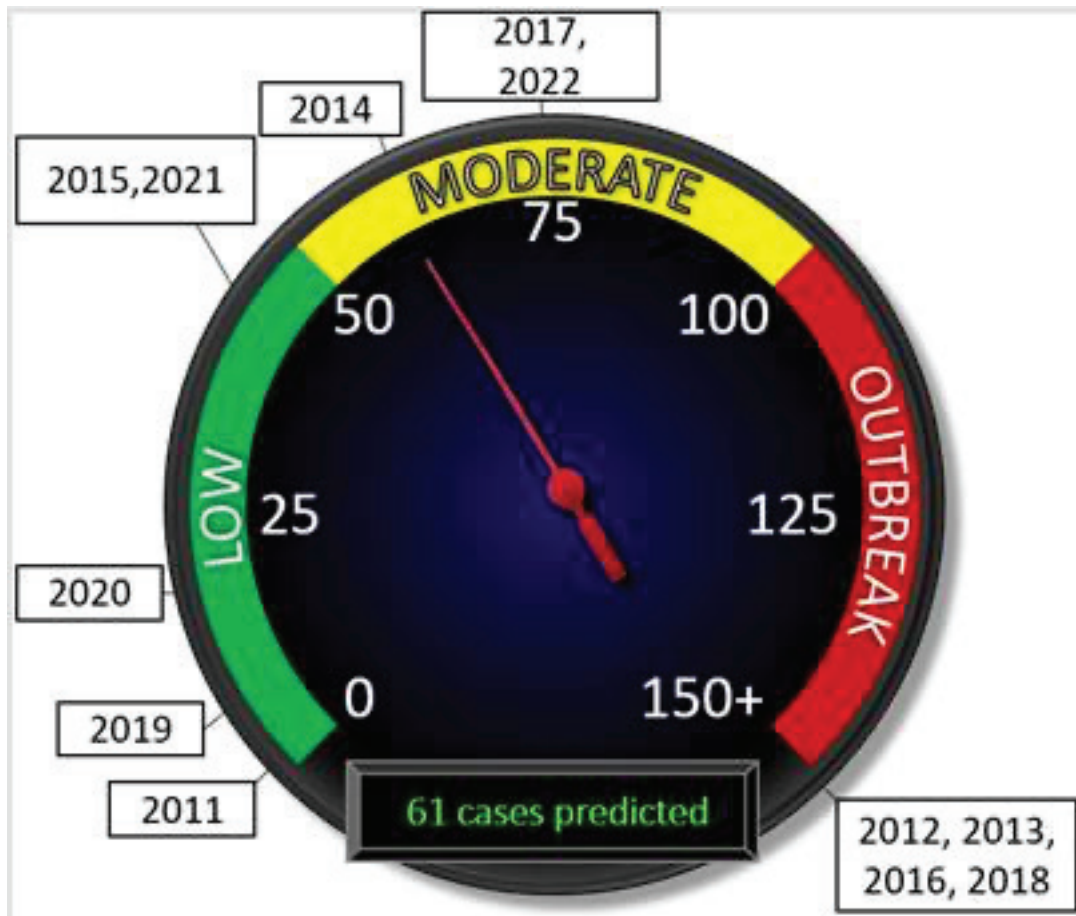
21 human cases reported (Beadle, Brown, Campbell, Davison, Faulk, Hughes, Jerauld, Kingsbury, Lincoln, Mead, Minnehaha, Oglala Lakota, Pennington, Sanborn, Walworth, Yankton)

6 human viremic blood donors (Brown, Codington, Faulk, Charles Mix, Minnehaha, Yankton)

8 counties with positive mosquito pools (Beadle, Brown, Brookings, Codington, Hand, Hughes, Lincoln, Minnehaha)

US WNV (as of August 22): 247 cases (Al, AR, AZ, CA, CO, CT, FL, GA, IA, ID, IL, KS, LA, MD, MI, MN, MO, MS, MT, ND, NE, NM, NY, OK, OR, PA, SC, SD, TN, TX, UT, WI, WV, WY)

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



Pheasants Forever Unveils New Hunting Access Program

Setting ambitious goal to enroll 10K new acres of access per year to support rural economies

Sioux Falls, S.D. - Pheasants Forever is proud to announce a new outdoor access initiative with the goal of enrolling 10,000 acres per year in South Dakota. The Public Access to Habitat (PATH) program will accelerate the statewide enrollment of lands in long-term conservation programs while bolstering participation in South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks' (GFP) Walk-In Area (WIA) program. The inaugural year, fully funded at \$250K through national sponsors onX Hunt and South Dakota Tourism, will open enrollment to landowners starting on September 1, 2023.

"PATH has all the ingredients to be a major statewide success for landowners, wildlife, hunters and rural communities in The Pheasant Capital," said Matt Gottlob, Pheasants Forever's state coordinator in South Dakota. "Through our tremendous partnerships with onX Hunt, South Dakota Tourism and GFP, this initiative can dramatically expand habitat and access in the world's premier upland hunting destination. We view Public Access to Habitat as a win-win for landowners and hunters alike and designed it to be scalable for years to come."

Additive to the current GFP Walk-In Area program and administered in a similar manner, PATH provides an additional sign-up incentive of up to \$25 per acre, paid in advance, in return for 10 years of undisturbed habitat and access on private lands. Landowners work directly with biologists from Pheasants Forever or GFP for site evaluation and implementation, following approval from a review panel. When combined with other financial incentives (signing bonus and payment for Walk-in Access + conservation program payment), PATH enrollments pay landowners a competitive rate for a decade of habitat and access stewardship.

"Voluntary public access programs like PATH are what help make South Dakota a premier upland hunting destination," said onX Hunt wingshooting manager, Ben Brettingen. "An impressive 1.4M acres, or nearly 30 percent of the state's huntable grounds are accessible thanks to these unique agreements between private landowners and outdoorsmen facilitated by organizations like Pheasants Forever and South Dakota GFP. We're proud to support Pheasants Forever and their mission of habitat conservation and access – helping expand hunting opportunity for the future and preserving sporting traditions for years to come."

Public Access to Habitat Guidelines:

- CRP and high-quality undisturbed habitat are incentivized at a base rate of up to \$25/acre
- Habitat must remain undisturbed annually, outside of required management practices for conservation practices
- Shelterbelts, wetlands, CRP, easements, existing grass qualify for the program
- Minimum PATH contract length of 10 years
- All PATH enrollments require a GFP Walk-In Area contract
- Managed rangelands/working lands are also eligible with payment rates similar to GFP rates

For more information about the Public Access to Habitat initiative with examples of funding for landowners, click here to visit the webpage. For landowners interested in enrollment opportunities, find your nearest biologist by visiting pheasantsforever.org/Habitat/findBiologist.aspx.

Thanks to the inaugural year of financial support from onX and South Dakota Tourism, Pheasants Forever is actively fundraising for the next 10,000 acres of enrollment. For individuals and businesses interested in sponsoring PATH acres in South Dakota, contact South Dakota development officer Jake Hanson at (605) 880-1659.

Department of Education launches statewide effort to build better readers

PIERRE, S.D. – The South Dakota Department of Education is launching a statewide literacy initiative designed to build better readers across the state.

“The ability to read is foundational to all learning. Up until about 3rd grade, students are learning to read; after that, they are reading to learn,” said Secretary of Education Joseph Graves. “Therefore, it’s critical that our students have strong reading skills early in their educational careers.”

While South Dakota students typically outperform their peers across the country, reading proficiency rates on the state assessment have not changed significantly in the last several years.

The literacy initiative is based on research collectively called the Science of Reading and includes an emphasis on phonics, which is a method of teaching reading by correlating sounds with letters.

Schools that choose to participate will receive supports for local implementation. Those supports include technical guidance, documents, and free professional learning opportunities for school staff. Successful implementation requires a systematic effort across a school, which is why the professional learning is available to every educator in a school, from paraprofessionals to teachers to school administrators.

Graves expects to see increases in students’ reading proficiency in schools that decide to participate. “All worthwhile things require hard work, and improvement will only come after a lot of hard work by South Dakota educators and those they serve. Knowing them as I do, I am confident that both are up to the task.”

Some school districts such as Sisseton and Tea Area have already begun implementing certain components and are experiencing positive results.

Names Released in Moody County Fatal Crash (August 4)

What: Two-vehicle crash

Where: 474th Ave / 242nd St., 3 miles north of Dell Rapids

When: 2:23 p.m., Friday, August 4, 2023

Driver No. 1: Zachary Apland, 47, Dell Rapids, S.D., Minor injuries

Vehicle No. 1: 2020 Peterbilt semi-truck and trailer

Driver No. 2: Justin Samlaska 42, Beresford, S.D., Fatal injuries

Vehicle No. 2: Ford F-150 pickup truck

MOODY COUNTY, S.D. – A Beresford, S.D. man has been identified as the person who died Friday, August 4, 2023, in a two-vehicle crash three miles north of Dell Rapids, S.D.

Preliminary crash information indicates a 2020 Peterbilt semi-truck and trailer was traveling southbound on 474th Avenue and 242nd Street. At the same time, a Ford F-150 pickup was traveling northbound in the same location. The pickup crossed the centerline into the southbound lane and was struck by the semi. The semi entered the west ditch. The pickup came to rest on the road. Both vehicles became engulfed in flames. The driver of the semi was able to exit the truck. The driver of the pickup was not able to exit the vehicle.

The driver of the Peterbilt semi, Zachary Apland, age 47, had minor injuries.

He was wearing a seatbelt.

The driver of the Ford F-150, Justin Samlaska, age 42, sustained fatal injuries.

Local Beef at Groton Area by Supt. Joe Schwan

We're excited that the opening of The Meathouse in Andover, SD brings a USDA inspected facility right to our District providing a great opportunity to serve our kids high quality, locally grown and harvested beef.

To help make this possible, the Groton Area School District is looking for donations of beef cattle for the 2023-2024 school year. We anticipate the need to be six head annually processed at different times throughout the school year.

The initial goal is to serve 100% locally grown and processed beef in our school lunch program.

If you are interested in donating to the Groton Area School District Local Beef program, please contact Joe Schwan at 605-397-2351 or Joe.Schwan@k12.sd.us.

Monetary donations to this program will be used to offset the cost of processing.



The first local beef is at the school to be used on Friday. Larson Livestock donated the beef. (Photo from Groton School Lunch facebook page)

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 061 ~ 8 of 70

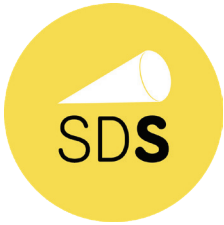
Kory is turning 40

Come join in on the fun

Saturday, August 26, 2023

At 4:00 at the Other Place Bar in Andover, SD





SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

COMMENTARY

'You get what you pay for' with government services

In their zeal to cut taxes, South Dakota lawmakers could face a revenue reckoning

DANA HESS

The scene was a District 7 legislative cracker barrel in Brookings, circa 2011 or thereabouts. The lawmakers on hand were two Republicans, Sen. Larry Tidemann and Rep. Scott Munsterman, and one Democrat, Rep. Spencer Hawley.

Near the end of the allotted time for the cracker barrel, Tidemann and Munsterman remained seated but they were taking a bit of a victory lap, responding to a question based on a recent news story that touted South Dakota's low tax burden. Tidemann and Munsterman were happy to take some of the credit, implying that a string of Republican governors and GOP majorities in the state's House and Senate were working hard to keep South Dakota's tax burden low.

As his Republican colleagues came to the end of their victory lap, Hawley, the Democrat, turned to them and said, "Well, you get what you pay for." The implication being that South Dakotans would be better off if they were tapped a little more heavily for tax dollars.

Here's hoping Hawley left the cracker barrel and bought some lottery tickets, because it seemed that he could look into the future. In a few years, the low tax burden enjoyed by South Dakotans came around to bite them right in the wallet.

In 2015, under the leadership of Gov. Dennis Daugaard, the Republicans in the Legislature put aside their low tax burden inclinations and endorsed a package of gas tax, excise tax and license plate fee increases designed to raise as much as \$88 million a year for improvements to public highways and bridges.

In 2016, the Legislature addressed another need that had been exacerbated by the state's low tax burden — teacher pay. A half-cent increase in the state sales tax was approved, designating 63% of an estimated \$107.4 million for teacher pay, 34% for property tax relief and 3% for increasing instructor pay at the state's four public technical colleges.

Even with those tax increases, South Dakota's low tax burden was in the news again recently. South Dakota Searchlight reported on a meeting of the Legislature's Executive Board at which its members heard from the Legislative Research Council that South Dakota has the lowest tax burden when compared with neighboring states. The state's per capita tax burden of \$4,466 was lower than the tax burdens in Iowa, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota and Wyoming.

Though its tax burden is lowest in the region, South Dakota leads its neighbors in per capita sales tax burden at \$1,788. An LRC research analyst noted that 40% of South Dakota's total tax revenue comes from money generated by the state's sales tax.

This is troubling given that the governor and legislators want nothing more than to cut the state sales tax. With the state awash in federal pandemic funds and higher than expected tax revenues, the 2023 legislative session could have been dubbed the Battle of the Tax Cuts. Noem, who ran on a platform of protecting South Dakotans from tax increases, even went so far as to use a branding iron to stamp her veto on a bill that would have let communities raise the motel occupancy tax from \$2 to \$4.

Noem quickly lost the Battle of the Tax Cuts when a legislative committee easily dismissed her plan to cut the state sales tax on groceries. Instead, lawmakers endorsed an overall state sales tax cut, taking the tax rate from 4.5% to 4.2%. While the cut doesn't make much of a dent in an everyday purchase, it will mean an annual loss to the state budget of \$104 million.

Potentially lurking on the 2024 ballot is an initiative designed to follow through on Noem's failed bill to

cut the state sales tax on groceries. If approved by voters, all of whom eat, that would amount to another annual loss to the state budget of \$124 million.

At some point, Noem and the Republicans in the Legislature will have to raise a tax or two as they deal with the cut in the state sales tax on food on top of the lowering of the tax rate to 4.2%. Despite their proclivity for tax cuts, it's never going to get cheaper to fund a state government. Someone has to pay, especially as the state faces challenges in prison building projects, rural health care, long-term care for senior citizens and discovering a path toward affordable child care. South Dakota's ranking in teacher pay is once again in the cellar, and that will also need to be addressed.

Maybe our leaders can tiptoe through this financial minefield and keep the state's tax burden the lowest in the region. Or maybe they'll be haunted by the words of Spencer Hawley: "You get what you pay for."

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

During debate with lawmaker, carbon pipeline executive calls eminent domain a 'last resort'

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - AUGUST 22, 2023 10:58 PM

BROOKINGS — An executive for a carbon dioxide pipeline company said during a debate Tuesday evening that eminent domain is "a tool of absolute last resort."

Elizabeth Burns-Thompson, vice president of government and public affairs for Navigator CO2, debated state Rep. Jon Hansen, R-Dell Rapids, at the Dacotah Bank Event Center. Hansen is a critic of Navigator's proposed pipeline and another pipeline proposed by Summit Carbon Solutions, both of which would capture carbon dioxide emissions from ethanol plants in multiple states and transport the gas in liquid form to be injected underground or sold for industrial use.

Hansen said when eminent domain is hanging overhead, "no matter how you slice it, that's not a voluntary negotiation, that's coercion."

The debate drew a crowd of hundreds — mostly landowners opposed to the project who cheered for Hansen. The debate was organized by The Dakota Scout, the South Dakota Federation of Republican Women, and the Sioux River Republican Women.

Hansen also attacked the motivation for carbon pipeline projects.

"I would describe this project as a boondoggle," he said, adding that the only reason for the project is federal tax credits. The credits incentivize the removal of heat-trapping carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, where it contributes to climate change.

Burns-Thompson countered, reminding the audience that the tax credits have been around since 2008 and were expanded under former President Donald Trump. Congress and President Joe Biden upped the credits last year to \$85 per metric ton of carbon sequestered annually, making Navigator's Heartland Greenway pipeline potentially eligible for up to \$1.5 billion in annual credits.

Burns-Thompson described ethanol — which is made from corn to be mixed with gasoline — as more than a fuel. She mentioned its byproducts, including distillers grains, which can be used as livestock feed.

"What's left?" she asked the crowd. "That CO2."

Burns-Thompson said by creating a market for ethanol's carbon byproduct, ethanol will be more successful.

"That's going to take markets," she said, referring to states like California, which are demanding cleaner fuels. "That's going to take infrastructure."

Hansen, who described himself as a "big fan of ethanol," said those markets are already shifting to electric vehicles.

"We shouldn't be appealing to those people," Hansen said, criticizing their "leftist climate agenda."

Burns-Thompson told South Dakota Searchlight that the company accepted the debate invitation because it believes in transparency and open communication.

Navigator has already had a lengthy hearing before the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission and is awaiting a decision on its permit application. The commission will begin a hearing for Summit Carbon

Solutions on Sept. 11.

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.

Trump absent but still dominates as GOP presidential rivals clash at first debate

BY: JACOB FISCHLER, JENNIFER SHUTT AND SAMANTHA DIETEL - AUGUST 23, 2023 10:19 PM

Eight Republican presidential candidates gathered onstage Wednesday night in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, for a heated first primary debate heavily influenced by former President Donald Trump, though the party's front runner refused to attend the two-hour event.

Trump instead recorded a competing 46-minute interview with former Fox News personality Tucker Carlson that aired on X, formerly known as Twitter, posted minutes before the debate began. Trump throughout the interview insulted President Joe Biden's health and mental capacity, mocked his fellow Republican candidates and repeated his unfounded claim that the 2020 election was stolen from him.

With just five months before voters head to the first-in-the-nation GOP caucuses in Iowa, each of the eight Republicans who qualified for the debate sponsored by conservative broadcaster Fox News tried to convince viewers they are the best politician to defeat Biden in the 2024 election.

Attending the GOP debate were North Dakota Gov. Doug Burgum, former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, former South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley, former Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson, former Vice President Mike Pence, entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy and South Carolina Sen. Tim Scott.

A handful of the candidates criticized Trump, who faces criminal indictments in four cases and is expected to report to the Fulton County Jail in Georgia on Thursday for a voluntary surrender in a case centering on interference in the 2020 election.

All the candidates but Hutchinson and Christie raised their hand to indicate they would still support Trump if he were convicted of any of the four criminal prosecutions he faces. Ramaswamy said he would pardon Trump on his first day in office.

Abortion policy

In one of the more contentious exchanges, the Republican candidates — who all consider themselves “pro-life” — differed over whether a GOP president should press for a nationwide ban on abortion access, likely to be a major issue in the 2024 election following the Supreme Court ruling striking down *Roe v. Wade*.

Haley said the candidates need to be honest with Americans that it's unlikely a majority of U.S. House members and at least 60 U.S. senators would vote to pass a nationwide ban.

If elected, Haley said, she would look for consensus to prevent abortions late in a pregnancy, encourage adoptions, protect doctors and nurses who don't believe they should have to perform abortions, ensure contraception is available and make sure women don't go to jail if they choose to end a pregnancy.

“Let's treat this like the respectful issue that it is and humanize the situation and stop demonizing the situation,” Haley said.

Pence rejected that assertion, arguing that “consensus is the opposite of leadership.”

The former vice president said he would press for a nationwide ban on abortion access after 15 weeks.

“When the Supreme Court returned this question to the American people, they didn't just send it to the states only. It's not a states-only issue. It's a moral issue,” Pence said. “And I promise you, as president of the United States, the American people will have a champion for life.”

Scott also advocated for a nationwide ban of at least 15 weeks, saying Democratic states should not be able to set their own abortion laws.

“We cannot let states like California, New York, Illinois have abortions on demand up until the day of

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 061 ~ 12 of 70

birth. That is immoral. It is unethical. It is wrong," Scott said. "We must have a president of the United States who will advocate and fight for at the minimum a 15-week limit."

DeSantis was somewhat less clear than the other candidates, saying he believes in a "culture of life" and was proud to sign a six-week ban as Florida governor, though he didn't say what he would press for if elected president.

"Look, I understand Wisconsin is going to do it different than Texas. I understand Iowa and New Hampshire are going to do different. But I will support the cause of life as governor and as president," DeSantis said.

There were approximately 930,160 abortions in the United States during 2020, according to the Guttmacher Institute. The majority of the abortions within the country are now done through medication abortion, a two-dose regimen that is approved for up to 10 weeks gestation.

About 93% of abortions take place during the first trimester, defined as at or before 13 weeks of gestation. Another 6% take place between 14 and 20 weeks and about 1% of abortions take place at 21 weeks or later in a pregnancy, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Minnesota Democratic Sen. Tina Smith said on a press call hosted by the Biden-Harris campaign on Tuesday in advance of the event that the Republican debate would "make really clear what Americans already know, which is that none of the Republican candidates for president will protect access to health care, including abortion."

"These candidates are completely out of touch with American voters who strongly support abortion rights," Smith said.

Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America has called on all of the Republican candidates to commit to pressing for a nationwide ban on abortions after 15 weeks gestation, while other conservative organizations have pressed for a nationwide abortion ban earlier in pregnancy.

Biden blamed for economic problems

Before the first question of the night, Fox News played a montage of voters complaining about rising prices.

Year-over-year inflation reached its highest point in two decades under Biden, at 9.1% in June 2022, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. That dropped to 3.2% last month, much closer to the Federal Reserve's target of 2%.

In Trump's absence, the first question of the night went to the candidate leading in the polls behind Trump, DeSantis, who said the nation was in decline under Biden. He called for opening more energy production as a way to boost the economy.

Christie said he and others on the stage "predominantly" agreed with DeSantis' answer on the economy, but said he had the strongest leadership experience that would be required.

The other candidates largely used their first round of speaking to criticize the economy under Biden. The Republicans sought to present themselves as the most conservative option on spending and taxes, describing Biden and congressional Democrats as irresponsible free spenders.

But Haley said Democrats weren't the only ones to blame, noting the \$2.2 trillion COVID-19 relief law was passed on a bipartisan basis and signed by Trump. She also said Republicans asked for three times as much money in federal earmarks this year.

"So you tell me who are the big spenders," she said. "I think it's time for an accountant in the White House."

She criticized Scott, DeSantis and Pence for voting to raise the debt limit.

Scott said his votes to approve large spending packages under Trump were a response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Three candidates — DeSantis, Ramaswamy and Burgum — specifically named Biden's energy policies as a hurdle to economic growth.

"We will be energy-dominant again," DeSantis said, borrowing a favorite phrase of Trump.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 061 ~ 13 of 70

Climate change

The second topic of the night, perhaps a surprise to Republican primary voters, was about climate change. A Catholic University of America student asked how the candidates would soothe young voters concerned about climate change.

Moderators Brett Baier and Martha MacCallum sought to have candidates raise their hands if they agreed human activity was causing climate change. Hutchinson appeared ready to raise his hand when DeSantis shut down the exercise.

"Look, we're not schoolchildren, let's have the debate," he said. "I'm happy to take it to start."

He did not substantively answer the question, instead criticizing Biden's response to the recent wildfires on Maui and complaining about media coverage.

Ramaswamy was the most clear on the issue, though he took the opposite position to even most Republican voters.

"The climate change agenda is a hoax," he said. "The anti-carbon agenda is the wet blanket on our economy."

Haley and Scott both nodded to environmental protection but declined to advocate for reducing domestic carbon emissions. Instead, they said, the U.S. should focus on forcing developing countries to reduce theirs.

"Is climate change real? Yes it is," Haley said. "But if you want to go and really change the environment, then we need to start telling China and India that they have to lower their emissions."

Average global temperatures in July set a new mark for the hottest month on record, coming after the hottest June ever recorded. This year is likely to be the hottest year since record keeping began in the 1880. The last nine years are the nine hottest ever, according to the National Centers for Environmental Information.

Majorities of voters in both parties now say human activity is causing a warming climate, but still differ on whether those rising temperatures are primary factors in dangerous weather events — such as wildfires, floods, drought and severe storms — according to a Washington Post-University of Maryland poll published Wednesday.

"Climate change is real, by the way," Biden tweeted during the exchange.

Divide on Ukraine aid

One of the starkest dividing lines Wednesday was on aid to Ukraine, with Ramaswamy and DeSantis saying the U.S. should not send more funding to the country defending a Russian invasion.

Ramaswamy's position in particular seemed to rankle Pence and Haley, who have longer foreign policy resumes.

Ramaswamy said Haley could look forward to board positions with defense contracting companies.

"You have no foreign policy experience, and it shows," Haley shot back. "It shows."

The U.S. has sent \$110 billion to Ukraine since Russian President Vladimir Putin sent troops into that country last year. Biden asked Congress to approve \$24 billion more as part of a supplemental funding request this month that also called for additional funds for disaster relief and border security.

Wisconsin setting

The debate took place at Fiserv Forum, the home arena of the Milwaukee Bucks basketball team. Located downtown, the forum can seat more than 17,000 people for concerts and sporting events. Since the arena opened in 2018, it has hosted performers such as Elton John, Lizzo, Harry Styles and Bon Jovi.

Biden narrowly won Wisconsin during the 2020 general election with 49.5% of the vote compared to Trump's 48.8%. The two were separated by fewer than 20,700 votes. During his interview with Carlson, Trump claimed to have won Wisconsin.

Biden said Wednesday afternoon during a family trip to Lake Tahoe, Nevada, that he planned to watch as much of the Republican primary debate as he could, though when asked about his expectations, he laughed and said, "I have none."

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 061 ~ 14 of 70

Trump defends Jan. 6

Trump in his interview with Carlson hinted at armed conflict and lobbed insults at his GOP rivals and Biden. Trump also presented an alternate version of history about the attack on the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, saying the crowd was filled with "love and unity." Trump has been indicted in connection with his activities that led to the day's events.

"People in that crowd said it was the most beautiful day they've ever experienced," he said. "There was love in that crowd. There was love, and unity. I have never seen such spirit, and such passion, and such love, and I've also never seen, simultaneously and from the same people, such hatred of what they've done to our country."

Carlson said Trump has been impeached and indicted and asked him, "Don't they have to kill you now?" And asked by Carlson if open conflict was possible in the future, Trump said he didn't know.

"I can say this, there's a level of passion that I've never seen, there's a level of hatred that I've never seen, and that's probably a bad combination."

Candidates pledge to support a convicted Trump

On the debate stage, the moderators asked the candidates to raise their hands if they would still support Trump's candidacy if he is convicted.

Ramaswamy's hand went up first, followed quickly by Haley, Scott and Burgum, then DeSantis and Pence. Christie and Hutchinson indicated they would not support Trump if he's convicted.

"Someone's got to stop normalizing this conduct," Christie said. "Whether or not you believe the criminal charges are right or wrong, the conduct is beneath the office of president of the United States."

The crowd reacted with a mix of boos and cheers.

Ramaswamy called Trump the best president of the century and said Christie's "entire campaign" was "based on vengeance and grievance against one man," Trump. Ramaswamy dismissed the federal prosecutions of Trump as political.

Christie responded that Ramaswamy's approach was hypocritical because the 38-year-old entrepreneur said he supported law and order.

"You make me laugh," Christie said, prompting prolonged boos from the audience.

Candidates left on the sidelines

Several GOP presidential hopefuls didn't qualify for the debate, including former Texas Rep. Will Hurd and Miami Mayor Francis Suarez.

Hurd criticized the Republican National Committee's debate criteria, saying a "the lack of transparency and confusion around the RNC's debate requirements is antithetical to the democratic process."

"I have said from day one of my candidacy that I will not sign a blood oath to Donald Trump," Hurd said in a statement. "The biggest difference between me and every single candidate who will be on the debate stage in Milwaukee is that I have never bent the knee to Trump."

The RNC required candidates to sign a pledge committing to support the official Republican nominee in the general election as one of the benchmarks for participating in the debate. Trump said in early August he would not sign the pledge.

Suarez said in a statement he was "sorry that this debate will not include my perspectives from the largest growing voting block in our country — young, conservative Hispanics."

The Miami mayor said earlier this month that any candidates who didn't make the debate stage should drop out, though he didn't withdraw his candidacy after he failed to make the stage.

The second Republican presidential primary debate will be Sept. 27 in Simi Valley, California, at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library.

Jacob covers federal policy as a senior reporter for States Newsroom. Based in Oregon, he focuses on Western issues. His coverage areas include climate, energy development, public lands and infrastructure.

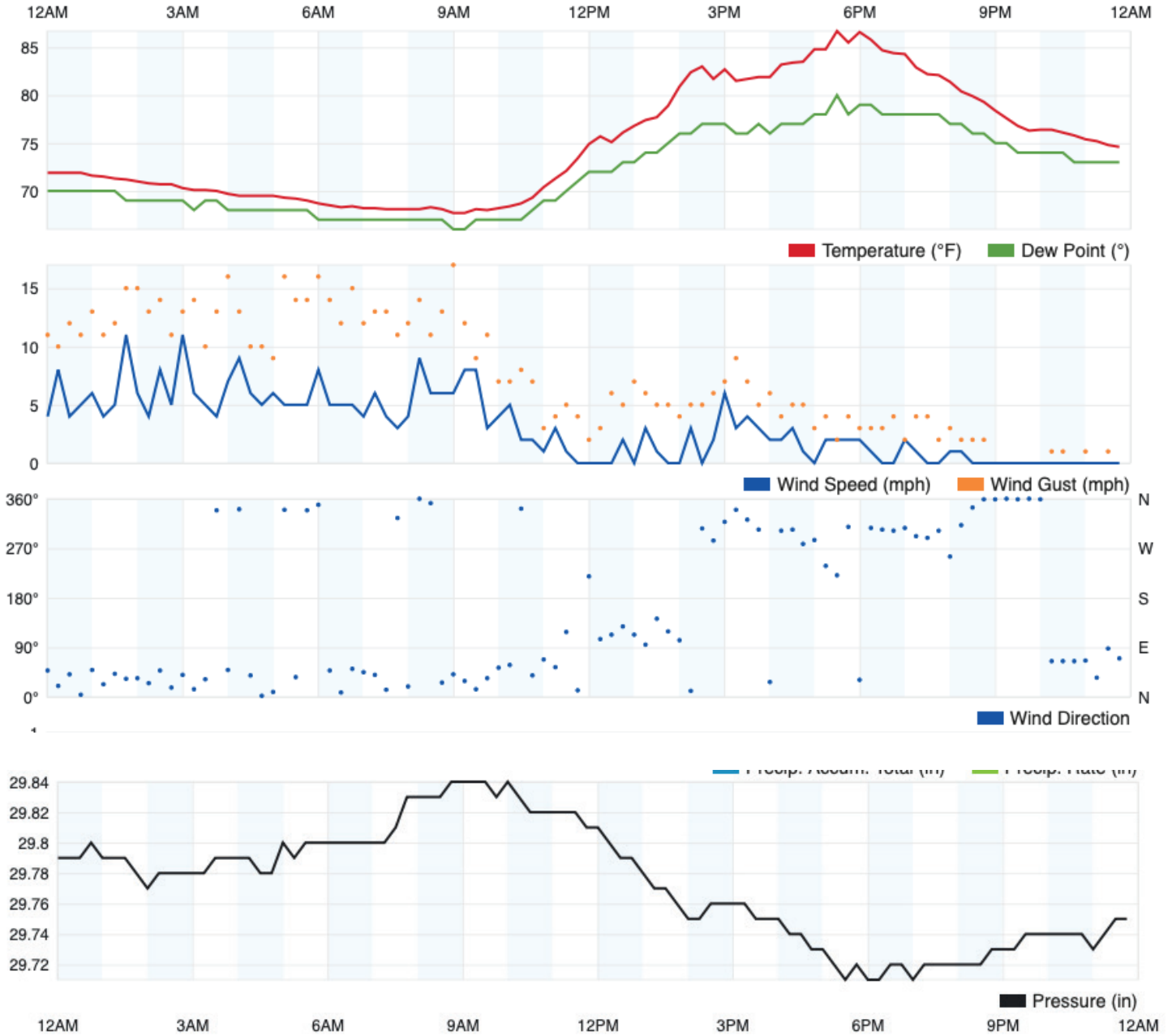
Jennifer covers the nation's capital as a senior reporter for States Newsroom. Her coverage areas include congressional policy, politics and legal challenges with a focus on health care, unemployment, housing and aid to families.

Samantha Dietel is a reporter intern in Washington, D.C. She is pursuing a degree in journalism at the University of Missouri-Columbia. She has previously covered the Missouri legislature in Jefferson City as a reporter for the Columbia Missourian.

Groton Daily Independent






Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 061 ~ 15 of 70


Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



Groton Daily Independent





Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 061 ~ 16 of 70


Thursday	Thursday	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday
<p>Thursday: Widespread dense fog, mainly between 9am and 11am. Otherwise, mostly sunny, with a high near 86. North wind 5 to 8 mph.</p>						
Dense Fog then Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy then Slight Chance T-storms	Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny
High: 86 °F	Low: 65 °F	High: 82 °F	Low: 54 °F	High: 76 °F	Low: 55 °F	High: 82 °F



Mild Weather Next Few Days

August 24, 2023
3:11 AM

Today	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
 20-60%			 10-20%
85-92°	78-86°	74-82°	82-88°



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

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Much more seasonal temperatures on tap through the weekend. We could see scattered weak storms overnight tonight but generally we can expect dry conditions over the next few days.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 061 ~ 17 of 70

Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 87 °F at 5:30 PM

Low Temp: 68 °F at 9:03 AM

Wind: 17 mph at 8:54 AM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 13 hours, 44 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 103 in 1929

Record Low: 38 in 1934

Average High: 82

Average Low: 55

Average Precip in Aug.: 1.74

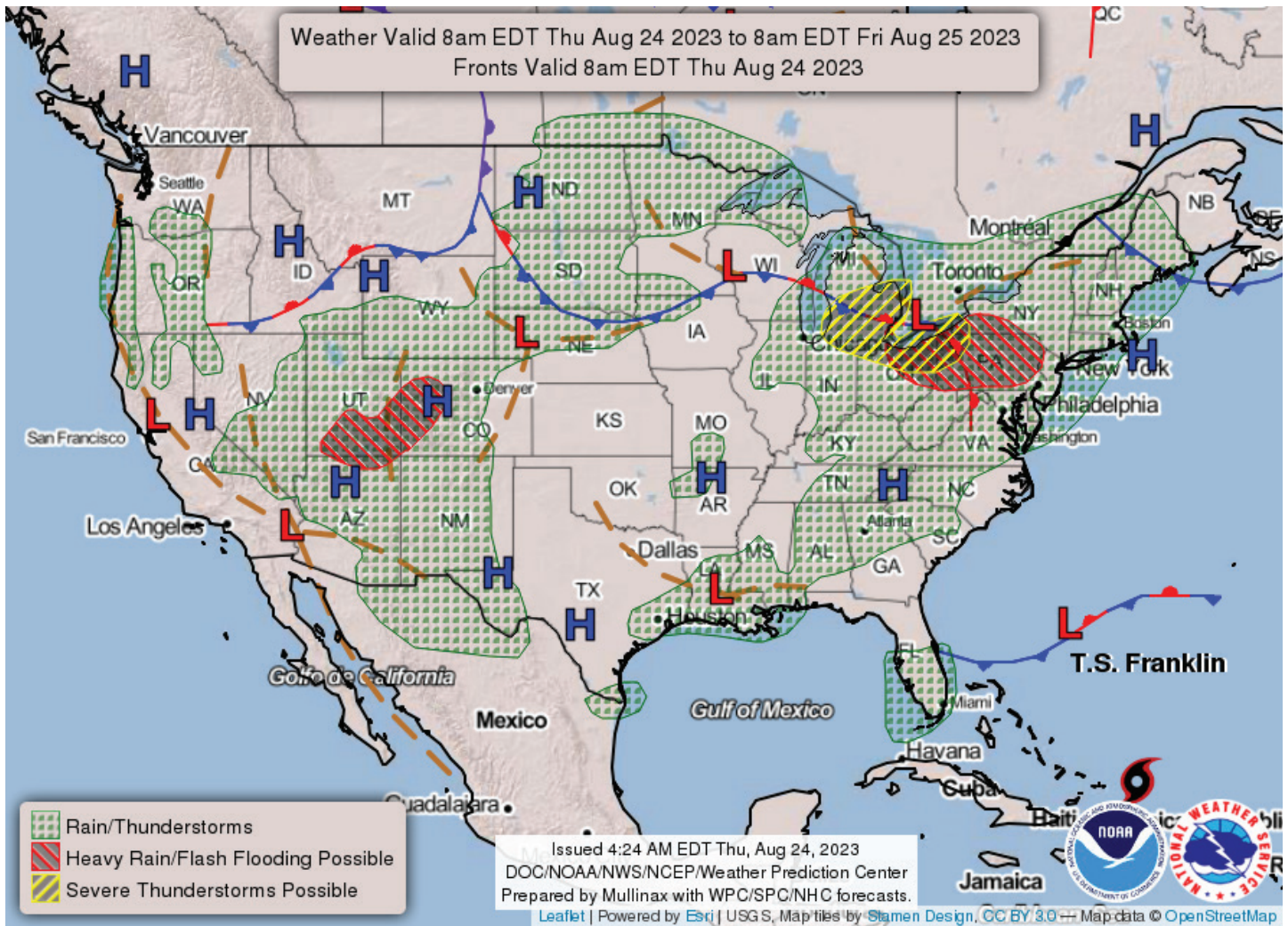
Precip to date in Aug.: 5.92

Average Precip to date: 15.84

Precip Year to Date: 18.59

Sunset Tonight: 8:26:48 PM

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:43:56 AM



Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 061 ~ 18 of 70

Today in Weather History

August 24, 1960: A man was injured when a barn was blown over by an F2 tornado that touched down near Hayes, in Stanley County. Hail, up to golf ball size accompanied the storm as well as about three inches of rain, causing some damage to crops and a farmhouse. The sky color in a westerly direction shortly before the tornado hit was described as a distinct shade of green. Evidence suggests that the tornado may have touched down again in northeast Sully County, destroying a barn, a chicken coop, and haystacks on two farms. Also, precipitation more than 3 inches and locally 6 to 8 inches was accompanied by severe hail, causing damage to buildings and crops. Hail damage was most substantial in Stanly County. The wind carried away an estimated 400 tons of baled hay in Haakon County. A measured rainfall amount of 5.1 inches in less than six hours occurred in Onida, causing extensive flooding of basements, streets, and cropland. Additional rainfall amounts include 5.58 inches 4 NW of Onida, 4.50 inches 23 N of Highmore, 3.05 inches 2N of Onaka, 3.42 inches in Clear Lake, 3.11 inches in Miller, 3.02 inches in Eureka, 2.55 inches 1 NW of Faulkton, 2.40 inches in Gettysburg, 2.22 inches in Blunt, 2.20 inches at Oahe Dam, and 2.16 inches in Clark.

August 24, 1998: A line of severe thunderstorms raced southeast across Sully, Hyde, and Hand counties during the morning hours, producing destructive winds up to 100 mph and hail up to the size of baseballs. The winds and hail damaged or destroyed a wide swath of sunflowers and corn. Four power poles south of Highmore on Highway 47 were snapped off. The school in Highmore had twenty screens shredded by the hail and the winds. On a farm northeast of Onida, a grain bin was blown over a distance of 200 yards.

August 24, 2006: Up to 4.25" diameter hail and 9 tornadoes developed across central and northeastern South Dakota between 4:30 pm and 8:00 pm, two of which were rated as F3 intensity. The first of these F3 tornadoes developed in McPherson County west of Hillsvie at 5:03 pm, and tracked 24.5 miles southeast to just north of Hosmer before lifting at 5:30 pm. Numerous livestock and deer were killed. Devastating damage was observed to farm equipment, homes, barns, grain bins, and vehicles. A well-anchored mobile home was completely destroyed. Debris from each site was observed up to 3 miles away. One person received minor scrapes and bruises. The second F3 tornado of the event was spawned by a long-track supercell, and this supercell produced the other 7 tornadoes of the day (two F2, an F1, and four F0 roughly from Onida to De Smet). It touched down just south of Wessington in Beadle County at 6:37 pm, and tracked 19.5 miles southeast to just southwest of Huron before lifting at 7:18 pm. This tornado destroyed 8 houses and numerous farm buildings and damaged at least 7 other houses. Five large high-voltage transmission towers were blown down about 3 miles southeast of Wessington. A woman was cut on the neck at a farm southwest of Wolsey where the house and all other buildings were destroyed (non-life threatening). One other injury occurred southeast of Wolsey.

79: Stratovolcano, Mount Vesuvius erupted on this day, burying the Roman cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum.

1456: Machiavelli wrote, "On the 24th of August, about an hour before day-break there arose from the Adriatic near Ancona, a whirlwind, which crossing Italy from east to west, again reached the sea near Pisa, accompanied by thick clouds, and the most intense and impenetrable darkness." [Click HERE](#) to read this book.

1992: Hurricane Andrew made landfall in southern Florida at 4:30 AM on this day. The high winds caused catastrophic damage in Florida, with Miami-Dade County cities of Florida City, Homestead, and Cutler Ridge receiving the brunt of the storm. About 63,000 homes were destroyed, and over 101,000 others were damaged. This storm left roughly 175,000 people homeless. As many as 1.4 million people were left without electricity at the height of the storm. In the Everglades, 70,000 acres (280 km²) of trees were knocked down. Additionally, rainfall in Florida was substantial, peaking at 13.98 in (355 mm) in western Miami-Dade County. About \$25 billion in damage and 44 fatalities were reported in Florida.

Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

THE KING ON HIS CROSS

Pilate said to them, "What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?"

They all said to him, "Let Him be crucified!"

Then the governor said, "Why, what evil has He done?"

But they cried out all the more saying, "Let Him be crucified!"

When Pilate saw he could not prevail . . . he took water and washed his hands before the multitude saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this Person. You see to it."

And all the people answered and said, "His blood be on us and on our children."

Then he released Barabbas to them; and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered Him to be crucified.

Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus, twisted a crown of thorns and put it on His head, mocked Him, spit upon Him, struck Him on the head, and led Him away to be crucified. Then they put a sign over His head: THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS. In the end the soldiers said: Truly this was the Son of God.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, let these Words bring to our hearts an understanding of the cost of our salvation. May we see the magnitude of Your love for us in His cross. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: The Roman officer and the other soldiers at the crucifixion were terrified by the earthquake and all that had happened. They said, "This man truly was the Son of God!" Matthew 27



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

Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 061 ~ 20 of 70

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
- 08/10/2023 Family Fun Fest, 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
- 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

Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 061 ~ 21 of 70

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

Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 061 ~ 22 of 70



WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.22.23

1 12 26 36 50 7

MegaPlier: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$52,000,000

NEXT 1 Days 16 Hrs 57
DRAW: Mins 59 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.23.23

9 11 29 38 39 4

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$8,870,000

NEXT 2 Days 16 Hrs 12
DRAW: Mins 59 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.23.23

5 21 29 33 37 17

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT 16 Hrs 27 Mins 58
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.23.23

9 11 17 21 23

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$23,000

NEXT 2 Days 16 Hrs 27
DRAW: Mins 58 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.23.23

18 25 38 56 61 19

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT 2 Days 16 Hrs 56
DRAW: Mins 59 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
08.23.23

25 30 32 33 55 20

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$345,000,000

NEXT 2 Days 16 Hrs 56
DRAW: Mins 59 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the Associated Press

Theodore Roosevelt presidential library taking shape in North Dakota Badlands

By JACK DURA Associated Press

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — Construction is underway for the Theodore Roosevelt presidential library planned in the Badlands of western North Dakota, where the 26th president hunted and ranched as a young man in the 1880s.

The work began June 15 with removing topsoil for the project's cut-fill plan. Builders are beginning construction on the library's east retaining wall, with an initial concrete pour completed Monday, library CEO Ed O'Keefe told The Associated Press on Tuesday.

"If you were to come out on site, you're seeing a sequence that began with the topsoil, started with the east wing, moves to the west wing and then will move back to the east wing," he said.

The project is on a 93-acre site near the venue of the popular Medora Musical and the scenic national park that bears Roosevelt's name. The sale of 90 acres of U.S. Forest Service land for the project was completed last year, costing \$81,000 and covered by the Roosevelt family. Congress approved the land sale in 2020.

Total construction will cost about \$180 million. Construction will continue through the winter, barring severe weather. "We're hardy and resilient," O'Keefe quipped.

"The anticipated pride moment" will be the delivery of mass timber and steel in spring 2024, he said.

"By next summer you're going to see a very substantial structure on site," O'Keefe said.

Library organizers are planning a grand opening of the library for July 4, 2026, the 250th anniversary of America's founding.

In 2019, North Dakota's Republican-controlled Legislature approved a \$50 million operations endowment for the library, contingent upon its organizers raising \$100 million in private donations. They announced that goal being reached in fall 2020.

O'Keefe told the AP the project has "exceeded over \$200 million in fundraising and commitments." Fundraising "doesn't really ever end," he said.

The Legislature earlier this year approved a \$70 million line of credit through the state-owned Bank of North Dakota for the project, intended as a backstop for beginning construction. Organizers haven't tapped the line of credit, O'Keefe said.

Oil magnate Harold Hamm, a major player in the state's Bakken oil field, donated \$50 million to the project, announced in January by Republican Gov. Doug Burgum.

Burgum, a wealthy software entrepreneur who is running for president, championed the library proposal in the 2019 session, and donated at least \$1 million to the project with his wife, Kathryn.

Editorial Roundup: South Dakota

By The Associated Press undefined

Madison Daily Leader. August 17, 2023.

Editorial: 'Teacher Pathway' has roots at Dakota State

Among the many industries short of qualified professionals is teaching. South Dakota's K-12 teacher shortage is notable and needs immediate attention.

Enter Dakota State University's College of Education, which is part of the solution and ramping it up quickly.

The K-12 teacher shortage came about through demographic changes: baby boomer retirees not being replaced by enough young people leaving college. Recruiting teachers to come from other states is difficult, as they face shortages of their own. Encouraging high school students to take up education as a college major would take time. Some potential teachers are frustrated by competing political and social agendas.

Lastly, some people don't want to move to small South Dakota school districts.

Dr. David DeJong, dean of the DSU College of Education, is at the center of South Dakota's effort, now named The South Dakota Teacher Apprenticeship Pathway. School districts already have paraprofessionals – noncertified teachers – among their staffs. By and large, they are already committed to living and working in small school districts. What about an education program that would bring the certification to them without having to leave their jobs? They could take online courses at night, in their hometowns, and pursue certification to a career field they already are committed to.

The Pathway program requires lots of coordination, from the state's Department of Education, the U.S. Department of Education, other South Dakota universities that have education programs and the state Division of Certification and Accreditation. But DeJong and DSU put in tremendous effort, and one result is new enrollment of 76 apprentices in the DSU Teacher Education program completing online course work while working in their communities and schools. Overall, 50 school districts or systems across the state are participating.

We're excited about the program's potential impact on South Dakota school districts and proud of DSU's central role in getting it off the ground.

END

A plane crash believed to have killed mercenary chief Prigozhin is seen as the Kremlin's revenge

By The Associated Press undefined

Russian mercenary chief Yevgeny Prigozhin and top officers of his private Wagner military company were presumed dead in a plane crash that was widely seen as an assassination, two months after they staged a mutiny that dented President Vladimir Putin's authority.

Russia's civil aviation agency said that Prigozhin and six top lieutenants were on a business jet that crashed Wednesday, soon after taking off from Moscow, with a crew of three. Rescuers found all 10 bodies, and Russian media cited sources in Prigozhin's Wagner company who confirmed his death.

Police cordoned off the field where the plane crashed a few hundred kilometers (miles) north of Moscow, as investigators studied the site. Vehicles were seen driving in to take the bodies for forensic examinations.

At Wagner's headquarters in St. Petersburg, lights were turned on in the shape of a large cross. Prigozhin's supporters brought flowers to the building in an improvised memorial.

U.S. and other Western officials long expected Putin to go after Prigozhin, despite promising to drop charges in a deal that ended the June 23-24 mutiny.

"I don't know for a fact what happened, but I'm not surprised," U.S. President Joe Biden said. "There's not much that happens in Russia that Putin's not behind."

Prigozhin supporters claimed on pro-Wagner messaging app channels that the plane was deliberately downed, including suggesting it could have been hit by an air defense missile or targeted by a bomb on board. These claims could not be independently verified. Numerous opponents and critics of Putin have been killed or gravely sickened in apparent assassination attempts.

"The downing of the plane was certainly no mere coincidence," Janis Sarts, director of NATO's Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence, told Latvian television.

The crash came the same week that Russian media reported that Gen. Sergei Surovikin, a former top commander in Ukraine who was reportedly linked to Prigozhin, was dismissed from his post as commander of Russia's air force. Surovikin hasn't been seen in public since the mutiny, when he recorded a video address urging Prigozhin's forces to pull back.

As news of the crash broke, Putin projected calm, speaking at an event commemorating the WWII Battle of Kursk and hailing the heroes of Russia's war in Ukraine. On Thursday, he addressed the BRICS summit in Johannesburg via videolink, talking about expanding cooperation among the group's members. He didn't mention the crash and the Kremlin made no comment about it.

While countless theories about the events swirled, most observers saw Prigozhin's death as Putin's pun-

ishment for the most serious challenge to his authority of his 23-year rule.

Tatiana Stanovaya, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Russia Eurasia Center, said on Telegram that "no matter what caused the plane crash, everyone will see it as an act of vengeance and retribution," and "the Kremlin wouldn't really stand in the way of that."

In the revolt that started on June 23 and lasted less than 24 hours, Prigozhin's mercenaries swept through the southern Russian city of Rostov-on-Don and captured the military headquarters there without firing a shot. They then drove within about 200 kilometers (125 miles) of Moscow in what Prigozhin called a "march of justice" to oust the top military leaders who demanded that the mercenaries sign contracts with the Defense Ministry. They downed several military aircraft, killing more than a dozen Russian pilots.

Putin first denounced the rebellion as "treason" and a "stab in the back" and vowed to punish its perpetrators, but hours later made a deal that saw an end to the mutiny in exchange for an amnesty for Prigozhin and his mercenaries and a permission for them to move to Belarus.

Details of the deal have remained murky, but Prigozhin has reportedly shuttled among Moscow, St. Petersburg, Belarus and Africa where his mercenaries have continued their activities despite the rebellion. He was quickly given back truckloads of cash, gold bars and other items that police seized on the day of the rebellion, feeding speculation that the Kremlin still needed Prigozhin despite the mutiny.

Earlier this week, the mercenary chief published his first video since the mutiny, declaring that he was speaking from an undisclosed location in Africa where Wagner is "making Russia even greater on all continents, and Africa even more free."

Prigozhin's overseas activities reportedly have irked Russia's military leadership, who have sought to replace Wagner with Russian military personnel in Africa.

The Institute for the Study of War argued that Russian authorities likely moved to eliminate Prigozhin and his top associates as "the final step to eliminate Wagner as an independent organization."

Flight tracking data reviewed by The Associated Press showed a private jet that Prigozhin had used previously took off from Moscow on Wednesday evening, and its transponder signal disappeared minutes later.

Videos shared by the pro-Wagner Telegram channel Grey Zone showed a plane dropping like a stone from a large cloud of smoke, twisting wildly as it fell, one of its wings apparently missing. A freefall like that can occur when an aircraft sustains severe damage, and a frame-by-frame AP analysis of two videos was consistent with some sort of explosion mid-flight.

Prigozhin's death is unlikely to have an effect on Russia's war in Ukraine. His forces fought some of the fiercest battles over the last 18 months, but pulled back from the frontline after capturing the eastern city of Bakhmut in late May.

China bans seafood from Japan after the Fukushima nuclear plant begins its wastewater release

By MARI YAMAGUCHI Associated Press

OKUMA, Japan (AP) — The tsunami-wrecked Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant began releasing its first batch of treated radioactive water into the Pacific Ocean on Thursday — a controversial step that prompted China to ban seafood from Japan.

People inside and outside the country protested the wastewater release, with Japanese fishing groups fearing it will further damage the reputation of their seafood and groups in China and South Korea raising concerns, making it a political and diplomatic issue.

In response to the wastewater release, Chinese customs authorities banned seafood from Japan, customs authorities announced Thursday. The ban started immediately and will affect all imports of "aquatic products" including seafood, according to the notice. Authorities said they will "dynamically adjust relevant regulatory measures as appropriate to prevent the risks of nuclear-contaminated water discharge to the health and food safety of our country."

Shortly after China's announcement, Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings President Tomoaki Kobayakawa said the utility was preparing to compensate Japanese business owners appropriately for damages

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 061 ~ 26 of 70

suffered by export bans from “the foreign government” over the wastewater release. He said China is Japan’s key trading partner and that he will do his utmost by providing scientific explanations of the release so that the ban will be dropped as soon as possible.

The Japanese government and TEPCO say the water must be released to make room for the plant’s decommissioning and to prevent accidental leaks. They say the treatment and dilution will make the wastewater safer than international standards and its environmental impact will be negligibly small.

Tony Hooker, director of the Center for Radiation Research, Education, Innovation at the University of Adelaide, said the water released from the Fukushima plant is safe. “It certainly is well below the World Health Organization drinking water guidelines,” he said. “It’s safe.”

“It’s a very political issue of disposing radiation into the sea,” he said. “I understand people’s concerns and that’s because we as scientists have not explained it in a very good way, and we need to do more education.”

Still, some scientists say the long-term impact of the low-dose radioactivity that remains in the water needs attention.

In a live video from a control room at the plant, TEPCO showed a staff member turn on a seawater pump with a click of a mouse, marking the beginning of the controversial project that is expected to last for decades.

“Seawater Pump A activated,” the main operator said, confirming the release was underway. TEPCO said an additional wastewater release pump was activated 20 minutes after the first. Plant officials said everything was moving smoothly so far.

In a statement Thursday, International Atomic Energy Agency Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi said, “IAEA experts are there on the ground to serve as the eyes of the international community and ensure that the discharge is being carried out as planned consistent with IAEA safety standards.”

The United Nations agency also said it would launch a webpage to provide live data about the discharge, and repeated its assurance that the IAEA would have an on-site presence for the duration of the release.

The water release begins more than 12 years after the March 2011 nuclear meltdowns, caused by a massive earthquake and tsunami. It marks a milestone for the plant’s battle with an ever-growing radioactive water stockpile that TEPCO and the government say has hampered the daunting task of removing the fatally toxic melted debris from the reactors.

The pump activated Thursday afternoon sent the first batch of the diluted, treated water from a mixing pool to a secondary pool 10 minutes later. It then moves through a connected undersea tunnel to go out 1 kilometer (0.6 miles) off the coast. Officials said the water moves at a walking speed and will take about 30 minutes to exit from the tunnel.

The operator checked data and the progress on a set of four monitors that show the water volume, pump conditions and any alerts.

TEPCO executive Junichi Matsumoto said Thursday’s release was planned to start small in order to ensure safety.

The wastewater is collected and partly recycled as cooling water after treatment, with the rest stored in around 1,000 tanks, which are already filled to 98% of their 1.37-million-ton capacity. Those tanks, which cover much of the plant complex, must be freed up to build the new facilities needed for the decommissioning process, officials said.

Final preparation for the release began Tuesday, when just one ton of treated water was sent from a tank for dilution with 1,200 tons of seawater, and the mixture was kept in the primary pool for two days for final sampling to ensure safety, Matsumoto said. A batch of 460 tons was to be sent to the mixing pool Thursday for the actual discharge.

Fukushima’s fisheries, tourism and economy — which are still recovering from the disaster — worry the release could be the beginning of a new hardship.

Fukushima’s current fish catch is only about one-fifth its pre-disaster level, in part due to a decline in the fishing population. China has tightened radiation testing on Japanese products from Fukushima and nine

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 061 ~ 27 of 70

other prefectures, halting exports at customs for weeks, Fisheries Agency officials said.

Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said the release is indispensable and could not be postponed. He noted an experimental removal of a small amount of the melted debris from the No. 2 reactor is set for later this year using a remote-controlled giant robotic arm.

In 2021, the Japanese government announced plans to release the treated water to the sea. Then, on Sunday, Kishida made a rushed visit to the plant before meeting with fisheries representatives and pledging to support their livelihoods until the release ends.

The hurried timeline raised skepticism that it was made to fit Kishida's busy political schedule in September. But Economy and Industry Ministry officials say they wanted the release to start as early as possible and have good safety records ahead of the fall fishing season.

The March 2011 earthquake and tsunami destroyed the plant's cooling systems, causing three reactors to melt. Highly contaminated cooling water applied to the damaged reactors has leaked continuously to building basements and mixed with groundwater.

TEPCO plans to release 31,200 tons of the treated water by the end of March 2024, which would empty only 10 tanks because of the contaminated production of wastewater at the plant, though the pace will later pick up.

Hopeful signs of an economic 'soft landing' emerge in Jackson Hole as Fed meets with world watching

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

JACKSON HOLE, Wyoming (AP) — At the height of the post-pandemic economic recovery, Andy Parazette's taco shop enjoyed such a crush of business that customers sometimes had to wait an hour for a burrito.

Though Parazette welcomed the sales, the influx was unsustainable. Jackson Hole, Wyoming, was absorbing a flood of visitors as Americans crowded into nearby Yellowstone and Grand Teton national parks — outdoor sites seen as safe vacation spots. The uber-wealthy who owned area properties arrived, too, to ride out the pandemic.

"The COVID thing was unmanageable," Parazette said of the summers of 2020 and 2021. "I'd never seen it like that before." Frustrated customers "were like, 'I just wanted a burrito.'"

This year, business is still good — just not as robust as it had been. Parazette's costs for beef and chicken have eased after spiking the past two years. It's not quite as hard to find workers. When he advertises a job opening, people actually apply for it.

"We've had our reprieve," said Parazette, 54, who has owned Pica's Taqueria with his wife, Danielle, for 22 years. "It's not necessarily a bad thing."

As the Federal Reserve prepares to hold its annual economic conference in Jackson Hole on Friday and Saturday, its policymakers are trying to guide the U.S. economy toward something akin to what's happening in Jackson Hole. They have jacked up their key interest rate to a 22-year high to try to slow growth and bring inflation down to their 2% target. Consumer inflation, which peaked last year at 9.1%, is now 3.2%.

Even as they cool the economy, the Fed's policymakers hope to avoid tipping it into a recession — a notoriously difficult achievement that economists call a "soft landing."

In Jackson, signs that the economy is stabilizing have begun to emerge. Supply chains have normalized for some retailers, reducing pricing pressures. Hotel occupancy rates have come off the boil of the pandemic years; room rates have eased in response. Real estate agents are advertising some reduced home prices, though by national standards they remain astronomical.

Jackson, to be sure, is not a bellwether community. It lies in Grand Teton County, the richest and most unequal county in the nation. Average-sized homes sell for millions. The area includes a branch of First Republic Bank, which caters to mostly wealthy clients and was one of three major banks that collapsed last spring. When Target opened a new store recently, it plunged into the competition for workers by dangling \$25 an hour.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 061 ~ 28 of 70

Yet the area also draws visitors of relatively modest means, who arrive in RVs to hike, fish and revel in the area's stunning natural beauty. Its population of permanent residents has jumped in recent decades, providing a bit of economic stability. They include many immigrants who labor in restaurants, hotels and resorts.

The Fed's conference will occur against a backdrop of growing optimism for the U.S. economy. Nationally, unemployment is near a half-century low. Despite sharply higher borrowing costs caused by the Fed's rate hikes, consumers have continued to increase their spending.

At the same time, there are encouraging signs that the economy might not grow so fast as to alarm the Fed's inflation fighters. Mortgage rates have spiked above 7%, to their highest levels in two decades, dragging down home sales in the process. Some retailers, including Macy's and Dick's Sporting Goods, have had to resort to deep discounts to clear out excess inventories because many customers are becoming more cost-conscious.

Raphael Bostic, president of the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, says he's still optimistic that the central bank can thread the needle and achieve a soft landing.

"A recession has never been in my outlook," Bostic said in an interview Wednesday. At the same time, he said, he has heard from some business leaders who are concerned about the jump in borrowing costs.

"Things are slowing down in an orderly fashion," he said. "People are being more sensitive in how they are spending their money."

Travel has been a boost to the economy since last year. But there are signs nationally that it is cooling. STR, a travel analytics firm, has lowered its forecast for hotel occupancy rates, projecting that those rates will barely increase this year from 2022.

Some domestic travel has been siphoned away by a burst in overseas tourism. But STR's president, Amanda Hite, said even some luxury travelers have pulled back on leisure spending. Lower-priced hotels have also seen fewer customers compared with previous years.

"Planes are full, and hotels and restaurants are busy," said Ian Shepherdson, chief economist at Pantheon Macroeconomics. "But we care about economic growth, not the level of activity. And growth appears to be slowing," in airline traffic and restaurant visits, as well as hotels.

In Jackson, data prepared for the local Chamber of Commerce shows a slowdown in hotel occupancy: It dropped to 75% this June, from 81% in the pre-pandemic year of 2019.

The decline in business has prompted many hotel owners in the area to cut prices, mirroring national trends that have helped reduce inflation. Nationally, hotel prices dropped on a monthly basis in June and July.

Keith Sproule, who owns the Brentwood Inn in Jackson Hole, said he's marked down the cost of some of his suites by as much as one-third to ensure that they're booked.

"We're all filling our room nights through price reductions," he said.

Sales remain healthy at Skinny Skis, an outdoor retailer in downtown Jackson, said co-owner Taylor Hall. Its customers are not inflation-sensitive, given their high incomes, he acknowledged.

But production at shoe makers in Vietnam and China appears to have fully rebounded from COVID. This has helped lower costs, which Hall said his shop is passing on to customers in the form of lower prices.

At the same time, Russia's invasion of Ukraine has made the cross-country and Alpine skis the store sells more expensive, because many had been made in Ukraine. Production has moved to other Eastern European countries, while some Ukrainian factories have resumed output after shutting down last year. But the disruptions are still inflating prices.

The Fed's rate hikes have led some business leaders in the region to postpone projects. Because of rising mortgage rates, Mike Halpin, a Jackson-based land developer, has delayed his plans to build about 400 homes on 100 acres in Ririe, Idaho, about an hour and a half away.

He thought the site would appeal to workers in Jackson. Some employers might even provide transportation from there. Workers in Idaho Falls and Rexburg, Idaho, where populations are also growing, could also become buyers.

But as mortgage rates marched higher last fall, Halpin got cold feet. He put the project's planning on

hold in December.

Halpin thinks the project could still succeed at current borrowing costs. He just worries that rates might go even higher. He is waiting for some clear sign that the Fed is done with its hikes.

And if Fed Chair Jerome Powell eventually does make it clear that rate increases are over?

"It would trigger me to start the six-month planning process," Halpin said. "I need to get the ball rolling by this fall."

Iran, Saudi Arabia and Egypt are among 6 nations set to join the BRICS economic bloc

By GERALD IMRAY and MOGOMOTSI MAGOME Associated Press

JOHANNESBURG (AP) — Iran and Saudi Arabia are among six countries that will join the BRICS bloc of developing economies as new members from 2024, South Africa's president said Thursday.

United Arab Emirates, Argentina, Egypt and Ethiopia are also set to join the bloc that is currently made up of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, whose country presently chairs BRICS, made the announcement at a bloc summit in Johannesburg.

The five current members agreed at this week's summit to expand the bloc after two days of talks, although Ramaphosa said the idea of expansion had been worked on for over a year.

It's the second time that BRICS has decided to expand. The bloc was formed in 2009 by Brazil, Russia, India and China. South Africa was added in 2010. The BRICS bloc currently represents around 40% of the world's population and contributes more than a quarter of global GDP.

Three of the group's other leaders, Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping, are attending the summit and were present alongside Ramaphosa for the announcement.

Russian President Vladimir Putin did not travel to the summit after the International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant for him in March for the abduction of children from Ukraine. He has participated in the summit virtually, while Russia was represented at the announcement in Johannesburg by Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.

"This membership expansion is historic," Chinese leader Xi said. "It shows the determination of BRICS countries for unity and development."

In an online message, United Arab Emirates leader Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan welcomed the BRICS announcement that it would include his nation in "this important group."

"We look forward to a continued commitment of cooperation for the prosperity, dignity and benefit of all nations and people around the world," Sheikh Mohammed said on X, the social media platform formerly known as Twitter.

The inclusion of Iran, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates together in the same economic or political organization would have been unthinkable in recent years amid escalating tensions following the collapse of Tehran's 2015 nuclear deal and a series of attacks attributed to the country since.

But the UAE was first to reengage diplomatically with Iran as it emerged from the coronavirus pandemic and following missile attacks on Abu Dhabi claimed by the Iranian-backed Houthi rebels of Yemen. In March, Saudi Arabia and Iran announced they reached a separate détente with Chinese mediation.

Both Saudi Arabia and the UAE also have maintained relations with Russia amid Moscow's war on Ukraine, much to the chagrin of Washington, which long has provided security guarantees for the major oil-producing nations. China has also sought closer relations with all three nations, particularly Iran, from which it has imported oil since the collapse of the nuclear deal.

Trump set to surrender at Georgia jail on charges that he sought to overturn 2020 election

By ERIC TUCKER, KATE BRUMBACK and JILL COLVIN Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Donald Trump is set to surrender Thursday to authorities in Georgia on charges that he schemed to overturn the 2020 election in that state, a booking process expected to yield a historic first: a mug shot of a former American president.

Trump's arrival follows a presidential debate featuring his leading rivals for the 2024 Republican nomination, a contest in which he remains the leading candidate despite accelerating legal troubles. His presence in the state, though likely brief, is expected to swipe the spotlight at least temporarily from his opponents in the aftermath of a debate in which other candidates sought to seize on Trump's absence to elevate their own presidential prospects.

The Fulton County prosecution is the fourth criminal case against Trump since March, when he became the first former president in U.S. history to be indicted. Since then, he's faced federal charges in Florida and Washington and, this month, was indicted in Atlanta with 18 others — including his ex-chief of staff, Mark Meadows, and former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani — under a racketeering statute normally associated with gang members and organized crime.

The criminal cases have spurred a succession of bookings and arraignments, with Trump making brief court appearances before returning to the campaign trail. He's turned the appearances into campaign events amid a far lighter schedule than his rivals, with staff delighting in wall-to-wall media coverage that has included news helicopters tracking his every move.

The campaign has also used the appearances to solicit fundraising contributions from his supporters as aides paint the charges as part of a politically motivated effort to damage his reelection chances.

His Atlanta appearance will be different than others, though, requiring him to surrender at a problem-plagued jail — but without an accompanying court appearance for now. Unlike in other cities that did not require him to pose for a mug shot, Fulton County officials have said they expect to take a booking photo like they would for any other defendant.

"Unless somebody tells me differently, we are following our normal practices, and so it doesn't matter your status, we'll have a mugshot ready for you," Fulton County Sheriff Patrick Labat said at a news conference earlier this month.

District Attorney Fani Willis has given all of the defendants until Friday afternoon to surrender at the main Fulton County jail.

Trump has repeatedly denied any wrongdoing. He said in a social media post this week that he was being prosecuted for what he described in capital letters as a "perfect phone call" in which he asked the Republican secretary of state, Brad Raffensperger, to help him "find" enough votes for him to overturn his loss in the state to Democrat Joe Biden.

Trump is expected to turn himself in at the Fulton County jail, which has long been a troubled facility. The Justice Department last month opened a civil rights investigation into conditions, citing filthy cells, violence and the death last year of a man whose body was found covered in insects in the main jail's psychiatric wing. Three people have died in Fulton County custody in the past month.

But he is not expected to spend much time there.

His attorneys and prosecutors have already agreed to a bond of \$200,000, along with conditions that include barring the former president from intimidating co-defendants, witnesses or victims in the case — including on social media.

When defendants arrive at the jail, they typically pass through a security checkpoint before checking in for formal booking in the lobby. During the booking process, defendants are typically photographed and fingerprinted and asked to provide certain personal information. Since Trump's bond has already been set, he will be released from custody once the booking process is complete.

Unlike in other jurisdictions, in Fulton County, arraignments — where a defendant appears in court for the first time — generally happen after a defendant surrenders at the jail and completes the booking process,

not on the same day. That means Trump could have to make two trips to Georgia in the coming weeks though the Fulton County Sheriff's Office has said some arraignments in the case may happen virtually if the judge allows, or he could waive Trump's arraignment.

When he eventually appears in court, the public is also likely to see much more of the proceedings firsthand. Georgia courts typically allow photographs and video of the proceeding, unlike in federal court and in New York, where press access is tightly controlled.

Only in Manhattan were still photographers allowed to capture images of Trump briefly while he sat at the witness stand. Federal courts generally prohibit photography, recordings and electronics of any kind.

Zimbabwe's election extends to a second day after long ballot delays. Some slept at polling stations

By FARAI MUTSAKA Associated Press

HARARE, Zimbabwe (AP) — Voting is still underway in Zimbabwe, where hourslong delays in distributing ballot papers forced the president to extend the general election by a day at dozens of polling stations.

Some frustrated voters slept at polling stations in the capital, Harare, snuggling under blankets or lighting fires to keep warm.

President Emmerson Mnangagwa, who seeks a second term, used his presidential powers to extend voting to Thursday night at dozens of polling stations. Ballot papers were still being printed late Wednesday, hours after voting should have closed. At other polling stations, counting of ballots began.

Zimbabwe has a history of violent and disputed elections. The 80-year-old Mnangagwa had claimed Zimbabwe to be a "master" of democracy while criticizing Western countries that expressed concern about the credibility of the polls weeks ago.

His main challenger, Nelson Chamisa, a 45-year-old lawyer who narrowly lost a disputed election in 2018, has described this election as a sham, claiming that the voting delays were aimed at disenfranchising voters in his urban strongholds.

At many polling stations in Harare and other urban areas, people shoved and shouted at election officials and police officers after being told ballot papers had run out. The state-run Herald newspaper quoted Justice Minister Ziyambi Ziyambi as saying the printing of ballot papers would only be complete late Wednesday night.

Some polling stations opened two hours after the official closing time, while others suspended voting and officials asked people to return in the morning.

"We spent the while night here. We are concerned. This is the first time in my life seeing a situation where people cannot vote because papers are not there. It's not making sense," said Cadwell Munjoma, 55, wearing an overcoat at a polling station in the middle-class Mabelreign suburb at dawn.

Some waiting voters washed their faces at plastic buckets. Others were glued to their phones, urging neighbors and family members who had gone home for the night to return and prepare to vote.

The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission acknowledged the late distribution of ballot papers at some polling stations and blamed it on printing delays "arising from numerous court challenges." Governing party activists and the opposition had brought a flurry of cases over who could run in both presidential and parliamentary elections.

This is the second general election since the ouster of longtime ruler Robert Mugabe in a coup in 2017.

The southern African nation of 15 million people has vast mineral resources, including Africa's largest reserves of lithium, a key component in making electric car batteries. But watchdogs have long alleged that widespread corruption and mismanagement have gutted much of the country's potential.

Ahead of the election, opposition and rights groups including Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International accused Mnangagwa of seeking to silence dissent amid rising tensions due to a currency crisis, a sharp hike in food prices, a weakening public health system and a lack of formal jobs.

Mnangagwa was a close ally of Mugabe and served as vice president before a fallout ahead of the 2017

coup. He has sought to portray himself as a reformer, but many accuse him of being even more repressive. Zimbabwe has been under United States and European Union sanctions for the past two decades over allegations of human rights abuses, charges denied by the governing party. Mnangagwa has repeated much of Mugabe's rhetoric against the West, accusing it of seeking to topple his regime.

3 small Palestinian villages emptied out this summer. Residents blame Israeli settler attacks

By JULIA FRANKEL Associated Press

AL-QABUN, West Bank (AP) — The Palestinian hamlet of al-Qabun in the central occupied West Bank was silent this week — the grazing fields for sheep deserted, the empty schoolhouse locked, the makeshift homes left as steel carcasses.

The last families living there packed up two weeks ago, driven from their homes of nearly three decades by what they said was a year of intensified attacks and harassment by armed Jewish settlers living in unauthorized outposts on neighboring hilltops.

"I feel like I'm a refugee here, and settlers are the owners of our land," said Ali Abu Kbash, a shepherd who fled al-Qabun with his four children and 60 sheep for the rocky slopes of a neighboring village. He said life had become unbearable as settlers tried to take over his fields with their sheep, tampered with the village's water supply, and routinely burst into his village to harass residents.

The exodus from al-Qabun, a small Bedouin village northeast of the city of Ramallah that numbered 89 people before the evacuation, represents the third case over four months in which a Palestinian community emptied out, according to data from U.N. monitors. Residents blame mounting settler violence.

For Palestinians, the recent wave of departures from Area C — the 60% of the West Bank that has remained under Israeli military control since interim peace accords from the 1990s — is emblematic of a new stage in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as Jewish settlers double down on shepherding as a tool to seize land. United Nations officials warn the trend is changing the map of the West Bank, entrenching unauthorized outposts.

Some 500,000 Israelis have settled in the West Bank — specifically in Area C — since Israel captured the territory, along with east Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip, in the 1967 Mideast war. Their presence is viewed by most of the international community as a major obstacle to peace.

Settlement expansion has been promoted by successive Israeli governments over nearly six decades, but Netanyahu's far-right government has made it a top priority. Settler firebrand and powerful Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich plans to ask the government to allocate \$180 million for West Bank projects that could advance his goal of eliminating any differences between life in the settlements and life within Israel's internationally recognized borders.

"The displacement of Palestinians amid increasing settler violence is of a magnitude that we have not previously documented," said Andrea De Domenico, head of the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in the occupied Palestinian territory. Settler attacks have displaced nearly 500 Palestinians, including 261 children, in the past year and a half, the office estimates.

A spokesperson for settlers in the region denied accusations of violence or aggression against Palestinian communities. "No one forced them out," said Eliana Passentin. "They chose to leave."

While Bedouin are traditionally nomadic, the recent departures are not voluntary seasonal migrations, residents and researchers said. Instead of moving to nearby hamlets before returning, Bedouin are fleeing the open areas of the West Bank for populous towns under Palestinian Authority administrative control.

Most of the displaced villagers said they would like to go home one day but would not unless the outposts disappeared.

Out of 36 people who fled the Palestinian hamlet of al-Baqa, east of Ramallah, in early July, just one six-person family has returned after settlers from a newly established outpost wreaked havoc on the village, setting their sheep loose on Palestinian grazing fields and torching a home with people inside.

"The rest of my village is too scared to return," said Mustafa Arara, a 24-year-old resident who recently

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 061 ~ 33 of 70

went back.

Palestinian rights groups describe the uptick in settler incursions as part of a state-backed strategy. For decades, the settler movement has sought to clear sections of the West Bank around the Israeli-built Route 90 road that runs through the Jordan Valley. If Israel were to develop the areas, it would bolster the contiguity of settlements and further weaken the already faint possibility of a partition deal leading to Palestinian statehood.

Many Bedouin communities in Area C have been slated for expulsion because they could not secure permission to build. According to anti-settlement watchdog group Peace Now, over 95% of Palestinian building permits are rejected. The military routinely issues demolition orders for homes of corrugated tin and scrap wood. Last week, authorities leveled a European Union-funded schoolhouse in the Bedouin hamlet of Ein Samiya, which 150 residents recently fled — virtually guaranteeing they would not return soon.

But the government hasn't carried out mass evictions for decades. In some cases, Israel's Supreme Court delays the expulsion of Bedouin communities by questioning whether authorities have suitable relocation plans.

Now, rights groups say radical Jewish settlers and their sheep are doing what Israeli authorities have not — driving scores of Bedouin from land that they've inhabited for decades. Most settled in the area after fleeing or being forced from the Negev desert in the 1948 war surrounding Israel's creation.

"I don't think there was a meeting in a smoky room between the army and government and settlers," said Michael Sfard, a prominent Israeli lawyer who often represents Palestinians. "But in a more general way, Israel is directly pushing the Palestinian community away from open lanes of Area C and into more populous enclaves."

Amana, a group that supports and funds unauthorized settlements, described the shepherd outposts as a way for Israelis to take over the most land with the least effort at a conference in 2021.

"Construction takes up little ground and is expensive, and it doesn't allow you to bring in large amounts of people in a short period of time," Amana's secretary-general, Ze'ev Hever, said at the conference.

Israeli shepherd settlers now control some 60,000 acres — just under 7% of Area C, said Dror Etkes, an Israeli anti-settlement researcher. A quarter of that land was seized after Palestinian residents evacuated. When al-Qabun emptied, some 3,000 additional acres fell under Israeli control, Etkes said.

Violence from both Israelis and Palestinians has long been routine in the territory. But under Netanyahu's new government, the number of attacks against Palestinians has skyrocketed, according to U.N. monitors.

In the governorate of Ramallah — where four small Palestinian villages have emptied out since last July — the U.N. has recorded 150 Palestinians injured and four killed by either Israeli settlers or Israeli forces in settler-related incidents between January and early August this year. That's nearly double the number of injuries recorded in all of 2022.

Israel's military said it does not allow or support acts of settler violence. It said the security forces deal with "cases in which a report of violence in the area" is received.

After evacuating earlier this month, some residents from al-Qabun returned — to set fire to what remained of their homes. They'd rather burn down the place themselves than let Israeli settlers do it, they said.

The violent settlers who drove them to leave, they said, came from a nearby outpost known as Malachei Hashalom — Hebrew for "Angels of Peace."

Founded in 2015, Malachei Hashalom describes itself as a "special shepherding farm ... where Jewish presence is critical to the security and integrity of the country."

Earlier this year, Netanyahu's government pledged to legalize the outpost.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 061 ~ 34 of 70

derstorm that unleashed heavy rains left more than 40 people dead across the country.

Prime Minister Ariel Henry had urged Haitians on Tuesday to stock up on water, food and medication.

More than 200,000 people in Haiti have been displaced by gang violence over the past few years: authorities checked up on some of those living on the street or in makeshift shelters.

In the Dominican Republic, officials shuttered schools, government agencies and several airports with at least 25 of the country's 31 provinces under red alert. On Wednesday, more than 346,000 customers were without power, and some 120 aqueducts were out of service because of heavy rains, affecting more than 1.6 million customers.

Flooding already had been reported on Tuesday in Santo Domingo, and beyond, where residents prepared for heavy rainfall.

"We're scared of the river," said Doralisa Sánchez, a government employee who lives near the Ozama River that divides the city. She had to flee her home three times during previous storms.

She hoped Franklin wouldn't force her to temporarily abandon her home because she said people steal belongings left behind.

The storm worried thousands of Dominicans who live in flood-prone areas.

"When two drops of water fall here, this suddenly becomes flooded," said Juan Olivo Urbáez, who owns a small business in a community near the Ozama River.

The National Hurricane Center issued a tropical storm warning for the Turks and Caicos Islands, where up to 3 inches (8 centimeters) of rain was forecast in some areas.

Franklin is the seventh named storm of the Atlantic hurricane season, which runs from June 1 to Nov. 30. An eighth named storm, Gert, dissipated on Tuesday.

On Aug. 10, the National Ocean and Atmospheric Administration updated its forecast and warned that this year's hurricane season would be above normal. Between 14 to 21 named storms are forecast. Of those, six to 11 could become hurricanes, with two to five of them possibly becoming major hurricanes.

Vivek Ramaswamy takes center stage, plus other key moments from first Republican debate

By STEVE PEOPLES and NICHOLAS RICCARDI Associated Press

Former President Donald Trump and Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis have dominated the Republican presidential nomination fight for much of the year. Neither dominated the debate stage Wednesday night.

Trump, of course, decided to skip the GOP's opening presidential primary debate given his overwhelming lead in the polls. DeSantis showed up, but he was overshadowed for much of the night by political newcomer Vivek Ramaswamy.

And there was no shortage of aggressive performances from the others on stage either. Former United Nations ambassador Nikki Haley, former Vice President Mike Pence and former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie were aggressive when given the opportunity.

It took more than an hour for moderators to ask about Trump's legal battles, a discussion previewed with a video of the Atlanta jail where he will surrender on charges Thursday.

The former president scheduled counterprogramming with an interview aired on X, formerly known as Twitter, while his team suggested that the debate was essentially an audience to see who's best positioned to serve as his running mate.

Here are our takeaways from an action-filled night:

VIVEK GRABS THE SPOTLIGHT

At the center of the stage, and the center of the debate's hottest exchanges, was a 38-year-old man who no one expected to be there even a few months ago – a novice candidate and technology entrepreneur named Vivek Ramaswamy.

Though he's well behind Trump, Ramaswamy has crept up in recent polls, leading to his position next to DeSantis at center stage. And he quickly showed why when he showcased his ready-for-video, on-

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 061 ~ 35 of 70

message approach — talking about how his poor parents moved to the U.S. and gave him the chance to found billion-dollar companies.

Then Ramaswamy started to throw elbows. At one point he declared, "I'm the only person on the stage who isn't bought and paid for." He slammed his rivals as "super PAC puppets" who were using "ready-made, pre-prepared slogans" to attack him.

He seemed to be betting that primary voters preferred something memorable said to something done. His rivals were having none of it.

"Now is not the time for on-the-job training," Pence said. "We don't need to bring in a rookie."

Christie cut in during one of Ramaswamy's most biting attacks. "I've had enough of a guy who stands up here who sounds like ChatGPT," Christie said, adding that Ramaswamy's opening line about being a skinny guy with a hard-to-pronounce name reminded him of former President Barack Obama — not a compliment on a Republican stage. Ramaswamy responded by asking Christie for a "hug," referencing when Obama visited Christie's state following Hurricane Sandy.

Haley attacked Ramaswamy's argument that the U.S. shouldn't support Ukraine in its defense against Russia's invasion. "Under your watch, you would make America less safe. You have no foreign policy experience and it shows," Haley told him, standing directly to his left.

NAVIGATING TRUMP

It took more than an hour for the candidates to confront the elephant not in the room.

And when they did, most of the participants raised their hands to say they'd support Trump even if he was convicted. That's after the moderators noted that Trump is facing more than 90 criminal counts in separate cases across four jurisdictions.

Ramaswamy vowed to pardon Trump if given the chance.

"Let's just speak the truth. President Trump, I believe, was the best president of the 21st century. It's a fact," Ramaswamy said.

Christie, a former U.S. attorney and frequent Trump antagonist, pushed back aggressively despite being drowned out at times by the audience's boos.

Even if people disagree with the criminal charges, Christie said, "The conduct is beneath the office of the president of the United States."

DIVIDE ON ABORTION POST-DOBBS

The Republicans on stage did not downplay their strong opposition to abortion rights when given the opportunity. But there was a clear divide among the candidates over whether to push for a federal abortion ban.

Haley called on her opponents to be honest with voters that a federal law that imposes an abortion ban on all states would likely never get through the narrowly divided Congress. She said the issue should be sent back to the states. She also made a personal appeal.

"We need to stop demonizing this issue," Haley said. "We aren't going to put a woman in jail ... if she has an abortion."

On the other side: Pence, an evangelical Christian who has long fought against abortion rights. Both Pence and Scott openly endorsed a national ban on abortions at 15 weeks at least. Pence said that Haley's call to find consensus in the states "is the opposite of leadership."

"It's not a states-only issue. It's a moral issue," he said.

As for DeSantis, who signed a 6-week abortion into Florida law just this spring, he didn't take a position on a federal ban when asked directly. He said he was "proud" to sign his state's abortion ban, which is one of the strictest in the nation.

Democrats were likely happy with the discussion. They already plan to make abortion a central issue in next fall's general election.

DESANTIS IN THE BACKGROUND

The Florida governor was the highest polling contender on stage. Yet at the debate, he seemed to slide into the background as Ramaswamy took most of the attacks and fought with others on stage.

DeSantis rarely waded into the back-and-forth, preferring to wait for a moment when he could give a

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 061 ~ 36 of 70

lengthy statement. His critics – especially Trump – have hammered him for being awkward and wooden, and he had relatively few opportunities to dispel that impression.

That's not to say DeSantis didn't have strong moments. He grabbed hold of a question about liberal billionaire George Soros, a major donor to left-leaning causes and frequent conservative target. DeSantis noted he was the only person on the stage who's removed Democratic prosecutors who were elected with donations from Soros' network.

"As president, we are going to go after all of these people because they are hurting the quality of life," DeSantis said.

But even when DeSantis successfully walked the tightrope that has defined his campaign – avoiding direct Trump criticism while making a case for why he'd do the job better – he was brought down to Earth.

The candidates were asked whether Pence did the right thing by letting Congress certify President Joe Biden's election on Jan. 6, 2021. DeSantis was notably quiet and had to be asked twice by the moderators for his answer. "I've answered this, Mike did his duty, I've got no beef with him," DeSantis said, contending that Democrats wanted the GOP to talk about Jan. 6 while pivoting to the future, saying the election has to be about Jan. 20, 2025 – the day the next president is sworn in.

Bret Baier, one of the moderators, retorted, "Donald Trump is beating you by 30 to 40 points in the polls so it is an issue we have to face."

It's not clear whether DeSantis changed that dynamic. With roughly four months left to go until voting starts, he may not have many other big opportunities to do so.

THE LONE WOMAN ON STAGE

With eight candidates on the stage, it was a challenge to stand out. But one stood out immediately – Haley – because she was the only woman there and the only person not in a dark suit and Republican-red tie.

Haley quoted Margaret Thatcher about how women get things done while men talk, stressing the importance of educating girls and arguing that keeping transgender girls out of female sports was a woman's issue. "I am going to fight for girls all day long because strong girls become strong women and strong women become strong leaders," Haley said.

She also explicitly referenced the general election even as she remains a longshot in primary polls. Some of her most memorable moments came when she sparred with Ramaswamy on whether the U.S. should send weapons and funding to Ukraine.

REJECTION OF TRUMP'S FALSE ELECTION CLAIMS

Trump has almost made it a prerequisite for people vying for his party's nomination to claim that he won the 2020 election. In 2022, Republican candidates in several debates were quick to say they disbelieve the 2020 election results.

Not on Wednesday. Instead, candidate after candidate praised Pence – who may end up a witness in one of the federal prosecutions against Trump – for rejecting the former president's pleas to halt Biden's certification as the victor on Jan. 6. Only Ramaswamy declined to support Pence.

"Mike Pence stood for the constitution and he deserves not grudging credit but our thanks as Americans," Christie said.

Pence has been attacked by Trump repeatedly and pursued by hecklers still angry that he didn't try to keep Trump in office. While an Associated Press poll earlier this month found that 7 out of 10 Americans think Biden legitimately won the election, 57% of Republicans do not agree with that statement. That's a reflection of both Trump's repetition of his election lies and the way a conservative media world parrots those lies, or at least shies away from contradicting them.

Fox News recently paid \$787 million to settle a libel suit from voting machine firm Dominion Systems over airing lies about the 2020 election, so it was especially striking to hear such robust statements on the network, including Pence's final statement about Trump.

"He asked me to put him over the Constitution," Pence said of the former president, "and I chose the Constitution."

AN UNRULY EVENT, AT TIMES

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 061 ~ 37 of 70

Things started off quietly as the candidates beat up on Biden's economic policies. But when the participants turned against each other, Baier and fellow moderator Martha MacCallum struggled to control the action at times.

DeSantis helped set the tone early by rejecting the moderators' request for candidates to raise their hands if they believed human behavior caused climate change.

"We're not schoolchildren," DeSantis charged. And the moderators abandoned their request.

At one point, Ramaswamy and Haley shouted over each other for more than 30 seconds when the conversation turned to foreign policy. The candidates waved their fingers at each other as they yelled. The moderators stayed silent.

Baier and MacCallum let the candidates drive the action for much of the night — which is typically what the audience wants, although there will be critics who would have preferred a more orderly affair.

The first 2024 Republican presidential debate is in the books. Here's what happened

MILWAUKEE (AP) — Follow along for live updates on the first 2024 Republican presidential debate. The field's early front-runner, Donald Trump, skipped the event and conducted an interview with Tucker Carlson instead.

What to know

— GOP candidates tangle in Milwaukee as they vie to be the leading alternative to Trump — The key moments from Wednesday night's debate — Trump attacks rivals in online interview with Tucker Carlson while skipping debate — Trump's decision to back out tests Fox News' ability to pivot again — The GOP presidential debate puts the spotlight on swing-state Wisconsin

With debate over, focus turns to Trump's surrender in Georgia

The front-runner for the 2024 Republican presidential nomination is set to surrender to authorities at an Atlanta jail on Thursday, a day after he skipped the contest's first debate.

Former President Donald Trump is expected to make a historic first, becoming the first former U.S. president to have a mug shot taken. He is surrendering on charges related to his efforts to overturn the 2020 election in the state.

Regardless, his criminal proceedings played little role in Wednesday's debate, with six of his eight rivals on the stage saying they would still support Trump if he wins the 2024 GOP nomination.

The Fulton County prosecution is the fourth criminal case against Trump since March, when he became the first former president in U.S. history to be indicted. Since then, he's faced federal charges in Florida and Washington and, this month, was indicted in Atlanta with 18 others — including his ex-chief of staff, Mark Meadows, and former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani — under a racketeering statute normally associated with gang members and organized crime.

Trump and his co-defendants have denied wrongdoing.

Moderators let candidates take control at times during debate

Like all debates, this one was unruly at times.

Things started off quietly as the candidates beat up on President Joe Biden's economic policies. But when the participants turned against one another, Fox News moderators Bret Baier and Martha MacCallum struggled to control the action.

Ron DeSantis helped set the tone early by rejecting the moderators' request for candidates to raise their hands if they believed human behavior caused climate change.

"We're not schoolchildren," DeSantis snapped. The moderators abandoned their request.

At one point, Vivek Ramaswamy and Nikki Haley shouted over each other for more than 30 seconds when the conversation turned to foreign policy. The moderators stayed silent.

Baier and MacCallum let the candidates drive the action for much of the night — which is typically what the audience wants, although there will be critics who preferred a more orderly affair.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 061 ~ 38 of 70

Burgum says he stood on one leg behind podium after injury

The North Dakota governor wasn't going to let a basketball injury ruin his debate night.

Doug Burgum told reporters after Wednesday night's debate in Milwaukee that he ended up rupturing his Achilles tendon, despite initially thinking it might have only been a tear.

He hurt his leg playing basketball on Tuesday and said he saw a Milwaukee Bucks doctor on Wednesday.

He stood for the full debate despite the injury and said he hadn't canceled any campaign events yet. He plans to take it "one day at a time," he said.

Burgum said he was "standing on one leg behind that podium" but took inspiration from a quote that's popular in his home state to get through it.

"Cowboy up," he said, "You got to just get up and do it."

'No one on stage 'won' tonight's debate,' Harris says

Vice President Kamala Harris is reacting to the Republican presidential debate on behalf of President Joe Biden's reelection campaign, saying, "No one on stage 'won' tonight's debate."

"Instead," she said, "the American people heard how much they stand to lose from an extremist agenda."

Harris has been a leading Biden administration voice on abortion, which was frequently discussed during the debate, and has increasingly stepped up political attacks against top Republicans. While the Republican candidates repeatedly laid into Biden during the debate, however, Harris herself was little mentioned.

Still, she said in a statement moments after the debate ended that the candidates had "laid out a vision for an America that is less fair, less free, and less safe."

"These extremists focus on unnecessary debates meant to divide our nation in hopes that the American public will not notice they have no affirmative agenda," Harris said.

Pence brings the fire in first 2024 presidential debate

Former Vice President Mike Pence is campaigning on his reputation as a statesman and experienced elected official, but he also showed off his debate chops during Wednesday night's faceoff with his GOP rivals.

Pence had back-and-forth moments with several others on stage over some of the biggest dividing lines in the Republican nominating contest. Drawing a contrast with former South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley over abortion, among his signature issues, Pence called Haley's push for consensus over the issue "the opposite of leadership."

Perhaps some of Pence's fieriest moments came as he sparred with biotech entrepreneur and political newcomer Vivek Ramaswamy, saying, "Now is not the time for on-the-job training." He also feuded with Ramaswamy over criticism of the decision by some candidates — Pence included — to meet with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

The former vice president said it represented "a pretty small view of the greatest nation on earth" to think the U.S. can't simultaneously work on domestic and foreign issues.

He also drew applause when he said former President Donald Trump wasn't above the law. Pence himself was also the subject of a pivotal debate question, with the candidates largely agreeing that he had been correct to protect the results of the 2020 election against Trump's pressure campaign.

Biden highlights Haley's remark that GOP to blame for national debt

President Joe Biden and the Democrats are responding to the Republican presidential debate by rushing to agree with an unlikely source — GOP White House hopeful Nikki Haley.

Haley, a former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, wasted little time during the early stages of the debate slamming her fellow Republicans, rather than Biden, for running up the national debt.

She noted that many of her opponents on stage were former members of Congress. "You have Ron DeSantis. You've got Tim Scott. You've got Mike Pence. They all voted to raise the debt. And Donald Trump added 8 trillion to our debt."

"What she said," Biden said on Instagram, posting a video of Haley's answer.

Kevin Munoz, a spokesperson for Biden's reelection campaign, also released a statement saying, "Nikki Haley is right."

"Republicans are responsible for some of our country's worst economic decisions," Munoz said.

At least 1 person is dead and 2 are missing as Tropical Storm Franklin batters Dominican Republic

By MARTÍN ADAMES ALCÁNTARA and DÁNICA COTO Associated Press

SANTO DOMINGO, Dominican Republic (AP) — Tropical Storm Franklin unleashed heavy floods and landslides in the Dominican Republic on Wednesday after making landfall in the country's southern region, killing at least one person and leaving two others missing.

The storm began to slowly spin away late Wednesday afternoon from the island of Hispaniola that the Dominican Republic shares with Haiti after dumping heavy rain for several hours.

Forecasters warned the storm could drop up to 12 inches (30 centimeters) of rain in the Dominican Republic, with a maximum of 16 inches (41 centimeters) for the country's western and central regions. Meanwhile, up to 4 inches (10 centimeters) of rain are forecast for Haiti, with nearly 8 inches (20 centimeters) for the country's eastern regions.

"The population of the Dominican Republic must all be right now, without exception, in their homes, the homes of friends and family, or in shelters," said Juan Manuel Méndez, emergency operations director.

The Civil Defense said a man identified as Carlos Marino Martínez died in the city of San Cristobal after being swept away by floodwaters. The agency initially said he was one of its volunteers, but later corrected the information saying it misidentified a uniform he was wearing. They did not provide further details. Two women in that city also were injured following a landslide, officials said.

More than 350 people were huddled in shelters in the Dominican Republic, where emergency operations officials said they were looking for a 54-year-old man with mental health problems who went missing after he jumped into a creek late Tuesday. Meanwhile, José Luis Cabrera with the Civil Defense agency told Noticias SIN that a teenage boy is missing after a river swept him away on Wednesday.

"Six of them jumped in, and one of them didn't make it back," he said.

Another 280 people were evacuated from their homes to safer ground, with at least six communities cut off by heavy rains, officials said.

The storm also downed several trees and at least two light posts, with dozens of homes affected by floods that turned streets into rushing rivers. Authorities said the roof of one home in San Cristobal collapsed, as did walls of various buildings around the country.

"There's a lot of damage," Méndez said.

The U.N.'s World Food Program warned Wednesday that some 125,000 people in the Dominican Republic are living in areas that "are extremely vulnerable to landslides and flash floods because they live in poor, overcrowded settlements near rivers, creeks, and lagoons."

Hércules Urbáez, a 41-year-old father of six who lives in the city of Barahona, where Franklin made landfall, said he and his family went to his mother's house for safety.

"People have refused to leave," he said.

On Wednesday night, the storm was centered about 75 miles (120 kilometers) south-southeast of Grand Turk Island, according to the National Hurricane Center in Miami. It had maximum winds of 40 mph (65 kph) with higher gusts and was moving northward at 13 mph (20 kph).

Rivers swelled across the Dominican Republic, with one in the southern coastal city of Barahona lapping at shacks made of tin where one resident used plastic buckets to raise his mattress above his home's dirt floor.

In the capital of Santo Domingo, José Abott, a 34-year-old graphic designer, monitored the water level of a river near his home via a WhatsApp group: "It always fills with water."

Meanwhile, Tropical Storm Harold weakened into a tropical depression Tuesday night after making landfall in South Texas, bringing strong winds and rain, leaving thousands of homes without power.

In the Caribbean, officials were most concerned about Franklin's impact in Haiti, which is prone to catastrophic flooding given the country's severe erosion.

"Haiti is among the most vulnerable countries in the world when it comes to the effects of extreme weather," said Jean-Martin Bauer, the World Food Program's director for Haiti. In June, a powerful thun-

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 061 ~ 40 of 70

Biden has made his handling of the economy a centerpiece of his campaign, trying to turn "Bidenomics" into a rallying cry even as top Republicans slammed it as a failure.

Debate shows deep divides within Republican Party

The first Republican presidential debate illustrated the deep divisions within the GOP, with the candidates on stage arguing over issues including U.S. support for Ukraine, when and how to best restrict abortion nationwide, and support for the party's eventual 2024 nominee.

Most of the candidates vowed to support Ukraine in its war with Russia, but the notable exception was Vivek Ramaswamy. He suggested that supporting that country when the U.S. hasn't fixed its own problems was "disastrous." That drew rebukes from many of his rivals, including former United Nations Ambassador Nikki Haley, who told the 38-year-old technology entrepreneur, "You have no foreign policy experience, and it shows."

There was disagreement on abortion, with Haley calling for "consensus" and Pence saying that was the "opposite of leadership." The candidates largely agreed that Pence was right to protect the results of the 2020 election against Donald Trump's pressure campaign.

Trump skipped Wednesday night's event and was not a major focus of what was said. But both Christie and Hutchison were booed for saying they wouldn't support him as their party's nominee, though Christie faltered in his answer. Despite so much consensus on Trump, however, Pence drew applause when he said the former president wasn't above the law.

DeSantis, the highest-polling candidate on stage, takes back seat

After recent campaign stumbles, Ron DeSantis was expected to have to defend himself and project likeability on the debate stage — but he had done relatively little of either as the two-hour broadcast neared its end.

The Florida governor instead seemed to take a back seat to more vocal candidates, speaking significantly less than biotech entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy, his closest GOP competitor besides former President Donald Trump in recent polls.

Ramaswamy garnered both massive applause and barbs from competitors on stage on topics from foreign policy to climate change.

In the second half of the night, DeSantis was given the first chance to answer a question about education, one of the topics he campaigns on most passionately.

He responded with ease, citing Florida legislation to remove mentions of gender identity and so-called critical race theory in the classroom.

But Ramaswamy was quick on his tail. The novice candidate pleased the crowd with calls to "shut down the head of the snake, the Department of Education," end teachers unions, and require civics tests to graduate high school.

Christie asked about UFOs at Republican debate

Is the truth really out there?

There was a UFO question posed near the end of the GOP debate. Former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie was asked if he would "level" with the American people about what was known about what was "out there."

Christie took mock offense, saying he'd been asked that because he was from New Jersey and that his home state is "different but not that different."

He didn't otherwise take the bait, saying those on stage had better things to talk about.

Ramaswamy only candidate to oppose more funding to Ukraine

When asked by the moderators who would not support more funding to Ukraine, the only candidate to raise their hand was Vivek Ramaswamy.

"I think this is disastrous that we are protecting against an invasion across somebody else's border when we should be using those same military resources to prevent the invasion of our own southern border here in the United States," Ramaswamy said, drawing cheers from the crowd.

Ramaswamy also took a swipe at his fellow Republicans, including former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie and former Vice President Mike Pence, who have met with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

"I find it offensive that we have professional politicians on the stage that will make a pilgrimage to Kyiv

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 061 ~ 41 of 70

to their Pope Zelenskyy without doing the same thing for people in Maui or the South Side of Chicago or Kensington," Ramaswamy said. "I think we have to put the interests of Americans first, secure our own border instead of somebody else's."

This prompted a rebuke from Pence: "Anybody that thinks that we can't solve the problems here in the United States and be the leader of the free world has a pretty small view of the greatest nation on earth."

Ramaswamy takes literal center stage at debate

At the center of the stage, and at the center of the hottest exchanges in the first part of the debate, was a 38-year-old novice candidate and technology entrepreneur named Vivek Ramaswamy.

Though he's well behind Trump, Ramaswamy has crept up in recent polls, leading to his position next to Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis at center stage. And he quickly showed why when he showcased his ready-for-video, on-message approach, talking about how his poor parents moved to the U.S. and he had the ability to found billion-dollar companies.

Then Ramaswamy tried to show he wasn't a regular politician and started to throw elbows. At one point he declared, "I'm the only person on the stage who isn't bought and paid for." He slammed his rivals as "super PAC puppets" who were using "readymade, pre-prepared slogans" to attack him.

He seemed to be betting that primary voters preferred something memorable said to something done. His rivals were having none of it.

Candidates agree Pence did the right thing on Jan. 6

The Republican presidential candidates at Wednesday's debate largely said they agreed with former Vice President Mike Pence's actions on Jan. 6, 2021.

Pence eschewed then-President Donald Trump's demands to stop the certification of Joe Biden's election, a decision that led some in a mob of Trump supporters to chant for his hanging that day.

South Carolina Sen. Tim Scott said, "Absolutely."

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis didn't immediately answer the question, saying, "We've got to look forward." Under pressure from both Pence and the moderators, DeSantis ultimately said, "Mike did his duty. I've got no beef with him," prompting Pence to reply, "I'm relieved."

Former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie leaped to Pence's defense, saying the then-vice president "deserves not grudging credit, he deserves our thanks as Americans."

Former South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley agreed that Pence "did the right thing" and deserved credit, as did North Dakota Gov. Doug Burgum.

Trump leans into 2020 election lies in conspiracy-dabbled interview

Donald Trump skipped the Republican presidential debate to instead lean into his bogus claims about the 2020 election in a conspiracy-dabbled interview with former Fox News host Tucker Carlson.

The former president praised the crowd he spoke to on the morning of Jan. 6, 2021, before his supporters stormed the U.S. Capitol, saying, "There was love in that crowd. There was love and unity."

Trump also did not dismiss a suggestion from Carlson about whether his political opponents might choose violence or threaten his life.

"They are savage animals. They are people that are sick. Really sick," Trump said.

He also called the four criminal cases he faces "nonsense."

Trump attacked President Joe Biden and suggested he was physically unfit for office. He also derided his rivals for the GOP nomination and said he skipped the debate because he didn't want to be "harassed" by people he said "shouldn't even be running for president."

"I'm going to have all these people screaming at me, shouting questions at me, all of which I love answering, I love doing, but it doesn't make sense to do them so I've taken a pass."

Six of eight candidates say they'd fully support Trump as nominee

The top Republicans vying to be the leading alternative to Donald Trump are finally getting a chance to weigh in on his four indictments — sort of.

Nearly an hour into the GOP debate, Fox News Channel showed a live image of Atlanta's Fulton County jail, where the former president is set to surrender on charges on Thursday, drawing boos from the audi-

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 061 ~ 42 of 70

ence. The moderators said they'd spend a "brief moment about the elephant not in the room" and ask about the cases against Trump.

Those on stage were then asked to raise their hands if they would support Trump if he wins the GOP presidential nomination. Six of the candidates raised their hands, while former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie half-raised his hand and former Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson kept his hand down.

The candidates on stage were required to sign a pledge vowing to support the eventual nominee before joining Wednesday's debate.

Haley calls for abortion 'consensus'; Pence says that's not leadership

All of the Republican candidates on Wednesday night's debate stage say they oppose abortion, but their differences on where lines should be drawn became evident on stage.

Former South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley — the only woman in the GOP race — says there's a need for "consensus" over abortion, noting that she feels it unlikely that a federal ban would pass until there are 60 senators who would support it. Haley, who often cites her own fertility struggles and the fact that her husband is adopted, says America needs to "humanize the issue and stop demonizing" it.

Former Vice President Mike Pence challenged her position, saying that "consensus is the opposite of leadership" on the issue.

Pence is the only major candidate who has said he supports a federal ban on abortion at six weeks, before many women know they're pregnant. In an interview with The Associated Press, Pence went even further, saying abortion should be banned even when a pregnancy isn't viable

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, who signed a six-week abortion ban into law, said "you've got to do what you think is right" when asked what he felt about potential criticism that such a narrow restriction could possibly harm GOP candidates in a general election.

Christie accuses Ramaswamy of sounding like a chatbot

Former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie lashed out at biotech entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy during a discussion on climate change, accusing the outsider candidate of sounding like an artificial intelligence chatbot after Ramaswamy called efforts against carbon energy "a wet blanket on our economy."

"I've had enough already tonight of a guy who sounds like ChatGPT standing up here," Christie said. "The last person at one of these debates who stood in the middle of the stage and said, 'What's a skinny guy with an odd last name doing up here?' was Barack Obama. And I'm afraid we're dealing with the same type of amateur."

"Give me a hug just like you did to Obama," Ramaswamy responded, a nod to the then-president placing his hand on Christie's shoulder during a visit after Superstorm Sandy. "And you'll help elect me just like you did to Obama too."

Former United Nations Ambassador Nikki Haley jumped in after the feisty exchange, distinguishing herself as the only woman onstage.

"I think this is exactly why Margaret Thatcher said, 'If you want something said, ask a man. If you want something done, ask a woman,'" she said, acknowledging that climate change is real and arguing that to address it, the U.S. needs to pressure China and India to lower their emissions.

Haley goes after fellow Republicans on federal spending

Nikki Haley smoothly took the first swipe of the night on a question about excessive federal spending and nodded to her accounting degree from Clemson.

The former South Carolina governor and former United Nations ambassador didn't blink in turning to her rivals with congressional experience to blame them — not Joe Biden — for the nation's debt.

"You have Ron DeSantis. You've got Tim Scott. You've got Mike Pence. They all voted to raise the debt. And Donald Trump added 8 trillion to our debt," Haley said.

Scott is a South Carolina senator, DeSantis a former Florida representative and Pence a former congressman from Indiana.

Haley said, "So, you tell me. Who are the big spenders? I think it's time for an accountant in the White House."

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 061 ~ 43 of 70

DeSantis borrows Trump's famous line

It was Donald Trump's famous line on "The Apprentice," but at the debate, "You're fired!" was taken over by one of his top GOP challengers.

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis said that "a major reason" for America's current struggles is "because how this federal government handled COVID-19 by locking down this economy."

DeSantis, who has talked often on the campaign trail about how he "kept Florida open" during the pandemic, said at the debate that, "As your president, I will never let the deep state bureaucrats lock you down."

Of Anthony Fauci, the government's top infectious disease expert during the pandemic, DeSantis said, "You don't take somebody like Fauci and coddle him. You bring Fauci and you sit him down and you say, 'Anthony, you are fired.'"

The GOP front-runner is little mentioned early in debate

Donald Trump may have a dominating early lead in the Republican presidential primary, but he was barely mentioned during the GOP debate's opening minutes.

The former president is skipping the debate, and his name was little spoken in its opening 25 minutes.

And that's despite former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, who has promised to build his presidential run around stopping Trump, giving a lengthy answer defending his own record in his home state.

Former Vice President Mike Pence defended the record of the "Trump-Pence administration" and Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis took a page from Trump's political playbook by pledging to fire Dr. Anthony Fauci, drawing applause from the crowd in Milwaukee.

But most of the early debate focused on the candidates on stage ripping President Joe Biden and his administration's economic policies.

Ramaswamy is a top early target on stage in Trump's absence

Vivek Ramaswamy emerged as a popular target early in the debate, drawing cheers from the audience when he introduced himself.

"Let me just address a question that is on everybody's mind at home tonight," the biotech entrepreneur said. "Who the heck is this skinny guy with a funny last name?"

Former Vice President Mike Pence called him a "rookie," saying people should not elect people without experience.

Christie accused Ramaswamy of trying to imitate Barack Obama and said the country had already tried that.

"The last person in one of these debates who stood in the middle of the stage and said, 'What's a skinny guy with an odd last name doing up here?' was Barack Obama, and I'm afraid we're dealing with the same type of amateur," Christie said

Economics of 'Rich Men North of Richmond'

To start off the debate, candidates were asked to lay out their economic arguments by way of explaining why a viral song decrying high taxes and the wealth of the elite had caught fire.

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis used his response to the popularity of Oliver Anthony's "Rich Men North of Richmond" to blame President Joe Biden for what he characterized as "American decline." DeSantis also took an opportunity to go after Biden's son Hunter, saying he made "hundreds of thousands of dollars on lousy paintings" while Americans "are working hard, and you can't afford groceries a car or a new home."

Former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie said he agreed "predominantly" with DeSantis' response but argued he can be a consensus builder since he was "elected as a conservative Republican in a blue state."

Two most prominent anti-Trump candidates get booed

Former President Donald Trump isn't on the debate stage, but the audience seems firmly in his corner.

The crowd booed former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie and former Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson as they were introduced at Wednesday night's debate on Fox News. The two are among the most prominent anti-Trump candidates in the GOP field.

Trump skipped the event for an interview with Tucker Carlson instead. He told Carlson: "Do I sit there for an hour or two hours, whatever it's going to be and get harassed by people that shouldn't even be

running for president? Should I be doing that at a network that isn't particularly friendly to me?"

Candidates take podium as leadoff GOP debate begins

The first Republican presidential debate of the 2024 election cycle has begun.

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, former Vice President Mike Pence, anti-woke activist Vivek Ramaswamy, Sen. Tim Scott of South Carolina, former United Nations Ambassador Nikki Haley, former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, former Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson and North Dakota Gov. Doug Burgum took the stage Wednesday night for the Fox News event.

Fox News anchors Bret Baier and Martha MacCallum are moderating.

Former President Donald Trump appeared poised to post on his Truth Social platform during the debate. He skipped the debate and instead conducted a prerecorded interview with Tucker Carlson that was airing at the same time.

Trial to begin in Texas in lawsuit over Biden policy letting migrants from 4 countries into the US

By JUAN A. LOZANO Associated Press

HOUSTON (AP) — A key portion of President Joe Biden's immigration policy that grants parole to thousands of people from Central America and the Caribbean was set to be debated in a Texas federal courtroom beginning Thursday.

Under the humanitarian parole program, up to 30,000 people are being allowed each month to enter the U.S. from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua and Venezuela.

Texas is leading a lawsuit filed by 21 Republican-leaning states to stop the program, arguing the Biden administration has overreached its authority. Other programs the administration has implemented to reduce illegal immigration have also faced legal challenges.

The parole program was started for Venezuelans in fall 2022 and then expanded in January. People taking part must apply online, arrive at an airport and have a financial sponsor in the U.S. If approved, they can stay for two years and get a work permit.

The program has "been tremendously successful at reducing migration to the southwest border," attorneys for the U.S. Justice Department, which is representing the federal government in the lawsuit, wrote in court documents.

A trial on the states' lawsuit is being presided over by U.S. District Judge Drew Tipton in Victoria, Texas. Tipton, a Donald Trump appointee, has previously ruled against the Biden administration on who to prioritize for deportation.

The trial was scheduled to be livestreamed from Victoria to a federal courtroom in Houston, and last two days. Tipton was expected to issue a ruling at a later date.

In court documents, Texas and the other states have called the Biden administration's program an "extreme example" of not enforcing immigration laws that require it to "grant parole only on a case-by-case basis for significant public benefit or urgent humanitarian reasons."

While the Republican states' lawsuit is objecting to the use of humanitarian parole for migrants from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua and Venezuela, it hasn't raised any concerns for its use to grant entry to tens of thousands of Ukrainians when Russia invaded.

Texas has also argued the parole program causes financial harm because it has to provide services, including detention, educational, social services, and driver's license programs, to the paroled migrants.

Immigrant rights groups joined the legal proceedings on behalf of seven people who are sponsoring migrants. One of the sponsors was expected to testify during the trial.

The immigrant rights groups have defended the humanitarian parole program, saying it's a safe pathway to the U.S. for desperate migrants who would otherwise be paying human smugglers and bogging down border agents. The program is also helping reduce the humanitarian crisis along the U.S.-Mexico border, the groups said.

As of the end of July, more than 72,000 Haitians, 63,000 Venezuelans, 41,000 Cubans and 34,000 Nica-

raguans had been vetted and authorized to come to the U.S. through the parole program.

Fire renews Maui stream water rights tension in longtime conflict over sacred Hawaiian resource

By JENNIFER SINCO KELLEHER and JAE C. HONG Associated Press

LAHAINA, Hawaii (AP) — Shortly after the ignition of the deadliest U.S. wildfire in more than a century, a developer of land around a threatened Maui community urgently asked state officials for permission to divert water from streams to fight the growing inferno.

West Maui Land Company, Inc. said it eventually received approval from the Hawaii commission that oversees water management, but suggested the state body didn't act quickly enough and first directed the company to talk with a downstream taro farmer who relies on stream water, according to letters by a company executive obtained by The Associated Press and other news outlets.

Community members, including Native Hawaiian farmers, say the water the developer wanted for its reservoirs would not have made a difference in the fires. The reservoirs don't supply Maui County's fire hydrants, and firefighting helicopters — which could have dipped into the reservoirs for water — were grounded by high winds.

The Aug. 8 fire that killed at least 115 people took place below West Maui Land Company's developments and the Hawaiian communities that rely on the water. But the dispute over water access during the blaze has sparked new tension in a fight that dates to the mid-1800s, when unfair water distribution practices took root with colonization.

"This is a 2023 rendition of what's been happening in Lahaina for centuries," said Kapua'ala Sproat, director of the Native Hawaiian law center at the University of Hawaii.

Glenn Tremble, who wrote the letters, told the AP via text that the company didn't share the letters with the media and didn't want to distract from West Maui's losses. AP obtained the correspondence from various people familiar with the dispute.

"All we have asked is for the ability to make water available for fire prevention and suppression, to help people while we recover and to rebuild what we have lost," he wrote.

The complex push-pull over Maui stream diversions recalls other battles over water rights in drought-stricken Western states that have pitted Native American tribes against farmers and farmers against urban areas.

Native Hawaiians have long fought to protect what they consider a sacred resource. Stream diversions continued even after the plantations closed, and booming development contributed to West Maui's arid conditions. The West Maui Land Company's subdivision — including multimillion-dollar gated homes that use diverted water — was untouched by the Lahaina fires, noted Native Hawaiians who live off the streams and farm taro, a cultural staple.

"At one time, Lahaina was known to be very verdant and very lush," said Blossom Feiteira, a Native Hawaiian cultural practitioner and Lahaina native. Hawaiians revere water so much and its abundance was why Lahaina became the capital of the Hawaiian kingdom from 1820 to 1845, she said.

When sugar cane and pineapple fields from the plantation era shut down in the 1980s and 1990s, the water was redirected to gated communities with lush green lawns and swimming pools, she said. Overgrown brown brush and invasive grass cropped up around these developments.

"There has been resentment in the community about that kind of picture," Feiteira said.

In one of the letters, West Maui Land Company said the state Commission on Water Resource Management should not prioritize "one individual's farm" over fighting a wind-whipped fire.

"No one is happy there was water in the streams while our homes, our businesses, our lands, and our lives were reduced to ash," the company said. The letter said the company requested "approval to divert more water from the streams so we could store as much water as possible for fire control" at 1 p.m. on the day of the fire, but that they were directed to first inquire with a downstream taro farmer.

At about 6 p.m., the commission approved the diversion of more water, the letter said.

West Maui Land's suggestion that Kaleo Manuel, first deputy of the commission, delayed the release of stream water has struck a nerve among Native Hawaiians and others who say the company is making him a scapegoat and using the tragedy to take yet more water.

A Lahaina stream sustains Ke'eaumoku Kapu's taro patches on his ancestral lands deep in Kauaula Valley in the mountains above Lahaina. He fled the town on the afternoon of the fire as flames approached and spent a night in his truck. The fire didn't get close to his home and farm in the valley, but in 2018 area residents used water from the stream to fight a wildfire, he said.

He called West Maui Land's characterization of the stream diversions "bogus" and disingenuous.

"They'll do anything to get it," Kapu said of the water.

The company is "trying to use this incredibly difficult time to get a legal and financial advantage, especially over their water resources, when that's something they were not able to accomplish legally before the fire," said Sproat, of the Native Hawaiian law center.

The letters caused such a commotion that the state Department of Land and Natural Resources re-assigned Manuel, drawing a lawsuit from West Maui residents decrying the move. The department said in a statement that Manuel's reassignment didn't suggest he did anything wrong, but would allow officials to focus on Maui.

Manuel couldn't immediately be reached for comment. Community groups urged supporters to go to Manuel's Honolulu office last week to bestow lei upon him in gratitude for his efforts.

Conflicts over stream diversions are not just a West Maui issue. Soon after the fires started, the state attorney general's office filed a petition with the state Supreme Court blaming an environmental court judge's caps on East Maui stream diversions for a lack of water for firefighting.

The court didn't immediately issue a ruling after hearing arguments Wednesday.

"This is what happens when there's literally not enough water anymore," said Kamanamaikalani Beamer, a former trustee of the Commission on Water Resource Management, calling streams "the veins that fill up our aquifers."

"Water brings together like the multitude of interests — economic, cultural," he said. "But it's because no one can just create it out of nothing."

Bans on diverse board books? Young kids need to see their families represented, experts say

By ANNIE MA Associated Press

When Wes Brown sought out children's books for his two young sons, he made sure to seek titles that reflected the family he and his husband were building.

He found that in one called "The Family Book," a 2003 picture book by Todd Parr. It depicts families of all kinds: the traditional nuclear family, but also families with one parent or step-parents, as well as adoptive families and same-sex parents like Brown and his husband.

But across the country, books and lessons that represent different families and identities are increasingly the target of conservative pushback — even when they're for the youngest of learners. Parr's book for preschoolers and early readers is often among those challenged by parents and activists.

"It is important my kids are definitely exposed to that," Brown said. "What these parents are really doing is demonstrating how fragile their worldview is, that a children's book is enough to shatter it."

Efforts to ban books have been surging at school and public libraries. Of the bans targeting picture books, about three-quarters are books that address LGBTQ+ themes and roughly half are stories that mention race, said Kasey Meehan, Freedom to Read program director at PEN America.

"There's legislation out there that could lead to felony offenses and criminalization, (teacher) decertification," Meehan said. "When you see this threatening environment, more and more we see educators responding in an overly cautious approach, and that shows up in how they think about their classroom libraries."

Objections to the titles often involve arguments that they are not age-appropriate. In some of the many

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 061 ~ 47 of 70

challenges Parr's book has faced over the years, opponents have taken issue with a line that reads, "Some families have two moms or two dads," saying it was not suitable for young children.

Educators and free-speech advocates said the books often simply acknowledge the existence of different identities. That's crucial, they say, to help young children develop empathy and an understanding of themselves — especially for children whose families include people of color or LGBTQ+ relatives.

The disputes have spilled over into classrooms. In Wake County, North Carolina, a preschool teacher resigned last year after an uproar over flashcards that depicted LGBTQ+ families, to teach colors based on the characters' clothing.

In Alabama, Gov. Kay Ivey, a Republican, replaced the state's early childhood learning director in April over the use of a guide for preschool teachers. The governor denounced the guide as teaching "woke concepts" because of language about inclusion and structural racism.

The book comes from the National Association for the Education of Young Children — the nonprofit professional association for early childhood education, which accredits daycares and preschools. The fourth edition of the group's "Developmentally Appropriate Practice Book" says in part that children "begin to see how they are represented in society" in preschool and that the classroom should be a place of "affirmation and healing."

The Alabama official's ouster was the most prevalent example of how censorship and restrictions on teaching are extending beyond the K-12 sphere into early learning, said Leah Austin, president and CEO of the National Black Child Development Institute.

Research has found that children as young as 6 months old can perceive race-based differences. Limiting content denies children opportunities to learn about themselves, and to relate to other people, Austin said.

For young children, having access to books that interest them is also a crucial factor in becoming strong readers and battling disparities in literacy rates, said Michelle Martin, a youth and children's services professor at the University of Washington. Although the diversity of children's books has grown in recent years, representation is still lagging.

Martin recalled growing up in South Carolina, where her parents had to drink from segregated water fountains. As a child, she had little choice but to read books that depicted stories far removed from her experiences.

"There were really limited books that my generation had that reflected who we are," she said. "Those books are beginning to be much more widely published, and those are the ones that are being targeted."

In Florida, where Brown and his family live, Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis has pushed through legislation that bans mentions of gender identity and sexuality in classrooms for all grades, including public pre-K programs. Supporters of the law say parents, not teachers, should be broaching those subjects with their children.

For gay people of his generation, Brown recalled, building a family often felt like a remote possibility. When he and his husband first started dating in 2002, it was illegal in the state of Florida for gay couples to adopt a child.

"It was like a dream, but it's a dream that's so far off," he said. "It's like, 'I want to fly like Superman.' You don't even really think it's something you can have."

The couple revisited the question in their 30s and decided to pursue adoption. Brown said he and his husband know it is inevitable for their sons, now ages 5 and 7, to encounter questions about having two dads.

"These laws are actually not meant to keep people from talking about sexuality," he said "It is to prevent queer families from being talked about, the queer experience from being talked about. It is very much aimed at us."

Mercenary leader Yevgeny Prigozhin is presumed dead in a plane crash outside Moscow

By DASHA LITVINOVA Associated Press

TALLINN, Estonia (AP) — Mercenary leader Yevgeny Prigozhin, who led a brief armed rebellion against the Russian military earlier this year, was presumed dead Wednesday after a plane crash north of Moscow that killed all 10 people on board.

Prigozhin was on the plane, according to Russia's civil aviation agency, which cited the airline. The crash immediately raised suspicions since the fate of the founder of the Wagner private military company has been the subject of intense speculation ever since he mounted the mutiny.

At the time, President Vladimir Putin denounced the rebellion as "treason" and a "stab in the back" and vowed to avenge it. But the charges against Prigozhin were soon dropped. The Wagner chief, whose troops were some of the best fighting forces for Russia in Ukraine, was allowed to retreat to Belarus, while reportedly popping up in Russia from time to time.

The crash also comes after Russian media reported that a top general linked to Prigozhin was dismissed from his position as commander of the air force.

A plane carrying three crew members and seven passengers that was en route from Moscow to St. Petersburg went down almost 300 kilometers (185 miles) north of the capital, according to officials cited by Russia's state news agency Tass.

Russia's civilian aviation agency, Rosaviatsia, quickly reported that he was on the manifest and later said that, according to the airline, he was indeed on board.

Earlier, Vladimir Rogov, a Russia-appointed official in the partially occupied Zaporizhzhia region in Ukraine, said he talked to Wagner commanders who also confirmed that Prigozhin was aboard, as was Dmitry Utkin, whose call sign Wagner became the company's name.

"I don't know for a fact what happened but I'm not surprised," U.S. President Joe Biden said.

Keir Giles, a Russia expert with the international affairs think tank Chatham House, had urged caution about reports of Prigozhin's death. He said "multiple individuals have changed their name to Yevgeniy Prigozhin, as part of his efforts to obfuscate his travels."

Flight tracking data reviewed by The Associated Press showed a private jet that Prigozhin had used previously took off from Moscow on Wednesday evening and its transponder signal disappeared minutes later.

The signal stopped suddenly while the plane was at altitude and traveling at speed. In an image posted by a pro-Wagner social media account showing burning wreckage, a partial tail number matching a jet previously used by Prigozhin could be seen.

Videos shared by the pro-Wagner Telegram channel Grey Zone showed a plane dropping like a stone from a large cloud of smoke, twisting wildly as it fell. Such freefalls can occur when an aircraft sustains severe damage, and a frame-by-frame AP analysis of two videos was consistent with some sort of explosion mid-flight. The images appeared to show the plane was missing a wing.

Russia's Investigative Committee opened an investigation into the crash on charges of violating air safety rules, as is typical when they open such probes. Interfax, citing emergency officials, reported early Thursday that all 10 bodies had been recovered at the site of the crash and the search operation had ended.

Even if confirmed, Prigozhin's death is unlikely to have an effect on Russia's war in Ukraine, where his forces fought some of the fiercest battles over the past 18 months.

His troops pulled back from front-line action after capturing Bakhmut, a city in the eastern Donetsk region, in late May. Bakhmut had been the subject of arguably the bloodiest battles in the entire war, with the Russian forces struggling to seize it for months.

After the rebellion, Russian officials said his fighters would only be able to return to Ukraine as part of the regular army.

This week, Prigozhin posted his first recruitment video since the mutiny, saying that Wagner is conducting reconnaissance and search activities, and "making Russia even greater on all continents, and Africa even more free."

Also this week, Russian media reported, citing anonymous sources, that Gen. Sergei Surovikin was dismissed from his position of the commander of Russia's air force. Surovikin, who at one point led Russia's operation in Ukraine, hasn't been seen in public since the mutiny, when he recorded a video address urging Prigozhin's forces to pull back.

As news of the crash was breaking, Putin spoke at an event commemorating the Battle of Kursk, hailing the heroes of Russia's war in Ukraine.

Tatiana Stanovaya, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Russia Eurasia Center, said on Telegram that "no matter what caused the plane crash, everyone will see it as an act of vengeance and retribution" by the Kremlin, and "the Kremlin wouldn't really stand in the way of that."

"From Putin's point of view, as well as the security forces and the military — Prigozhin's death must be a lesson to any potential followers," Stanovaya said in a Telegram post. According to her, after the mutiny, Prigozhin "stopped being the authorities' partner and could not, under any circumstances, get that status back."

"He also wasn't forgiven," Stanovaya wrote. "Prigozhin was needed for some time after the mutiny to painlessly complete the dismantling of Wagner in Russia." But overall, "alive, happy, full-of-strength and full-of-ideas Prigozhin was, definitely, a walking source of threats for the authorities, the embodiment of Putin's political humiliation."

Stanovaya doesn't expect much public outcry over Prigozhin's death. She said those who supported him will be "more scared than inspired to protest," while others would see it as a "deserved outcome."

Oklahoma authorities name the BTK killer as the 'prime suspect' in at least two unsolved cases

By HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH and SUMMER BALLENTINE Associated Press

The BTK serial killer has been named the "prime suspect" in two unsolved killings — one in Oklahoma and another in Missouri — leading authorities to dig this week near his former Kansas property in Park City, authorities announced Wednesday.

Osage County, Oklahoma, Undersheriff Gary Upton told The Associated Press that the investigation into whether Dennis Rader was responsible for additional crimes started with the re-examination last year of the 1976 disappearance of Cynthia Kinney, a 16-year-old cheerleader in Pawhuska. The case, which was investigated on and off over the years, was reopened in December.

Sheriff Eddie Virden told KAKE-TV that a bank was having new alarms installed across the street from the laundromat where Kinney was last seen. Rader was a regional installer for ADT at the time, although the sheriff wasn't able to confirm that Rader installed the systems. He also was involved in Boy Scouts in the area.

Virden said he decided to investigate when he learned that Rader had included the phrase "bad laundry day" in his writings.

Upton, the undersheriff, said the investigation "spiraled out from there" into other unsolved murders and missing persons cases.

"We sit just on the other side of the state line from Kansas and Wichita, which is his stomping grounds. And so yeah, we were following leads based off of our investigations and just unpacked other missing persons and murders, unsolved homicides that possibly point towards BTK," he said.

Upton said Rader is also the prime suspect in the death of 22-year-old Shawna Beth Garber, whose body was discovered in December 1990 in McDonald County, Missouri. An autopsy revealed she had been raped, strangled and restrained with different bindings about two months before her body was found. Her remains weren't identified until 2021.

Rader killed from 1974 to 1991, giving himself the nickname BTK — for "bind, torture and kill."

A city code inspector in Kansas, he was arrested in February 2005 — a year after resuming communications with police and the media after going silent years earlier.

He resurfaced with a letter to The Wichita Eagle that included photos of a 1986 strangling victim and a

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 061 ~ 50 of 70

photocopy of her missing driver's license. That letter was followed by several other cryptic messages and packages. The break in the case came after a computer diskette the killer had sent was traced to Rader's church, where he once served as president.

Rader, now 78, ultimately confessed to 10 killings in the Wichita area, which is about 90 miles (144.84 kilometers) north of Pawhuska.

He was sentenced in August 2005 to 10 consecutive life prison terms. Kansas had no death penalty at the time of the murders. His earliest possible release date is listed for the year 2180.

McDonald County Sheriff Rob Evenson told the news director for KSNF-TV and KODE-TV that Rader has denied any involvement in Garber's death. Evenson said they have "worked with the Oklahoma investigators in the past, but so far, there has been no direct evidence linking Rader to the case."

An Associated Press phone message seeking comment from the McDonald County Sheriff's Office was not immediately returned Wednesday.

Upton declined to say how many other missing person and homicide cases are being re-examined, but told the AP that Rader could be a suspect in more cases.

No information has been released yet about what the search Tuesday in Park City uncovered. Upton described the discoveries only as "items of interest," in a news release. The release said the items would undergo a thorough examination to determine their potential relevance.

Virden told KAKE-TV that some items were deeply buried. He also said that some items also were found during a previous excavation of the property in April, including a piece of aged, ripped pantyhose.

"It was very, very clear someone had created this hole and refilled it with a different material. Took some precaution to kind of protect some of those items," Virden said.

Upton said his department is working with the Kansas Bureau of Investigation. Agency spokeswoman Melissa Underwood confirmed meeting with the sheriff's office about the investigation, but she said the KBI wasn't involved in recent property searches.

Phil Bostian, the police chief in the Wichita suburb of Park City, told KAKE-TV that Osage County called them as a courtesy and said they asked public works to move some cement and do a little digging.

Police there didn't immediately return a phone message from the AP seeking comment.

The Kansas State Board of Indigents' Defense didn't immediately return a phone message inquiring about whether Rader still has an attorney representing him.

Rader's daughter, Kerri Rawson, told the Wichita Eagle that she worked with investigators this summer by meeting with her father in person and communicating with him for the first time in years. Rawson told Fox News that she believes investigators were looking for items related to the unsolved cases that Rader may have kept and buried on his property under a metal shed he built. The shed and Rader's former home have been leveled.

Rawson said she also told investigators to check where Rader buried the family dog. She said she hopes investigators can determine if her father is linked to any of these other cases. "I'm still not 100% sure my dad did commit any more at this point," she said to the newspaper, adding: "If my dad has harmed somebody else, we need answers."

What's going on with Scooter Braun's artist roster? Here's what we know and what's still speculation

By MARIA SHERMAN AP Music Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Scooter Braun is one of the most recognizable names in the music business for his singular work as an executive and entrepreneur. He's managed many of your favorite artists, propelling the likes of Justin Bieber to stratospheric fame, and earned the ire of Taylor Swift and her legions of fans for his business practices.

On Friday, rumors circulated online that Justin Bieber was leaving Braun, his longtime manager — and the man credited with discovering him. In the days that followed, speculation grew, and media outlets began reporting that some of Braun's other hype-profile clients like Ariana Grande, and Demi Lovato were

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 061 ~ 51 of 70

also parting ways with him — all of which has yet to be confirmed.

Braun hasn't issued a public statement, but did tweet in jest, writing "Breaking news... I'm no longer managing myself."

As the story continues to unfold, here's everything we know — and everything we don't — about what's going with Scooter Braun and his powerful client roster.

Who has Scooter Braun managed?

Without confirmation from artists, their teams, or Braun himself, changes to Braun's roster are conjectural. AP reached out to every artist listed as being managed by Braun on the SB Projects website and only heard back from a select few.

The site mentions his company's "past and present work" and includes artists Braun no longer works with, including Hilary Duff and J Balvin.

Representatives for Carly Rae Jepsen, BabyJake, and Asher Roth confirmed to AP that those artists no longer work with Braun and haven't for quite some time.

A person close to Idina Menzel told AP the singer is no longer managed by Braun but was not authorized to speak publicly.

A representative for pop star Ava Max confirmed that she is still represented by Braun.

OK, but why is Scooter Braun a big deal?

In the early 2000s, Braun dropped out of Emory College to throw parties for elite musicians traveling to Atlanta: Ludacris, Eminem, even Britney Spears. Jermaine Dupri recruited him to become So So Def's executive director of marketing. Later, in 2007, Braun started his own talent management company, SB Projects, where in 2008, he'd discover Justin Bieber on YouTube, growing the teen heartthrob's profile by utilizing social media.

SB Projects encompasses a few ventures: Management, which included clients like Bieber, Ariana Grande, J Balvin, and for a short-stint, Kanye West; Sheba Publishing, a joint venture with Universal Music Group Publishing; and Schoolboy Records, a record label first put on the map by Braun's client Asher Roth and his 2009 hit "I Love College."

Braun operated his assorted companies under one entity called Ithaca Holdings.

In the midst of his incredible success, in 2019, Braun bought Big Machine Records, the label that originally signed Taylor Swift and released her first six records. Its CEO Scott Borchetta stayed in place. With the purchase, Braun purchased ownership to Swift's master recordings, which he sold to an investment fund the following year. As a result, Swift announced that she would re-record her albums to own her new masters in a project called "Taylor's Version."

In April 2021, Braun sold Ithaca Holdings to HYBE — the publicly traded company formerly known as Big Hit Entertainment, best known for creating the K-pop group BTS — in a \$1.05 billion deal. According to the corporate filing, Braun would receive about 462,380 shares of the company (totaling \$86.2 million) while his star clients Grande and Bieber would each receive 53,557 shares, or almost \$11.0 million apiece.

In January 2023, he became the sole CEO of HYBE America, having previously shared the title after the merger with Big Hit's Lenzo Yoon.

Back up — what is Braun doing with HYBE?

When Braun's Ithaca Holdings merged with the globally minded HYBE in April 2021, it became one of the largest music companies in the world. Just a few months later, in July, Bang Si-hyuk, the CEO of Big Hit Entertainment/HYBE stepped down, Park Ji-won took over, and Lenzo Yoon and Scooter Braun were named co-CEOs of HYBE America. In January, Braun became the sole CEO — which means he's busy.

There has been speculation that if Braun's artists are leaving SB Projects management, it is because Braun is slowly placing his focus on HYBE America instead of acting as an artist manager. But so far, there's been no confirmation that's what's happening.

What does a music manager do?

The role of a music manager is an elusive one, based largely on the kind of relationship between the businessperson and the musician. The best music managers — and we're excluding business and tour

managers here, whose specialties are in the title — are fiercely organized, dedicated to the success of their artist. They possess a deep understanding of the industry and the artist's place within it.

They work to ensure their artist's projects run smoothly, connecting teams to reach a particular goal. Think of them as the behind-the-scenes engine responsible for allowing the artist to succeed. Often, they invest in and help develop an artist, and tackle anything from creative production to day-to-day operations.

MLK's dream for America is one of the stars of the 60th anniversary of the 1963 March on Washington

By GARY FIELDS Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The last part of the speech took less time to deliver than it takes to boil an egg, but "I Have A Dream" is one of American history's most famous orations and most inspiring.

On Aug. 28, 1963, from the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, Martin Luther King Jr. began by speaking of poverty, segregation and discrimination and how the United States had reneged on its promise of equality for Black Americans. If anyone remembers that dystopian beginning, they don't talk about it.

What is etched into people's memory is the pastoral flourish that marked the last five minutes and presented a soaring vision of what the nation might be and the freedom that equality for all could bring.

As participants prepare to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, that five-minute piece of King's 16-minute address is the star of that day and today it is the measuring stick of the country's progress.

How did that memorable moment come to be? Were there other speakers?

King was one of several prominent figures speaking to the many tens of thousands gathered on the National Mall that summer day. Others included A. Phillip Randolph, the march director and founder of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters; Roy Wilkins, the NAACP's executive secretary; Walter Reuther, president of the United Auto Workers; and John Lewis, a 23-year-old who led the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and later was a longtime congressman.

There were memorable moments before King spoke.

Eleanor Holmes Norton, who today is the District of Columbia's veteran nonvoting delegate to Congress, was a SNCC member who helped organize the march. She remembers that march leaders got Lewis to tone down his planned speech because of concern it was too inflammatory. "He had phrases in there about, for example, Sherman marching through Georgia," Norton said, a reference to Union Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman burning most of Atlanta during the Civil War. "So we had to work with the leaders of the march to change a little bit of that rhetoric."

King had no peer at the microphone, she said, acknowledging she does not remember now what others may have said. "I'm afraid that Martin Luther King's speech drowned out everything. It was so eloquent that it kind of surpassed every other speech."

Did King deliver the speech off the cuff?

The first two-thirds were from written text. The actual speech he used is on loan now at the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, in the "Defending Freedom, Defining Freedom" gallery of the museum, and shows where he broke script.

King lieutenant Andrew Young said in an interview that he worked with King preparing the text and "none of the things that we remember were in his speech. They didn't give him but nine minutes and he was trying to write a nine-minute speech."

A King biographer, Jonathan Eig, said King hit the end of his written remarks and kept going because "he was Martin Luther King" and "it was time to do what he loved to do best, and that's to give a sermon."

Had King talked about a dream before?

Although he set the text aside, his deviation was not extemporaneous in the truest sense of the word.

Eight months before the March on Washington, King gave an address in Rocky Mount, North Carolina, with similar themes, including a dream.

In June 1963, King spoke in Detroit and opened with the same recognition of Abraham Lincoln and the

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 061 ~ 53 of 70

Emancipation Proclamation before noting that 100 years later, Black people in the U.S. were not free. He talked of the circumstances and sense of urgency but then moved into what he said was a "dream deeply rooted in the American dream."

The speech mirrored points he would speak of two months later.

Although King used the theme on several occasions "he always made it sound fresh. That's kind of how he operated," said Keith Miller, an Arizona State professor who has studied and written extensively about King's speeches and addresses.

Legend has it that renowned gospel singer Mahalia Jackson prompted King to make the addition?

Whether Jackson was the catalyst or cheered him on after he started, King did not initially intend to speak about a dream and Jackson did say, "Tell them about the dream Martin." Whatever the close sequence, the two are intertwined now in that moment.

Young said the speech "wasn't going too well, but everybody was polite listening. But then Mahalia Jackson said, 'Tell them about the dream Martin' and he must have heard it or it was in his spirit any way and he took off."

Arndrea Waters King, King's daughter-in-law, said Jackson's suggestion was the moment "that he just really broke out and really started to deliver, if nothing else, what most people remember when they remember the dream."

Eig, author of "King: A Life," said he has listened to the master tape made by Motown and she clearly pushes King about the dream, "but it's only after he has already begun the dream portion of the speech." Norton, who was nearby and heard Jackson, agrees that was the sequence.

How important was the march to the steps toward equality in the 1960s?

The diversity and size of the crowd and energy were major drivers for the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, as well as the fair housing law, Norton said. "It would have been very hard for Congress to ignore 250,000 people coming from all over the country, from every member's district."

Aaron Bryant, curator of photography, visual culture and contemporary history at the National Museum of African American History and Culture, said the impact was immediate in some ways.

"After the March on Washington, you had some of the organizers, some of the leaders of the march actually meeting with (President) John Kennedy and (Vice President) Lyndon Johnson, to talk more strategically about legislation. So it wasn't just a dream. It was about a plan and then putting that plan into action," Bryant said.

Historians and other luminaries of that time said tragedies and atrocities fortified those plans. Those include the bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama, that killed four girls two weeks after the march; the murders of three civil rights workers in Neshoba County, Mississippi, in 1964; and the televised beatings of civil rights activists on Bloody Sunday in Selma, Alabama, in March 1965.

Why the focus on the final five minutes?

Eig believes that focus on hope and not the harsher reality of the day and the lack of progress is due in part to the predominantly white media that chose the inspirational part of the speech over King calling for accountability.

That focus has done a "disservice to King" and his overall message, Eig said, because "we forget about the challenging part of that speech where he says that there are insufficient funds in the vaults of opportunity in this nation."

Has the dream been achieved?

Bryant said the answer to that probably varies within generations, but a democracy "is always going to be a work in progress. I think particularly as ideas of citizenship and democracy and definitions among different groups change over the course of time."

Bryant said history shows the progress that followed the march. "The question is how do we compare where we were then to where we are now?"

In the eyes of King's older son, Martin Luther King III, "Many of us, and I certainly am one, thought that we would be further." He referred to the rewriting of history today and the rise in public hate and hostility,

often driven by political leaders.

"There used to be civility. You could disagree without being disagreeable," he said.

South Carolina's new all-male highest court reverses course on abortion, upholding strict 6-week ban

By JAMES POLLARD Associated Press/Report for America

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — South Carolina's newly all-male Supreme Court reversed course on abortion Wednesday, upholding a law banning most such procedures except in the earliest weeks of pregnancy.

The continued erosion of legal abortion access across the U.S. South comes after Republican state lawmakers replaced the lone woman on the court, Justice Kaye Hearn, who reached the state's mandatory retirement age.

The 4-1 ruling departs from the court's own decision months earlier striking down a similar ban that the Republican-led Legislature passed in 2021. The latest ban takes effect immediately.

Writing for the new majority, Justice John Kittredge acknowledged that the 2023 law also infringes on "a woman's right of privacy and bodily autonomy," but said the state Legislature reasonably determined this time around that those interests don't outweigh "the interest of the unborn child to live."

"As a Court, unless we can say that the balance struck by the Legislature was unreasonable as a matter of law, we must uphold the Act," Kittredge wrote.

Kittredge wrote that "we leave for another day" a determination on what the law's language means for when exactly during a pregnancy the ban should begin, likely forecasting another long court fight on that question.

Chief Justice Donald Beatty provided the lone dissent, arguing that the 2023 law is nearly identical, with definitions for terms including "fetal heartbeat" and "conception" that provide no clarity on when the ban begins, exposing doctors to criminal charges if law enforcement disagrees with their expertise.

The Planned Parenthood South Atlantic clinic in Columbia had served only a "handful" of the roughly 30 patients scheduled for abortions Wednesday when the ruling came down, according to Dr. Katherine Farris, the group's chief medical officer. The center — one of three clinics in the state — has paused abortions while officials work to understand the ruling's implications.

Beatty warned that the majority's failure to address such a key question could lead to political retribution. He added that judicial independence and integrity were weakened by the court's decision to backpedal on its prior ruling.

Hearn wrote the majority's lead opinion in January striking down the ban as a violation of the state constitution's right to privacy. She then reached the court's mandatory retirement age, enabling the GOP-led Legislature to put Gary Hill on what is now the nation's only state Supreme Court with an entirely male bench.

Republican lawmakers then crafted a new law to address Justice John Few's concern, expressed in the January ruling, that the Legislature had failed to take into account whether the restrictions were reasonable enough to infringe upon a woman's privacy rights.

Abortion providers, including Planned Parenthood South Atlantic, sued again. Planned Parenthood South Atlantic's lawyer said during oral arguments this summer that both laws limited abortions at the same point in pregnancy and were equally unconstitutional.

The 2023 law restricts most abortions once cardiac activity can be detected, declaring that this happens about six weeks after a pregnant woman's last menstrual period. Lawmakers defined this as "the steady and repetitive rhythmic contraction of the fetal heart, within the gestational sac."

But Beatty wrote that at six weeks, the fetus doesn't exist yet — it's still an embryo — and the heart doesn't develop until later in a pregnancy. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists says it's inaccurate to call such "cardiac activity" a heartbeat.

"The terminology is medically and scientifically inaccurate. As such, it is the quintessential example of political gaslighting; attempting to manipulate public opinion and control the reproductive health decisions

of women by distorting reality," Beatty wrote.

The newly sworn Hill joined Wednesday's majority along with Few, who had previously voted to overturn the 2021 law. In a separate concurring opinion, Few wrote that the state constitution's right to privacy does not provide blanket protections against "reasonable" invasions.

The majority opinion found a key difference in the lawmakers' deletion of a reference to a pregnant woman having the right to make an "informed choice." The 2023 law expanded "the notion of choice to the period of time before fertilization, certainly before a couple passively learns of a pregnancy," Few wrote.

That change lengthens the window for couples to avoid unwanted pregnancies by promoting "active family planning." In addition, the new law provides insured contraceptives to "almost all couples" and places responsibility on sexually active couples to actively use pregnancy tests, Few wrote.

Planned Parenthood South Atlantic's lawyer had noted during oral arguments that such analysis ignored the possibility for failures in testing and contraceptives.

Since the U.S. Supreme Court last year overturned *Roe v. Wade*, the 1973 ruling that provided nationwide access to abortion, most GOP-controlled states have enacted or adopted abortion bans of some kind. All have been challenged in court.

Republican officials in South Carolina celebrated what Gov. Henry McMaster called "the culmination of years of hard work" to curtail abortion access. Republican legislative leaders scrambled at the end of the session to pass the new limits as the number of abortions increased rapidly under the state's reversion to a 22-week ban passed in 2016.

Republican South Carolina Senate Majority Leader Shane Massey said Wednesday that he anticipates future challenges based on the definition of cardiac activity. Still, he expects the new ruling will put the issue to rest next session.

That is, at least until 2024 elections possibly alter the composition of a state Senate that fell just shy several times this past year of clearing procedural hurdles to enact a near-total ban.

More court shakeups are also coming. Beatty must retire in 2024 because he, too, will reach the mandated retirement age of 72 for judges. Kittredge is the only judge who applied to replace him. The Legislature is expected to approve Kittredge and choose another new justice next year.

India lands a spacecraft near the moon's south pole, a first for the world as it joins elite club

By ASHOK SHARMA and KRUTIKA PATHI Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — India became the first country to land a spacecraft near the moon's south pole on Wednesday — a historic voyage to uncharted territory that scientists believe could hold vital reserves of frozen water, and a technological triumph for the world's most populous nation.

After a failed attempt to land on the moon in 2019, India now joins the United States, the Soviet Union and China as only the fourth country to achieve this milestone. A lander with a rover inside touched down on the lunar surface at 6:04 p.m. local time, sparking celebrations across India, including in the southern Indian city of Bengaluru, where space scientists watching the landing erupted in cheers and applause.

The successful mission showcases India's rising standing as a technology and space powerhouse and dovetails with the image that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is trying to project: an ascendant country asserting its place among the global elite.

"India is now on the moon. India has reached the south pole of the moon — no other country has achieved that. We are witnessing history," Modi said as he waved the Indian tri-colored flag while watching the landing from South Africa, where he is participating in the BRICS nations summit.

The lunar rover will slide down a flap from the lander within hours or a day and conduct experiments, including an analysis of the mineral composition of the lunar surface, said S. Somnath, chairman of the state-run Indian Space Research Organization.

The mission, which began more than a month ago at an estimated cost of \$75 million, is expected to last another two weeks. Somnath said that India would next attempt a manned lunar mission.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 061 ~ 56 of 70

Nuclear-armed India grew to become the world's fifth-largest economy last year, and the success of the lunar mission will likely help Modi's popularity ahead of a crucial general election next year.

India's success comes just days after Russia's Luna-25, which was aiming for the same lunar region, spun into an uncontrolled orbit and crashed. It would have been the first successful Russian lunar landing after a gap of 47 years. Russia's head of the state-controlled space corporation Roscosmos attributed the failure to the lack of expertise due to the long break in lunar research that followed the last Soviet mission to the moon in 1976.

Modi's efforts to revitalize India's global standing — and to finally shake off the legacy of British colonialization — has resonated with many Indians. The moon landing was seen by many as further proof that their country is a rising, modern superpower.

Excited and anxious people across India crowded around televisions in offices, shops, restaurants and homes. Thousands prayed Tuesday for the success of the mission with oil lamps on the river banks, temples and religious places, including the holy city of Varanasi in northern India.

As the lander approached the lunar surface, dozens of people in a government-run planetarium started praying with folded hands. They switched to cheering and clapping once the lander touched down.

A man waved a banner reading "The Moon in India's arms."

Shrini Singh, a New Delhi resident, said she got goosebumps. "It's a very happy moment ... you can see the energy. It's beyond words."

Mitakshi Sinha, a student, said the successful mission motivated her. "And now I also want to be part of ISRO," she said, referring to the country's space agency.

India will host next month's G-20 Summit, and Modi is expected to use the event to spotlight the country's growing geopolitical clout. Even as it maintains historic ties with Russia, the U.S. and other Western nations continue to woo India, whom they see as a critical bulwark against China's growing influence.

Accolades poured in from around the world to acknowledge India's emergence as a modern space power.

NASA Administrator Bill Nelson congratulated India on X, formerly known as Twitter, saying "We're glad to be your partner on this mission!"

"Incredible!" European Space Agency's director general Josef Aschbacher tweeted.

India's Chandrayaan-3 — "moon craft" in Sanskrit — took off from a launchpad in Sriharikota in southern India on July 14.

Many countries and private companies are interested in the south pole region because permanently shadowed craters may hold frozen water that could help future astronaut missions use it as a potential source of drinking water or to make rocket fuel.

The six-wheeled lander and rover module of Chandrayaan-3 is configured with payloads that will provide data to the scientific community on the properties of lunar soil and rocks, including chemical and elemental compositions.

India's previous attempt to land a robotic spacecraft near the moon's little-explored south pole ended in failure in 2019. It entered the lunar orbit but lost touch with its lander, which crashed while making its final descent to deploy a rover to search for signs of water. According to a failure analysis report submitted to the ISRO, the crash was caused by a software glitch.

The \$140-million mission in 2019 was intended to study permanently shadowed moon craters that are thought to contain water deposits and were confirmed by India's Chandrayaan-1 orbiter mission in 2008.

But India's space program has been steadily advancing for years.

Active since the 1960s, India has launched satellites for itself and other countries, and successfully put one in orbit around Mars in 2014. India is planning its first mission to the International Space Station next year, in collaboration with the United States.

The anticipation for a successful landing rose after Russia's failed attempt and as India's regional rival China, which landed on the moon in 2013, reaches for new milestones in space. In May, China launched a three-person crew for its orbiting space station and hopes to put astronauts on the moon before the end of the decade. Relations between India and China have plunged since deadly border clashes in 2020.

Numerous countries and private companies are racing to successfully land a spacecraft on the lunar sur-

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 061 ~ 57 of 70

face. In April, a Japanese company's spacecraft apparently crashed while attempting to land on the moon. An Israeli nonprofit tried to achieve a similar feat in 2019, but its spacecraft was destroyed on impact.

Japan plans to launch a lunar lander to the moon over the weekend as part of an X-ray telescope mission, and two U.S. companies also are vying to put landers on the moon by the end of the year, one of them at the south pole. In the coming years, NASA plans to land astronauts at the lunar south pole, taking advantage of the frozen water in craters.

Pallava Bagla, a science writer and co-author of books on India's space exploration, said the Russian failure days earlier did not put India off. He also said lessons learned from India's failed mission four years ago were incorporated and a flawless mission was executed on Wednesday.

"Indians didn't get derailed. They continued the journey with strength and confidence that paid off," he said.

Who's in, who's out, who's boycotting: The 8 candidates expected onstage for the first GOP debate

By MEG KINNARD Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — Donald Trump won't be on the Republican debate stage Wednesday. But the former president is driving the conversation on and off the debate stage anyway.

Trump supporters including Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene will be in Milwaukee. There are questions about how many of his campaign surrogates will be allowed into Fox News' spin room. The network has restricted their access unless they are the guests of another media organization.

Eight other candidates met the donor and polling qualifications to be onstage, according to the Republican National Committee. For those who didn't, missing the debate could be a decisive moment in their campaigns.

Conservative radio host Larry Elder has said he plans to sue the RNC over being left out, despite what he says is proof that he qualified for the debate. It also wasn't immediately clear what Miami Mayor Francis Suarez — who didn't make the cut — would do, following his Iowa State Fair comments that he might drop out of the race if that happened.

To qualify for the Aug. 23 debate, candidates needed to satisfy polling and donor requirements set by the RNC: at least 1% in three national polls or a mix of national and early-state polls deemed acceptable by the committee, between July 1 and Aug. 21, and a minimum of 40,000 donors, with 200 in 20 or more states.

Candidates also needed to commit at least 48 hours before the Wednesday evening debate, according to RNC criteria, which also required participants to sign a pledge promising to support the party's eventual nominee.

A look at who's in, who's out and who's decided not to participate:

WHO'S IN

RON DESANTIS

The Florida governor has long been seen as Trump's top rival, finishing a distant second to him in polls in early-voting states and in national polls as well, and raising an impressive amount of money.

But DeSantis' campaign has struggled in recent weeks to live up to high expectations. He let go of more than one-third of his staff as federal filings showed his campaign was burning through cash at an unsustainable rate.

With Trump absent, DeSantis may be the primary target for others onstage. According to people familiar with DeSantis' planning who were granted anonymity to discuss strategy, the campaign is preparing him for nonstop attacks.

DeSantis has been participating in debate-related question and answer sessions at least once a week, having brought in experienced debate strategist Brett O'Donnell to assist.

TIM SCOTT

The South Carolina senator has been looking for a breakout moment. The first debate could be his chance.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 061 ~ 58 of 70

A prolific fundraiser, Scott entered the summer with \$21 million cash on hand.

In one debate-approved poll in Iowa, Scott joined Trump and DeSantis in reaching double digits. The senator has focused much of his campaign resources on the leadoff GOP voting state, which has a large number of white evangelical voters.

Scott is hitting the early-state campaign trail after the debate, traveling to New Hampshire, Iowa and his home state of South Carolina, where he has four stops planned on Monday.

NIKKI HALEY

She has blitzed early-voting states with campaign events, walking crowds through her successes ousting a longtime South Carolina lawmaker, then becoming the state's first female and first minority governor. Also serving as Trump's U.N. ambassador for about two years, Haley frequently cites her international experience, focusing on the threat China poses to the United States.

The only woman in the GOP race, Haley has said transgender students competing in sports is "the women's issue of our time" and has drawn praise from a leading anti-abortion group, which called her "uniquely gifted at communicating from a pro-life woman's perspective."

Entering the race in February, Haley has brought in \$15.6 million. Making no mention of plans to go on the attack while speaking to reporters in Iowa earlier this month, Haley did explain why she showed up to the state fair in a shirt that read, "Underestimate me, that'll be fun."

VIVEK RAMASWAMY

The biotech entrepreneur and author of "Woke, Inc.: Inside Corporate America's Social Justice Scam" is an audience favorite at multi-candidate events and has polled well despite not being nationally known when he entered the race.

Ramaswamy's campaign says he met the donor threshold earlier this year, but this summer he rolled out "Vivek's Kitchen Cabinet" to boost his donor numbers even more by letting fundraisers keep 10% of what they bring in for his campaign.

As he pursues a whirlwind campaign schedule, Ramaswamy has done virtually no formal debate prep, according to a senior adviser granted anonymity to discuss campaign strategy. The adviser said he'll spend the day before the debate playing tennis and spending time with family.

CHRIS CHRISTIE

The former New Jersey governor opened his campaign by portraying himself as the only candidate ready to take on Trump. Christie called on the former president to "show up at the debates and defend his record," calling him "a coward" if he doesn't.

Last month, Christie — who kicked off his campaign in June — told CNN that he surpassed "40,000 unique donors in just 35 days." He also has met the polling requirements.

DOUG BURGUM

Burgum, a wealthy former software entrepreneur now in his second term as North Dakota's governor, has been using his fortune to boost his campaign.

He announced a program last month to give away \$20 gift cards — "Biden Relief Cards," hitting President Joe Biden's handling of the economy — to as many as 50,000 people in exchange for \$1 donations. Critics have questioned whether the offer violates campaign finance law.

Within about a week of launching that effort, Burgum announced he had surpassed the donor threshold. Ad blitzes in the early-voting states helped him meet the polling requirements.

Whether Burgum would be able to participate in Wednesday's debate was thrown into question after he hurt his Achilles tendon playing basketball with members of his campaign staff on Tuesday and was taken to the emergency room. After doing a walk-through of the debate stage on his injured leg on Wednesday, Burgum posted a photo of himself on crutches and said "I'm in," asserting that he'd be able to debate.

The injury, which occurred Tuesday while Burgum was playing with campaign staff, was first reported by CNN.

MIKE PENCE

Trump's vice president had met the polling threshold but struggled to amass a sufficient number of donors, raising the possibility he might not qualify for the first debate.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 061 ~ 59 of 70

But on Aug. 8, Pence's campaign announced that it had crossed the 40,000 donor threshold, and also that he had become the first candidate to formally submit his donor count to the RNC for verification.

An adviser who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss internal strategy said earlier this month that Pence had participated in roughly a half-dozen formal debate prep sessions to date, including at least one in which a campaign aide previously close to Trump is playing the part of the former president.

ASA HUTCHINSON

The former two-term Arkansas governor was the final candidate to meet the RNC's qualifications. Satisfying the polling requirements but slowly working on passing the donor threshold, Hutchinson said Sunday on CNN that he had finally surpassed 40,000 unique donors.

Hutchinson is running in the mold of an old-school Republican and has differentiated himself from many of his GOP rivals in his willingness to criticize Trump. He posted pleas on Twitter for \$1 donations to help secure his slot.

WHO'S DECIDED NOT TO PARTICIPATE

DONALD TRUMP

The current GOP front-runner long ago satisfied the polling and donor requirements. But Trump has opted not to participate in Wednesday's debate — and potentially any others that may follow.

"The public knows who I am & what a successful Presidency I had," Trump wrote on his social media site over the weekend. "I WILL THEREFORE NOT BE DOING THE DEBATES!"

His spokesman did not immediately clarify whether he plans to boycott every primary debate or just those that have currently been scheduled. Trump has also said that he would not sign the debate pledge.

He has floated a range of possible counterprogramming options, notably a competing interview with former Fox News host Tucker Carlson, who now has a program on X, the site formerly known as Twitter. The day after the debate, Trump is expected to go to Atlanta for booking on state racketeering charges over his alleged efforts to overturn the 2020 election.

WHO DIDN'T MAKE IT

FRANCIS SUAREZ

The Miami mayor told The Associated Press on Friday that he had qualified for the debate, but party officials disagreed. Senior RNC advisers who spoke on the condition of anonymity to share internal discussions said later that Suarez had not yet officially met the criteria, and Suarez was not among the candidates listed in the official on-stage lineup released Monday night.

Suarez has been one of the more creative candidates in his efforts to boost his donor numbers. He offered a chance to see Argentine soccer legend Lionel Messi's debut as a player for Inter Miami, saying donors who gave \$1 would be entered in a chance to get front-row tickets.

Still shy of the donor threshold, he took a page from Burgum's playbook by offering a \$20 "Bidenomics Relief Card" in return for \$1 donations. A super political action committee supporting Suarez launched a sweepstakes for a chance at up to \$15,000 in tuition, in exchange for a \$1 donation to Suarez's campaign.

LARRY ELDER

The conservative radio host claimed Monday that he had met the debate qualifications, sharing the letter sent to debate director David Bossie and saying that Elder planned to arrive in Milwaukee Tuesday afternoon.

Following the RNC's announcement, Elder's campaign said it planned to sue the party "over their eleventh-hour attempt to keep him off the Debate stage, even after he completed — and in some cases, exceeded — all of the requirements."

PERRY JOHNSON

Johnson, a wealthy but largely unknown businessman from Michigan, said on social media earlier this month he had notched 40,000 donors. Last week, he said he had satisfied other qualifications and on Monday posted a photo of his signed debate pledge.

But after the RNC's list was announced, without him, Johnson took his dissatisfaction to social media, writing that "the debate process has been corrupted, plain and simple" and adding that he would be in Milwaukee on Wednesday "and will have more to say" about the process on Tuesday.

WILL HURD

The former Texas congressman — the last candidate to enter the race, on June 22 — has said repeatedly that he would not pledge to support the eventual GOP nominee, a stance that would keep him off the stage even if he had the qualifying polling numbers.

In deadly Maui fires, many had no warning and no way out. Those who dodged a barricade survived

By REBECCA BOONE, HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH, CLAUDIA LAUER and CHRISTOPHER L. KELLER
Associated Press

As flames tore through a West Maui neighborhood, car after car of fleeing residents headed for the only paved road out of town in a desperate race for safety.

And car after car was turned back toward the rapidly spreading wildfire by a barricade blocking access to Highway 30.

One family swerved around the barricade and was safe in a nearby town 48 minutes later, another drove their four-wheel-drive car down a dirt road to escape. One man took a dirt road uphill, climbing above the fire and watching as Lahaina burned. He later picked his way through the flames, smoke and rubble to pull survivors to safety.

But dozens of others found themselves caught in a hellscape, their cars jammed together on a narrow road, surrounded by flames on three sides and the rocky ocean waves on the fourth. Some died in their cars, while others tried to run for safety.

"I could see from the bypass that people were stuck on the balconies, so I went down and checked it out," said Kekoa Lansford, who made several trips into town to look for survivors. What he found was horrible, Lansford said, with dead bodies and flames like a hellish movie scene. "And I could see that people were on fire, that the fire was just being stoked by the wind, and being pushed toward the homes."

The road closures — some because of the fire, some because of downed power lines — contributed to making historic Lahaina the site of the deadliest U.S. wildfire in more than a century. But there were many problems that day, and in some ways the disaster began long before the fires started.

A flash drought in the region provided plenty of kindling, and Hurricane Dora brought strong winds to Maui as it passed roughly 500 miles (800 kilometers) south of the Hawaii island chain. Those winds downed at least 30 power poles in West Maui, and Hawaiian Electric had no procedure in place for turning off the grid — a common practice in other fire-prone states. Video shot by a Lahaina resident shows a downed powerline setting dry grasses alight, possibly revealing the start of the larger fire.

And later, as the fire began to swallow homes in its ravenous path, Maui County emergency officials declined to use an extensive network of emergency sirens to alert Lahaina's residents to flee.

During a news conference Tuesday, Maui Police Chief John Pelletier said police officers drove up and down streets, knocking on doors and using loudspeakers to tell people to leave, but he didn't say exactly where and what time those efforts occurred. The Associated Press has filed public records requests for location reports and other documentation including video and internal communications to clarify the details of the police and fire response, but Maui County has not yet released that information.

A team of Associated Press journalists documented the first hours of the deadly wildfire by interviewing dozens of survivors and public officials, examining public documents and analyzing citizen videos, satellite images and publicly available data. The timeline reveals the chaos that overtook the town.

Shane Treu wakes early on Aug. 8 and is in his backyard when he hears a utility pole snap next to Lahainaluna Road. He sees the downed powerline ignite the grass and calls 911 at 6:37 a.m. to report the fire.

Small brush fires aren't unusual for Lahaina, and the fire department declares this one 100% contained by 9:55 a.m. The assurance puts many residents at ease; the high winds have prompted the closure of some public schools for the day, and others have not yet started. That means many of Lahaina's 3,000 public school students are home alone while their parents work.

Contained is not controlled, however, and the town is being battered by high winds. While many of Maui

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 061 ~ 61 of 70

County's fire crews work to extinguish the Upcountry fire on the eastern half of the island, the wind is toppling power poles and scattering embers like seeds in Lahaina.

Treu's neighbor Robert Arconado said the fire reignites around 2 p.m. He records video of it spreading at 3:06 p.m., as large plumes of smoke rise near Lahainaluna Road and are carried downtown by the wind.

Around 3:20 p.m., Lahaina resident Kevin Eliason is watching the black smoke from a vantage point closer to downtown when passersby tell him a power pole has been knocked onto the tar roof of a gas station two blocks away, creating fireballs that are being blown in the wind, he said.

Eliason said the fire knocked the power out in the area soon after.

Ten minutes later, Hawaiian Electric sends a news release asking Maui residents to prepare for extended outages. The utility says more than 30 power poles are down in West Maui, including along the Honoapiilani Highway at the south end of Lahaina. The fire department closes the Lahaina Bypass road because of the fire.

The closures block the only route out of Lahaina to the south.

Mike Cicchino decides to flee with his wife and several dogs from their neighborhood near Lahainaluna Road.

They head toward the ocean, but when they reach the intersection with the highway, Cicchino sees a traffic jam ahead on Front Street. He sees more traffic backed up on the highway to his right, where he knows the fire is rapidly approaching.

To his left, he sees two police cars blocking the road, one across the lane of traffic and another one just starting to pull away. Cicchino ignores the roadblock, driving around the police cars to head south.

About a mile later, he runs into a line of cones blocking the highway.

"I remember thinking, shoot, maybe there is something dangerous ahead," Cicchino says. "And then we see all the other cars driving onto Front Street, so we go that way too."

He cuts through parking lots and side streets, and ends up on Front Street near the ocean.

"So the police were blocking roads, the exit, some of the exit roads out," he says. "And I'm assuming it's because there's been some downed power lines or some downed trees."

Maui Police Chief John Pelletier confirmed that at a news conference two weeks later.

"We did not close or forbid people from getting out of Lahaina," Pelletier said. "If there was a downed power line that was live, we wanted to make sure that you didn't go over a downed live power line."

The first sign of trouble for Nate Baird and Courtney Stapleton comes at 3:40 p.m., when their 9- and 10-year-old sons say they can smell s'mores.

By the time the family piles into the car with their dog and Baird's mother and joins a caravan of evacuating residents, parts of the subdivision are beginning to burn. A telephone pole falls behind their car, causing an accident and blocking a side street.

Meanwhile, police officers knock down a fence to help others escape, the police chief says later. Firefighters in the area nearly become trapped themselves, losing a truck to the flames, Pelletier says.

When Baird and his family turn south to drive out of town, the way is blocked by cones and a crew working on downed electric poles. The workers were motioning for everyone to turn back toward Lahaina.

Shayna Decker, a spokesperson for Hawaiian Electric in Maui, did not immediately respond to a request for comment by The Associated Press.

They decide they don't care what the crew wants, swerving around the cones and heading south. They make it to a neighboring town by 4:18 p.m. and begin texting people to see who else has made it out.

"Nobody realized how little time we really had," Baird said. "Like even us being from the heart of the fire, we did not comprehend. Like we literally had minutes and one wrong turn. We would all be dead right now."

Jonelle Santos said her daughter, Ronelle Santos-Adrian, managed to escape her Lahaina affordable housing apartment with her 3-year-old daughter and partner by turning their four-wheel-drive vehicle away from the standstill traffic and onto a dirt road, eventually finding their way to a friend's house in Napili. Some of the other people who lived in the apartment complex didn't have cars, Santos said, and her daughter thinks some of them didn't make it out.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 061 ~ 62 of 70

Kim Cuevas-Reyes narrowly escapes with her 12- and 15-year-old by ignoring instructions to turn right on Front Street toward Lahaina's Civic Center, which earlier in the day had been turned into a shelter for refugees. Instead, she takes a left, driving in the wrong lane to pass a stack of cars heading in the other direction.

"The gridlock would have left us there when the firestorm came," said Cuevas-Reyes, 38. "I would have had to tell my children to jump into the ocean as well and be boiled alive by the flames or we would have just died from smoke inhalation and roasted in the car."

At 5:20 p.m., Maui County shares another update on Facebook. The road leading south out of Lahaina has been cleared and is open for traffic, the county says.

But by then, some on Front Street have already died, according to survivor accounts. Others, including Cicchino, have jumped over the seawall and are treading water, dodging flaming debris and breathing overheated black smoke.

At some point, police begin directing people away from Front Street, Pelletier says, "because it had already gotten too late." He does not say exactly when that point is reached.

A private ambulance company calls the U.S. Coast Guard at about 5:45 p.m., asking for help transporting 10 injured people from Lahaina to Maalaea because a fire is blocking road access to Lahaina. It is the Coast Guard's first notification of the fire.

People in the water and on boat moorings use flashlights and phones to guide the boats through the thick smoke. The Coast Guard rescues nearly 40 people from the shore and pulls 17 people from the water while civilians help pull more from the ocean. The rescue efforts stretch into the early morning hours.

Kekoa Lansford is among the rescuers. Earlier, he had climbed a hill behind the town and watched as the city burned, trying to gauge when it would be safe to return. Lansford said he knew people would need help "because the roads are small, and it's pretty tight down there."

Over the next several hours, Lansford makes repeated trips into the still-burning downtown, often using back roads to travel safely.

"I seen one girl and her legs was all burned up, and then I helped her," Lansford said. "And then something just clicked in my head, like, everybody's going to be burned up. So I just kept going back down."

Lansford focuses his effort on Front Street, getting as many people as he can out of the fire.

"Pulling them off behind the seawall, you know, and walking them back to my truck," he said.

He takes each person to a place that seems safe from fire where they can be picked up by others. And then he goes back to find more.

"Just getting them out of the fire, make sure they don't die of smoke inhalation. Some of them will die after anyway," he recounted.

The houses and buildings are too hot to enter, he said, and a popular spot for watching the sunset has become a death zone.

When the sun rises on Wednesday, the town that was once home to about 13,000 people has become an ashen wasteland frozen in its final moments of panic.

More than 100 deaths have been confirmed, and roughly 1,000 people remain unaccounted for.

Many of the survivors are angry, and haunted by the thought that a just few minutes of notice could have saved many lives.

Baird's neighborhood near Lahainaluna Road was filled with kids who were home alone when the flames hit, he said.

"We needed like 10 more minutes, and we could have saved a lot of kids," he said, choking back tears. "If we'd just had like a 10- or 15-minute warning."

The family ventured out to a Kahului mall recently, looking for a moment of normalcy in the aftermath of the tragedy. They ran into a playmate of their son.

"The kids just don't have a filter. So their son ran up and was just telling our son, you know, 'This kid is dead. This kid is dead.' And it's like, all my son's friends that they come to our house every day," he said. "And their parents were at work, and they were home alone. And nobody had a warning. Nobody, nobody, nobody knew."

Deep-sea 'hot tubs' help octopus moms hatch their eggs faster

By CHRISTINA LARSON AP Science Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Most octopuses lead solitary lives. So scientists were startled to find thousands of octopus huddled together, protecting their eggs at the bottom of the ocean off the central California coast.

Now researchers may have solved the mystery of why these pearl octopus congregate: Heat seeping up from the base of an extinct underwater volcano helps their eggs hatch faster.

"There are clear advantages of basically sitting in this natural hot tub," said Janet Voight, an octopus biologist at the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago and co-author of the study, which was published Wednesday in Science Advances.

The researchers calculated that the heated nest location more than halved the time it took for eggs laid there to hatch — reducing the risk of being munched by snails, shrimp and other predators.

The nesting site, which the scientists dubbed an "octopus garden," was first discovered in 2018 by researchers from the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary and other institutions. The team used an underwater remote vehicle to film the throng of nearly 6,000 octopus nesting 2 miles deep.

The octopus — about the size of a grapefruit — perched over their eggs laid on rocks heated by water seeping up from the sea floor.

"It was completely incredible — we suddenly saw thousands of pearly-colored octopus, all upside down, with their legs up in the air and moving around. They were pushing away potential predators and turning over their eggs," for an even flow of water and oxygen, said National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration marine biologist Andrew DeVogelaere, a study co-author.

Only the hazy shimmer of escaping hot water meeting the frigid sea alerted the researchers to the hydrothermal seep. But they still didn't know exactly why the octopus had gathered there.

For three years, scientists monitored the site to understand the hatching cycle, recording both the developmental stage of eggs at 31 nests and the inevitable deaths of octopus moms.

"After the hatchlings come out of the nest and swim off immediately into the dark, the mothers, who never left their nest and never appeared to feed during nesting, soon die," said James Barry, a biologist at the Monterey institute and co-author of the study.

The researchers found that eggs at this site hatch after about 21 months — far shorter than the four years or more it takes for other known deep-sea octopus eggs.

"Usually, colder water slows down metabolism and embryonic development and extends life span in the deep sea. But here in this spot, warmth appears to speed things up," said Adi Khen, a marine biologist at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, who was not involved in the study.

Mike Vecchione, a Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History zoologist who was not involved in the study, praised the researchers' tenacity "to gather so much detailed data about such a remote location."

Such octopus gardens "may be widespread and really important in the deep sea, and we just previously knew very little about them," he said. "There's still so much to discover in the deep sea."

Donald Trump seems inescapable but many Republicans embrace a campaign discussion without him

By BILL BARROW Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Donald Trump's decision to skip the first Republican debate may hurt television ratings and put more pressure on the eight contenders who will be on stage. But plenty of rank-and-file conservatives said they were eager to see their options without the former president dominating the conversation.

"People are just so focused on the circus," said Melissa Watford, a 53-year-old Republican from suburban Atlanta. "He's just a distraction. Distraction, distraction, distraction."

Watford's husband, Jack, said he would still consider supporting Trump if he wins the nomination, but he described the former president as "clickbait" and expressed relief that he is yielding the stage Wednesday

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 061 ~ 64 of 70

in Milwaukee.

"When he's out of the picture," the 61-year-old said, "you can actually hear other candidates, actually listen to them."

The Watfords represent a notable share of Republican primary voters who, regardless of their feelings about Trump, want the party to wrestle with its identity and choices rather than hand the former president a third consecutive nomination without a fight. The group is difficult to quantify precisely, though GOP pollsters and Trump's competitors believe it's large enough to overcome Trump's base.

It extends beyond the small-but-vocal "Never Trump" faction. Instead, there is an expansive middle of the party open to new options — but that has supported Trump in the past, is at least somewhat sympathetic to his legal peril and would almost certainly vote for him again in a general election if he becomes the nominee.

"I'm deeply bothered by the bigger picture, by what Joe Biden and his administration are doing to the country," said Terry Lathan, a former Alabama Republican Party chairwoman who once backed Trump but now supports Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis for president. "The policy and the Republican platform have to be the top of the food chain here."

Lathan acknowledged, however, that "there is no bigger personality than President Trump ... There's a crush of people ready to do it all over again."

What a post-Trump party might look like was on display last weekend at conservative radio host Erick Erickson's annual political convocation, "The Gathering," staged in the GOP-leaning Buckhead neighborhood of Atlanta, a Democratic stronghold. Hundreds of activists, operatives and rank-and-file conservatives attended and tested their theories of Republicanism after Trump.

The dynamic at "The Gathering" underscored the challenge for Trump's rivals Wednesday night. None of them have yet won enough support to avoid splintering the GOP base.

Robert Kuehl, a 33-year-old Georgia Republican, recounted how he watched friends gravitate to Trump's populism in the 2016 campaign because of their disillusionment with an uneven economy and entrenched political class. "He spoke to them, and there's still a deep loyalty there," Kuehl said, before adding that the former president's latest campaign seems much more self-interested.

"There's a lot of optimism among the other candidates" about conservatism and the country at large, he said, "and that's something that's been missing" under Trump's control.

Erickson conducted one-on-one interviews with DeSantis, former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, South Carolina Sen. Tim Scott, former U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley, tech entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy and former Vice President Mike Pence.

All planned to be on stage in Milwaukee.

Erickson did not invite Trump to Atlanta. He rejects Trump's false statements about the 2020 election and has consistently urged his listeners to look forward. There were no "Make America Great Again" hats dotting the audience. And Erickson did not ask candidates about the former president.

"We know what they would say," he said.

Still, the party seems poised to ride with Trump a third time and unsure about how to embark on a different direction. The broader takeaway from attendees at Erickson's event was a desire for candidates to make their pitches beyond a frame imposed by Trump.

"These candidates get pigeonholed or just ignored in the media, especially television," said Raz Shafer, a 37-year-old from Stephenville, Texas. "It is refreshing to hear a different, deeper perspective in their own voice."

Shafer said he was most impressed by DeSantis, Haley and Christie. DeSantis, he argued, crushed narratives that he is "falling apart." Haley, he said, demonstrated domestic and foreign policy depth as a former governor and ambassador. And Christie went beyond "the usual soundbites" of blasting Trump, he said.

Lorelei Eddy, a 58-year-old from Fayetteville, Georgia, said the New Jersey politician dispelled her notions that he "is, well, more on the liberal side of conservative." Instead, with extended time at the microphone, Christie explained how he battled leading legislators and local officials in deeply Democratic New Jersey while ultimately compromising with them to achieve policy victories.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 061 ~ 65 of 70

Once Christie left the stage and met the media hoard outside, though, he eagerly answered Trump-related questions, calling the former president a "coward" for skipping Milwaukee and musing that Trump is "scared" of a "jail cell."

Criticism of Trump doesn't necessarily bother Eddy, as long as she hears more than that from the alternatives. She said she has never cast a ballot for Trump in either a primary or general election. "He never met my values as a conservative," she said, insisting it's possible to find a genuine conservative who can "accomplish things" and "not be divisive."

Melissa Watford said Ramaswamy stood out because he "sounded a lot like Trump, as an outsider, but without all the baggage." She said she is not ready to pick a candidate.

Of course, as voters talk through their choices, they offer reminders of how deeply the former president's imprint goes and demonstrate how distinctions among Trump's rivals can make it harder for any of them to corral a majority or even plurality coalition that rivals his.

For example, Eddy praised Scott, the South Carolina senator and highest-profile Black Republican nationally, as "very, very persuasive," but she wondered "whether he could win yet."

Shafer called Pence a "man of character" whom history "will remember fondly" for refusing Trump's efforts to overturn the 2020 election. But Shafer didn't include him in his top tier. Of Pence, Eddy said "most people aren't looking for that seasoned a politician."

Thomas Eddy, who came to Erickson's gathering with his wife, said he understands most voters will never have the kind of extended, up-close look at candidates he recently had. And he said he expected Wednesday's debate, even without Trump, could involve the kinds of Trump-centered questions Christie so willingly fielded in Atlanta.

"It's frustrating how this primary system works," he said. "There's got to be a better way."

As Ralph Yarl begins his senior year of high school, the man who shot him faces a court hearing

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — Four months after he was shot in the head after ringing the doorbell at the wrong house to pick up his brothers, Ralph Yarl has begun his senior year in high school.

Next week, the man accused of shooting him will be in court.

Yarl's first day of school was Tuesday. "He was ready," his aunt, Faith Spoonmore, told the Kansas City Star. "Ralph was ready to just go back to just being a teenager."

Andrew Lester, 84, pleaded not guilty to first-degree assault and armed criminal action in the April 13 shooting. His preliminary hearing is Aug. 31.

Lester, who is white, told authorities that he shot Yarl through the door without warning because he was "scared to death" he was about to be robbed by the Black person standing there. Yarl was struck in the head and the arm. The case shocked the country and renewed national debates about gun policies and race in America.

Yarl continues to heal from the traumatic brain injury he suffered, but was still able to complete an engineering internship this summer.

Support for Yarl and his family poured in throughout the past few months. A GoFundMe set up on the family's behalf raised nearly \$3.5 million.

The high school musician was also gifted a new bass clarinet — a professional model purchased with donations to a GoFundMe drive set up by a group of U.S. and Canadian musicians.

For the fall, Yarl's family is planning college trips. They expect to visit the Georgia Institute of Technology, the University of Michigan, Texas A&M University and Purdue University. Yarl hopes to study engineering.

He also has an upcoming trip to the White House after President Joe Biden extended an invitation shortly after the shooting. A date has not yet been set.

Yarl and his family will have the opportunity to face his alleged assailant at Lester's court hearing next week.

"It's scary," Spoonmore said.

"In our mind, and in a lot of people's minds, it's a simple case and what happened was wrong and it should not have happened," she said, "and the person that did it should be punished for their actions."

Russia and Ukraine trade drone attacks as Kyiv claims it took out a key S-400 missile defense system

By SUSIE BLANN Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russia and Ukraine traded drone attacks early Wednesday, officials said, with Kyiv apparently targeting Moscow again and the Kremlin's forces launching another bombardment of Ukrainian grain storage depots in what have recently become signature tactics in the almost 18-month war.

Later Wednesday, the Ukrainian intelligence agency claimed it had destroyed a key Russian S-400 surface-to-air missile defense system in occupied Crimea. If confirmed, it would be another embarrassing blow for Moscow, as Ukraine increasingly targets Russia's assets far behind the front line in southern and eastern Ukraine.

The agency, known by its acronym GUR, claimed on its official Telegram channel that Russia has a "limited number" of the sophisticated systems and that the loss "is a painful blow." Moscow officials made no immediate comment.

The long-range S-400 missiles are capable of striking enemy aircraft and are regarded as one of the best such systems available. They have a range of 400 kilometers (250 miles) and can simultaneously engage multiple targets.

Earlier, a three-hour nighttime Russian drone attack in Ukraine's southern Odesa region overnight Tuesday caused a blaze at grain facilities, Odesa Regional Military Administration Head Oleh Kiper said.

The attack destroyed 13,000 metric tons (14,300 U.S. tons) of grain, bringing the month's total grain losses to around 270,000 metric tons (300,000 U.S. tons), Ukrainian Infrastructure Minister Oleksandr Kubrakov said in a Facebook post.

Russia zeroed in on Odesa last month, crippling significant parts of the port city's grain facilities, days after President Vladimir Putin broke off Russia's participation in the Black Sea Grain Initiative. That wartime deal enabled Ukraine's exports to reach many countries facing the threat of hunger.

Under a year of that deal, Ukraine shipped 32.9 million metric tons (36.2 million U.S. tons) of grain, most of it from the Odesa region.

Russian officials, meanwhile, claimed to have downed Ukrainian drones in Moscow and the surrounding region early Wednesday, the defense ministry and the mayor said. No casualties were reported in the drone attack, which has become almost a daily occurrence in the Russian capital.

Moscow Mayor Sergey Sobyenin said one drone smashed into a building under construction in Moscow City, a prestigious business complex hit by drones twice before. Several windows were broken in two buildings nearby and emergency services responded to the scene.

Russia's Ministry of Defense said the drone had been electronically jammed.

It blamed the attack on Ukraine and said two other drones were shot down by air defense systems in the Mozhaisk and Khimki areas of the Moscow region. Kyiv officials, as usual, neither confirmed nor denied Ukraine was behind the drone attacks.

Moscow airports briefly closed but have now reopened, according to Russian state media.

Neither side's claims could be independently verified.

Ukraine has since early this year sought to take the war into the heart of Russia. It has increasingly targeted Moscow's military assets behind the front lines in eastern and southern Ukraine and at the same time has launched drones against Moscow.

Meanwhile, a Russian drone attack on the city of Romny in northeastern Ukraine struck a local school, killing the principal, his deputy, a secretary and the school librarian, according to Ukraine's Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Also, three people were killed in the Belgorod region of Russia on the Ukrainian border after repeated shelling of a sanatorium, according to Gov. Vyacheslav Gladkov.

Gladkov said the sanatorium in the village of Lavy, about 40km (25 miles) from the border, was shelled, killing two refugees and a staff member.

The Belgorod region has witnessed sporadic fighting and shelling during the war, including a border incursion last May that prompted the Kremlin to introduce tighter security.

A handful of foreign dignitaries, including the prime minister of Finland and the presidents of Portugal and Lithuania, visited Ukraine on Wednesday.

Their presence coincided with the Day of the National Flag of Ukraine, which precedes Ukrainian Independence Day on Thursday.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, along with Ukrainian Armed Forces Commander in Chief Valerii Zaluzhnyi and other top officials, attended the unfurling in Kyiv of a giant Ukrainian flag with numerous signatures of soldiers, volunteers, doctors and rescuers.

Thousands of discouraged migrants are stranded in Niger because of border closures following coup

By SAM MEDNICK Associated Press

NIAMEY, Niger (AP) — After three months of crossing the desert and then watching other migrants die at sea in his failed attempt to reach Europe, Sahr John Yambasu gave up on getting across the Mediterranean and decided to go back home.

The 29-year-old from Sierra Leone reached Niger in June on his return journey, but United Nations officials said he had to wait for packed migrant centers to empty before he could be repatriated.

Then mutinous soldiers toppled Niger's president a few weeks later, bringing regional tensions and the shuttering of the borders. Yambasu was trapped.

He is one of nearly 7,000 discouraged migrants trying to get home elsewhere in Africa that the U.N. estimates have been stranded in Niger since late July when members of the presidential guard overthrew the country's democratically elected president, Mohamad Bazoum. Niger's junta closed its airspace and regional countries closed border crossings as part of economic and travel sanctions, making it hard for people to leave.

Niger is an important route both for Africans trying to reach Libya as a jumping off spot to cross the Mediterranean to Europe and those who are returning to their homes with help from the United Nations.

Yambasu and others like him are unsure when they will be able to leave.

"I feel sad because it's a country that I don't belong to. It's not easy," Yambasu said.

Recounting his story, he said he left Sierra Leone in June because of political unrest and was hoping to reach Germany. He got rides across the region until arriving in Libya, where he boarded a boat with some 200 other migrants. The boat spent days at sea, with some people dying onboard before it was intercepted by Libya's coast guard and taken back to Libya.

That was enough for him and he headed for home. Helped by aid groups, he made it as far as Niger but has been unable to go farther.

U.N. officials estimate about 1,800 in Yambasu's predicament are living on Niger's streets because centers run by the International Organization for Migration are too crowded to take in more. The centers hold about 5,000 people trying to get home.

The U.N. agency had been assisting approximately 1,250 people a month return to their countries this year. But the closure of borders and airspace has forced it to temporarily suspend returns and its centers are now jammed at 14% over capacity, said Paola Pace, acting interim chief of mission for the agency in Niger.

"This situation poses challenges for migrants as migrants staying in these centers may experience heightened stress and uncertainty with limited prospects for voluntary return and already crowded facilities," she said.

Pace worries the stall in the transiting of Africans seeking to get home could increase exploitation of vulnerable people by traffickers and smugglers who normally focus on individuals trying to migrate to Europe.

The shelters are helping people who are making their way home, rather than would-be migrants heading to Europe — a northern flow that has seen more than 100,000 cross the central Mediterranean to Italy so far this year, according to Italy's interior ministry.

COOPI, an Italian aid group that provides shelter for migrants in Niger's northern town of Assamakka near the border with Algeria, said that since the coup an additional 1,300 people have entered its center trying to return home.

COOPI assists the U.N. in hosting people, but has warned that it will run out of food and water if the borders don't open soon.

Not only are migrants unable to leave but aid groups are unable to bring in food and medical supplies. Morena Zucchelli, head of mission for COOPI in Niger, said it has only enough food stocks to last until the end of August and its funding will run out at the end of September.

"If the situation doesn't change ... we can't guarantee things will continue running," she said.

Before the coup, Niger worked with the European Union in trying to slow the flow of migrants north to Libya and Algeria. The EU had been scheduled to provide more than \$200 million to Niger to help it address security, socio-economic and migration challenges.

It's unclear how cooperative the new military leaders will be with the EU, which has now frozen assistance to Niger. Anitta Hipper, a spokeswoman for the European Commission, could not say Tuesday whether cooperation on migration had been suspended, saying only that the EU would continue to "monitor and evaluate the situation."

Momo Kmulbah is another of those trying to get back home, for him in Liberia. He says many of them have nowhere to turn for help. He says U.N. officials have told him to be patient.

The 36-year-old has been sleeping on the pavement in Niger's capital, Niamey, with his two daughters and wife since June and they beg for food.

"Our children don't have food to eat. I feel confused when I wake up in the morning," Kmulbah said.

A top Russian general linked to the head of a rebellious mercenary group is reportedly dismissed

By The Associated Press undefined

Gen. Sergei Surovikin, a former commander of Russia's forces in Ukraine who was linked to the leader of a brief armed rebellion, has been dismissed as chief of the air force, Russian state media reported Wednesday after weeks of uncertainty about his fate.

Surovikin has not been seen in public since June 23-24, when Yevgeny Prigozhin, head of the Wagner mercenary group, sent his men to march toward Moscow. In a video released during the uprising, Surovikin — who was believed to have close ties to Prigozhin — had urged him to pull the mercenaries back.

The Wagner uprising posed the most serious challenge to President Vladimir Putin's 23-year rule and reports circulated that Surovikin had known about it in advance. Prigozhin called off the rebellion short of reaching Moscow after he said he wanted to avoid bloodshed.

Surovikin's absence has been one of several enduring mysteries surrounding the rebellion. During his absence, Russian media have speculated about Surovikin's whereabouts, with some claiming he had been detained, but his daughter told the Russian social media channel Baza in late June that her father had not been arrested.

Russian state news agency RIA Novosti, citing an anonymous source, reported that Surovikin has been replaced as commander of the Russian Aerospace Forces by Col. Gen. Viktor Afzalov, who heads the main staff of the air force.

The agency frequently represents the official position of the Kremlin through reports citing anonymous officials in Russia's defense and security establishment.

The Russian government has not commented on the report, and The Associated Press was not able to confirm it independently.

The Russian daily newspaper RBC reported that Surovikin is being transferred to a new job and is now

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 061 ~ 69 of 70

on vacation.

Alexei Venediktov, the former head of the closed radio station Ekho Moskv, and Ksenia Sobchak, the daughter of a Putin-linked politician, both wrote on social media Tuesday that Surovikin had been dismissed.

Sobchak said Surovikin was removed from his post Aug. 18, "by a closed decree. The family still has no contact with him."

Surovikin was dubbed "General Armageddon" for his brutal military campaign in Syria and led Russia's operations in Ukraine between October 2022 and January 2023. Under his command, Russian forces unleashed regular missile barrages on Ukrainian cities, significantly damaging civilian infrastructure and disrupting heating, electricity and water supplies.

Both Surovikin and Prigozhin were both active in Syria, where Russian forces have fought to shore up President Bashar Assad's government since 2015.

Surovikin was replaced as commander in Ukraine by Chief of General Staff Gen. Valery Gerasimov following Russia's withdrawal from the southern city of Kherson amid a swift counteroffensive by Kyiv's troops, but the air force general continued to serve under Gerasimov as a deputy commander.

Prigozhin had spoken positively of Surovikin while criticizing Russia's military brass, and suggested he should be appointed General Staff chief to replace Gerasimov.

While the reports circulated about actions against Surovikin, Prigozhin, appears to be still in charge of the mercenary group, which won a key battle to capture the Ukrainian city of Bakhmut earlier this year. Prigozhin said he launched the rebellion to oust Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu and other military leaders who he accused of mismanaging the war in Ukraine.

Shortly after the rebellion, the Kremlin confirmed Putin had a three-hour meeting with Prigozhin and Wagner commanders shortly before they apparently agreed to depart for exile in Belarus. In July, Prigozhin was seen on the sidelines of a Russia-Africa summit in the Russian city of St. Petersburg, and this week he posted his first video address since the mutiny, saying he was seeking "bogatyrs" — courageous and strong men — to work for Wagner in Africa.

Today in History: August 24, Mount Vesuvius erupts

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Thursday, Aug. 24, the 236th day of 2023. There are 129 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Aug. 24, A.D. 79, long-dormant Mount Vesuvius erupted, burying the Roman cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum in volcanic ash; an estimated 20,000 people died.

On this date:

In 1814, during the War of 1812, British forces invaded Washington, D.C., setting fire to the still-under-construction Capitol and the White House, as well as other public buildings.

In 1912, Congress passed a measure creating the Alaska Territory.

In 1932, Amelia Earhart embarked on a 19-hour flight from Los Angeles to Newark, New Jersey, making her the first woman to fly solo, non-stop, from coast to coast.

In 1949, the North Atlantic Treaty came into force.

In 1954, President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed the Communist Control Act, outlawing the Communist Party in the United States.

In 1981, Mark David Chapman was sentenced in New York to 20 years to life in prison for murdering John Lennon.

In 1989, Baseball Commissioner A. Bartlett Giamatti (juh-MAH'-tee) banned Pete Rose from the game for betting on his own team, the Cincinnati Reds.

In 1992, Hurricane Andrew smashed into Florida, causing \$30 billion in damage; 43 U.S. deaths were blamed on the storm.

In 2006, the International Astronomical Union declared that Pluto was no longer a full-fledged planet, demoting it to the status of a "dwarf planet."

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 061 ~ 70 of 70

In 2016, a 6.2-magnitude earthquake reduced three central Italian towns to rubble and killed nearly 300 people.

In 2019, police in Aurora, Colorado, responding to a report of a suspicious person, used a chokehold to subdue Elijah McClain, a 23-year-old Black man; he suffered cardiac arrest on the way to the hospital and was later declared brain dead and taken off life support.

In 2020, Republicans formally nominated President Donald Trump for a second term on the opening day of a scaled-down convention; during a visit to the convention city of Charlotte, North Carolina, Trump told delegates that "the only way they can take this election away from us is if this is a rigged election."

Ten years ago: Tens of thousands of people marched to the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial and down the National Mall, commemorating the 50th anniversary of King's famous "I Have a Dream" speech (delivered on August 28, 1963). Julie Harris, one of Broadway's most honored performers, died in West Chatham, Massachusetts at age 87.

Five years ago: The family of Arizona Sen. John McCain announced that he had discontinued medical treatment for an aggressive form of brain cancer; McCain died the following day. Robin Leach, host of the 1980s TV show "Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous," died in Las Vegas at the age of 76. The S&P 500 index finished at an all-time high of 2,874.69, just two days after the bull market in U.S. stocks became the longest in history.

One year ago: President Joe Biden announced detailed plans to deliver on a campaign promise to provide \$10,000 in student debt cancellation for millions of Americans — and up to \$10,000 more for those with the greatest financial need — along with measures to lower the burden of repayment for their remaining federal student debt. (The Supreme Court would later block the plan.) Russian forces launched a rocket attack on a train station in central Ukraine on the embattled country's Independence Day, killing at least 15 people and wounding about 50. Drummer Jerry Allison, who played and co-wrote songs with rock pioneer and childhood friend Buddy Holly and whose future wife inspired the classic "Peggy Sue," died at age 82.

Today's Birthdays: Composer-musician Mason Williams is 85. R&B singer Marshall Thompson (The Chilites) is 81. Actor Anne Archer is 76. Actor Joe Regalbuto is 74. Actor Kevin Dunn is 68. Former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee is 68. Actor-writer Stephen Fry is 66. Actor Steve Guttenberg is 65. Baseball Hall of Famer Cal Ripken Jr. is 63. Actor Jared Harris is 62. Talk show host Craig Kilborn is 61. CBS News correspondent Major Garrett is 61. Rock singer John Bush is 60. Actor Marlee Matlin is 58. Basketball Hall of Famer Reggie Miller is 58. Broadcast journalist David Gregory is 53. Movie director Ava DuVernay is 51. Actor-comedian Dave Chappelle is 50. Actor James D'Arcy is 50. Actor Carmine Giovinazzo (jee-oh-vihn-AH'-zoh) is 50. Actor Alex O'Loughlin is 47. Actor Beth Riesgraf is 45. Actor Chad Michael Murray is 42. Singer Mika is 40. Actor Blake Berris is 39. Actor Rupert Grint ("Harry Potter" films) is 35.