

Groton Daily Independent

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Tuesday, Oct. 24

Senior Menu: Chicken fried steak, mashed potatoes with gravy, oriental blend vegetables, baked apples, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Scones.

School Lunch: Scalloped potatoes and ham.

Thrift Store open 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Food Pantry open 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.

ASVAB Test, 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.



“ Important encounters are planned by the souls long before the bodies see each other.

—Paulo Coelho

Wednesday, Oct. 25

Senior Menu: Meatloaf, baked potato with sour cream, broccoli normandy blend, Fruited Jell-O, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Cereal.

School Lunch: Tacos.

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

Emmanuel Lutheran: Confirmation, 6 p.m.

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

Thursday, Oct. 26

Senior Menu: Hot turkey combo, mashed potatoes with gravy, 7-layer salad, peaches.

School Breakfast: Breakfast pizza.

School LUnch: Corndogs, mashed sweet potatoes.

Second Round of Football Playoffs

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

OPEN: **Recycling Trailer in Groton**
The recycling trailer is located west of the city shop. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.
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The Bulletin by Newsweek

World in Brief

who received COVID-19 vaccines during pregnancy were at no increased risk of severe health outcomes after birth—with some outcomes improving in those with vaccinated mothers.

Off-duty pilot Joseph David Emerson was arrested and charged with 83 counts of attempted murder after he tried to kill the engines midflight on an Alaska Airlines jet on Sunday. The flight, which had 80 people aboard, was diverted to Portland, Oregon.

Sen. Bob Menendez pleaded not guilty to providing “sensitive U.S. government information” to Egypt while serving as chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

At least seven people have died, and dozens of others were injured after a “superfog” of smoke from wildfires and dense fog in New Orleans caused multi-car crashes involving nearly 160 vehicles.

The Texas Rangers defeated the defending champion Houston Astros 11-4 in Game 7 of the ALCS and clinched their first World Series berth since 2011.

President Joe Biden announced 31 new regional tech hubs across 32 states and Puerto Rico to focus on growing industries such as clean energy and artificial intelligence.

In the ongoing war in Ukraine, cases of sabotage are increasing among Russia’s Federal Security Service (FSB) employees who wish to leave the agency, according to Important Stories, an investigative Russian publication..

What to Watch in the Day Ahead

Michael Cohen, who served as Donald Trump’s longtime attorney and “fixer,” is expected to testify in the former president’s ongoing civil trial into alleged business fraud.

Investors will watch for General Motors’ third-quarter earnings and comments on future guidance or the impact of an ongoing strike with the United Auto Workers union. Microsoft, Alphabet, Visa, Coca-Cola, Verizon, and Chubb are among others due to release their results.

The Federal Reserve and Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation are expected to approve a rule during a board meeting today that requires lenders to extend credit to lower-income communities and a rule on climate-related financial risk management.

It’s a light day for economic events, with S&P manufacturing and services PMI for October due at 9:45 a.m. ET..

TALKING POINTS

“All those concerned about the corporate capture of our federal government should see “Into the Weeds” to understand just how harmful our corrupt regulatory system has been to public health. And all of us should oppose this latest stealth attempt by corporate lobbyists to make an end run around the democratic process, embodied in the so-called Agricultural Labeling Uniformity Act,” Independent presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy Jr. in a Newsweek op-ed on the toxicity of glyphosate.

“We need somebody who is sincere and hardworking, and who is focused on making local headlines, not national headlines. There’s a large number of people who live in the third congressional district who recognize that we need somebody that is focused on the issues that matter to working families and businesses here in Colorado who maybe has a lower profile but is more effective in what they can deliver for the district,” Rep. Lauren Boebert’s Republican challenger Jeff Hurd told Newsweek after the congresswoman sparked controversy in 2023.

BRISTOL, SOUTH DAKOTA

HAUNTED WAREHOUSE

OCTOBER 27 & 28

BRISTOL MAIN STREET

● ● 7:00PM-11:00PM | \$15 ADMISSION | 6+ |

● ● INCREDIBLE EDIBLES | SHARI'S JO TO GO |

ROB'S PORTA POTTIES

NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR ACCIDENTS

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Paul Kosel and Justin Hanson provided the play-by-play commentary of the volleyball match Monday in Groton. (Selfie photo by Justin Hanson)

kills and a block and Anna Aesoph had two ace serves for Faulkton.

The win propelled the Tigers to the number one seed in the region and finish the regular season with an 18-4 record.

The match was broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by Agtegra, Bary Keith at Harr Motors, BK Custom Ts & More, Bierman Farm Service, Blocker Construction, Dacotah Bank, Full Circle Ag, Groton Ag Partners, Groton Chamber, Groton Ford, John Sieh Agency and Locke Electric

Groton Area won the junior varsity match, 25-14 and 25-20. Talli Wright led Groton Area with six ace serves and two kills, Jaedyn Penning had four kills and three ace serves, McKenna Tietz had two ace serves and a kill, Emma Kutter had two kills and a block, Chesney Weber and Kella Tracy each had two kills, Taryn Traphagen and Faith Traphagen each had a kill and Sydney Locke had an ace serve.

Grace Kopecky led the Trojans with four kills and an ace serve.

Fans of Jaedyn Penning sponsored the broadcast on GDILIVE.COM.

Netters roll past Faulkton

Groton Area's volleyball team is on a 12 match winning streak after taking care of Faulkton in three sets Monday night in Groton.

Set scores were 25-23, 25-12 and 25-21.

It was the night of the fives for the Tigers with four players having five kills and one having five ace serves.

Anna Fjeldheim was 21 of 26 in attacks with five kills, was 12 of 12 in serves with one ace serve and had 15 digs. Sydney Leicht had five kills, one ace serve, nine digs and three assisted blocks. Carly Guthmiller was 17 of 17 in serves with five ace serves and led the team in digs with 29. Chesney Weber was 29 of 33 in attacks with five kills, had one block assist and one ace serve. Rylee Dunker was 14 of 16 in attacks with five kills and had three assisted blocks. Faith Traphagen had four kills and two assisted blocks. Elizabeth Fliehs had 21 assists, nine digs, one block assist and one ace serve. Jaedyn Penning and Laila Roberts each had one kill.









Carley Cotton had nine kills while Addison Medius had eight kills, one ace and one block, Jayme Sen had two kills and one block, Kelli Stoecker had four

- Paul Kosel

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Region 1 A Volleyball Standings

#	Name	Season			Seed	Pts
		W	L	PCT		<u>PTS</u>
1	 Groton Area	18	4	.818		44.318
2	 Aberdeen Roncalli	18	5	.783		44.217
3	 Milbank	18	11	.621		41.793
4	 Sisseton	10	14	.417		39.958
5	 Redfield	9	16	.360		39.480
6	 Webster Area	10	15	.400		38.720
7	 Tiospa Zina	7	18	.280		37.280
8	 Waubay/Summit	2	21	.087		34.609

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St Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church

Fall Dinner

NOVEMBER 5TH, 5PM TO 7PM

TOSSED SALAD, LASAGNA, GARLIC BREAD,
ICE CREAM SUNDAE BAR

.....
FREE WILL OFFERING
.....

BINGO, BINGO, BINGO!



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Weekly Vikings Recap - Vikings vs. 49ers

By Jack & Duane Kolsrud

With the whole country watching on Monday night, the Minnesota Vikings put together their best performance of the season against arguably the best team in the NFL, the San Francisco 49ers. Granted the 49ers came into Monday's game without two of their best players, Trent Williams and Deebo Samuel, but the same can be said about the Vikings who are still without their superstar wide receiver, Justin Jefferson. However, with Jefferson's absence, Monday night became the official coming-out party for Jordan Addison, who caught two touchdowns and had over 100 yards receiving.

The first half, for the most part, was a dominant one for the Vikings' defense - as they held a dominant 49ers' offense to only 7 points and a likely MVP finalist in Christian McCaffrey to less than 50 yards rushing. However, like every player, the Vikings were only able to contain Christian McCaffrey for so long. At the end of the second quarter, McCaffrey was able to get in the endzone with a rushing touchdown. This touchdown gave McCaffrey his 16th straight game with a touchdown, an NFL record for a non-quarterback. However, McCaffrey was not done as midway through the third quarter, he took a simple screen pass from Brock Purdy for a 35-yard touchdown.

Despite the Vikings' early successes, McCaffrey's second touchdown of the game cut the Vikings lead to 19-14 despite the Vikings outgaining the 49ers by nearly 100 total yards up to that point. The main reason for the Vikings' inability to gain a larger lead over the 49ers came down to them having to settle for multiple field goals when inside the 49ers' 10-yard line. You have to get points when you can take them but it's risky to settle for two short-yardage field goals when playing a team like the 49ers.

Thankfully, for the Vikings, Kirk Cousins came to play on Monday night. This might be a reactionary statement to make, but Monday night's performance by Kirk Cousins might have been the best performance of his Vikings' career. After throwing an interception at the start of the game, Cousins completely locked in by going 35/45 with 378 yards passing. When the Vikings needed it, Cousins was thereby converting eight of the Vikings' 13 third-down attempts.

With all that said, the most impressive stat of the night though was the fact that Cousins did not get sacked. It was a credit to both Cousins and the Vikings' offensive line that they were able to avoid getting sacked by reigning defensive player of the year, Nick Bosa, and the rest of the 49ers' dominant defensive line. Vikings' offensive tackle, Christian Darrisaw, shut down Bosa so much that Bosa decided midway through the game to move to the other side of the line and face Brian O'Neill, instead.

However, in typical Vikings fashion, they had to make the game as stressful as possible. After a Greg Joseph missed field goal with less than 2:00 remaining, the Vikings found themselves with only a 5-point lead and needing to hold off the 49ers from driving down the field to win the game. Thanks to Cam Bynum, the stress did not last much longer as he picked off Brock Purdy for the second time Monday to seal the upset for the Vikings.

Vikings 22 - 49ers 17

Now, the Vikings head to Green Bay to face the Packers, who are currently on a three-game losing streak. The Vikings, who will likely be favorites over the Packers, have a real chance to go on a major win streak in the next five weeks before their week 13 bye as they face the easiest part of their schedule. It might be shocking but the Vikings have a legitimate shot to get back in the NFC North race going forward.

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Groton Wage Memorial Library

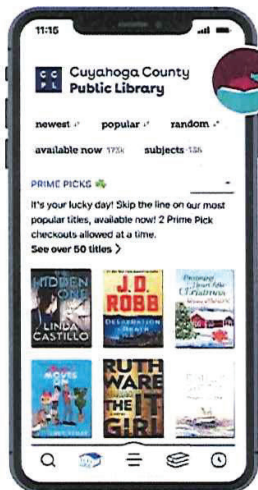


120 N Main St – Groton, SD – (605) 397-8422

Open Monday-Friday 8am-5pm

- Library Cards are FREE to ALL Groton Area Residents!
- Offer a variety of books, magazines, audiobooks and DVDs!
- Offer printing, copying, faxing and scanning services!
- Computer Lab, laptops and tablets available for public use!
- Now offering e-books and audiobooks with the FREE OverDrive/Libby App!

Discover new reads on Libby, the free app from your local library that allows you to borrow ebooks, audiobooks & more on your phone or tablet.



Why you'll love Libby:

- Quick and easy setup! Just follow the prompts to start reading
- A unified bookshelf for all your loans and holds
- Unlimited custom tags to categorize books however you'd like
- Push notifications so you never miss a thing, including available holds
- Easily find the next book in a series
- Preferences to only see the content you like
- More ways to listen on the go with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto

With the classic OverDrive app being discontinued soon, it's time to read on Libby. The award-winning Libby app by OverDrive offers a fresh, easy-to-use design with access to the same great titles from your library.



Visit overdrive.com/libby to get started with Libby today!



Summer Storytime EVERY Thursday in the Summer June-August!
'1,000 Books Before Kindergarten Program' is NOW available!

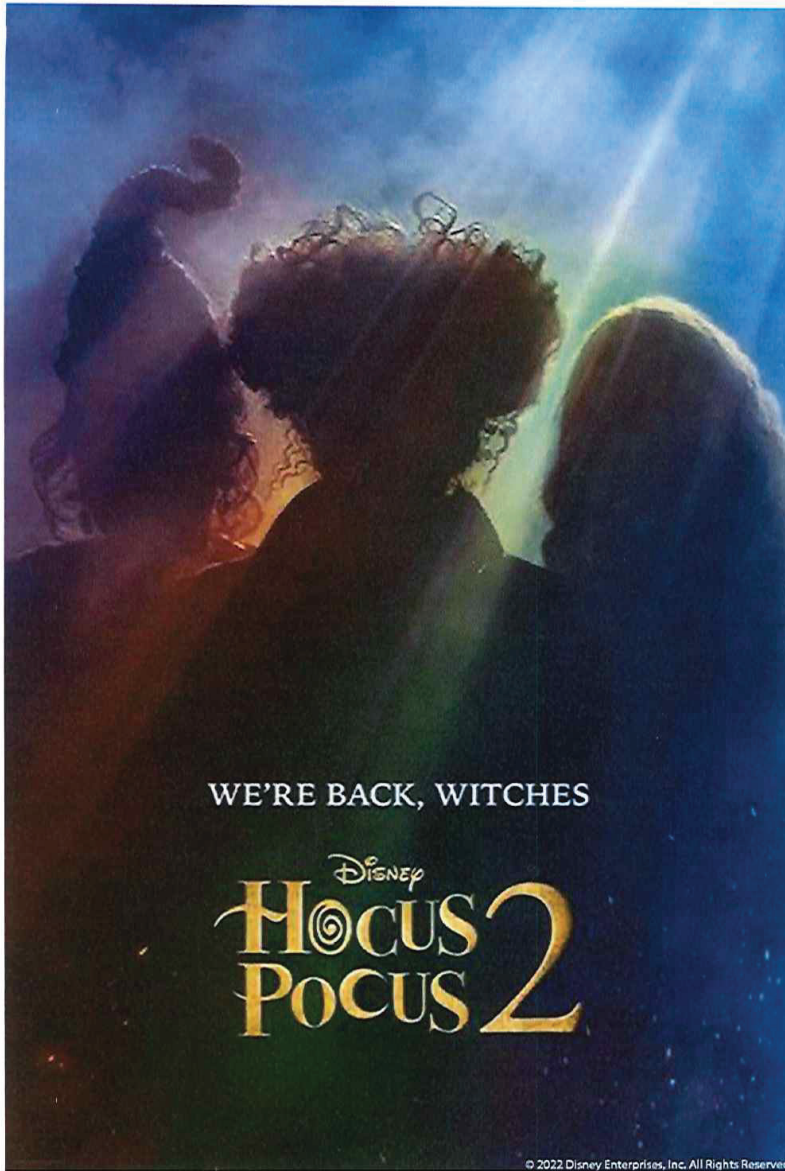
FREE UPCOMING EVENTS: *MUST PREREGISTER BY CALLING LIBRARY*

Saturday, October 28th 3pm-5pm: Halloween Movie Event: Featuring Hocus Pocus 2!

Saturday, December 9th 11am-1pm: Christmas Movie Event (TBA). Jungle Pizza will be served!

Groton Daily Independent

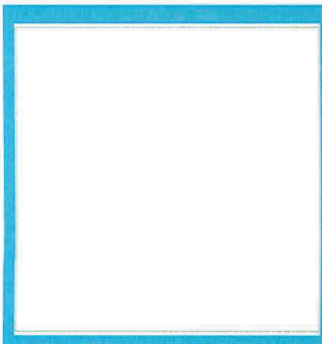
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Groton Wage Memorial
Library
120 N Main Street
Saturday, October 28th
3:00pm-5:00pm

FREE ADMISSION!
MUST preregister! Limited
seating available!
Questions/Register
(605) 397-8422

FREE SNACKS provided by
Dacotah Bank!



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Lincoln County Fatal Crash

What: Single-vehicle crash
Where: 274th St./SD Hwy.17, 4 miles north of Lennox, S.D.
When: 3:44 p.m., Monday, October 23, 2023

Driver No. 1: Male, 14, Minor injuries
Vehicle No. 1: 2013 GMC Yukon
Passenger No. 1: Female, 10, Minor injuries
Passenger No. 2: Female, 6, Serious Non-Life-Threatening injuries
Passenger No. 3: Male, 4, Fatal injuries

LINCOLN COUNTY, S.D.- One person died this afternoon in a one-vehicle crash 4 miles north of Lennox, S.D.

The names of the persons involved have not been released pending notification of family members.

Preliminary crash information indicates a 2013 GMC Yukon was driving westbound on 274th St. which is a gravel road. For an unknown reason, just east of SD Hwy 17, the Yukon left the road (274th St.) to the right, entered a ditch, and rolled coming to rest on its roof.

The 14-year-old male driver of the GMC Yukon sustained minor injuries.
He was not wearing a seatbelt.

There were three passengers.

The 10-year-old female passenger sustained minor injuries.
She was wearing a seatbelt.

The 6-year-old female passenger sustained serious non-life-threatening injuries. She was taken by ambulance to Sanford Hospital.
Seatbelt use is under investigation.

The 4-year-old male passenger sustained fatal injuries.
He was not wearing a seatbelt.

South Dakota's Highway Patrol is investigating the crash. All information released so far is only preliminary.

The Highway Patrol is an agency of the South Dakota Department of Public Safety.

The Life of Bruce Sippel



Bruce Harry Sippel passed away October 21, 2023 doing what he loved, helping with harvest at a cousin's farm.

Services for Bruce Sippel, 66, of Groton will be 2:00 p.m., Thursday, October 26th at St. John's Lutheran Church, Groton. Rev. Jeremy Yeadon will officiate. Burial will follow in Union Cemetery, Groton under the direction of Paetznick-Garness Funeral Chapel, Groton. Services will be broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM and will also be broadcast on GDIRADIO at 89.3 FM, available within 1 mile of Groton.

Visitation will be held at St. John's Lutheran Church on Wednesday, October 25th from 5-7 p.m. with a prayer service to follow at 7:00 p.m.

Bruce Harry Sippel was born on January 23, 1957, the only child of Harry Albert and Lorraine Mae (Johnson) Sippel in Aberdeen. Bruce attended school in Groton, graduating in 1975. He furthered his education at the Tech School in Wahpeton, ND, earning a degree in Auto Mechanics. On April 12, 1980 he was united in marriage to his forever love, Victoria Luce and together they were blessed with 4 children. They raised their children together on his childhood homestead. Bruce worked for several places over the years, including Trail Chevrolet, Darrel's Sinclair and farming with Lee Thompson and Pharis Farms. He later hauled gravel for Hanlon Brothers and had just retired in early October from Agtegra (formerly Wheat Growers) where he had been a semi-driver for 16 years.

Bruce was a member of St. John's Lutheran Church, James Valley Threshing Association and the James Valley Tractor Club. He was active on the Fireman's Board, where he served as Secretary, Grain Bin Rescue Team at Agtegra and the Township Board. His loved spending time with his grandchildren, anything involving tractors, driving semi and visiting with everyone--he never met a stranger!

Celebrating his life is his wife of 43 years, Vickie, children, Emily (Jesse) Wolff of Mankato, MN, Felicia (James) Ethridge of Redfield, SD, Adam (Bailey) Sippel of Groton, SD, six grandchildren: Michael, Kaylee and Claire Wolff, Jaxon, Haven and Natalie Ethridge and several fur-grandbabies. He is also survived by brother-in-law, Steve (Teresa) Luce of Powder Springs, GA, sister-in-law Kathy (Bryan) Evjen of Standburg, SD, sister-in-law, Sherrie (Dean) VanZee of St. Lawrence, SD and many close friends and relatives.

Preceding him in death were his parents, his daughter, Lisa Sippel, his close friend and cousin, Marty Sippel, his brother-in-law, John Luce and many aunts and uncles.

Honorary Casketbearers will be members of the James Valley Tractor Club and James Valley Threshing Association.

Casketbearers will be Marc Sippel, Anthony Sippel, Craig Weber, Dean VanZee, Jerome Akin and Shaun Rickett.

That's Life/Tony Bender

Autumn stirs memories

It's 6 a.m. on a Monday, and I'm cornered. I've got a bunch of newspapers waiting for a column. Most weeks I have an idea pretty much cooked in my head, but sometimes it doesn't hit me until a couple of hours before deadline. There's a lot to be said for "sleeping on it." So, much of the time, I just wake up with a plan. Sometimes my muse flies past the window snickering, "You're on your own."

And here we are.

Most writers are alike. If it weren't for deadlines, nothing would ever get written, and when it comes to books, authors will hold those pages like a favorite blankie because we're just not sure it's ready. Fear of commitment.

Of all the writers in the world, statistically, 100% of them have plans to write the "great American novel." When I sat down to write one decades ago on a clunky MS-DOS-based dinosaur, I realized after a few chapters that I was woefully unprepared. I needed to write regularly. I needed to polish my skills. I realized that the reason I hadn't started on my magnum opus is because no one was making me do it. So I tricked myself by signing up some papers for a weekly column. It was cheaper than hiring someone to twist my arm. Unfortunately, that plan is working this morning. Did I mention I'm cornered?

Fog is shrouding the landscape; gold, red, and brown leaves cover a ragged lawn that should have had one more mowing. It's my favorite season but my affection is waning. Fall hangs like the Sword of Damocles, and soon it will fall in the guise of snow. A few years ago we had a blizzard on October 10, so every day we get past that point, feels like a victory. If we make it past Thanksgiving, and all the corn is in the bin, well, it's like hitting the lottery.

Like all prairie dwellers, I play the same game each autumn. How long can I hold out before I turn the furnace on? It's amazing how long a sweater, a lap blanket, and a warm pug snoring at your feet can allow you to hold out. But it was 67F in the house this morning, and since it's hard to type under a blanket, I relented. Last year, I held out until it was in the mid 50s. I've gotten soft.

Some of my fall activities have evolved, some remain the same. I never lived and breathed hunting—

I've taken out more deer with my bumper than with my rifle—but the camaraderie of the hunt was the payoff. One learned never to wear your best hat, however. If the birds were elusive, and the boys got bored, someone might sweep the cap off your head, toss it up and blast it. Extremely air-conditioned hats were so common at Duff's Bar in Westport, they didn't even merit a comment. A raised eyebrow and the understanding that the victim had been hunting with Woof Dog.

I don't know what the limit on caps is.

I was the oldest of six kids, so the family budget was tight. Allowance wasn't a thing. So, I delivered newspapers, shoveled snow in the winter, mowed lawns in the summer, and raked lawns in the fall.

Alice Humphries lived next to us in a tiny house where she gave piano lessons to get by. Across the street in a beautiful home built of field stones lived the imperial Sena Glover, a benevolent dictator, who counted on my sisters to get her library books, and me to rake the leaves and shovel the walk, even though she never went anywhere.

Sena's trees produced a prolific amount of leaves in a large yard. After I'd raked Alice's modest acreage, I tackled Sena's house. It was a long, tedious afternoon resulting in a long line of bulging plastic bags. When I was done, I knocked on the door and was granted entrance.

"How much do I owe you?"

"Whatever you think it's worth, Sena."

"Well, what did Alice pay you?" (She was competitive.)

"I think that should be between Alice and me."

"How much!?"

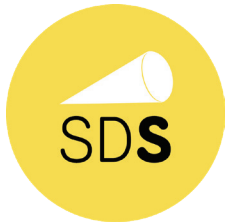
"Well, I guess it worked out to \$5 an hour." (An outrageous sum in those days.)

"I'm not paying that!!!"

Still, it was a pretty good haul.

I haven't raked a leaf for years. I don't miss it. I do miss those old gals, though. I hadn't realized until now that I think of them annually when the autumn leaves surrender.

© Tony Bender, 2023



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Legislative Research Council director resigns

BY: JOHN HULT - OCTOBER 23, 2023 5:27 PM

The South Dakota Legislature's Executive Board accepted the resignation of the state's Legislative Research Council (LRC) director on Monday.

Reed Holwegner, a McLaughlin native, was appointed director in the spring of 2020 after several years working in a similar office in Kansas. In an interview with the National Conference of State Legislatures published in January of 2022, Holwegner said he'd covered 16 sessions in Kansas and eight in South Dakota, the latter of which included a stint with the LRC in Pierre in the early 2000s.

LRC staffers collect data on behalf of legislators and help them write bills. They also produce white papers on the impact of bills that become law, and cost estimates for proposals that will impact the state budget.

Lawmakers on the committee voted to accept Holwegner's resignation in a short public session after a closed-door meeting, then voted to appoint LRC Chief Research and Legal Analyst John McCullough as interim director.

Shortly thereafter, Sen. Lee Schoenbeck, R-Watertown, moved to "authorize the executive committee to work out any severance termination issues" with the former director. House Speaker Hugh Bartels, R-Watertown, called a vote on the motion "to work out termination severance and other issues," which received unanimous support from the executive board.

There was no discussion on the reason or reasons for Holwegner's resignation.

A call to Holwegner was not immediately returned on Monday.

McCullough takes the helm at the LRC less than three months before the start of the 2024 legislative session.

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

Thune visits Israel, says 'organizations like Hamas have to be eliminated'

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - OCTOBER 23, 2023 3:36 PM

U.S. Sen. John Thune, R-South Dakota, said during a weekend visit to Israel that if the world wants peace, "organizations like Hamas have to be eliminated."

Israel has been at war with Hamas, a militant Palestinian group in the Gaza Strip, since surprise attacks by Hamas on Oct. 7.

Thune joined a bipartisan group of Senate colleagues in Tel Aviv to show support for Israel.

"The barbarism we saw on October the 7th cannot stand," Thune said. "Israel has a right to exist. Israel has a right to defend itself, and not be threatened on a daily basis, right on its border, by a terror organization whose main mission is wiping it off the map."

Israel has retaliated against Hamas, cutting off supplies to Gaza and conducting air strikes.

"The only people who benefit from Hamas' activities in this region are their enablers in Tehran," Thune said. Tehran is the capital of Iran, whose government has supported Hamas.

President Biden and congressional leaders have pledged support for Israel, a U.S. ally.

The Biden administration asked Congress last week to approve nearly \$106 billion in new funding for military and humanitarian aid to Israel, Ukraine and other countries, and to improve security on the U.S.-Mexico border.

The funding request includes \$92.2 billion for national security, including \$14.3 billion for Israel. The

request would fund \$10.6 billion to provide Israel air and missile defense support and to restock Defense Department supplies, and \$3.7 billion for State Department foreign military financing and embassy support.

White House National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said the U.S. assistance would also help "civilians impacted by the war in Gaza, who have nothing to do with Hamas and are suffering greatly as well."

— States Newsroom's D.C. Bureau contributed to this report.

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.

U.S. House Republicans mull eight new candidates for speaker in advance of votes

SD's Rep. Johnson calls last four weeks 'incredibly damaging'

BY: ARIANA FIGUEROA AND ASHLEY MURRAY - OCTOBER 23, 2023 9:52 PM

WASHINGTON — U.S. House Republicans Monday night gathered behind closed doors to hear the pitches of eight candidates for the speaker's gavel, as the chamber approaches three weeks without a speaker.

Monday's nearly three-hour meeting was meant to produce a leading GOP candidate, so that when Republicans vote behind closed doors on Tuesday, there will be a new speaker designate who can be brought to the House floor for a vote. Ohio's Rep. Jim Jordan on Friday was cast aside by the conference after he failed to gain enough support on the floor.

"We heard tonight, a really strong vision laid out by each of them. Everybody has a lot of the same goals in mind," said Majority Leader Steve Scalise of Louisiana, who was briefly the nominee two weeks ago before bowing out. "We need to get moving on our agenda."

The eight Republican men who have declared their candidacy for speaker of the House are Reps. Gary Palmer of Alabama, Byron Donalds of Florida, Austin Scott of Georgia, Mike Johnson of Louisiana, Jack Bergman of Michigan, Tom Emmer of Minnesota, Kevin Hern of Oklahoma and Pete Sessions of Texas.

Rep. Dan Meuser of Pennsylvania declared himself a candidate on Sunday but he dropped out of the race during the closed-door meeting Monday night.

"I came in late. I have other commitments that I want to adhere to, largely leading President Trump's campaign in Pennsylvania. And, we have great candidates," Meuser said.

Meuser said former President Donald Trump supported his decision to exit the speaker race "based upon the situations at hand and with some of the other members that are in so as we get a strong speaker," but stopped short of endorsing another candidate.

Majority vote

According to House Republican rules, any nominee must get a majority of the vote of the conference in the closed-door meeting. Because there are eight candidates, it could take a while before Republicans rally around a speaker designate.

If none receives a majority during the first ballot, the candidate with the least votes would be removed from the ballot and another round of voting would begin.

With 221 House Republicans, a candidate needs the support of 111 to become the speaker nominee in the conference vote. However, the nominee would likely need 217 votes on the floor if all Republicans are present and voting.

The GOP's speaker designate can only afford to lose a handful of votes on the House floor, as all Democrats are expected to vote for House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries of New York for speaker.

Any Republican speaker will have to walk a delicate line negotiating with the White House and Democratic-controlled Senate on must-pass legislation like an annual defense bill, and aggressively fundraise for the Republican Party as well as protect vulnerable Republicans and expand their slim House majority in the

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upcoming 2024 elections.

The next speaker of the House will also be tasked with an upcoming Nov. 17 deadline on government funding, as well as nearly \$106 billion in supplemental aid request from the White House for Israel, Ukraine and U.S. border security.

Unity pledge

House Republicans have been unable to pick a successful candidate to replace former Speaker Kevin McCarthy, who was ousted in early October by eight Republicans voting with all Democrats. Following his removal, McCarthy said he would not run again, but has said the decision is ultimately up to the Republican conference.

Jordan brought his candidacy to the floor three times. With each vote, he continued to lose GOP support. Following Jordan's losses, House Republicans held a secret vote in which Jordan failed to garner enough votes from his fellow GOP lawmakers to continue as the nominee.

The first speaker candidate, Louisiana's Scalise, never called a floor vote, stepping down a day after he was selected as the nominee after he realized he couldn't reach the 217 votes needed to become speaker.

To avoid continued struggles to come together in unity behind a candidate, Nebraska Rep. Mike Flood unveiled a unity pledge Friday, urging his Republican colleagues to sign and give their support for the speaker designate, regardless of who becomes the candidate.

"I wanted to start this process, this election, with us understanding that we have to be unified to the end of it," Flood said to reporters.

As of Monday night, all eight candidates signed the pledge, Flood said.

Damage to GOP

Several Republicans, such as Reps. Dusty Johnson of South Dakota and Ralph Norman of South Carolina, said that Republicans ultimately have to pick a speaker because the last few weeks have been damaging to the party.

"Hopefully, small groups of members who have stood in the way of us getting work done in the past understand how incredibly damaging the last four weeks have been," Johnson said, referring to the beginning of the month when McCarthy was removed.

Norman argued that "there is no perfect speaker," and that Republicans need to unify behind a candidate. Following the Republican candidate forum, House Rules Committee Chair Tom Cole of Oklahoma said that all the candidates were good and that he hopes a new speaker can be picked quickly.

Rep. Brett Guthrie of Kentucky said he supports Flood's unity pledge.

"I think anybody asking for our votes should commit to supporting whoever wins. That's the only way we're gonna govern, if we become a majority," Guthrie said on his way into the candidate forum.

"Anybody who gets 51% at the end of the day, we walk across the street, hold hands and vote for that person ... And that's the way it should be," said Rep. Vern Buchanan of Florida.

Rep. Matt Gaetz, who sparked McCarthy's ouster earlier this month, said he thought the candidates did "a great job" in the forum.

"I was most heartened by those who wanted to advance single-subject spending bills rather than link disparate issues like Ukraine funding and Israel funding together," the Florida Republican said.

Rep. Victoria Spartz of Indiana said she's pleased to see "competition and vibrancy."

"I think it's important for us to govern, but I truly think it's a good process. This institution is so broken, so only crisis maybe will help, for the American people, to make us work," Spartz said.

She added that she has "concerns" with some of the candidates, not specifying who, but said she wanted "to give people a chance."

Whichever candidate gets a majority of the vote will coordinate with North Carolina's Patrick McHenry, who has been serving as speaker pro tempore, to bring the nomination to the floor for a vote.

McCarthy handpicked him for the role under a procedure established in the wake of the 9/11 attacks to ensure continuity of government. It's unclear what legislative authority McHenry has, and House Republicans last week punted on adopting a resolution that would temporarily allow McHenry to move legislation.

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A range of experience

Of all the candidates, Minnesota's Emmer is the highest ranking Republican.

Emmer has the advantage of already being a member of House GOP leadership and party insider, with connections as a former National Republican Congressional Committee head.

But Emmer, the current House majority whip, is facing criticism from the far right. Emmer did not support Trump's false 2020 election victory claims, and voted to certify the Electoral College count.

However, he did sign onto a lawsuit out of Texas challenging election results in swing states that Biden won in 2020.

Like Emmer, Palmer also sits in a GOP House leadership position, as chair of an advisory committee known as the Republican Policy Committee.

Hern, who at one point owned two dozen McDonald's franchises, chairs the Republican Study Committee, a body that has promoted a conservative agenda among House GOP lawmakers since the 1970s.

Hern said the closed-door meeting had a good turnout and he was happy to answer questions from his GOP colleagues. He said they asked "questions of concern about where our conference currently is and where it needs to go."

Donalds, who belongs to the far-right House Freedom Caucus, received floor nominations for speaker last week and in January during the course of more than a dozen ballots that finally declared McCarthy the winner.

Donalds, first elected in 2020, defended his legislative record, pointing to his time as a Florida state legislator.

"I know the legislative process," he said. "I've worked with our colleagues up here to get a lot of policies done."

Donalds added that he spoke with Trump but did not answer reporters who asked if the former president would endorse him.

"The president is going to watch us do our process," he said. "I think he's gonna be happy with who's gonna be the next speaker of the House."

The former president did endorse Jordan, who co-founded the House Freedom Caucus, and struggled to win the support of more centrist Republicans. Members who voted against Jordan also received death threats and other threatening messages from Jordan allies.

Scott briefly challenged Jordan but lost an internal secret ballot on Oct. 13. Scott is vice chairman of the House Committee on Agriculture, where he chairs the panel on General Farm Commodities, Risk Management, and Credit. He is also the co-chair of the Congressional Crop Insurance Caucus.

He said that many of the candidates running are similar and "there are no personal differences between us."

"It's just a matter of being able to do things and get the ball rolling in the right direction," Scott said. "I'm committed to a House that operates and functions."

Scott added that he did not specify a plan for government spending to Republicans, but "laid out a path forward for us as a conference."

Johnson chairs the House Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Constitution and Limited Government, and chairs the Congressional Long Range Strike Caucus.

Bergman, a former lieutenant general in the U.S. Marines and commercial airline pilot, does not hold a leadership position on any committees or caucuses, but he does sit on three House committees, including Armed Services and Veterans Affairs.

Sessions, who has served in Congress for over two decades and was a former head of the NRCC, currently sits on two House committees.

"We're gonna find out what people think," Sessions said about whether Republicans would support his nomination.

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

Ashley Murray covers the nation's capital as a senior reporter for States Newsroom. Her coverage areas include domestic policy and appropriations.

Mysterious monument for mountain man Hugh Glass has been moved to Nebraska

BY: PAUL HAMMEL - OCTOBER 23, 2023 6:00 PM

BANCROFT, Nebraska — A 3,200-pound concrete “altar of courage,” holding a mysterious and possibly valuable literary manuscript, found a new home Monday in this northeast Nebraska farm town.

With the help of a powerful forklift, the monument, built by poet/author John Neihardt and others to honor the heroic crawl of mountain man Hugh Glass after he was mauled by a bear and left for dead in 1823, was lowered into the sod at the John Neihardt State Historic Site here.

Neihardt wrote an epic poem about Glass’ ordeal called “The Song of Hugh Glass” and issued a challenge a century ago to the students from modern-day Wayne State College who helped build the concrete obelisk: Return in 100 years and open up a time capsule inside the monument and celebrate like the mountain men of old.

Neihardt, in 1923, wrote that he left an “original manuscript” in the metal time capsule, among other items, and buried it in the concrete. But no one’s quite sure what the original work might be.

Neihardt’s grandson, Robin, said it’s possible the manuscript might be the original, handwritten version of “The Song of Hugh Glass.”

“That would be something,” Robin Neihardt said, as family members worked to level the monument in its new home.

“We don’t know what’s in there,” he added. “It might be an old sandwich and a burnt cigar.”

Tim Anderson, who wrote a recent biography of Neihardt, “Lonesome Dreamer,” said that it’s possible it could be the original poem.

Anderson said that Neihardt — the poet laureate in perpetuity of Nebraska — wrote his early works in longhand, though the poem was probably typed before it was sent, along with five other poems, to the publisher of “The Cycle of The West,” Neihardt’s decades-long effort to document the heroes of the western frontier and the displacement of the Plains Indians.

The Hugh Glass monument, featuring a bronze plaque entitled an “altar of courage,” was erected near the site of the mauling, at the confluence of two branches of the Grand River near Lemmon, South Dakota. It was erected on the ranch of Otto Weinkauff, a German immigrant who lent his homemade cement mixer for the task.

The epic crawl, which was depicted in the recent Hollywood movie, “The Revenant,” starring Leonardo DiCaprio, ended with Glass surviving horrific wounds and forgiving the colleagues who left him behind to die.

Who owned the monument?

Fast forward to today. The process of opening the monument to retrieve the time capsule and manuscript was complicated by determining who really owned the block of concrete and who really controlled the task of opening it. The property on which it sat is part of a U.S. Bureau of Reclamation reservoir and is located on land leased for the state park.

Ultimately, it was determined that the Neihardt family owned the monument, and the family determined that the old monument would make a nice addition to the historic site dedicated to their grandfather in Nebraska. The site includes the renovated shack where Neihardt wrote “The Song of Hugh Glass” and other early works, a museum/library, and a sculpture depicting Neihardt’s interviews of a Lakota medicine man that led to the book, “Black Elk Speaks.”

The Neihardt family, who hauled the monument from Lemmon to Bancroft on Sunday in a trailer, came armed with drills, chisels, a metal detector and a “borescope” — a rope-like, lighted camera that can be slid inside a drilled hole to see what’s inside.

“I asked a historian and he said make sure you have a borescope,” said Alexis Petri, a great-granddaughter of Neihardt from Kansas City, Missouri.

Coralie Hughes, a granddaughter of Neihardt, said that officials in South Dakota had been very helpful and had already dug up the monument, laid it on a pallet and wrapped it in plastic film by the time she and her husband made the drive from Indiana.

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"We've been so blessed," Hughes said. "The weather was perfect up there and the weather is perfect here — it could be so bad in late October."

A grandson, Robin Neihardt, a classical guitarist and home designer from Arizona, used to own a lumber yard in Herman, Nebraska, and has some experience with breaking into concrete.

He pointed to lines on the concrete monument where it appeared that one pour of the home-mixed concrete ended, and the pour of another batch began.

"Come here and look," he told a group of about a dozen onlookers Monday morning.

Robin Neihardt speculated that the time capsule, possibly inside a wooden cavity, was buried in the monument toward the bottom, after the first pour of concrete. He said he planned to remove the bronze plaque, use the metal detector to discern the location of the metal time capsule, and then drill a hole to see what the borescope might reveal.

'Wait and see'

"We're just going to wait and see," Hughes said.

There's some concern about the condition of what's inside the time capsule.

Arlen Saunders, a grandson of Weinkauff, said it was flooded at its original site along the Grand River before being moved to make way for the reservoir. Then it was flooded again, according to Joseph Wiexelman, a now-retired Wayne State history professor who led students up to the Lemmon site in June.

Hughes said the family hopes to discern what's inside later Monday and then repair the monument so it can be displayed at the Neihardt Center. Revealing what's inside will remain a family secret until April 27, when the Neihardt Foundation holds its annual spring conference at Wayne State College.

Some kind of interpretive sign is planned to be erected in Lemmon to preserve the story of the century-old monument.

EDITOR'S NOTE: When he's not writing for the Examiner, Paul Hammel is vice president of the Neihardt Foundation, which seeks to support the work of the Neihardt Center in Bancroft, a History Nebraska facility.

Paul Hammel is the senior reporter for the Nebraska Examiner. He has covered the Nebraska Legislature and Nebraska state government for decades. He started his career reporting for the Omaha Sun and was named editor of the Papillion Times in 1982. He later worked as a sports enterprise reporter at the Lincoln Journal-Star. He joined the Omaha World-Herald in 1990, working as a legislative reporter, then roving state reporter and finally Lincoln bureau chief. Paul has won awards from organizations including Great Plains Journalism, the Associated Press and Suburban Newspapers of America. A native of Ralston, Nebraska, he is vice president of the John G. Neihardt Foundation and secretary of the Nebraska Hop Growers.

Eight Republicans are running for U.S. House speaker. Here's your guide to the field.

BY: JACOB FISCHLER AND SAMANTHA DIETEL - OCTOBER 23, 2023 5:39 PM

WASHINGTON — The eight Republican candidates to be speaker of the U.S. House were set to make their cases to their colleagues Monday evening, as the House Republican Conference restarted its process to choose a candidate.

Nine had filed on Sunday to run for speaker but on Monday night Pennsylvania Rep. Dan Meuser dropped out, after announcing just the day before he would make a bid for the post. Meuser cited his promise to run former President Donald Trump's campaign in Pennsylvania as one of the reasons he exited the race.

The chamber has been in turmoil since eight Republicans voted with all House Democrats to remove Speaker Kevin McCarthy from the post last month. The conference has been unable to unite behind a single candidate.

After Monday night's speeches, the conference was expected to hold a vote or likely multiple votes behind closed doors Tuesday to try to settle on a nominee, then bring that nominee to the floor.

With the exception of Minnesota's Tom Emmer, the House majority whip, the group is not particularly well known outside of their districts.

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Six of the eight voted to object to certifying the results of the 2020 presidential election, in line with Trump's position.

With Republicans holding only a 221-212 majority, any would-be speaker will need near-unanimous support from Republicans — a tall order for a deeply divided conference largely still loyal to the former president, but with some members in vulnerable seats.

"It's a nearly impossible task," Peter Loge, a professor at the School of Media and Public Affairs at George Washington University, told States Newsroom. "Because you have to be as conservative and angry and election-denying as Matt Gaetz, but as reasonable and a believer in compromise and democratic institutions as the New York moderates. And you can't be both at the same time."

In hopes that Republicans will rally around whoever the party nominates this time, Rep. Mike Flood of Nebraska introduced a "unity pledge" for members to sign. As of Monday afternoon, eight of the nine original candidates — all but Gary Palmer of Alabama — have signed the pledge, according to Flood's office.

"Everyone running for Speaker should sign this," Michigan Republican Jack Bergman, one of the contenders, wrote on X.

Loge said the field can be divided into long-term members with institutionalist tendencies — Emmer and Texas' Pete Sessions, for example — and newer members such as Florida's Byron Donalds, who are more in line with the conference's anti-establishment wing.

The next speaker will immediately face a challenge in passing spending bills or a short-term funding measure to keep the government open past a Nov. 17 deadline, as well as an aid package to Israel and Ukraine amid ongoing wars and a farm bill reauthorization.

States Newsroom put together the guide below to help readers get to know the candidates:

Jack Bergman of Michigan

First elected in 2016, Bergman is a retired U.S. Marine Corps lieutenant general. He sits on the Armed Services, Veterans' Affairs and Budget committees.

He's said his priorities as speaker would include funding the government, especially the military, homeland security and aid to foreign allies.

In announcing his candidacy, Bergman suggested he would stay in the position only through the end of the current Congress,

"We need a leader who shuns permanent power and recognizes the current crisis of leadership," he said.

How he's voted:

Certifying the 2020 election: No

Sept. 30 continuing resolution to keep government open: Yes

Sept. 28 Ukraine aid bill: Yes

Who's supporting him: Other members of Michigan's House GOP delegation. They are John James, John Moolenaar, Tim Walberg and Lisa McClain.

Byron Donalds of Florida

A member of the hard-right House Freedom Caucus, Donalds is a favorite of the Trump wing of the party. He voted against certifying the 2020 election and has said as recently as July that President Joe Biden is not legitimate.

First elected in 2020, Donalds, 44, is the youngest to join the field and has been in the House for the shortest time.

He has said his priorities would be to improve border security and "responsibly" pass funding bills.

He sits on the Financial Services Committee. Before coming to Congress, he worked in the finance industry.

The only non-white Republican candidate for speaker, Donalds would be the first Black speaker.

How he's voted:

Certifying the 2020 election: No

Sept. 30 continuing resolution to keep government open: Did not vote

Sept. 28 Ukraine aid bill: No

Who's supporting him: fellow Florida Republicans Carlos Gimenez, Mario Diaz-Balart and Mike Waltz.

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Tom Emmer of Minnesota

Currently the No. 3 House Republican, Emmer is considered by some the frontrunner for the top spot and has McCarthy's endorsement.

In an appearance on NBC News' "Meet the Press" on Sunday, McCarthy praised Emmer's experience as part of his leadership team.

"He sets himself, head and shoulders, above all those others who want to run," McCarthy said.

Emmer also developed relationships across the conference when he chaired the House Republican campaign operation in the 2020 and 2022 cycles.

Emmer is one of only two candidates for speaker who voted consistently to certify the 2020 election results. That could make his path harder with the most fervent Trump supporters in the House GOP.

Emmer posted a video of Trump on Monday saying that he had "always gotten along" with Emmer and saying he would stay out of the speaker race. Emmer wrote that as speaker he would continue their "strong working relationship."

He won his House seat in 2014 following an unsuccessful run for Minnesota governor.

In his letter to colleagues announcing his candidacy, Emmer highlighted national debt and spending, national security and border security as major issues.

How he's voted:

Certifying the 2020 election: Yes

Sept. 30 continuing resolution to keep government open: Yes

Sept. 28 Ukraine aid bill: Yes

Who's supporting him: McCarthy.

Kevin Hern of Oklahoma

The chair of the conservative House Republican Study Committee, Hern could seek support from budget hawks.

The Institute for Legislative Analysis, a limited-government group, gave Hern the highest marks of any candidate for fiscal and tax issues.

Hern has not been shy about his leadership aspirations. He publicly weighed a run for speaker shortly after McCarthy stepped down, but opted not to join that race. He has said he at one time dreamed of being an astronaut.

In a letter to colleagues, Hern said Congress has not run well for decades, citing the number of unauthorized programs and a lack of regular order for spending bills. He also listed illegal immigration and drug overdose deaths as problems that Congress should address.

Hern won a special election for his House seat in 2018. Hern owns several McDonald's franchises in Oklahoma.

How he's voted:

Certifying the 2020 election: No

Sept. 30 continuing resolution to keep government open: No

Sept. 28 Ukraine aid bill: No

Mike Johnson of Louisiana

As the vice chairman of the House Republican Conference, Johnson is something of an establishment candidate. He's also a senior member of the House Judiciary Committee, which Rep. Jim Jordan, the conference's previous nominee, chairs.

But Johnson also has conservative bonafides, having previously chaired the House Republican Study Committee.

In his letter to colleagues asking for support, Johnson highlighted the national debt, border security, crime and inflation as major issues.

An attorney, Johnson was on Trump's defense team for the former president's Senate impeachment trials in 2019 and 2020.

How he's voted:

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Certifying the 2020 election: No
Sept. 30 continuing resolution to keep government open: No
Sept. 28 Ukraine aid bill: No

Gary Palmer of Alabama

Palmer called for GOP unity in his speaker candidacy announcement.

"There is a distinct difference between our vision for a prosperous and strong America and the vision of the Democrats that has done so much harm," Palmer said in his statement on X.

Palmer said he "decided to step forward" as a candidate "to do what I can to put our differences behind us and unite Republicans behind a clear path forward, so we can do our job for the benefit of the American people."

His statement also cited the concerns American families have about the cost of living, child safety, crime in urban areas, fentanyl, federal bankruptcy and national security.

Palmer was first elected to the House in 2014.

Palmer serves as the chairman of the House Republican Policy Committee. He also sits on the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, as well as the House Committee on Oversight and Accountability.

He led the Alabama Policy Institute for 24 years before joining Congress. The Alabama Policy Institute is a conservative think tank with core values surrounding free markets, limited government and "strong families," according to the organization's website.

How he's voted:

Certifying the 2020 election: No
Sept. 30 continuing resolution to keep government open: No
Sept. 28 Ukraine aid bill: No

Austin Scott of Georgia

Scott received 81 votes when he ran for speaker earlier this month against Jordan, an Ohio Republican.

"If we are going to be the majority we need to act like the majority, and that means we have to do the right things the right way," Scott said in his announcement Friday that he will run again for speaker of the House following Jordan's withdrawal.

He is one of only two members to vote consistently to certify the 2020 presidential election.

Scott has been a House member since 2011.

Scott sits on the House Armed Services Committee and the Agriculture Committee. He chairs the House Agriculture Subcommittee on General Farm Commodities, Risk Management and Credit.

How he's voted:

Certifying the 2020 election: Yes
Sept. 30 continuing resolution to keep government open: Yes
Sept. 28 Ukraine aid bill: Yes

Pete Sessions of Texas

Sessions has been in Congress the longest of any of the candidates.

Sessions was initially elected to represent the eastern Dallas district in 1999 and continued to serve until he lost to Rep. Colin Allred in 2018. Sessions was then reelected in 2020, this time to represent the district surrounding Waco.

He chaired the National Republican Congressional Committee from 2009 to 2012. Republicans regained control of the House in 2010. He also chaired the House Rules Committee from 2013 to 2019.

Sessions voted against the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act last year, as well as the codification of same-sex marriage.

In 2019, Sessions was caught in a scandal when he was referred to in an indictment of two men charged with violating campaign finance rules.

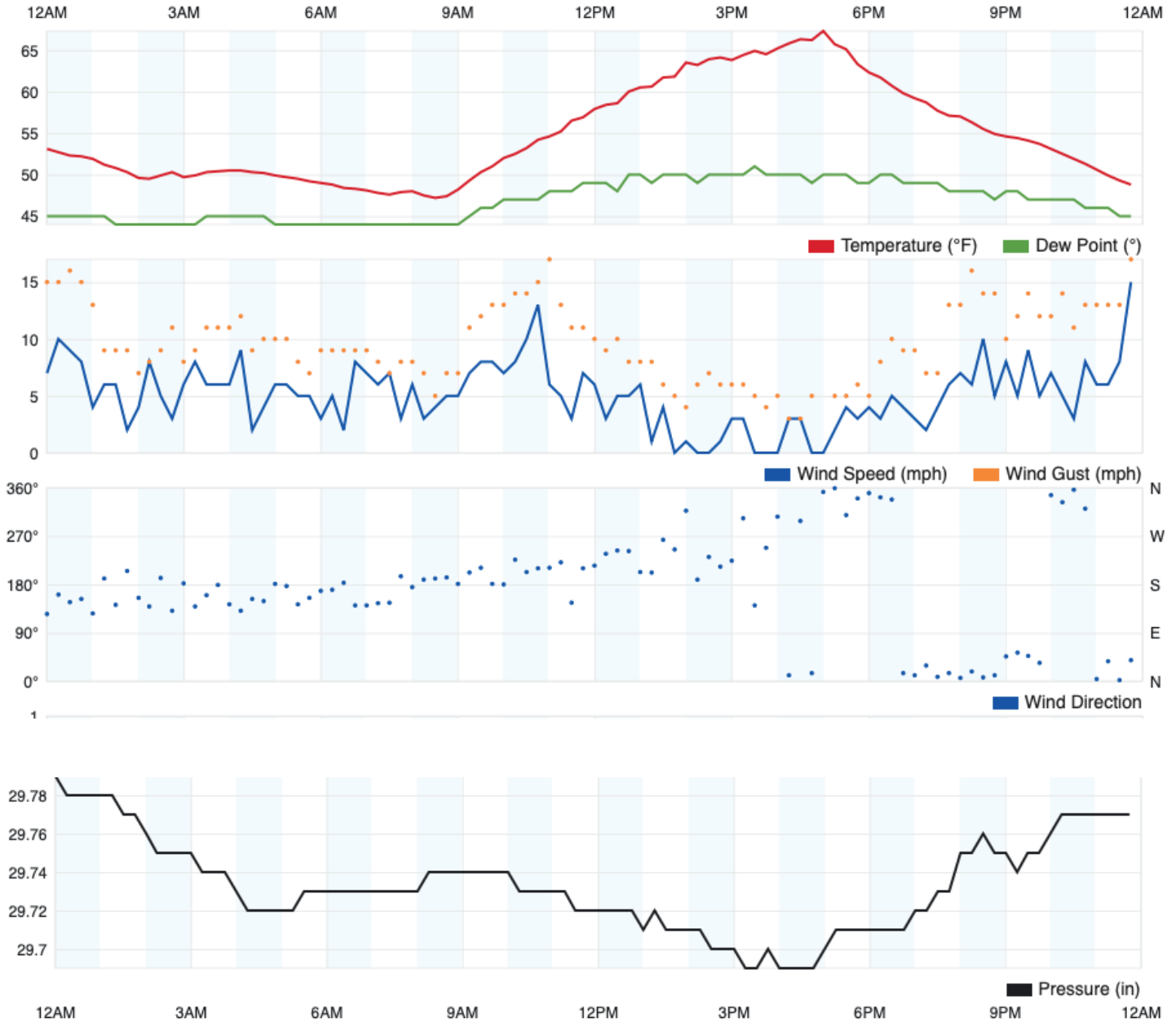
How he's voted:

Certifying the 2020 election: No
Sept. 30 continuing resolution to keep government open: Yes
Sept. 28 Ukraine aid bill: Yes

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Tue Oct 24	Wed Oct 25	Thu Oct 26	Fri Oct 27	Sat Oct 28	Sun Oct 29	Mon Oct 30
50°F	57°F	46°F	34°F	31°F	31°F	31°F
40°F	39°F	25°F	20°F	18°F	13°F	19°F
NNE 12 MPH	E 10 MPH	NNE 18 MPH 60%	NW 17 MPH 70%	NNE 11 MPH 20%	NNW 13 MPH	W 15 MPH



Turning Colder Through The Week

October 24, 2023

4:17 AM

Accumulating Possible Snow Thursday night (30-85% chance), greatest in north central SD

Overview



Temperatures will be near normal Tuesday and Wednesday before falling on Thursday

Temperatures will be well below normal (highs in the 30s) Friday through Halloween



First Accumulating Snow Possible Thursday night

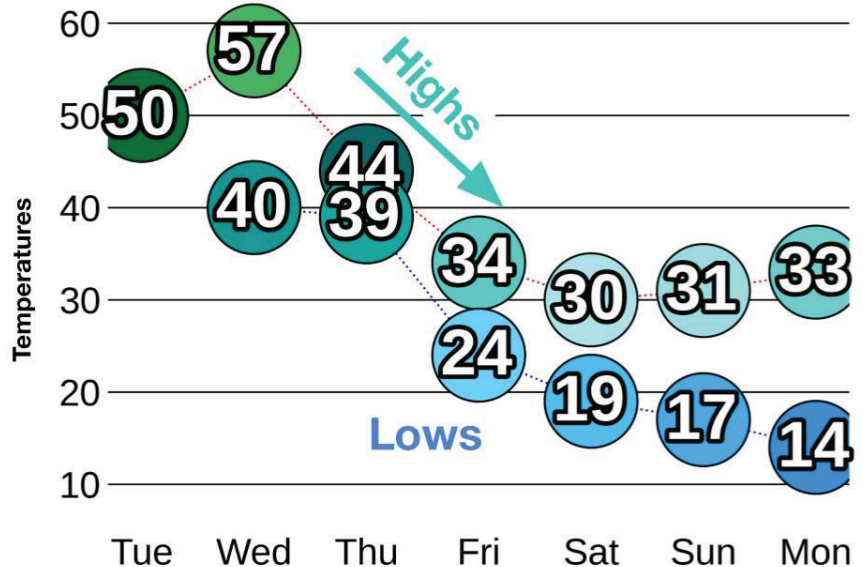
Rain and drizzle will gradually transition to snow as temperatures fall Thursday into Thursday night



What should you do?

Those with travel plans to North Dakota tonight through the end of the week should prepare for winter driving conditions and monitor the latest forecasts

Temperature Trend into the Weekend



Much colder air will move into the region on Thursday, leading to rain and drizzle to transition to snow by Thursday night. High temperatures will be in the 30s starting on Friday and continue through Halloween.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 67 °F at 5:00 PM

Low Temp: 47 °F at 8:34 AM

Wind: 18 mph at 12:31 AM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 10 hours, 34 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 83 in 1989

Record Low: 6 in 1917

Average High: 55

Average Low: 30

Average Precip in Oct.: 1.77

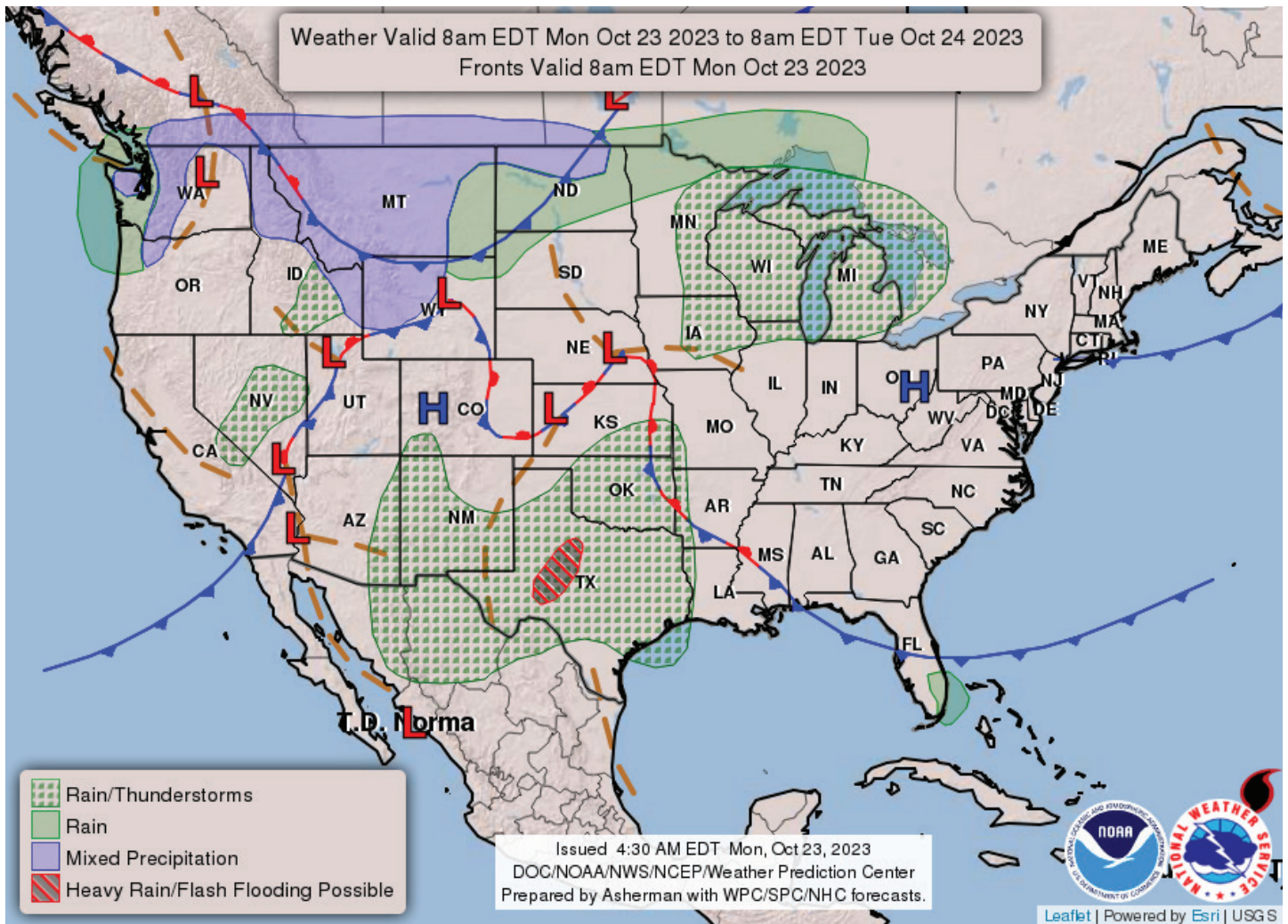
Precip to date in Oct.: 0.89

Average Precip to date: 20.10

Precip Year to Date: 22.66

Sunset Tonight: 6:33:53 PM

Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:00:38 AM



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Today in Weather History

October 24, 1989: A storm in the western U.S. produced up to three feet of snow in the mountains around Lake Tahoe, with 21 inches reported at Donner Summit. Thunderstorms in northern California produced 3.36 inches of rain at Redding to establish a 24 hour record for October, and bring their rainfall total for the month to a record 5.11 inches. Chiefly "Indian Summer" type weather prevailed across the rest of the nation. Fifteen cities in the north central U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date as readings soared into the 70s and 80s. Record highs included 74 degrees at International Falls, Minnesota and 86 degrees at Yankton, South Dakota. Record highs also occurred across parts of central and northeast South Dakota. The record highs were 80 degrees at Mobridge and Sisseton, 83 degrees at Aberdeen, and 84 degrees at Pierre.

1785 - A four day rain swelled the Merrimack River in New Hampshire and Massachusetts to the greatest height of record causing extensive damage to bridges and mills. (David Ludlum)

1878: The Gale of 1878 was an intense Category 2 hurricane that was active between October 18 and October 25. It caused extensive damage from Cuba to New England. Believed to be the strongest storm to hit the Washington - Baltimore region since hurricane records began in 1851.

1878 - A hurricane produced widespread damage across North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. At Philadelphia PA, the hurricane was the worst of record. (David Ludlum)

1937 - A snow squall in Buffalo NY tied up traffic in six inches of slush. (David Ludlum)

1947 - The Bar Harbor holocaust occurred in Maine when forest fires consumed homes and a medical research institute. The fires claimed 17 lives, and caused thirty million dollars damage. (David Ludlum)

1951 - Sacramento, CA, reported a barometric pressure of 29.42 inches, to establish a record for October. (The Weather Channel)

1969 - Unseasonably cold air gripped the northeastern U.S. Lows of 10 degrees at Concord, NH, and 6 degrees at Albany NY established October records. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Snow fell across northeast Minnesota and northwest Wisconsin overnight, with five inches reported at Poplar Lake MN and Gunflint Trail MN. Thunderstorm rains caused flash flooding in south central Arizona, with street flooding reported around Las Vegas NV. Strong northwesterly winds gusting to 50 mph downed some trees and power lines in western Pennsylvania and the northern panhandle of West Virginia. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Strong winds circulating around a deep low pressure centered produced snow squalls in the Great Lakes Region, with six inches reported at Ironwood MI. Wind gusts to 80 mph were reported at State College PA. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - A storm in the western U.S. produced up to three feet of snow in the mountains around Lake Tahoe, with 21 inches reported at Donner Summit. Thunderstorms in northern California produced 3.36 inches of rain at Redding to establish a 24 hour record for October, and bring their rainfall total for the month to a record 5.11 inches. Chiefly "Indian Summer" type weather prevailed across the rest of the nation. Fifteen cities in the north central U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date as readings soared into the 70s and 80s. Record highs included 74 degrees at International Falls MN, and 86 degrees at Yankton SD. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2005 - Hurricane Wilma reached the U.S. coastline near Everglades City in Florida with maximum sustained winds near 120 mph. The hurricane accelerated across south Florida and the Miami/Fort Lauderdale area, exiting the coast later the same day. There were 10 fatalities in Florida, and nearly 6 million people lost power, the most widespread power outage in Florida history. Preliminary estimates of insured losses in Florida were over \$6 billion, while uninsured losses were over \$12 billion.

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Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

UNLIMITED!

George was well known and highly esteemed by the members of his church. By the world's definition of success, he would be considered one who "had it made." He had a comfortable life, his children settled into good careers, and was always available to serve the Lord whenever someone called upon him. He was well known for his faithfulness and fruitfulness.

Once he was asked, "What's the source of your energy? How can you do so much for so many and never seem to tire?"

After thinking for a moment he replied, "It's this - with Christ within me, and working through me, I refuse to accept any human limitations others may try to put on me."

Paul once said, "I keep working toward that day when I will finally be all that Christ Jesus saved me for and wants me to be." What a goal for each of us to adopt: being what Jesus saved us for and wants us to be! And, if it is in His plan for us, He can accomplish it through us!

When we fully realize and accept all that He has called us to be and to do, our lives will have no "human limitations." Often when an opportunity to serve Him comes our way, our first response is to question our abilities or availability. But, He never calls us to do anything that is beyond our potential. If He asks us to do "it" He will empower us to accomplish "it!" Trust Him.

Prayer: Lord, may we have an unlimited view of what You would have us to be and do. Free us of self-imposed limitations that cause fear and failure. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us. Philippians 3:12-14



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

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2023 Community Events

- 01/29/2023 Groton Robotics Pancake Feed, 10am-1pm, Community Center
- 01/29/2023 85th Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm (Last Sunday of January)
- 01/31/2023-02/03/2023 Lion's Club Prom & Formal Dress Consignment Drop Off 6-9pm, Community Center
- 02/04/2023-02/05/2023 Lion's Club Prom & Formal Dress Consignment Sale 1-5pm, Community Center
- 02/25/2023 Littles and Me, Art Making 10-11:30am, Wage Memorial Library
- 03/25/2023 Spring Vendor Fair, 10am-3pm, Community Center
- 04/01/2023 Dueling Duo Baseball/Softball Fundraiser at the Legion Post #39 6-11:30pm
- 04/06/2023 Groton Career Development Event
- 04/08/2023 Lion's Club Easter Egg Hunt 10am Sharp at the City Park (Saturday a week before Easter)
- 04/22/2023 Firemen's Spring Social at the Fire Station 7pm-12:30am (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
- 04/23/2023 Princess Prom 4:30-8pm (Sunday after GHS Prom)
- 05/06/2023 Lion's Club Spring Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm (1st Saturday in May)
- 05/29/2023 Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services (Memorial Day)
- 06/16/2023 SDSU Alumni and Friends Golf Tournament
- 06/17/2023 Groton Triathlon
- 07/04/2023 Couples Firecracker Golf Tournament
- 07/09/2023 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm (Sunday Mid-July)
- 07/26/2023 GGA Burger Fundraiser Lunch at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 08/04/2023 Wine on Nine 6pm
- 08/10/2023 Family Fun Fest, 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
- 08/11/2023 GHS Basketball Golf Tournament
- 09/08/2023 Family Fun Fest 3:30-5:30pm
- 09/09/2023 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm
- 09/09-10/2023 Groton Airport Fly-In/Drive-In, Groton Municipal Airport
- 09/10/2023 Couples Sunflower Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 10am
- 09/10/2023 Emmanuel Lutheran Church Sunday School Rally 9:00am
- 09/10/2023 7th Annual Doggie Day at the Swimming Pool 4-6pm
- 09/15/2023 Homecoming Parade
- 10/13/2023 Lake Region Marching Band Festival 10am
- 10/14/2023 Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm
- 10/31/2023 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm
- 10/31/2023 United Methodist Church Trunk or Treat 5:30-7pm
- 11/05/2023 St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church Fall Dinner, 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.
- 11/11/2023 Groton American Legion Annual Turkey Party 6:30 pm.
- 11/23/2023 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm
- 12/02/2023 Tour of Homes, Live & Silent Auctions at Olive Grove Golf Course 4pm-close
- 12/09/2023 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services 9-11am

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The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:
10.20.23

7 29 36 49 61 22

MegaPlier: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$114,000,000

NEXT 17 Hrs 20 Mins 37
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
10.23.23

21 27 28 32 51 2

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$3,100,000

NEXT 1 Days 16 Hrs 35
DRAW: Mins 37 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
10.23.23

11 13 15 22 44 2

TOP PRIZE:
\$7,000/week

NEXT 16 Hrs 50 Mins 37
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
10.21.23

9 15 22 23 29

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$31,000

NEXT 1 Days 16 Hrs 50
DRAW: Mins 37 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
10.23.23

25 44 45 50 58 13

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT 1 Days 17 Hrs 19
DRAW: Mins 38 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
10.23.23

18 21 25 46 64 21

Power Play: 5x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$100,000,000

NEXT 1 Days 17 Hrs 19
DRAW: Mins 37 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

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News from the  Associated Press

Monday's Scores

The Associated Press

PREP VOLLEYBALL

Aberdeen Christian def. Britton-Hecla, 23-25, 26-24, 25-21, 22-25, 15-5

Aberdeen Roncalli def. Deuel, 25-9, 25-16, 25-18

Alcester-Hudson def. Viborg-Hurley, 25-15, 25-20, 25-21

Baltic def. Canton, 25-21, 25-22, 25-19

Bridgewater-Emery def. Centerville, 18-25, 25-16, 25-19, 25-22

Canistota def. Freeman, 26-24, 25-18, 25-13

Chester def. Arlington, 25-13, 26-24, 25-13

Clark-Willow Lake def. Sisseton, 21-25, 25-22, 14-25, 25-19, 15-9

Dakota Valley def. Tea Area, 26-24, 24-26, 25-20, 25-14

Elkton-Lake Benton def. Estelline/Hendricks, 25-19, 25-18, 25-19

Ethan def. Tripp-Delmont/Armour, 25-21, 25-13, 25-9

Faith def. Newell, 25-10, 25-18, 25-23

Faulkton def. Groton Area, 25-23, 25-12, 25-21

Garretson def. Sioux Valley, 21-25, 23-25, 25-15, 25-22, 15-6

Gayville-Volin High School def. Avon, 15-25, 25-23, 22-25, 25-14, 15-13

Gregory def. Andes Central-Dakota Christian, 25-23, 25-21, 25-15

Hanson def. McCook Central-Montrose, 25-21, 25-20, 25-17

Harding County def. Bison, 25-17, 25-19, 25-17

Herreid/Selby Area def. Ipswich, 25-11, 25-21, 25-23

Hot Springs def. Oelrichs, 25-15, 25-17, 25-19

Kimball/White Lake def. Colome, 25-12, 25-13, 25-11

Lemmon High School def. Dupree, 11-25, 25-22, 25-11, 25-17

Leola-Frederick High School def. Sunshine Bible Academy, 25-9, 25-17, 25-12

Lyman def. Chamberlain, 20-25, 18-25, 25-12, 25-19, 15-9

McLaughlin def. McIntosh, 21-25, 25-22, 25-18, 25-12

Northwestern def. North Central Co-Op, 25-11, 25-13, 25-20

Pine Ridge def. Edgemont, 15-25, 25-23, 25-21, 25-20

Platte-Geddes def. Winner, 3-1

Sioux Falls Christian def. Lennox, 25-23, 25-12, 22-25, 25-19

Sioux Falls Lutheran def. Marty Indian, 3-0

Todd County def. Red Cloud, 17-25, 25-15, 25-20, 17-25, 15-9

Vermillion def. Parker, 25-14, 25-22, 25-7

Wagner def. Burke, 25-22, 25-17, 25-11

Waverly-South Shore def. Tiospa Zina Tribal, 18-25, 16-25, 25-14, 25-18, 15-8

West Central def. Tri-Valley, 25-14, 21-25, 25-11, 21-25, 15-7

White River def. St. Francis Indian, 25-10, 25-19, 25-8

Wolsey-Wessington def. Redfield, 25-14, 25-9, 25-19

Some high school volleyball scores provided by Scorestream.com, <https://scorestream.com/>

New deadly bird flu cases reported in Iowa, joining 3 other states as disease resurfaces

By HANNAH FINGERHUT Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — Two commercial turkey farms in Iowa have been hit by the reemerging highly pathogenic bird flu, causing about 100,000 birds to be killed to prevent the disease from spreading.

The Iowa Department of Agriculture reported the infected commercial poultry flocks within weeks of a turkey farm in South Dakota and one in Utah reporting the first outbreaks in the U.S. since April, raising concerns that more would follow.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture shows 12 commercial flocks in South Dakota, Utah and Minnesota have been affected in October, totaling more than 500,000 birds.

Bird flu last year cost U.S. poultry producers nearly 59 million birds across 47 states, including egg-laying chickens and turkeys and chickens raised for meat, making it the country's deadliest outbreak ever, according to USDA figures. The outbreak caused spikes in egg and turkey prices for consumers and cost the government over \$660 million.

Iowa was the hardest-hit state last year, with nearly 16 million birds lost, but there hadn't been a case reported in the state since March.

Iowa's department reported Friday that one commercial turkey facility of about 50,000 birds in Buena Vista County was affected. Another facility of about 47,500 turkeys in neighboring Pocahontas County was confirmed Monday.

In Guthrie County, about 50 backyard birds were also infected, the department said.

Before last week, the only reports of bird flu in recent months in the U.S. were sporadic appearances in backyard flocks or among wild birds such as ducks, geese and eagles. While wild birds often show no symptoms of avian influenza, infections in them are a concern to the poultry industry as migration season gets underway. Migrating birds can spread the disease to vulnerable commercial flocks.

Bird flu infections are relatively rare in humans and aren't considered a food safety risk. But as it hits other species, including some mammals, scientists fear the virus could evolve to spread more easily among people. Cambodia this week reported its third human death from bird flu this year.

Live updates | Israel escalates its bombardment in the Gaza Strip

By The Associated Press undefined

Israel is escalating its bombardment of targets in the Gaza Strip ahead of an expected ground invasion against Hamas militants. The war is rapidly raising the death toll in Gaza, and the U.S. fears the fighting could spark a wider conflict in the region.

Gaza's 2.3 million people have been running out of food, water and medicine since Israel sealed off the territory following the Hamas attack on Israeli towns on Oct. 7. The aid convoys allowed into Gaza so far have carried a fraction of what's needed, and the U.N. said distribution will have to stop if there's no fuel for the trucks.

The war, in its 18th day Tuesday, is the deadliest of five Gaza wars for both sides. The Hamas-run Health Ministry said at least 5,087 Palestinians have been killed and 15,270 wounded. In the occupied West Bank, 96 Palestinians have been killed and 1,650 wounded in violence and Israeli raids since Oct. 7.

More than 1,400 people in Israel have been killed, mostly civilians who died in the initial Hamas rampage. In addition, 222 people including foreigners were believed captured by Hamas during the incursion and taken into Gaza, Israel's military has said. Four of those have been released.

Currently:

1. The U.S. Department of Defense is assisting Israel in its war planning by sending military advisers
2. 40 years after bombing that killed Americans in Beirut, US troops again deploy east of Mediterranean
3. The war is giving Israel's Iron Dome missile defense system its toughest challenge yet
4. Release of more hostages gives some hope to families of others abducted in the attack on Israel
5. Find more of AP's coverage at <https://apnews.com/hub/israel-hamas-war>

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Here's what's happening in the latest Israel-Hamas war:

RELEASED HOSTAGE SAYS SHE WAS BEATEN WITH STICKS WHEN KIDNAPPED

TEL AVIV — Yocheved Lifshitz, an 85-year-old woman released by Hamas, told reporters Tuesday that the militants beat her with sticks, bruising her ribs and making it hard to breathe, as they kidnapped her during their attack on towns in southern Israel on Oct. 7.

They drove her into Gaza, then forced her to walk several kilometers (miles) on wet ground to reach a network of tunnels that looked like a spider web, she said. Lifshitz is one of only four hostages to be released — and the first to speak publicly — of the more than 220 believed held by Hamas.

She said the people assigned to guard her “told us they are people who believe in the Quran and wouldn't hurt us.”

Lifshitz, whose husband remains a hostage, said that after she and four other people were taken into a room, they were treated well, conditions were clean, and they received medical care, including medication. They ate one meal a day of cheese and cucumber, she said, adding that her captors ate the same.

ISRAELI AIR STRIKES ON HOMES KILL 28 PEOPLE IN RAFAH, INTERIOR MINISTRY SAYS

KHAN YOUNIS, Gaza Strip — Israeli fighter jets pounded several homes overnight in the city of Rafah in southern Gaza, killing at least 28 people, according to the Hamas-run Interior Ministry. The ministry reported other airstrikes across the besieged territory which it said left dozens dead.

In Khan Younis, an Israeli airstrike hit a building in a refugee area late Tuesday morning, leaving many casualties. An Associated Press journalist saw ambulances bringing two dead and two wounded people from the strike.

The Palestinian Red Crescent said the airstrike in densely populated Khan Younis hit a house near its hospital, Al-Amal. It said the airstrike caused panic at the hospital and its shelter center, which houses 4,000 people who fled their homes in northern Gaza because of the bombardments.

Tens of thousands of Palestinians have moved to southern Gaza, including Rafah, which borders Egypt, after Israel told civilians to flee southward ahead of an expected ground invasion. However, Israel has continued its attacks across Gaza's southern areas.

UN SAYS SOME AID TO GAZA NOT USABLE BECAUSE OF WATER, FUEL SHORTAGES

GENEVA — The U.N. aid agency for Palestinians, UNRWA, says some of the aid trucked into Gaza is “not very usable,” such as lentils and rice that require increasingly scarce fresh water and fuel to be cooked.

UNRWA spokesperson Tamira Alrifai said a total of 54 aid trucks have entered Gaza over the last several days, a “trickle” compared to the 500-odd truck deliveries, carrying both aid and commercial goods, a day in times of relative peace.

“My colleagues told me that in one of the shipments over the last couple of days, we received boxes of rice and lentils -- donated very, very generously,” she said from Amman by video call to a U.N. briefing in Geneva. “But for people to cook lentils and rice, they need water and gas. And therefore, these kinds of supplies — while very generous and well-intended — are not very usable.”

Alrifai praised the “very spontaneous giving and donations” flown into Egypt for delivery to Gaza through the Rafah crossing, from various countries, “especially Arab countries.” She called for coordination with the Egyptian Red Crescent and “very, very clear guidance from the humanitarian groups that are on the ground.”

“Of course, everything is being closely coordinated with my U.N. colleagues and with U.N. agencies. But we will need to get better as a consortium of humanitarians in sending very explicit lists of what is most needed,” Alrifai said.

She said U.N. negotiators were “very, very far away” from getting the full ability to provide needed aid to Gaza.

QATAR'S RULING EMIR SAYS ISRAEL SHOULDN'T HAVE A 'GREEN LIGHT' TO KILL

JERUSALEM — The ruling emir of the small Middle East nation of Qatar, which hosts an office of Hamas and has served as an intermediary in hostage negotiations, said Tuesday that it “is untenable for Israel to be given an unconditional green light and free license to kill.”

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The comments by Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani to Qatar's consultative Shura Council come as negotiations continue to free more of the approximately 200 hostages Hamas has held since its Oct. 7 assault on Israel. About 1,400 people in Israel died in the assault, while the Hamas-run Health Ministry in the Gaza Strip says over 5,000 people have died in Israeli airstrikes since then.

"We are against attacks on innocent civilians, regardless of their nationality, by any party," Sheikh Tamim said. "But we do not accept double standards, nor do we accept acting as if the Palestinian children's lives are not worth to be reckoned with, as though they are faceless or nameless."

He added: "We are saying enough is enough. It is untenable for Israel to be given an unconditional green light and free license to kill, nor it is tenable to continue ignoring the reality of occupation, siege and settlement. It should not be allowed in our time to use cutting off water and preventing medicine and food as weapons against an entire population."

Sheikh Tamim renewed calls for a Palestinian state based on Israel's 1967 borders, with east Jerusalem as its capital, something long called for by other Arab nations, including Saudi Arabia.

Qatar had a trade office for Israel from 1996 until 2000, but broke ties in 2009 over an Israel-Hamas war at the time. Under arrangements stemming from past cease-fire understandings with Israel, the gas-rich emirate of Qatar has paid the salaries of civil servants in the Gaza Strip, provided direct cash transfers to poor families and offered other kinds of humanitarian aid.

ISRAELI AIRSTRIKE HITS RESIDENTIAL BUILDING, KILLING 32 PEOPLE, SURVIVORS SAY

KHAN YOUNIS, Gaza Strip — An overnight Israeli airstrike hit a 4-story residential building in the city of Khan Younis, killing at least 32 people and wounding scores of others, according to survivors.

The fatalities included 13 from the Saqallah family in the Qarraha area, east of Khan Younis, said Ammar al-Butta, a relative who survived the airstrike. He said about 100 people, including his family and many others, had sheltered there.

The victims were taken to Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis. An Associated Press video showed about a dozen bodies in white body bags lying on the ground outside the main gate of the hospital. One woman was weeping while another tried to console her.

"We were hosting our relatives from Gaza and the northern cities," al-Butta said, speaking from the hospital. "They were sheltering at our home because we thought that our area would be safe. But apparently there is no safe place in Gaza."

Osama al-Bashity, another relative, said they couldn't recognize the dead. "We recognized them through the clothes they wore, who wore these trousers, or that T-shirt," he said. "They turned into pieces."

FRENCH PRESIDENT MACRON EXPRESSES SUPPORT, URGES RELEASE OF HOSTAGES

JERUSALEM -- French President Emmanuel Macron said during a meeting with Israeli President Isaac Herzog in Jerusalem on Tuesday that he came to Israel "to express our support and solidarity and share your pain."

After arriving at Tel Aviv airport, Macron met with the families of 18 Franco-Israeli people who have been killed, are being held hostage or are missing.

"The first objective we should have today is the release of all hostages without any distinction because this is an awful crime to play with lives of children, adults, old people, civilians, soldiers," Macron said.

He said he wanted to ensure Israel it is "not left alone in the war against terrorism."

"We will do whatever we can to restore peace, security and stability for your country and the whole region," he added.

French authorities said 30 French nationals were killed in the Oct. 7 attack by Hamas and nine others are missing or are being held hostage.

ISRAEL DELAYS START OF ACADEMIC YEAR

JERUSALEM — The start of the academic year at Israel's universities and colleges has been delayed again, this time by nearly a month, suggesting the country is expecting extended fighting in the Gaza Strip.

The academic year initially had been scheduled to begin Oct. 19. After two previous delays, the Association of University Heads decided that studies won't begin until Dec. 3, Israel Army Radio reported.

15 PALESTINIANS FROM THE SAME FAMILY BURIED IN MASS GRAVE

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip – Fifteen members of the same family were among at least 33 Palestinians buried in a mass grave at a Gaza hospital on Monday after they were killed by Israeli airstrikes.

A harried-looking doctor in green scrubs walked past as bodies in white sheets were loaded into the back of a pickup truck. Men discussed where to fit the shrouded corpse of a small child between two adults.

The bodies were laid to rest side-by-side in a shallow, sandy grave in the courtyard of al-Aqsa Hospital in Deir al-Balah, an ambulance parked nearby. "Bring them all," a gravedigger called out.

Israel said Monday it struck 320 militant targets throughout the besieged Gaza Strip over the previous 24 hours. The military says it does not target civilians. Over 5,000 Palestinians, including some 2,000 minors, have been killed since the war began, Gaza's Health Ministry said.

More than 1,400 people in Israel have been killed — mostly civilians slain during the initial Hamas attack.

ISRAEL MUST PROTECT CIVILIANS IN ITS WAR ON HAMAS, UN INVESTIGATOR SAYS

UNITED NATIONS — A United Nations special investigator said while Hamas' attacks on Israel at a minimum constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity, Israel in its response is required to protect civilians and is banned from targeting schools, hospitals and people fleeing harm.

Fionnuala Ní Aoláin, the special rapporteur on protecting human rights while countering terrorism, said at a U.N. news conference Monday that when these rules of international humanitarian law are breached, "we are also in the territory of war crimes."

She stressed that under the Geneva Conventions governing the conduct of war, it isn't only Israel and Hamas that must respect humanitarian law. Those "with influence" over the parties also have an obligation to ensure the rules of war are respected — and to remind the parties to comply.

Ní Aoláin, a law professor at the University of Minnesota, said Israel should avoid making the same "mistake" the United States did following 9/11, when "egregious and systematic violations of human rights" were committed.

She also echoed U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres's view that Israel's order for 1.1 million people in northern Gaza to move to the south "will have devastating consequences."

Ní Aoláin said she and many others in the U.N. system joined the secretary-general in condemning this, "as well as being clear that the cutting off of water and electricity, which indiscriminately and excessively harm civilians, may constitute a war crime."

Israel increases strikes on Gaza, as two more hostages are freed

By NAJIB JOBAIN, SAMY MAGDY and RAVI NESSMAN Associated Press

RAFAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — Israel escalated its bombardment of targets in the Gaza Strip, the military said Tuesday, ahead of an expected ground invasion against Hamas militants that the U.S. fears could spark a wider conflict in the region, including attacks on American troops.

The stepped-up attacks, and the rapidly rising death toll of thousands killed in Gaza, came as Hamas released two elderly Israeli women who were among the hundreds of hostages it captured during its devastating Oct. 7 attack on towns in southern Israel.

Amid a flurry of diplomatic activity in Israel since the war started, French President Emmanuel Macron arrived in Tel Aviv on Tuesday, meeting with the families of French citizens who were killed or held hostage before heading to talks with top Israeli officials.

He told Israel's President Isaac Herzog that he came "to express our support and solidarity and share your pain" as well as to assure Israel it is "not left alone in the war against terrorism."

Gaza's 2.3 million people have been running out of food, water and medicine since Israel sealed off the territory following the attack. A third small aid convoy entered Gaza on Monday carrying only a tiny fraction of the supplies aid groups say is necessary.

With Israel still barring the entry of fuel, the United Nations said aid distribution would soon grind to a halt when it can no longer fuel trucks inside Gaza. Hospitals overwhelmed by the wounded are struggling to keep generators running to power lifesaving medical equipment and incubators for premature babies.

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On Tuesday, Israel said it had launched 400 airstrikes over the past day, killing Hamas commanders, hitting militants as they were preparing to launch rockets into Israel and striking command centers and a Hamas tunnel shaft. The previous day, Israel reported 320 strikes. The Palestinian official news agency, WAFA, said many of the airstrikes hit residential buildings, some of them in southern Gaza where Israel had told civilians to take shelter.

An overnight strike hit a four-story residential building in the southern city of Khan Younis, killing at least 32 people and wounding scores of others, according to survivors.

The fatalities included 13 from the Saqallah family, said Ammar al-Butta, a relative who survived the airstrike. He said there were about 100 people there, including many who had come from Gaza City, which Israel has ordered civilians to evacuate.

"They were sheltering at our home because we thought that our area would be safe. But apparently there is no safe place in Gaza," he said.

Fifteen members of another family were among at least 33 Palestinians buried Monday in a shallow, sandy mass grave at a Gaza hospital after being killed in Israeli airstrikes.

Israel says it does not target civilians and says Hamas militants are using them as cover for their attacks. Palestinian militants have fired over 7,000 rockets at Israel since the start of the war, Israel said, and Hamas said it fired a new barrage Tuesday morning.

"We continue to attack forcefully in Gaza City and its environs, where Hamas is building up its terrorist infrastructure, where Hamas is arraying its troops," said Israeli military spokesman Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari. He again told Palestinians to head south "for your personal safety."

The U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees said six of its staff were killed in bombings, bringing the number of its workers killed since the war started to 35. The agency said it found shrapnel in two of its facilities from nearby bombings.

The war has killed more than 5,000 Palestinians, including some 2,000 minors and around 1,100 women, the Hamas-run Health Ministry said. That includes the disputed toll from an explosion at a hospital last week. The toll has climbed rapidly in recent days, with the ministry reporting 436 additional deaths in just the last 24 hours.

The fighting has killed more than 1,400 people in Israel — mostly civilians slain during the initial Hamas attack.

On Monday night, the two freed hostages, 85-year-old Yocheved Lifshitz and 79-year-old Nurit Cooper, were taken out of Gaza at the Rafah crossing into Egypt, where they were put into ambulances, according to footage shown on Egyptian TV. The women, along with their husbands, were snatched from their homes in the kibbutz of Nir Oz near the Gaza border. Their husbands, ages 83 and 84, were not released.

"While I cannot put into words the relief that she is now safe, I will remain focused on securing the release of my father and all those — some 200 innocent people — who remain hostages in Gaza," Lifshitz' daughter, Sharone Lifschitz, said in a statement.

Ichilov Hospital in Tel Aviv released photos Tuesday of Lifshitz sitting in an armchair, being wheeled in a wheelchair down a hall, soldiers in tow, and kissing unidentified people.

The women were freed days after an American woman and her teenage daughter. Hamas and other militants in Gaza are believed to have taken roughly 220 people, including an unconfirmed number of foreigners and dual citizens.

Lifschitz, an artist and academic in London who spells her name differently to her parents, told reporters last week that her parents were peace activists, and her father would drive to the Gaza border to take Palestinians to east Jerusalem for medical treatment.

Kindness, she said last week, could somehow save them.

"I grew up, you know, with all these Holocaust stories about how all my uncles' lives were saved because" of acts of kindness, she said.

"Do I want that to be the story here?" she asked. "Yeah."

On Monday, Hamas released a video showing the handover, with militants giving drinks and snacks to the dazed but composed women, and holding their hands as they are walked to Red Cross officials. Just

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before the video ends, Lifshitz reaches back to shake one militant's hand.

Around the same time, Israel's internal security service, Shin Bet, released a recording showing Hamas prisoners — most in clean prison uniforms, but one in a bloody t-shirt and at least one wincing in pain — sitting handcuffed in drab offices talking about the Oct. 7 attack. The men said they were under orders to kill young men, and kidnap women, children and the elderly, and that they'd been promised financial rewards.

The Associated Press could not independently verify either video, and both the hostages and the prisoners could have been acting under duress.

Israel has vowed to destroy Hamas. Iranian-backed fighters around the region are warning of possible escalation, including the targeting of U.S. forces deployed in the Mideast, if a ground offensive is launched.

The U.S. has told Iranian-backed Hezbollah in Lebanon and other groups not to join the fight. Israel and Hezbollah have traded fire almost daily across the Israel-Lebanon border, and Israeli warplanes have struck targets in Syria, Lebanon and the occupied West Bank in recent days.

National Security Council spokesman John Kirby said there has been an uptick in rocket and drone attacks by Iranian-backed militias on U.S. troops in Iraq and Syria, and the U.S. was "deeply concerned about the possibility for any significant escalation" in the coming days.

He said U.S. officials were having "active conversations" with Israeli counterparts about the potential ramifications of escalated military action.

The U.S. advised Israeli officials that delaying a ground offensive would give Washington more time to work with regional mediators on the release of more hostages, according to a U.S. official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were authorized to reveal sensitive negotiations.

At least 1.4 million Palestinians in Gaza have fled their homes, and nearly 580,000 of them are sheltering in U.N.-run schools and shelters, the U.N. said Monday.

Gaza has oil markets on edge. That could build more urgency to shift to renewables, IEA head says

By DAVID McHUGH AP Business Writer

FRANKFURT, Germany (AP) — Tensions from the war in Gaza could help accelerate the move away from planet-warming fossil fuels like oil and gas and toward renewable energy, electric cars and heat pumps — similar to how sharp increases in the price of oil during the 1970s unleashed efforts to conserve fuel, the head of the International Energy Agency said.

"Today we are again facing a crisis in the Middle East that could once again shock oil markets," said IEA Executive Director Fatih Birol. That comes on top of the stress on energy markets from Russia's cutoff of natural gas to Europe over its invasion of Ukraine, he said.

"Put these two things together, and no one can convince me that oil and gas are safe and secure energy choices for countries or consumers," Birol told The Associated Press in an interview ahead of the publication Tuesday of the IEA's annual world energy outlook, which analyzes the global picture of energy supply and demand.

"This could further accelerate the energy transition around the world," with renewable sources like wind or solar offering a "long lasting solution" to energy security issues as well as climate change, he said.

The attack on Israel by the militant organization Hamas and the ensuing Israel military operations has raised fears of a wider Mideast conflict. So far oil price rises have been relatively moderate. International benchmark Brent crude traded at \$90.17 per barrel Tuesday, up from around \$84 on the eve of the Hamas attack. So far the fighting has not led to a supply interruption.

Fossil fuel prices are down from 2022 peaks, but "markets are tense and volatile," said the IEA in the report.

"Some of the immediate pressures from the global energy crisis have eased, but energy markets, geopolitics, and the global economy are unsettled and the risk of further disruption is ever present," it said.

Birol pointed out that there was "a major government response" to the energy supply concerns that

arose 50 years ago from the Arab oil embargo imposed during the 1973 Yom Kippur war.

It sent oil prices nearly 300% higher and led to the founding of the IEA in 1974 to help shape a collective response to the disruption. That was followed by the 1978 Iranian revolution, which added another price shock. At the time, the solutions included the rollout of nuclear power plants and the imposition of mileage standards for cars.

"This time, we have all of the available technologies," Birol said. "We have solar, wind, nuclear power, electric cars. They will extend significantly around the world and it will be an additional boost to the energy transition."

He pointed to the rapid rollout of electric cars, saying that in 2020 only one in 25 cars was electric but in 2023 it was one in five. Meanwhile the share of fossil fuels in electricity generation has fallen from 70% ten years ago to 60% today and should reach 40% by 2030, he said.

Concerted international action at the upcoming United Nations climate conference is needed to expand use of clean technologies and find new ways of financing the massive investment that is needed, especially in the developing world, the IEA said.

The report also pointed to a shifting role for China, once a leading source of increased demand for energy due to rapid industrialization and growth. The report said energy demand there could peak as soon as 2025 amid slowing growth and "impressive" shifts to clean energy like solar and nuclear.

The IEA estimates that demand for fossil fuels will peak before 2030 under current policies but says governments will have to increase their efforts to speed up the transition if the world is to meet the global goal of keeping warming below 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit).

Is Israel's Iron Dome missile defense system ironclad?

By JULIA FRANKEL Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Since Israel activated the Iron Dome in 2011, the cutting-edge rocket-defense system has intercepted thousands of rockets fired from the Gaza Strip.

The system has given residents a sense of security, and Israelis can often be seen watching the projectiles flying through the skies and destroying their targets overhead.

But the current war with Gaza's militant Hamas group might be its stiffest challenge yet.

In just two weeks, Hamas has fired 7,000 rockets toward Israel, according to the Israeli military. That is more than any of the previous four wars fought between Israel and Hamas since the militant group seized power in Gaza in 2007.

On Oct. 7 alone, the first day of fighting, Hamas launched at least 2,000 rockets, according to data from West Point. Lebanon's militant Hezbollah group has also fired hundreds of rockets along Israel's northern front since the fighting began.

Most of the rockets have been intercepted. But some have managed to get through, killing at least 11 people and hitting buildings as far away as Tel Aviv, according to Israeli officials.

Here is a look at the accomplishments — and limitations — of the Iron Dome.

HOW DOES THE IRON DOME WORK?

The Iron Dome is a series of batteries that use radars to detect incoming short-range rockets and intercept them.

Each battery has three or four launchers, 20 missiles, and a radar, according to Raytheon, the U.S. defense giant that co-produces the system with Israel's Rafael Defense Systems.

Once the radar detects a rocket, the system determines whether the rocket is headed toward a populated area.

If so, it launches a missile to intercept and destroy the rocket. If the system determines the rocket is headed to an open area or into the sea, it is allowed to land, thus conserving missiles. According to the military, all interceptions occur in Israeli airspace.

The military declined to comment on how many Iron Dome batteries are currently deployed. But as of 2021, Israel had 10 batteries scattered around the country, each able to defend a territory of 60 square

miles (155 square kilometers), according to Raytheon.

The Iron Dome is part of a larger multi-layer air-defense system that includes the Arrow, which intercepts long-range ballistic missiles, and also David's Sling, which intercepts medium-range missiles such as those believed to be possessed by Hezbollah in Lebanon.

Both systems, like the Iron Dome, were jointly developed with the United States. Israel is also developing a laser-based system called the Iron Beam that it says will be able to intercept rockets and other short-range threats at a fraction of the cost of the Iron Dome. Israel says that system, developed with U.S. funding, has not yet been deployed.

HOW ACCURATE IS THE IRON DOME?

It is roughly 90% effective, according to Rafael.

But it can get overwhelmed if a mass barrage of rockets is fired, allowing some to slip through.

While it has performed well so far, the risk could be raised if Hezbollah enters the war. Hezbollah has an estimated 150,000 rockets and missiles.

HOW EXPENSIVE IS THE SYSTEM?

Each missile costs an estimated \$40,000 to \$50,000, according to the Institute for National Security Studies, a Tel Aviv think tank.

The U.S. has invested heavily in the system, helping with development costs and replenishing it during times of fighting.

President Joe Biden has said he will ask Congress for \$14.3 billion in military aid for Israel. The majority of that would help with air and missile defense systems, according to the White House.

"We're surging additional military assistance, including ammunition and interceptors to replenish Iron Dome," Biden said.

An off-duty pilot is accused of trying to shut down the engines of a Horizon Air jet in midflight

By DAVID KOENIG and CLAIRE RUSH Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — An off-duty pilot riding in the extra seat in the cockpit of a Horizon Air passenger jet tried to shut down the engines in midflight and had to be subdued by the crew, a pilot flying the plane told air traffic controllers.

Authorities in Oregon identified the man as Joseph David Emerson, 44. He was being held Monday on 83 counts each of attempted murder and reckless endangerment and one count of endangering an aircraft, according to the Multnomah County Sheriff's Office.

The San Francisco-bound flight on Sunday diverted to Portland, Oregon, where Emerson was taken into custody by officers from the Port of Portland. He is to be arraigned Tuesday.

Seattle-based Alaska Airlines, which owns Horizon, a regional carrier, did not name Emerson, but said Monday that the threat was posed by one of its pilots who was off duty but authorized to occupy the cockpit jump seat.

The airline said in a statement that the captain and co-pilot "quickly responded, engine power was not lost and the crew secured the aircraft without incident." Alaska said no weapons were involved.

One of the pilots told air traffic controllers that the man who posed the threat had been removed from the cockpit and was in handcuffs in the back of the plane.

"We've got the guy that tried to shut the engines down out of the cockpit. And he — doesn't sound like he's causing any issue in the back right now, and I think he's subdued," one of the pilots said on audio captured by LiveATC.net. "Other than that, we want law enforcement as soon as we get on the ground and parked."

Bailey Beck, who was on the flight, described to SFGate the confusion and stress experienced by passengers.

"It was really bizarre because there was no overheard commotion to alert the passengers. The man

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walked from the cockpit to the back of the plane by himself, where he was then handcuffed to a railing and didn't make any disturbance from the rear," Beck told the news outlet.

Sunday's incident occurred on a Horizon Air Embraer 175 carrying 80 passengers, including children 2 or younger, and four crewmembers. The plane left Everett, Washington, at 5:23 p.m. local time and landed in Portland an hour later. Alaska said passengers continued on to San Francisco on a later flight.

The FBI office in Portland said it was investigating.

The Federal Aviation Administration, in an alert to airlines, said a jump seat passenger tried to disable the engines by deploying the engine fire-suppression system. The agency said it was helping law enforcement investigations, but declined further comment.

FAA records indicate Emerson has a valid license to fly airline planes. Property records show he owns a house in Pleasant Hill, California, about 30 miles (50 kilometers) east of San Francisco. The Associated Press tried but couldn't reach family members.

The Multnomah County sheriff's office, district attorney's office and public defender's office didn't immediately respond to inquiries about whether Emerson had an attorney to comment on his behalf.

John Cox, a retired airline pilot who is now a safety consultant, said it isn't hard to activate the fire handles on a jet. "You want them to be accessible in case of an engine fire," he said.

He said it's possible to restart the engines once the fire handles are returned to their normal position.

"This is an extremely rare event. In 53 years, I have never heard of a jump seat rider attempting to shut down engines," Cox said. He said the third pilot can be invaluable in cases where a crew must deal with a complex situation.

Jeffrey Price, an aviation-security expert at Metropolitan University of Denver, said airlines must approve people who sit in the jump seat, but the pilots working the flight can deny access.

The vetting of crew members is based on trust, he said, and the last line of defense is what happened on the Horizon plane — "crew members physically preventing someone from taking over the flight controls. The system worked, fortunately."

Airlines use the third seat to accommodate pilots who need to get in position to fly a later flight, avoiding the need to bump a passenger off the plane. Many U.S. carriers will let pilots from other airlines occupy the third seat, at least on domestic flights.

"For the amount of times this type of incident happens — almost never — it's probably not a procedure we need to get rid of," Price said. He added, however, that Sunday's quashed threat will lead to an analysis of whether procedures were followed and whether additional safeguards are needed.

Price could recall only one other similar episode — in 1994, when a FedEx pilot who was facing possible termination tried to kill the crew and crash the plane. The crew subdued the hijacker, who was convicted and sentenced to life in prison.

In 2018, a pilot in the jump seat of a Boeing 737 Max operated by Indonesia's Lion Air emerged as a hero after helping the crew stop the plane's nose from repeatedly pointing down. Disaster was averted — or delayed until the next flight of the plane, which crashed, killing all 189 people on board.

There have been crashes that investigators believe were deliberately caused by pilots. Authorities said the co-pilot of a Germanwings jet that crashed in the French Alps in 2015 had practiced putting the plane into a dive.

In 2018, a Horizon Air ground agent stole an empty plane at Seattle's Sea-Tac International Airport and crashed into a small island in Puget Sound after being chased by military jets that scrambled to intercept the aircraft. The man told an air traffic controller that he "wasn't really planning on landing" and described himself as "a broken guy."

Hamas frees two Israeli women as US advises delaying ground war to allow talks on captives

By NAJIB JOBAIN, SAMY MAGDY and JOSEPH KRAUSS Associated Press

RAFAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — Hamas on Monday released two elderly Israeli women held hostage in Gaza as the United States expressed increasing concern that the escalating Israel-Hamas war will spark a wider conflict in the region, including attacks on American troops.

The death toll in Gaza rose rapidly as Israel ramped up airstrikes that flattened buildings in what it said was preparation for an eventual ground assault. The United States advised Israel to delay the expected invasion to allow time to negotiate the release of more hostages taken by Hamas during its brutal incursion two weeks ago.

A third small aid convoy from Egypt entered Gaza, where the population of 2.3 million has been running out of food, water and medicine under Israel's sealed border. With Israel still barring entry of fuel, the United Nations said its distribution of aid would grind to a halt within days when it can no longer fuel trucks inside Gaza. Hospitals flooded by a constant stream of wounded are struggling to keep generators running to power lifesaving medical equipment and incubators for premature babies.

The two freed hostages, 85-year-old Yocheved Lifshitz and 79-year-old Nurit Cooper, were taken out of Gaza at the Rafah crossing into Egypt, where they were put into ambulances, according to footage shown on Egyptian TV. The two women, along with their husbands, were snatched from their homes in the kibbutz of Nir Oz near the Gaza border during Hamas' Oct. 7 rampage into southern Israeli communities. Their husbands, ages 83 and 84, were not released.

"While I cannot put into words the relief that she is now safe, I will remain focused on securing the release of my father and all those — some 200 innocent people — who remain hostages in Gaza," Lifshitz' daughter, Sharone Lifshitz, said in a statement.

Lifshitz, an artist and academic in London who uses a different spelling for her name, told reporters last week that her parents were peace activists, and her father would drive to the Gaza border to take Palestinians to east Jerusalem for medical treatment.

Kindness, she said last week, could somehow save them.

"I grew up, you know, with all these Holocaust stories about how all my uncles' lives were saved because" of acts of kindness, she said.

"Do I want that to be the story here?" she asked. "Yeah."

Hamas apparently received nothing in exchange for the release of the two hostages, who were freed days after an American woman and her teenage daughter were also freed. Hamas and other militants in Gaza are believed to have taken roughly 220 people, including an unconfirmed number of foreigners and dual citizens.

On Monday, Hamas released a video showing the handover of the two elderly hostages, with militants giving drinks and snacks to the dazed but composed women, and holding their hands as they are walked to Red Cross officials. Just before the video ends, Lifshitz reaches back to shake one militant's hand.

Around the same time, Israel's internal security service, Shin Bet, released a recording showing a series of prisoners from the Hamas attack — most in clean prison uniforms, but one in a bloody t-shirt and at least one wincing in pain — sitting handcuffed in drab offices talking about the Oct. 7 attack. The men said they were under orders to kill young men, and kidnap women, children and the elderly, and that they'd been promised financial rewards.

The videos were both clearly intended to shape the war's narrative — with Israel focusing on Hamas' brutality, and Hamas trying to show a humane side.

The Associated Press could not independently verify either video, and both the hostages and the prisoners could have been acting under duress.

Israel has vowed to destroy Hamas. Iranian-backed fighters around the region are warning of possible escalation, including the targeting of U.S. forces deployed in the Mideast, if a ground offensive is launched

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in Gaza.

The U.S. has told Iranian-backed Hezbollah in Lebanon and other groups not to join the fight. Israel and Hezbollah have traded fire almost daily across the Israel-Lebanon border, and Israeli warplanes have struck targets in the occupied West Bank, Syria and Lebanon in recent days.

National Security Council spokesman John Kirby said there has been an uptick in rocket and drone attacks by Iranian-backed militias on U.S. troops in Iraq and Syria, and the U.S. was "deeply concerned about the possibility for any significant escalation" in the coming days.

He said U.S. officials were having "active conversations" with Israeli counterparts about the potential ramifications of escalated military action.

The U.S. advised Israeli officials that delaying a ground offensive would give Washington more time to work with regional mediators on the release of more hostages, according to a U.S. official. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because they were authorized to reveal sensitive negotiations.

Israeli tanks and ground forces have been massed at the Gaza border, and Defense Minister Yoav Gallant told troops there Monday to keep preparing for an offensive "because it will come." He said it will be a combined offensive from air, land and sea, but he did not give a time frame.

A ground offensive is likely to dramatically increase casualties in what is already the deadliest by far of five wars fought between Israel and Hamas since the militant group took power in Gaza in 2007.

More than 1,400 people in Israel have been killed — mostly civilians slain during the initial Hamas attack. At least 222 people were captured and dragged back to Gaza, including foreigners, the military said Monday, updating a previous figure.

More than 5,000 Palestinians, including some 2,000 minors and around 1,100 women, have been killed, the Hamas-run Health Ministry said Monday. That includes the disputed toll from an explosion at a hospital last week. The toll has climbed rapidly in recent days, with the ministry reporting 436 additional deaths in just the last 24 hours.

Israel said its forces had struck over 400 militant targets over the last day, killing several Hamas commanders and dozens of fighters preparing to fire rockets into Israel.

The official Palestinian news agency WAFA said many residential buildings had been hit in the overnight Israeli airstrikes, and many people had been killed or injured. Rescuers were still searching the rubble for survivors.

Israel says it does not target civilians, and that Palestinian militants have fired over 7,000 rockets at Israel since the start of the war. But inside Gaza, the civilian death toll continued to mount.

Fifteen members of the same family were among at least 33 Palestinians buried Monday in a shallow, sandy mass grave at a Gaza hospital after being killed in Israeli airstrikes.

The bodies were laid to rest side by side in the courtyard of al-Aqsa Hospital in Deir al-Balah. Men discussed where to fit the shrouded corpse of a small child. "Bring them all," a gravedigger called out.

Israel continued to carry out limited ground forays into Gaza.

On Monday, the Palestinian Red Crescent said 20 trucks entered Gaza carrying food, water, medicine and medical supplies through the Rafah crossing with Egypt, the only way into Gaza not controlled by Israel. It was the third delivery in as many days, each around the same size.

The aid coming in so far is "a drop in the ocean" compared with the needs of the population, said Thomas White, the Gaza director of the U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA.

At least 1.4 million Palestinians in Gaza have fled their homes, and nearly 580,000 of them are sheltering in U.N.-run schools and shelters, the U.N. said Monday.

No aid will be distributed in Gaza City and other parts of the north, where hundreds of thousands of people remain. Gaza City's main al-Shifa Hospital, with a normal capacity of 700 patients, is currently overwhelmed with 5,000 patients, and around 45,000 displaced people are gathered in and around its grounds for shelter, the U.N. said.

'Superfog' near New Orleans blamed for highway crashes that killed at least 7

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — At least seven people were killed Monday after a "superfog" of smoke from marsh fires and dense morning fog caused a series of wrecks on Interstate 55 near New Orleans that left a long stretch of mangled and scorched cars, trucks and tractor-trailers.

An estimated 158 vehicles were involved and 25 people injured, according to the Louisiana State Police, who warned the death toll could climb as first responders worked into the night looking for victims, the smell of burnt wreckage still heavy in the air.

Vehicles were crushed, piled atop each other and engulfed by flames. Some people got out of their vehicles and stood on the side of the road or on the roofs of their cars looking in disbelief at the disaster, while others cried out for help.

Clarencia Patterson Reed was driving with her wife and niece and could see people waving their hands for her to stop, but when she did her car was hit from behind and on the side by two other vehicles, she told The Times-Picayune/The New Orleans Advocate.

"It was 'Boom. Boom.' All you kept hearing was crashing," Reed said. She was able to scramble out of her car, but her wife was pinned inside and injured her leg and side.

Another driver Christopher Coll, said he was already braking when a pickup truck "drove up on top of my work trailer and took me for a ride."

Coll could smell smoke as he heard the sounds of crashing cars and popping tires. He was able to kick open his passenger door to escape and then helped others — pulling out one person through a car window.

While 25 people were transported to the hospital, with injuries ranging from minor to critical, others sought medical aid on their own, authorities said.

Gov. John Bel Edwards asked for prayers "for those hurt and killed" on Monday and issued a call for blood donors to replenish dwindling supplies.

Louisiana State Police shared aerial photos on their Facebook page showing the crashed cars and extensive debris on both northbound and southbound lanes of the elevated interstate, which passes over swamp and open water between lakes Pontchartrain and Maurepas.

As of Monday afternoon, state troopers were still working "to notify families, investigate the exact causes of the crashes" and coordinate with the state's transportation department to have the bridge inspected.

Traffic backed up for miles in both directions on I-55. The lack of visibility also prompted closures of parts of I-10 and the 24-mile (39-kilometer) Lake Pontchartrain Causeway at times.

School buses were summoned to transport stranded motorists from the accident sites. At midday, state police told reporters at the scene that one vehicle went over the highway guardrail and into the water, but the driver escaped unharmed.

The National Weather Service said there were multiple wetland fires in the region. Smoke from the fires mixed with fog to create a "superfog." Visibility improved as the fog lifted, according to the agency, but similarly dangerous conditions could occur in coming days.

Few transplant surgeons are Black. Giving medical students a rare peek at organ donation may help

By LAURAN NEERGAARD AP Medical Writer

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — It's long after midnight when the bustling operating room suddenly falls quiet — a moment of silence to honor the man lying on the table.

This is no ordinary surgery. Detrick Witherspoon died before ever being wheeled in, and now two wide-eyed medical students are about to get a hands-on introduction to organ donation.

They're part of a novel program to encourage more Black and other minority doctors-to-be to get involved in the transplant field, increasing the trust of patients of color.

"There are very few transplant surgeons who look like me," said Dr. James Hildreth, president of Me-

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harry Medical College, which teamed with Tennessee Donor Services for the project — one of several by historically Black colleges and universities to tackle transplant inequity.

Fresh off their first year at Meharry, six students spent the summer shadowing the donor agency to learn the complex steps that make transplants possible: finding eligible donors, broaching donation with grieving families, recovering organs and matching them to recipients sometimes hundreds of miles away.

In the operating room, student Teresa Belledent worried she'd get emotional seeing a donor's face — especially this one, a Black father of six, just 44, who reminded her a bit of her own dad. Instead, calm descended as Dr. Marty Sellers, the organ agency's surgeon, began retrieving the kidneys and liver while teaching Belledent and classmate Emmanuel Kotey.

"I'm able to feel sad and honor this person ... and be able to focus on the act of helping other people," said Belledent as the tired team began the two-hour drive back to Nashville from the Jackson, Tennessee, hospital.

The night's tougher lesson: Hours into the surgery the room falls quiet again. The donor had died of a brain hemorrhage but now Sellers has found undiagnosed cancer in his lungs. The kidneys and liver, already carefully placed on ice, can't be used. Still, the corneas can be donated — and for the two students, the surgery offered a powerful teaching moment.

"I got to see so much and do so much — and trying is better than not," Belledent said.

MISTRUST AND THE TRANSPLANT GAP

Despite record numbers of transplants in recent years, thousands die waiting because there aren't enough donated organs — and some don't get a fair chance. Black Americans are over three times more likely than white people to experience kidney failure. But they face delays in even being put on the transplant list and are far less likely than their white counterparts to get an organ from a living donor — the best kind.

Overall, Black patients make up 28% of the waiting list for all organs but account for just about 16% of deceased donors. Increasing donor diversity also helps improve the odds of finding a good match.

"How do we close that gap?" was the question Jill Grandas, Tennessee Donor Services' executive director, took to Hildreth.

The Meharry students know mistrust of the medical system — a legacy of abuses such as the infamous Tuskegee experiment that left Black men untreated for syphilis — is a barrier both to organ donation and seeking care, such as transplants, that people may not be familiar with.

Austin Brown of Memphis said his grandfather "absolutely despised medicine," and died of a heart attack after refusing an artery-clearing stent.

Belledent, of Miami, recalled her mother saying not to check the organ donor box when she got her driver's license — because of a widespread myth that doctors won't work as hard to save the life of a registered donor.

"Now that I've seen the process, it's crazy to even think about," Belledent said. "In the ICU, no one's looking through stuff and trying to find your license, look for the (organ donor) heart on there."

Stacey Scotton of Cleveland, Tennessee, said a cook in Meharry's cafeteria listed the reasons he's heard "that it's not a good idea to be an organ donor. And I'm able to now go in and comfort him and correct, you know, some of those disbeliefs."

AWE IN THE OPERATING ROOM

Back at the Jackson, Tennessee, hospital, Kotey and Belledent are getting a very different anatomy lesson than medical students' introductory lab with cadavers.

Machines keep oxygen and blood flowing to Witherspoon's organs — and Kotey lets out a quiet "wow" upon touching a pulsating artery while assisting Sellers, the surgeon.

"It was the first time I've ever done anything like that. I didn't want to mess up," he said later.

Sellers gives precise instructions: Place your right hand here, pinch this spot, clamp that one. The students learn to trim fat from a kidney, stitch a biopsy wound and feel the lung nodule that proved cancerous — opportunities they normally wouldn't get until far later in training.

"I'm a firm believer that students can't get really excited about something they're not exposed to," said

Hildreth, who thinks early experiences like this could help diversify the transplant field.

Only 5.5% of transplant surgeons and less than 7% of kidney specialists are Black.

The Meharry students were stunned to learn how rare donation opportunities are. Only about 1% of deaths occur in a way that qualifies someone to even be considered, and hospitals must alert agencies like Grandas' fast enough to evaluate candidates and approach families.

"It's not like you go to the hospital, you die and you automatically become a donor. There's a lot more moving parts," said Sam Ademisoye of Lawrenceville, Georgia.

MATCHING ORGANS TO RECIPIENTS

In a Nashville ICU, Brown is learning bedside care for a deceased donor — an 18-year-old motorcycle crash victim — and how to match the organs on the national waiting list.

The heart is immediately claimed. But there's a hitch with the lungs: Hospitals have said no for 16 patients, primarily because a week-old scan in the donor's records suggested bruising.

Brown knows young donors' organs usually are in high demand, and these lungs are working well.

"The denial, that blows my mind," he said, helping nurses take the risky step of moving the body for another CT scan to prove the lungs really are fine.

The gamble pays off and the next transplant center in line grabs them.

The many steps to successful donation "are like gears in a machine and the entire machine breaks down if one gear fails. That's my biggest takeaway," said student Mikhail Thanawalla of Scottsbluff, Nebraska.

WHAT MAKES THE DIFFERENCE FOR FAMILIES

What the students may remember most were grieving families who shared their donation experience.

Daphne Myers, struggling with her son's death at 26, initially was ready to refuse.

"I remember my reaction: I don't want to talk about that," Myers said. "I wasn't educated on it. My generation wasn't raised to be organ donors."

But the donor representative didn't make that request, instead asking Myers all about her son — how Haston Stafford Myers Jr. always helped others and loved to sing. Only then did Myers learn her son was a registered organ donor and realized she supported his choice.

"She was caring," Myers recalled. "That changed my opinion, changed my mind. ... The impact you guys can have on families, the caring that comes along with doing your job, it makes all the difference."

It's far too soon to know if the program pointed students to new career paths. But next year, Grandas plans to also invite students from a historically Black nursing school.

Kotey thinks he'll become a general practitioner and pledges his patients "young to old, will know about organ donation."

Belledent, though, has long wanted to become a surgeon. She spent her childhood in Haiti and recalls family friends with kidney disease and no access to transplants. Specializing in transplant surgery "is definitely on the list because I like the idea of being able to give someone a second chance."

Donald Trump expected back at civil fraud trial with fixer-turned-foe Michael Cohen set to testify

By MICHAEL R. SISAK Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Michael Cohen once proclaimed he'd "take a bullet" for Donald Trump. Now, after breaking with the former president amid his own legal troubles, the fixer-turned-foe is poised to testify against his old boss Tuesday as a key witness at the civil fraud trial that threatens to upend Trump's real estate empire and wealthy image.

Trump is expected to be in court for the highly anticipated testimony, detouring from his usual campaign haunts to the Manhattan courtroom for a sixth day this month. Cohen scrapped their expected showdown last week, citing a health issue. Cohen has said it will be his first time seeing Trump in five years.

Trump attended the trial for two days last week — having planned the trip when it was expected that Cohen would be testifying. Trump was also in court for the trial's first three days in early October. The trial wasn't held Monday because of issues related to an apparent COVID-19 exposure. Trump is expected to

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testify later in the trial. All of his trips to the case so far have been voluntary.

Each time, the front-runner for the 2024 Republican presidential nomination has complained to TV cameras in the courthouse hallway about a case he's derided as a "sham," a "scam" and "a continuation of the single greatest witch hunt of all time."

New York Attorney General Letitia James' lawsuit alleges that Trump and top executives at his company, the Trump Organization, conspired to pad the business mogul-turned-politician's net worth by billions of dollars on financial statements provided to banks, insurers and others to make deals and secure loans.

The judge, Arthur Engoron, has already ruled that Trump and his company committed fraud, but the trial involves remaining claims of conspiracy, insurance fraud and falsifying business records.

As punishment, Engoron ordered that a court-appointed receiver take control of some Trump companies, putting the future oversight of Trump Tower and other marquee properties in question, but an appeals court has blocked that for now.

Trump denies any wrongdoing. He says his assets were actually undervalued and maintains that disclaimers on his financial statements essentially told banks and other recipients to check the numbers out for themselves.

Cohen spent a decade as Trump's fiercely loyal personal lawyer before famously turning on him in 2018 amid a federal investigation that sent Cohen to federal prison. He is also a major prosecution witness in Trump's separate Manhattan hush-money criminal case, which is scheduled to go to trial next spring.

James, a Democrat, has credited Cohen as the impetus for her civil investigation, which led to the fraud lawsuit being decided at the trial. She cited Cohen's testimony to Congress in 2019 that Trump had a history of misrepresenting the value of assets to gain favorable loan terms and tax benefits.

Cohen gave copies of three of Trump's financial statements to the House Committee on Oversight and Reform. Cohen said Trump gave the statements to Deutsche Bank to inquire about a loan to buy the NFL's Buffalo Bills and to Forbes magazine to substantiate his claim to a spot on its list of the world's wealthiest people.

Cohen went to prison after pleading guilty in 2018 to tax evasion, lying to Congress and campaign finance violations, some of which involved his role in arranging hush-money payments to women during Trump's 2016 campaign.

Earlier this month, Trump dropped a \$500 million lawsuit that accused Cohen of "spreading falsehoods," causing "vast reputational harm" and breaking a confidentiality agreement for talking publicly about the hush-money payments.

But a Trump spokesperson said he had only decided "to temporarily pause" the lawsuit as he mounts another campaign for the White House and fights four criminal cases, but said he would refile at a later date.

With Trump expected in court for Cohen's testimony, it'll be the ex-president's first time at the trial since Engoron fined him \$5,000 on Friday because a disparaging social media post about a key court staffer lingered on his campaign website for weeks after it was ordered deleted.

There's a long list of candidates for House speaker as Republicans try voting again on a new leader

By LISA MASCARO, STEPHEN GROVES, FARNOUSH AMIRI and KEVING FREKING Associated Press
WASHINGTON (AP) — Three weeks now since the ouster of Kevin McCarthy, House Republicans will meet privately to try nominating a new House speaker to accomplish the seemingly impossible job of uniting a broken, bitter GOP majority and returning to the work of governing in Congress.

Having dispatched their speaker then rejected two popular GOP figures as replacements, the House Republicans on Tuesday will be voting instead on a hodge-podge of lesser-known congressmen for speaker, a powerful position second in line to the presidency. The private session could take all day before a nominee emerges.

"We're going to have to figure out how to get our act together — I mean, big boys and big girls have

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got to quit making excuses and we just got to get it done," said Rep. Dusty Johnson, R-S.D., a conservative caucus leader.

The candidate list is long and jumbled with no obvious choice for the job. There's a former McDonald's franchise owner Rep. Kevin Hern of Oklahoma, a conservative leader, who plied his colleagues with hamburgers seeking their support; Majority Whip Tom Emmer of Minnesota, the gruff former hockey coach who reached out to Donald Trump for backing; newcomer Byron Donalds of Florida, a well-liked Trump ally, and a half dozen others.

No one is expected to emerge from first-round voting and Republicans are planning to stay behind closed doors until they can agree on a nominee. Some have pushed for a signed pledge to abide by rules to support the majority winner, but holdouts remain. The plan is to hold a House floor vote later this week.

"I feel good, but it's up to the members — it's in their hands now," said Donalds after a candidate forum late Monday evening.

The House has been in turmoil, without a speaker since the start of the month after a contingent of hardline Republicans ousted McCarthy, creating what's now a governing crisis that's preventing the normal operations of Congress.

The federal government risks a shutdown in a matter of weeks if Congress fails to pass funding legislation by a Nov. 17 deadline to keep services and offices running. More immediately, President Joe Biden has asked Congress to provide \$105 billion in aid — to help Israel and Ukraine amid their wars and to shore up the U.S. border with Mexico. Federal aviation and farming programs face expiration without action.

Those running for speaker are mostly conservatives and election deniers, who either voted against certifying the 2020 presidential election results, when Biden defeated Trump, in the run up to the Jan. 6, 2021 attack on the Capitol, or joined a subsequent lawsuit challenging the results.

Rep. Matt Gaetz of Florida, the hard-right leader who engineered McCarthy's ouster, has said several of those in the running — Hern, Donalds or Rep. Mike Johnson, a constitutional law expert from Louisiana, would make a "phenomenal" choice for speaker.

Also running are Reps. Jack Bergman of Michigan, Austin Scott of Georgia, who had briefly challenged Jordan with a protest bid, Pete Sessions of Texas and Gary Palmer of Alabama. Rep. Dan Meuser of Pennsylvania withdrew from the race.

What Gaetz and other hard-liners are resisting is a leader who joined in voting for the budget deal that McCarthy struck with Biden earlier this year, which set federal spending levels that the far-right Republicans don't agree with and now want to undo. They are pursuing steeper cuts to federal programs and services with next month's funding deadline.

Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene said she wanted assurances the candidates would pursue impeachment inquiries into Biden and other top Cabinet officials.

Republicans gathered late in the evening Monday to hear quick speeches from the congressmen seeking the job, elevator pitches ahead of Tuesday's internal party voting. They have also heard from voters back home who want them to get back to work and appeared ready to try to move on.

"There seems to be some sort of compromise in the room," said Rep. Nick LaLota, a more centrist New York Republican after the hours-long session.

Senior-most among the hopefuls is Emmer, and he and others are reaching out to Trump for backing.

"They all called asking for support," said Trump, the Republican front-runner in the 2024 presidential race, who was in New Hampshire registering for the state's primary ballot.

Trump downplayed, even derided, Emmer, the third-ranking House Republican with whom he has had a rocky relationship, while presenting himself as a kingmaker who talks to "a lot of congressmen" seeking his stamp of approval.

Of Emmer, Trump said, "I think he's my biggest fan now, because he called me yesterday and told me I'm your biggest fan."

Yet factional power plays run strong on Capitol Hill among the so-called "five families" that make up the House Republican majority.

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Launched over right-flank complaints about McCarthy's leadership in budget battles, it's no longer clear what the House Republicans are fighting for and if they will end up with a more acceptable speaker.

Trump has intervened from the sidelines backing hard-charging Rep. Jim Jordan over Majority Leader Steve Scalise. But Republicans dropped Jordan as their nominee last week in part because of the hardball tactics, including death threats by the Ohio Republican's supporters.

"Most of these guys and gals can't be bullied to do anything," said Johnson of South Dakota. "You're gonna have to use persuasion."

Trump, brushing back suggestions that he take the gavel himself, suggested Monday that no one is capable of uniting the House Republicans.

"There's only one person who can do it all the way: Jesus Christ," he declared in New Hampshire.

Amid the turmoil, the House is now led by a nominal interim speaker pro tempore, Rep. Patrick McHenry, R-N.C., the bow-tie-wearing chairman of the Financial Services Committee whose main job is to elect a more permanent speaker.

Some Republicans — and Democrats — would like to simply give McHenry more power to get on with the routine business of governing. But McHenry, the first person to be in the position that was created in the aftermath of the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks as an emergency measure, has declined to back those overtures.

Mayor says West Maui to reopen to tourism on Nov. 1 after fire and workers are ready to return

By AUDREY McAVOY Associated Press

HONOLULU (AP) — All of West Maui except for burned-out sections of historic Lahaina will reopen to tourism on Nov. 1 following the deadliest U.S. wildfire in more than century, the mayor of Maui County said Monday.

Mayor Richard Bissen said he made the move after talking about it with his Lahaina advisory team, the Red Cross and other partners.

West Maui has about 11,000 hotel rooms, or about half of Maui's total. Travelers evacuated those hotels after the Aug. 8 fire raged through Lahaina town, killing at least 99 people and destroying more than 2,000 buildings.

Hawaii Gov. Josh Green last month declared West Maui would officially reopen to tourism on Oct. 8 to bring back badly needed jobs and help the economy recover. Bissen modified the governor's declaration with a phased plan, allowing a small section on the northern edge of West Maui to open first with the rest to follow at an undetermined date.

The community has had an impassioned debate about when to welcome travelers back to the disaster-stricken region. Some residents drafted a petition opposing the return of tourists, saying the community wasn't ready.

Bissen said Monday that workers are ready to return to their jobs while acknowledging "this isn't for everyone."

Those who aren't prepared to go back to work on Nov. 1 should talk to their employers and "continue to seek the help and attention that they need," Bissen said at a news conference in Lahaina that was livestreamed online.

The mayor said many residents are also concerned about not having child care. He said the county's partners are working on that issue.

Residents who have been staying in West Maui hotels and other short-term accommodations after losing their homes in the fire won't lose their lodging, the mayor said.

"We're assured by the Red Cross that their housing will not be in jeopardy," Bissen said.

The mayor said the reopening schedule was voluntary and said some properties have already reopened on their own.

40 years after bombing that killed Americans in Beirut, US troops again deploy east of Mediterranean

By BASSEM MROUE Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Forty years after one of the deadliest attacks against U.S. troops in the Middle East, some warn that Washington could be sliding toward a new conflict in the region.

On Oct. 23, 1983, a suicide bomber hit an American military barracks at Beirut International Airport, killing 241 U.S. service members, most of them Marines – still the deadliest attack on Marines since the World War II Battle of Iwo Jima. A near-simultaneous attack on French forces killed 58 paratroopers.

Washington blames the bombings on the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah, a claim the Iranian-backed Hezbollah denies. The U.S. and French forces were in Beirut as part of a multinational force deployed amid Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon. The force oversaw the withdrawal of Palestinian fighters from Beirut and stayed afterward to help a Western-backed government at the time. The bombing prompted a U.S. withdrawal from Lebanon.

The United States is now deploying forces again in the region in connection to a war between Israel and its enemies.

The aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford has been positioned in the eastern Mediterranean along with other American warships – with a second carrier on the way – in what is widely seen as a message to Iran and Hezbollah not to open new fronts as Israel fights Hamas.

Longtime tensions between the U.S. and Iran have been hiked by the two-week-old war between Israel and Hamas, in which the Palestinian militant group's Oct. 7 surprise attack on southern Israeli towns brought devastating Israeli bombardment of the Gaza Strip.

The war risks spiraling into a wider regional conflict. The biggest worry is over the Lebanon-Israel border, where Israel and Hezbollah exchange fire on a daily basis.

But there are other spots where the U.S. could be dragged directly into the fight. There are roughly 2,500 U.S. troops in Iraq and around 900 others in eastern Syria, on missions against the Islamic State group. In both countries, Iran has militias loyal to it that already have opened fire on the Americans since the Gaza war erupted.

A Hezbollah supporter who goes by the name of Haj Mohammed posted a video on Tiktok on Oct. 13 that drew a threatening parallel between the barracks bombing 40 years ago and present-day events.

"It seems that Uncle Joe did not tell the commanders of these warships and aircraft carriers about what happened on October 23, 1983," the man said, referring to President Joe Biden. Sitting in front of a poster of Jerusalem's Dome of the Rock, he wondered aloud whether U.S. troops will return home in coffins again.

Iran-backed groups have issued threats against the U.S. if it joins the war on the side of Israel.

Top Hezbollah official Hachem Safieddine said in a speech that there are tens of thousands of fighters around the region "whose fingers are on the trigger."

The commander of a powerful Iranian-backed militia in Iraq posted a photo of himself on social media standing by the Lebanon-Israel border in an apparent show that his fighters are ready for war.

If the U.S. intervenes directly in the Israel-Hamas war, "then the American presence in the region becomes legitimate targets for resistance fighters whether in Iraq or elsewhere," the commander -- Abu Alaa al-Walae of Iraq's Kataib Sayyid al-Shuhada -- told Beirut-based Al-Mayadeen TV.

Since Wednesday, suicide drones and rockets have hit several bases housing U.S. troops in Iraq and Syria. The attacks were either claimed by or blamed on Iranian-backed militias.

A U.S. Navy warship on Thursday intercepted three missiles and several drones fired by Iranian-backed Houthi rebels from Yemen, potentially toward targets in Israel, the Pentagon said.

American forces could also come under attack if Israel launches a ground invasion of Gaza and appears about to destroy Hamas, as it has vowed to do.

An official with one Iranian-backed group warned that if Israel tries to go all the way for a complete defeat of Hamas, Iranian allies can ignite a conflict throughout the Middle East. He said the volleys at U.S. forces were meant to send this message. The official spoke on condition that he and his group not be

identified because he was not authorized to comment publicly.

Following a tour in the region where he met leaders of Hezbollah, Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Iran's foreign minister warned in mid-October that "pre-emptive action is possible" if Israel moves closer to a ground offensive and that Israel would suffer "a huge earthquake."

On Sunday, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said Washington expects the Israel-Hamas war to escalate through involvement by proxies of Iran, adding that the Biden administration is prepared to respond if American personnel or armed forces are targeted.

"This is not what we want, not what we're looking for. We don't want escalation," Blinken said. "We don't want to see our forces or our personnel come under fire. But if that happens, we're ready for it."

Austin said they see the "prospect of a significant escalation of attacks on our troops and our people throughout the region."

Biden repeatedly has used one word to warn Israel's enemies against trying to take advantage of the situation: "Don't."

Iran leads the so-called "axis of resistance" that includes Tehran-backed factions from Lebanon, Iraq, Yemen, Afghanistan and Pakistan as well as Syria. Hezbollah, Lebanon's most powerful group, has tens of thousands of rockets and missiles as well as a drone arsenal that pose a serious threat if the group fully joins the war against Israel.

Still, many analysts say an all-out regional war that would risk dragging the U.S. and Iran into direct confrontation remains unlikely.

"Until this moment the two sides don't want a confrontation" and are communicating that to each other, said Iranian political analyst and political science professor Emad Abshenass about Tehran and Washington.

But "the situation could turn on its head" if Israel's army enters Gaza and seems likely defeat Hamas, Abshenass said.

In 1983, the barracks bombing was seen as a lesson in the danger for the U.S. from stepping in the middle of a conflict between Israel and one of its neighbors.

Sam Heller of The Century Foundation said that, as in 1983, "I don't trust that the U.S. forces the Biden administration has sent to the region are enough to really intimidate and deter local actors."

"Iran and its allies are exposed in their own way," Heller said, but they have "very serious capabilities today that could be (used) against U.S. targets regionwide."

Two weeks ago she was thriving. Now, a middle-class mom in Gaza struggles to survive

By SAMYA KULLAB and NAJIB JOBAIN Associated Press

KHAN YOUNIS, Gaza Strip (AP) — Yusra Abu Sharekh's days begin in the southern Gaza Strip often after sleepless nights amid blaring ambulance sirens and the clamor of neighbors in the brief pause between relentless Israeli airstrikes.

By daybreak, the 33-year-old mother is on the hunt for bread, lining up for hours at bakeries to buy one bag to feed her two children. Without electricity, disconnected from her relatives and terrified by the sounds of warplanes overhead, she rushes in the afternoon to see her sick mother at a crowded U.N. shelter 20 minutes away.

There, she finally can charge her phone and check on her 66-year-old father who stubbornly stayed behind in their northern Gaza City home, refusing to heed Israeli evacuation orders.

Only two weeks ago, Abu Sharekh had a thriving life, working enthusiastically at a coveted new job and caring for her family.

"I feel either we were dreaming then or we are in a nightmare now," she said. "Everyone was making plans, enjoying their lives the best they could. Suddenly we are wandering the streets without fuel to drive our cars, electricity, water or food. Homes are lost, people are being killed."

It's a view shared by many among Gaza's tiny but budding middle class for whom hard-won progress

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despite Israel's 16-year blockade and the slow erosion of Gaza's state institutions was reversed in a matter of days. After Israel declared war following Hamas' violent rampage across the border fence, their dreams of good jobs, attending foreign universities and buying homes were dashed.

Now when thinking about the future, many draw a blank, unable to imagine an existence beyond the daily fear of being killed in an airstrike. They include graphic designers seeking shelter in tents outside overcrowded U.N. facilities, architects living among dozens of other relatives and U.N. workers grappling with the destruction of their houses.

Before the war, an aspirational middle class had emerged from the rubble of earlier conflicts in Gaza. Despite the enduring blockade and severe limits on travel, they were able to invest in their children's education, local businesses, even private beach-side bungalows and fancy eateries. Against the rising current of unemployment and precarious economic conditions, a small portion of society in Gaza managed to prosper.

Abu Sharekh graduated this summer with an engineering degree from Portland State University, in Oregon, as a Fulbright scholar. She returned home ecstatic to have landed a job with al-Ahli Hospital in Gaza City and to be reunited with her family.

Within the span of a week starting Oct. 7, those hopes vanished as if crushed under the rubble of the flattened homes in her Gaza City neighborhood. Survival grew precarious. Her workplace became the scene of a horrific explosion.

Sharing a home with 70 other displaced relatives in a home in Khan Younis, Abu Sharekh said the day starts with anxiety about how to get bread to feed the many children there. Abu Sharekh's two sons, ages 5 and 10, survive on canned beans. Water is rationed, just 300 millilitres (10 fluid ounces) per person every day. At night, their quarters are plunged into darkness.

Still, Abu Sharekh says it's better than the overcrowded and dirty U.N. shelter at the Khan Younis Training Center, where her mother stays.

The shelter, housing nearly 11 times its designated capacity with nearly 20,000 people, is the most overcrowded among the 91 UNRWA installations where nearly half a million Gaza residents have sought refuge. Tents have cropped up outside, triggering painful memories of the mass displacement of the 1948 war with Israel, which Palestinians call the Nakba, or catastrophe.

"It's undignified," Abu Sharekh says.

Men and women stand in line to use the same toilet facility. The wait is so long that fights break out. Garbage is piled outside. There is no steady supply of food or water.

Her mother, a cancer survivor, suffers from gastrointestinal issues and needs a toilet for two to three hours a day. That has been impossible in the shelter.

"It was heartbreaking, I was inside the shelter's administration building, she was outside, and I was begging the man at the door just to let her in to use the toilet," she said. "I couldn't do anything for her to get in, I was so helpless, can you imagine?"

But her 63-year-old mother didn't feel safe anywhere else, despite warnings from relatives that even U.N. shelters were not impervious to Israeli bombardment.

The U.N. reported nearly 180 internally displaced Palestinians at their facilities have been injured and 12 killed since the start of the war.

Abu Sharekh's father, traumatized by tales of his parents' displacement from their village in what is now the Israeli city of Ashkelon in 1948, was adamant history would not repeat itself, she said. "That was the main point for him," she said.

He described an increasingly desperate situation in their Gaza City neighborhood: People breaking into homes looking for food and wandering the streets in search of supplies.

She fears he won't pick up when she calls. Or that scrolling through social media, she will find her home among the several destroyed nearly every day. A strike damaged the home she shares with her husband and leveled the building her brother lived in.

"All my furniture, all my memories, windows, doors, everything is broken," she said.

She didn't want to leave, either. But her husband persuaded her, telling her at least the children should

be spared the horror of airstrikes, and that they should stay together.

"But as we discovered, there are airstrikes everywhere."

Pentagon rushes defenses and advisers to Middle East as Israel's ground assault in Gaza looms

By TARA COPP and AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Pentagon has sent military advisers, including a Marine Corps general versed in urban warfare, to Israel to aid in its war planning and is speeding multiple sophisticated air defense systems to the Middle East days ahead of an anticipated ground assault into Gaza.

One of the officers leading the assistance is Marine Corps Lt. Gen. James Glynn, who previously helped lead special operations forces against the Islamic State and served in Fallujah, Iraq, during some of the most heated urban combat there, according to a U.S. official who was not authorized to discuss Glynn's role and spoke on the condition of anonymity.

Glynn will also be advising on how to mitigate civilian casualties in urban warfare, the official said.

Israel is preparing a large-scale ground operation in an environment in which Hamas militants have had years to prepare tunnel networks and set traps throughout northern Gaza's dense urban blocks. Glynn and the other military officers who are advising Israel "have experience that is appropriate to the sorts of operations that Israel is conducting," National Security Council spokesman John Kirby said Monday. The advisers will not be engaged in the fighting, the unidentified U.S. official said.

The military team is one of many fast-moving pieces the Pentagon is getting in place to try and prevent the already intense conflict between Israel and Hamas from becoming a wider war. It also is trying to protect U.S. personnel, who in the last few days have come under repeated attacks that the Pentagon has said were likely endorsed by Iran.

Kirby said Iran was "in some cases actively facilitating these attacks and spurring on others who may want to exploit the conflict for their own good, or for that of Iran. We know that Iran's goal is to maintain some level of deniability here. But we're not going to allow them to do that."

The White House said President Joe Biden spoke with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Monday to update him on "U.S. support for Israel and ongoing efforts at regional deterrence, to include new U.S. military deployments."

On Monday, the U.S. military garrison at an-Tanf, Syria, came under attack again, this time by two drones. The drones were shot down and no injuries were reported. It was the latest episode of more than a half-dozen times in the last week that U.S. military locations in the Middle East had come under rocket or drone attack since a deadly blast at a Gaza hospital.

Last Thursday the destroyer USS Carney shot down four land-attack cruise missiles launched from Yemen that the Pentagon has said were potentially headed toward Israel.

In response, over the weekend the Pentagon announced it was sending multiple Patriot missile defense system battalions and a Terminal High Altitude Area Defense system to the Middle East, as well as repositioning the Eisenhower strike group to the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility. The ship had previously been en route to the Eastern Mediterranean.

The shift means that the Navy will have a carrier strike group off the shore of Israel — the Ford carrier strike group — and another, the Eisenhower, potentially maneuvered to defend U.S. forces and Israel from the Red Sea or the Gulf of Oman.

"We're going to continue to do what we need to do to protect and safeguard our forces and take all necessary measures," Ryder said. "No one wants to see a wider regional conflict. But we will not hesitate to protect our forces."

The U.S. has also advised Israeli officials to consider a delay in any ground assault, saying it would give more time to allow the U.S. to work with its regional partners to release more hostages, according to a U.S. official familiar with Biden administration thinking on the matter. The official, who requested anonymity to discuss the private discussions, said it was unclear how much the argument will "move the needle"

on Israeli thinking.

The official noted that with the help of Qatar mediating with Hamas, the U.S. was able to win the release of two captives, Judith and Natalie Raanan. The process that led to their release — just two of more than 200 people in Israel who were taken hostage in the Oct. 7 attacks — started soon after the Hamas operation. The official noted arranging for the release of the Raanans took longer to come together than many people realized.

Asked during a brief exchange with reporters at the White House on Monday if the U.S. would be supportive of a ceasefire-for-hostage deal, Biden replied, "We should have those hostages released and then we can talk."

During his phone call with Netanyahu, Biden also "reaffirmed his commitment to ongoing efforts to secure the release of all the remaining hostages taken by Hamas — including Americans — and to provide for safe passage for U.S. citizens and other civilians in Gaza," the White House said.

The International Committee of the Red Cross said Monday that Hamas had released two more hostages. They were identified by Israeli media as Yocheved Lifshitz and Nurit Cooper of the Israeli kibbutz of Nir Oz. Glynn's assignment to Israel was first reported by Axios.

It's Israeli boy's 9th birthday as he is held in Hamas captivity — and his family waits

By ARON HELLER Associated Press

KFAR SABA, Israel (AP) — Ohad Munder-Zichri's 9th birthday is on Monday. But instead of celebrating at home with his family and friends, he is believed to be somewhere in Gaza, one of more than 200 hostages held by Hamas since the militants' devastating Oct. 7 incursion.

The fourth-grader from the central Israeli city of Kfar Saba was nabbed along with his mother and grandparents during a holiday visit to his grandparents' kibbutz of Nir Oz along the border with Gaza.

Ohad's beloved uncle was killed in the attack. The boy, his mom and grandparents disappeared with the only thread of information about them coming from a cellphone signal traced to Gaza.

It's that uncertainty that has been most agonizing for Ohad's grief-stricken father, Avi Zichri.

"I keep imagining what he is going through. He's a sensitive boy. Did he see dead bodies? He wears glasses. Did they take them from him? Can he see anything?" Zichri said as he nervously chain-smoked cigarettes on his front porch.

"I keep thinking of every scenario, hoping for the least catastrophic. I just hope that he is safe and with his mother."

Zichri has been living this nightmare for 17 days, saying the thoughts never leave him and the only reprieve comes when he takes sleeping pills that knock him out for the night.

"And then I wake up in the morning and feel guilty for not thinking about them in my sleep," the 69-year-old said.

Ohad is Zichri's only child with his partner, Keren Munder, a 54-year-old special education teacher and volleyball coach for children with disabilities. He's also the only grandson of Avraham and Ruti Munder, both 78, who disappeared with them from Nir Oz, where about 80 people — nearly a quarter of all residents of the small community — are believed to have been taken hostage. Ohad loved visiting his grandparents and his uncle there.

At home, he is a gifted student who loves solving Rubik's cubes and playing soccer, tennis and chess. He is a huge fan of Liverpool FC and his bedroom, untouched since his abduction, includes team souvenirs, his various trophies, family photos on the walls and the elaborate Lego constructions he loved to build.

"He's incredibly smart and charming and is very developed verbally. He teaches me things all the time and I sometimes forget that he is only 9 years old," Zichri said.

Monday's birthday offered a chance to raise awareness of Ohad's plight.

There has been an outpouring of local and international support. The Israeli ambassador to the United States, Michael Herzog, launched an international social media campaign, calling on people to send him

virtual birthday cards.

Members of Ohad's favorite Israeli soccer team and other prominent Israeli athletes have recorded birthday greetings and wishes for his safe return. Yellow balloons with messages recognizing his birthday in captivity were strewn across his hometown of Kfar Saba, with other local initiatives taking place. Local media widely acknowledged the day and friends posted tributes on social media.

But for Zichri it was just another in a series of agonizing days, with anxiety consuming his every moment. "I wish I could celebrate with him today. But it feels no different. It's just wake up and worry," he said. "And every day it gets worse."

Zichri was awaiting Ohad and his mom's return on Oct. 7 when he heard air-raid sirens warning of incoming rockets. He instinctively reached out to Munder knowing that she and Ohad were in much closer range.

Pulling out his cellphone, Zichri showed their final exchanges.

"There is nonstop firing here and there is concern terrorists have infiltrated the villages," Munder wrote at 7:24 a.m.

She wrote that they were hiding in the safe room and she had locked the door. She said she forgot her cellphone charger in the kitchen and might soon run out of battery, but she managed to let Zichri know they had turned off the news so that Ohad could quietly watch a TV show to distract him from what was going on outside.

"Let's hope this ends quickly with no one getting harmed," she wrote in her last message at 7:39 a.m. "Take care of yourself and follow the homefront command instructions."

Zichri said it was typical of Munder to "always worry about others before herself."

Zichri said he shudders at every report of Israeli airstrikes in Gaza, wondering if they had harmed his loved ones. The only thing that keeps him going throughout the endless, agonizing wait for information is the support of a small group of friends and a vision of one day reuniting with his son and Munder, and falling into their arms in a tearful embrace.

"All I can do is hope," he said. "There is nothing else I can do."

It's Day 20 with no House speaker, and lower-level names seek Trump's support and race for the gavel

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — On Day 20 without a House speaker, Republicans found themselves starting over Monday — bumbling ahead with few ideas about who will lead, what they are fighting over and when they will get Congress working again.

Republicans gathered late in the evening to hear quick speeches from the congressmen seeking the job, though none has a clear shot at the gavel. Eight candidates are in the running for one speaker after one dropped out. Behind closed doors, they made their elevator pitches to colleagues ahead of internal party voting.

Senior-most among the hopefuls is Rep. Tom Emmer of Minnesota, but neither he or the other lower-level Republican lawmakers are expected to quickly secure a majority. Instead he and others are reaching out to Donald Trump for backing ahead of elections to choose a nominee. One, Rep. Dan Meuser of Pennsylvania, dropped out.

"They all called asking for support," said Trump, the Republican front-runner in the 2024 presidential race, who was in New Hampshire registering for the state's primary ballot.

Of Emmer, Trump said, "I think he's my biggest fan now because he called me yesterday and told me I'm your biggest fan."

Trump downplayed, even derided, Emmer, the third-ranking House Republican with whom he has had rocky relationship, while presenting himself as a kingmaker who talks to "a lot of congressmen" seeking his stamp of approval.

"There's only one person who can do it all the way: Jesus Christ," he declared.

The House Republicans retreated privately, as they have most days since the ouster of Kevin McCarthy,

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trying for several hours to find a path forward. The candidates had two minutes to make opening remarks, then take questions, then sum it up. The Republicans plan to meet Tuesday to choose the nominee.

"We're going have to figure out how to get our act together — I mean, big boys and big girls have got to quit making excuses and we just got to get it done," said Rep. Dusty Johnson, R-S.D., a conservative caucus leader.

What started as swaggering bravado when a contingent of hardline Republicans led by Rep, Matt Gaetz of Florida ousted McCarthy at the start of the month has morphed into a full-blown crisis of governing as dysfunction and dangerous, bitter infighting prevent the normal operations of Congress.

The federal government again risks a shutdown in a matter of weeks if Congress fails to pass funding legislation by a Nov. 17 deadline to keep services and offices running. More immediately, President Joe Biden has asked Congress to provide \$105 billion in aid — to help Israel and Ukraine amid their wars and to shore up the U.S. border with Mexico. Federal aviation and farming programs face expiration without action.

As he exited the meeting, Rep. Pat Fallon, R-Texas, urged his colleagues to act quickly, saying voters want them to wrap it up. "Enough is enough. Andale! Andale!" he told reporters.

Yet factional power plays are running stronger on Capitol Hill than any sense of urgency to resolve the standoff as the House Republicans are essentially eating their own — first by ousting McCarthy just nine months on the job, then rejecting the next nominees to take his place, Majority Leader Steve Scalise and hard-edged Judiciary Committee Chairman Jim Jordan.

Launched over right-flank complaints over McCarthy's leadership in budget battles, the speakership fight is now a string of political and personal grievances over various leaders, factions and personalities.

"Is there anybody that can get there? I don't think there is," said Rep. Troy Nehls, R-Texas, who has repeatedly suggested Trump should be elected House speaker.

Trump himself has largely stayed in the background, but his presence is everywhere. Trump also spoke over the weekend to longshot candidate Rep. Pete Sessions, R-Texas, according to a person who insisted on anonymity to discuss the private conversation. Early on Trump helped sink Scalise's nomination by backing Jordan instead.

But when more centrist GOP conservatives in the House refused to back Jordan, worried about elevating the far-right Freedom Caucus founder as speaker, Trump was unable to salvage the Ohioan's nomination. The House Republicans dropped Jordan as their nominee Friday, after a hardball pressure campaign that resulted in some lawmakers even receiving death threats flopped.

"Most of these guys and gals can't be bullied to do anything," said Johnson. "You're gonna have to use persuasion."

The House has never been here before, having ousted its own speaker for the first time in history, and now led by a nominal interim speaker pro tempore Rep. Patrick McHenry, R-N.C., the bow-tie-wearing chairman of the Financial Services Committee whose main job is now to elect a more permanent speaker.

Some Republicans — and Democrats — would like to simply give McHenry more power to reconvene the House and get on with the routine business of governing. But McHenry, the first person to be in the position that was created in the aftermath of the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks as an emergency measure, has brushed back those overtures.

In the Senate, Republican leader Mitch McConnell, who is trying to helm the party through a tumultuous time, has had little advice for his colleagues on the other side of the Capitol.

"Look, I'm not an expert on the House. I have my hands full here in the Senate," McConnell said Sunday on CBS. "We're gonna do our job and hope the House can get functional here sometime soon."

For now, Emmer and the others will try their hand at uniting the broken Republican majority around each of their candidacies. Among those running are potential leaders, to be sure, but no singular figure who stands out as an obvious choice.

Along with Emmer and Sessions seeking the nomination are Rep. Mike Johnson, an affable lawyer from Louisiana, Rep. Kevin Hern, a former McDonald's restaurant franchise owner who now leads the conser-

vative Republican Study Committee, the largest bloc of House conservatives, and Rep. Byron Donalds, a Florida newcomer aligned with Trump.

Also running are Reps. Austin Scott of Georgia, who had briefly challenged Jordan with a protest bid, Jack Bergman of Michigan and Gary Palmer of Alabama.

Internal party elections are set for Tuesday, but with eight candidates it could take multiple rounds to choose a nominee ahead of floor voting by the full House, possibly later this week.

Desperate to end the infighting, some GOP lawmakers are demanding that the candidates sign a pledge to back whoever is eventually nominated, as the Republican majority's rules state.

Trump compares himself to Mandela and rails against Biden after filing for New Hampshire primary

By HOLLY RAMER and JILL COLVIN Associated Press

CONCORD, N.H. (AP) — Former President Donald Trump compared himself to anti-apartheid activist Nelson Mandela on Monday as he cast himself as the victim of federal and state prosecutors he alleges are targeting him and his businesses for political reasons.

Returning to New Hampshire to register for its presidential primary, Trump held a rally where he railed against President Joe Biden's response to the Hamas attack on Israel and vowed to build an Iron Dome-style missile defense shield over the U.S.

But he focused much of his dark and at times profane speech on the criminal and civil cases against him, at one point suggesting he would go to prison like the former South African president who spent 27 years in prison for opposing South Africa's apartheid system and was awarded a Nobel Peace Prize.

"I don't mind being Nelson Mandela because I'm doing it for a reason," Trump told an amped-up crowd of supporters at a sports complex in Derry, New Hampshire. "We've got to save our country from these fascists, these lunatics that we're dealing with. They're horrible people and they're destroying our country."

Trump is facing four criminal indictments as well as civil trials that span allegations that he inflated his worth, misclassified hush money payments to women during his 2016 campaign, illegally tried to overturn his 2020 election loss and hoarded classified documents at his Mar-a-Lago club.

The comments came after Trump formally filed for the first-in-the-nation primary, becoming the first person who has served as president to do so in person more than once.

"Vote for Trump and solve your problems," he wrote on the commemorative poster at the statehouse in Concord that all the candidates are asked to sign.

Candidates this year have until Oct. 27 to officially sign up, and dozens are expected to do so. The process is easy: They only need to meet the basic requirements to be president, fill out a one-page form and pay a \$1,000 filing fee. In 2020, 33 Democrats and 17 Republicans signed up. The all-time high was 1992, when 61 people got on the ballot.

Trump won both the 2016 and 2020 Republican primaries in New Hampshire but lost the state in both general elections.

After signing up for the 2016 contest on the first day of the filing period eight years ago, Trump sent then-Vice President Mike Pence to file his paperwork for the 2020 contest. That was in keeping with a tradition of other incumbents who also sent surrogates, but his return on Monday was something new.

Also new was the security surrounding his visit. Only supporters selected by the campaign were allowed to line the hallway to the secretary of state's office at the Statehouse, and access to the building was restricted.

In 2015, he used the experience in part to boast about his personal wealth.

"They wanted a cashier's check," Trump said. "So this is from a bank that's not actually as rich as we are."

On Monday, he touted his wide lead in current New Hampshire polls and noted that support for Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis has dropped significantly.

"Bad things are happening, but we keep going up," he said.

Later, at his rally, continued to criticize Biden's response to the Hamas attack on Israel, calling the speech

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the president gave in response to the war last Thursday night "a grotesque betrayal of Israel" and "one of the most dangerous and deluded speeches ever delivered from the Oval Office."

He charged that Biden, in linking the threats posed by Hamas and Russia, "went before the American people and said that if you want to support Israel, then you have to give a blank check" to help Ukraine stave off Russia's ongoing invasion.

To protect the country, Trump said that, if he returns to the White House, he will order the construction of a state-of-the-art missile defense shield over the U.S. that he said would be "capable of blasting Chinese, Russian, and Iranian missiles out of our skies."

"Americans deserve an Iron Dome, and that's what we're going to have," he said, referring to Israel's vaunted defense system, which has intercepted thousands of missiles in the days since the attack.

In the weeks since, Trump has been leaning into the anti-immigration rhetoric that fueled his 2016 campaign, calling for an expanded Muslim travel ban and new ideological tests for immigrants. He has also warned that those who want to do harm to the U.S. may be infiltrating the country's southern border along with South American migrants.

He read the lyrics of "The Snake," a dark song that he's used since his first campaign as an allegory of what he says are the dangers of illegal immigration, and claimed Biden would turn the country "into a hotbed for jihadists and make our cities into dumping grounds resembling the Gaza Strip."

At a news conference Monday, New Hampshire Democrats criticized Trump and predicted state voters would reject him if he becomes the GOP nominee.

"At a time when our country confronts significant problems at home and around the world, and when our global leadership is as indispensable as ever, we need to be united. But Trump is incapable of bringing us together," said U.S. Sen. Maggie Hassan, a Democrat. "We are the Live Free or Die State: We have no use for a man who would overturn our elections or praise dictators. I know that as Granite Staters and Americans, we will reject Trump and we will win next November." ____

Colvin reported from Derry, New Hampshire.

Sen. Menendez enters not guilty plea to a new conspiracy charge

By LARRY NEUMEISTER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — U.S. Sen. Bob Menendez returned to Manhattan federal court Monday to challenge a new criminal charge alleging that he conspired to act as an agent of the Egyptian government when he chaired the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

"Not guilty," Menendez, 69, said when Judge Sidney H. Stein asked him for a plea to the charge. It was his first appearance before Stein, who is expected to preside over a trial tentatively scheduled for May.

Stein said the plea was the sole purpose for the hearing and adjourned the proceeding after less than five minutes. The New Jersey Democrat left the courthouse minutes later without speaking to reporters waiting outside. At an arraignment before a magistrate judge last month, Menendez was released on a \$100,000 bond.

In a statement issued after the hearing, Menendez repeated his claim that the new charge "flies in the face of my long record of standing up for human rights and democracy in Egypt and in challenging leaders of that country."

He again called it "as outrageous as it is absurd" and said he has been loyal only to the United States his entire life.

"The facts haven't changed. The government is engaged in primitive hunting, by which the predator chases its prey until it's exhausted and then kills it. This tactic won't work," he said. "I will not litigate this case through the press, but have made it abundantly clear that I have done nothing wrong and once all the facts are presented will be found innocent."

Menendez was forced to step down from his powerful post leading the Senate committee after he was charged last month. Prosecutors said the senator and his wife, Nadine Menendez, accepted bribes of cash, gold bars and a luxury car over the past five years from three New Jersey businessmen in exchange for

a variety of corrupt acts.

The other defendants entered not guilty charges to a superseding indictment last week. The senator was permitted to delay his arraignment so he could tend to Senate duties. He has said that throughout his life he has been loyal to the United States and that he will prove he is innocent.

Menendez has resisted calls from more than 30 Democrats to resign.

The rewritten indictment added a charge alleging that the senator, his wife and one of the businessmen conspired to have Menendez act as an agent of the government of Egypt and Egyptian officials.

As a member of Congress, Menendez is prohibited from acting as an agent for a foreign government.

Menendez is accused of passing information to the Egyptians about the staff at the U.S. embassy in Cairo, ghostwriting a letter on Egypt's behalf intended to influence fellow senators and urging the U.S. State Department to get more involved in international negotiations to block a dam project Egypt opposed, among other things.

Last week, Nadine Menendez and a businessman, Wael Hana, pleaded not guilty to the superseding indictment.

Both of them were charged with conspiring with the senator to use him as an agent of the government of Egypt and its officials. The charge carries a potential penalty of up to five years in prison.

Man fires gun near pro-Palestinian rally outside Chicago, another pepper-sprays crowd, police say

By TODD RICHMOND Associated Press

Two people were arrested after police say one man fired a shot into the air and another pepper-sprayed pro-Palestinian demonstrators near an Israel solidarity event in Chicago's northern suburbs.

The episode took place Sunday evening around a banquet hall in Skokie, where about 1,000 people had gathered to show solidarity with Israel, according to event organizers.

A group of about 200 pro-Palestinian protesters staged their own rally near the hall. A man reportedly drove his car into the group, got out and fired a shot before police said they took him into custody. A witness told the Chicago Sun-Times that the man's car had been covered in Israeli flags, the newspaper reported.

A man coming out of the banquet hall wearing an Israeli flag as a cape sprayed the crowd with pepper spray before he was arrested. No one was seriously hurt in the melee, but the pepper spray hit several protesters, a Chicago police officer and a Sun-Times reporter.

Hatem Abudayyeh, national chair of the U.S. Palestinian Community Network, told The Associated Press in a telephone interview Monday that his group organized the protest along with the Chicago Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression to push back against Israeli aggression. He said that he heard the shot and saw the person attack the crowd with pepper spray.

"This is a concern we're having across the country," Abudayyeh said. "Palestinians, whether at protests or living their daily lives, are being attacked."

He accused pro-Israeli political leaders in the U.S. of inflaming tensions.

"Not only do we have to work 24 hours a day to help educate the American public ... we also have to defend our community from physical attacks on their lives," he said.

Alison Pure-Slovin, director of the Simon Wiesenthal Center's Midwest regional office, said in a statement that her group organized the rally. The Simon Wiesenthal Center describes itself as a global Jewish human rights activist organization.

"It was an incredible display of solidarity and support for the State of Israel and the Jewish people," she said in the statement. She didn't immediately respond to a follow-up message seeking comment on the arrests.

Messages left with the Skokie Police Department and the Cook County State Attorney's Office inquiring about whether the men will be charged weren't immediately returned.

Police in U.S. cities as well as federal authorities have been on high alert for violence driven by antisemitic or Islamophobic sentiments as the war between Israel and Hamas continues.

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In Minneapolis, a rally was briefly disrupted Sunday when a man allegedly drove toward protesters who were showing support for Palestinians in Gaza. Police said in a statement that multiple witnesses reported a vehicle drove through the crowd. The Anti-War Committee released a statement saying that a "hostile driver threatened protesters with his car and a box cutter" and video circulating on social media showed protesters kicking and hitting a car before the person inside drove away.

Minneapolis police Sgt. Garrett Parten said Monday that police were still investigating and trying to "figure out what was true and what was not." Police said that no injuries were reported and there were no arrests.

Sunday's rally in Skokie came a little more than a week after a landlord in Plainfield, Illinois, was charged with a hate crime after he was accused of fatally stabbing a 6-year-old Muslim boy and seriously wounding his mother. Police said he singled out the victims because of their faith and as a response to the war.

After presidential race surprise, Argentine economy minister and right-wing populist look to runoff

By DANIEL POLITI and DAVID BILLER Associated Press

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina (AP) — Argentina's economy minister and the anti-establishment upstart he faces in a presidential runoff next month began competing Monday to shore up the moderate voters they need.

Economy Minister Sergio Massa earned almost seven points more than chainsaw-wielding economist and freshman lawmaker Javier Milei in Sunday's vote. Most polls had shown Massa slightly trailing, as voters had been expected to punish him for triple-digit inflation that has eaten away at purchasing power and boosted poverty.

On Nov. 19 voters will either choose Massa, despite the economic deterioration that took place on his watch, or place their hopes in a self-described anarcho-capitalist who promises a drastic shake-up of South America's second-largest economy.

Milei's fiery rhetoric and radical proposals — like slashing subsidies that benefit a large swath of the population and replacing the local currency with the dollar — galvanized die-hard supporters, but cost him support among more moderate voters.

Massa focused his messaging in the latter part of the campaign on how Milei's budget-slashing chainsaw would negatively affect citizens already struggling to make ends meet, with a particular focus on how much public transportation prices in Buenos Aires would increase without subsidies, said Mariel Fornoni of the political consulting firm Management & Fit.

That "had a significant impact and evidently instilled more fear than anything else," Fornoni said.

Massa once again showed his Peronist party's power to mobilize Argentine voters. A nebulous political movement named after former President Juan Domingo Perón that has both left- and right-wing factions but broadly believes in social justice and workers' rights, Peronism has been a dominant force and in this election cycle emerged as the only viable left-leaning option.

Right-wing votes were divided between Milei, former Security Minister Patricia Bullrich of the main opposition coalition and another candidate, Cordoba province's Gov. Juan Schiaretti. Bullrich finished third in the field of five candidates, and the runoff will be decided by where her voters ultimately migrate.

She said in her concession speech Sunday night that she wouldn't congratulate Massa on his victory because he was part of "Argentina's worst government," and that her coalition would never support "the mafias that have destroyed this country." She stopped short of endorsing Milei, however.

During the campaign, Milei harshly criticized Bullrich as part of the entrenched elite that required purging, but he sought to appeal to her voters in a radio interview Monday, suggesting that they should focus on the bigger picture.

"Everyone who wants to change Argentina, who wants to embrace the ideas of freedom, are welcome," Milei said. "It's not a matter of labels; it's a matter of who wants to be on this side."

Asked in a news conference Monday whether he foresees challenges in siphoning support away from Bullrich, Massa responded that "leaders aren't the owners of votes" and that several views espoused by

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Milei "have nothing to do with our culture and the values of the average Argentine citizen."

Massa also said he would not want his government to be characterized as only Peronist.

"I believe it's a mistake to suggest that the upcoming phase should be tied solely to Peronism. We are heading toward a government of national unity. I will call upon the best from various political forces, regardless of their origin," Massa said.

Massa had already told voters that he inherited a bad economic situation exacerbated by a devastating drought that decimated exports. He reassured them that the worst was past.

With nearly all ballots counted Monday, Massa, 51, had 36.7% of the vote and Milei, 53, had 30%. Bullrich got 23.8%

In his radio interview, Milei characterized Massa's results as the minister's "ceiling" and said his showing marked a "floor".

Mauro Salvatore, a 23-year-old programmer, said outside Milei's campaign headquarters Sunday night that he is optimistic Milei will pick up the votes that went to Bullrich in the first round.

"We have a clear possibility. We find ourselves in a situation we knew wouldn't be easy, but you can see the Argentine people are tired and really want change, independent of whether it will be Milei or Bullrich," said Salvatore, 23. "We have a lot of faith that some of Bullrich's voters can be taken, given it's understood they have more inclination toward Milei's ideas than Massa's."

Analysts, however, questioned whether those votes would automatically transfer to him. Some of the more progressive elements of Bullrich's coalition were already making clear Monday they would not support Milei, who has raged against the so-called "political caste," vowed to eliminate half the government ministries and slash public spending.

And some analysts warned a runoff scenario may not be conducive to Milei's combative style.

Milei is "an inexperienced candidate, lacking political expertise, who perhaps may not have the capacity to understand that the current scenario will require him to moderate, build political agreements, and appeal to voters who might ask for changes in his political proposal," said Lucas Romero, head of Synopsis, a local political consultancy.

Milei's casting himself as a culture warrior against the creep of the so-called "socialist agenda" appears to be a headwind, said Benjamin Gedan, director of the Latin America Program at the Washington-based Wilson Center. Milei has been endorsed by Brazil's former far-right President Jair Bolsonaro and says he shares a common mission with former U.S. President Donald Trump. Some supporters wear hats that read "Make Argentina Great Again".

Gedan described Milei's opposition to abortion and gun control, among other positions, as "out of sync with Argentine society," Gedan said.

Sovereign bonds plunged Monday and there was a selloff in Argentine equities as the market predicted that Massa's first-round surprise means the government has little incentive to correct any of the economy's imbalances for now. In the run-up to the vote, Massa boosted welfare programs and implemented tax cuts that benefited almost all registered workers, going against calls from the International Monetary Fund for austerity and removal of subsidies.

Massa "was able to build over the last two months through some tax holidays and other giveaways that could be fairly deemed populist," said Brian Winter, a longtime Argentina expert and vice president of the New York-based Council of the Americas. "It's going to be really interesting to hear what he says in the next few weeks, because he will need to win over some more moderate voters in order to win."

Release of two more hostages gives some hope to families of others abducted in the attack on Israel

By The Associated Press undefined

The release Monday of two more hostages is offering some hope to the families of the more than 200 people the Israeli military says were seized by Hamas militants.

The two Israeli women, 85-year-old Yocheved Lifshitz and 79-year-old Nurit Cooper, were snatched from

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their homes in Nir Oz, a kibbutz near the Gaza border during Hamas' Oct. 7 rampage into southern Israel. Their husbands were not released.

Their release follows the freeing Friday of an American woman and her teenage daughter.

But the relatives of others taken captive are struggling with thoughts of what their loved ones might be enduring and how to explain to young children what happened to their parents.

Here are some of their stories.

BIBAS FAMILY

LARNACA, Cyprus — Ofri Bibas couldn't bring herself to tell her brother, Yarden, she loved him — to do so seemed an irreversible finality, she said.

Yarden Bibas, his wife, Shiri, and their sons, 4-year-old Ariel and 9-month-old Kfir, were snatched from their home in the Nir-Oz Kibbutz during the Oct. 7 Hamas onslaught.

Her brother initially believed the volley of rocket fire was "just another bombing like we're used to," said Ofri Bibas, who lives elsewhere in Israel.

But he soon realized it was "something much bigger and much worse," she said, speaking last week at a rally in support of Israel in Larnaca, Cyprus, that she and other relatives of the hostages flew in for, to raise attention to their loved ones' plights.

Ofri Bibas said she communicated with her brother in a flurry of texts as the Hamas gunmen roamed around outside his home. She said her brother and his wife did their best to keep their sons quiet.

"Try to imagine keeping a 9-month-old and a 4-year-old kid quiet so the terrorists won't come in," she said.

Yarden Bibas told his sister he had a gun in the house, but couldn't use it to defend his family against so many gunmen armed with automatic rifles.

Then her brother said he loved her. But Ofri Bibas didn't respond she loved him too. "I just said, 'Shut up it's going to be okay, shut up. Just be quiet and follow the security and everything will be all right.'"

Later that night, Yarden sent a final text that the gunmen had entered the family's home.

Ofri Bibas said she and her family learned that Shiri and the boys were taken by Hamas through a video released by the Islamic militants on social media. Later, Hamas released an image showing her wounded brother held by his throat by a militant holding a hammer in his other hand.

Ofri Bibas said every time she hears children playing, she thinks of her little nephew, Kfir, hungry and afraid.

"They must be terrified. We just ask everyone to help us bring them back home," she said.

— Menelaos Hadjicostis

Judith and Natalie Raanan

Judith and Natalie Raanan, an American woman and her teenage daughter, have been released and are being reunited with family. It was the first such hostage release.

Before the release was announced Friday, Natalie Raanan's brother, Ben, described her as a typical 17-year-old: she loves art, makeup, fashion, and DoorDash -- "she hates eating at home."

She graduated from high school in the Chicago suburbs this year and has a birthday coming up, according to her brother, who is 34 and based in Denver.

Before she left with her mother, Judith Raanan, on a trip to Israel to celebrate her grandmother's 85th birthday and the Jewish holidays, the teen was deciding between going to college to study interior or fashion design and taking an apprenticeship with a tattoo shop.

The pair had been sending updates as the trip progressed and were enjoying "this really special mom and daughter time together," said their rabbi, Meir Hecht.

Natalie is "just a very loving, kind person," Ben Raanan said. Their middle brother, Adam, is nonverbal and much older than she is, but Natalie makes it a priority to maintain a strong bond with him, he explained.

Judith Raanan was very active in her faith community, Chabad of Evanston, said her friend and the rabbi's wife, Yehudis Hecht. Judith came to Shabbat almost every week, helped prepare the Kiddush lunch, and just before she left for Israel she dropped off a pink prayer book for the Hechts' 7-year-old daughter, who loves the color, said Yehudis Hecht.

— Claire Savage

Omer Neutra

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A small forest of candles melted into the chocolate icing of a birthday cake in New York's Long Island last week, but the guest of honor wasn't there.

Omer Neutra, an Israeli soldier, turned 22 seven days after Hamas' attack on Israel on Oct. 7. Israeli officials told his parents that Hamas took Neutra and his unit hostage, Orna and Ronen Neutra said in a telephone interview. They were told he was seen on video footage released by Hamas.

At their home in the U.S. on Oct. 14, the family took a break from doing what they can to secure Omer's release by celebrating his birthday. They did not blow out the candle flames, because, they said, Omer wasn't there to do so.

The scene is a glimpse of the difficult limbo in which the Neutras find themselves as they and the families of more than 200 other Israeli hostages — and dozens more people who remain missing — await word on their loved ones' fates, with hope.

"Omer is tough," said his dad, Ronen. "We feel that he is well."

Omer Neutra was born in Manhattan a month after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, the son of Israeli-born parents. Also a dual citizen, he attended a conservative Jewish school and "knew all of the statistics of the New York Knicks," Ronen said.

He lists Omer's leadership positions as captain of the basketball, soccer and volleyball teams at the Schechter School of Long Island, as well as a regional president of United Synagogue Youth. Omer, Ronen said, was offered admission to the State University of New York at Binghamton — but instead deferred, took a gap year and then moved to Israel to join the army.

The Neutras last spoke to their son on Oct. 6, the night before the incursion, as he patrolled the Gaza border. Omer was looking forward to Shabbat, which on that weekend was also the start of a weeklong celebration of the harvest season in Israel.

"He was tired — motivated but tired — after a few weeks of lots of action on the border," Ronen said. "He was hoping for a peaceful weekend to relax a little bit."

— Laurie Kellman

Haran family

For days after the brutal Hamas attack, Shaked Haran sought any clues she could about the fate of her missing parents, sister, little niece and nephew, two aunts, an uncle, a cousin — 10 family members in all, spanning three generations.

There were strong signs that at least some had been taken hostage. Her parents' house at Kibbutz Be'eri was burned but the shelter was intact and there were no bodies found in it. Phone locations were tracked to Gaza. Haran's brother-in-law had been seen being put in a Hamas car. And after a friend called the father's phone more than 100 times, someone finally answered in Arabic and then referred in Hebrew to a hostage situation.

If captivity was a terrible outcome, the alternative would be worse.

But earlier this week, Haran, a 34-year-old attorney who grew up on the kibbutz but now lives in Beer-sheba, got the devastating news that the body of her father, Avshalom Haran, had been identified — he'd died in the terrible violence at Be'eri. The news came shortly after her uncle, Eviatar Kipnis, had also been confirmed dead.

Now, Haran can only pray her other relatives are alive — and tell the world their stories. They include her mother, Shoshan, a longtime social activist who founded the nonprofit Fair Planet, which works to fight food insecurity in the developing world by helping farmers.

"She's really dedicated her time to this, trying to get as many people out of the poverty cycle as possible," Haran said, adding that her family had been committed to peace, with many active in peace organizations, and raised her "to think about the person on the other side of the situation."

Also missing: Haran's sister, Adi, a psychologist; her husband Tal and their children Naveh, 8, "a bright, open-hearted boy that makes friends in an instant," and Yahel, 3, "creative and full of life." Also believed abducted are Haran's aunt, Sharon, her 12-year-old daughter, Noam, and another aunt, Lilach Kipnis.

Asked if she has a message on behalf of her family, Haran preferred to speak about all the hostages

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and victims.

"I love my family, but they're one small story in this huge catastrophe," Haran said. "They'd want the message to be that they're part of the family of the kibbutz – and the family of Israel."

— Jocelyn Noveck

Or and Eynav Levy

For the past week, 2-year-old Almog Levy has been asking for his mom and dad, and no one knows what to tell him.

His parents, Or and Eynav Levy, did everything together. They kept a tent in their car for spontaneous road trips, and they recently took a family trip to Thailand. They also loved music festivals, and drove to the Tribe of Nova festival in the Israeli desert.

They arrived minutes before Hamas militants carried out the deadliest civilian massacre in Israeli history. Eynav Elkayam Levy, 32, was confirmed dead. Or, 33, is missing.

"How can you tell a 2-year-old boy he won't see his mother anymore?" said Or's older brother, Michael Levy. The family is stuck between heartbreak and hope, and they pray that Or makes it home alive.

Photos from happier times show the couple beaming at the beach and cafes.

"Or is always smiling, always happy, not just in the pictures," said Michael Levy, 40, who thinks of his brother as a child genius who would break things so he could fix them. Or taught himself computer programming and is part of a successful startup, and he and Eynav dreamed of having a bigger family.

A patchwork of text messages captures the couple's chaotic final minutes together. Eynav texted her mother, who was babysitting Almog, shortly after daybreak to say they'd arrived at the festival site.

Soon after, Or texted his mother to say they were driving back home. It was 6:51 am and sirens were sounding as Hamas rockets flew over the desert party.

Or's mother texted back: "Watch out and call me when you can." He called at 7:39 a.m. to say they were hiding in a bomb shelter. She asked how they were. "Mom, you don't want to know," he replied, before phone service cut off. The family hasn't heard from him since.

Several days later, the Israeli army informed the family that Eynav's body was found inside the shelter, and that Or had been kidnapped and taken hostage. The family has no other details.

Almog's grandparents are taking turns watching the boy, Michael said. They are trying to stay positive, for Almog's sake. "He is calling out for his mom and dad all the time."

— Jocelyn Gecker

Sagui Dekel-Chen

Sagui Dekel-Chen is a builder of things. He's as gifted with his hands as he is at managing community development projects, his father says.

Early on the morning of Oct. 7, Sagui was tinkering with an engine in the machine shop at the kibbutz of Nir Oz, in southern Israel, when he saw intruders on the grounds and sounded the alarm. After running home, he rigged the door of the safe room so it couldn't be opened from the outside, kissed his pregnant wife and told her to lock herself and their two daughters inside.

Then the 35-year-old father borrowed a gun and tried to protect his community. He hasn't been seen since. His family believes that the Israeli-American, like several members of the kibbutz, was abducted by the Hamas militants.

"This is a guy who has so much to give," said his father, Jonathan Dekel-Chen. "He's already proven it. Ironically not just to Israelis and his family, his children, but to all of our neighbors."

Sagui Dekel-Ch is a project manager for the U.K. branch of the Jewish National Fund, organizing the construction of schools and youth centers in the underdeveloped Negev Desert. That included collaboration with both Jewish and Muslim nonprofits that worked in Arab communities near the kibbutz.

"Every day was something different. Every day he was helping other people make their nonprofit goals come alive," his father said.

The work was an avenue for Sagui Dekel-Chen's "extraordinary creativity" as he advised non-profits,

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launched his own projects and built coalitions to get things done, his father said.

"It is a crime that Hamas has made it so that Palestinian people will never be able, I fear, to benefit themselves from my son and people like him because their brains have been poisoned," he added.

— Danica Kirka

Romi Gonen

Meirav Leshem Gonen says she feels like she has failed to do her job as a mother to protect her 23-year-old daughter, Romi Gonen, who vanished on the day Hamas unleashed its onslaught inside Israel.

Speaking in Cyprus at a support rally for Israel on Tuesday, Gonen fought back tears as she recounted her daughter's frantic call from an outdoor music festival and her description of missiles falling followed by volleys of automatic gunfire.

"We assumed, OK, a few terrorists, the army will come and everything will be finished in a few minutes," Gonen said. "But the shooting kept on and on, and we are on the phone hearing the shootings, and Romi is terrified."

Gonen and her eldest daughter spent nearly five hours speaking to Romi, who told them that roads clogged with abandoned cars made escape impossible and that she would instead seek shelter in some bushes to hide from roaming Hamas gunmen.

"She's afraid and she has to hide from bush to bush so the terrorists will not find her. Just imagine where she was, what she felt," Gonen said.

Amid the carnage a ray of hope emerged, as a friend who rescued a few other revelers went back in search of Romi and her friends.

But then, the call came that changed everything. "Mommy I was shot, the car was shot, everybody was shot. ... I am wounded and bleeding. Mommy, I think I'm going to die," said Romi.

Trying to lift her daughter's spirits, Gonen told Romi as if by command that she wasn't going to die, to stop crying, start breathing and to treat her wounded friends.

"And they knew I was lying because I didn't have anything, anything I could do to help her," Gonen said.

"If I cannot help her, I will tell her how much I love her. She's my kid. I wanted her to remember my words, and then told her how much I love her and how much she's loved, and what we will do when she comes back home."

Romi's last word during the call was "Mommy," as approaching gunfire and the men's shouts drowned out everything.

Then the phone shut off.

Gonen said she thinks she's a strong mother, "But I feel that I didn't do my job. And since that day, all I do is make sure that nobody will forget Romi and any others of the kidnapped."

— Menelaos Hadjicostis

Judith Weinstein and Gad Haggai

Judith Weinstein and her husband, Gad Haggai, were on their morning walk when gunfire erupted and missiles streaked across the sky. Taking cover in a field, they could hear a recorded voice from an alert system for their kibbutz in southern Israel.

"What did she say?" Weinstein, 70, asked in Hebrew as she captured the scene on video.

"Red alert," her 72-year-old husband said.

Weinstein shared the 40-second video clip in a group chat Oct. 7, when Hamas attacked Kibbutz Nir Oz. That has been their last contact with their family.

More than a week later, Weinstein and Haggai are still missing. Their family used the video to pinpoint the couple's last known location and shared it with the Israeli army, but a search came up empty. Their fate remains a mystery to their four grown children.

A daughter, Iris Weinstein Haggai, has been relentlessly looking for answers from her home in Singapore. The family heard ominous news from a paramedic, who said Weinstein had called for medical help.

"She said they were shot by terrorists on a motorcycle and that my dad was wounded really bad," said Weinstein Haggai, 38. "Paramedics tried to send her an ambulance. The ambulance got hit by a rocket."

The paramedic lost contact with Weinstein, leaving her family grappling with worst-case scenarios.

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Haggai is a retired chef and jazz musician. Weinstein, a New York native, is a retired teacher. Both are pacifists who raised their children at the kibbutz, where everybody knows their neighbors.

— Michael Kunzelman

Yaffa Adar

Yaffa Adar loved reading, writing and keeping connected. Even at 85 she often sent her family messages and GIFs on WhatsApp. She was active on Facebook, her granddaughter recalls.

Keeping in close touch online became especially important in recent years as she found it harder to walk beyond her home in Nir Oz, a kibbutz near the Gaza Strip. Amid that physical struggle, she kept her mind busy and knew what she wanted, her granddaughter said.

"She loved reading," Adva Adar recalled. "So we were like, "We're going to get you a Kindle." What did her grandmother say? "No, I like the smell of the paper in books.""

So when Hamas' Oct. 7 massacre at Nir Oz ended and no one could find Adar, her family worried. That concern turned to horror when video surfaced showing her being driven in a golf cart in Gaza, wrapped in a pink-flowered blanket.

The footage was among the first evidence that Hamas fighters had not only killed Israelis — more than 1,400, the vast majority civilians — but had dragged dozens back to Gaza regardless of age in the most complex hostage crisis the country has ever faced.

Some people speculated that Yaffa Adar's unflinching demeanor in the video perhaps meant she didn't understand what was happening.

Not her family, which includes three children, eight grandchildren and seven great-grandkids.

"She absolutely knew what was going on around her. She wasn't going to panic," her granddaughter said.

What's frightening now is that her grandmother doesn't have her medication for blood pressure and chronic pain.

"She was really the glue of our family. She loved her life," Adva Adar recalls. "She liked good food and she liked good wine. She was very young-minded."

— Laurie Kellman

Roni Eshel

Roni Eshel, a 19-year-old Israel Defense Forces soldier, was stationed at a military base near the Gaza border when Hamas attacked. Although she didn't answer her phone when her mother called to check on her that morning, she later texted to say that she was busy but OK.

"I love you so much," Eshel told her mother, Sharon, about three hours after the attack started.

Her parents haven't heard from her since. More than a week later, Eshel's family is desperate to know happened to their daughter. Her father, Eyal Eshel, describes the wait for news as "hell."

"I don't know what to do. I don't know what to think, actually. Where is she? What is she eating? If it's cold for her? If it's hot? I don't know nothing," Eyal Eshel said.

The IDF hasn't publicly released any names of hostages. Her father says IDF has told them she is considered missing; he believes she has been kidnapped.

"Otherwise, where is she?" he asked.

Eshel grew up in a small village north of Tel Aviv. She reported for military service two weeks after finishing school. She was three months into her second year of mandatory military service.

"It's part of our life here in Israel," her father says.

Roni Eshel was in a communications unit at a base near Nahal Oz. She had returned to the base from a brief vacation on the Wednesday before the attack.

Eshel was proud to be a third generation of her family to join the Israeli military. Her father, uncle and grandfather also served.

"She was very happy to serve the country," her father said.

Her father said she has planned to travel and enroll in a university after completing her two years of service. But he can't think about her future while she's missing. Eyal Eshel says he isn't sleeping, eating or working while he waits.

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"I'm not ashamed to ask (for) help. Please help us," he said.

— Michael Kunzelman

Maya and Itay Regev

"Mom, I'll unpack my suitcase when I get back," Maya Regev told her mother that Friday night, in a rush to get going. "See you tomorrow."

And within a half-hour of returning to Israel from a family trip overseas, 21-year-old Maya and her brother Itay, 18, were on their way to the Tribe of Nova music festival, planning to dance the night away.

It was a typical activity for the duo, who both love to be on the move, gather with friends, and especially to travel, said their parents, Ilan and Mirit Regev. Maya had already bought her ticket for an extended trip to South America in December.

But early the next morning, Ilan Regev's phone rang. It was a frantic Maya. "Dad, they shot me, they shot me!" she screamed in a recording the family has released. "He is killing us, Dad, he is killing us."

Her father begged her to send her location, to find a place to hide. "I'm coming," he said.

Ilan Regev jumped in his car from his home in Herzliya, near Tel Aviv, and sped south to the festival site, where he was barred from entering. Soon, the Regev family discovered a Hamas video that showed Itay in captivity in Gaza.

Maya was not pictured, but the army has told the family both were hostages in Gaza. Officials gave no further information.

"I want to know that my kids are alive," said Ilan Regev. Added their mother: "We don't know if they are eating. We don't know if they are drinking. If they are hurt."

— Jocelyn Noveck

Hersh Goldberg-Polin

His mother describes Hersh Goldberg-Polin as like a lot of other young people.

The 23-year-old from Jerusalem loves music, wants to see the world and, now that he's finished his military service, has plans to go to university, his family says. But first he has to come home.

Goldberg-Polin was last seen on Oct. 7, when Hamas militants loaded him into the back of a pickup with other hostages abducted from the music festival where at least 260 people were killed.

Despite those harrowing accounts, his mother, Rachel Goldberg, holds out hope she will see him again.

"He's a survivor," Goldberg said of her son, whose grin beams out from behind a sparse, youthful beard in family photos. "He's not like this big, bulky guy. But I think that survival has a lot to do with where you are mentally."

Born in Berkeley, California, Goldberg-Polin moved to Israel with his family when he was 7 years old.

As a child, he wanted to learn about the world, poring over maps and atlases to learn the names of capital cities and mountains. Later he became a fan of psychedelic trance music and once took a nine-week trek through six European countries so he could attend a series of raves.

Not surprising then, that he and some friends headed to the Tribe of Nova music festival, billed as a place "where the essence of unity and love combines forces with the best music."

That vibe was shattered by gunmen who stormed into Israel from the nearby Gaza Strip.

Witnesses said Goldberg-Polin lost part of an arm when the attackers tossed grenades into a temporary shelter where he and others had taken refuge, but he tied a tourniquet around it and walked out before being bundled into the truck.

Family and friends have organized the "Bring Hersh Home" campaign on social media, hoping he will still be able to take a planned backpack trip through southern Asia.

But first his mother hopes someone helps her son.

"It will require like the biggest heroism and strength and courage, but I want someone to help out and I want someone to help all of those hostages."

— Danica Kirka

Ada Sagi

Ada Sagi was getting ready to travel to London to celebrate her 75th birthday with family when Hamas militants attacked her kibbutz and took her hostage.

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The trip was supposed to be a joyous occasion after a year of trauma. Her husband died of cancer last year, she had struggled with allergies and was recovering from hip replacement surgery. But the grandmother of six was getting through it, even though it was hard.

"They had a very, very, very strong bond of 54 years," her son Noam, a psychotherapist in London, told The Associated Press. "And my mum, this is her main thing now, really, just getting her life back after dealing with the loss of my dad."

Ada Sagi was born in Tel Aviv in 1948, the daughter of Holocaust survivors from Poland. She moved to a kibbutz at the age of 18 because she was attracted by the ideals of equality and humanity on which the communal settlements were built.

A mother of three, Ada decided to learn Arabic so she could make friends with her neighbors and build a better future for her children. She later taught the language to other Israelis as a way to improve communication with the Palestinians who live near Kibbutz Nir Oz, on the southeastern border of the Gaza Strip.

That was, for many years, her mission, Noam said.

While he hopes his mother's language skills will help her negotiate with the hostage-takers, he is calling on the international community for assistance.

"The only hope I have now is ... for humanity to do something and for me to see my mother again and for my son to see his grandmother again," he said. "I think we need humanity to actually flex its muscle here, and" — by telling her story — "that is all I'm trying to do."

— Danica Kirka

Adina Moshe

David Moshe was born in Iraq. So decades later in Israel, his wife, Adina, cooked his favorite Iraqi food, including a traditional dish with dough, meat and rice.

But what really delighted the family, their granddaughter Anat recalls, was Adina's maqluba — a Middle Eastern meal served in a pot that is flipped upside-down at the table, releasing the steaming goodness inside. Pleasing her husband of more than a half-century, Anat Moshe says, was her grandmother's real culinary priority.

"They were so in love, you don't know how in love they were," the 25-year-old said. Adina Moshe "would make him his favorite food, Iraqi food. Our Shabbat table was always so full."

It will be wracked with heartbreak now.

On Oct. 7, Hamas fighters shot and killed David Moshe, 75, as he and Adina huddled in their bomb shelter in Nir Oz, a kibbutz about two miles from the Gaza border. The militants burned the couple's house. The next time Anat Moshe saw her grandmother was in a video, in which Adina Moshe, 72, in a red top, was sandwiched between two insurgents on a motorbike, driving away.

Her grandmother hasn't been heard from since, Anat Moshe said. She'd had heart surgery last year, and is without her medication.

Still, Anat Moshe brightened when she recalled her family life in Nir Oz. The community was the birthplace and landscape of Adina and David's romance and family. The two met at the pool, Anat said. Adina worked as a minder of small children, so generations of residents knew her.

But all along, low-level anxiety hummed about the community's proximity to Gaza.

"There was always like some concern about it, like rumors," Anat Moshe recalled. "She always told us that when the terrorists come to her house, she will make her coffee and put out some cookies and put out great food."

— Laurie Kellman

Moran Stela Yanai

Delicate pearls peek out from silver and stainless steel chains — bits of brightness and optimism among Moran Stela Yanai's jewelry designs that reflected cultures around the world.

Creating art to wear has been Yanai's joy, but not the only one, her brother-in-law Dan Mor said. Yanai, a 40-year-old Israeli who disappeared after a desert rave, also fiercely protected people and animals.

"Moran is the softest soul," recalls Dan Mor, whose wife, Lea, is Moran's sister. "She could almost be annoying with how much she was so kind and sensitive to animals. You couldn't eat meat because she

was so sensitive to animals being harmed — not just pets but farm animals and wild animals.”

Mor has a hard time speaking of Yanai in the past tense. But that’s the least of his family’s unknowns in the wake of her disappearance — and the family’s horror at recognizing her in a video on TikTok that surfaced later. In it, Yanai is sitting on the ground, looking terrified, amid derogatory Arabic text about Jews.

Days earlier, Yanai had posted a video on Instagram on her way to the rave, where she hoped to sell her designs. She posted a second video, recorded by a friend, of her designs displayed on a table at the festival.

“Moran, kind hearted, never caused pain to anyone, not even a fly,” reads the accompanying text. Her work, Mor said, is inspired by cultures around the world, including Chinese and Arab.

Mor, an actor, said his family in Tel Aviv is feeling Moran’s absence deeply and trying to fill the wait by telling the world about her.

“My beautiful dear sister-in-law, auntie to my kids,” he said. “She had a big heart, she has a big heart, and I’m hoping that heart is still pumping.”

— Laurie Kellman

Even with carbon emissions cuts, a key part of Antarctica is doomed to slow collapse, study says

By SETH BORENSTEIN AP Science Writer

No matter how much the world cuts back on carbon emissions, a key and sizable chunk of Antarctica is essentially doomed to an “unavoidable” melt, a new study found.

Though the full melt will take hundreds of years, slowly adding nearly 6 feet (1.8 meters) to sea levels, it will be enough to reshape where and how people live in the future, the study’s lead author said.

Researchers used computer simulations to calculate future melting of protective ice shelves jutting over Antarctica’s Amundsen Sea in western Antarctica. The study in Monday’s journal *Nature Climate Change* found even if future warming was limited to just a few tenths of a degree more – an international goal that many scientists say is unlikely to be met – it would have “limited power to prevent ocean warming that could lead to the collapse of the West Antarctic Ice Sheet.”

“Our main question here was: How much control do we still have over ice shelf melting? How much melting can still be prevented by reducing emissions?” said study lead author Kaitlin Naughten, an oceanographer at the British Antarctic Survey. “Unfortunately, it’s not great news. Our simulations suggest that we are now committed to the rapid increase in the rate of ocean warming and ice shelf melting over the rest of the century.”

While past studies have talked about how dire the situation is, Naughten was the first to use computer simulations to study the key melting component of warm water melting ice from below, and the work looked at four different scenarios for how much carbon dioxide the world pumps into the atmosphere. In each case, ocean warming was just too much for this section of the ice sheet to survive, the study found.

Naughten looked at melting gatekeeper ice shelves, which float over the ocean in this area of Antarctica that is already below sea level. Once these ice shelves melt, there’s nothing to stop the glaciers behind them from flowing into the sea.

Naughten specifically looked at what would happen if somehow future warming was limited to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) over mid-19th century levels — the international goal — and found the runaway melting process anyway. The world has already warmed about 1.2 degrees Celsius (nearly 2.2 degrees Fahrenheit) since pre-industrial times and much of this summer temporarily shot past the 1.5 mark.

Naughten’s study concentrated on the part of the West Antarctic Ice Sheet that is most at risk from melting from below, near the Amundsen Sea. It includes the massive Thwaites ice shelf that is melting so fast it got the nickname “the Doomsday Glacier.” West Antarctica is only one-tenth of the southern continent but is more unstable than the larger eastern side.

That part of Antarctica “is doomed,” said University of California Irvine ice scientist Eric Rignot, who wasn’t part of the study. “The damage has already been done.”

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University of Colorado ice scientist Ted Scambos, who also wasn't part of the study, said this ice sheet "eventually is going to collapse. It's not a happy conclusion and it is one that I'm only saying reluctantly."

Naughten doesn't like to use the word "doomed," because she said 100 years from now the world might not just stop but reverse carbon levels in the air and global warming. But she said what's happening now on the ground is a slow collapse that can't be stopped, at least not in this century.

"I think it's unavoidable that some of this area is lost. It's unavoidable that the problem gets worse," Naughten told The Associated Press. "It isn't unavoidable that we lose all of it because sea level rise happens over the very long term. I only looked in this study up to 2100. So after 2100, we probably have some control still."

No matter what words are used, Naughten said she and other scientists studying the area in previous research conclude that this part of Antarctica "couldn't be saved or a lot of it couldn't be saved."

Naughten's study did not calculate how much ice would be lost, how much sea level would rise and at what speed. But she estimated that the amount of ice in the area most at risk if it all melted would raise sea levels by about 1.8 meters (5.9 feet).

However, she said, that is a slow process that would play out through the next few hundred years through the 2300s, 2400s and 2500s.

Naughten said that may seem like a long way away, but noted that if the Victorians of the 1800s had done something to drastically change the shape of our world, we would not look well on them.

This type of sea level rise would be "absolutely devastating" if it happened over 200 years, but if it could be stretched out over 2,000 years, humanity could adapt, Naughten said.

"Coastal communities will either have to build around or be abandoned," Naughten said.

While this part of Antarctica's ice sheet is destined to be lost, other vulnerable sections of Earth's environment can still be saved by reducing heat-trapping emissions so there is reason to still cut back on carbon pollution, Naughten said.

Twila Moon, deputy chief scientist at the National Snow and Ice Data Center who wasn't part of the research, said she worries that most people will see nothing but doom and gloom in the research.

"I don't see a lot of hope," Naughten said. "But it's what the science tells me. So that's what I have to communicate to the world."

Naughten quoted former NASA scientist Kate Marvel, saying "when it comes to climate change we need courage and not hope. Courage is the resolve to do well without the assurance of a happy ending."

This procedure is banned in the US. Why is it a hot topic in fight over Ohio's abortion amendment?

By JULIE CARR SMYTH Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — With Election Day closing in, anti-abortion groups seeking to build opposition to a reproductive rights measure in Ohio are messaging heavily around a term for an abortion procedure that was once used later in pregnancy but that hasn't been legal in the U.S. for over 15 years.

In ads, debates and public statements, the opposition campaign and top Republicans have increasingly been referencing "partial-birth abortions" as an imminent threat if voters approve the constitutional amendment on Nov. 7. "Partial-birth abortion" is a non-medical term for a procedure known as dilation and extraction, or D&X, which is already federally prohibited.

"It would allow a partial-birth abortion," Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine told reporters recently as he explained his opposition to the constitutional amendment, known as Issue 1.

"For many years, in Ohio and in this country, we've had a law that said a partial-birth abortion — where the child is partially delivered and then killed and then finally delivered — was illegal in Ohio," the governor continued. "This constitutional amendment would override that."

Constitutional scholars say that is not true and that the amendment would not override the existing federal ban if Ohio voters approve it.

"So changing our constitution will not affect in the slightest way the applicability of the federal partial-birth

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abortion ban," said Dan Kobil, a law professor at Capital University in Columbus, who supports abortion rights. "It would be a federal crime for a doctor to violate that ban."

That's because the supremacy clause of the U.S. Constitution calls for federal laws to trump state laws, said Jonathan Entin, professor emeritus of law at Case Western Reserve University.

"If the federal law prohibits a particular technique, then that's going to prevail over a state law that might be inconsistent," he said.

Ohio is the only state this November where voters will decide whether abortion should be legal. But the debate isn't happening in isolation. The state has been used as a campaign testing ground by anti-abortion groups after a string of defeats since the U.S. Supreme Court overturned a constitutional right to the procedure. And next year, abortion rights supporters are planning to put the question before voters in several more states, ensuring the issue will be central to races up and down the ballot.

A D&X procedure involved dilating the woman's cervix, then pulling the fetus through the cervix, feet-first to the neck. The head was then punctured and the skull emptied and compressed to allow the fetus to fit through the dilated cervix. Before the federal ban, it was used for both abortions and miscarriages in the second and third trimesters of pregnancy.

DeWine was serving in the U.S. Senate when the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act was passed in 2003. He voted for the prohibition, which declared a "moral, medical, and ethical consensus" that the procedure was "gruesome and inhumane." President George W. Bush signed the measure into law with DeWine at his side.

The ban was largely on hold while a constitutional challenge played out. The U.S. Supreme Court in 2007 rejected arguments against the law, upholding its application across all 50 states.

Asked why the governor suggested a federal law he supported would not apply if Ohio changes its constitution, spokesman Dan Tierney said DeWine bases his position on provisions of the U.S. Constitution that prevent the federal government from regulating conduct that has no effect on interstate commerce. Kobil acknowledged that argument, but said it's "almost certain to fail" if tested, given that the Supreme Court already declared the ban constitutional.

DeWine isn't the only top elected Republican in the state to warn that the procedure would be revived if the amendment passes on Nov. 7.

In a memo earlier this month, Republican Attorney General Dave Yost said the state's laws outlawing abortions through D&X and another procedure, non-intact dilation and evacuation, or D&E, the most common second trimester method, "would both be invalidated and these abortions would be permitted" if the amendment passes. The Ohio Senate's Republican supermajority passed a resolution saying something similar.

Entin, of Case Western, said "to the extent that the Ohio laws he's discussed are also covered by the federal law, it doesn't matter," because federally banned procedures would remain illegal.

Kelsey Pritchard, director of state public affairs for Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America, whose political arm is a major funder of the campaign opposing the amendment, said the federal ban "lacks enforcement" under a Biden Administration she described as "extreme pro-abortion."

"If it's not being enforced, if there's no teeth to it, then the protections need to happen at the state level," argued spokesperson Amy Natoce of Protect Women Ohio, the Issue 1 opposition campaign. "Of course, if Issue 1 passed, we won't have those protections."

Mae Winchester, a Cleveland-based maternal fetal medicine specialist, said use of the term in the campaign messaging over the amendment is misleading.

"Partial-birth abortion' is a made-up term that only serves to create confusion and stigmatize abortion later in pregnancy," she said. "It's not a procedure that's described anywhere in medical literature, and so it's not considered a medical term or even an actual medical procedure."

Ohio passed the nation's first ban on what its lawmakers then dubbed "partial birth feticide" in 1995, just three years after Ohio physician Martin Haskell debuted the D&X procedure during an abortion practitioners conference. He touted it as a way to avoid an overnight hospital stay and as safer and less painful for women than other methods.

Protect Women Ohio has invoked Haskell's legacy in one of its ads. It shows an image of Haskell and

describes the procedure he pioneered as “painful for the mother and the baby.” The voiceover then calls for a no vote on the amendment “so people like Dr. Haskell can’t perform painful ‘late-term’ abortions.”

The spot doesn’t note the distinction between “partial-birth” and “late-term” abortions — both non-medical terms coined by anti-abortion advocates — nor reference the federal ban.

Mike Gonidakis, president of Ohio Right to Life, said because of protections provided to individuals and abortion providers in the amendment, “The ad withstands any scrutiny.”

Haskell retired from active practice two years ago. He declined comment. But he has donated to the main group supporting the constitutional amendment, Ohioans United for Reproductive Rights.

Pro-Choice Ohio Executive Director Kellie Copeland called talk of “late-term” and “partial-birth” abortions a scare tactic.

“Issue 1 allows for clear restrictions on abortion after viability that protect patients’ health and safety,” she said. “These situations, when a woman needs an abortion later in pregnancy, are incredibly rare and heartbreaking for families.”

Ohio hasn’t had an abortion of any type performed after 25 weeks’ gestation since 2018 and only four have been recorded since 2013, according to statistics compiled by the state Health Department. Abortions between 21 and 24 weeks’ gestation, a span that encompasses the outside limit of Ohio’s current law, totaled 576, or 0.6% of the total, over that time.

Pritchard, of Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America, attributed the low numbers to the state’s existing abortion restrictions.

Dwindling fuel supplies for Gaza’s hospital generators put premature babies in incubators at risk

By WAFAA SHURAF, SAMY MAGDY and SAMYA KULLAB Associated Press

DEIR AL BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — A premature baby squirms inside a glass incubator in the neonatal ward of al-Aqsa Hospital in the central Gaza Strip. He cries out as intravenous lines are connected to his tiny body. A ventilator helps him breathe as a catheter delivers medication and monitors flash his fragile vital signs.

His life hinges on the constant flow of electricity, which is in danger of running out imminently unless the hospital can get more fuel for its generators. Once the generators stop, hospital director Iyad Abu Zahar fears that the babies in the ward, unable to breathe on their own, will perish.

“The responsibility on us is huge,” he said.

Doctors treating premature babies across Gaza are grappling with similar fears. At least 130 premature babies are at “grave risk” across six neonatal units, aid workers said. The dangerous fuel shortages are caused by the Israeli blockade of Gaza, which started — along with airstrikes — after Hamas militants attacked Israeli towns on Oct. 7.

At least 50,000 pregnant women in Gaza are unable to access essential health services, and some 5,500 are due to give birth in the coming month, according to the World Health Organization.

At least seven of the almost 30 hospitals have been forced to shut down due to damage from relentless Israeli strikes and lack of power, water and other supplies. Doctors in the remaining hospitals said they are on the brink. The U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees said Sunday it has enough fuel to last three days to serve critical needs.

“The world cannot simply look on as these babies are killed by the siege on Gaza ... A failure to act is to sentence these babies to death,” said Melanie Ward, chief executive of the Medical Aid for Palestinians aid group.

None of the 20 aid trucks that crossed into Gaza on Saturday, the first since the siege was imposed, contained fuel, amid Israeli fears it will end up in Hamas’ hands. Limited fuel supplies inside Gaza were being sent to hospital generators.

Seven tankers took fuel from a U.N. depot on the Gaza side of the border, but it was unclear if any of that was destined for the hospitals.

But will eventually run out if more is not permitted to enter.

Tarik Jašarević, a WHO spokesman, said 150,000 liters (40,000 gallons) of fuel are required to offer basic services in Gaza's five main hospitals.

Abu Zahar worries about how long his facility can hold out.

"If the generator stops, which we are expecting in the coming few hours due to the heavy demands of different departments in the hospital, the incubators in the intensive care unit will be in a very critical situation," he said.

Guillemette Thomas, medical coordinator for Doctors Without Borders in the Palestinian territories, said some of the babies could die within hours, and others in a couple of days, if they don't receive the special care and medication they urgently need.

"It's sure that these babies are in danger," she told The Associated Press. "It's a real emergency to take care of these babies, as it is an emergency to take care of the population of Gaza who are suffering from these bombings since the past two weeks."

The hospital must care for patients in northern and central Gaza since several hospitals shut down, he said, forcing it to more than double its patient capacity. That also puts a strain on the limited electricity.

Nesma al-Haj brought her newborn daughter to the hospital from Nuseirat, where she was recently displaced from northern Gaza, after she suffered from oxygen deprivation and extreme pain, she said.

The baby girl was born three days ago but soon developed complications. "The hospital is lacking in supplies," she said, speaking from al-Aqsa. "We are afraid that if the situation gets worse, there won't be any medicine left to treat our kids."

The problems are exacerbated by the dirty water many have been forced to use since Israel cut off the water supply. Abu Zahar says mothers are mixing baby formula with the contaminated water to feed their infants. It has contributed to the rise in critical cases in the ward.

In the al-Awda Hospital, a private facility in northern Jabalia, up to 50 babies are born almost every day, said hospital director Ahmed Muhanna. The hospital received an evacuation order from the Israeli military, but continued to work.

"The situation is tragic in every sense of the word," he said. "We have recorded a large deficit in emergency medicines and anesthetic," as well as other medical supplies.

To ration dwindling supplies, Muhanna said all scheduled operations were stopped and the hospital devoted all its resources to emergencies and childbirths. Complex neo-natal cases are sent to al-Aqsa.

Al-Awda has enough fuel to last four days at most, Muhanna said. "We have appealed to many international institutions, the World Health Organization, to supply hospitals with fuel, but to no avail so far," he said.

Thomas said women have already given birth in U.N.-run schools where tens of thousands of displaced people have sought shelter.

"These women are in danger, and the babies are in danger right now," she said. "That's a really critical situation."

Outcome of key local races in Pennsylvania could offer lessons for 2024 election

By BROOKE SCHULTZ Associated Press/Report for America

Local elections in Democratic strongholds at both ends of Pennsylvania next month could show how voters feel about progressive candidates and issues such as abortion and crime ahead of the 2024 election.

Philadelphia will get a new mayor, and Allegheny County — where Pittsburgh is the county seat — will see a new executive. Voters there will also decide whether to reelect the district attorney with backing of another party, after his long career as a Democrat.

The Nov. 7 results in Pennsylvania's two biggest population centers will set the electoral stage for 2024, when the state will be a prime presidential battleground, with candidates taking lessons about how Democrats see crime into the next election cycle and the strength of progressives in local races.

PHILADELPHIA MAYOR

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In Philadelphia, Democrat Cherelle Parker, a former state legislator who has had a long political career in the state, will face Republican David Oh, a former City Council member. Democratic Mayor Jim Kenney, in office for eight years, is term limited.

Parker, a moderate, emerged from a crowded field vying for her party's nomination in the heavily Democratic city.

Oh, 63, ran unopposed in the Republican primary. He acknowledges getting elected mayor is a tough battle in a city that — in his words — hates Republicans. But he said he has often butted heads with the party and has created a coalition of Democrats and independents who supported him during his time on the council.

"Where people are today, it might take an outsider to buck the system," he said. "There are people who are Democrats who are kind of like outsiders in rhetoric but they're not. They've not really fought any of the systems."

Parker, 51, said her long experience — working in government since she was 17, serving as a state lawmaker and on the City Council — allows her to bring different people to the table to make change.

"We can't solve these problems alone. We need federal, state and local government, along with the private sector and philanthropic communities, to help us address the public health and safety," she said.

Oh and Parker agreed crime is the most pressing city issue. Both want to see more officers employed and more deployed in neighborhoods.

Oh rejected Parker's stance that tactics such as stop-and-frisk should be used to curb crime, which he said will create animosity. He pushed upgrading technology to better support them.

"The community has to want the police to be there, and police have to stand for the enforcement and respect of the law," he said.

Parker called for a well-trained police force with cultural competency and emotional intelligence. She said misuse cannot be tolerated, but also was resolute that reform by redirecting funds or slashing budgets — a push that saw a burst of energy in 2020 — wasn't the right answer, either.

"I'm glad I didn't succumb to the emotional pressures of the moment and buy into a philosophy that was antithetical and not coming from the people who were experiencing the most pain," she said.

ALLEGHENY COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Public safety is also a prominent campaign issue in the Pittsburgh area, where progressive Democrat Sara Innamorato, a former state legislator, and Republican Joe Rockey, a former chief risk officer at PNC bank, are running for Allegheny County executive. The two are seeking to replace term-limited Democrat Rich Fitzgerald, in office since 2012.

Rockey, 59, is pushing for more officers on the street, where Innamorato has focused on developing a comprehensive public health approach to public safety.

Innamorato, 37, also indicated that national issues — like voting rights and abortion access — remain potent among voters. She supports a shield law that would protect women who come to the county from other states to get abortions, she said.

She said that her time in the Legislature allowed her to bring more dollars back to the county, but that when it came to distributing those funds, it came down to the county government. She sees county executive as the "ultimate doer" position.

"I feel like taking on this position, we can take county government and make sure there's more of a community-led, people-centered process, and we can talk about things that haven't really been championed at the county level in a strategic and cohesive way," she said.

Rockey emphasized his business background, saying he used to manage larger budgets and more people as a corporate executive.

"I believe what we should be doing is focusing on Allegheny County with practical solutions, as opposed to running this county from an ideological perspective," he said.

ALLEGHENY COUNTY PROSECUTOR

During the spring primary for elected prosecutor, Allegheny County's Democratic voters enthusiastically supported the more progressive candidate over the more moderate long-term incumbent. They're back

for a rematch in November, with the losing incumbent running as a Republican.

The county's chief public defender, Matt Dugan, bested District Attorney Stephen Zappala, who has held the role for more than two decades, by double digits. But Zappala secured enough write-ins in the Republican primary to get that party's nomination.

Dugan, 44, said that changes are needed in the district attorney's office and that he wants a greater focus on connecting low-level, nonviolent offenders to drug and alcohol services or mental health treatment.

"We don't always have to see these life-altering consequences of a criminal conviction," he said. "That, then, will allow us to free our time, our resources and our attention to the prosecution of violent crime."

During a debate last week, Zappala said lower-level crimes still must be persecuted so problems don't spiral out of control.

"We've treated both drug dealers and persons who possess and run with bad guys as violent," he said. "And that's not going to change in my administration."

UAW's confrontational leader makes gains in strike talks, but some wonder: Has he reached too far?

By TOM KRISHER AP Auto Writer

WAYNE, Mich. (AP) — Throughout its 5-week-old strikes against Detroit's automakers, the United Auto Workers union has cast an emphatically combative stance, reflecting the style of its pugnacious leader, Shawn Fain.

Armed with a list of what even Fain has called "audacious" demands for better pay and benefits, the UAW leader has embodied the exasperation of workers who say they've struggled for years while the automakers have enjoyed billions in profits. Yet as the strikes have dragged on, analysts and even some striking workers have begun to raise a pivotal question: Does Fain have an endgame to bring the strikes to a close?

People with personal ties to Fain say his approach, on the picket lines and at the bargaining table, reflects the bluntly straightforward manner he developed as he rose through the union's ranks. He is, they say, the right man for the moment.

Others, though, say they worry that Fain set such high expectations for the pay and benefits he can extract from the companies that he risks incurring a personal setback if an eventual deal disappoints union members. A weak settlement could also make it difficult for Fain to expand UAW membership to non-union rivals such as Tesla and Toyota USA — an issue the union has been pushing.

"He's gotten far more from the companies than anyone, in particular the companies, may have expected," said Harley Shaiken, a professor emeritus specializing in labor at the University of California Berkeley. "But now is the critical point where you pull the package together. If it isn't now, when will it be? That is what he's got to be giving some thought to."

What began with 7,000 workers at one factory each of Ford, General Motors and Jeep maker Stellantis has grown to 34,000 at six plants and 38 parts warehouses across the country. Officials at all three companies note that they have sweetened pay offers and offered numerous other concessions. In one particularly notable move, GM agreed to bring its new electric vehicle battery factories into the national UAW contract, essentially guaranteeing that workers of the future will belong to the union.

Three auto officials, who asked that they and their companies not be identified so they could speak candidly, say they remain unsure whether Fain has a clear plan to end the strikes or whether he'll cling to demands that the companies say would be so costly as to jeopardize their ability to invest in the future.

Fain, who in March narrowly won the UAW's first-ever direct election of a president, had campaigned on promises to end cooperation with the automakers, essentially declaring war on them. He has complained that the highly profitable companies have failed to restore concessions the union members made before and during the 2008-2009 Great Recession, when the industry was teetering.

Some auto executives have accused Fain of performative showmanship and of failing to negotiate seriously. Yet his strategy has so far achieved a number of measurable successes: The companies have offered

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to raise pay increases from single digits to 23% over four years, restore cost-of-living pay increases and end lower wage tiers for many workers.

Yet obstacles remain. The UAW has demanded 36% general raises; traditional defined-benefit pensions for workers hired after 2007; and pension increases for retirees. Fain has even sought 32-hour work weeks for 40 hours of pay — a demand that even many union workers call unrealistic.

On the picket lines, some say they wonder just how long Fain will keep them out.

"If they can't come to terms, what happens then?" asked Dawn Krunzel, a team leader at Stellantis' Jeep complex in Toledo, Ohio, one of the first plants to walk out.

Krunzel said she and her husband had prepared for the strike and aren't yet worried about their finances, though she said some workers are.

All that Fain is seeking, Krunzel said, is for the UAW to be made whole for the concessions that saved the companies when they were in grave financial danger. Retirees, she said, haven't had pension increases for years. But she said Fain seems "stuck on what he said out there initially" about pay and other demands.

"I'm hoping Fain is smart enough to say, 'Enough is enough,'" she said. "You never get everything you want."

Doc Killian, who works at Ford's Michigan Assembly plant in Wayne near Detroit, said he thought it was insincere for Ford Executive Chairman Bill Ford to assert in a speech last week that Ford can't increase its contract offer because higher labor costs would limit its investments in electric vehicles and the factories to build them. Ford's speech, Killian noted, came a day before the company announced that it was paying out \$600 million in dividends to shareholders.

"Saying you're broke and then all of the sudden passing out dividends because you're not broke — that flies in the face of your own statement," Killian said.

The union, Killian said, should hold out as long as necessary to secure bigger raises, the unionization of battery plants and increased pensions.

In a departure from the style of past UAW leaders, Fain has insulted CEOs and publicly revealed the companies' pay offers. With contempt in his voice, he has likened the UAW's contract fight to a battle between the beleaguered working class and billionaires. Rejecting the auto officials' arguments, Fain said the companies can indeed afford to pay more.

"We have plans," he said. "We have strategies and tactics to keep winning at the table."

Unlike his predecessors, Fain has recruited outside advisers, some of them specialists in public relations, to assist the union. His communications director, for instance, was a labor organizer for Bernie Sanders' 2020 presidential campaign. The advisers have refined the union's public image, shaping it with slick videos and appearances by Fain on Facebook Live.

With roots in small-town Indiana, Fain, now 54, was known as a straight-arrow young man who respected teachers and coaches at Taylor High School near Kokomo, from which he graduated in 1987. Paul Nicodemus, a childhood friend, said Fain derived his values from his father, who was Kokomo's police chief, and his mother, a nurse.

Nicodemus doesn't recall Fain as being particularly outspoken about economic inequities — probably, he said, because there wasn't much inequality in Kokomo. Nearly everyone's parents worked at either Chrysler or General Motors' Delco factories.

"Shawn was the type that loved to make people laugh," Nicodemus said. "To know he's in a spot now that this is not a laughing matter and he's having to put his foot down — in my eyes, he's doing a phenomenal job."

After high school, Fain became an electrician at a Chrysler castings plant in Kokomo and joined the UAW, the union that had represented three of his grandparents. Having risen in the local union to become plant shop chairman, he warned against becoming too chummy with automakers. In 2007, he opposed the union's leadership, which had agreed to a contract that created lower tiers of wages for new workers. Still, the deal was ratified.

Bill Parker, who chaired the union's national negotiating committee at Chrysler in those talks, said Fain

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joined him to oppose the deal. Fain favored a more confrontational stance with the companies than the UAW's president did.

Fain later took a job with the union's national staff in Detroit while still pushing to be more aggressive with the automakers.

"He fought for his principles while he was on staff," Parker said, "and was often reprimanded by those in power."

When a federal embezzlement and bribery investigation rocked the union starting in 2017 and sent two former presidents and other officials to prison, it opened the door to Fain's campaign for higher office. In a settlement to avoid a federal takeover, the union agreed to let members decide if they wanted direct elections of leaders. They did. Fain campaigned against an incumbent who had arisen from the union's old guard, declaring that it was time to fight the companies and end years of coziness.

"What you see is what he is," Parker said.

Parker, whom Fain tapped to be an assistant, says he feels sure Fain has a plan to end the strike. He just doesn't know what it is.

Brian Rothenberg, a former union spokesman who now is a public relations consultant, said all UAW presidents struggle over when to take a company offer to members to end a strike.

"There comes a point," Rothenberg said, "where the members really push if they feel a need for resolution. In the end, this is an employment contract, and the endgame will be a contract."

Today in History: October 24, the United Nations is officially born

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, Oct. 24, the 297th day of 2023. There are 68 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Oct. 24, 1945, the United Nations officially came into existence as its charter took effect.

On this date:

In 1537, Jane Seymour, the third wife of England's King Henry VIII, died 12 days after giving birth to Prince Edward, later King Edward VI.

In 1861, the first transcontinental telegraph message was sent by Chief Justice Stephen J. Field of California from San Francisco to President Abraham Lincoln in Washington, D.C., over a line built by the Western Union Telegraph Co.

In 1940, the 40-hour work week went into effect under the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938.

In 1952, Republican presidential candidate Dwight D. Eisenhower declared in Detroit, "I shall go to Korea" as he promised to end the conflict. (He made the visit over a month later.)

In 1962, a naval quarantine of Cuba ordered by President John F. Kennedy went into effect during the missile crisis.

In 1972, Hall of Famer Jackie Robinson, who'd broken Major League Baseball's modern-era color barrier in 1947, died in Stamford, Connecticut, at age 53.

In 1991, "Star Trek" creator Gene Roddenberry died in Santa Monica, California, at age 70.

In 1992, the Toronto Blue Jays became the first non-U.S. team to win the World Series as they defeated the Atlanta Braves in Game 6.

In 1996, TyRon Lewis, 18, a Black motorist, was shot to death by police during a traffic stop in St. Petersburg, Florida; the incident sparked rioting. (Officer James Knight, who said that Lewis had lurched his car at him several times, knocking him onto the hood, was cleared by a grand jury and the Justice Department.)

In 2002, authorities apprehended John Allen Muhammad and teenager Lee Boyd Malvo near Myersville, Maryland, in the Washington-area sniper attacks. (Malvo was later sentenced to life in prison. Muhammad was sentenced to death and executed in 2009.)

In 2005, civil rights icon Rosa Parks died in Detroit at age 92.

In 2012, Hurricane Sandy roared across Jamaica and headed toward Cuba, before descending on the

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eastern United States.

In 2017, Fats Domino, the rock 'n' roll pioneer whose hits included "Blueberry Hill" and "Ain't That a Shame," died in Louisiana at age 89.

In 2021, heavily protected crews in Washington state worked to destroy the first nest of so-called murder hornets discovered in the United States.

In 2022, actor Leslie Jordan, a comedy and drama standout on TV series including "Will & Grace" and "American Horror Story," died at age 67.

Today's Birthdays: Rock musician Bill Wyman is 87. Actor F. Murray Abraham is 84. Movie director-screenwriter David S. Ward is 78. Actor Kevin Kline is 76. Congressman and former NAACP President Kweisi Mfume (kwah-EE'-see oom-FOO'-may) is 75. Actor Doug Davidson is 69. Actor B.D. Wong is 63. Actor Zahn McClarnon is 57. Singer Michael Trent (Americana duo Shovels & Rope) is 46. Rock musician Ben Gillies (Silverchair) is 44. Singer-actor Monica Arnold is 43. Actor-comedian Casey Wilson is 43. R&B singer, actor and TV personality Adrienne Bailon Houghton is 40. Actor Tim Pocock is 38. R&B singer-rapper-actor Drake is 37. Actor Shenae Grimes is 34. Actor Eliza Taylor is 34. Actor Ashton Sanders (Film: "Moonlight") is 28. Olympic gold medal gymnast Kyla Ross is 27. Actor Hudson Yang is 20.