

Groton Daily Independent

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Today on GDILIVE.COM

VB Pep Rally, 3 p.m.
SoDak 16 at Watertown, 6:30 p.m.
City Council Meeting, 7 p.m.

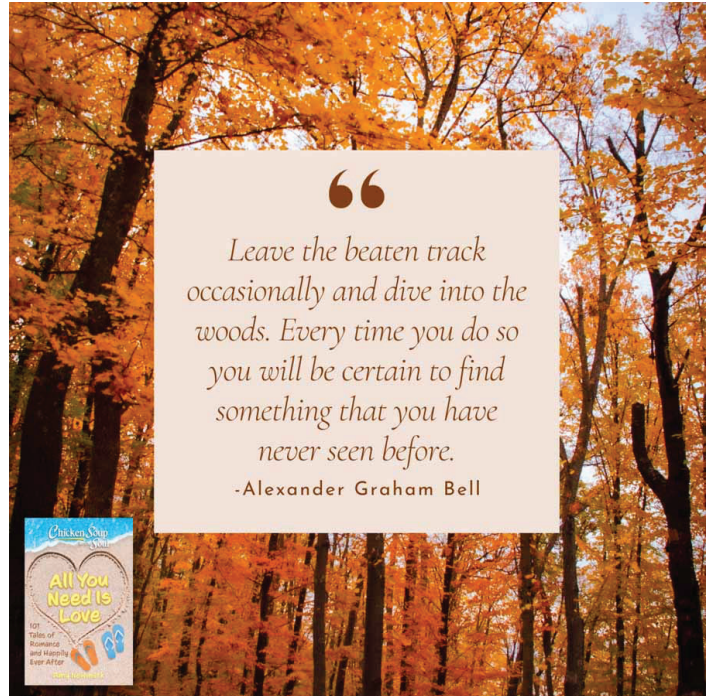
Coming up

Tuesday, Nov. 7

United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.; Nominations Committee Meeting, 7 p.m.
St. John's Lutheran: Ladies Aid, LWML, 1 p.m.
SoDak 16 Volleyball at Watertown: Groton Area vs. Lennox, 6:30 p.m.
Thrift Store open 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.
Food Pantry open 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.
Senior Menu: Roast pork, mashed potatoes and gravy, steamed cabbage, peaches, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Monty Cirso Sandwich.
School Lunch: Hot dogs, baked beans.

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



“

Leave the beaten track occasionally and dive into the woods. Every time you do so you will be certain to find something that you have never seen before.

-Alexander Graham Bell

2024 DOG LICENSES DUE BY 12/29/2023

Fines start January 1, 2024



Spayed/Neutered dogs are \$5 per dog, otherwise \$10 per dog
Proof of rabies shot information is **RE-REQUIRED!!**

Email proof to city.
kellie@nvc.net, fax to
(605) 397-4498 or bring a copy to City Hall!!
Please contact City Hall as soon as possible if you no longer have a dog(s) that were previously licensed!

Questions call (605) 397-8422

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

filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in New Jersey after years of struggle for the office-sharing company.

The Supreme Court will hear a case on Tuesday on whether a statute that prohibits the possession of firearms by people under domestic violence restraining orders is unconstitutional.

Donald Trump declined President Volodymyr Zelensky's offer to visit Ukraine over concerns that it could "create a conflict of interest" with President Biden. Zelensky invited Trump after he claimed he could end Russia's war within 24 hours.

Former White House chief of staff Mark Meadows has been sued by his publisher, All Seasons Press, for allegedly "squarely" contradicting his book's main claim about the 2020 election.

A second Denver-area officer has been acquitted in the death of Elijah McClain, who was injected with ketamine and put in a neck hold after being stopped by police in 2019.

In the ongoing war in Ukraine, Russian Federation Council Chair Valentina Matviyenko has proposed the creation of a Ministry of Happiness as many of the nation's citizens have reportedly soured on the war. It comes as Russia lost 6,030 soldiers in Ukraine during the past week, Kyiv reported.

Donald Trump repeatedly clashed with Judge Arthur Engoron as he testified in his New York civil trial. Trump's lengthy answers prompted Engoron to ask the former president's attorney to "control him." Trump was also caught in a lie.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu rejected calls for a ceasefire but said his country would consider "tactical little pauses" to allow humanitarian aid into Gaza and for hostages to leave.

WeWork, once a high-flying SoftBank-backed venture,

GHS Interns Series

Imrie interns at Groton Ag Partners

by Dorene Nelson

Braxton Imrie, a senior at Groton Area High School, is interning with Groton Ag Partners. "I decided to do my internship here so that I could learn how to run a business," Imrie explained. "I would like to have my own business eventually."

"I enjoy playing sports and am currently on the school's basketball, soccer, and baseball teams," he listed.

"My future plans are to pursue a business degree, probably in a technical college like Lake Area or a similar school," Imrie said. "Following that degree, I next plan to find a top-notch taxidermy program, hopefully in Alaska."

"According to the research I've done, the Alaska School of Taxidermy provides academic training with both classroom and lab work and presents the best option for learning all aspects of taxidermy in a hands-on environment," he stated.

"While working here at Groton Ag Partners, I'm doing filing and computer work," Imrie said. "This kind of work will teach me the best ways to run my own business."

"I've enjoyed working here and haven't found anything to be stressful for me or for the regular employees," he admitted.

Braxton is the son of Mike and Dawn Imrie.



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ALL OVER ROOFING

RAISING THE ROOFING STANDARDS,
ALL OVER YOUR TOWN!
FREE HAIL STORM ESTIMATES!

605.759.0000
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Frosty is Back!!!

Please check the Groton Daily Independent for daily clues as to who the Groton Area Mystery Frosty is. The unveiling of Frosty will take place at the Groton Area Snow Queen and Talent Contest on Sunday, November 26th at 4:00pm. The Groton Chamber voted to gift Snow Queen \$100 in Chamber Bucks for the winner of the Mystery Frosty competition.



2023 Frosty Clues

I....

- 6.) Love coffee!
- 7.) Enjoy fishing and hiking; or really any activity outdoors

Groton Post No. 39 American Legion

Annual Turkey Party

Saturday, Nov. 11, 2023

Starting at 6:30 p.m.

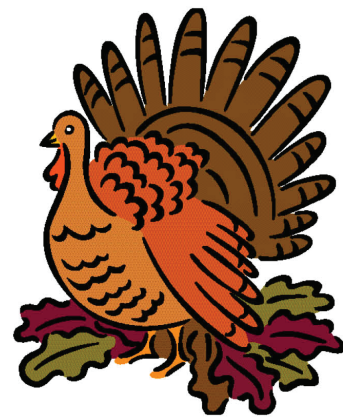
Groton Legion Post Home, 10 N. Main.

Turkey, Ham and Bacon
to be given away

FREE ADMISSION

**DOOR
PRIZE!**

Lunch served
by Auxiliary



Groton City Council Meeting Agenda

November 7, 2023 – 7:00pm
City Hall – 120 N Main Street

(IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO CALL IN TO THIS MEETING, PLEASE MAKE PRIOR ARRANGEMENTS TO DO SO BY CALLING CITY HALL 605-397-8422)

1. Approval of Agenda
2. Public Comments - pursuant to SDCL 1-25-1
(Public Comments will offer the opportunity for anyone not listed on the agenda to speak to the council. Speaking time will be limited to 3 minutes. No action will be taken on questions or items not on the agenda.)
3. Wastewater/Street Project Discussion – Ken Hier from IMEG
4. Department Reports
5. Police Department Discussion
6. Park Saferoom Update
7. First Reading of Ordinance No. 773 – 2024 Appropriations
8. Minutes
9. Bills
10. Skating Rink Employment Applications – Due by December 4, 2023, at 5:00pm
11. City Offices Closed on Friday, November 10, 2023 in Observance of Veterans Day
12. Executive session personnel & legal 1-25-2 (1) & (3)
13. First Reading of Ordinance No. 772 – 2024 Salary Ordinance
14. Adjournment



L to R Joe Bartmann, Dakota Resources President; Julie Lillis, Larry Vietmeier, Cyndy Larson – Columbia Community Foundation; Paula Jensen, Dakota Resources Community Coach.

(Courtesy Photo)

Columbia receives Community Innovation Award

At Dakota Resources' Learning Network Gathering Awards Banquet in Brookings, held on November 2, 2023, three honorees received distinguished awards in appreciation for their service to their communities. This annual tradition, which takes place at the Entrepreneur Support Systems Learning Network gathering, allows Dakota Resources to celebrate the innovative work that is happening in rural places across the state.

Like all past award winners, this year's recipients demonstrate the best of the work that rural shapers do, and the finest of what Dakota Resources seeks to recognize through these awards.

Columbia Community Foundation honored with Community Innovation Prize

This year's Community Innovation Prize was awarded to the Columbia Community Foundation for the way this community engaged more voices and empowered residents of all ages to become part of the solution. The award is open to communities who've partnered with Dakota Resources in the Learning Network or in the Community Coaching programs within the past year.

On behalf of the community of Columbia, South Dakota, the Columbia Community Foundation has raised more than \$850,000 to continue to support community growth. Throughout the past year, more than 30 volunteers joined six different committees, all of whom worked together on various initiatives to help Columbia thrive. Volunteers capitalized on momentum from a new baseball complex in town and raised additional funds for future community projects, including housing initiatives. In addition, Columbia has celebrated new ownership for the local bar/cafe, the arrival of a new daycare provider in town, and a successful inaugural Columbia Fest, a yearly celebration to highlight all things Columbia.

"Columbia is becoming the thriving community that was envisioned at those first meetings," said Cyndy Larson, a long-time Columbia resident and business owner. "Dakota Resources has been an invaluable help and has had a huge impact in visioning what residents can't see or imagine."

Moving Toward a Stronger Community Future in Columbia



Cleanup Day

(Courtesy Photo)

“What would it look like if the community was thriving?” For rural communities who ask such a powerful question, the responses may vary in scope or complexity, but one thing is certain: asking the question in the first place can be what sets some communities apart from the rest.

In January 2022, the City of Columbia, located on the James River in Brown County, South Dakota, and home to 160 residents, asked such a question, and this desire for a thriving community led them to engage with Dakota Resources. Led by Community Coach Paula Jensen, residents and stakeholders collaborated over a 12-month period to discover a thriving Columbia.

“The results we’ve discovered together over the last several months have provided us with the information necessary

to create pivot strategies, new solutions, and inspire 30+ local resident leaders to collaboratively move the community toward a stronger future,” Jensen said. “A community will thrive as more people become engaged in creating solutions to meet their local needs.”

The core leadership team in Columbia, who called themselves Columbia Community Cares, got right to work. From hosting a community clean-up day and assisting with a community yard sale to setting up a system to support residents needing assistance with yard chores, rides to appointments, and more, Columbia Community Cares played a foundational role in generating early success and momentum, said Julie Lillis, Columbia’s Core Team Lead.

The Columbia Community Cares core team organized a community clean up day.

“We have moved toward a thriving Columbia collaboratively in meaningful ways,” Jensen said. “After activating a core leadership team of eight volunteers to kickstart the action, we conducted a community perception poll to discover baseline data to help us then engage the greater community in visioning for their future. Then, we formed teams of 30+ volunteers focused on six local priorities, ranging from investments in business recruitment and community appearance to housing and fundraising efforts. Our time together has included accomplishing projects and building a network of resources, as well as celebrating Columbia’s local success on a regular basis.”

As additional teams of residents in Columbia took shape, volunteers jumpstarted a variety of new initiatives, including Columbia Fest, a community-wide gathering that was held this year and will continue on an annual basis, as well as the development of a community website. In addition, funds have been raised to support further development, including the installation of a digital sign that will share upcoming community events and a traffic study in an effort to bring a gas station back to Columbia. The six teams working on Columbia’s current priorities are looking to the future as well by creating a 2023 work plan. Throughout the coming year, they will continue to participate in the Community Coaching program, engage more local residents in the process, and celebrate their successes together, along the way. To help ensure that the community of Columbia will still meet residents’ needs, Lillis also shared that the Business and Housing Development Committee discussed and developed transition plans with a daycare owner and a restaurant/bar owner in town, both of whom plan to retire in the near future.

“With the help of Paula’s ongoing coaching, our teams have achieved several goals and are on the way to achieving more,” Lillis said. “The Community Coaching process has brought about a greater sense of

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community pride and hope for the future. Our goal in Columbia is to recreate some of the community's glory days while working toward a healthy future."

Such glory days are fervent memories for long-time residents and business owners, Ray and Cyndy Larson. Until recently, when Ray and Cyndy, his wife of 50 years, retired and moved to Aberdeen, SD, Ray had only known home to be in Columbia. Ray's father started a farming and cattle business in 1946 – which many family members continue to operate today – and when it came time for Ray and Cyndy to raise their own family, Columbia was the natural choice.

"Our main reason for investing our time and talents in the Columbia community's growth and development is because of family," Ray said. "Columbia was a wonderful place to grow up and raise our family, and we want our children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews to have those same opportunities."

According to Ray, communities like Columbia have a variety of perspectives and visions to manage when discovering opportunities for growth. And while the work certainly isn't done, as Columbia stakeholders continue to formulate plans to shape the future of the city, Ray points to the value of the Community Coaching process in guiding all of the voices in Columbia to define and refine a shared mission for moving forward.

"In working with a small community, there are many perspectives from young to old, and it can be hard for some to let go of the past, while others may not always recognize the work that was done to build the community," Ray said. "This is where Paula and the Dakota Resources' Community Coaching process was so valuable. Because of Paula's knowledge and experiences, she was able to guide us through the process and keep us focused on the positives. It's been thrilling to see such a revival of the Columbia spirit."



Community Meeting

(Courtesy Photo)

**DAKOTA
RESOURCES**

**Columbia SD
2023**

Community Innovation Prize

THE FUTURE OF RURAL IS *here*

Sponsored by our Premier Learning Network Gatherings Partner
REED Fund & Touchstone Energy

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Groton Chamber of Commerce November Meeting

November 1, 2023 12pm City Hall

• Individuals present: Christine Hilton, Katelyn Nehlich, Kellie Locke, Douglas Heinrich, Carol Kutter, April Abeln, and Ashley Bentz

• Minutes from the previous meeting were approved on a motion by Heinrich and seconded by Locke. All members voted aye.

• Treasurer's report was given. Dacotah Bank checking account balance is \$31,133.09. About \$1,500 is currently in the Chamber Bucks account. The report was approved by Nehlich and seconded by Heinrich. All members voted aye.

• A thank you was received from BIO Girls for our donation as well as the SD Magazine with our November/December ad printed.

• Main street benches will be refurbished and hopefully placed next Spring.

• Pumpkin Fest was a successful event with lots of attendees.

• Our Fall shirt order was boosted on Facebook for \$50 for 2 weeks today.

• Motion by Abeln and seconded by Heinrich to publish a shop local ad in the GDI weekly 11/8/23 and the daily starting 12/4/23. All members voted aye.

• Motion by Abeln and seconded by Heinrich to sponsor the extra Volleyball games with GDI Live for \$25/game. All members voted aye.

• The lighting went out on the electronic hwy 12 sign and will need to be upgraded to LED lighting. Service Signs provided an estimate of over \$2,000. Abeln will apply for a possible energy efficiency grant from Heartland Energy.

• Our City Council budget request has been received and will be discussed at the 11/7/23 Council meeting. Council members will be given order forms to choose a shirt on us.

• Motion by Abeln and seconded by Bentz to order 75 of the window clings with the top rounded rectangle in orange. All members voted aye.

• Motion by Nehlich and seconded by Heinrich to donate \$100 in Chamber Bucks to Snow Queen to be used for their Frosty competition. All members voted aye.

• Motion by Abeln and seconded by Locke to donate \$50 in Chamber Bucks to Fruit Fusion for their 12 days of Christmas giveaway. All members voted aye.

• Motion by Hilton and seconded by Heinrich to donate \$100 for the shop with a cop event in Aberdeen. All members voted aye.

• Abeln will schedule a new business welcome for Kenzie's Preschool and for Teddy Bear Daycare too and will reach out to Hope Block to schedule Candid Shots Photography and Anderson Garage Doors.

• A Santa is possibly needed for Santa Day on December 9th.

• Discussion was held on Apptegy, a potential app and website for the city that the Chamber would be able to utilize as well.

• Next Meeting: December 6, 2023, at City Hall at 12:00pm (Groton Chiropractic will provide lunch, please RSVP to city.april@nvc.net)

• Upcoming events

• 11/08/2023 GHS Fall Food Drive 6-7pm sponsored by Groton FCCLA

• 11/09-11/2023 Lori's Pharmacy Holiday Open House (Th/F 8am-6pm, Sat 9am-1pm)

• 11/10-11/2023 Beauty Brew Boutique Holiday Open House (F 8am-4pm, Sat 9am-1pm)

• 11/10-12/2023 Front Porch 605 Christmas at the Barn 10am-5pm each day

• 11/11/2023 Fruit Fusion Holiday Open House 9am-1pm

• 11/11/2023 Common Cents Community Thrift Store Holiday Open House 10am-1pm

• 11/11-12/2023 Christmas on the Prairie Shop Hop 10am-5pm, 10am-4pm, Front Porch 605

• 11/11/2023 Legion Post #39 Turkey Party 6:30pm

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- 11/12/2023 United Methodist Church Fall Dinner 11am-1pm
- 11/16/2023 Blood Drive at the Community Center
- 11/23/2023 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm
- 11/25/2023 Comedy Night at the Jungle Lanes & Lounge 9:30pm
- 11/26/2023 Groton Area Snow Queen & Talent Show 4pm GHS Old Gym
- 11/28/2023 James Valley Telecommunications' Holiday Open House 10am-4pm
- 12/01/2023 Tour of Trees at Wage Memorial Library 3:30-6:30pm
- 12/02/2023 Olive Grove 7th Annual Holiday Party with Live & Silent Auctions 6pm-close
- 12/09/2023 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services 9-11am
- 12/09/2023 Christmas Movie Event at Wage Memorial Library 11am-1pm

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**GROTON
VET CLINIC**

1503 N Broadway, Groton, 605/397-8145



Aberdeen
225-6772
1-800-843-1865

Redfield
1-800-247-4650

Webster
1-800-658-2252



JOHN DEERE

Groton November Events Calendar

Tuesday, Nov. 7

United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.; Nominations Committee Meeting, 7 p.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Ladies Aid, LWML, 1 p.m.

SoDak 16 Volleyball at Watertown: Groton Area vs. Lennox, 6:30 p.m.

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

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

Senior Menu: Roast pork, mashed potatoes and gravy, steamed cabbage, peaches, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Monty Cirsto Sandwich.

School Lunch: Hot dogs, baked beans.

Wednesday, Nov. 8

United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; UMYF Food Drive at GHS, 6 p.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Bible Study, 2:45 p.m.; Confirmation, 3:45 p.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Confirmation, 6 p.m.

GHS Fall Food Drive, 6 p.m.

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

Senior Menu: Tator tot hot dish, green beans, grape juice, pineapple tidbits, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: French toast.

School Lunch: Super nachos

Thursday, Nov. 9

JH GBB at Webster (7th at 4 p.m., 8th at 5 p.m.)

Senior Menu: Chicken Alfredo, lemon buttered broccoli, pumpkin bar cookie, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Muffins.

School Lunch: Sloopy joes, fries.

Friday, Nov. 10

Veteran's Day Program, 2 p.m., GHS Arena

Senior Menu: Chili, corn bread, coleslaw, lime pear Jell-O.

School Breakfast: Veteran's Breakfast

School Lunch: Pizza, green beans.

Saturday, Nov. 11

Girls JH Jamboree at Roscoe

Thrift Store open 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

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

Groton American Legion Annual Turkey Party 6:30 pm.

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Sunday, Nov. 12

United Methodist: Conde worship, 8:30 a.m.; Coffee hour, 9:30 a.m.; Groton worship, 10 a.m.; Sunday school and Christmas practice, 10 a.m.; Fall Dinner, 11 a.m.; Charge Conference, 2 p.m.

St. John's Lutheran: St. John's worship, 9 a.m.; Zion worship, 11 a.m.; Sunday school, 9:45 a.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship / Milestones for JK and kindergarten, 9 a.m.; Sunday school, 10:15 a.m.; Choir, 6 p.m.

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

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

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

Monday, Nov. 13

United Methodist: PEO meeting (outside group), 7 p.m.

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

Senior Citizens meet at the Groton Community Center, 1 p.m.

School Board Meeting, 7 p.m.

Pantry Open 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Senior Menu: Breaded cod, parsley buttered potatoes, creamy coleslaw, rainbow sherbet, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Pancake on a stick.

School Lunch: Tater tot hot dish.

Tuesday, Nov. 14

United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Church Council, 6 p.m.

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

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

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

School Breakfast: Scones.

School Lunch: Chicken legs, vegetable blend.

Wednesday, Nov. 15

United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Groton Ad Council, 7 p.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Bible Study, 2:45 p.m.; Confirmation, 3:45 p.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Confirmation, 6 p.m.; League, 6:30 p.m.

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

Senior Menu: Teriyaki chicken, almond rice with peas, pineapple-strawberry ambrosia, cookie, dinner roll.

School Breakfast: Cereal.

School Lunch: Turkey dinner with all the bells and whistles.

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Thursday, Nov. 16

Emmanuel Lutheran: WELCA Praise and thanksgiving: Program: Nigeria. Hostess: Sarah., 1:30 p.m.
Blood Drive at the Groton Community Center.
State Volleyball Tournament at Rapid City
Senior Menu: Roast beef, mashed potatoes and gravy, carrots, fruit cocktail, whole wheat bread.
School Breakfast: Breakfast pizza.
School Lunch: Pasta with meat sauce.

Friday, Nov. 17

State Volleyball Tournament at Rapid City
JH GBB at Milbank (7th at 4 p.m., 8th at 5 p.m.)
Senior Menu: BBQ pork driblet on bun, potato salad, mixed vegetables, tropical fruit.
School Breakfast: Cheese omelets.
School Lunch: Chicken noodle soup.

Saturday, Nov. 18

State Volleyball Tournament at Rapid City
Robotics at Harrisburg
Thrift Store open 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Catholic: SEAS Confession, 3:45-4:15 p.m.; SEAS Mass, 4:30 p.m.

Sunday, Nov. 19

United Methodist: Conde worship, 8:30 a.m.; Coffee hour, 9:30 a.m.; Groton worship, 10:30 a.m.; Sunday school and Christmas Practice, 10:30 a.m.
St. John's Lutheran: (Holy Communion) St. John's worship, 9 a.m.; Zion worship, 11 a.m.; Sunday school, 9:45 a.m.
Groton CM&A: Sunday School at 9:15 a.m., Worship Service at 10:30 a.m.
Catholic: SEAS Confession, 7:45-8:15 a.m., SEAS Mass, 8:30 a.m.; Turton Confession, 10:30-10:45 a.m.; Turton Mass, 11 a.m.
First Presbyterian Church: Bible Study, 9:30 a.m.; Worship, 11 a.m.

Monday, Nov. 20

St. John's Lutheran: Christian Literature Circle, 7:30 p.m..
Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study, 6:30 a.m., Newsletter deadline
Senior Citizens meet at the Groton Community Center, 1 p.m.
JH GBB hosts Britton-Hecla (7th at 6 p.m., 8th at 7 p.m.)
Pantry Open 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Senior Menu: Spanish rice with hamburger, green beans, mandarin oranges, vanilla pudding, whole wheat bread.
School Breakfast: Stuffed bagels.
School Lunch: French bread pizza, green beans.

Tuesday, Nov. 21

United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.
St. John's Lutheran: Quilting, 9 a.m.
Thrift Store open 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.
Food Pantry open 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.
Senior Menu: Ham and bean soup, egg salad sandwich, tomato spoon salad, fruit.
School Breakfast: Waffles.
School Lunch: Chicken Alfredo, cooked carrots.

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Wednesday, Nov. 22

United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.
St. John's Lutheran: Bible Study, 2:45 p.m.; Thanksgiving Eve Service, 7 p.m.
No School - Thanksgiving Break
Groton CM&A: Kids' Club, Youth Group and Adult Bible Study begins at 7 pm
Senior Menu: Oven fried chicken, sweet potatoes, vegetable carpi blend, chocolate pudding with bananas, whole wheat bread.

Thursday, Nov. 23

THANKSGIVING DAY

Community Thanksgiving Dinner at the Groton Community Center, 11:30 a.m.
No School - Thanksgiving Break

Friday, Nov. 24

No School - Thanksgiving Break

Saturday, Nov. 25

Thrift Store open 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Catholic: SEAS Confession, 3:45-4:15 p.m.; SEAS Mass, 4:30 p.m.

Sunday, Nov. 26

United Methodist: Conde worship, 8:30 a.m.; Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Groton worship, 10:30 a.m. (No Sunday school)
St. John's Lutheran: St. John's worship, 9 a.m.; Zion worship, 11 a.m.; Sunday school, 9:45 a.m.
Snow Queen Contest, 4 p.m., GHS Gym
Groton CM&A: Sunday School at 9:15 a.m., Worship Service at 10:30 a.m.
Catholic: SEAS Confession, 7:45-8:15 a.m., SEAS Mass, 8:30 a.m.; Turton Confession, 10:30-10:45 a.m.; Turton Mass, 11 a.m.
First Presbyterian Church: Bible Study, 9:30 a.m.; Worship, 11 a.m.

Monday, Nov. 27

Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.
Senior Citizens meet at the Groton Community Center with potluck at noon.
JH GBB hosts Clark/Willow Lake (7th at 6 p.m., 8th at 7 p.m.)
Pantry Open 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Senior Menu: Meatballs, mashed potatoes with gravy, carrots, fruit cocktail, whole wheat bread.
School Breakfast: Oatmeal.
School Lunch: Chicken nuggets, mashed potatoes.

Tuesday, Nov. 28

United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.
James Valley Telecommunications Holiday Open House, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
JH GBB at Redfield (7th at 6:15 p.m., 8th at 7:15 p.m.)
Thrift Store open 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.
Food Pantry open 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.
Senior Menu: Tuna noodle hot dish, peas, California blend, Swedish apple pie square, whole wheat bread.
School Breakfast: Monty Cristo sandwich.
School Lunch: Scalloped potatoes with ham, corn.

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Wednesday, Nov. 29

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

St. John's Lutheran: Bible Study, 2:45 p.m.; Confirmation, 3:45 p.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Confirmation, 6 p.m.

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

Senior Menu: Vegetable beef soup, chicken salad sandwich, mandarin oranges, cookie.

School Breakfast: Muffins.

School Lunch: Corndogs, fries.

Thursday, Nov. 30

Fall Sports Awards Night, 7 p.m.

Senior Menu: Baked chicken breast, mashed potatoes with gravy, California blend vegetables, lemon tart bar, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Muffins.

School Lunch: Corndogs, fries.

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Excerpt #5 - 1940 - 1945 We Will Remember

This is the fifth of probably seven excerpts. This involves 1943. I noticed that Paul is including some of these excerpts in the Groton on-line paper. I certainly appreciate that.

November 11, 2023 is the official Veterans Day with the public holiday being the Friday before. 1,700 veterans pass away daily. Most of the veterans mentioned in my book and these excerpts are now gone but I hope they are not forgotten. So many politicians and wannabe politicians seem to take the veterans for granted these days. Some even call them suckers for making the ultimate sacrifice and some even call for actions because they follow the constitution instead of the whims of wannabe dictators.

Please thank a veteran. They gave up a portion of their lives to serve their country. Some were put at risk, some were not. However, they still volunteered and stood up for their country.

Hope to receive a book draft tomorrow from Kindle and will turn it around as quickly as possible. Still hope to get it published and available on my website and Amazon in a few weeks. Will continue with the excerpts as long as the book is not available.

Enjoy.

Lee Raines

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1943 – War Year Two

January 1943 – Diary – January 1 got up late. Took the tree down. January 2 went with Ann and bought two pair of shoes – one for \$4.00 and one pair for \$2.00. Cold, zero degrees. January 3 took Don to Dell Rapids for work. Snowed. 10 below. Snow was deep but road ok. January 5 18 below. Washed and hung clothes in house. January 8 took stove pipes down in the kitchen and cleaned kitchen. January 11 Beth had to go to play practice. Ralph and I took her and went to the show “You Were Never Lovelier”. January 12 washed my hair. Beth fixed it. Ralph helped Miller shell corn. Dressed a chicken. January 13 got a letter from Don. January 14 did the usual work. Ralph helped Miller shell corn. Shelled here in the PM. January 15 Ralph went to town to get the trailer at the locker. Snowed and blew. Beth stayed in town. January 16 Ralph and Al took Al’s car and our heifer (1,010 pounds) to the locker to have it butchered. Snowed and stormed. We slept downstairs. January 18 terribly cold. 25 below. Beth came home on the bus. January 19 35 below. Glen (assume a nephew) went away to the Navy. January 20 terribly cold. Almost froze to death in the house. Wore coveralls and overshoes all day to keep warm. Beth stayed in town. January 21 Virgil Davidson and Nelson were here for lunch. They brought two tons of coal. Started the car. Ralph went to town. Took eggs and got groceries. Beth came home with Ralph. January 23 emptied ashes. Baked bread. Ralph went to town and Don came home on the bus. Beth and Don went to town. January 24 blizzard. Ralph and I took Don to Dell Rapids. Tried to take Beth to town, but roads were too bad, turned around and came home. January 25 Beth went to school late. Bus driver had to make a special trip to pick her up. Made Beth a pair of slacks out of two navy feed sacks. Had to pull the car to get it started. January 26 Ralph went to Sioux Falls with hogs. Sold 30 weight 334. Got \$1,450. January 29 Ralph went to town to wool growers dinner. Cleaned house. Went to a bridge luncheon. Beth stayed in town. Snowed. January 30 went to town and bought new dishpan for \$1.29. Listened to the radio in the evening. January 31 Millers came for dinner. Went to the show “Life Begins at Eight Thirty”. Cold.

January 1 – T.C. Kasper, South Dakota collector of internal revenue, pointed out here today that the victory tax which goes into effect today applies to all persons – businessmen and farmers as well as wage earners. Individuals on salaries which amount to more than \$12 per week or \$824 yearly will find 5% of their pay above the \$824 withholding deduction drawn from their check by their employer starting tomorrow. Part of the victory tax also will be treated as a post war credit to be refunded after the war. Kasper explained that the amount of the exemption, \$824 is just enough to exempt privates in the Army from the victory tax. Officers of all branches of service, however, are liable for the tax but are not subject to the withholding provisions. They pay their victory tax when they file their regular income tax returns in 1944.

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Clarence S. Utne, Staff Sergeant, U.S. Army/Air Corps, member of the 320th Bomber Squadron of the 90th Bomber Group was killed in action from shrapnel wounds. Clarence was born on October 29, 1917. Next of kin is Mr. Sivert P. Utne of Eugene, OR. Originally interred at the Ipswich U.S. Air Force Cemetery in Brisbane, Australia. The body (skeleton incomplete) was shipped to Sivert Utne on September 26, 1947, via the Honolulu National Cemetery, Territory of Hawaii. Sivert and his son were originally from Waubay, SD. He also had a brother, Albert Utne from Roseburg, Oregon. On December 8, 1943, Sivert received a letter from the War Department that a check in the amount of \$151.72 would be forwarded to him as soon as possible. The final possessions of Clarence included: one mechanical pencil, one billfold, two New Testaments, one shoeshine kit, two shaving kits, one red cross bag, three khaki ties, two pair socks, one novelty pencil, one box personal letters, one bank book and one memo book. These were mailed to Sivert in May 1943. The War Department had promised such would be shipped in January 1943. Clarence's mother, Josepine Amelia Klunness Utne passed away in May 1935.

Application for tires for the week ending January 14, 1943, exceeded the allotment allowed the county almost two to one, hence most applications were cut. Tires allotted to persons in the Groton and adjacent communities were as follows: Floyd Pray, Groton, 1 tire; Vernon Walter, Groton, one tire and tube; Fay Stewart, Stratford, one tire; Harry Pharis, Putney, one tire; Harvey Pierson, Groton, one tire and tube; Ervin Voigt, one tire and tube; Harry Heinz, Groton, one tire; Hubert Breikreutz, Verdon, one tire; Maurice E. Denson, Claremont, one tire and tube; R.R. Pulfrey, Huffton, one tire; Hugh E. Powell, Groton, one tire; Ewald Pigers, Groton, one tire and tube. Passenger car tire recaps: Louise Dunn, Stratford, one; Clayton Gibbs, Groton, two. Truck tires: R.A. Richards, Groton, one tire and tube; Ray Dayton, Stratford, one recap; Martin Stover, Stratford, two recaps; Ervin G. Wood, Stratford, one recap; Dale McKiver, Groton, two recaps; Joe Abeln, Groton, one tire; Elmer Messing, Groton, one tire and tube; Palmer Peterson, Groton, one tire and tube, two recaps; Fred C. Zoellner, Groton, one tire and tube; Elmer Wagener, one tire. Fred McGee and Wm. H. Rock, Groton, were each allotted a new automobile.

February GI 11 – The Independent is happy to relay a message from Sgt. Milo Julson, from “somewhere in England”. The letter dated January 25, reads: “Hello everybody. I received a package a few days ago from the West Side Sewing Circle of the Norwegian Lutheran Church of Groton....and I want to thank the ladies of that organization. The package was very welcome as many of the things it contained we can't get as much of it as we would like and then, too, it was very gratifying to know that people back home are thinking of us. Have been wondering what has happened to the fellows that have gone into the service from around home. Haven't met one in this part of England, but would be glad to know the addresses of any here in England.” “Many of the historical places of England that we are able to visit on pass, most of us who are interested in that sort of thing, have seen. The British people have done an awful lot to make the Americans feel at home and are doing a lot to keep them entertained.” “Certainly would give a lot to foot in Groton, though, and breathe some of the South Dakota air again”. **Milo Julson was a graduate of Groton High School in 1936, was born December 25, 1910 and died October 9, 1948. He died in an accident while still in the service.**

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February GI 25 – Ranchers near the badland practice bombing range claim that the great air activity over the region has driven the coyotes out of the badlands to the surrounding ranch lands. It is reasonable to suppose that the coyotes, used to no larger fowl than the buzzards, might leave the area when such enormous birds as the great roaring bombers take over. The coyotes might also have another motive in moving out; since all stock has been taken out of the practice bombing range, leaving only rabbits for coyote food, the coyotes may have wanted to get out where they could get an occasional meal of beef or mutton. The decrease in population has been favorable to coyotes and present restrictions on rubber and gasoline have cut down coyote hunting, so it is to be expected that the number of coyotes will increase.

March 3 – The war department made public today the names of 435 U.S. soldiers killed in action. The announcement included casualties in the Alaskan, European, North African, South Pacific, and Southwest Pacific areas. On today's list are eight officers and 14 enlisted men killed in action in North African; one enlisted man killed in action in Alaska; nine officers and 16 enlisted men killed in action in Europe; 22 officers and 131 enlisted men killed in action in the South Pacific; and 14 officers and 190 enlisted men killed in action in the Southwest Pacific. South Dakotans listed include Pvt Alvin S. Anderson, Estelline; Pvt Gilbert Knodel, Pierre; Pvt Blake F. Gardiner, Houghton; Pvt Elmer J. Kaaz, Summit; and Staff Sergeant Clarence S. Utne, Waubay. **Blake F. Gardiner, U.S. Army, PVT, was born on January 22, 1920, and died on December 25, 1942, member of the 126th Infantry, 32nd Division. He is buried at the Manila American Cemetery and Memorial, Manila, Philippines. Clarence S. Utne, U.S. Army/Air Corps, Staff Sergeant, Purple Heart and Distinguished Flying Cross, was born October 29, 1916, and died January 8, 1943. His body was returned to the United States in January 1949. He was a member of the 320 Army Air Force Bomber Squadron and is buried at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, Honolulu, Hawaii.**

March GI 4 – Farmers may obtain gasoline for their tractors, engines, and other non-highway equipment for a period of six months instead of three months under a change in rationing regulations announced by the OPA. The change is being made because of the variability of farming operations which frequently make it difficult for farmers to estimate their requirements for only a three-month period. It will also save the farmer time.

April GI 1 – Five sons of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Dahlman (**Emery**) are now in the armed services. The fifth was Walter W., who was inducted. The others are: Pvt, Arthur A., of Luke Field, Ariz.; Corp, Edward F., overseas; Erwin D., also overseas, and PFC Clifford R., Chanute Field, Rantoul, Illinois.

Pvt. Morris Spencer arrived Thursday morning from Fort George G. Meade, Md., to spend a 14-day furlough visiting his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Spencer and his three sisters. Morris reports that the training has been plenty strenuous in spots, but he has thrived on it as he tips the scales at 20 pounds plus his weight when he presided in the Independent composing room.

Pfc. Russel Thoe arrived from a camp in Oregon for a furlough at the home of his parents, Mr. and Mrs. E. M. Thoe, Monday evening. He was delayed about 18 hours at Miles City, Mont., by a washout on the railroad grade but said a small inconvenience like that is of no consequence in the life of a soldier.

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South Dakota's farm cash income for 1942 was 269 million dollars, the State College agricultural economics department reported recently after making a compilation of income. This, the department said, was the largest which has been recorded since records begun in 1924. The income is 46 percent greater than in 1941 and exceeds the 1942 estimates made a month ago. Crop income was listed at 68 million, or 42 per cent above 1941; livestock at 182 million, or 47 per cent above 1941. The two best previous years were 1925, with 242 million, and 1928, also with 242 million. The low income year was 1932, with 59 million.

The Groton Bakery, closed for about a week on account of short rations on sugar and shortening, was able to reopen Wednesday morning after more materials became available. W.D. Neldon, proprietor, said that another forced holiday is in prospect for his establishment unless a more liberal supply of sugar and shortening become available for his business. Groton householders who were wont to buy really fresh bread, were not a little discommoded and irritated by the circumstances that forced the local baking plant to close, especially as larger establishments were able to keep on operating. Many of them would like to know just why the local bakery is not entitled to the materials required for production of its wares as larger plants apparently are. It is a question that will probably not be dismissed with a shrug of shoulders indefinitely.

"I'm glad to have that many boys to serve their county", said Mrs. Myrtle Hahn of this city (**Sioux Falls**), speaking of six sons in the armed service, five in the army and one in the navy. Staff Sgt. Weldon Hahn, 28, and Sgt. Milton Hahn, 26, are in Australia; Sgt. Kenneth Hahn, 24, 4th Tech. Sgt. Robert Hahn, 22 are in Africa; Pvt. John Hahn, 20, is in training at Ft. Francis Warren, Wyoming, and Seaman, Chas. H. Hahn, 17, is at the Naval training station at Farragut, Idaho. Mrs. Hahn, who has lived in Sioux Falls for the past 15 years, formerly resided in Sioux City, Iowa.

May 1943 – Diary – May 1 and May 2 blew dirt all day. May 7 went to town with Ralph. Got a bed spread for south bedroom \$4.00; curtains for north bedroom \$1.69; and curtains for hall \$.35. Ralph planted corn. May 9 Mother's Day. Don gave me \$2.00. Don and I went to church. Allen Miller plowed alfalfa all day. Kids went to a picnic. May 10 Ralph planted corn. May 11 Ralph planted corn. May 12 ground covered with snow. Got a lot of water in the cistern. May 13 baked 72 rolls and did the usual work. Ralph planted corn. May 15 Ralph finished planting corn. Don came home from Dell Rapids. Beth and Don went to Junior/Senior prom and banquet. Don took Meredith. Beth went with Bob Cherney. I watched them dance. May 18 Ralph dragged. May 22 Don came home and went to town in the evening. I went bowling with the kids. Ralph put a new tank together. May 23 Ralph and I went to bacalaureate in the evening. Then to the show "My Friend Flicka". Very good. May 25 rained. Beth and I went to town. Beth took her geometry exam. May 26 made 72 rolls. Had our sheep sheared (33). Beth also took history exam. May 27 no school. Ralph dragged corn. May 28 Beth and Ralph went to town. Beth got her report card. Don came home and took the car. Beth went to dance in Elkton. Rained. May 29 Don brought car home. We all went to town. Beth to show with Jimmy Mattson.

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June GI 24 – Groton grocery stores, as indicated in an announcement in another column will observe new business hours effective at once. On week days the stores will open for business at 7:30 am and close at 6:00 pm, and on Saturdays the stores will be open from 7:30 am to 10:30 pm. The July 4th holiday will this year be observed on Monday, July 5, and Groton grocery stores will be closed all day in order that employees may enjoy the day in common with other citizens of the community. In order to accommodate farms customers, the grocers announce they will open their stores from 7:30 am to 9:30 pm, Wednesday evenings, on and after July 7th, during the busy season on farms of the vicinity. The new closing hours on Saturday evenings are being arranged by reason of difficulty in adjusting the working hours with the wages and hours rule in force during the war period, the grocers said. In keeping open until 12 mid-night, as has often been the case, employees have been forced to work more than the time allowed under war regulations. All stores involved are asking their customers to note the change in hours and do their trading earlier next Saturday evening. They also call attention to the all-day closing on July 5th, in order that customers may anticipate their wants on the preceding Saturday.

July GI 22 – It's an all-out effort to win the war on the part of eight children of Mrs. Carl Engelson of Andover. Mrs. Engelson has five sons in the nation's armed forces and two daughters now working in Pacific coast war industry who left recently for the west coast. Two daughters, Laura Cromwell and Evelyn Engelson are welders in a Kirkland, Washington, shipyard and the third daughter, Donna Engelson, will join them shortly. The five sons are William Thuernau, T-5, stationed in Australia. He entered army service in June 1940; George Thuernau, T-5 entering the service in March 1940, served as a tank gunner in Hawaii and is now stationed at Camp Hood, Texas; Harland Thuernau is in the signal corps at Drew Field, Florida, having joined that service in November, 1942; Glen Thuernau, serving in the army since 1940 is in Bermuda and Carl Engelson, the youngest son was inducted in the army last spring, and is stationed at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. It is believed that the eight members of Mrs. Engelson's family, serving their country in various parts of the war effort establish a record in the state, if not the entire nation. A quiet woman, who has made no boasts about the unusual circumstances of eight children all helping, according to their abilities to win the war, folk in the Andover community take pride in her and her brood of patriots. **George Thuernau entered the U.S. Army on March 21, 1944, and was discharged as a sergeant on December 13, 1945. He was born on June 12, 1914, and died on April 13, 1974, in Hillside, Illinois. Harland Thuernau entered the U.S. Army on November 13, 1942, and was discharged on November 21, 1945. He was born on June 13, 1917, and died on June 2, 1961, also in Hillside, Il. Glenn Thuernau entered the U.S. Army on January 24, 1940, and was discharged on October 5, 1945. He was born on November 19, 1919, and died in McHenry, Il on July 5, 1990.**

July GI 29 – Lt. Berdines Lackness, the son of Mr. and Mrs. B.C. Lackness of this city (**Groton**), serving as a pilot in the army air forces in the south Pacific, was awarded the highly coveted air medal for "meritorious achievement" by Lt. Gen. George C. Kenny of the Fifth air force. Lt. Lackness was one of a group of 12 officers and men of the Fifth air force thus being honored for having completed 25 attacks upon the Japanese. Lt. Lackness was a member of the high school faculty in Groton for some time previous to entering the army air force for pilot training and was a graduate of the Aberdeen high school and a student at Northern State Teachers college. He received his wings at Williams Field, Arizona, and was almost immediately sent to the Pacific war front, serving there for more than a year previous to

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receiving the high honors of the army air forces. Aside from a few leaves, spent in Australia, Lieut. Lackness has been in "the down under" country continuously since entering combat service.

August 1943 – Diary – August 1 went to town and took Ann to "Mr. Lucky". August 3 Ralph hauled manure. Ralph went to thresher's meeting. August 4 wrote a letter to Don. August 5 Ralph helped Valentine's hay all day. August 6 shelled corn. Ralph cleaned up corn shelling mess. Hauled 4 loads of corn to the shed. August 7 baked bread and canned 3 jars of apple sauce. Ernes Walton died, hung himself. Went to town in the PM. August 8 washed my hair. Beth fixed it. Rained. Went to show in the evening. Took two soldiers to dinner. Very warm. August 9 Ralph went to Dell Rapids and Pipestone with Virgil, Cliff, and Herman. Bought a threshing machine \$200.00 each. August 10 Ralph went to Sioux Falls with Allen Miller. Beth went to town. She and Joyce had a picnic with soldier friends. Rained most of the day. August 11 rained all day. Wiped up water. Allen Miller here and fixed pigs. August 12 Ralph reshocked some of the grain. Rained during the night. August 13 canned six quarts of apples. Made apple and grape juice. August 14 washed separator and dishes. Went to town to get groceries. They started to thresh Cliff's flax in the PM. Sent a letter and the paper to Don. August 16 Ralph threshed for Cliff – flax in the PM. Stanley worked for us all day turning shocks. Very cold. August 17 Ralph went threshing about 10 to Cliff's. Howard came in the PM to turn barley shocks. August 18 had threshers for lunch and supper. Didn't have but seven men. A lot went 40 bushels to the acre. August 19 had threshers for lunch and supper. I fried out lard. Got about 10 gallons. August 20 threshed at Al's in the PM. Beth and I went to town to get tire fixed. Also bought two new tires. Goodyear deluxe all weather white side walls for \$20.00 each. August 21 Ralph threshed in the PM. He and I went to town in the evening. Had ice cream. August 22 Ralph hunted for a tire. Allen Miller bought 290 lambs at \$.14 a pound. August 23 Ralph threshed all day. Very warm. August 24 wrote to Don and sent him a paper. Threshed at Virgil's. August 25 went to Sioux Falls got a new black dress \$8.00. Beth got material for shirt-seater material for a pina fore. August 26 took Beth to town so she could work at the hospital. No threshing, too wet. Ralph turned shocks after supper. August 27 Ralph went threshing at Virgil's. August 28 Ralph took Beth to town and went threshing at Virgil's. While in town, talked to two soldiers from Sioux Falls. August 29 two soldiers here for lunch and supper. John Dorgan and Mike Franz. Ramdell's took the soldiers to Babcock's Corner – to catch the bus to Sioux Falls. August 30 Ralph threshed at Schultz's. August 31 Ralph threshed at Schultz's. Got a card from Don from New York. Got threshers after lunch.

August 3 – PFC James McKani of Andover is now a member of one of the most exclusive clubs in the world. It is restricted to men who have flown over Japanese territory. His chapter, at Adak, Alaska, is made up of veterans who have participated in heavy raids on shipping in the harbor at Japan's Paramushiru Island. To date, the club has held only one meeting. The single rule for retaining

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membership is for each member to drink a toast to the other members on the 4th of July. **I believe the article involved James R. McKane, Andover, U.S. Army Air Corps, Staff Sergeant, who was born March 16, 1922, and died March 16, 2003. He is buried in the Andover cemetery. McKane was discharged as a staff sergeant and served from 1940 through 1945 in the Asia Pacific Theater of Operations, awards included Asia Pacific Theater, American Defense, Bronze Star and Air Medal with Oak Leaf Clusters. Native of Andover.**

August 11 – A message from the adjutant general's office to Mrs. D.E. Falk of Spokane, WA, reported that her husband Flight Officer D.E. Falk, a Flying Fortress pilot, is missing in action in a raid on Kassel, Germany, July 30. The message was relayed to the flier's parents, Mr. and Mrs. L.E. Falk of Groton. Flight Officer Falk had been stationed in England since the middle of April, being ordered into combat service shortly after completing tactical training at the Rattlesnake Bomber Base at Pyote, TX. He is a veteran of the Air Corps, having enlisted in October 1939. **Research indicated that Donald E. Falk survived the war while in a POW camp – Stalag Luft 1 Barth-Vogelsang Prussia 54-12. Falk entered the service October 6, 1939, and was discharged May 18, 1945. He was shot down over Tielrode, Belgium in 1943. He was the son of Luther E. and Helen F. Falk of Groton. Falk graduated from Aberdeen High School. He had lived in Spokane, Washington for over 60 years when he died in March 2006.**

The war department listed 2nd Lt. Richard E. Grandpre, son of Elias E. Grandpre, Conde, S.D. as among the U.S. army personnel interned as a prisoner of war in Germany. His name was in a list of 102 soldiers held as prisoners by the enemy, 94 by Germany and 8 by Italy. **Grandpre was born on December 27, 1918, and died on May 29, 2006, and is buried in Aberdeen. He entered the U.S. Army Air Corps on August 13, 1941, and was discharged as a lieutenant on December 20, 1945. He was in Stalag 7A Moosburg Bavaria 48-12 from June 22, 1943, until liberated in June 1945.**

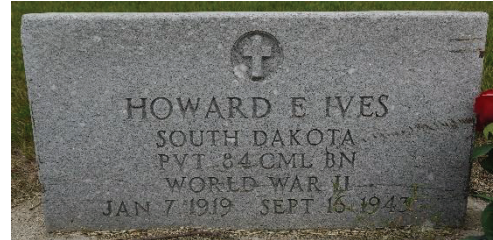
September GI 2 – The Groton Public Schools will open Monday, Sept 13. In both the elementary grades and in the high school division enrollment and registration will be the only activity for the first day, taking place in the afternoon. Class work will begin on Tuesday morning. High school students residing in or near Groton are urged to register with Principal R.K. McVay on Friday or Saturday, Sept. 10 and 11. Principal McVay will be in his office on Saturday evening to accommodate rural students who work during the day. High school students who register on Friday and Saturday will not need to report for school until Tuesday morning when class work begins. High school students may register Monday forenoon, if unable to do so Friday or Saturday. Arrangements are being made to continue operation of the hot lunch project, which operated very successfully last year. An average of 75 pupils were given a substantial noon lunch at a nominal fee. **By the time I began school in Groton in the 1960s, there was a building in the middle of campus that served as the lunchroom. I usually walked home for lunch, but it was a great place to eat when the weather was bad. Can't remember how much the meal cost, but it was pretty small. Also, most of us figured the peanut butter and cheese we ate was at least as old as we were.**

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Funeral services were held here (Groton) Tuesday for William Edgar Stange, 40, gunner's mate third class of the naval reserve, whose death was ascribed to drowning in the Brooklyn Harbor by a report from the navy personnel department. He was last seen alive August 27 and the body was recovered from the water on August 30, the report to Mrs. John Ott of Verdon, a sister, disclosed. Stange was a native of the Stratford, SD vicinity. He enlisted in the navy from Pontiac, IL, in May 1942. Military honors were accorded by the local post of the American Legion and the body was interred in the soldiers circle in the Groton Union Cemetery.

September 16 – Records show that Private Howard H. Ives, SN 37,115,075 who was previously reported killed in action in the North African Area on September 15 is now reported killed in action on September 16, 1943. Ives was a member of the 84th Cml. Battalion, Company "C". Chemical Warfare Branch. Place of death is Region of Paestum, Italy from shrapnel in head. He was originally interred at the Vannulo Cemetery, Italy. Plot A, Row 5, Grave #337, and marked by a temporary wooden marker. On September 24, 1946, Mrs. Jane E. Ives (mother), Aberdeen, SD was notified by the official report of burial disclosures that the remains of her son were interred in Plot D, Row 4, Grave 65, in the U.S. Military Cemetery, Mt. Soprano, Paestun, Italy, located approximately 22 miles southeast of Salerno, Italy.



This letter from the Quartermaster Corps was in response to a personal letter from Mrs. Jane E. Ives, dated September 10, 1946. Her letter "Would you please send me the exact location of the burial place of my son, Private Howard E. Ives, SN 37,115,075, reported killed in action September 16, 1943. Also, any information you have concerning the details and circumstances surrounding his death".

List of personal effects: Holy Bible, two rings, eight photos, campaign ribbon, 30 francs, one billfold all turned over to VI Corps Quartermaster for transmittal to Base Sector. Emergency Addressee was listed as E.W. Ives, Andover, SD. Personal effects were delivered to Harry Ives on or about August 11, 1944.

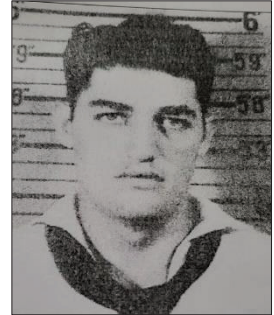
In March 1947, Harry Ives, Andover, SD was sent a picture of the U.S. Military Cemetery, Mt. Soprano, Italy, in which Ives is buried. The letter stated "It is my sincere hope that you may gain solace from this view of the surroundings in which your loved one rests. As you can see, this is a place of simple dignity, neat and well cared for. Here, assured of continuous care, now rest the remains of a few of those heroic dead who fell together in the service of our country. This cemetery will be maintained as a temporary resting place until, in accordance with the wishes of the next of kin, all remains are either placed in permanent American cemeteries overseas or returned to the Homeland for final burial." G.A. Horkan, Brigadier General, QMC.

Ives (skeletal remains) was transported back to the U.S., Groton, Attention: Alfred Paetznick, Funeral Director. He was sealed in the casket on May 25, 1948, and transported to Groton, SD on August 19, 1948. Harry Ives, 212 S. Jackson, Aberdeen, SD certified the sum of \$130.00 was paid by Harry (father) from personal funds in connection with the interment of the remains of Howard Ives. The body was to arrive by military escort due to arrive at Groton Station on Milwaukee Train number five and to be accepted by Paetznick. He was buried in the Groton Union Cemetery.

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October 7 – USS S-44 submarine was sunk by Japanese escort destroyer. 55 crewmen perished. Two taken prisoner. One of those that perished was Eugene Smith, Amherst. **(Donald E.) Eugene Smith was the son of Lloyd Andrew Smith, Amherst, SD. Originally listed as coming from Salem, OR. Born in Amherst on August 29, 1922.**



Eugene Smith

November GI 11 – A number of men from the Groton community left with the second November contingent to leave for induction into the armed services of the nation. The first call for November was met by a group of Seabees who were inducted in October. The present group is said to include no pre-Pearl Harbor fathers. Included in twelve men who volunteered for service was Donald C. Wood of Putney. Other men from the Groton neighborhood who left with the contingent were: Ervin G. Woods, Stratford; Richard N. Shepherd, Claremont and Harold R. Sour, Groton. The group reported to Ft. Snelling on Wednesday morning. **Donald C. Wood was born on September 17, 1924, and died on May 10, 2017. He is buried in the Black Hills National Cemetery in Sturgis. He was a sergeant in the U.S. Army Air Corps and a radio operator on a B-17 Flying Fortress. After he was discharged, he went to the State University and earned an accounting degree. He became a Rapid City certified public accountant. Richard N. Shepherd was born on February 14, 1925, and died on October 20, 2006, in Leaburg, Oregon. He entered the U.S. Navy on May 22, 1944, and was discharged May 15, 1946. Harold Sour was born on June 6, 1914, and died on May 9, 1981, in Edgewater, Florida. He was a long-time employee of Pioneer Ford in Groton.**

November 23, 1943 – Ernest N. Wormke, Corporal, U.S. Army Air Corps, died on November 23, 1943, of scrub typhus, in Papua, New Guinea. He was hospitalized in the 363rd Station Hospital in New Guinea at the time of his death. He was a member of the 100th Service Squadron, 58th Service Group. He was buried for the second time in the USAF Cemetery #2, Finschhafen, New Guinea in June 1945. He was the son of Mr. and Mrs. Herman Wormke, Andover, South Dakota. He was born on February 24, 1913, and on June 8, 1942, entered the U.S. Army Air Corps while living in Minnesota. In 1948 his body was shipped to Kenneth Loe of Pierpont, South Dakota to be buried in Langford, South Dakota. His body was expected to arrive in Pierpont on July 7, 1948. Scrub typhus, also known as bush typhus, is a disease caused by bacteria called *Orientia tsutsugamushi*. It is spread to people through bites of infected chiggers. In mild cases, recovery is complete. In severe cases with multi-organ failure, mortality may be as high as 24%. Severe epidemics of the disease occurred among troops in Burma and Ceylon during World War II, and it provided some indicators that the disease is endemic to undeveloped areas in all of the Pacific Theater. General MacArthur's biographer William Manchester identified that the disease was one of a number of debilitating afflictions affecting both sides on New Guinea in the running bloody battles over extremely harsh terrains under intense hardships fought during a six-month span.

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December GI 2 – Mr. and Mrs. Carl Knapp recently received news that their son, Cpl. Alvin Knapp, was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for gallantry in action while serving with the U.S. army on Guadalcanal. The young soldier took part in the action which relieved the marines after the initial landing at Henderson Field, Guadalcanal on October 25, 1942. His group was treated to a bombing by two-motored Jap bombers, but it was on October 26th, the day following their landing, that Knapp and four companions saved the lives of twenty marines in an outpost surrounded by enemy troops. The group mounted a light machine gun on a carrier and drove to the outpost through fierce enemy fire. After four attempts they were able to rescue all twenty of the marines. The battle of Henderson Field lasted until October 27 when the Jap attack was finally repulsed and the crew, after being in action three day and three nights, was relieved. After resting two days the group again joined the forces that moved toward Koli Point, marching 170 miles in nine days, fighting every inch of the way. They had one hot meal during the nine days. After the capture of Koli Point, Knapp's squad came in for a much needed rest, but were soon sent to relieve another outfit at Point Cruz, but fortunately there was little heavy fighting there. But Knapp's company was sent behind the lines for guard duty and eventually evacuated to a quiet island in January this year. He and his companions were awarded Distinguished Service Crosses for extraordinary bravery in action. Cpt. Knapp has two brothers, Pvt Don Knapp in the same outfit and Cpl. Lyle Knapp, stationed in the Panama canal zone. **Couple of issues with this press release. He was in the U.S. Army and, as a result, could not be receiving a Distinguished Service Cross for gallantry. Since he was in the Army and as other press releases will indicate, he received the Silver Star.**

That's Life by Tony Bender

Memories they don't know they're making

The Hecla Rockets quarterback unloaded the ball before I got there. Dang. Screen pass. Downfield, a rangy receiver was running horizontally, trying to pick his way past a fence line of Frederick Viking defenders. I suppose I had a 30-yard run to get to him. A full head of steam. I imagined the ball flying free. We intersected at helmet-rattling full speed. I remember a tornadic blur of arms and legs.

"Great hit, Bender!" my buddy Bernie Witte exclaimed, jerking me to me feet. I immediately folded, gasping for breath, that awful feeling when you've had the wind knocked out of you and you're sure you're gonna die. Spoiler alert: I didn't.

As I lay there, gasping, I watched two Hecla coaches escort the wobbly receiver off the field. The ball was still firmly lodged under his arm. By then, our coach Ken Pudwill was hovering over me with my concerned teammates.

Pudwill loosened my belt, which was the cure all for all injuries in those days.

"Did you get it in the cookies?" he asked.

"Gahhh."

Everyone cracked up.

My list of glorious moments on the gridiron is short and memories involve mostly comic relief. As a teenager, you don't realize you're making memories, and if the team is special, those memories will echo for decades and will be spoken of with respect.

In Frederick, SD, there was the 1960's basketball team that lost an epic third place game at state that everyone agreed was essentially the championship game. They remain legends.

My dad spoke of the great Ashley Aces basketball teams of the 1950's led by the great Otto Raile. They lost one or two titanic battles to Hettinger and their towering star, John Butterfield. My dad remembered him, too, and when I was living in Hettinger, together one night, we watched the marvelous team that Butterfield was coaching. They had a front line with a couple of 6-5 forwards and a 6-8 center. As he watched them run the floor, my dad said, "That's not a high school team—that's a college team."

Butterfield remembered Raile, too. By then, Otto was a myth in my mind. So, a few years ago when he was invited back for induction into the Ashley Hall of Fame for championship athletes—he was also a track star—I was eager to meet him. When I told him who I was, he got a bit sentimental. My father has been gone for 30 years, and it hadn't dawned on me how much Otto revered him. It wasn't just my father admiring a great athlete. They were friends.

Great moments. Great friendships. Achievements. Disappointments. These are the things we carry forward, the things that bind communities together.

I've been honored to walk the sidelines of the South Border Mustangs (Ashley and Wishek) who have been knocking on the door to history for three years. Each year, they've gotten closer.

I've heard the conversations between players and coaches, the play calls, seen the look in their eyes, the resilience, as they've faced challenges. And a few laughs, too. Along the way, they've settled old scores with longtime nemeses. Those teams who always seem to have your number.

These players have helped transform the culture of a once-moribund program. And, on Friday at 9:10 a.m., the 12-0 Mustangs will be playing the North Prairie Cougars in the Dakota Bowl for the Class B 9-man championship. Such moments, such opportunities are beyond rare, and they're never a gift. They're always earned.

Shortly after I arrived in Hettinger, the Black Devils won a wrestling championship, but I didn't really grasp how monumental it was. I never wrestled, never understood the sport. But Coach Randy Burwick's enthusiasm, and Assistant Theo Schalesky's patient tutelage drew me in.

When I arrived in McIntosh County, it coincided with the first two Ashley-Wishek state wrestling championships. I've witnessed angst, upsets, and unlikely finishes. And more banners.

These are the things these kids will reminisce about decades from now. The rekindling of friendships and the memory of uncommon effort, of giving it all.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Landowners sue to put prison site in front of county zoning board **State immunity from local scrutiny hinges on 46-year-old Janklow opinion**

BY: JOHN HULT - NOVEMBER 6, 2023 4:44 PM

The state should ask for Lincoln County's permission before building a new prison there, according to a lawsuit from a group of landowners.

The lawsuit was filed in Lincoln County late last week by a recently formed group called "Neighbors Opposed to Prison Expansion" — or the acronym NOPE for short — as well as four individual neighbors aligned with the group.

On Oct. 6, the state Department of Corrections announced its plans to build a 1,500-bed penitentiary in rural Lincoln County as a replacement for the antiquated penitentiary in Sioux Falls.

The site's long-term use as farmland is a key point argued in the landowners' lawsuit. They contend that the county's zoning master plan never envisioned — and does not permit — what amounts to an industrial property on the land.

The lawsuit demands that the state release more information on its search for an appropriate prison site, and that the DOC be either required to request a conditional use permit from the county or seek a ruling on its right to build from a judge before proceeding with prison construction.

Either option would offer landowners — who were not given notice about a potential prison near their respective properties — an opportunity to voice their opposition.

A conditional use permit, if issued by the county, could then be appealed for review by a judge.

"We want to encourage the state to appear before the county planning commission, which would give us the fundamental rights that we have as landowners to appear, examine witnesses and the right of appeal," said A.J. Swanson, the Canton-based attorney representing the landowners.

State: Local zoning does not apply

The state contends that it needn't seek the approval of county officials, largely because of a 46-year-old opinion from former Gov. William Janklow. Janklow was serving as the state's attorney general at the time, and his letter was meant to clarify a clause in the state Constitution on the state's immunity from lawsuits.

"The Legislature shall direct by law what manner and in what courts suits may be brought against the state," the clause reads.

Ten years before Janklow penned his now-disputed letter of legal guidance, lawmakers passed a bill giving counties the right to manage land use through zoning. But that law didn't specify whether county zoning rules would apply to the state.

Janklow's opinion, therefore, was not built on express legislative guidance or South Dakota Supreme Court precedent. Instead, Janklow wrote, it was crafted based on accepted practices and legal doctrines in place in other states, as well as the immunity clause in the state Constitution.

Janklow's letter, referred to in the lawsuit as the "general rule," essentially says the state can assert eminent domain and sidestep county zoning laws. In the context of his letter, the state was free to build a satellite dish for its public broadcasting system in Vermillion without adhering to that city's zoning rules.

The prison site lawsuit argues that Janklow's "general rule" has never been blessed by the state Supreme Court as a controlling doctrine for disputes over land use in matters involving state entities, nor has such a right been explicitly established by lawmakers.

"We find no Legislative direction that the State may just do as it wishes," the complaint says.

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Landowners: Make the state comply

Among other demands, the plaintiffs in the lawsuit want a judge to determine if Janklow's guidance nearly five decades ago ought to apply, or whether the courts ought to weigh the state's interests in the construction of a prison against the long-term planning goals of the county.

That could take the form of a conditional use permit hearing, Swanson told South Dakota Searchlight, or be considered by a judge using a "balance of interests" test to determine whether the state made a good faith effort to select the best possible site.

Swanson argues that by the state's own request for proposal for a site – which included proximity to an interstate and existing roadways – the Lincoln County site falls short.

The cost to build infrastructure like roads and water lines works against the state's assertion that the land was a good deal for taxpayers, he said. The site is about 15 miles south of Sioux Falls.

"They're putting it way out in the country, where it's even more costly, because distance and space are the primary factors in why infrastructure costs so much," Swanson said.

The DOC has said the 320-acre site was the best option in part because the state already owned the land, which had previously been held in trust and leased for farming, with the lease payments used to support South Dakota schools. The DOC pledged to purchase it for \$7.9 million from another state agency, the Office of School and Public Lands, to convert it from agriculture to a prison site (the money would go into a trust fund supporting schools).

The DOC did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the lawsuit on Monday, but DOC Secretary Kellie Wasko has addressed some of the issues raised by the lawsuit through public statements and letters.

"This site is the best choice for a modern correctional facility that supports our state's public safety needs, minimizes the impact on community growth, and keeps us close to available workforce," Wasko said in a press release announcing the prison site.

In a letter to Swanson now included in the court file, Wasko wrote that the state's position supports the agency's ability to sidestep local zoning rules.

"... neither zoning ordinances nor land use approvals are required for state-owned property ... this is not only the department's position, but the state's long-standing position," Wasko wrote, in addition to citing a state law allowing the DOC to condemn private land.

She also wrote that land near the city of Sioux Falls was quite difficult to find during the 15-month search for a site, and that "many landowners declined to even discuss selling their land."

Lawmakers set aside \$323 million last winter for the penitentiary project.

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.

ACLU sues state over 'REZWEED' vanity license plate

BY: JOHN HULT - NOVEMBER 6, 2023 12:45 PM

The American Civil Liberties Union of South Dakota wants a judge to stop the state from saying no to vanity license plates over "poor taste."

The nonprofit filed its lawsuit in U.S. District Court in South Dakota on behalf of a client named Lynn Hart, who'd asked for and been denied a vanity plate that reads "REZWEED," which was approved months later.

The lawsuit names South Dakota Department of Revenue Secretary Michael Houdyshell and Brenda King of the Division of Motor Vehicles, who inked the initial letter to Hart signaling the DMV's denial of his vanity plate application.

While the DMV ultimately reversed itself on Hart's license plate, the lawsuit notes that the DMV reserves the right to recall approved plates, and that such a recall could result in Hart losing his vanity plate.

The lawsuit follows a letter from the ACLU to Houdyshell and Attorney General Marty Jackley in late August that demanded a reevaluation of denied vanity plates and challenged the constitutionality of the

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law and accompanying policy guidance that allow the state to issue denials for plates dubbed "offensive to good taste and decency."

The letter pointed to 2,135 denied plates and claimed that about 32% had been denied based on what the organization characterized as "viewpoint discrimination."

The DMV announced in September that it planned to review and clarify its approval process, but the ACLU argues in a press release on the Hart lawsuit that the state's pledge to review policy "doesn't change or repeal any parts of the codified law in question and still contains provisions that censor free speech of South Dakotans."

Hart is a longtime activist in South Dakota who's Black and an enrolled member of the Yankton Sioux Tribe. Hart advocated for the state to recognize Martin Luther King Jr. Day in 1990 through testimony in Pierre, and has continued to advocate for issues affecting Blacks and Indigenous South Dakotans. The complaint notes that the U.S. Marine Corps veteran has been inducted into the National Western Multi-cultural Museum Hall of Fame.

Hart's current business, the lawsuit says, is "Rez Weed Indeed," which "supports and promotes the legal selling and use of Medical and Recreational Marijuana on all Federally recognized Indian reservations."

He applied for a "REZWEED" license plate in May of 2022 to "to raise awareness of his business and its message of Tribal Sovereignty," but was denied a plate. Months later, in September, the lawsuit says, a separate DMV employee reviewed his plate application and approved the plate.

Because state law and policy allow for the state to recall plates issued "in error," the ACLU argues, Hart's constitutional rights – and those of others who've been denied or had their plates recalled – have been violated by the state.

The organization says "the 8th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals has ruled that license plates are a legitimate place for personal and political expression, and courts throughout the country have struck down laws similar to South Dakota's."

"South Dakota, like other states, has created a system of protected speech through the personalized plate program and is required to comply with the Constitution," said Stephanie Amiotte, ACLU of South Dakota legal director.

The press release on the lawsuit points to a debate in the 2008 South Dakota Legislature's transportation committee on a bill that would have repealed the state's personalized license plate laws.

Deb Hillmer, then-director of the DMV, told lawmakers that the law as written does not pass constitutional muster and referenced the 8th Circuit decision in her testimony. Dan Mosteller, the then-superintendent of the state Highway Patrol, supported the bill. The committee nonetheless voted to keep the statute in place.

The ACLU's complaint asks a judge to permanently stop the state from enforcing its "poor taste" laws and accompanying policy guidance.

Attorney General Marty Jackley, whose office is tasked with defending the state in court, said on Monday through spokesman Tony Mangan that the state cannot comment on ongoing litigation.

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.

South Dakota inspired ICWA but still has high rate of Native children in foster care

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER AND ANNIE TODD - NOVEMBER 6, 2023 6:01 AM

Cheryl Spider DeCoteau was nervous.

It was the Sisseton Wahpeton tribal citizen's first time in Washington, D.C., and she sat in front of two senators, multiple congressional aides, lawyers and clerks in a large, wood-paneled committee room, bright lights shining down. Two of the 23-year-old's sons, ages 5 and 3, sat in the audience while her 10-month-old son was back home with a babysitter.

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It was 1974 and DeCoteau was testifying to a congressional subcommittee about the high rate of removal of Native American children from their families – something she knew personally.

Three years earlier, DeCoteau had been tricked into signing papers giving her second son Robert up for adoption, she said. Nearly eight months after that, her oldest boy, Herbert John, had been at home in Sisseton, on the Lake Traverse Reservation in northeastern South Dakota, with a babysitter when a social worker from the South Dakota Department of Social Services took him away.

At the committee hearing, DeCoteau spoke softly. Sen. James Abourezk, the South Dakota Democrat leading the committee hearing, had to ask her to speak up as she described how John had been placed with a foster family and she had never been told a specific reason as to why her sons were taken.

"The man said that I wasn't a very good mother and everything, and that my children were better off being in a white home where they were adopted out," DeCoteau said. "They could buy all this stuff that I couldn't give them, and give them all the love that I couldn't give them."

DeCoteau went through two lawyers in 10 months before Bert Hirsch, who was with her that day in D.C., took her case to get her children back. By April 1973, both boys were home.

A year after the boys came home, in a span of two days, Abourezk and Sen. Dewey Bartlett, R-Oklahoma, heard from DeCoteau and other Native parents, grandparents and social workers about how Native children had been taken from their families and placed into foster care or put up for adoption.

The mission: to understand the high rate of Native American child removals and create federal safeguards to keep more Native children with their families and communities.

The Indian Child Welfare Act passed in 1978 — Abourezk's flagship legislation in his time in Congress. ICWA mandates that the best interest of the Indigenous child be prioritized. That includes keeping the child near the family and culture and prioritizing family reunification. The goal was to stabilize Native families and keep their children at home across the country.

Yet history is repeating itself in South Dakota.

Forty-five years after ICWA passed, South Dakota has one of the highest rates of Native American child removals in the United States.

An Argus Leader/South Dakota Searchlight investigation examined the issues Native families and children face inside South Dakota's child welfare system. Native American children accounted for nearly 74% of the foster care system at the end of fiscal year 2023 — despite accounting for only 13% of the state's overall child population.

Margaret Jacobs, a professor of American history at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and director of the Center for Great Plains Studies, said the rhetoric used against Native American communities in the 1960s and '70s continues to be used as justification to remove children today.

It's been nearly 20 years since South Dakota began an internal investigation of ICWA because of disproportionate rates of Native children in foster care in 2004. At the time, nearly 60% of children in South Dakota's child welfare system were Native American.

Now lawmakers and legal experts are exploring why the effort failed, since Native child removals remain high, and what is needed to improve the foster system in South Dakota.

Rep. Tamara St. John, R-Sisseton and a citizen of the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate, is in the process of drafting a state ICWA bill for the upcoming legislative session in January.

"The state's goal is to do right by ICWA. How do we attack this issue together?" St. John said. "This is a South Dakota issue. These are South Dakota families."

A history of assimilation policies

A hundred years before ICWA was passed, thousands of Indigenous children were removed from their homes and sent to boarding schools. The guiding mission of the schools, such as the Carlisle Industrial School in Pennsylvania, was "Kill the Indian in him, and save the man," in the words of Richard Henry Pratt, an Army officer and superintendent of the Carlisle school.

Hundreds of Native children died at those schools before the government or church-run schools closed by the 1960s. By 1920, researchers estimate 83% of Native children, some as young as 5, had been enrolled

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in one of the more than 500 boarding schools in the United States.

The impact on families and children is ongoing. The removal of Native children became normalized, Jacobs explained, and when those children became parents, they didn't know how to raise their kids within their own cultural context.

The mother of sisters Madonna Thunder Hawk, a Lakota activist, and Mable Ann Hunter, both members of the Cheyenne River Waśagiya Najin grandmother group, attended boarding schools in Pipestone, Minnesota, and Flandreau, South Dakota.

Hunter recalls their mother wasn't a loving parent. She told them they couldn't cry, couldn't laugh or "be happy loud," she said. Otherwise they'd get beaten.

"Punishment, punishment, punishment," Thunder Hawk sighed.

Marcella Gilbert, Thunder Hawk's daughter, agreed with Jacobs about the generational impact.

"Because of boarding schools, we weren't allowed to be around our parents, so we didn't learn how to parent," Gilbert said. "Instead, we learned violence and all of the abuses."

As boarding schools shut down, the federal government and states turned to new assimilation policies such as the Indian Adoption Project, created by the Bureau of Indian Affairs in 1958 to encourage the adoption of Native children from the western United States to white families in the eastern United States. Australia and Canada implemented similar assimilation policies.

All three governments intentionally shifted assimilation tactics from institutionalization to foster care after they weren't seeing the outcomes they wanted, said Jacobs, the UNL professor. A study conducted during the 1960s found that 25-35% of Native children in America had been separated from their families and placed in white foster or adoptive homes.

Social workers and government agents would deem Native families unable to care for their children because of the circumstances of where they lived, Jacobs said. Large, multi-generational families would live in a home together, with siblings sharing beds, and sometimes the bathroom was an outhouse.

St. John, who serves as tribal historian for the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate, said some children who were fostered or adopted out of the tribe return as "lost birds" — adults lacking connections to their cultural and familial roots.

Many Native families continue to live in multi-generational households today due to housing shortages.

Neglect is routinely used to justify the removal of children and was cited as the main reason for removal in 68% of cases in 2021 in South Dakota, according to the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect.

Rep. Peri Pourier, D-Pine Ridge and a member of the Oglala Sioux Tribe, sponsored three unsuccessful bills during the 2023 legislative session to codify certain parts of the federal ICWA law into South Dakota law.

"Being born and raised in one of the poorest counties in the country, I can tell you that neglect often looks like poverty," Pourier said on the House floor.

Better compliance with federal foster care guidance needed, ICWA directors say

Another federal law implemented to keep children from languishing in foster care for a prolonged amount of time has created some confusion over whether ICWA should be prioritized in child welfare cases involving Native children, according to BJ Jones, a tribal judge who currently serves as director for the University of North Dakota's Tribal Judicial Institute.

The Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 states if a child has spent 15 out of 22 consecutive months in state care, then the process to terminate parental rights can begin if efforts to reunify the family are not working.

In South Dakota, the state Supreme Court ruled in 2005 that ICWA must be prioritized over ASFA.

State Department of Social Services Secretary Matt Althoff said the court's finding has been obeyed "unequivocally." But he added it's not the department's role anyway: it's the judge and court system's.

"I don't think you're going to find a sort of gold standard or the right amount of time," Althoff said, "but I do want to emphasize that there is a sequence and methodology that our team is using to arrive at data that can be presented to the court. And it always, always starts with reunification, if at all possible. That is the North Star for all that we do."

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But more can be done. Jessica Morson, the South Dakota ICWA Coalition director who also serves as the Flandreau Santee Sioux ICWA director, wants the state to conduct an audit of recent child welfare cases to ensure ICWA is being followed.

Jones, who co-chaired the 2004 ICWA commission, said the state can go further than a ruling from South Dakota's highest court.

"I thought it would be good if South Dakota clarified and put into code the South Dakota Supreme Court's decision that the state doesn't have to follow ASFA timelines when there's an Indian child involved, because the federal law prevails over that," he said.

Outcomes from 2004 commission

Of the 30 recommendations made by the 2004 commission, a majority have been implemented.

According to the state, all of the recommendations pertaining to the governor's administration, the Legislature and state's attorneys were implemented. The state DSS implemented 20 of its 21 recommendations — such as having a "qualified expert witness" who could explain Lakota family traditions in a courtroom, which continues today with over 20 qualified witnesses listed by the courts — and the Unified Judicial System implemented at least two of its seven recommendations. Tribal governments were responsible for four recommendations: two were not implemented and the state does not know if the other two were implemented.

The commission listed another six steps key players could take that were not included in its official recommendations.

Two of the official recommendations focused on kinship placements, which keep children closer to their community and their culture by placing them with relatives instead of foster families. The recommendations included hiring Department of Social Services staff to locate the child's next of kin and to find all possible kinship relations.

Jones, who was practicing law in South Dakota at the time he co-chaired the 2004 commission, said it seemed apparent that a majority of Native foster children were being placed with non-Native foster families. That is still the case today, since only 11% of foster families are Native American, according to the state Department of Social Services.

However, Jones explained, kinship placement families aren't eligible for the same financial assistance as foster families.

Other issues found by the 2004 study included a lack of resources for foster care, and ICWA offices not responding quickly to child enrollment inquiries to transfer cases to tribal court. These remain issues 20 years later.

Legislation drafted in 2023 would've recreated the task force since the rate of Native children in state foster care has increased significantly in 20 years.

"I wish that bill had passed and there was another study just to see where the state is now in complying," Jones said.

Should South Dakota implement a statewide ICWA law?

Jones told a panel of lawmakers in June that in 2005, the commission didn't believe South Dakota needed to create its own version of the federal ICWA law.

In the early 2000s, Nebraska, Oklahoma and Minnesota were some of the only states to have codified ICWA into state law, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures.

Today, South Dakota is the only state in the Northern Plains region not to have a state ICWA law. Wyoming, North Dakota and Montana all passed ICWA laws during their 2023 legislative sessions.

Legislation in 2012 would have taken portions of the federal ICWA law and placed them into South Dakota statutes. The bill sought to find better ways to notify tribes that a child's case could be transferred to tribal court and create preventative solutions for a family prior to their child being taken into state custody. Additionally, the bill would have created an advisory council made up of state and tribal stakeholders to craft better policies for Indian child welfare in the state.

Eleven years later, legislation in 2023 would've mandated DSS to better comply with active efforts, which

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is a list of ways for child welfare workers to reunite families and support parents and children. The BIA lists 11 active efforts, including keeping siblings together and helping identify and attain community resources for parents to get housing or treatment for substance abuse.

St. John plans to introduce state ICWA legislation in 2024 at the recommendation of Jones and ICWA officials from Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate.

While the legislation is still in the development stage, St. John said she hopes it can fill in ICWA compliance gaps in the state, specifically:

Prioritizing ICWA over ASFA timelines.

Defining active efforts and neglect.

Opening up communication and partnerships between tribes and the state.

Tribal ICWA coordinators like Oglala Sioux Tribe's Juanita Scherich and Crow Creek's Christian Blackbird want to see better notification for tribes when a Native child is in DSS custody and can be transferred over to tribal custody.

Blackbird said that in court, he's been told by state child welfare representatives that they exhaust all efforts to find a kinship placement for the child. But he has often found distant relatives willing to take the child after the state gives up. Blackbird's office had to intervene and send letters to the state to ensure the child's kinship was prioritized over foster placement.

Jones wants state, federal and tribal partners to examine all policies that can contribute to the removal of Native children.

"The federal government, the state and all the tribes need to just sit down and work this out," Jones said. "The feds have to be at the table because, after all, it was really the federal policies that started this through the removal of Native kids.

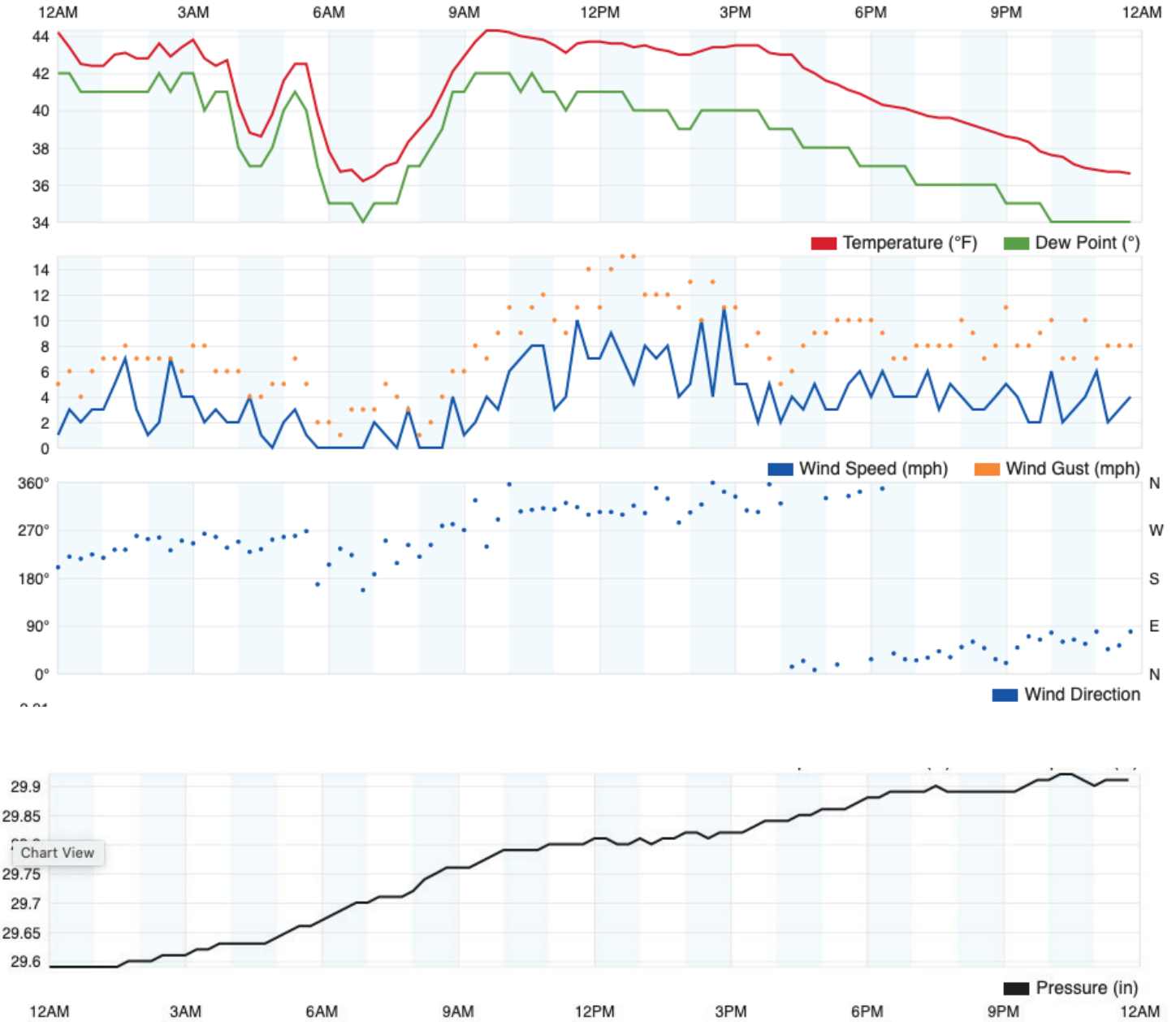
Makenzie Huber is a lifelong South Dakotan whose work has won national and regional awards. She's spent five years as a journalist with experience reporting on workforce, development and business issues within the state.

Annie Todd covers state politics for the Argus Leader in Sioux Falls. She was born and raised in Colorado and graduated from the University of Wyoming.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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52°F 33°F	52°F 32°F	44°F 27°F	40°F 26°F	44°F 28°F	50°F 32°F	54°F 35°F
ESE 22 MPH	SW 19 MPH	W 21 MPH	WNW 11 MPH	ESE 11 MPH	S 12 MPH	S 18 MPH

Today/Tonight

Highs: 46-60°
Lows: 33-39°

Warmest across the central/south central SD

- Fog early. Mostly cloudy with some clearing tonight
- Isolated rain showers (15-30%) across northeastern SD to west central MN this morning

weather.gov/aberdeen

Wednesday

Highs: 48-56°
Lows: 29-31°

- Partly to mostly cloudy. Windy-gust of 35-45 mph
- Elevated fire danger from north central to south central SD

November 7, 2023

A few light rain showers this morning (15-30%) otherwise the rest of the day should be dry with temperatures above average. Winds will pick up for Wednesday between 15-30mph with gusts 35-45mph. Dry conditions and the gusty winds will lead to an elevated fire concern from north central to south central SD.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 44 °F at 12:00 AM

Low Temp: 36 °F at 6:39 AM

Wind: 15 mph at 12:29 PM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 9 hours, 54 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 75 in 1909

Record Low: -9 in 1991

Average High: 47

Average Low: 23

Average Precip in Nov.: 0.23

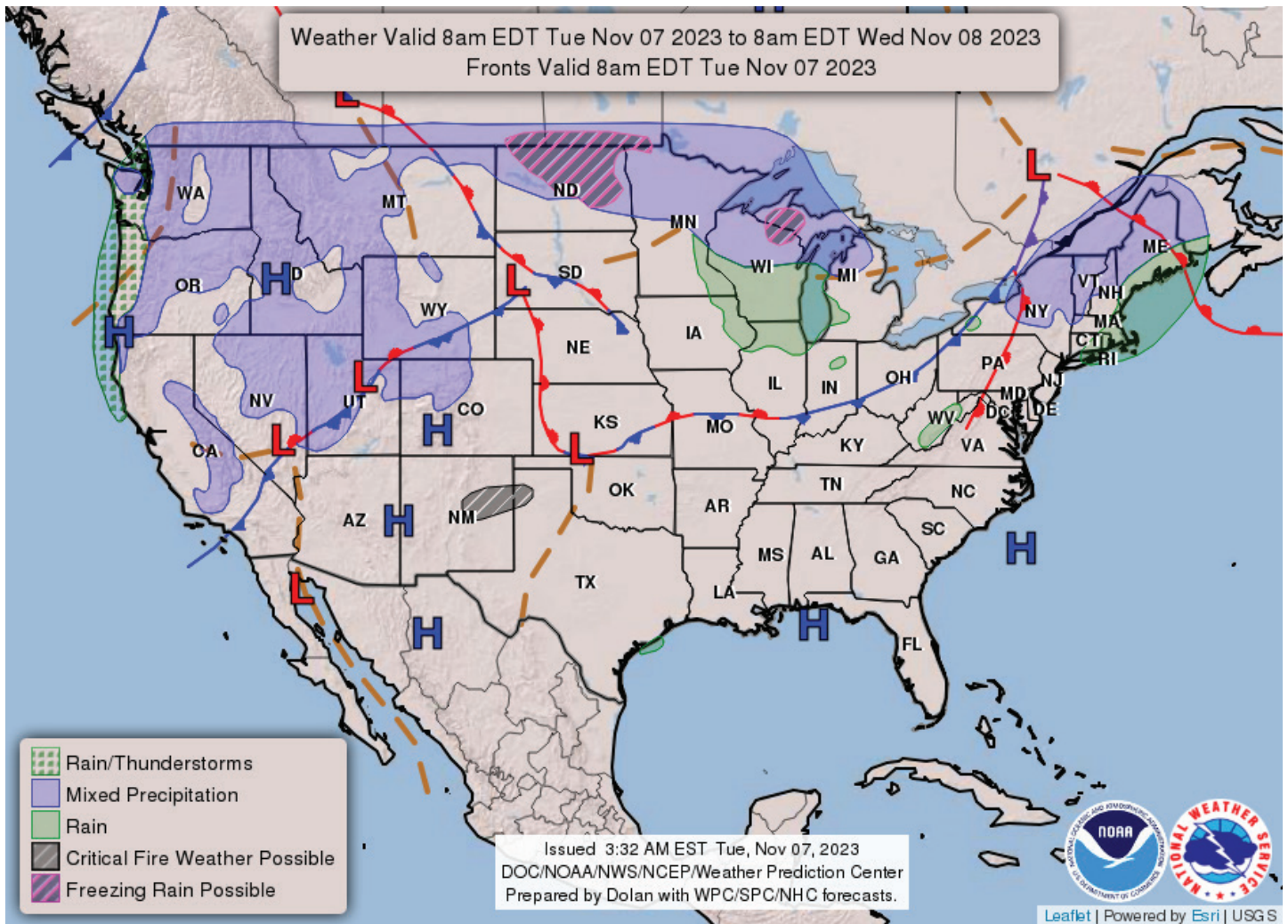
Precip to date in Nov.: 0.17

Average Precip to date: 20.70

Precip Year to Date: 23.15

Sunset Tonight: 5:13:30 PM

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:20:01 AM



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Today in Weather History

November 7th, 1986: A major winter storm dumped 10 to 25 inches of snow over most of North Dakota. The snow combined with winds of 30 to 50 mph and gusts to 70 mph, creating blizzard conditions. Snow began over southern and eastern North Dakota on the morning of the 7th, and by late afternoon, had spread over the entire state. The snowfall was heavy at times and continued through the night of the 7th. In the southeast quarter, the snow alternated with rain, freezing rain, and sleet. By daybreak on the 8th, snow and blowing snow was occurring statewide. By late morning, the storm had intensified into a blizzard over almost all of North Dakota. The blizzard ended over extreme western North Dakota by late afternoon of the 8th and over the rest of the state that night. The most substantial snowfall occurred over south-central and east-central North Dakota. The highest wind gusts of the storm happened in the north-central and northeast sections of the state. Several wind gusts to 58 mph were recorded at Grand Forks, and a gust to 55 mph occurred at the Minot Air Force Base. Wind chills dipped to 40 below over some parts of the state. The storm happened on the opening day of deer hunting season and forced many hunters to cancel their trips.

November 7th, 2000: A storm system brought 4 to 10 inches of snow and northwest winds of 30 to 50 mph, with higher gusts to create blizzard conditions to South Dakota. Numerous schools and other events were canceled due to the blizzard conditions. In addition, several accidents occurred due to the slick roads and low visibilities. Some storm total snowfall amounts include; 9.5 inches in Selby; 8 inches in Glenham and 12SSW of Harrold; 7.3 inches near Onaka; 7 inches at Faulkton; and 6 inches in Miller.

1940: The Tacoma Narrows Bridge opened on July 1st, 1940, spanned the Puget Sound from Gig Harbor to Tacoma. At the time of the opening, the bridge was the third-longest suspension bridge in the world, covering nearly 6,000 feet. Before the bridge opened, high winds would cause the bridge to move vertically, giving the nickname Galloping Gertie. On this day in 1940, winds of 40 mph caused the bridge to collapse because of the physical phenomenon known as aeroelastic flutter.

1951: At 7 AM, a blinding flash, a massive ball of fire, and a terrific roar occurred over parts of Texas, Oklahoma, and Kansas, caused by a disintegrating meteor. Windows were broken in and near Hinton, Oklahoma, by the concussion.

1957: A historic tornado outbreak impacted southeast Texas and southwestern Louisiana. Ten people were killed.

2001: Typhoon Lingling struck the southern Philippines, killing 171 people with 118 missing in Camiguin. The typhoon then struck Vietnam 5 days later, killing an additional 18 people.

2011: A powerful storm system moving through the southern Great Plains produced tornadoes, large hail, damaging winds, and flooding across parts of Oklahoma and western north Texas on November 7-8, 2011. The system initially produced numerous thunderstorms, heavy rainfall, and flash flooding over portions of south-central Oklahoma during the late evening of November 6th and early morning of November 7th. Rainfall totals of 5-9 inches were reported across Jefferson, Carter, and Murray counties.

2012: A Nor'Easter brought several inches of snow to the Northeast. Snowfall amounts of 2 to 6 inches were typical with locally higher amounts.

2013: Super Typhoon Haiyan made history as one of the largest and strongest typhoons ever recorded.

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Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

COWS, CUDS, AND MEDITATION

Have you ever watched a cow, lying beneath a tree, quietly looking through its leaves at the puffy clouds that are passing across the soft blue sky? They seem to be concentrating on something far beyond themselves, yet important to them. Their stillness reflects a sense of peace and confidence that "all is well in my world and there's nothing for me to worry about." All the while they are chewing on "cuds" - round balls of grass that they bring up from their stomachs and chew some 30,000 times each day to get all of the nourishment out of them.

Could that not be a picture of meditation for the Christian to adopt? A time when we quietly "chew" on a piece of Scripture that God brings to our minds from His Word that we have hidden in our hearts.

Imagine how our lives would be different if we sat quietly and brought a verse of Scripture from His Word into our minds and then looked to Him to give us all the nourishment that it contains. Imagine the changes that would take place in our lives if we would invest even a small amount of time "chewing" on a verse or two from His Word each day asking Him to "nourish our lives" with its meaning. Imagine the peace and comfort that could be ours if we simply asked His Spirit to use His Word to calm our fears, lift our depression, eliminate our doubts, change our attitudes, and convict us of our sins.

If we can imagine it, we can do it! God troubles our hearts and minds to get our attention. Then we must submit to His Spirit to work in us as we meditate on Him.

Prayer: Lord, speak to our hearts and change our lives as we willingly ask Your Spirit to guide and guard us. Please do in us what we cannot do in ourselves. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: May all my thoughts be pleasing to him, for I rejoice in the LORD. Psalm 104:34



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
- 11/26/2023 Snow Queen Contest, 4 p.m.
- 12/02/2023 Live & Silent Auctions at Olive Grove Golf Course 4pm-close

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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:

11.03.23

15 32 38 47 65 12

MegaPlier: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$196,000,000

NEXT 17 Hrs 7 Mins 44
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:

11.06.23

13 15 26 44 46 5

All Star Bonus: 5x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$2,050,000

NEXT 1 Days 16 Hrs 22
DRAW: Mins 44 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:

11.06.23

9 11 12 20 32 10

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT 16 Hrs 37 Mins 45
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:

11.04.23

3 18 20 22 26

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$44,000

NEXT 1 Days 16 Hrs 37
DRAW: Mins 45 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:

11.06.23

22 23 25 41 56 24

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT 1 Days 17 Hrs 6
DRAW: Mins 45 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:

11.06.23

12 25 40 59 61 26

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$196,000,000

NEXT 1 Days 17 Hrs 6
DRAW: Mins 45 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the Associated Press

Dawson's 19 lead Akron over South Dakota State 81-75

BROOKINGS, S.D. (AP) — Mikal Dawson's 19 points helped Akron defeat South Dakota State 81-75 in a season opener on Monday night.

Dawson also had five rebounds for the Zips. Sammy Hunter scored 16 points while shooting 6 for 13, including 4 for 9 from beyond the arc. Enrique Freeman was 4 of 10 shooting and 5 of 6 from the free throw line to finish with 13 points, while adding 14 rebounds and five assists.

The Jackrabbits were led by Zeke Mayo, who posted 28 points and four steals. William Kyle III added 16 points for South Dakota State. Charlie Easley also had 10 points, seven rebounds and four steals.

NEXT UP

Up next for Akron is a matchup Friday with Southern Miss at home. South Dakota State hosts Dakota Wesleyan on Wednesday.

Uduje has 19 in Utah State's 101-48 victory against South Dakota Mines

By The Associated Press undefined

LOGAN, Utah (AP) — Josh Uduje had 19 points in Utah State's 101-48 season-opening win over South Dakota Mines on Monday night.

Uduje shot 8 for 8, including 3 for 3 from beyond the arc for the Aggies. Mason Falslev scored 17 points while going 7 of 9 and 2 of 3 from the free throw line, and added five rebounds, five assists, and four steals. Great Osobor had 14 points and was 5 of 10 shooting and 4 of 6 from the free throw line.

Alejandro Rama finished with 19 points for the Hardrockers. South Dakota Mines also got six points from Jaka Prevodnik. In addition, Keagen Smith had six points.

NEXT UP

Up next for Utah State is a matchup Saturday with Bradley on the road.

South Dakota knocks off NAIA's Mount Marty 85-53

VERMILLION, S.D. (AP) — Bostyn Holt had 16 points in South Dakota's 85-53 win over NAIA-member Mount Marty on Monday night.

Holt also had five rebounds for the Coyotes. Paul Bruns scored 16 points, going 5 of 10 (5 for 8 from 3-point range). Lahat Thioune shot 6 of 8 from the field and 3 for 4 from the line to finish with 15 points.

Tash Lunday led the Lancers (0-1) in scoring, finishing with 18 points and two steals. Micah Johnson added eight points and two steals for Mount Marty. In addition, Rugby Ryken had seven points.

NEXT UP

South Dakota's next game is Friday against UT Rio Grande Valley, and Mount Marty visits North Dakota State on Wednesday.

No. 22 Creighton women get things started with 75-52 win over North Dakota State

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Lauren Jensen scored 23 points and No. 22 Creighton got its season started with a coast-to-coast 75-52 victory over North Dakota State on Monday night.

The Bluejays scored the first eight points and held the Bison scoreless through the first six minutes. Creighton led 16-4 after one quarter and 36-18 at halftime.

Jensen made 10 of 15 shots, although she was 0 for 4 from three-point distance. Fellow first-team All-Big East selection Morgan Maly added 10 points. Emma Ronsiek had 15 points, four assists and three steals

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for the Bluejays.

Elle Evans made three three-pointers and scored 10 points for North Dakota State.

The Bluejays return four starters from last season, led by Jensen, who averaged 16.1 points per game. Maly averaged 14.6 ppg last season.

ACLU sues South Dakota over its vanity plate restrictions

By TRISHA AHMED Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — The American Civil Liberties Union of South Dakota announced Monday that it is suing South Dakota over a state law that restricts content on vanity plates.

The ACLU said in a press release that it filed the lawsuit on behalf of Lyndon Hart, whose application for a plate that said "REZWEEED" was initially denied by the South Dakota Motor Vehicle Division for allegedly being "in poor taste."

Hart runs a business called Rez Weed Indeed, which he uses to support the legal selling and use of marijuana on Native American reservations. Hart intended for the personalized license plate to refer to his business and its mission of promoting tribal sovereignty, the news release said.

According to the complaint filed Friday, the state Department of Revenue denied Hart's application in 2022. Under state law, the department has the authority to "refuse to issue any letter combination which carries connotations offensive to good taste and decency."

The department later reversed its decision without explanation and granted Hart the REZWEEED plate. But Hart's free speech rights are still at risk because state law allows the department to recall the plates at any time if they are believed to have been issued in error, the complaint says.

The department used its authority to recall at least three personalized plates in 2022, the lawsuit says.

It names both the state's Department of Revenue and the state's Motor Vehicle Division.

Kendra Baucom, a spokesperson for both entities, declined to comment Monday on the lawsuit or on the state's policy.

The ACLU said the Motor Vehicle Division has rejected hundreds of personalized plate requests in the past five years for allegedly carrying "connotations offensive to good taste and decency."

The state's standard is "overly broad, vague and subjective," the ACLU says, and it violates the First and Fourteenth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution that include the rights of free speech and due process.

The ACLU added that the 8th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals has ruled that license plates are a legitimate place for personal and political expression, and courts throughout the country have struck down similar laws.

In January, North Carolina decided to allow more LGBTQ+ phrases on vanity plates. The state's Division of Motor Vehicles approved more than 200 phrases that were previously blocked, including "GAYPRIDE," "LESBIAN" and "QUEER."

Other states — including Delaware, Oklahoma and Georgia — have been sued over their restrictions in recent years.

Nearly 1M chickens will be killed on a Minnesota farm because of bird flu

By JOSH FUNK Associated Press

Nearly 1 million chickens on a Minnesota egg farm will be slaughtered to help limit the spread of the highly contagious bird flu after it was confirmed there, officials said Monday.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced that the virus was found at a farm in Wright County, Minnesota, as well as in three smaller flocks in South Dakota and Iowa. Whenever the highly pathogenic avian influenza virus is detected on a farm, the entire flock is killed as to keep it from spreading to other farms.

In addition to the Minnesota case, the USDA said some 26,800 turkeys will be killed on a farm in McPherson County in South Dakota and nearly 17,000 birds will be slaughtered on two farms in Iowa's Clay County.

The egg and poultry industry has been dealing with a bird flu outbreak since last year. In 2022, nearly

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58 million birds — mostly chicken and turkeys — were slaughtered to deal with the virus, contributing significantly higher egg and turkey prices. The Minnesota farm is the first egg-laying operation where bird flu has been found this year.

The toll overall has been much lower in 2023 than in 2022 as the number of cases found in wild birds plummeted and farmers redoubled their efforts to prevent any contact between their birds and the ducks and geese migrating past their farms. Even after 940,000 chickens on the Minnesota farm are slaughtered, there will only have been about 3.4 million birds killed this year.

Minnesota has now lost a total of more than 5.5 million birds since the outbreak began. Iowa, which is home to many massive egg farms, has been the hardest hit with more than 16 million birds slaughtered, including one case where 5 million egg-laying chickens had to be killed. Egg farms like the one in Minnesota tend to have the most birds on any one farm. Turkey and chicken operations usually involve fewer birds.

There have been a number of cases reported over the past month, mostly at turkey farms in Minnesota, South Dakota and Iowa, as wild birds began to migrate south for the winter. But the virus can be found on any farm because it is spread easily, primarily through the droppings of wild birds or direct contact with them.

Egg and poultry farmers take steps like requiring their workers to change clothes and sanitize their boots before stepping inside their barns, limiting the sharing of tools between barns, and sealing up their facilities to prevent wildlife from getting inside.

Officials stress that bird flu isn't a threat to food safety because all the birds on a farm where the disease is found are slaughtered before they reach the food supply, and properly cooking poultry and eggs to 165 degrees Fahrenheit (73.89 degrees Celsius) will kill any viruses. Infections in humans are rare and usually come only in people with prolonged exposure to sick birds.

A month into war, Netanyahu says Israel will have an 'overall security' role in Gaza indefinitely

By NAJIB JOBAIN and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

KHAN YOUNIS, Gaza Strip (AP) — Israel will take "overall security responsibility" in Gaza indefinitely after its war with Hamas, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said, the clearest indication yet that Israel plans to maintain control over the coastal enclave one month into a conflict that has claimed thousands of lives and leveled whole swaths of the territory.

In an interview with ABC News that aired late Monday, Netanyahu expressed openness to "little pauses" in the fighting to facilitate the delivery of aid to Gaza or the release of some of the more than 240 hostages seized by Hamas in its Oct. 7 attack into Israel that triggered the war.

But he ruled out any general cease-fire without the release of all the hostages, and the White House said there was no agreement on U.S. President Joe Biden's call for a broader humanitarian pause after a phone call between the leaders.

The war has come at a staggering cost. Airstrikes have reduced entire city blocks to rubble, and around 70% of Gaza's 2.3 million people have fled their homes, with many heeding Israeli orders to head to the southern part of the besieged territory, which is also being bombed.

Israeli troops have been battling Palestinian militants inside Gaza for over a week, and have succeeded in cutting the territory in half and encircling Gaza City. Food, medicine, fuel and water are running low, and United Nations-run schools-turned-shelters are overflowing.

The Palestinian death toll has surpassed 10,000, the Health Ministry of the Hamas-run Gaza Strip said Monday, including over 4,100 minors. More than 2,300 people are missing and believed to be buried under the rubble of destroyed buildings, the ministry said. The ministry does not distinguish between civilians and combatants, and Israel says it has killed thousands of fighters.

About 1,400 people in Israel have died, mostly civilians killed in the Oct. 7 incursion by Hamas. Israelis observed a moment of silence Tuesday in memory of the victims. The 30th day is a milestone in Jewish mourning, and memorial events are planned in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem.

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Israel has vowed to remove Hamas from power and crush its military capabilities — but neither Israel nor its main ally, the United States, has said what would come next.

Netanyahu told ABC News that Gaza should be governed by “those who don’t want to continue the way of Hamas,” without elaborating.

“I think Israel will, for an indefinite period, will have the overall security responsibility because we’ve seen what happens when we don’t have it. When we don’t have that security responsibility, what we have is the eruption of Hamas terror on a scale that we couldn’t imagine,” he said.

Israel captured Gaza, the West Bank and east Jerusalem — the three territories that Palestinians want for a future state — in the 1967 Mideast war.

Israel annexed east Jerusalem in a move not recognized by most of the international community and continues to occupy the West Bank. It withdrew its troops and more than 8,000 Jewish settlers from Gaza in 2005, though it has maintained control over the territory’s airspace, coastline, population registry and all but one of its border crossings.

Hamas seized power from forces loyal to President Mahmoud Abbas two years later, confining his Palestinian Authority to parts of the West Bank.

Since then, Israel and Egypt have imposed a blockade on Gaza to varying degrees. Israel says the blockade is needed to keep Hamas from rearming, while Palestinians and rights groups see it as a form of collective punishment.

For now, Israel’s troops are focused on northern Gaza, including Gaza City, which before the war was home to some 650,000 people. Israel says Hamas has extensive militant infrastructure in the city, including a vast tunnel network, and accuses it of using civilians as human shields.

Several hundred thousand people are believed to remain in the north in the assault’s path. The military says a one-way corridor for residents to flee south remains available, and thousands have traveled it in recent days. But many are afraid to use the route, part of which is held by Israeli troops.

Residents in northern Gaza reported heavy battles overnight into Tuesday morning in the outskirts of Gaza City. The Shati refugee camp — a built-up district housing refugees from the 1948 war surrounding Israel’s creation and their descendants — has been heavily bombarded from the air and sea over the past two days, residents said.

Marwan Abdullah, who is among thousands of people sheltering at Gaza City’s Shifa Hospital, said they heard constant explosions overnight as ambulances brought dead and wounded in from the Shati camp. “We couldn’t sleep. Things get worse day by day,” he said.

A strike early Monday hit the roof of Shifa Hospital, killing a number of displaced people sheltering on its top floor and destroying solar panels, said Mohamed Zaqout, general manager of all hospitals in Gaza. The panels have been helping keep power on in the facility, which has been reduced to using one generator because of lack of fuel.

In southern Gaza, where Palestinians have been told to seek refuge, an Israeli airstrike destroyed several homes early Tuesday in the town of Khan Younis. First responders pulled five bodies — including three dead children — from the rubble, according to an Associated Press journalist at the scene.

AP video taken at a nearby hospital showed a woman desperately searching for her son and then crying and kissing him when she found him, half-naked and bloodied, but apparently without serious injuries. A girl sobbed next to a baby lying on a stretcher wrapped in a blanket, apparently dead.

The war has also stoked wider tensions, with Israel and Lebanon’s Hezbollah militant group trading fire along the border. More than 160 Palestinians have been killed in the occupied West Bank since the war began, mainly during violent protests and gunbattles with Israeli forces during arrest raids.

The military says 30 Israeli troops have been killed since the ground offensive began. Hamas and other militants have continued firing rockets into Israel, disrupting daily life even as most are intercepted or fall in open areas. Tens of thousands of Israelis have evacuated from communities near the volatile borders with Gaza and Lebanon.

Hundreds of trucks carrying aid have been allowed to enter Gaza from Egypt since Oct. 21. But humani-

tarian workers say the aid is far short of mounting needs. Egypt's Rafah Crossing has also opened to allow hundreds of foreign passport holders and medical patients to leave Gaza.

Blinken seeks G7 unity on Israel-Hamas war among items on crisis-heavy global agenda

By MATTHEW LEE AP Diplomatic Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Fresh from a whirlwind tour of the Middle East, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken shifted his intense diplomacy on the Israel-Hamas war to Asia on Tuesday with an appeal for the Group of Seven leading industrial democracies to forge consensus on how to deal with the crisis.

As he and his G7 counterparts began two days of talks in Japan, Blinken said it was critically important for the group to show unity as it has over Russia's war in Ukraine and other major issues and prevent existing differences on Gaza from deepening.

"This is a very important moment as well for the G7 to come together in the face of this crisis and to speak, as we do, with one clear voice," Blinken told Japanese Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa, shortly after talks with Prime Minister Fumio Kishida.

The devastating monthlong conflict in Gaza and efforts to ease the dire humanitarian impacts of Israel's response to the deadly Oct. 7 Hamas attack will be a major focus of the meeting. Yet with the Russia-Ukraine war, fears North Korea may be readying a new nuclear test, and concerns about China's increasing global assertiveness, it is far from the only crisis on the agenda.

In Tokyo, Blinken and foreign ministers from Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Japan and Italy will be seeking common ground in part to prevent the Gaza war from further destabilizing already shaky security in the broader Middle East and seeking to maintain existing consensus positions on other matters.

Kamikawa said Japan "unequivocally condemns" the Hamas' attack on Israel, supports U.S. efforts to find a way forward and said that "solid unity between Japan and the U.S. is especially critical at this point."

"We appreciate the diplomatic efforts of the U.S. in the recent situation between Israel and Palestine," she said. "You have our utmost support."

Those efforts include significantly expanding the amount of humanitarian aid being sent to Gaza, pushing Israel to agree to "pauses" in its military operation to allow that assistance to get in and more civilians to get out, beginning planning for a post-conflict governance and security structure in the territory and preventing the war from spreading.

Blinken described all of these as "a work in progress" and acknowledged deep divisions over the pause concept. Israel remains unconvinced and Arab and Muslim nations are demanding an immediate full cease-fire, something the United States opposes. There has also been resistance to discussing Gaza's future, with the Arab states insisting that the immediate humanitarian crisis must be addressed first.

Securing agreement from G7 members, none of which border or are directly involved in the conflict, may be a slightly less daunting challenge for Blinken.

Yet cracks have emerged over Gaza, which has inflamed international public opinion. Democracies are not immune from intense passions that have manifested themselves in massive pro-Palestinian and anti-Israel demonstrations in G7 capitals and elsewhere.

Last month in the U.N. Security Council, France voted in favor of a resolution calling for a humanitarian truce in Gaza that was vetoed by the United States because it didn't go far enough in condemning Hamas' attack on Israel, which ignited the war. Britain abstained in that vote.

Several days later in the U.N. General Assembly, a non-binding U.S.-Canadian resolution that would have condemned Hamas failed, while a separate resolution calling for an immediate cease-fire overwhelmingly passed. The U.S. voted against the second resolution while France voted in favor. Britain, Canada, Germany, Italy and Japan all abstained.

Since before Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the G7 has held together in defense of the international order that emerged from the destruction of World War II. Despite some fraying around the edges, the group

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has preserved a unified front in condemning and opposing Russia's war.

The group similarly has been of one voice in demanding that North Korea halt its nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs, that China exercise its growing international clout responsibly, and also in calling for cooperative actions to combat pandemics, synthetic opioids, and threats from the misuse of artificial intelligence.

Blinken arrived in Tokyo from Turkey, the last stop on his four-day whirlwind through the Mideast that began with visits to Israel, Jordan, the West Bank, Cyprus and Iraq. From Japan, he will travel to South Korea and then on to India.

Live updates | Israel open to 'little pauses' as it bombards Gaza

By The Associated Press undefined

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Israel will have "overall security responsibility" in Gaza "for an indefinite period" after its war with Hamas and expressed openness to "little pauses" in the current fighting to facilitate the release of hostages.

His comments, in an interview that aired late Monday on ABC News, offered the clearest indication yet that Israel plans to maintain control over the territory that is home to some 2.3 million Palestinians.

Netanyahu ruled out any general cease-fire without the release of the more than 240 captives seized by Hamas in its Oct. 7 raid into Israel, but said he was open to "tactical little pauses." U.S. President Joe Biden had raised the need for humanitarian pauses directly with Netanyahu on a call earlier Monday, but no agreement was reached, the White House said.

The Palestinian death toll in the Israel-Hamas war surpassed 10,000, including more than 4,100 children and 2,640 women, according to the Hamas-run Health Ministry in Gaza.

In the occupied West Bank, more than 140 Palestinians have been killed in the violence and Israeli raids. More than 1,400 people in Israel have been killed, most of them in the Oct. 7 Hamas attack that started the fighting, and 242 hostages were taken from Israel into Gaza by the militant group.

Roughly 1,100 people have left the Gaza Strip through the Rafah crossing since Wednesday under an apparent agreement among the United States, Egypt, Israel and Qatar, which mediates with Hamas.

Currently:

- Israeli military says it has surrounded Gaza City and is preparing for expected ground battles.
- South Africa recalls diplomatic mission to Israel and accuses it of genocide in Gaza.
- Majority of Israelis are confident in justice of Gaza war, even as world sentiment sours.
- U.S. secretary of state ends Mideast tour with tepid support for pauses in fighting.
- A U.N. official says the average Palestinian in Gaza is living on two pieces of bread a day.
- Find more of AP's coverage at <https://apnews.com/hub/israel-hamas-war>.

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

BLINKEN SEEKS G7 CONSENSUS ON ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR

TOKYO — U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken shifted his intense diplomacy on the Israel-Hamas war to Asia on Tuesday with an appeal for the Group of Seven leading industrial democracies to forge a consensus on how to deal with the crisis.

As he and his G7 counterparts began two days of talks in Japan, Blinken said it was critically important for the group to show unity as it has over Russia's war in Ukraine and other major issues and prevent existing differences on Gaza from deepening.

"This is a very important moment as well for the G7 to come together in the face of this crisis and to speak, as we do, with one clear voice," Blinken told Japanese Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa.

The devastating monthlong conflict in Gaza and efforts to ease the dire humanitarian impacts of Israel's response to the deadly Oct. 7 Hamas attack will be a major focus of the meeting. Yet with the Russia-Ukraine war, fears North Korea may be readying a new nuclear test, and concerns about China's increasing global assertiveness, it is far from the only crisis on the agenda.

ISRAELIS OBSERVE ONE-MONTH ANNIVERSARY OF HAMAS ASSAULT

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JERUSALEM — Israelis observed a minute of silence on Tuesday morning in memory of the victims of Hamas' Oct. 7 attack on southern Israel and the 348 soldiers killed since the assault, on its one-month anniversary.

Israelis are marking the anniversary as a day of mourning over the attack, in which more than 1,400 people were killed and 242 were taken hostage. The one-month anniversary is a milestone in the timeline of Jewish mourning.

Memorial events are scheduled to be held in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem later in the day.

UAE TO ESTABLISH 150-BED FIELD HOSPITAL IN GAZA

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — The United Arab Emirates says it will establish a field hospital in Gaza with 150 beds, a surgery department and intensive care units for adults and children.

The state-run WAM news agency reported the move late Monday, saying five aircraft had flown to Egypt, where the equipment will be unloaded and transferred to Gaza.

It says the hospital will be set up in multiple stages, without providing an exact timetable.

The UAE was the driving force behind the Abraham Accords in which four Arab countries normalized relations with Israel in 2020.

The wealthy Persian Gulf country has previously said it would provide \$20 million in aid to the Palestinian people and bring about 1,000 Palestinian children, along with their families, to the UAE for medical treatment.

PAKISTAN SENDS SECOND PLANELOAD OF RELIEF GOODS FOR GAZA

ISLAMABAD — Pakistan sent a second planeload of relief goods for people in Gaza on Tuesday, the Foreign Ministry said.

It said the humanitarian assistance consisted of hygiene kits, medicines and food.

Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani expressed Pakistan's full solidarity with the Palestinian people and condemned Israel's bombardment of Gaza. He said Israel was targeting civilians, including women and children, and demanded an end to the strikes.

SINGAPORE WARNS AGAINST DISPLAYING EMBLEMS LINKED TO ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR

Singapore's government has warned that anyone who displays or wears emblems linked to the Israel-Hamas war could be jailed, saying the conflict was an "emotive issue" that could disrupt national peace.

The Ministry of Home Affairs said in a statement late Monday that Singapore's laws prohibited the display or wearing of foreign national emblems, including flags and banners of any state. It also warned that promoting or supporting terrorism by exhibiting apparel or paraphernalia with logos of terrorist or militant groups such as Hamas or its military wing, Al-Qassam Brigade, will not be condoned.

Those convicted face up to six months in prison or a fine of up to 500 Singapore dollars (\$370) or both. Travelers who wear such apparel can also be denied entry into Singapore, it added.

NETANYAHU SAYS ISRAEL OPEN TO 'LITTLE PAUSES' IN FIGHTING

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Israel was open to "little pauses" in its fight against Hamas — although it was not clear whether some kind of small stoppage had been agreed to or whether the U.S. was satisfied with the scope of the Israeli commitment.

U.S. President Joe Biden had raised the need for humanitarian pauses directly with Netanyahu on a call earlier Monday, but there was no agreement reached, the White House said. Lulls in the fighting are being sought to facilitate humanitarian aid deliveries and the release of some of the estimated 240 hostages that Hamas seized during its Oct. 7 raid into Israel.

Netanyahu, in an interview Monday night with ABC News, also said there would be no general cease-fire in Gaza without the release of the hostages.

UNITED NATIONS FAILS TO AGREE ON RESOLUTION TO HALT GAZA WAR

UNITED NATIONS — The U.N. Security Council has failed again to agree on a resolution on the Israel-Hamas war.

Despite more than two hours of closed-door discussions Monday, differences remained. The U.S. is calling for "humanitarian pauses" and many council members are demanding a "humanitarian cease-fire" to

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deliver desperately needed aid and prevent more civilian deaths in Gaza.

"We talked about humanitarian pauses and we're interested in pursuing language on that score," U.S. deputy ambassador Robert Wood told reporters after the meeting. "But there are disagreements within the council about whether that's acceptable."

Secretary-General Antonio Guterres earlier Monday told reporters he wanted an immediate humanitarian cease-fire in Gaza and a halt to the "spiral of escalation" already taking place from the occupied West Bank, Lebanon and Syria to Iraq and Yemen.

Guterres said international humanitarian law, which demands protection of civilians and infrastructure essential for their lives, is clearly being violated and stressed that "no party to an armed conflict is above" these laws. He called for the immediate unconditional release of the hostages Hamas took from Israel to Gaza in its Oct. 7 attack.

China, which holds the Security Council presidency this month, and the United Arab Emirates, the Arab representative on the council, called Monday's meeting because of the "crisis of humanity" in Gaza, where more than 10,000 people have been killed in less than a month.

ISRAEL ARRESTS PALESTINIAN ACTIVIST IN WEST BANK RAID

JERUSALEM — Israel said it arrested young Palestinian activist Ahed Tamimi during a raid early Monday in the occupied West Bank for alleged terrorist activity and incitement.

Now 22, Tamimi gained international recognition as a teenager when she spent eight months in prison for slapping a soldier. Israel treated her actions as a criminal offense, indicting her on charges of assault and incitement.

Israeli troops conducted several raids across the West Bank overnight, and the military statement said Tamimi was arrested for inciting violence on a social media account. The Associated Press could not verify if the account cited by Israel belongs to Tamimi.

PROTESTERS BLOCK ROAD AT US PORT AS MILITARY CARGO SHIP DOCKS

TACOMA, Wash. — Hundreds of protesters calling for a cease-fire in Gaza blocked traffic on Tuesday at the Port of Tacoma, where a military supply ship had recently arrived.

Organizers say they targeted the vessel based on confidential information that it was to be loaded with weapons bound for Israel. Those claims could not immediately be verified. Police said no arrests had been made.

The Defense Department confirmed that the ship is supporting the movement of U.S. military cargo. The Cape Orlando drew similar protests in Oakland, California, on Friday before it sailed to Tacoma.

ISRAEL SAYS VIDEO SHOWS HAMAS ROCKET LAUNCHERS IN GAZA

JERUSALEM — The Israeli military released videos Monday that it said show its ground troops uncovering Hamas rocket launchers in a youth center and near a mosque in northern Gaza. It did not provide the precise locations where the videos were filmed, and the images did not include any visible landmarks, so The Associated Press could not independently confirm the videos.

During its monthlong war against Hamas, Israel has blamed the Islamic militant group for the heavy civilian death toll in Gaza and said it uses civilians as human shields.

Critics say the vast destruction is evidence that Israel's attacks are disproportionate and don't take precautions to avoid civilians.

An Israeli strike hit the roof of Gaza City's Shifa Hospital early Monday, killing a number of displaced civilians sheltering on its top floor and destroying solar panels.

US NAVY SUBMARINE IN MIDEAST HAS NO NUCLEAR WEAPONS, DEFENSE OFFICIAL SAYS

WASHINGTON — The Ohio-class submarine that U.S. Central Command announced had sailed into Middle East waters on Sunday is an SSGN, a guided missile submarine variant that is not capable of firing nuclear weapons, a defense official told The Associated Press.

The official spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the matter.

The vessel was photographed as it transited the Suez Canal into the Red Sea, the defense official said.

On Monday, Pentagon press secretary Brig. Gen. Pat Ryder said the submarine would provide "further support our deterrence efforts in the region."

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Although it's not unusual for a U.S. submarine to transit the canal, Central Command's online statement acknowledging the location of an Ohio-class submarine is rare. There are Ohio-class submarines that can fire nuclear weapons known as SSBN, or ballistic missile submarine variants.

Associated Press writer Tara Copp contributed.

RED CROSS SAYS IT ACCOMPANIED CRITICALLY ILL PATIENTS TO RAFAH CROSSING POINT

The International Committee of the Red Cross on Monday accompanied a convoy of four ambulances transporting seven critically wounded patients from al-Shifa hospital in Gaza City to the Rafah crossing point into Egypt, Jessica Moussan, a spokesperson for the ICRC told the AP.

The patients were evacuated to Egypt for treatment as part of a deal among Egypt, Israel and Hamas, the militant group that rules Gaza. The deal also calls for foreign passport holders to exit the besieged territory to Egypt.

Monday's evacuation was the first since the crossing was closed over the weekend because of a dispute among Israel, Egypt and Hamas.

Lebanese woman and her 3 granddaughters killed in Israeli strike laid to rest

By BASSAM HATOUM Associated Press

BLIDA, Lebanon (AP) — A Lebanese woman and her three granddaughters were laid to rest in their hometown in southern Lebanon on Tuesday, two days after they were killed in an Israeli drone strike that hit the car they were traveling in near the Lebanon-Israel border.

Hundreds of men and women marched before the four coffins, which were draped in black and white banners as they were carried through the streets of the village of Ainata. The coffins were later taken for burial in a cemetery in the nearby village of Blida.

Israeli troops and militants from Lebanon's Hezbollah group and their allies have been clashing for a month along the border following the start of the Israel-Hamas war. The clashes have intensified since Israel launched a ground incursion into Gaza against Hamas, an ally of Hezbollah.

Large posters of Samira Abdul-Hussein Ayoub and her three granddaughters — Rimas Shor, 14; Talin Shor, 12; and Layan Shor, 10 — were displayed in the cemetery in the southeastern town of Blida. The three girls' mother, Hoda Hijazi, was wounded in the attack and is still undergoing treatment in a hospital.

Following the drone strike that killed the four, Hezbollah said its fighters fired rockets toward the northern Israeli town of Kiryat Shmona, killing one person.

Hezbollah officials have warned that if Israel kills Lebanese civilians, it will retaliate by attacking civilian targets.

"Protecting civilians is a main pillar of the rules of engagement with the enemy," Hezbollah legislator Ali Fayad said during the funeral.

Israel considers the Iran-backed Shiite militant group its most serious immediate threat and estimates that Hezbollah has around 150,000 rockets and missiles aimed at Israel. The group also has different types of drones and surface-to-sea missiles.

What to know about Elijah McClain's death and the cases against police and paramedics

By MATTHEW BROWN and COLLEEN SLEVIN Associated Press

BRIGHTON, Colo. (AP) — A jury has acquitted a Denver-area police officer of manslaughter, following trial testimony that he put Elijah McClain in a neck hold before the Black man was injected with the powerful sedative ketamine by paramedics and died.

The acquittal came Monday in the second of three trials against first responders indicted by state pros-

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ecutors in the 23-year-old massage therapist's death in August 2021.

The local district attorney initially declined to bring charges but the case was revived after the 2020 murder of George Floyd spurred social justice protests nationwide.

Prosecutors contended Officer Nathan Woodyard's actions including the neck hold contributed to McClain's death. But defense attorneys convinced the 12-person jury that the officer wasn't responsible, arguing Woodyard wasn't present during crucial moments in the confrontation with McClain.

The first trial ended in a split verdict with one Aurora officer found guilty and another acquitted.

McClain's mother, Sheneen McClain, left the courthouse Monday with a fist raised in the air. A supporter who accompanied her called the verdict "pathetic" and a sign that the justice system was not changing.

Paramedics Jeremy Cooper and Lt. Peter Cichuniec with the Aurora fire department face prosecution in the final trial. Jury selection begins Nov. 17.

Here's what you need to know about the criminal trials:

WHY WERE THE OFFICERS AND PARAMEDICS CHARGED?

Local prosecutors initially decided not to bring charges in McClain's death largely because an initial autopsy didn't determine exactly how he died.

Following the protests over Floyd's death Democratic Gov. Jared Polis directed the state attorney general to re-investigate the McClain case. A grand jury indicted the three officers and two paramedics in 2021. Dr. Stephen Cina, a forensic pathologist who performed McClain's autopsy, said he changed his findings to pin the blame on the sedative ketamine in 2021 after looking at body camera footage.

WHY DID POLICE STOP McCLAIN?

Woodyard was the first of three officers who approached McClain after a 17-year-old 911 caller said McClain, who was wearing earbuds and listening to music, seemed "sketchy" and was waving his arms as he walked home on the night of Aug. 24, 2019. McClain was often cold and wore a runner's mask and jacket despite the warm weather, prosecutors said in the indictment.

The encounter quickly escalated. Prosecutors say Woodyard put his hands on McClain within eight seconds of getting out of his patrol car without introducing himself. McClain, seemingly caught off guard, tried to keep walking.

Then, after officer Randy Roedema said that McClain had reached for one of their guns, Woodyard put him in a neck hold, pressing against his carotid artery, which rendered him temporarily unconscious. Joyce said McClain didn't try to get a gun, but defense attorney Megan Downing said Woodyard had to react quickly to protect everyone since officers did not have the luxury of hindsight to know whether McClain posed a threat.

The paramedics later injected McClain with an overdose of ketamine. He was pronounced dead three days later.

Woodyard had been charged with manslaughter and criminally negligent homicide.

Roedema was convicted earlier this month of the least serious charges he faced — negligent homicide and third-degree assault. He faces a sentence of anywhere from probation to prison time. Rosenblatt was acquitted.

WHAT DO THE FIRST TWO TRIALS MEAN FOR THE PARAMEDICS?

The actions of Cooper and Cichuniec loomed over the first two trials. They're charged with manslaughter, negligent homicide and several counts each of assault — all felonies.

Defense attorneys for the officers repeatedly said it was the ketamine injection — not their clients — that caused McClain's death. In Woodyard's case, the defense brought in a paid expert witness who has also worked for the prosecution in the paramedic's case. Dr. Nadia Iovetz-Tereshchenko, an emergency room doctor who has worked as a paramedic, said Cooper and Cichuniec did not follow their training protocols in caring for McClain.

"There are people guilty of killing Elijah McClain but they are not here today," defense attorney Andrew Ho said during closing arguments in Woodyard's case. He added, referring to the paramedics, that it was "decided to give him an overdose of 500 milligrams of ketamine despite being explicitly trained not to do so."

Prosecution experts also said the ketamine was the ultimate cause of death after the officer's violent

stop of McClain set in motion events that led to and contributed to his killing.

A use of force expert who has been tracking the McClain case said it was unusual for medical professionals to be brought to trial for the death of a person in police custody.

"When paramedics show up at a scene they have to make fast decisions, obviously, and they base their decisions based on what the officer are telling them, and then apply what they believe is the proper course of treatment," said Ed Obayashi, an attorney and use of force training adviser who spent more than two decades in law enforcement.

Five years after California's deadliest wildfire, survivors forge different paths toward recovery

By ADAM BEAM and OLGA R. RODRIGUEZ Associated Press

PARADISE, Calif. (AP) — On the day Paradise burned, Gwen Nordgren stopped her car just long enough to rescue a young woman escaping by foot.

By that time on Nov. 8, 2018, the sky was black even though the sun had been up for hours. Both sides of the street were on fire as Nordgren grabbed the woman's hand.

"Have you lived a good life?" she asked. The woman said she had.

"So have I," said Nordgren, the president of the Paradise Lutheran Church council. "We're going to say the Our Father and we're going to drive like hell."

Nordgren has told that story countless times in the five years since the deadliest and most destructive wildfire in California's history nearly erased a quiet community in the Sierra Nevada foothills. There are thousands more stories like it, each one providing a frame for one of the worst wildfires in U.S. history.

Five years later, some — like Nordgren — are sharing their stories freely and managing their post-traumatic stress enough to return to Paradise to help make something new. Others, like Shari Bernacette, are still haunted by their memories — including witnessing the flames consume a fleeing couple, one pushing the other in a wheelchair.

"We still can't sleep well. We toss and turn all night," said Bernacette, who moved with her husband to Yuma, Arizona, to escape the risk of future wildfires. The couple lives in a used RV purchased with their insurance money. "We are in the desert surrounded by cactus and rocks. There is nothing that can light up. We will never live amongst the trees again."

For people who returned to Paradise, life is about adjusting. It's the same place, but doesn't feel the same. Paradise was once so thick with trees it was hard to tell the town was perched on a ridge. Now, the shadows are gone as sunlight bathes the town on clear days, offering impressive views of the canyons.

Today's population of just under 10,000 is less than half the 26,000 who lived there before the blaze.

The Camp Fire destroyed about 11,000 homes, which amounted to about 90% of the town's structures. So far 2,500 homes have been rebuilt. About 700 are under construction at any one time, many on original lots. But just six of the town's 36 mobile home parks that served mostly low-income and older residents have reopened.

Donna Hooton and her husband lived in one of the mobile home parks destroyed by the fire. The Hootons live off of Social Security and said they can't afford to move to Paradise. They now live an hour away, in a small, decades-old mobile home.

"We wish we could go home but home is not there anymore," Hooton said.

Paradise Mayor Greg Bolin says that by 2025 all of the town's overhead power lines will be buried underground. By 2026, he says all public roads will be repaved.

"I can see what it's going to look like. I know how nice it is going to be when it's done," said Bolin, who also owns Trilogy Construction Inc., one of the town's main construction companies.

For the most part, Bolin said it is "amazing, in five years, how well people are doing." But then a whiff of smoke will linger in the air, and it instantly brings residents back to that terrible day. It happened just last month, when Derrick Harlan — a 34-year-old Paradise resident whose business reduces fire hazards

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— got a permit to burn some debris piles in Paradise.

When neighbors saw smoke from the debris fire though, they called the police. The next day, the fire department showed up.

"That's where the trauma and the PTSD comes in," Harlan said.

Wildfires have always been a part of life in California, but they are getting more severe as climate change has caused hotter, drier summers. Seven of the state's top 10 most destructive fires happened in the past decade. Before the Camp Fire killed 85 people, the state's deadliest was a 1933 blaze that killed 29. More recently, a 2017 fire shocked the state as it ripped through suburban neighborhoods in California wine country, killing 22.

But the Camp Fire, the official name of the Paradise fire, marked a turning point.

Now, utility companies routinely shut off power for millions of people during wind storms in an effort to prevent fires from starting. Major property insurance companies have raised homeowners' rates to exponential highs or dropped coverage for many in wildfire-prone areas. Other providers have simply stopped writing new policies altogether. PG&E pleaded guilty to 84 counts of manslaughter, filed for bankruptcy and announced plans to bury 10,000 miles of power lines. The town has installed warning sirens and is working to create more evacuation routes.

But just when it seemed safe to think that what happened in Paradise was a once-in-a-lifetime fire, it happened again — this time thousands of miles away in Maui, Hawaii. It meant April Kelly, who grew up in Paradise and lived in Maui for 16 years, lost both of her hometowns.

"I can't believe I'm going through this a second time," she said.

Finding ways to cope with that grief has become a shared part of life in Paradise. The local theater saved Judy Clemens, giving her a space to channel her passion for live performance after the blaze. The Theatre on the Ridge opened to host its first show on Valentine's Day in 2019.

"If the theater had gone, too, I really would have been lost," Clemens said.

For Samuel Walker, making peace with the fire meant making peace with God. The pastor of the First Baptist Church of Paradise was wracked with guilt over the death of Bob Quinn, a church member who Walker likened to a second father. On the day of the fire, Walker drove by the street where Quinn lived and for a moment, thought about checking on him. Instead, he rescued his parents, who would not have been able to escape the fire on their own.

Walker learned of Quinn's death three days after the fire, while he was in Fresno with his family. Thieves had just broken into Walker's car and stolen the only things his wife and daughter had saved from their house — including photos, an iPad and a knitting machine.

He was angry about his situation, everything that had happened and all of the people who had died or been hurt. For a pastor, being mad at God is a bigger problem than most.

"How am I going to minister to a congregation with all of these people with all of their issues, if I'm still trying to get through mine?" Walker asked.

He finally found peace after a trip to the hospital, of all places. Walker injured his arm after a fall while taking out the trash. In the hospital, he immediately thought of a Bible verse from the New Testament that says: "The Lord disciplines everyone he loves."

"It was almost kind of a healing point ... to say, 'OK Lord, I'm going to let this go. I'm going to stop being angry and get back to what you have me here to do,'" Walker said.

Businesses are returning to Paradise, with recent openings of a Big Lots and Ross Dress for Less sending ripples of excitement through town. Town leaders plan to begin installing a sewer system next summer for the business district, which would allow more restaurants to operate.

That will help Nicki Jones' restaurant, a deli and wine bar called Nic's. Jones first came to Paradise 25 years ago. She called it a "fluke," a place to retire with her husband. The town quickly became much more than that. She opened two businesses: a candle shop and a women's clothing store. Both burned in the fire, along with her home.

After the fire, there was no time for rest or reflection. She had a community to rebuild. With a background in accounting she knew what to do. She started by calling her insurance companies. Within 30 days of the

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fire, she was able to buy a building. Within a year, she opened a restaurant called Nic's, what she said is the first new business to open in Paradise after the fire.

"Everybody reacts to whatever tragedy there is — and we all have them — but my way has always been to jump in. How can I fix it?" she said. "I wanted a place where everybody could come and feel comfortable and feel normal."

The best time to go to Nic's is for "Wine room Wednesdays," when lots of locals stop by for a drink and a hug. That sometimes includes Adam Thompson, who is not from Paradise. After the pandemic, Thompson and his family were looking for a quiet community in the foothills to raise their family. In 2021, they moved to Magalia, just outside of Paradise.

If the town is to grow, it needs new people. But newcomers face a daunting question: How do you assimilate into a community defined by a shared tragedy?

Thompson said his family was quickly accepted. His kids are enrolled in a local school. They play Little League baseball and perform in the local theater.

"There's a humility and a resilience here that I don't think would be in a town like this had they not gone through the fire," he said. "I've never once felt excluded up here. I've never felt judged. I've only felt love and welcome from literally every single person I've met."

April Kelly, who hails from Paradise and Maui, is now the general manager at Nic's. She is on the board of directors for a parent support group called Mom's on the Ridge. Samuel Walker is still the pastor of Paradise Baptist Church, now living with his family in nearby Magalia.

Before the fire, Paradise was viewed as a retirement community with mostly older residents. But that's changing. The Paradise Little League has had so much interest it's warned parents that kids may be turned away next year.

The town's rebirth has amazed Don Criswell, a Paradise native who moved back to the area in 1998. Wildfires burned his property in 2008 and again in 2018. Both times he stayed to fight the fires himself.

The Paradise of his memory has been erased. Personal landmarks — the house he grew up in, his elementary school — are gone. Most of his childhood friends and neighbors have since moved away.

But he hasn't gone anywhere. Instead, he has planted trees and a garden. He donates vegetables to a free community lunch put on by his church. He even plays the piano for people who come to eat.

"I'm so sorry that (the fire) happened. There's nothing I can do about that," he said. "I can try to make it a good, fun and beautiful place to live again. I think we're doing that."

WeWork seeks bankruptcy protection, a stunning fall for a firm once valued at close to \$50 billion

By WYATTE GRANTHAM-PHILIPS AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — WeWork has filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection, marking a stunning fall for the office sharing company once seen as a Wall Street darling that promised to upend the way people went to work around the world.

In a late Monday announcement, WeWork said it entered into a restructuring support agreement with the majority of its stakeholders to "drastically reduce" the company's debt while further evaluating WeWork's commercial office lease portfolio.

WeWork is also requesting the "ability to reject the leases of certain locations," which the company says are largely non-operational, as part of the filing. Specific estimates of total impacted locations were not disclosed Monday, but all affected members have received advanced notice, the company said.

"Now is the time for us to pull the future forward by aggressively addressing our legacy leases and dramatically improving our balance sheet," WeWork CEO David Tolley said in a prepared statement. "We defined a new category of working, and these steps will enable us to remain the global leader in flexible work."

The specter of bankruptcy has hovered over WeWork for some time. In August, the New York company

sounded the alarm over its ability to remain in business. But cracks had begun to emerge several years ago, not long after the company was valued as high as \$47 billion.

WeWork is paying the price for aggressive expansion in its early years. The company went public in October 2021 after its first attempt to do so two years earlier collapsed spectacularly. The debacle led to the ouster of founder and CEO Adam Neumann, whose erratic behavior and exorbitant spending spooked early investors.

Japan's SoftBank stepped in to keep WeWork afloat, acquiring majority control over the company.

Despite efforts to turn the company around since Neumann's departure — including significant cuts to operating costs and rising revenue — WeWork has struggled in a commercial real estate market that has been rocked by rising costs of borrowing money, as well as a shifting dynamic for millions of office workers now checking into their offices remotely.

In September, when WeWork announced plans to renegotiate nearly all of its leases, Tolley noted that the company's lease liabilities accounted for more than two-thirds of its operating expenses for the second quarter of this year — remaining "too high" and "dramatically out of step with current market conditions."

At the time, WeWork also said it could exit more underperforming locations. As of June 30, the latest date with property numbers disclosed in securities filings, WeWork had 777 locations in 39 countries.

Beyond real estate costs, WeWork has pointed to increased member churn and other financial losses. In August, the company said that its ability to stay in operation was contingent upon improving its liquidity and profitability overall in the next year.

WeWork's bankruptcy filing arrives at a time when leasing demand for office space is weak overall. The COVID-19 pandemic notably led to rising vacancies in office space as working from home became increasingly popular — and major U.S. markets, from New York to San Francisco, are still struggling to recover.

In the U.S., experts note that WeWork's 18 million square feet is a small fraction of total office inventory in the country — but on a building-by-building level, landlords with exposure to WeWork could take significant hits if their leases are terminated. The shuttering of select WeWork locations to cut costs isn't new. In some past cases, landlords' building loans moved to special servicing after losing WeWork as a tenant, credit rating and research firm Morningstar Credit previously told The Associated Press.

While the full impact of this week's bankruptcy filing on WeWork's real estate footprint is still uncertain, the company sounded an optimistic note Monday night.

"Our spaces are open and there will be no change to the way we operate," a WeWork spokesperson said in a statement to The Associated Press. "We plan to stay in the vast majority of markets as we move into the future and remain committed to delivering an exceptional experience and innovative flexible workspace solutions for our members."

WeWork and certain entities filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in U.S. District Court in New Jersey, with plans to also file recognition proceedings in Canada, according to Monday's announcement.

WeWork locations outside of the U.S. and Canada will not be affected by the proceedings, the company said, as well as franchisees worldwide.

Jewish man dies after confrontation during pro-Israel and pro-Palestinian demonstrations

By ROBERT JABLON Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A Jewish man in California has died after getting into a confrontation during dueling protests over the Israel-Hamas war, authorities said.

Paul Kessler, 69, died at a hospital on Monday, a day after he was struck during pro-Israel and pro-Palestinian demonstrations at an intersection in Thousand Oaks, a suburb northwest of Los Angeles, authorities said.

Witnesses said Kessler was involved in a "physical altercation" with one or more counter-protesters, fell backward and struck his head on the ground, according to a statement from the Ventura County Sheriff's

Department.

An autopsy Monday said Kessler died from a blunt force head injury and it was homicide, according to the Sheriff's Department, which said investigators hadn't ruled out the possibility that the act was a hate crime.

No arrests had been made and details of the confrontation weren't immediately released, although the Sheriff's Department scheduled a news conference for Tuesday morning.

Rabbi Noah Farkas, president of the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles, said the group had heard reports that Kessler was struck in the head by a megaphone held by a pro-Palestinian demonstrator. However, he said federation officials weren't at the scene or involved in the demonstrations.

Other unconfirmed reports suggested that Kessler may have been pushed and fallen.

Rabbi Michael Barclay of Temple Ner Simcha in Westlake Village, near Thousand Oaks, urged people to avoid jumping to conclusions about what happened.

"I just got off the phone with the Chief of Police," he posted on X, formerly Twitter. "They have conflicting reports of what happened, and they did interview the suspect that is identified in social media at the event. They have no video."

He said police are being cautious before making accusations. "We need to do the same; and not let this become a spark that starts an inferno," he wrote.

The Greater Los Angeles Area office of the Council on American-Islamic Relations issued a statement calling Kessler's death a "tragic and shocking loss."

"While we strongly support the right of political debate, CAIR-LA and the Muslim community stand with the Jewish community in rejecting any and all violence, antisemitism, Islamophobia, or incitement of hatred," the statement said.

Since the war between Israel and Hamas broke out last month protests have been held around the world over the deaths of thousands. Hamas militants have been condemned for invading Israel and killing and kidnaping civilians while Israel has been accused of indiscriminate bombing that has killed many civilians in Gaza.

The Supreme Court takes up a case that again tests the limits of gun rights

By MARK SHERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court is taking up a challenge to a federal law that prohibits people from having guns if they are under a court order to stay away from their spouse, partner or other family members. The justices are hearing arguments Tuesday in their first case about guns since last year's decision that called into question numerous gun control laws.

The federal appeals court in New Orleans struck down the law following the Supreme Court's Bruen decision in June 2022. That high-court ruling not only expanded Americans' gun rights under the Constitution, but also changed the way courts are supposed to evaluate restrictions on firearms.

Justice Clarence Thomas' opinion for the court tossed out the balancing test judges had long used to decide whether gun laws were constitutional. Rather than consider whether a law enhances public safety, judges should only weigh whether it fits into the nation's history of gun regulation, Thomas wrote.

The Bruen decision has resulted in lower-court rulings striking down more than a dozen laws. Those include age restrictions, bans on homemade "ghost guns" and prohibitions on gun ownership for people convicted of nonviolent felonies or using illegal drugs.

The court's decision in the new case could have widespread ripple effects, including in the high-profile prosecution of Hunter Biden. The president's son has been charged with buying a firearm while he was addicted to drugs, but his lawyers have indicated they will challenge the indictment as invalid following the Bruen decision.

The outcome probably will come down to the votes of Chief Justice John Roberts and Justice Brett Kavanaugh. They were part of the six-justice conservative majority in Bruen, but Kavanaugh wrote separately,

joined by Roberts, to underscore that not every gun restriction is unconstitutional.

The case before the court involves Zackey Rahimi, who lived near Fort Worth, Texas. Rahimi hit his girlfriend during an argument in a parking lot and then fired a gun at a witness in December 2019, according to court papers. Later, Rahimi called the girlfriend and threatened to shoot her if she told anyone about the assault, the Justice Department wrote in its Supreme Court brief.

The girlfriend obtained a protective order against him in Tarrant County in February 2020.

Eleven months later, Rahimi was a suspect in additional shootings when police searched his apartment and found guns. He eventually pleaded guilty to violating federal law. The appeals court overturned that conviction when it struck down the law. The Supreme Court agreed to hear the Biden administration's appeal.

Rahimi remains jailed in Texas, where he faces other criminal charges. In a letter he wrote from jail last summer, after the Supreme Court agreed to hear his case, Rahimi said he would "stay away from all firearms and weapons" once he's released. The New York Times first reported the existence of the letter.

Guns were used in 57% of killings of spouses, intimate partners, children or relatives in 2020, according to data from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Seventy women a month, on average, are shot and killed by intimate partners, according to the gun control group Everytown for Gun Safety.

A decision in *U.S. v. Rahimi*, 22-915, is expected by early summer.

Civilians fleeing northern Gaza's combat zone report a terrifying journey on foot past Israeli tanks

By WAFAA SHURAF, SAMY MAGDY and KAREEM CHEHAYEB Associated Press

BUREIJ REFUGEE CAMP, Gaza Strip (AP) — What was once Gaza's busiest thoroughfare has become a terrifying escape route for Palestinian civilians fleeing combat on foot or on donkey carts. On their way south, those running for their lives said they raised their hands and waved white flags to move past Israeli tanks along the four-lane highway.

Some reported Israeli soldiers firing at them and said they passed bodies strewn alongside the road.

Many escaped with just the clothes on their back. One woman, covered head-to-toe in a black veil and robe, cradled a toddler and clutched a black purse. A man walked alongside a covered donkey cart that transported his family. It was piled high with mattresses.

In the north of the Gaza Strip, Israeli ground forces backed by relentless airstrikes have encircled Gaza City, the base of Hamas' power, since the weekend. They cut the strip in half and sought to drive Palestinians from northern Gaza as troops advanced.

From early on in the war, now in its second month, the army has urged civilians to move south, including by announcing brief windows for what it said would be safe passage through Salah al-Din, which runs through the center of the besieged enclave.

But tens of thousands of civilians have remained in the north, many sheltering in hospitals or United Nations facilities.

Those who have stayed put say they are deterred by overcrowding in the south, along with dwindling water and food supplies, and continued Israeli airstrikes in what are supposed to be safe areas. Some said fear of the treacherous journey south, following reports from other travelers about coming under fire, initially made them hesitate.

On Monday, Health Ministry in Gaza spokesperson Ashraf al-Qidra dismissed the Israeli offers of safe passage as "nothing but death corridors." He said bodies have lined the road for days, and called for the International Committee of the Red Cross to accompany local ambulances to retrieve the dead.

Israel's military said that at one point, troops came under Hamas fire when trying to open the road temporarily for civilians. Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu echoed the army's claims in an interview with ABC News broadcast late Monday.

"We are fighting an enemy that is particularly brutal. They are using their civilians as human shields, and while we are asking the Palestinian civilian population to leave the war zone, they are preventing them

at gunpoint," Netanyahu said.

The claims could not be verified independently.

During a four-hour evacuation window Sunday, fewer than 2,000 made the move, followed by about 5,000 on Monday, according to U.N. monitors.

Some of those were from Gaza City and the adjacent Shati refugee camp, fleeing Monday after heavy Israeli bombardment there overnight.

"Last night was very difficult," said Amal, a young woman who declined to give her family name due to safety concerns. She was part of a group of 17 people making the journey Monday. She said tanks fired near the group. Soldiers then ordered everyone to raise their hands and white flags before being allowed to pass.

Nour Naji Abu Nasser, 27, arrived Sunday in Khan Younis in southern Gaza. She described an hourslong frightening journey.

"They fired at the sand around us. They wanted to scare us," she said, adding that she saw bodies lying along the road outside Gaza City.

Once those fleeing the north had reached the evacuation zone, residents from the Bureij refugee camp along the highway offered water — a scarce resource in war-time Gaza — to the evacuees.

The four-week war has displaced about 1.5 million people across Gaza, according to U.N. figures.

The Israeli military said thousands heeded its orders to move south, but U.N. humanitarian monitors said thousands of evacuees returned to their homes in the north because of ongoing bombardment across Gaza and the lack of shelters in the south.

The U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees says more than 530,000 people are sheltering in its facilities in southern Gaza, and it's now unable to accommodate new arrivals. Many displaced people sought safety by sleeping in the streets near U.N. shelters, the agency said.

Exonerated 'Central Park Five' member set to win council seat as New York votes in local elections

By ANTHONY IZAGUIRRE Associated Press

Exonerated "Central Park Five" member Yusef Salaam is poised to win a seat Tuesday on the New York City Council, marking a stunning reversal of fortune for a political newcomer who was wrongly imprisoned as a teenager in the infamous rape case.

Salaam, a Democrat, will represent a central Harlem district on the City Council, having run unopposed for the seat in one of many local elections playing out across New York state on Tuesday. He won his primary election in a landslide.

The victory will come more than two decades after DNA evidence was used to overturn the convictions of Salaam and four other Black and Latino men in the 1989 rape and beating of a white jogger in Central Park. Salaam was imprisoned for almost seven years.

"For me, this means that we can really be become our ancestors' wildest dreams," Salaam said in an interview before the election.

Elsewhere in New York City, voters will decide whether to reelect the Queens district attorney and cast ballots in other City Council races. The council, which passes legislation and has some oversight powers over city agencies, has long been dominated by Democrats and the party is certain to retain firm control after the election.

Local elections on Long Island could offer clues about how the city's suburbs could vote in next year's congressional elections.

Races for Suffolk County executive and North Hempstead supervisor have been the most prominent, though the races are expected to have low turnout because they are happening in a year without federal or statewide candidates on the ballot.

"Keeping an eye on Long Island, which has been a little counterintuitive in its election outcomes the last few years with a mix of national and local issues, gives you a chance to see what's playing in a typical

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suburb that's not unlike the ones in Pennsylvania, Michigan, North Carolina, Virginia, Arizona, Nevada and other places that both parties believe are at play," said Lawrence Levy, executive dean of the National Center for Suburban Studies at Hofstra University on Long Island.

Democrats lost in all four of Long Island's congressional districts last year and have dedicated significant resources to the region for 2024. Republicans, bolstering campaigns with a focus on local issues such as crime and migrants, are aiming to hold onto the seats next year.

In the city meanwhile, Salaam's candidacy is a reminder of what the war on crime can look like when it goes too far.

Salaam was just 15 years old when he was arrested along with Antron McCray, Kevin Richardson, Raymond Santana and Corey Wise and accused of attacking a woman running in Central Park.

The crime dominated headlines in the city, inflaming racial tensions as police rounded up Black and Latino men and boys for interrogation. Former President Donald Trump, then just a brash real estate executive in the city, took out large ads in newspapers that implored New York to bring back the death penalty.

The teens convicted in the attack served between five and 12 years in prison before the case was re-examined.

A serial rapist and murderer was eventually linked to the crime through DNA evidence and a confession. The convictions of the Central Park Five were vacated in 2002 and they received a combined \$41 million settlement from the city.

Salaam campaigned on easing poverty and combatting gentrification in Harlem. He often mentioned his conviction and imprisonment on the trail — his place as a symbol of injustice helping to animate the overwhelmingly Black district and propel him to victory.

"I am really the ambassador for everyone's pain," he said. "In many ways, I went through that for our people so I can now lead them."

In a more competitive City Council race Tuesday, Democrat Justin Brannan faces off against Republican Ari Kagan in an ethnically-diverse south Brooklyn district. The race has become heated as the candidates neared Election Day, with the pair sparring over the Israel-Hamas war and New York's migrant crisis.

In a slight that symbolized the tension between the two men, Brannan recently tweeted a photo of a ribbon cutting ceremony that he and Kagan attended, but the image had Kagan's face blurred out.

Statewide, New Yorkers will be voting on two ballot measures. One would remove the debt limit placed on small city school districts under the state Constitution. The second would extend an exclusion from the debt limit for sewage projects.

Tuesday's elections will be shaped by the politics of abortion. Here are the major races to watch

By ROBERT YOON Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Several states will participate in Tuesday's off-year general election that will determine the next governor in two states and provide insight into how abortion rights are shaping American politics.

Voters in Kentucky will decide whether to give a second term to Gov. Andy Beshear, a Democrat running in a heavily Republican state. In Mississippi, Republican Gov. Tate Reeves is seeking reelection against a cousin of rock 'n' roll legend Elvis Presley.

In those races and others across the country, access to abortion has been a frequent topic in campaign debates. Ohio voters will decide on a constitutional amendment supported by abortion rights groups and both Democrats and Republicans have campaigned for control of Virginia's legislature by arguing the other party is wrong on abortion.

Here's a look at Tuesday's major races.

Kentucky governor

Beshear seeks a second term in a heavily Republican state Donald Trump carried twice. The GOP nominee is Daniel Cameron, who succeeded Beshear as state attorney general.

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Beshear has called the state's restrictive abortion law "extremist" for not allowing exceptions in cases of rape and incest. He also vetoed a proposal banning abortions after 15 weeks. Cameron says he supports the state law and that as governor he would sign a bill amending it to allow rape and incest exceptions. But at times he has had difficulty clarifying what exceptions he favors.

Beshear, the son of former two-term Democratic Gov. Steve Beshear, was first elected in 2019 when he defeated GOP incumbent Matt Bevin by less than half a percentage point. Cameron is a former aide to U.S. Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell and endorsed by Trump. If elected, he would become the first Black Republican governor since Reconstruction.

Ohio constitutional amendment on abortion

Ohio voters will decide whether to amend the state Constitution to protect access to abortion services.

The measure would establish the right to "make and carry out one's own reproductive decisions" on matters including abortion, contraception and fertility treatment. It would also allow for abortions to be banned once it has been established that the fetus can survive outside of the womb, unless a physician determines that continuing with the pregnancy would endanger the patient's "life or health."

In August, voters rejected a measure that would have made it more difficult to approve Tuesday's abortion proposal. That contest was seen as a proxy fight on reproductive rights and received national attention.

Virginia General Assembly

Control of both chambers of Virginia's state legislature is up for grabs, with Republicans holding a narrow majority in the state House and Democrats leading the state Senate. Either or both chambers could flip and possibly give Republicans full control of state government. That would clear the way for Republican Gov. Glenn Youngkin to implement a ban on abortions after 15 weeks with exceptions for rape, incest and when the mother's life is endangered. Democratic candidates have campaigned heavily on the issue.

In addition to the three marquee races in Kentucky, Ohio and Virginia, the Associated Press will report vote totals and winners in 346 contested races in 12 states. Here are some other notable races to watch:

Mississippi governor

Reeves is running for a second term against Democrat Brandon Presley, a state utility regulator and cousin of Elvis Presley. Democrats held the Mississippi governorship for almost all of the 20th century, but Republicans have controlled the office for the last 20 years. With help from a sizable cash infusion from the national party, Presley outraised Reeves this year and essentially matched him in spending, but the incumbent entered the final stretch of the campaign with more money.

Reeves was first elected in 2019 with 52% of the vote. Both chambers of the state legislature are also up for election.

Pennsylvania Supreme Court

Republican Carolyn Carluccio and Democrat Daniel McCaffery are the nominees to fill a vacant state Supreme Court seat that could play a significant role on voting-related cases during the 2024 presidential campaign.

Rhode Island U.S. House District 1

Democrat Gabe Amo and Republican Gerry Leonard face off in a special election to complete the term of former Democratic U.S. Rep. David Cicilline, who resigned in May after seven terms. The district has voted reliably for Democrats. Cicilline was first elected in 2010 and won his last five reelection bids with 60% of the vote or higher. Democrat Patrick Kennedy previously held the seat for 16 years.

Mayors

In Houston, 17 candidates are vying to replace term-limited Mayor Sylvester Turner. Notable hopefuls include U.S. Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee and state Sen. John Whitmire, both Democrats.

In Uvalde, Texas, where a gunman killed 19 students and two teachers at Robb Elementary School last year, the candidates for mayor are former news reporter Kimberly Mata-Rubio, whose daughter was killed in the shooting, former mayor Cody Smith and elementary school teacher Veronica Martinez.

In Bridgeport, Connecticut, Mayor Joe Ganim is seeking an eighth term, but on Wednesday, a state judge made the unusual move of ordering a re-do of the September Democratic primary after evidence

surfaced of possible ballot stuffing. The date for the new primary has not been set but will take place after Tuesday's general election. AP will tabulate vote results of the Tuesday election but will not declare a winner until the legal challenges have been resolved.

In Derby, Connecticut, incumbent Mayor Richard Dziekan is running as an independent for a fourth term after losing the Republican primary to alderman Gino DiGiovanni, Jr., who was charged by federal prosecutors in August with illegally entering the U.S. Capitol during the riot on Jan. 6, 2021.

New York City Council District 9

Criminal justice reform activist Yusef Salaam, who was one of five men convicted and later exonerated in the "Central Park Jogger" rape case, is running unopposed.

Ohio is the lone state deciding an abortion-rights question Tuesday, providing hints for 2024 races

By JULIE CARR SMYTH Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — Ohio becomes the latest flashpoint on Tuesday in the nation's ongoing battle over abortion access since the U.S. Supreme Court overturned a constitutional right to the procedure last year.

Voters will decide whether to pass a constitutional amendment guaranteeing an individual right to abortion and other forms of reproductive healthcare.

Ohio is the only state to consider a statewide abortion-rights question this year, fueling tens of millions of dollars in campaign spending, boisterous rallies for and against the amendment, and months of advertising and social media messaging, some of it misleading.

With a single spotlight on abortion rights this year, advocates on both sides of the issue are watching the outcome for signs of voter sentiment heading into 2024, when abortion-rights supporters are planning to put measures on the ballot in several other states, including Arizona, Missouri and Florida. Early voter turnout has also been robust.

Public polling shows about two-thirds of Americans say abortion should generally be legal in the earliest stages of pregnancy, a sentiment that has been underscored in half a dozen states since the Supreme Court's decision reversing *Roe v. Wade* in June 2022.

In both Democratic and deeply Republican states — California, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Montana and Vermont — voters have either affirmed abortion access or turned back attempts to undermine the right.

Voter approval of the constitutional amendment in Ohio, known as Issue 1, would undo a 2019 state law passed by Republicans that bans most abortions at around six weeks into pregnancy, with no exceptions for rape and incest. That law, currently on hold because of court challenges, is one of roughly two dozen restrictions on abortion the Ohio Legislature has passed in recent years.

Issue 1 specifically declares an individual's right to "make and carry out one's own reproductive decisions," including birth control, fertility treatments, miscarriage and abortion.

It still allows the state to regulate the procedure after fetal viability, as long as exceptions are provided for cases in which a doctor determines the "life or health" of the woman is at risk. Viability is defined as the point when the fetus has "a significant likelihood of survival" outside the womb with reasonable interventions.

Anti-abortion groups have argued the amendment's wording is overly broad, advancing a host of untested legal theories about its impacts. They've tested a variety of messages to try to defeat the amendment as they seek to reverse their losses in statewide votes, including characterizing it as "anti-parent" and warning that it would allow minors to seek abortions or gender-transition surgeries without parents' consent.

It's unclear how the Republican-dominated Legislature will respond if voters pass the amendment. Republican state Senate President Matt Huffman has suggested that lawmakers could come back with another proposed amendment next year that would undo Issue 1, although they would have only a six-week window after Election Day to get it on the 2024 primary ballot.

The voting follows an August special election called by the Republican-controlled Legislature that was aimed at making future constitutional changes harder to pass by increasing the threshold from a simple majority vote to 60%. That proposal was aimed in part at undermining the abortion-rights measure being decided now.

Voters overwhelmingly defeated that special election question, setting the stage for the high-stakes fall abortion campaign.

Indian states vote in key test for opposition and PM Modi ahead of 2024 national election

By SHEIKH SAALIQ Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — Two Indian states began voting in local elections on Tuesday in a test of strength for India's opposition, which is pitted against Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ruling party ahead of a crucial national vote scheduled for next year.

The elections in central Chhattisgarh and northeastern Mizoram states, along with polls in three others states over the next three weeks, are expected to give an indication of voter mood before India's political parties gear up for nationwide elections in 2024 in which Modi is eyeing a third consecutive term.

A second round of voting in Chhattisgarh will be held on Nov. 17 along with polls in central Madhya Pradesh state. Polls in two more states, western Rajasthan and southern Telangana, will be held Nov. 23 and Nov. 30. Votes in all five states will be counted on Dec. 3 and results will be declared the same day.

The Indian National Congress, India's main opposition party, holds power in Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh. Modi's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party rules Madhya Pradesh and its regional ally is in power in Mizoram. Telangana is ruled by a strong regional party.

The Congress party also leads the INDIA alliance, which is aiming to keep Modi's increasingly powerful sway at bay. The acronym, which stands for Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance, comprises India's previously fractured opposition parties.

Modi and leaders of the Congress party headed by Rahul Gandhi have traveled across the five states in a charged-up election campaign trying to woo voters by promising them subsidies, loan waivers and employment guarantees.

Modi and his party remain popular nationally after nearly a decade in power and surveys suggest he is expected to win a third term as prime minister. But his party is expected to face tough challenges in all five state polls where issues like rising unemployment and commodity price increases are likely to play on voters' minds.

Meanwhile, the Congress party hopes to revive its fortunes in these states ahead of the national polls next year. It has announced welfare schemes for women and farmers in states where it is in a direct contest with Modi's party.

The local polls will also test the INDIA alliance's strength after it came together to take on Modi in July.

During his nine years in power, Modi has consolidated his party's reach in north and central India. But the party has faced tough challenges in states where regional parties hold influence.

In recent polls, Congress toppled local BJP governments in state elections in southern Karnataka and northern Himachal Pradesh, denting the ruling party's image of invincibility.

Modi will seek reelection next year at a time when India's global diplomatic reach is rising. However, his rule at home has coincided with a struggling economy, rising unemployment, attacks by Hindu nationalists against the country's minorities, particularly Muslims, and a shrinking space for dissent and free media.

Israeli forces cut off north Gaza to isolate Hamas as an advance on the urban center looms

By NAJIB JOBAIN, JACK JEFFERY and LEE KEATH Associated Press

KHAN YOUNIS, Gaza Strip (AP) — The Israeli army severed northern Gaza from the rest of the besieged

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territory and pounded it with airstrikes Monday, preparing for expected ground battles with Hamas militants in Gaza's largest city and an even bloodier phase of the month-old war.

Already, the Palestinian death toll surpassed 10,000, the Health Ministry of the Hamas-run Gaza Strip said Monday. The ministry does not distinguish between fighters and civilians. About 1,400 people in Israel have died, mostly civilians killed in the Oct. 7 incursion by Hamas that started the war.

The war has quickly become the deadliest Israeli-Palestinian violence since Israel's establishment 75 years ago, with no end in sight as Israel vows to remove Hamas from power and crush its military capabilities.

Casualties are likely to rise sharply as the war turns to close urban combat. Troops are expected to enter Gaza City soon, Israeli media reported, and Palestinian militants who have had years to prepare are likely to fight street by street, launching ambushes from a vast network of tunnels.

"We're closing in on them," said Lt. Col. Richard Hecht, an Israeli military spokesperson. "We've completed our encirclement, separating Hamas strongholds in the north from the south."

BOMBARDMENT IN NORTH GAZA

Several hundred thousand people are believed to remain in the north in the assault's path. The military says a one-way corridor for residents of Gaza City and surrounding areas to flee south remains available. But many are afraid to use the route, part of which is held by Israeli troops.

In recent days, airstrikes have hit United Nations facilities where thousands were sheltering, as well as hospitals, which have been overwhelmed by wounded and running low on power and supplies.

A strike early Monday hit the roof of Gaza City's Shifa Hospital, killing a number of displaced people sheltering on its top floor and destroying solar panels, said Mohamed Zaqout, general manager of all hospitals in Gaza. The panels have been helping keep power on in the facility, which has been reduced to using one generator because of lack of fuel.

The strike came in what witnesses said was one of the heaviest nights of bombardment yet in northern Gaza.

Israel said it struck 450 targets overnight, killing a number of Hamas military commanders. Israel blames civilian casualties on Hamas, accusing the militants of operating in residential neighborhoods.

The overnight barrages crushed homes and buried unknown numbers of people underneath in the Shati refugee camp, a densely built-up district on the Mediterranean coast adjacent to central Gaza City, Palestinians who fled south Monday reported.

Ghassan Abu Sitta, a surgeon at Shifa Hospital, told The Associated Press the hospital buildings shook all night from the bombardment "and we started getting the bodies and the wounded. It was horrendous."

The military released videos that it said showed its ground troops uncovering Hamas rocket launchers in a youth center and near a mosque in northern Gaza. It did not provide the precise locations where the videos were filmed, and the images did not include any visible landmarks, so The Associated Press could not independently confirm the videos.

Around 70% of Gaza's 2.3 million residents have fled their homes since the war began. Food, medicine, fuel and water are running low, and U.N.-run schools-turned-shelters are beyond capacity. Many people are sleeping on the streets outside.

Mobile phone and internet service went down overnight — the third territory-wide outage since the start of the war — but was gradually restored on Monday.

ISRAEL IS OPEN TO 'LITTLE PAUSES,' NETANYAHU SAYS

United States President Joe Biden raised the need for humanitarian pauses directly with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on a call Monday, but there was no agreement reached, the White House said.

Lulls in the fighting are being sought to facilitate humanitarian aid deliveries and the release of some of the estimated 240 hostages seized by Hamas in its raid.

After days of intense diplomacy around the Middle East, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken wrapped up his tour of the region Monday. He said efforts to secure a pause, negotiate the hostages' release and plan for a post-Hamas Gaza were still "a work in progress."

Hours later, Netanyahu, in an interview with ABC News, suggested an openness to "little pauses" —

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although it was not clear whether some kind of small stoppage had been agreed to or whether the U.S. was satisfied with the scope of the Israeli commitment. Netanyahu also said there would be no general cease-fire in Gaza without the hostages' release.

The war has also stoked wider tensions, with Israel and Lebanon's Hezbollah militant group trading fire along the border. In another sign of growing unrest, a Palestinian man stabbed two members of Israel's paramilitary Border Police in east Jerusalem before being shot dead, according to police and an AP reporter at the scene. Police said one of the officers, a 20-year-old woman, was later pronounced dead.

In the occupied West Bank, Israeli forces shot to death four Palestinian men in a vehicle in the city of Tulkarem, the Palestinian Health Ministry said. The military said two of the men were high-ranking militants.

Israel captured east Jerusalem, along with Gaza and the West Bank, in the 1967 Mideast war. The Palestinians want all three territories for a future state. Israel annexed east Jerusalem in a move not recognized by most of the international community; it considers the entire city its capital.

In northern Gaza, a Jordanian military cargo plane air-dropped medical aid to a field hospital, King Abdullah II said early Monday. It appeared to be the first such airdrop of the war, raising the possibility of another avenue for aid delivery besides Egypt's Rafah crossing.

Over 450 trucks carrying aid have been allowed to enter Gaza from Egypt since Oct. 21. But humanitarian workers say the aid is far short of mounting needs.

The crossing was closed over the weekend because of a dispute among Israel, Egypt and Hamas, but reopened Monday. Seven Palestinian patients were evacuated to Egypt, the International Committee of the Red Cross said.

FLEEING SOUTH

Some 800,000 people have heeded Israeli military orders to flee to southern Gaza. But continued Israeli strikes in central and southern Gaza — the purported safe zone — killed dozens of people Sunday.

After another strike Monday, in the southern town of Khan Younis, men dug through the rubble with sledgehammers and their bare hands. A young boy caked in dust screamed as he was rolled onto a stretcher and carried away. At least two people were killed, according to an AP reporter at the scene.

Earlier Monday, Palestinians held a mass funeral for 66 people laid out on the ground outside a hospital morgue in the central town of Deir al-Balah. A man with bandages wrapped around his head placed his hand on a child's body and wept.

The Health Ministry said that 10,022 people have been killed in Gaza, including over 4,100 children. More than 2,300 people are missing and believed to be buried under the rubble of destroyed buildings, the ministry said.

The Israeli army said 30 Israeli troops have been killed since the ground offensive began over a week ago. Hamas and other militants have continued firing rockets into Israel, disrupting daily life even as most are intercepted or fall in open areas. Tens of thousands of Israelis have evacuated from communities near the volatile borders with Gaza and Lebanon.

Live updates | Israeli troops divide north and south Gaza as UN fails to reach cease-fire resolution

By The Associated Press undefined

Israeli troops divided the northern and southern parts of Gaza, as communications across the besieged territory were gradually restored Monday after being cut for a third time since the war started. The troops were expected to enter Gaza City on Monday or Tuesday, Israeli media reported.

The Palestinian death toll in the Israel-Hamas war surpassed 10,000, including more than 4,100 children and 2,640 women, according to the Hamas-run Health Ministry in Gaza.

The developments come as an Israeli strike hit the roof of Gaza City's Shifa Hospital, killing a number of displaced people sheltering on its top floor and destroying solar panels, said the general manager of all hospitals in Gaza. The panels have been helping keep the power on at the facility, which has been reduced to using one generator because of lack of fuel.

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In the occupied West Bank, more than 140 Palestinians have been killed in the violence and Israeli raids. More than 1,400 people in Israel have been killed, most of them in the Oct. 7 Hamas attack that started the fighting, and 242 hostages were taken from Israel into Gaza by the militant group.

Roughly 1,100 people have left the Gaza Strip through the Rafah crossing since Wednesday under an apparent agreement among the United States, Egypt, Israel and Qatar, which mediates with Hamas.

Currently:

- Israeli military says it has surrounded Gaza City and is preparing for expected ground battles.
- South Africa recalls diplomatic mission to Israel and accuses it of genocide in Gaza.
- Majority of Israelis are confident in justice of Gaza war, even as world sentiment sours.
- U.S. secretary of state ends Mideast tour with tepid support for pauses in fighting.
- A U.N. official says the average Palestinian in Gaza is living on two pieces of bread a day.
- Find more of AP's coverage at <https://apnews.com/hub/israel-hamas-war>.

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

NETANYAHU SAYS ISRAEL OPEN TO 'LITTLE PAUSES'

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Israel was open to "little pauses" in its fight against Hamas — although it was not clear whether some kind of small stoppage had been agreed to or whether the U.S. was satisfied with the scope of the Israeli commitment.

U.S. President Joe Biden had raised the need for humanitarian pauses directly with Netanyahu on a call earlier Monday, but there was no agreement reached, the White House said. Lulls in the fighting are being sought to facilitate humanitarian aid deliveries and the release of some of the estimated 240 hostages that Hamas seized during its Oct. 7 raid into Israel.

Netanyahu, in an interview Monday night with ABC News, also said there would be no general cease-fire in Gaza without the release of the hostages.

UNITED NATIONS FAILS TO AGREE ON RESOLUTION TO HALT GAZA WAR

UNITED NATIONS — The U.N. Security Council has failed again to agree on a resolution on the Israel-Hamas war.

Despite more than two hours of closed-door discussions Monday, differences remained. The U.S. is calling for "humanitarian pauses" and many council members are demanding a "humanitarian cease-fire" to deliver desperately needed aid and prevent more civilian deaths in Gaza.

"We talked about humanitarian pauses and we're interested in pursuing language on that score," U.S. deputy ambassador Robert Wood told reporters after the meeting. "But there are disagreements within the council about whether that's acceptable."

Secretary-General Antonio Guterres earlier Monday told reporters he wanted an immediate humanitarian cease-fire in Gaza and a halt to the "spiral of escalation" already taking place from the occupied West Bank, Lebanon and Syria to Iraq and Yemen.

Guterres said international humanitarian law, which demands protection of civilians and infrastructure essential for their lives, is clearly being violated and stressed that "no party to an armed conflict is above" these laws. He called for the immediate unconditional release of the hostages Hamas took from Israel to Gaza in its Oct. 7 attack.

China, which holds the Security Council presidency this month, and the United Arab Emirates, the Arab representative on the council, called Monday's meeting because of the "crisis of humanity" in Gaza, where more than 10,000 civilians have been killed in less than a month.

ISRAEL ARRESTS PALESTINIAN ACTIVIST IN WEST BANK RAID

JERUSALEM — Israel said it arrested young Palestinian activist Ahed Tamimi during a raid early Monday in the occupied West Bank for alleged terrorist activity and incitement.

Now 22, Tamimi gained international recognition as a teenager when she spent eight months in prison for slapping a soldier. Israel treated her actions as a criminal offense, indicting her on charges of assault and incitement.

Israeli troops conducted several raids across the West Bank overnight, and the military statement said

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Tamimi was arrested for inciting violence on a social media account. The Associated Press could not verify if the account cited by Israel belongs to Tamimi.

PROTESTERS BLOCK ROAD AT US PORT AS MILITARY CARGO SHIP DOCKS

TACOMA, Wash. — Hundreds of protesters calling for a cease-fire in Gaza blocked traffic on Tuesday at the Port of Tacoma, where a military supply ship had recently arrived.

Organizers say they targeted the vessel based on confidential information that it was to be loaded with weapons bound for Israel. Those claims could not immediately be verified. Police said no arrests had been made.

The Defense Department confirmed that the ship is supporting the movement of U.S. military cargo. The Cape Orlando drew similar protests in Oakland, California, on Friday before it sailed to Tacoma.

ISRAEL SAYS VIDEO SHOWS HAMAS ROCKET LAUNCHERS IN GAZA

JERUSALEM — The Israeli military released videos Monday that it said show its ground troops uncovering Hamas rocket launchers in a youth center and near a mosque in northern Gaza. It did not provide the precise locations where the videos were filmed, and the images did not include any visible landmarks, so The Associated Press could not independently confirm the videos.

During its monthlong war against Hamas, Israel has blamed the Islamic militant group for the heavy civilian death toll in Gaza and said it uses civilians as human shields.

Critics say the vast destruction is evidence that Israel's attacks are disproportionate and don't take precautions to avoid civilians.

An Israeli strike hit the roof of Gaza City's Shifa Hospital early Monday, killing a number of displaced civilians sheltering on its top floor and destroying solar panels.

CIA DIRECTOR VISITS MIDDLE EAST TO MEET WITH INTELLIGENCE PARTNERS, US OFFICIAL SAYS

WASHINGTON -- CIA Director William Burns is in the Middle East meeting with intelligence partners and leaders of several countries on matters including ones related to the war between Israel and Hamas, a U.S. official said Monday.

Topics include the fate of some 240 people being held hostage by the Hamas militant group in Gaza, and the U.S. commitment to prevent state and nonstate actors from widening the Israel-Hamas war regionally, the U.S. official said. The official spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss Burns' typically off-the-record travel plans.

Associated Press writer Ellen Knickmeyer contributed.

US NAVY SUBMARINE IN MIDEAST IS NOT ARMED WITH NUKES, DEFENSE OFFICIAL SAYS

WASHINGTON — The Ohio-class submarine that U.S. Central Command announced had sailed into Middle East waters on Sunday is an SSGN, a guided missile submarine variant that is not capable of firing nuclear weapons, a defense official told The Associated Press.

The official spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the matter.

The vessel was photographed as it transited the Suez Canal into the Red Sea, the defense official said.

On Monday, Pentagon press secretary Brig . Gen. Pat Ryder said the submarine would provide "further support our deterrence efforts in the region."

Although it's not unusual for a U.S. submarine to transit the canal, Central Command's online statement acknowledging the location of an Ohio-class submarine is rare. There are Ohio-class submarines that can fire nuclear weapons known as SSBN, or ballistic missile submarine variants.

Associated Press writer Tara Copp contributed.

RED CROSS SAYS IT ACCOMPANIED CRITICALLY ILL PATIENTS TO RAFAH CROSSING POINT

The International Committee of the Red Cross on Monday accompanied a convoy of four ambulances transporting seven critically wounded patients from al-Shifa hospital in Gaza City to the Rafah crossing point into Egypt, Jessica Moussan, a spokesperson for the ICRC told the AP.

The patients were evacuated to Egypt for treatment as part of a deal among Egypt, Israel and Hamas,

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the militant group that rules Gaza. The deal also calls for foreign passport holders to exit the besieged territory to Egypt.

Monday's evacuation was the first since the crossing was closed over the weekend because of a dispute among Israel, Egypt and Hamas.

FLEEING PALESTINIANS REPORT ISRAELI BOMBARDMENT OF REFUGEE CAMP

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip — Palestinians who fled southward on Monday reported a heavy Israeli bombardment overnight of the Shati refugee camp. They said the Israeli military pounded the camp and the area around al-Shifa hospital during a communications blackout.

Houses across the sprawling camp were reduced to the ground, leaving many dead or wounded under the rubble, they said. First responders and medics worked overnight to retrieve the dead and wounded, they said.

Ghassan Abu Sitta, a surgeon at al-Shifa hospital, said the bombardment of the camp shook the hospital's buildings.

"They pounded the camp all night. The buildings of the al-Shifa hospital were shaking all night, and we started getting the bodies and the wounded. It was horrendous," he told The Associated Press.

ISRAELI STRIKE DAMAGES A ROOF AT GAZA'S LARGEST HOSPITAL; HAMAS DENIES USING HOSPITALS FOR MILITARY ACTIVITIES

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip — Mohamed Zaqout, general manager of all hospitals in Gaza, said the roof of a building at al-Shifa hospital, Gaza's largest, was damaged by an Israeli strike, resulting in deaths and injuries.

Speaking on Al Jazeera, Zaqout said the strike killed displaced people who were sheltering on the top floor. Solar panels that were installed on the roof were destroyed in the attack, he said.

Al-Jazeera showed a video of bloodstained wreckage inside the top floor, where the beds of displaced families were still laid out. Other videos showed smoke rising from the building.

Meanwhile, a senior Hamas official on Monday denied Israeli charges that the militant group has located missiles and rocket launchers near a hospital in the Gaza Strip.

Osama Hamdan told reporters in Beirut that Israel is trying to destroy the medical sector in Gaza to force Palestinians out of their land.

Hamdan also denied Israeli military statements that the group has a tunnel near a hospital in Gaza, saying a hole shown in a photo presented by the Israeli military spokesperson is used for storing fuel.

Hamdan urged the U.N. to send an international committee to visit hospitals to confirm they are not being used by Hamas for military activities.

GAZA HEALTH MINISTRY SAYS PALESTINIAN DEATH TOLL HAS SURPASSED 10,000

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip — The Health Ministry in Hamas-ruled Gaza says the Palestinian death toll from the ongoing war with Israel has jumped over 10,000.

The figures, released Monday, mark a grim milestone in what has quickly become the deadliest Israeli-Palestinian violence since 1948.

The war erupted on Oct. 7 when Hamas militants stormed into Israel from Gaza and killed over 1,400 people and took some 240 others hostage in a rampage that Israel described as the deadliest attack on Jews since the Holocaust. Israel responded with a campaign of blistering airstrikes, followed by a ground invasion.

The Health Ministry said 292 people were killed in Gaza on Sunday, raising the death toll to 10,022, without distinguishing between fighters and civilians. The vast majority of the dead are believed to have been killed in Israeli airstrikes, though Israel says over 500 errant rockets launched by Palestinian militants have landed inside Gaza.

POPE DECRIES ANTISEMITISM, WAR AND TERRORISM

ROME — Pope Francis met with European rabbis on Monday and decried antisemitism, war and terrorism in a written speech he declined to read, saying he wasn't feeling well.

Francis said in his prepared speech that his first thought and prayers goes "above all else, to everything

that has happened in the last few weeks," a clear reference to the Oct. 7 Hamas attack in Israel, including the taking away of hostages to the Gaza Strip, and the ensuing Israeli-Hamas war.

"Yet again violence and war have erupted in that Land blessed by the Most High, which seems continually assailed by the vileness of hatred and the deadly clash of weapons," Francis wrote in the speech.

With France, Austria and Italy among the countries in Europe recently seeing a spate of antisemitic vandalism and slogans, Francis added, "The spread of antisemitic demonstrations, which I strongly condemn, is also of great concern."

The pontiff said believers in God are called to build "fraternity and open paths of reconciliation for all."

Trump lashes out from the witness stand at judge, NY attorney general as he testifies in fraud trial

By JILL COLVIN, MICHAEL R. SISAK, JENNIFER PELTZ and ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A defiant Donald Trump sparred with a New York judge and slammed the state attorney general suing him Monday, using the witness stand at his civil fraud trial to defend his riches and lash out at a case that imperils his real estate empire.

The former president's barbed testimony spurred the judge to admonish, "This is not a political rally."

Trump's long-awaited testimony about property valuations and financial statements was punctuated by personal jabs at state Judge Arthur Engoron, who he said was biased against him, and New York Attorney General Letitia James, whom he derided as a "political hack." He proudly boasted of his real estate business — "I'm worth billions of dollars more than the financial statements" — and disputed claims that he had deceived banks and insurers.

"This is the opposite of fraud," he declared. Referring to James, a Democrat whose office brought the lawsuit, he said, "The fraud is her."

The testy exchanges and frequent rebukes from the judge underscored Trump's unwillingness to adapt his famously freewheeling rhetorical style to a formal courtroom setting governed by rules of evidence and legal protocol. His presence on the stand was a vivid reminder of the legal troubles he faces as he vies to reclaim the White House in 2024.

It also functioned as a campaign platform for the former president and leading Republican presidential candidate to raise anew to supporters his claims of political persecution at the hands of government lawyers and judges.

"People are sick and tired of what's happening. I think it is a very sad day for America," Trump told reporters outside the courtroom after roughly three-and-a-half hours on the stand.

The fraud case doesn't carry the prospect of prison as Trump's upcoming criminal cases do. But its allegations of financial impropriety cut to the very heart of the brand he spent decades crafting. Engoron has already ruled that Trump committed fraud by inflating his financial statements, putting the the ex-president's future control of Trump Tower and his other marquee properties into question.

The non-jury trial addresses other claims in the lawsuit brought by James against Trump, his company and top executives, including his eldest sons. She wants the defendants to fork over what she claims is more than \$300 million in ill-gotten gains and to be banned from doing business in New York.

The civil trial is one of numerous legal proceedings facing Trump as he runs for a second term, including federal and state charges accusing him of crimes including illegally hoarding classified documents and scheming to overturn the 2020 presidential election. His legal and political strategies have now become completely intertwined as he hopscoches between campaign events and court hearings, a schedule that will only intensify once his criminal trials begin.

Trump has been particularly engaged in his fraud trial, aggrieved by the suggestion that he's worth less than he's claimed.

"I'm worth billions of dollars more than the financial statements," he said Monday on the stand, telling a state lawyer, "You go around and try and demean me and try and hurt me, probably for political reasons."

His testimony got off to a contentious start, with the judge turning to Trump's attorney at one point and

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saying: "I beseech you to control him if you can. If you can't, I will."

The courtroom at 60 Centre Street had already become a familiar destination for Trump, who spent days over the past month voluntarily seated at the defense table, observing the proceedings. He took the stand once before — unexpectedly and briefly — after he was accused of violating a partial gag order. He denied violating the rules, but Engoron disagreed and fined him anyway.

His turn as a witness gave him the biggest opportunity yet to respond to allegations against him.

Summoned by lawyers for the state, Trump repeatedly bristled at the suggestion that he had ever intended to defraud financial institutions. He said he had been misquoted or taken too literally in past public comments about his business dealings and his Florida estate, Mar-a-Lago, and said disclaimers in his financial statements covered any missteps. He returned to a familiar position that no one had been victimized, though state lawyers contend that Trump was able to get lower interest rates and other benefits because of the wealth reflected on his financial statements.

"Not one bank lost money. Not one insurance company lost money," he declared.

Tensions between Engoron and Trump — already on display in recent weeks, when the judge fined him a total of \$15,000 for incendiary outside-of-court comments — were evident early on Monday when the ex-president was repeatedly scolded about the length and content of his answers.

Engoron, who determined in a ruling earlier that Trump committed fraud for years while building the real estate empire that catapulted him to fame, will decide the non-jury case. He cautioned at one point that he was prepared to draw "negative inferences" against the former president if he failed to rein in his answers.

"I do not want to hear everything this witness has to say. He has a lot to say that has nothing to do with the case or the questions," the judge said.

Despite the testy back-and-forth early in the day, Trump was later able to veer into expansive answers without anyone cutting him off, using the opportunity to rail against James, the judge and the proceedings in general.

"I think that she's a political hack, and I think she used this case to try and become governor, and she used it successfully to become attorney general. I think it's a disgrace that this case is going on," Trump said.

Of Engoron, Trump said, "He ruled against me, and he said I was a fraud before he knew anything about me."

James, who was in the courtroom, stared straight ahead at Trump as he spoke and was seen chuckling when Trump suggested she didn't know anything about one of his properties, which is located across the street from her office. Afterward, she told reporters: "He rambled. He hurled insults. But we expected that."

Monday's testimony centered on the core of the allegations by the state attorney general: that Trump and his company intentionally inflated property values and deceived banks and insurers in the pursuit of business deals and loans.

Echoing the stance taken by two of his sons, Donald Trump Jr. and Eric, in their own testimony last week, Trump sought to downplay his direct involvement in preparing and assessing financial statements that the attorney general claims were grossly inflated and fraudulent.

"All I did was authorize and tell people to give whatever is necessary for the accountants to do the statements," he said. As for the results, "I would look at them, I would see them and maybe on some occasions, I would have some suggestions."

He also played down the significance of the statements, which went to banks and others to secure financing and deals.

"Banks didn't find them very relevant, and they had a disclaimer clause -- you would call it a worthless statement clause," he said, insisting that after decades in real estate, "I probably know banks as well as anybody. ... I know what they look at. They look at the deal, they look at the location."

He complained that his 2014 financial statements shouldn't be a subject of the lawsuit at all.

"First of all it's so long ago, it's well beyond the statute of limitations," Trump said before turning on Engoron, saying he allowed state lawyers to pursue claims involving such years-old documents "because he always rules against me."

Engoron said, "You can attack me in whichever way you want, but please answer the questions."

2nd police officer acquitted in death of Elijah McClain, who was put in a neck hold, given ketamine

By COLLEEN SLEVIN and MATTHEW BROWN Associated Press

BRIGHTON, Colo. (AP) — Elijah McClain's mother wiped tears from her eyes as a verdict was read Monday acquitting a second Denver-area police officer in the 2019 death of her son.

Two of three officers to face trial so far avoided prison time after being found not guilty, leaving Sheneen McClain and police reform advocates still searching for justice. Elijah McClain's death fueled national outrage about racial injustice in policing after the 23-year-old Black man was put in a neck hold and injected with an overdose of ketamine after police stopped him as he walked home from a convenience store.

In the most recent trial, a 12-person jury found Aurora officer Nathan Woodyard, who put McClain in the neck hold, not guilty of homicide and manslaughter following a weekslong trial in state district court. He faced years in prison if convicted.

Sheneen McClain sat in the front row of the courtroom and left with a fist raised high, just as she did after the first trial last month against two other officers. She declined to comment, but a supporter who accompanied her called the verdict "pathetic" and a sign that the justice system was not changing.

"Her son should be alive, and everybody claims to agree with that, but for some reason we can't hold to account the people that took that away," said MiDian Holmes, an activist who befriended Sheneen McClain after they met at a 2020 protest. "I think she understands and she recognizes that if she can feel, she can fight. This fight is not over for Sheneen McClain. She is going to turn this pain into promise and into progress."

A third officer was convicted in the earlier trial of the lesser charges he faced — negligent homicide and third-degree assault. Two paramedics from the Aurora fire department are awaiting trial later this month.

Woodyard declined to comment following his acquittal. Defense lawyer Megan Downing said, "We believe it was the right verdict, not an easy one."

Colorado Attorney General Phil Weiser said outside the courthouse with the prosecuting attorneys by his side that his office was undeterred in its pursuit of justice for Elijah McClain.

"At this moment, I'm thinking about Sheneen McClain, who has fought hard to keep her son's memory alive and to live on a blessing," Weiser said. "No mother should go through what she has gone through."

Unlike the first two officers who were prosecuted, Woodyard took the stand during his trial. He testified that he put McClain in the neck hold because he feared for his life after he heard McClain say, "I intend to take my power back" and another officer say, "He just grabbed your gun, dude."

Defense attorneys stressed Woodyard was not there during the crucial minutes when McClain's condition was deteriorating. Body camera footage seen by jurors showed Woodyard stepping away for part of the confrontation.

McClain's death had received little attention until protests over the 2020 killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis sparked renewed outrage. His pleading words captured on police body camera video, "I'm an introvert and I'm different," struck a chord.

A local prosecutor in 2019 decided against criminal charges because the coroner's office could not determine exactly how McClain died. Colorado Gov. Jared Polis ordered state Attorney General Phil Weiser's office to take another look at the case in 2020, and a grand jury indicted the officers and paramedics in 2021.

The killings of McClain, Floyd and others triggered a wave of legislation that put limits on the use of neck holds in more than two dozen states, including Colorado, which now also tells paramedics not to give ketamine to people suspected of having a disputed condition known as excited delirium. The condition had been described in a since-withdrawn emergency physicians' report as manifesting symptoms including increased strength. Critics have called it unscientific and rooted in racism.

McClain was stopped the night of Aug. 24, 2019, while walking home from a convenience store, listening to music and wearing a mask that covered most of his face. The police stop quickly became physical

after McClain, seemingly caught off guard, asked to be left alone. He had not been accused of committing any crime.

Woodyard and other officers told investigators they took McClain down after hearing Officer Randy Roedema say McClain grabbed an officer's gun. Roedema later said Officer Jason Rosenblatt's gun was the target.

Prosecutors refuted that McClain ever tried to grab an officer's gun, and it can't be seen in body camera footage.

Woodyard said he put his arm around McClain's neck and applied pressure on its sides to stop the flow of blood to McClain's brain and render him briefly unconscious. The technique, known as a carotid control hold, was allowed at the time but later banned in Colorado.

Paramedics injected McClain with ketamine as Roedema and another officer who was not charged held him on the ground. McClain went into cardiac arrest en route to the hospital and died three days later.

Roedema was convicted earlier this month of the least serious charges he faced, which could lead to a sentence of anywhere from probation to prison time.

He was acquitted of all charges. His lawyer said the most junior officer on scene was a scapegoat in a prosecution driven by politics.

In both trials, the defense sought to pin the blame for McClain's death on paramedics Jeremy Cooper and Lt. Peter Cichuniec. While attorneys in the first trial suggested McClain bore some responsibility for his medical decline by struggling with police, Woodyard's lawyers seemed more sympathetic to McClain.

The city of Aurora agreed in 2021 to pay \$15 million to settle a lawsuit brought by McClain's parents.

Captain found guilty of 'seaman's manslaughter' in boat fire that killed 34 off California coast

By STEFANIE DAZIO Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A scuba dive boat captain was convicted Monday of criminal negligence in the deaths of 34 people killed in a fire aboard the vessel in 2019, the deadliest maritime disaster in recent U.S. history.

Jerry Boylan, 69, was found guilty of one count of misconduct or neglect of ship officer following a 10-day trial in federal court in downtown Los Angeles. The charge is a pre-Civil War statute colloquially known as seaman's manslaughter that was designed to hold steamboat captains and crew responsible for maritime disasters.

Boylan is the only person to face criminal charges connected to the fire. He could get 10 years behind bars when he's sentenced Feb. 8, though he can appeal. His public defenders declined to comment as they left the courthouse.

The verdict comes more than four years after the Sept. 2, 2019, tragedy, which prompted changes to maritime regulations, congressional reform and several ongoing civil lawsuits.

Relatives of those killed hugged one another and wept outside the courtroom Monday after the verdict was read.

Clark and Kathleen McIlvain, whose son Charles died at age 44, said they were relieved that there is finally some accountability for their loss.

"We are very happy that the world knows that Jerry Boylan was responsible for this and has been found guilty," Clark McIlvain said.

The families also applauded and cheered outside the courthouse when the federal prosecutors arrived for a news conference to discuss the case.

"The captain is responsible for everything that happens on the ship, including, most importantly, the safety of everyone on board that ship," U.S. Attorney Martin Estrada told reporters.

While Estrada said Boylan "failed, utterly failed" in those duties, he declined to comment when asked if the boat's owners would be charged now that prosecutors have secured a guilty verdict against the captain.

The Conception was anchored off Santa Cruz Island, 25 miles (40 kilometers) south of Santa Barbara,

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when it caught fire before dawn on the final day of a three-day excursion, sinking less than 100 feet (30 meters) from shore.

Thirty-three passengers and a crew member perished, trapped in a bunkroom below deck. Among the dead were the deckhand, who had landed her dream job; an environmental scientist who did research in Antarctica; a globe-trotting couple; a Singaporean data scientist; and a family of three sisters, their father and his wife.

Boylan was the first to abandon ship and jump overboard. Four crew members who joined him also survived.

Although the exact cause of the blaze remains undetermined, the prosecutors and defense sought to assign blame throughout the trial.

The U.S. Attorney's Office said Boylan failed to post the required roving night watch and never properly trained his crew in firefighting. The lack of the roving watch meant the fire was able to spread undetected across the 75-foot (23-meter) boat.

Boylan's attorneys sought to pin blame on boat owner Glen Fritzler, who with his wife owns Truth Aquatics Inc., which operated the Conception and two other scuba dive boats, often around the Channel Islands.

They argued that Fritzler was responsible for failing to train the crew in firefighting and other safety measures, as well as creating a lax seafaring culture they called "the Fritzler way," in which no captain who worked for him posted a roving watch.

The Fritzlars have not spoken publicly about the tragedy since an interview with a local TV station a few days after the fire. Their attorneys have never responded to requests for comment from The Associated Press, including on Monday.

Kendra Chan, 26, was killed on the Conception, along with her father, Raymond "Scott" Chan, 59. Vicki Moore, who was Raymond's wife and Kendra's mother, said Monday that justice was served.

"A strong message came through that if you are captain of a boat, you are truly responsible and there are consequences if you don't follow the law," Moore said after the verdict.

While the criminal trial is over, several civil lawsuits remain ongoing.

Three days after the blaze, Truth Aquatics filed suit under a pre-Civil War provision of maritime law that allows it to limit its liability to the value of the remains of the boat, which was a total loss. The time-tested legal maneuver has been successfully employed by the owners of the Titanic and other vessels, and requires the Fritzlars to show they were not at fault.

That case is pending, as well as others filed by victims' families against the Coast Guard for alleged lax enforcement of the roving watch requirement.

The Channel Islands draw boaters, scuba divers and hikers. Five of the eight Channel Islands comprise the national park and Santa Cruz is the largest within the park at about 96 square miles (249 square kilometers).

Mind-altering ketamine becomes latest pain treatment, despite little research or regulation

By MATTHEW PERRONE AP Health Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — As U.S. doctors scale back their use of opioid painkillers, a new option for hard-to-treat pain is taking root: ketamine, the decades-old surgical drug that is now a trendy psychedelic therapy.

Prescriptions for ketamine have soared in recent years, driven by for-profit clinics and telehealth services offering the medication as a treatment for pain, depression, anxiety and other conditions. The generic drug can be purchased cheaply and prescribed by most physicians and some nurses, regardless of their training.

With limited research on its effectiveness against pain, some experts worry the U.S. may be repeating mistakes that gave rise to the opioid crisis: overprescribing a questionable drug that carries significant safety and abuse risks.

"There's a paucity of options for pain and so there's a tendency to just grab the next thing that can make a difference," said Dr. Padma Gulur, a Duke University pain specialist who is studying ketamine's use.

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"A medical journal will publish a few papers saying, 'Oh, look, this is doing good things,' and then there's rampant off-label use, without necessarily the science behind it."

When Gulur and her colleagues tracked 300 patients receiving ketamine at Duke, more than a third of them reported significant side effects that required professional attention, such as hallucinations, troubling thoughts and visual disturbances.

Ketamine also didn't result in lower rates of opioid prescribing in the months following treatment, a common goal of therapy, according to Gulur. Her research is under review for medical journal publication.

PSYCHEDELIC EXPERIENCE

Ketamine was approved more than 50 years ago as a powerful anesthetic for patients undergoing surgery. At lower doses, it can produce psychedelic, out-of-body experiences, which made it a popular club drug in the 1990s. With its recent adoption for pain, patients are increasingly encountering those same effects.

Daniel Bass, of Southgate, Kentucky, found the visual disturbances "horrifying." His doctors prescribed four- to six-hour IV infusions of ketamine for pain related to a rare bone and joint disorder. Seated in a bare hospital room with no stimulation or guidance on the drug's psychological effects, Bass says he felt "like a lab rat."

Still, he credits ketamine with reducing his pain during the year that he received twice-a-month infusions.

"No matter how horrific an experience is, if it allows me to be more functional, I will do it," Bass said.

Ketamine targets a brain chemical messenger called glutamate, which is thought to play a role in both pain and depression. It's unclear whether the psychedelic experience is part of the drug's therapeutic effect, though some practitioners consider it essential.

"We want patients to disassociate or feel separate from their pain, depression or anxiety," said Dr. David Mahjoubi, owner of Ketamine Healing Clinic in Los Angeles. "If they feel like they're just sitting in the chair the whole time, we actually give them more."

Mahjoubi's practice is typical of the burgeoning industry: He offers IV ketamine for alcohol addiction, chronic pain, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder. The ketamine doses for those indications are well below those used for surgery, but Mahjoubi favors higher doses for pain than for psychiatric conditions.

Patients pay cash because most insurers don't cover non-surgical uses of ketamine, none of which are approved by the Food and Drug Administration. Mahjoubi's background is in anesthesiology, not psychiatry or addiction.

Patients can pay extra for ketamine nasal sprays and tablets to use between infusions. Those formulations are also not FDA approved and are compounded by specialty pharmacies.

Sending ketamine through the mail has become its own profitable business for telehealth services, such as MindBloom, which jumped into the space after regulators relaxed online prescribing rules during COVID-19.

Pain specialists who study ketamine say there's little evidence for those versions.

"The literature for the nasal and oral formulations is pretty scant," said Dr. Eric Schwenk of Thomas Jefferson University. "There's just not a lot of good evidence to guide you."

Demand for ketamine has sent prescriptions soaring more than 500% since 2017, according to Epic Research, which analyzed the trend using a database of more than 125 million patients. In each year, pain was the No. 1 condition for which ketamine was prescribed, though depression has been rising quickly.

The prescribing boom has led to shortages of manufactured ketamine, driving up sales of compounded versions.

There is more evidence for ketamine's use against depression than for pain. In 2019, the FDA approved a ketamine-related chemical developed by Johnson & Johnson for severe depression. The drug, Spravato, is subject to strict FDA safety rules on where and how it can be administered by doctors.

Guidelines from pain societies note some evidence for ketamine's use in complex regional pain, a chronic condition that usually affects the limbs. But the experts found "weak or no evidence" for ketamine in many more conditions, including back pain, migraines, fibromyalgia and cancer pain.

THE 'WILD WEST' OF KETAMINE PRESCRIBING

While the science behind ketamine is murky, the business model is clear: Physicians can purchase ket-

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amine for less than \$100 a vial and charge \$500 to \$1,500 per infusion.

The recent boom has been fueled, in part, by venture capital investors. Another set of consulting businesses offer to help doctors set up new clinics.

A blog post from one, Ketamine Startup, lists "Five reasons you should open a ketamine clinic," including: "You want to be your own boss" and "You want to take control of your money-making ability."

The clinics are facing increasing competition from telehealth services like MindBloom and Joyous, which connect potential patients with physicians who can prescribe ketamine remotely and send it through the mail.

In May, federal regulators were scheduled to roll back the COVID-era policy that allowed online prescribing of high-risk drugs like ketamine and opioids. But the Drug Enforcement Administration, facing backlash for telehealth companies and physicians, agreed to extend the flexible approach through 2024.

The current landscape is a "wild west," said Dr. Samuel Wilkinson, a Yale University psychiatrist who prescribes both Spravato and ketamine for depression. U.S. physicians have "quite a bit of latitude" to prescribe drugs for unapproved, or off-label, uses.

"There's good things about that and not-so-good things about that," he said.

When used at high doses, ketamine can cause bladder damage, sometimes seen in people who use the drug recreationally. Far less is known about the neurological effects of long-term use. Ketamine was linked to brain abnormalities in rat studies, FDA regulators note.

Last month, the FDA warned doctors and patients against compounded versions of ketamine, including lozenges and pills, saying the agency does not regulate their contents and cannot assure their safety. The warning followed a similar advisory last year about nasal spray versions of ketamine.

But most compounding pharmacies are small operations, overseen by state officials, not the FDA.

In April, Massachusetts' board of pharmacy flagged the FDA's warning to local pharmacies, but noted that state officials wouldn't take any steps to stop "the continued compounding and dispensing of ketamine nasal spray."

The FDA likewise has little leverage over physicians promoting ketamine, even those making exaggerated or misleading claims.

Drugmakers are subject to strict FDA regulation in how they promote their medicines — with requirements to balance risk and benefit information. Those rules don't apply to physicians.

Even when the FDA has tried to regulate risky in-office procedures, such as unproven stem cell infusions, the agency has had a mixed track record of prevailing in court.

For now, experts say it's unlikely regulators will go beyond their recent warnings about off-label ketamine.

"There's an element of whack-a-mole and it's essentially beyond their regulatory purview," said Dr. Caleb Alexander, a drug safety researcher at Johns Hopkins University. "These clinics would represent yet another front that they would be hard pressed to manage and address."

US senators seek answers from Army after reservist killed 18 in Maine

LEWISTON, Maine (AP) — Two senators from Maine asked the U.S. Army inspector general on Monday to provide a full accounting of interactions with a reservist before he killed 18 people and injured 13 others in the deadliest shooting in the state's history.

U.S. Sens. Susan Collins, a Republican, and Angus King, an independent, told Lt. Gen. Donna W. Martin in a letter that it's important to understand "what occurred, or failed to occur" at the federal level, including the Army, before Robert Card opened fire at a bowling alley and bar in Lewiston.

Fellow soldiers expressed concerns about Card's mental health before the Oct. 25 shootings. One of them sent a text message in September saying, "I believe he's going to snap and do a mass shooting," according to law enforcement.

The senators view their federal request as working in tandem with an independent commission that

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Democratic Gov. Janet Mills is convening to explore the facts related to the shooting, including the police response.

"As we continue to grieve the needless loss of life that day, we must work to fully understand what happened — and what could have been done differently that might have prevented this tragedy — on the local, state, and federal levels," the senators wrote.

The senators posed several questions including under what circumstances the Army reports personnel to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System, and when the Army seeks to invoke state laws to temporarily remove firearms from a soldier's possession.

An Army spokesperson said the U.S. Army Reserve Command is conducting an investigation into Card's death "and the unit's actions preceding" the shootings.

"The Army is in close contact with the Maine delegation and is committed to addressing their questions," Lt. Col. Ruth Castro said Monday evening in an email.

Concerns over Card's mental health during military training led to a 14-day hospitalization at the Four Winds Psychiatric Hospital in Katonah, New York, last summer. The worries continued after Card returned home to Maine.

A deputy visited Card's Bowdoin home twice, once with an additional deputy for backup, to perform a wellness check in September but Card never came to the door, officials said. What happened after that is unclear. The sheriff's office canceled its statewide alert seeking help locating Card a week before the killings.

Ex-college football staffer shared docs with Michigan, showing Big Ten team had Wolverines' signs

By LARRY LAGE AP Sports Writer

ANN ARBOR, Mich. (AP) — A former employee at a Big Ten football program said Monday it was his job to steal signs and he was given details from multiple conference schools before his team played Michigan to compile a spreadsheet of play-calling signals used by the Wolverines last year.

He spoke with The Associated Press on condition of anonymity, fearing the disclosures could impact his coaching career.

The employee said he shared with Michigan the documents, which showed the Wolverines' signs and corresponding plays, after his school faced the Jim Harbaugh-led program in 2022.

The person also passed along screenshots of text-message exchanges with staffers from a handful of Big Ten football teams with Michigan, giving the program proof that other conference teams were colluding to steal signs from the Wolverines.

He said he gave the additional details to Michigan last week because he hoped it would help Harbaugh's embattled program, adding he believes the head coach and his assistants are being unfairly blamed for the actions of a rogue staffer.

The alleged actions by Michigan's opponents potentially violate the Big Ten's sportsmanship policy, which is being used as the basis of the conference's case against Michigan. The school and the Big Ten confirmed Monday that Michigan had received notification of potential disciplinary action from the conference.

No. 2 Michigan (9-0, 6-0 Big Ten) is already the subject of an NCAA investigation into an alleged impermissible, in-person scouting and sign-stealing scheme. A former low-level staffer, Connor Stalions, allegedly attended and also sent people to opponents' games to record video that was used to decode their in-game signals.

The scandal has loomed over Harbaugh's team as it chases a third straight conference championship and the school's first national title since 1997. Michigan plays at No. 9 Penn State on Saturday, and if the team was at all distracted by the tumult swirling around the program, it didn't show on the field last Saturday. The Wolverines beat Purdue 41-13.

"I'm fine with being the villain if that's how the media and everyone else sees it outside the building," guard Zac Zinter told reporters Monday as the Wolverines went back to business as usual, but for a notable

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visitor to Schembechler Hall.

Wrestling star Ric Flair dropped in on Harbaugh. "Just Spent The Morning With My Close Friend," Flair posted on X, along with an image of himself and Harbaugh in the coach's office.

The NCAA doesn't outlaw sign-stealing, but it has rules against in-person scouting and using electronic equipment to steal signs, and some of the allegations against Michigan suggest an organized and well-funded approach. Harbaugh has denied any knowledge of the scheme and the school says it is cooperating with the NCAA.

Last week, Stalions resigned two weeks after he was suspended by Michigan. Stalions' attorney said his client did not want to be a distraction for the team.

The former Big Ten program employee told AP he had no knowledge that any of the material he received was gathered in violation of the rules. The documents he provided to Michigan were shared along with other material with the Big Ten on Friday, according to a person familiar with the situation speaking on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to share the details.

The conference gave the school until early this week to respond to allegations and evidence it has been presented, another person with knowledge of the situation said. The person spoke to AP on condition of anonymity because the Big Ten was not making its dealings with Michigan public.

Commissioner Tony Petitti met by video call with angry and frustrated Big Ten coaches and athletic directors last week. The ADs discussed possible punishments for Michigan, focusing on a potential suspension of Harbaugh and other coaches.

Big Ten bylaws allow for the commissioner to hand down a two-game suspension and a fine of up to \$10,000, though more severe penalties can be imposed with approval of the joint group executive committee, comprised of leaders from other Big Ten schools.

Michigan President Santa Ono and athletic director Warde Manuel met with Petitti last Friday. Ono also sent an email to Petitti, asking the conference to wait for results of the NCAA investigation before potentially taking action.

"We are aware that other representatives of the Big 10 are demanding that you take action now, before any meaningful investigation and full consideration of all the evidence," Ono wrote. "And we both know it is not what any other member would want if allegations were raised against their people or programs."

With the investigation hanging over Harbaugh and his team, Manuel said he would not be traveling to North Texas to participate in the College Football Playoff selection committee meeting this week.

Through his attorney, Stalions said that to his knowledge none of the Michigan coaches told anyone to break rules or were aware of improper conduct when it came to advance scouting. Harbaugh served a three-game, university-imposed suspension earlier this season for an unrelated and still unresolved NCAA violations case tied to recruiting.

Earlier Monday, Central Michigan athletic director Amy Folan said the school was still reviewing whether Stalions was on the sideline during the Chippewas' season-opener at Michigan State. Central Michigan is now cooperating with the NCAA, she said.

Images of a person in Central Michigan gear, wearing a hat and sunglasses during the night game, circulated on social media last week and prompted the school to look into it.

Protesters calling for Gaza cease-fire block road at Tacoma port while military cargo ship docks

By ED KOMENDA Associated Press

TACOMA, Wash. (AP) — Hundreds of pro-Palestinian protesters calling for a cease-fire in Gaza blocked traffic Monday at the Port of Tacoma, where a military supply ship had recently arrived.

Organizers said they opposed the Israel-Hamas war and targeted the vessel — the Cape Orlando — based on confidential information that it was to be loaded with weapons bound for Israel.

Those claims could not immediately be corroborated. In an emailed statement, Air Force Lt. Col. Bryon

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J. McGarry, a spokesperson for the Department of Defense, confirmed that the vessel is under the control of the U.S. Navy's Military Sealift Command and is supporting the movement of U.S. military cargo.

"Due to operations security, DoD does not provide transit or movement details or information regarding the cargo embarked on vessels of this kind," McGarry said.

The Cape Orlando drew similar protests in Oakland, California, where it docked on Friday before it sailed to Tacoma. About 300 protesters delayed its departure, and the U.S. Coast Guard detained three people who climbed onto the ship.

The three were released on a pier in San Francisco, Petty Officer Hunter Schnabel said Monday. He said investigations are ongoing against the three and others who had breached the federal maritime area.

By midmorning Monday, about 200 protesters remained at the Port of Tacoma, some carrying signs reading "No Aid For Israel" and "Free All Palestinian Prisoners," emblazoned with watermelons, a symbol of Palestinian freedom. No arrests had been made, said officer Shelbie Boyd, a spokesperson for the Tacoma Police Department.

The protesters' goal was to block the Cape Orlando from being loaded, said Wassim Hage, with the San Francisco-based Arab Resource and Organizing Center.

"It speaks to the historic moment where people are coming out to say, 'No. No funding for genocide, no U.S. bombs for bombing hospitals and killing children in Gaza,'" he said Monday.

The International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 23, which represents workers at the Port of Tacoma, did not immediately return phone messages from the Associated Press on Monday.

Gaza's Hamas-run Health Ministry said more than 10,000 Palestinians have been killed in nearly a month of war in Gaza, and more than 4,000 of those killed are children and minors. That toll likely will rise as Israeli troops advance into dense, urban neighborhoods.

5 hostages of Hamas are free, offering some hope to families of more than 200 still captive

By The Associated Press undefined

Five hostages of Hamas are free, offering some hope to the families of more than 200 others snatched in southern Israel during the militants' deadly rampage on Oct. 7.

But the families of those still in captivity have questions, such as why progress has been so slow, why some and not others are being released and whether Israel's punishing bombardment of the Gaza Strip puts their loved ones in danger.

Israel on Oct. 30 announced its first hostage rescue — that of army Pvt. Ori Megidish. Hamas had earlier released Americans Judith Raanan, 59, and her daughter, Natalie, 18. Also let go were Yocheved Lifshitz, 85, along with Nurit Cooper, 79. Their husbands remain in captivity.

Hamas has said it would let the others go in return for thousands of Palestinian prisoners held by Israel, which has dismissed the offer.

Here are stories of some of the more than 200 still held.

Yarden Roman

"It's a pity that we did not bring water with us," 3-year-old Geffen told her father, Alon Gat, as they hid in brush from Hamas militants for 18 hours on the morning of Oct. 7.

The two, along with Alon's wife and Geffen's mother, Yarden Roman, had been dragged into a car at Kibbutz Be'eri when Hamas attackers showed up. The family made a run for it under fire just before they crossed into the nearby Gaza Strip, Yarden's brother, Gili, said during a recent visit to New York in support of hostages taken in the monthlong war.

Alon, who ran faster as he carried Geffen, emerged with their daughter from a small forest when he thought it was safe. On foot, the two made it back to Be'eri, where Israeli soldiers had arrived. The last Alon saw of his wife, she was hiding behind a tree as he fled with their child, Gili Roman said via Zoom.

The family believes Yarden deliberately lagged behind to give her family a better chance to get away.

Yarden's sister-in-law, Carmel Gat, is also missing and Yarden's mother-in-law, Kinneret Gat, was mur-

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dered at the kibbutz, Gili said.

To 36-year-old Yarden, family is everything, her brother said. She is also dedicated to her work as a physical therapist specializing in elder care.

"She is very timid and mostly introvert. She's open and fun and communicative, mostly with our own small circle of family and friends," Gili said.

Yarden is also an avid rock climber. "She did a lot of hikes around the world," he said. "When we grew up, she was the tomboy."

The two, with two other siblings, are dual citizens of Israel and Germany. Alon, a tour guide, and Yarden and Geffen had lived at Be'eri until recently.

"They left the kibbutz just in the beginning of September because Yarden was not willing to live under the missile attacks anymore. She couldn't accept the breaches of security," Gili said.

Alon and Yarden stashed their belongings in Tel Aviv with Yarden's father, then took off on a three-week caravan trip through South Africa with Gili and other loved ones. Said Gili: "We came back just a day before it happened."

—Leanne Italie

Gong Sae Lao

Gong Sae Lao of Thailand wasn't worried when he traveled a year ago to Israel to work as a farm hand.

Gong knew vaguely about the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. He knew of occasional rocket attacks from the air, of skirmishes and of tensions. But the capacity to earn a living was limited at home in northern Thailand, where Gong delivered fruits and vegetables to market. Moreover, his family was in debt, and Gong — with his father long dead and a brother in prison — was the main provider.

So he headed for Israel in November 2022 to earn wages that would give himself and his loved ones a brighter future.

But Gong's plan went horribly awry on Oct. 7, when Hamas militants slipped into southern Israel and launched a series of bloody, coordinated attacks that ultimately claimed nearly 1,400 lives. Kibbutz Be'eri, where Gong worked, was one of the targets.

Wanwarin Yensuk of Chiang Mai, Thailand, works as the Thailand program manager for the U.S.-based Global Fund for Children. A fluent English speaker, she stepped forward to help Gong's wife communicate with non-Thai speaking officials.

According to Wanwarin, the 26-year-old Gong was on Facebook Live talking to other Thai migrant workers in Israel when the attack began. Loud shooting was heard in the background. Gong's wife was listening in. She urgently called her husband. That was the last time she heard his voice.

Four of the Thai workers in Gong's tight-knit group managed to escape, Wanwarin said. Gong and another worker were taken hostage. Their living quarters were burned to the ground.

Gong's family is from the village of Mae Fah Luang, in northern Chiang Rai province. They are members of the Hmong minority.

Wanarin said that no one from either the Israeli or Thai government has contacted Gong's family, but a local official contacted his mother about collecting a DNA sample, presumably to help identify him if his body is found.

—Pamela Sampson

Oded Lifshitz

Oded Lifshitz has spent his life fighting for Arab rights, but that didn't prevent him from being abducted by Hamas militants who raided Israel on Oct. 7.

Throughout a long career in journalism, he campaigned for the recognition of Palestinian rights and peace between Arabs and Jews. In retirement, the 83-year-old drove to the Erez border crossing on the northern edge of the Gaza Strip once a week to ferry Palestinians to medical appointments in Israel as part of a group called On the Way to Recovery.

"My father spent his life fighting for peace," his daughter Sharone Lifschitz, who spells her surname slightly differently, told reporters last week in London. "I am his daughter. We are all his children. When we ask for peace, we ask to see the human within each of us."

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Oded and his wife, Yocheved, were among the founders of Kibbutz Nir Oz, from which they were abducted when Hamas militants raided the community and killed dozens of residents. Yocheved Lifshitz and another elderly woman, Nurit Cooper, were freed last week. Oded Lifshitz remains in captivity.

In a lifetime devoted to building better relations with the kibbutz's Arab neighbors, Oded was most proud of his work on behalf of the traditionally nomadic Bedouin people of the Negev Desert, Sharone Lifschitz said, describing a case that went to Israel's High Court and resulted in the return of some of their land.

Even after last month's events, Sharone Lifschitz believes her father still supports reconciliation — just like her mother, who shook her captor's hand and said "shalom," the Hebrew word for peace, as she was released.

"We should celebrate, you know, the people that are working for peace — not the people just that are working for war," Sharone Lifschitz said. "I think that was my father's life story."

—Danica Kirka

Clemence Mtenga and Joshua Mollel

Agriculture is Clemence Felix Mtenga's love.

The shy, studious Tanzanian skipped his graduation ceremony from Sokoine University of Agriculture near home in the Kilimanjaro region for a year-long internship in Israel. It was his first time out of the country.

"He was so excited to learn and meet new people," said his sister, Alphoncena Mtenga. "He wanted to start his own agri-business."

Clemence, 22, and another Tanzanian agriculture intern, 21-year-old Joshua Loitu Mollel, were working on cow farms and living in separate kibbutzim not far from the Gaza Strip when they were taken in the Oct. 7 rampage by Hamas militants.

Clemence had been placed at the kibbutz Nir Oz. Joshua was living at Nahal Oz. They had arrived in Israel in mid-September. Loitu Sindoeni Mollel had last spoken to Joshua, the eldest of his five children, on Oct. 5.

"I told him, you're in a foreign country, you have to have good behavior so you can succeed," the father said by phone from his home in Tanzania's Manyara region. "Now, my other children ask me every day, 'Where is my brother? Where is my brother?' But I have no answers."

Joshua, kind and outgoing, had just graduated from an agriculture college about three hours from Dar es Salaam. Like Clemence, he had never traveled outside of Tanzania. And he, too, had dreams connected to the land. "He wants to be a big farmer," his father said.

Clemence is the youngest of four siblings in a tight-knit family, his sister said. Socially, he often kept to himself. He attended church every Sunday back home and sang in the choir.

"He has a beautiful voice," she said. "He dreams of being a very successful person."

Thirty-six agriculture interns from Tanzania were living near Gaza at the time of the attack, according to the human rights organization Hotline for Refugees and Migrants. The rest have been accounted for.

—Leanne Italie

Bibas family

LARNACA, Cyprus — Ofri Bibas couldn't bring herself to tell her brother, Yarden, she loved him when his home came under attack, fearing that might signal some kind of 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 earlier this month at a rally in support of Israel in Larnaca, Cyprus, that she and other relatives of the hostages attended 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

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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

Omer Neutra

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

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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 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 at least a 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 a.m. 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 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

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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, 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, 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

Judih 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.

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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.

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. 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.""

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.

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

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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.

"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.

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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.

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. 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 2 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

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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 passion, 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."

The family was horrified to recognize her in a video on TikTok that surfaced after the attack on southern Israel. 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."

Aid trickles in as survivors salvage belongings from rubble in Nepal villages struck by earthquake

By BINAJ GURUBACHARYA Associated Press

KATHMANDU, Nepal (AP) — Survivors of an earthquake that flattened villages in Nepal's northwest mountains searched through the debris of their collapsed homes for any salvageable belongings Monday as aid trickled into the remote area.

The relatively shallow 5.6 temblor Friday killed 157 people, injured scores and left thousands homeless when it struck just before midnight, unleashing landslides and collapsing homes in an area of steep slopes centered around the district of Jajarkot. The district is about 400 kilometers (250 meters) northeast of the capital, Kathmandu.

"It felt like the world had collapsed and I was not sure if anyone had even survived and would be able to help," said Mina Bika, who was sleeping with her family when the ceiling of their home fell and buried them.

Her husband was badly injured and taken to hospital in the town of Surkhet, while she and the couple's two sons were only lightly hurt.

Authorities pressed forward Monday with efforts to bring food, tents, medicine and other supplies to the remote villages, many reachable only by foot. Roads also were blocked by landslides triggered by the earthquake. Soldiers could be seen trying to clear blocked roads.

Later in the afternoon, the ground shook again with a magnitude 5.3 aftershock that sent people scrambling for safety.

Rescue and search teams said the first part of their mission — to rescue survivors, get the injured to treatment and search for bodies — was over.

"Now we are working on the second phase of our work to distribute relief material, get aid to the villagers, and at the same time we are collecting details about the damages," government official Harish Chandra Sharma said Monday.

Nepal's National Emergency Operation Center in Kathmandu said that along with the 157 killed, at least 256 people were injured and 3,891 houses were damaged.

In Chepare, villagers were going through piles of rocks and logs that used to be their homes Monday, looking for anything they could salvage.

"Most of what belonged to us is under the rubble, all our beds, clothes, whatever jewelry and money we

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had, it's all under there," said Nirmala Sharma, pointing to her wrecked home.

She said they got a tent and some food on Sunday night. Authorities distributed rice, oil, instant noodles and salt in the village, to last them for a few days.

Tarpaulin and plastic sheets made for temporary shelters for a lucky few, while thousands of others spent a third night in the cold.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, who just returned from a trip to Nepal, said the hospitality and spirit of the country's people were "fresh in his heart." He sent condolences to families of the victims while wishing for a quick recovery for the injured, U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric said.

"The United Nations is working closely with authorities in providing speedy assistance — including food, shelter and medicine — to those affected," the spokesman added.

Most homes in villages throughout the districts of Jajarkot and Rukum were built by stacking rocks and logs, and they mostly collapsed or were severely damaged in the quake. Even the few buildings made out of concrete were damaged.

Monday's aftershock caused panic but there were no casualties, only a few structures that were already damaged were reported to have completely collapsed, said police official Binod Majhi. He added that the tremor would likely force many to spend a fourth night in the open.

After a Cabinet meeting on Sunday, Communications Minister Rekha Sharma told reporters that supplying food and setting up temporary shelters were the main focus of government efforts for the moment while also working on plans to reconstruct damaged houses.

Friday night's quake was also felt in India's capital, New Delhi, more than 800 kilometers (500 miles) away.

Earthquakes are common in mountainous Nepal. A 7.8 magnitude earthquake in 2015 killed around 9,000 people and damaged about 1 million structures.

South Africa recalls ambassador and diplomatic mission to Israel and accuses it of genocide in Gaza

By MOGOMOTSI MAGOME Associated Press

JOHANNESBURG (AP) — South Africa's government has recalled Monday its ambassador and diplomatic mission to Israel in condemnation of the bombardment of the Gaza Strip, calling it a "genocide."

The government also threatened action against the Israeli ambassador to South Africa over his recent remarks on the African country's stance on the Israel-Hamas war. No further details were given about the remarks.

The war broke out after the Palestinian militant group Hamas attacked Israel on Oct. 7, leaving over 1,400 people dead. More than 10,000 Palestinians have been killed in Israel's military offensive in Gaza, according to the Hamas-run Health Ministry there.

"The South African government has decided to withdraw all its diplomats in Tel Aviv for consultation," Minister in the Presidency Khumbudzo Ntshavheni said.

She said the Cabinet noted the "disparaging remarks of the Israeli ambassador to South Africa about those who are opposing the atrocities and genocide of the Israeli government" and added that the department of international relations was instructed to "take the necessary measures within the diplomatic channels and protocols to deal with (his) conduct."

Ntshavheni also said the position of the Israeli ambassador in the country was "untenable."

Pro-Palestinian protesters — who have been staging demonstrations by the U.S. Consulate in Johannesburg and Israeli embassies in Pretoria and Cape Town — have called on the South African government to expel the Israeli ambassador.

International relations minister Naledi Pandor, who on Monday hosted her Ukraine counterpart Dmytro Kuleba, said the South African officials would be recalled from Tel Aviv to give the government a detailed briefing about the situation in the region.

"We need to have this engagement with our officials because we are extremely concerned at the con-

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tinued killing of children and innocent civilians in the Palestinian territory and we believe the nature of response by Israel has become one of collective punishment," said Pandor.

Pandor said she had discussed the strengthening of bilateral ties with her Ukraine counterpart, including meetings held by at least seven African leaders who visited Moscow and Kyiv earlier this year to propose a peace plan.

"We are one of the few countries around the regions of the world that are able to speak to both Ukraine, as well as Russia."

There was no immediate comment from the Israeli Foreign Ministry.

The South African government, led by the ruling African National Congress party which has close ties to Palestine, has called for an immediate cease-fire in Gaza and for aid to be allowed into the bombed enclave.

South Africa is among several countries that have recalled their ambassadors to Israel to protest the military operations in Gaza, including Chile, Colombia Honduras. Bolivia severed diplomatic ties with the country.

Israel criticized the Latin American countries last week and called on Colombia and Chile to "explicitly condemn the Hamas terrorist organization."

Israelis overwhelmingly are confident in the justice of the Gaza war, even as world sentiment sours

By AMY TEIBEL Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — At a time when world sentiment has begun to sour on Israel's devastating offensive in Gaza, the vast majority of Israelis, across the political spectrum, are convinced of the justice of the war.

Still under rocket and missile attacks on several fronts, they have little tolerance for anyone railing against the steep toll the conflict has exacted on the other side. They have rallied to crush Hamas, which breached the country's borders from the Gaza Strip, killing more than 1,400 people and taking over 240 hostage in an Oct. 7 rampage that triggered the war.

Capturing the prevailing sentiment in Israel, former Prime Minister Ehud Barak said other countries would have reacted the same way to such a cross-border attack with mass casualties.

"The United States would do whatever it takes," Barak recently told the magazine Foreign Policy. "They would not ask questions about proportionality or anything else."

Israel has carried out weeks of relentless airstrikes and launched a ground operation in what it says is a mission to destroy Hamas. More than 10,000 Palestinians have been killed in the fighting, according to the Health Ministry in Hamas-ruled Gaza.

Entire neighborhoods have been flattened, more than half of the enclave's 2.3 million people have fled their homes, and food, water, fuel and medical supplies have dwindled dangerously under an Israeli siege.

To be sure, Palestinian citizens of Israel on the whole sympathize with the plight of the people of Gaza, while relatives of some hostages have expressed concern about what the bombing campaign means for their loved ones.

But since Oct. 7, the acrimonious polarization that had gripped Israel over Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's proposal to weaken the country's courts has largely been replaced with an outburst of national unity. Some 360,000 Israeli reservists have been called up for a war that enjoys broad support, despite fears it will exact a high military toll. An estimated 250,000 people have been displaced by the violence.

Israelis are hanging the blue and white national flag on homes and cars, turning out in throngs to support hostage families, and handing out food at road junctions to soldiers headed to the front.

TV stations broadcast under the slogans, "Israel at war," and "Together we will win." A month after the attack, coverage focuses heavily on stories of grief and heroism, with little mention of the situation in Gaza.

Backing for the war effort is pouring in from the home front as the government, caught flat-footed by the attack and distracted by infighting, struggles to meet vast new needs. From blood drives to food banks,

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volunteers have stepped in. One organization, HaShomer HaChadash, is helping to build bomb shelters, patrol farmlands in border areas, and keep farms going when their workers have been called up.

Israelis overwhelmingly are incensed by growing pro-Palestinian protests across the world — including within their own Palestinian community — and what they see as the demonization of Israel over the soaring Palestinian casualties. A global spike in antisemitic attacks has only deepened their commitment to a Jewish homeland.

“Let them put themselves in our shoes, with unending rocket fire on civilians for years,” said Yosi Schnaider. Four of his relatives, including two young children, are hostages in Gaza. Two others were killed in the Hamas onslaught.

“They’ve been firing on Israel for years, carrying out attacks for years, and (Hamas’) charter says its objective is to destroy Israel and the Jewish entity. What country would put up with that? I invite anyone who opposes (the war) to come here for a week. Then let’s talk.”

While Israel initially was greeted with international sympathy in the first days after the attack, the humanitarian crisis in Gaza has drawn calls for a respite in the fighting, including from Israel’s staunchest supporter, U.S. President Joe Biden. Bolivia severed diplomatic ties, and Jordan, Turkey, Chile and Colombia recalled ambassadors.

The ongoing violence has refocused world attention on the Palestinian struggle against more than half a century of Israeli military occupation and its stranglehold on the 5.5 million Palestinians living in east Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza. The last serious peace efforts broke down over a decade ago, and Netanyahu’s government adamantly opposes Palestinian statehood.

At the same time, the fighting has shattered the illusion held by many in Israel that Palestinians could be sidelined because other countries in the region — the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Morocco and potentially Saudi Arabia — were willing to normalize ties before the conflict was resolved.

Yet Israelis — even those who oppose the occupation — by and large reject any contextualization of the Hamas attack as their military sets out to destroy the Islamic militant group.

A month into the war, Israel is bracing for a long haul. Former Defense Minister Benny Gantz, now part of a special war Cabinet, has predicted the fighting could last a year or more.

As the military moves deeper into Gaza City, the epicenter of the Hamas command, casualties on both sides are expected to surge as combat moves into a dense urban landscape, with a warren of underground tunnels stocked with fighters and munitions.

So far, at least 30 Israeli soldiers have been killed since the ground operation began. Israel historically has had a low tolerance for casualties. Complicating matters are the hostage situation and the danger that the fighting will spiral into a devastating multifront conflict. Confrontations with militants in Lebanon, the West Bank, Syria and Yemen are already taking place.

“The big question is, has Israeli society steeled itself on the question of casualties?” Amos Harel, military correspondent for the Haaretz daily, told Army Radio. “After the blow we took on Oct. 7, they may be willing. But after the news starts trickling in, and we understand that this is an invasion with bloodshed on both sides, it won’t be easy to swallow at all.”

Pressure rises on Israel to pause fighting and ease siege as battles intensify near Gaza City

By WAFAA SHURAF, JACK JEFFERY and LEE KEATH Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — Israeli troops battling Hamas militants encircled Gaza City on Thursday, the military said, as the Palestinian death toll rose above 9,000. U.S. and Arab leaders raised pressure on Israel to ease its siege of Gaza and at least briefly halt its attacks in order to aid civilians.

Nearly four weeks after Hamas’ deadly rampage in Israel sparked the war, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken was heading to the region for talks Friday in Israel and Jordan following President Joe Biden’s suggestion for a humanitarian “pause” in the fighting. The aim would be to let in aid for Palestinians and

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let out more foreign nationals and wounded. Around 800 people left over the past two days.

Israel did not immediately respond to Biden's suggestion. But Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who has previously ruled out a cease-fire, said Thursday: "We are advancing ... Nothing will stop us." He vowed to destroy Hamas rule in the Gaza Strip.

An airstrike Thursday smashed a residential building to rubble in the Bureij refugee camp several miles south of Gaza City.

One boy, his face covered in blood, cried as workers dug him out of the dirt and wreckage. Others rushed wounded men and women, covered in dust, away on stretchers or wrapped in blankets. At a nearby hospital, doctors tried to stanch the flow of blood from the head of a child laid out on the floor.

At least 15 people were killed, Gaza's Civil Defense spokesperson said, and residents said dozens more were believed buried. The strike took place in the southern zone where Israel has told residents of the north to flee, but which has also faced repeated bombardment.

Blinken's visit will unfold as Arab countries, including those allied with the U.S. and at peace with Israel, have expressed mounting unease with the war. Jordan recalled its ambassador from Israel and told Israel's envoy to remain out of the country until there's a halt to the war and the "humanitarian catastrophe."

A flurry of heavy explosions raised clouds of smoke over Gaza City on Thursday. Al Jazeera television, which continues to broadcast from the city, said Israeli airstrikes were hitting an area of apartment towers in the Tel al-Hawa neighborhood.

The barrage hit around 100 meters (yards) from Al-Quds Hospital, the Palestinian Red Crescent Society said in post on X. It said there were deaths and injuries but gave no more details.

There was no immediate comment by the Israeli military on the strikes. Israel says it targets Hamas fighters and infrastructure and that the group endangers civilians by operating among them and in tunnels under civilian areas.

BLINKEN'S NEW FORAY

The U.S. has pledged unwavering support for Israel after Hamas militants killed hundreds of men, women and children on Oct. 7 and took some 240 people captive.

But the Biden administration has pushed for Israel to let more aid into Gaza amid growing alarm in the region over the destruction and humanitarian crisis in the tiny Mediterranean enclave.

More than 3,700 Palestinian children have been killed in 25 days of fighting — more than six times the 560 children that the U.N. has reported killed in 19 months of war in Ukraine as of Oct. 8. Bombardment has driven more than half the territory's 2.3 million people from their homes. Food, water and fuel are running low under Israel's siege, and overwhelmed hospitals warn they are on the verge of collapse.

Israel has allowed more than 260 trucks carrying food and medicine through the crossing, but aid workers say it's not nearly enough. Israeli authorities have refused to allow fuel in, saying Hamas is hoarding fuel for military use and would steal new supplies.

White House national security spokesman John Kirby said the U.S. was not advocating for a general cease-fire but a "temporary, localized" pause.

In a sign that Israel might be feeling the international pressure, the military put out a late-night statement, in English, insisting it did not want civilians to be harmed.

"I want to make something very clear," military spokesman Brig. Gen. Daniel Hagari said in a recorded video. "Israel is at war with Hamas. Israel is not at war with the civilians in Gaza."

Israel and the U.S. seem to have no clear plan for what would come next if Hamas rule in Gaza is brought down — a key question on Blinken's agenda on his upcoming visit, according to the State Department.

Earlier in the week, Blinken suggested that the Palestinian Authority govern Gaza. Hamas drove the authority's forces out of Gaza in its 2007 takeover of the territory. The authority now holds limited powers in some parts of the Israeli-occupied West Bank.

MOVING ON GAZA CITY

Military officials said Israeli forces had completely encircled Gaza City, a densely packed cluster of neighborhoods that Israel says is the center of Hamas military infrastructure and includes a vast network of

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underground tunnels, bunkers and command centers.

Israeli forces are "fighting in a built-up, dense, complex area," said the military's chief of staff, Herzi Halevy. Hagari said Israeli forces were in "face to face" battles with militants, calling in airstrikes and shelling when needed. He said they were inflicting heavy losses on Hamas fighters and destroying their infrastructure with engineering equipment.

Casualties on both sides are expected to rise as Israeli troops advance toward the dense residential neighborhoods of Gaza City.

On Thursday, Israeli planes dropped leaflets warning residents to immediately evacuate the Shati refugee camp, which borders Gaza City's center.

"Time is up," the leaflets read, warning that strikes "with crushing force" against Hamas fighters were coming.

Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians remain in the path of fighting in northern Gaza, despite Israel's repeated calls for them to evacuate. Many have crowded into U.N. facilities, hoping for safety.

Four U.N. schools-turned-shelter in northern Gaza and Bureij were hit in the past day, killing 24 people, according to Philippe Lazzarini, general-secretary of the U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees, known as UNRWA.

At least 9,061 Palestinians have been killed in the war, mostly women and minors, and more than 23,000 people have been wounded, the Gaza Health Ministry said, without providing a breakdown between civilians and fighters. The death toll is without precedent in decades of Israeli-Palestinian violence.

Over 1,400 people have died on the Israeli side, mainly civilians killed during Hamas' initial attack, also an unprecedented figure.

Nineteen Israeli soldiers have been killed in Gaza since the start of the ground operation. A suspected militant shot to death an Israeli reserve soldier driving near a West Bank settlement Thursday, the military and medics said.

Rocket fire from Gaza into Israel, and daily skirmishes between Israel and Lebanon's Hezbollah militants, have disrupted life for millions of Israelis and forced an estimated 250,000 to evacuate border towns.

Rockets fired from Lebanon injured two people when they hit the northern Israeli town of Kiryat Shmona, medical services said. Hamas said earlier on Thursday it fired 12 rockets from Lebanon.

Hezbollah attacked Israeli positions in the north with drones, mortar fire and suicide drones. The Israeli military said it retaliated with warplanes and helicopter gunships. Four Lebanese civilians were killed, state media there said.

Four Palestinians, including three teenagers, were shot dead Thursday in different parts of the occupied West Bank, the Palestinian Health Ministry said. More than 130 Palestinians have been killed in the West Bank since the start of the war, mainly in violent protests and gunbattles during Israeli arrest raids.

MORE DEPARTURES FROM GAZA

On Thursday, 342 Palestinians with foreign passports, 21 injured in the fighting and an additional 21 companions left Gaza through the Rafah crossing into Egypt, according to Wael Abu Omar, a spokesman for the Palestinian Crossings Authority.

At least 335 people with foreign passports, and 76 injured and their companions, were evacuated Wednesday, he said.

U.S. officials said 79 Americans were among those who have gotten out. The U.S. has said it is trying to evacuate 400 Americans with their families.

Egypt has said it will not accept an influx of Palestinian refugees, fearing Israel will not allow them to return to Gaza after the war.

Oldest black hole discovered dating back to 470 million years after the Big Bang

By MARCIA DUNN AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — Scientists have discovered the oldest black hole yet, a cosmic beast formed a mere 470 million years after the Big Bang.

The findings, published Monday, confirm what until now were theories that supermassive black holes existed at the dawn of the universe. NASA's James Webb Space Telescope and Chandra X-Ray Observatory teamed up over the past year to make the observations.

Given the universe is 13.7 billion years old, that puts the age of this black hole at 13.2 billion years.

Even more astounding to scientists, this black hole is a whopper — 10 times bigger than the black hole in our own Milky Way.

It's believed to weigh anywhere from 10% to 100% the mass of all the stars in its galaxy, said lead author Akos Bogdan of the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics. That is nowhere near the miniscule ratio of the black holes in our Milky Way and other nearby galaxies — an estimated 0.1%, he noted.

"It's just really early on in the universe to be such a behemoth," said Yale University's Priyamvada Natarajan, who took part in the study published in the journal Nature Astronomy. A companion article appeared in the Astrophysical Journal Letters. "It's astounding how this thing actually is sitting in place already with its galaxy so early on in the universe."

The researchers believe the black hole formed from colossal clouds of gas that collapsed in a galaxy next door to one with stars. The two galaxies merged, and the black hole took over.

The fact that Chandra detected it via X-ray confirms "without a doubt that it is a black hole," according to Natarajan. With X-rays "you're actually capturing the gas that is being gravitationally pulled into the black hole, sped up and it starts glowing in the X-rays," she said.

This one is considered a quasar since it's actively growing and the gas is blindingly bright, she added.

The Webb telescope alone may have spotted a black hole that is 29 million years older, according to scientists, but it's yet to be observed in X-rays and verified. Natarajan expects more early black holes will be found — perhaps not as far out, but still quite distant.

"We are expecting a new window to open in the universe, and I think this is the first crack," she said.

The two space telescopes — Webb and Chandra — used a technique called gravitational lensing to magnify the region of space where this galaxy, UHZ1, and its black hole are located. The telescopes used the light from a much closer cluster of galaxies, a mere 3.2 billion light-years from Earth, to magnify UHZ1 and its black hole much farther in the background.

"It's a pretty faint object, and thanks to like luck, nature has magnified it for us," Natarajan said

Launched in 2021 to a point 1 million miles (1.6 million kilometers) away, Webb is the biggest and most powerful astronomical observatory ever sent into space; it sees the universe in the infrared. The much older Chandra has X-ray vision; it rocketed into orbit in 1999.

"I absolutely find it amazing that Chandra can do such amazing discoveries 24 years after its launch," Bogdan said.

Florida lawmakers begin special session to express support for Israel, further sanction Iran

By BRENDAN FARRINGTON Associated Press

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (AP) — The Florida Legislature returned to the Capitol on Monday for a special session that will allow lawmakers to express their support for Israel, while giving Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis some talking points as he campaigns for president.

Lawmakers are expected to consider new sanctions against Iran, which has supported Hamas, as well as vote on resolutions expressing support for Israel's right to defend itself.

"I urge you all to stand with me and view the world from my eyes," David Schachter, a 94-year-old

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Holocaust survivor from Miami, told House members as the session began. "As someone who watched marches and protests in Europe that led to gas chambers and mass graves, I am here to tell you that our world needs a rude awakening.

Following Schacter's remarks, Republican House Speaker Paul Renner said, "Know that in this House we will always stand with Israel and the Jewish people throughout the globe, today, tomorrow and forever."

After Hamas militants attacked Israeli citizens last month, a large, bipartisan group of Florida lawmakers met in the Capitol to express their horror and to stand with Israelis. Now, they'll be taking official action to send a similar message, both about the current war and against antisemitism at home.

More than 1,400 people in Israel have been killed, most of them in the Oct. 7 Hamas attack that started the fighting. The Palestinian death toll has reached 9,700, according to the Hamas-run Health Ministry in Gaza.

A resolution being considered this week says lawmakers "reject and condemn persistent threats against Jewish people, institutions, and communities in the State of Florida, the United States, and abroad, including those from individuals and organizations committed to the extermination of the Jewish people."

Lawmakers will also consider new sanctions against companies that do business with Iran, and a \$35 million grant program to help secure Jewish schools, synagogues and other institutions.

Florida already has sanctions against companies that directly do business with Iran and six other "countries of concern," including Cuba, China and Russia. The U.S. federal government has imposed sanctions against Iran for decades.

Lawmakers were already scheduled to be at the Capitol for committee meetings and Republican leaders decided to use the time for the special session. The Legislature will also take up issues like hurricane relief, property insurance and providing more money for developmentally disabled students.

Since the attacks, DeSantis has touted his support for Israel while on the campaign trail and used his official office to back up his words. He has sent planes to Israel to help Floridians return home and to provide supplies for the country.

Democrats said the session was called to try to boost DeSantis' campaign.

"We should be focused on helping Floridians, not giving Ron DeSantis a talking point for his presidential campaign. Our community is worried about property insurance, schools, and health care. I don't know what GOP primary voters in Iowa are concerned about, but maybe DeSantis can ask while he's up there," House Democratic Leader Fentrice Driskell said in a news release.

AP survey finds 55 of 69 schools in major college football now sell alcohol at stadiums on game day

By LARRY LAGE and MIKE HOUSEHOLDER Associated Press

EAST LANSING, Mich. (AP) — College football tailgates are as synonymous with the game as blocking and tackling. Burgers, brats and beer go along with the cornhole and camaraderie for tens of thousands of people every Saturday, a beloved tradition seen outside stadiums big and small.

"My dad almost gets more excited for football season than I do because of the tailgating and stuff like that," said J.J. McCarthy, the star quarterback for No. 2 Michigan.

For many years, the booze flowed only outside of stadiums. Not anymore: Selling beer and wine inside college football stadiums has become the norm over the past decade, a way for schools to bring in more revenue and attract fans who might otherwise be inclined to stay home.

According to a survey by The Associated Press of Power Five conference schools and Notre Dame, 55 of 69 of them — 80% — now sell alcohol in the public areas of their stadiums on game days. Of the remaining schools, some sell alcoholic drinks in non-public areas of the venue such as suites; others do not sell booze at all.

The University of Wisconsin is one of the institutions that do not sell alcohol to the general public at football games, but it will begin selling booze at basketball and hockey games this season.

"If our fan experience metrics increase, then it certainly warrants a conversation," said Mitchell Pinta,

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Wisconsin's deputy athletic director. "Hey, we did this at Kohl Center (and) LaBahn Arena. What would it take? What will it look like? Is that something we want to do at Camp Randall?"

Alcohol has been sold in football stadiums in various ways for years, but the number of schools willing to do it picked up dramatically in the late 2010s. Adam Barry, a health behavior social scientist at Texas A&M, said after the Southeastern Conference allowed schools to sell alcohol in 2019, booze started to flow in stadiums from coast to coast.

"Since the SEC made that decision, other Power Five conferences followed suit, and we've seen an exponential rise," Barry said.

The AP survey found that 19 schools that currently are in Power Five conferences began selling alcohol to the public during football games in 2019. Before that, just 20 such schools permitted the practice.

Since 2019, another 16 schools have come on board, including Michigan State, Kentucky and Stanford, all of which started selling booze in their football stadiums during the current season.

Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer signed legislation in July lifting the state's ban on alcohol being sold at college sporting events. Michigan State made moves relatively quickly in response.

"I didn't have much trepidation because we're not the first," said Marlon Lynch, Michigan State's chief safety officer. "It's been done for years."

The University of Michigan, meanwhile, did not make alcohol available at the Big House this fall, waiting to see how it goes at basketball and hockey games later this winter. The school has also conducted community surveys.

"We have to take slow steps in order to implement this because it hasn't been a part of our culture," athletic director Warde Manuel said. "This is a way to phase that in, see what the data says and then talk to the regents and the president again."

University of Michigan Regent Paul Brown said he was not sure about the idea.

"One of the things that makes us unique is a collegiate atmosphere," Brown said last month as the board approved applying for liquor licenses at the school's football, basketball and hockey venues. "It is different than the pro sports that always serve alcohol. I think that difference is one thing that creates value for our institution. And so, I don't want to destroy that value."

The University of North Carolina, meanwhile, is in its fifth season of selling Twisted Tea, Modelo, White Claw and other booze.

"Based upon the people that I attend games with sometimes, I think that they will still prefer tailgating over the in-game," said Jonathan Williams, gripping a Coors Light after buying it at a cart station during a recent Tar Heels game. "They're going to want to buy and pay grocery-store prices versus stadium prices and try to get as much in as they can before coming in."

At North Carolina, alcohol has helped the bottom line with about \$4 million in sales. After having \$320,213 in net sales during the 2019-20 athletic year, the school quadrupled that number last year and will see an increase again after this season.

"Athletic departments typically are not profitable," Barry said. "So, selling alcohol has simply become a new revenue stream."

Before Pittsburgh upset Louisville at home last month, Jen Margot and her family played cornhole, noshed on barbecue and drank an array of mostly domestic beers on the fourth level of a parking garage adjacent to Acrisure Stadium.

"We always joked the prices at the tailgate were better," Margot said with a laugh.

Margot said the adults will buy a beer or two when they're inside but prefer the atmosphere at the tailgate.

"We don't go to the games so we can get beer," she said. "It's nice that it's an option especially because it's pretty common at most other stadiums we've been to."

August trial date set for officers charged in Tyre Nichols killing

By ADRIAN SAINZ Associated Press

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP) — A Tennessee judge on Monday set an August trial date for four former Memphis police officers charged in the fatal beating of Tyre Nichols after a traffic stop in January.

During a short hearing on Monday, Shelby County Criminal Court Judge James Jones Jr. announced the Aug. 12 trial date in the cases of Emmitt Martin, Tadarrius Bean, Demetrius Haley and Justin Smith. Each has pleaded not guilty to second-degree murder and other charges in state court.

A fifth officer charged in the case, Desmond Mills Jr., pleaded guilty last week to federal charges of excessive force and obstruction of justice. The plea is part of a larger deal in which prosecutors said he had also agreed to plead guilty later to state charges.

Mills is the only officer to admit guilt in the criminal case. Prosecutors are recommending a 15-year prison sentence for Mills, but the final sentencing hearing rests with the federal judge.

Defense lawyers told prosecutors and the judge in private that they believe the trial could last a month, prosecutor Paul Hagerman told reporters after the hearing.

"We're of a mind that this does not need to be a monthlong trial," Hagerman said. "The proof is pretty simple."

Hagerman also said it's possible that Mills could testify at the state trial. Martin's lawyer, William Massey, said after the hearing that he is considering filing a motion for a change of venue, which means that a jury from outside Shelby County would hear the case. Nichols' beating death has received heavy media coverage in Memphis.

Caught on police video, the beating of Nichols in January was one in a string of violent encounters between police and Black people that sparked protests and renewed debate about police brutality and the need for police reform in the U.S. The five former officers who were charged also are Black.

Mills and four other former Memphis Police Department officers were charged in federal court with using excessive force, failing to intervene, deliberate indifference and conspiring to lie, as well as obstruction of justice after they were caught on camera punching, kicking and beating Nichols on Jan. 7. He died three days later. The federal trial date for the four other officers is May 6.

The officers said they pulled Nichols over because he was driving recklessly, but Police Chief Cerelyn "CJ" Davis has said no evidence was found to support that allegation. Nichols ran from officers, who tried to restrain him. He pleaded for his mother as he was pummeled just steps from his home.

An autopsy report showed Nichols died from blows to the head, and that the manner of death was homicide. The report described brain injuries, cuts and bruises to the head and other parts of the body.

After Nichols' death, all five officers were fired from the department and the crime-suppression team they were part of was disbanded.

Inspired by online dating, AI tool for adoption matchmaking falls short for vulnerable foster kids

By SALLY HO and GARANCE BURKE Associated Press

Some are orphans, others seized from their parents. Many are older and have overwhelming needs or disabilities. Most bear the scars of trauma from being hauled between foster homes, torn from siblings or sexually and physically abused.

Child protective services agencies have wrestled for decades with how to find lasting homes for such vulnerable children and teens — a challenge so enormous that social workers can never guarantee a perfect fit.

Into this morass stepped Thea Ramirez with what she touted as a technological solution — an artificial intelligence-powered tool that ultimately can predict which adoptive families will stay together. Ramirez claimed this algorithm, designed by former researchers at an online dating service, could boost successful adoptions across the U.S. and promote efficiency at cash-strapped child welfare agencies.

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"We're using science – not merely preferences – to establish a score capable of predicting long-term success," Ramirez said in an April 2021 YouTube video about her ambitions to flip "the script on the way America matches children and families" using the Family-Match algorithm.

An Associated Press investigation, however, found that the AI tool – among the few adoption algorithms on the market – has produced limited results in the states where it has been used, according to Family-Match's self-reported data that AP obtained through public records requests from state and local agencies.

Ramirez also has overstated the capabilities of the proprietary algorithm to government officials as she has sought to expand its reach, even as social workers told AP that the tool wasn't useful and often led them to unwilling families.

Virginia and Georgia dropped the algorithm after trial runs, noting its inability to produce adoptions, though both states have resumed business with Ramirez's nonprofit called Adoption-Share, according to AP's review of hundreds of pages of documents.

Tennessee scrapped the program before rolling it out, saying it didn't work with their internal system even after state officials spent more than two years trying to set it up, and social workers reported mixed experiences with Family-Match in Florida, where its use has been expanding.

State officials told AP that the organization that Ramirez runs as CEO owns some of the sensitive data Family-Match collects. They also noted that the nonprofit provided little transparency about how the algorithm works.

Those experiences, the AP found, provide lessons for social service agencies seeking to deploy predictive analytics without a full grasp of the technologies' limitations, especially when trying to address such enduring human challenges as finding homes for children described by judges as the "least adoptable."

"There's never going to be a foolproof way for us to be able to predict human behavior," said Bonni Goodwin, a University of Oklahoma child welfare data expert. "There's nothing more unpredictable than adolescence."

Ramirez, of Brunswick, Georgia, where her nonprofit is also based, refused to provide details about the algorithm's inner workings and declined interview requests. By email, she said the tool was a starting point for social workers and did not determine whether a child would be adopted. She also disputed child welfare leaders' accounts of Family-Match's performance.

"User satisfaction surveys and check-ins with our agency end users indicate that Family-Match is a valuable tool and helpful to users actively using it to support their recruitment + matching efforts," Ramirez wrote.

INSPIRED BY ONLINE DATING

Ramirez, a former social worker and wife of a Georgia pastor, has long sought to promote adoption as a way to reduce abortions, according to her public statements, newsletters and a blog post.

More than a decade ago, she launched a website to connect pregnant women with potential adoptive parents. She marketed it as "the ONLY online community exclusively for networking crisis pregnancy centers" and pledged to donate 10% of membership fees to such anti-abortion counseling centers, whose aim is to persuade women to bring their pregnancies to term. Ramirez said in an email that Family-Match is not associated with such centers.

She next turned her focus to helping children living in foster care who don't have family members to raise them. Most of the 50,000 children adopted nationwide in 2021 landed with relatives, federal statistics show, while about 5,000 ended up with people they didn't previously know. Such recruitment-based adoptions are the most difficult to carry out, social workers say.

Ramirez has said she called Gian Gonzaga, a research scientist who had managed the algorithms at eharmony, a dating site with Christian roots that promises users "real love" for those seeking marriage. She asked Gonzaga if he would team up with her to create an adoption matchmaking tool.

Gonzaga, who worked with his wife Heather Setrakian at eharmony and then on the Family-Match algorithm, referred questions to Ramirez. Setrakian said she was very proud of her years of work developing the Family-Match model.

An eharmony spokesperson, Kristen Berry, said the dating site was "not affiliated with Family-Match."

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Berry described Gonzaga and Setrakian as “simply former employees.”

NOT ‘PARTICULARLY USEFUL’

Later, Ramirez began crisscrossing the country promoting Family-Match to state officials. Her work and her religious convictions drew support primarily from conservatives, including first lady Melania Trump, who spotlighted Ramirez’s efforts at a foster care event in the White House Situation Room. Ramirez has co-written reports and given a high-profile presentation at the American Enterprise Institute, benefitted from attention-getting fundraisers and used connections to win over state officials to pilot her tool.

Social workers say Family-Match works like this: Adults seeking to adopt submit survey responses via the algorithm’s online platform, and foster parents or social workers input each child’s information.

After the algorithm generates a score measuring the “relational fit,” Family-Match displays a list of the top prospective parents for each child. Social workers then vet the candidates.

In a best-case scenario, a child is matched and placed in a home for a trial stay; parents then submit the legal paperwork to formalize the adoption.

Family-Match first started matching families in Florida and Virginia in 2018. Virginia’s then-governor Terry McAuliffe, a Democrat, ordered a pilot at the urging of a campaign donor he appointed as the state’s “adoption champion.” In Florida, which has a privatized child welfare system, regional care organizations soon signed up for the algorithm for free – thanks to a grant from a foundation founded by the then-CEO of the company that makes Patrón tequila and his wife.

Once philanthropic dollars dried up in Florida, the state government picked up the tab, awarding Adoption-Share a \$350,000 contract last month for its services.

Pilot efforts in Tennessee and Georgia followed.

Adoption-Share has generated \$4.2 million in revenue since 2016; it reported about \$1.2 million in 2022, according to its tax returns.

In Virginia’s two-year test of Family-Match, the algorithm produced only one known adoption, officials said.

“The local staff reported that they did not find the tool particularly useful,” the Virginia Department of Social Services said in a statement, noting that Family-Match “had not proven effective” in the state.

Virginia social workers were also perplexed that the algorithm seemed to match all the children with the same group of parents, said Traci Jones, an assistant director at the state’s social services agency.

“We did not have access to the algorithm even after it was requested,” Jones said.

By 2022, Virginia had awarded Adoption-Share an even larger contract for a different foster care initiative that the nonprofit says “leverages” the Family-Match application.

Georgia officials said they ended their initial pilot in October 2022 because the tool didn’t work as intended, ultimately only leading to two adoptions during their year-long experiment.

Social workers said the tool’s matching recommendations often led them to unwilling parents, leading them to question whether the algorithm was properly assessing the adults’ capacity to adopt those kids.

Ramirez met with the governor’s office and also lobbied a statehouse committee for a direct appropriation, saying the tool was “an incredible feat.” By July, the Georgia Department of Human Services signed a new agreement with Adoption-Share to use Family-Match again – this time for free, said Kylie Winton, an agency spokesperson.

Florida’s privatized child welfare system operates with more than a dozen regional agencies providing foster care and adoption services. When AP requested public records about their Family-Match cases, many of those agencies gave the tool mixed reviews and couldn’t explain Family-Match’s self-reported data, making it difficult to assess the algorithm’s purported success rate.

Statewide in Florida, Family-Match claimed credit for 603 placements that resulted in 431 adoptions over a five-year period, according to Adoption-Share’s third-quarter report for the 2023 fiscal year that AP obtained from a Pensacola-based child welfare organization.

Scott Stevens, an attorney representing the FamiliesFirst Network, told AP in June that only three trial placements recommended by Family-Match failed since the agency started using the algorithm in 2019. But Adoption-Share’s records that Stevens provided to the AP indicate that his agency made 76 other Family-

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Match placements that didn't show the children had been formally adopted. Asked by AP for clarification, Stevens couldn't say what happened in those 76 cases and referred further questions to Family-Match.

Ramirez declined to discuss the discrepancy but acknowledged in an email that not all matches work out. "Transitions can take time in the journey to adoption," Ramirez said in an email, adding that the "decision to finalize the adoption is ultimately the responsibility" of agencies with input from the children and judges. On Sunday, Adoption-Share posted on its Facebook page that the organization had "reached 500 adoptions in Florida!"

Jenn Petion, the president and CEO of the organization that handles adoptions in Jacksonville, said she likes how the algorithm lets her team tap into a statewide pool of potential parents. Petion has also endorsed Family-Match for helping her find her adoptive daughter, whom she described as a "100% match" in an Adoption-Share annual report.

Family-Match assists social workers in making "better decisions, better matches," Petion said, but her agency, Family Support Services declined to provide statistics about Family-Match.

The Fort Myers-based Children's Network of Southwest Florida said in the past five years the Family-Match tool has led to 22 matches and eight adoptions, as compared to the hundreds of matches and hundreds of adoptions that its social workers did without the tool.

Bree Bofill, adoption program manager for Miami-based Citrus Family Care Network, said social workers found the tool didn't work very well, often suggesting potential families that weren't the right fit.

"It's frustrating that it's saying that the kids are matched but in reality, when you get down to it, the families aren't interested in them," Bofill said of the algorithm.

Bofill also said it was difficult to assess the tool's utility because social workers who found potential parents were sometimes asked by Family-Match officials to tell the adults to register with the tool even if it played no role in the adoption, allowing the algorithm to claim credit for the match.

Winton, the Georgia agency spokesperson, told AP about a similar issue — Family-Match could claim credit for pairings if the child and parent already were in its system, even if the program didn't generate the match. Family-Match, in an April 2023 "confidential" user guide posted on the internet, instructed social workers not to delete cases that were matched outside the tool. Instead, they were told to document the match in the system so that Adoption-Share could refine its algorithm and follow up with the families.

Ramirez didn't address Bofill's claim but said in an email that Family-Match's reports reflect what social workers input into the system.

'KIDS AS GUINEA PIGS'

Officials in Virginia, Georgia and Florida said they weren't sure how the tool scored families based on the highly sensitive variables powering the algorithm.

In Georgia, Family-Match continues to gather data about whether foster youth have been sexually abused, the gender of their abuser, and whether they have a criminal record or "identify as LGBTQIA." That kind of information is typically restricted to tightly secured child protective services case files.

In Tennessee, a version of the algorithm's questionnaire for prospective parents asked for their specific household income and for them to rate how "conventional" or "uncreative" they were. They were also asked if they agreed — or disagreed — with a statement about whether they seek God's help, according to records AP obtained.

When Tennessee Department of Children's Services reviewed the proposed Family-Match assessment, they questioned some of the information Family-Match wanted to collect. Tennessee officials asked why Family-Match needed certain sensitive data points and how that data influenced the match score, according to an internal document in which state workers noted questions and feedback about the algorithm. Ramirez said the agency didn't challenge the survey's validity, and said the discussions were part of the streamlining process.

Virginia officials said once families' data was entered into the tool, "Adoption Share owned the data."

In Florida, two agencies acknowledged that they used Family-Match informally without a contract, but would not say how children's data was secured.

Ramirez wouldn't say if Family-Match has deleted pilot data from its servers, but said her organization maintains a compliance audit and abides by contract terms.

Social welfare advocates and data security experts have been raising alarms about government agencies' increasing reliance on predictive analytics to assist them on the job. Those researchers and advocates say such tools can exacerbate racial disparities and discriminate against families based on characteristics they cannot change.

Adoption-Share is part of a small cadre of organizations that say their algorithms can help social workers place children with foster or adoptive families.

"We're using, essentially, kids as guinea pigs for these tools. They are the crash test dummies," said Suresh Venkatasubramanian, a former assistant director of the Biden White House's Office of Science and Technology Policy now at Brown University. "That's a big problem right there."

SEEKING TO EXPAND

Adoption-Share continues to try to expand, seeking business in places like New York City, Delaware and Missouri, where child welfare agency officials were reviewing its pitch. Ramirez said she also saw an opportunity last year to present Family-Match to the U.S. Health and Human Services Department "to demonstrate our tool and how it can be a helpful resource."

This year, Adoption-Share landed a deal with the Florida Department of Health for Family-Match to build an algorithm intended "to increase the pool of families willing to foster and/or adopt medically complex children," according to state contracts. Health department officials didn't respond to repeated requests for comment.

Connie Going, a longtime Florida social worker whose own viral adoption story Ramirez has described as her inspiration for Family-Match, said she didn't believe the tool would help such vulnerable children. Going said the algorithm gives false hope to waiting parents by failing to deliver successful matches, and ultimately makes her job harder.

"We've put our trust in something that is not 100% useful," Going said. "It's wasted time for social workers and wasted emotional experiences for children."

Why one survivor of domestic violence wants the Supreme Court to uphold a gun control law

By MARK SHERMAN and LINDSAY WHITEHURST Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Ruth Glenn knows from harrowing personal experience the danger of putting a gun in the hands of a violent spouse or partner, the issue at the heart of a case before the Supreme Court.

On a beautiful June evening in 1992, Glenn was shot three times, twice in the head, and left for dead outside a Denver car wash.

The shooter was her estranged husband, Cedric, who was under a court order to stay away from Glenn. But there was no federal law on the books at the time that prohibited him from having a gun.

Two years later, Congress put such a law in place, prohibiting people facing domestic violence restraining orders from having guns. "He would not have been able to access that gun if we had these current laws in place," Glenn said in an interview with The Associated Press that took place outside the Supreme Court.

The high court is hearing arguments Tuesday in a challenge to the 1994 law. The closely watched case is the first one involving guns to reach the justices since their landmark Bruen decision last year expanded gun rights and changed the way courts evaluate whether restrictions on firearms violate the constitutional right to "keep and bear arms."

Glenn, the president of Survivor Justice Action, is allied with gun control groups that are backing the Biden administration's defense of the law.

Gun rights organizations are supporting Zackey Rahimi, the Texas man whose challenge to the law led to the Supreme Court case.

The law has blocked nearly 77,800 firearm sales over the last 25 years, said Shira Feldman, director of constitutional litigation at the gun-violence prevention group Brady.

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"At stake here is a law that works and that has been supported by both Republicans and Democrats in Congress," Feldman said.

Firearms are the most common weapon used in homicides of spouses, intimate partners, children or relatives in recent years, according to data from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Guns were used in more than half, 57%, of those killings in 2020, a year that saw an overall increase in domestic violence during the coronavirus pandemic.

Seventy women a month, on average, are shot and killed by intimate partners, according to the gun control group Everytown for Gun Safety.

A gun, though, is more than just a potential source of violence, Glenn said, recalling how her husband threatened her and her then-teenage son, David, repeatedly.

"I think sometimes we forget and we look at the firearm as this tool of lethality, which it is absolutely. But it's also even more powerful as a tool of control," Glenn said.

Rahimi's case reached the Supreme Court after prosecutors appealed a ruling that threw out his conviction for possessing guns while subject to a restraining order.

Rahimi was involved in five shootings over two months in and around Arlington, Texas, U.S. Circuit Judge Cory Wilson noted. When police identified Rahimi as a suspect in the shootings and showed up at his home with a search warrant, Rahimi admitted both to having guns in the house and being subject to a domestic violence restraining order that prohibited gun possession, Wilson wrote.

But even though Rahimi was hardly "a model citizen," Wilson wrote, the law at issue could not be justified by looking to history. That's the test Justice Clarence Thomas laid out in his opinion for the court in Bruen.

The appeals court initially upheld the conviction under a balancing test that included whether the restriction enhances public safety. But the panel reversed course after Bruen. At least one district court has upheld the law since the Bruen decision.

Rahimi's case, and the subject of domestic violence may offer the government the optimal situation for defending gun restrictions, said Hashim Mooppan, a former Justice Department official in the Trump administration.

"If the government could have picked a case to be the first post-Bruen case, I think they would have picked this case and this statute," Mooppan said at a Georgetown Law School preview of the year's big cases.

But supporters of Rahimi said the appeals court got it right when it looked at American history and found no restriction close enough to justify the gun ban.

They also object to the hearing process under which restraining orders can be issued as insufficiently protective of the rights of people like Rahimi.

"It is sort of a truism that our commitment to due process and the rule of law means very little if we don't assure that everybody gets due process," said Clark Neily, a vice president at the libertarian Cato Institute who authored a brief on Rahimi's side.

The Bruen decision has led to upheaval in the legal landscape with rulings striking down more than a dozen laws, said Jacob Charles, a law professor at Pepperdine University in Malibu, California. Those include age restrictions, bans on homemade "ghost guns" and prohibitions on gun ownership for people convicted of nonviolent felonies or using illegal drugs.

The court's decision in the Rahimi case could have widespread ripple effects, including in the high-profile prosecution of Hunter Biden. The president's son has been charged with buying a firearm while he was addicted to drugs, but his lawyers have indicated they will challenge the indictment as invalid following the Bruen decision.

"It has the potential to be pretty impactful," Charles said. While it's possible the high court could hand down a decision on the Rahimi case alone, it seems "the court is realizing that it's just going to keep having these cases if they decide this narrowly."

Glenn somehow survived the shooting with no damage to her brain and was released from the hospital after three days. But she and her son lived in fear for several months, before Cedric Glenn took his own life with the same gun.

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She wrote in her book, "Everything I Never Dreamed," that the shooting transformed her life and motivated her to work to prevent other women from suffering similar abuse.

"We're saying that the one thing that can protect them is a protection order that says somebody must have their gun removed," Glenn said on the sidewalk outside the court. "We're just increasing the risk to them when we're not removing the very thing that is threatening to them."

Can a Floridian win the presidency? It hasn't happened yet as Trump and DeSantis vie to be first

By BRENDAN FARRINGTON Associated Press

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (AP) — A Florida governor wins reelection by record numbers and later finds himself running as a party conservative in a crowded presidential primary. In New Hampshire, he tip-toes around the explosive abortion rights issue, discusses ongoing Israeli military operations, promises he'll secure the Mexican border and warns that the current administration's fiscal insanity will cause more inflation, not reduce it.

While it sounds like Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis in 2023, this was former Florida Democratic Gov. Reubin Askew in 1984. Askew dropped out of the race after finishing eighth in New Hampshire. DeSantis is looking to avoid a similar fate as he prepares for the third GOP debate this week in his home state.

If DeSantis or former President Donald Trump eventually is elected president next year, it would be the first time Americans have chosen a Floridian to lead them. Trump was a New York snowbird with a second home in Palm Beach when he was first elected, but he later lost as a full-time Floridian.

So while Florida is home to Disney World's Hall of Presidents, that's not the place to look for representation from the nation's third-largest state. And even if home court advantage gives DeSantis an opening to talk about his accomplishments in the Sunshine State, there's no historical evidence to suggest it will help him in the race itself.

"I really have no idea why this is the case," said former Gov. Jeb Bush, who was considered the front-runner for the 2016 Republican presidential primary before Donald Trump's ascent reshaped the party.

Florida has long been influential in national politics — never more so than in 2000 when there were five weeks of recounts and court challenges before George W. Bush carried the state and won the presidency, by 537 votes. And more and more Floridians have sought the presidency as its population has exploded and Republicans chased Democrats out of power in Tallahassee.

Early in the 2016 presidential cycle, many political observers thought former Gov. Bush or Sen. Marco Rubio would win the Republican nomination to challenge Democrat Hillary Clinton. Trump at first wasn't taken seriously by either campaign — until he blasted both of the Floridians with insults as he rose to the top of the GOP pile.

It wasn't the moment for either. Bush would have been the third member of his family to become president, and Trump's nickname of "Low Energy Jeb" seemed to stick at a time when voters were in no mood for an establishment candidate with a whiff of inevitability, maybe even entitlement.

Rubio brought youthful energy to the campaign, but he never found his footing against a brawling candidate who specialized in branding and dubbed him "Little Marco." Rubio tried to match Trump with branding of his own, taunting Trump about the size of his hands at one point, but the shift in strategy only seemed to diminish him further — and by then Trump was well on his way to the GOP nomination.

By 2020, Trump had become a Floridian himself, changing his residence and voter registration to Florida, a state he desperately needed to win to earn a second term in the White House. He did carry the state but lost to President Joe Biden in the Rust Belt, thus adding his name to the list of Floridians who lost a presidential bid. That list keeps growing but includes Askew, Bush, Rubio, and former Sen. Bob Graham.

There is another notable asterisk. President Andrew Jackson was the first territorial governor of Florida in 1821, but it was a short stint to keep him busy as he tried to retire. It's described as "a troublesome few months" before he returned home to Tennessee and eventually ran for the White House from the Volunteer State.

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"If you track Jackson's progress towards being a presidential candidate, Florida has very, very little to do with it," said Daniel Feller, a Jackson historian and professor emeritus at the University of Tennessee. "Florida didn't do much damage to his national reputation, but it certainly didn't help it any."

Politics were decidedly different then anyway. Jackson basically took the job as a favor to President James Monroe after the U.S. took over the territory from Spain.

"It was understood from the very beginning between Jackson and Monroe that this was going to be a temporary appointment," said Feller, noting Jackson's wife wasn't a fan of the idea. "Jackson didn't think Rachel would like it very much and he was right about that. Rachel hated it."

Florida had a sparse population when it became a state in 1845. The federal census five years earlier counted fewer than 55,000 people, nearly half of whom were African American slaves. It wasn't until air conditioning became more affordable and effective in the middle of the 20th century that the state's population started to grow.

That changed in a hurry, though. It more than doubled from fewer than 2 million in 1940 to more than 5 million in 1960 and hasn't stopped growing. And its demographics shifted from a Southern, agricultural state to a hodgepodge population more reflective of the nation as a whole.

While north Florida and the Panhandle remain largely Southern in their outlook, the rest of the state is an eclectic mix.

Immigrants from Cuba, Haiti, and other Latin American countries have a large presence in South Florida, central Florida has a large Puerto Rican population, conservative Midwesterners have moved to the southwest Gulf coast in droves and liberal New Englanders have migrated to the southeast Atlantic Coast. There's plenty of intermingling between those groups, but a large majority of the state's population was born outside of Florida.

As the population has changed, the state's politics have shifted. What had been the key swing state in 2000 has been reliably Republican in the past two presidential contests.

Democrats dominated the state Legislature for decades, but Republicans' power has grown steadily this century. Democrats always had an advantage in voter registration until two years ago. Now Republicans have about 5.2 million registered voters compared to about 4.6 million Democrats.

The GOP has easily held the Legislature and governor's office since 1999. While Republicans continue to be unstoppable in state politics, the state has been less predictable in presidential years. Since the 2000 recount, it supported Bush for re-election, Barack Obama twice and Trump twice.

Trump is once again leading in Florida polls. While he won't participate in Wednesday's debate in Miami, he is holding a rally nearby in a city that's 95% Hispanic or Latino, a signal he's seeking to boost support with the state's Hispanic voters.

The one sure bet is that Floridians will keep trying to win the White House. If neither DeSantis nor Trump win in 2024, there's always 2028 and the possibility Rubio and DeSantis run again, perhaps joined by former governor and current Sen. Rick Scott, who has long been speculated to have presidential ambitions.

Former Republican strategist Rick Wilson of Florida, who worked on the presidential campaigns of both George H.W. Bush and George W. Bush, said the state has been a political late bloomer on the national scene.

"Florida is a state that didn't really reach its political maturity as early as others," said Wilson, a founder of the Lincoln Project, which opposes both Trump and DeSantis. "We had a much longer puberty where we were a backwater."

That all could change soon enough.

"The money's here, the importance of the vote is here, the importance of the electoral college is here," he said. "Now we need somebody who actually has the skills."

Ailing Pope Francis meets with European rabbis and condemns antisemitism, terrorism, war

By FRANCES D'EMILIO Associated Press

ROME (AP) — Pope Francis met with European rabbis on Monday and decried antisemitism, war and terrorism in a written speech he declined to read, saying he wasn't feeling well.

Francis told the rabbis during the audience in the Vatican's Apostolic Palace that he was very happy to receive them, but added: "I'm not feeling well, and so I prefer not to read the speech but give it to you, so you can take it with you."

Vatican spokesman Matteo Bruni said the pope "has a bit of a cold and a long day of audiences." The 86-year-old pontiff "preferred to greet the European rabbis individually, and that's why he handed over his speech."

Bruni said the pope's scheduled activities would proceed, and they did. The activities included an hour-long meeting in late afternoon in a Vatican auditorium with some 7,000 children from 84 countries.

Francis seemed at ease, chatting with kids and answering their prepared questions, including about how to make peace — "extend your hand" — and about war — "war is always cruel, and who pays the price? Children."

As he sat in a chair, he shook dozens of young hands and autographed many caps and at least one sports jersey.

In his prepared speech to the rabbis, Francis said his first thought and prayers goes "above all else, to everything that has happened in the last few weeks," a clear reference to the Oct. 7 Hamas attack in Israel, including the taking away of hostages to the Gaza Strip, and the ensuing Israeli-Hamas war.

"Yet again violence and war have erupted in that Land blessed by the Most High, which seems continually assailed by the vileness of hatred and the deadly clash of weapons," Francis wrote in the speech.

With France, Austria and Italy among the countries in Europe recently seeing a spate of antisemitic vandalism and slogans, Francis added: "The spread of antisemitic demonstrations, which I strongly condemn, is also of great concern."

The pontiff said believers in God are called to build "fraternity and open paths of reconciliation for all."

"Not weapons, not terrorism, not war, but compassion, justice and dialogue are the fitting means for building peace," Francis said in the speech.

The pontiff also advocated taking steps to "search for our neighbor" as well as acceptance and patience, and certainly not "the brusque passion of vengeance and the folly of bitter hatred."

Francis in recent years has dealt with several health setbacks, including two abdominal surgeries and a chronic knee problem that forces him to use a wheelchair when walking longer stretches. Earlier this year, Francis was hospitalized for treatment of what the Vatican said was bronchitis, but the pontiff described as a bout of pneumonia.

Just a few days ago, in an interview with Italian state TV, Francis was asked about his health. The pope replied with one of his frequent lines: "I'm still alive, you know," and also said he was going to Dubai in early December for the COP28 conference on combating climate change.

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Today in History: November 7 Twitter becomes public company

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, Nov. 7, the 311th day of 2023. There are 54 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Nov. 7, 2013, shares of Twitter went on sale to the public for the first time; by the closing bell, the social network was valued at \$31 billion. (The company would go private again in October 2022 after Elon Musk purchased it for \$44 billion.)

On this date:

In 1917, Russia's Bolshevik Revolution took place as forces led by Vladimir Ilyich Lenin overthrew the provisional government of Alexander Kerensky.

In 1940, Washington state's original Tacoma Narrows Bridge, nicknamed "Galloping Gertie," collapsed into Puget Sound during a windstorm just four months after opening to traffic.

In 1944, President Franklin D. Roosevelt won an unprecedented fourth term in office, defeating Republican Thomas E. Dewey.

In 1972, President Richard Nixon was reelected in a landslide over Democrat George McGovern.

In 1973, Congress overrode President Richard Nixon's veto of the War Powers Act, which limits a chief executive's power to wage war without congressional approval.

In 1989, L. Douglas Wilder won the governor's race in Virginia, becoming the first elected Black governor in U.S. history; David N. Dinkins was elected New York City's first Black mayor.

In 1991, basketball star Magic Johnson announced that he had tested positive for HIV, and was retiring.

In 2001, the Bush administration targeted Osama bin Laden's multi-million-dollar financial networks, closing businesses in four states, detaining U.S. suspects and urging allies to help choke off money supplies in 40 nations.

In 2011, a jury in Los Angeles convicted Michael Jackson's doctor, Conrad Murray, of involuntary manslaughter for supplying a powerful anesthetic implicated in the entertainer's 2009 death. (Murray was sentenced to four years in prison; he served two years and was released in October 2013.)

In 2012, a magnitude 7.4 earthquake killed at least 52 people in western Guatemala.

In 2013, shares of Twitter went on sale to the public for the first time; by the closing bell, the social network was valued at \$31 billion.

In 2015, the leaders of China and Taiwan met for the first time since the formerly bitter Cold War foes split amid civil war 66 years earlier; Chinese President Xi Jinping and Taiwanese President Ma Ying-jeou hailed the meeting in Singapore as a sign of a new stability in relations.

In 2017, Twitter said it was ending its 140-character limit on tweets that had defined the social media outlet for its first decade, and would allow nearly everyone 280 characters to get their message across.

In 2018, a gunman killed 12 people at a country music bar in Thousand Oaks, California, before taking his own life as officers closed in.

In 2020, Democrat Joe Biden clinched victory over President Donald Trump as a win in Pennsylvania pushed Biden over the threshold of 270 Electoral College votes. Trump refused to concede.

Today's Birthdays: Former U.S. Sen. Rudy Boschwitz of Minnesota is 93. Actor Dakin Matthews is 83. Singer Johnny Rivers is 81. Former supermodel Jean Shrimpton is 81. Singer-songwriter Joni Mitchell is 80. Former CIA Director David Petraeus is 71. Jazz singer Rene Marie is 68. Actor Christopher Knight (TV: "The Brady Bunch") is 66. Rock musician Tommy Thayer (KISS) is 63. Actor Julie Pinson is 56. Rock musician Greg Tribbett (Mudvayne) is 55. Actor Michelle Clunie is 54. Documentary filmmaker Morgan Spurlock is 53. Actor Christopher Daniel Barnes is 51. Actors Jeremy and Jason London are 51. Actor Yunjin Kim is 50. Actor Adam DeVine is 40. Rock musician Zach Myers (Shinedown) is 40. Actor Lucas Neff is 38. Rapper Tinie (TY'-nee) Tempah is 35. Rock singer Lorde is 27.



Good Luck Groton Area Tigers at the SoDak 16 !



Back row: Jaedyn Penning, Chesney Weber, Faith Traphagen, Emma Kutter, Rylee Dunker, Sydney Leicht and Anna Fjeldheim.

Front row: Kella Tracy, Sydney Locke, Talli Wright, Laila Roberts, Carly Guthmiller, Jerica Locke and Elizabeth Flihs.

Groton Area vs. Lennox
Tuesday, Nov. 7, 2023, 6:30 p.m.
Watertown High School

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