

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 143 ~ 1 of 89

- [1- Upcoming Events](#)
- [2- Newsweek Bulletin](#)
- [3- GHS Interns Series: Jacob Zak](#)
- [4- All Over Roofing Ad](#)
- [4- Frost is Back!](#)
- [5- Obit: Alan Strom](#)
- [6- Groton School Board reviews expenditure increases during opt-out discussion, review district report card](#)
- [8- That's Life/Tony Bender](#)
- [9- 1940 - 1945 We Will Remember by Lee Raines](#)
- [18- SD SearchLight: Some lawmakers frustrated by lack of specific data from governor's workforce campaign](#)
- [19- SD SearchLight: Hotel will apologize to Native Americans as part of Justice Department agreement](#)
- [20- Weather Pages](#)
- [24- Daily Devotional](#)
- [25- 2023 Community Events](#)
- [26- Subscription Form](#)
- [27- Lottery Numbers](#)
- [28- News from the Associated Press](#)



Coming up

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

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

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.

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.

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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Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 143 ~ 2 of 89

The Bulletin by Newsweek

World in Brief

mixed reactions.

Bragging About Ammunition: Newly unsealed court documents revealed that alleged Jan. 6, 2021, Capitol riot participant Lawrence Billiter boasted about having “enough ammo to win a small war” before the attack.

Lack of Good Options: Democrats appear to be in a bind to choose a candidate with enough support to topple Donald Trump in 2024, with a new poll showing the former president would beat Biden in the Electoral College.

Trade Guns for Gift Cards: A new program in San Antonio, Texas, will allow residents to trade in their guns for a grocery store gift card as it aims to take firearms out of circulation in local communities.

Student Loans: Student debt borrowers have until Nov. 20 to file a claim with Navient as part of a settlement that will transfer \$16 million to borrowers who had loans paid to the company after they declared bankruptcy. Here’s a look at who qualifies.

COVID Hearing: The Biden Administration is hiring additional attorneys to help handle the workload from vaccine lawsuits after seeing a spike in people filing claims.

Broncos Ride Again: The Denver Broncos won their third game in a row in dramatic fashion after upsetting the Buffalo Bills 24-22.

War in Ukraine: Kyiv is heightening attacks inside Russia, and on targets in Russian-occupied areas of Ukraine, which includes frequent strikes on Crimea and other Moscow-occupied territories, the Institute for the Study of War noted.

Hospitals in Gaza: President Joe Biden said Gaza hospitals “must be protected” as attacks on the Al-Shifa Hospital become a flashpoint in the Israel-Hamas conflict. Biden said he hoped there would be “less intrusive action” as Israeli forces reportedly took positions outside Gaza’s largest hospital.

New Ethics Code: The U.S. Supreme Court announced its new code of conduct for justices amid growing calls to implement an ethics code over revelations of undisclosed luxury trips and gifts from billionaires, a decision that drew

GHS Interns Series

Zak interns at Weber Landscaping

by Dorene Nelson

Jacob Zak, a senior at Groton Area High School, is interning at Weber Landscaping in Groton. "I have worked for Jeremy Weber for the past two summers so choosing this business was the right decision for me," Zak stated.

"I was on the soccer team this year, play basketball, and also participate in track," he listed. "Next year I plan to attend Southeast Technical College in Sioux Falls."

"My experience working here has really helped me to decide to study landscaping, architecture, and business, three areas involved with this job," Zak explained.

"Working with Jeremy Weber has not only helped me decide on my future occupation but has also been impressed with his creative landscaping ideas," he admitted. "This experience has been very rewarding for me!"

"If there is a downside to this job, it is working outside when the weather is really cold and damp," Zak said. "However, I prefer the colder temperatures to the days when it is really hot!"

"The best part of this job is being with and learning from Jeremy," he smiled. "The easiest, but probably the most boring part of my internship, is watering the trees!"

Jacob is the son of Jesse and Krissi Zak.



Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 143 ~ 4 of 89



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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....

14.) Know how to
snowboard and knee board

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 143 ~ 5 of 89

The Life of Alan Strom



Services for Alan Strom, 68, of Groton will be 11:00 a.m., Thursday, November 16th at the United Methodist Church, Groton. Rev. Rob Moorlach will officiate. Burial will follow in Union Cemetery under the direction of Paetznick-Garness Funeral Chapel, Groton. Services will be broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM and will also be broadcast on GDIRADIO at 89.3 FM, available within 1 mile of Groton.

Visitation will be held at the church on Wednesday from 5-7 p.m. with a prayer service at 7:00 p.m.

Alan Lee Strom, age 68, peacefully passed away on November 11, 2023, at St. Luke's Hospital in Aberdeen, SD, surrounded by his loving sons, daughters-in-law, four grandchildren, and his devoted partner, Shelly Lerew.

Alan's life journey began on September 26, 1955, as the only child of Doris and Lloyd Strom. Graduating from Groton High School in 1973, he embraced a life deeply rooted in family and farming. Moving to the family farm, he began a career in agriculture that forged a lifelong bond with his father, Lloyd.

On September 17, 1977, Alan married Vicki Clark in Aberdeen, and together, they built a loving home on a farm near Groton. A dedicated family man, they raised their two sons, Nicholas and Jackson, in a house he constructed on the farm.

After his father's passing in 1996, Alan continued the family legacy, nurturing a profound passion for farming that defined his life. From tending to feeder cattle in his youth to farming crops until his final days, he found fulfillment in every aspect of the agricultural cycle. Alan never missed a harvest in 54 years, a testament to his unwavering commitment.

Finding joy in every season, Alan was always ready for the next task, whether it involved expanding the farm, fixing equipment, or simply cleaning the shop. His deep passion for daily work extended beyond the fields, creating cherished moments with friends and fellow farmers over morning coffee.

As a devoted husband, Alan cherished 33 years with his wife, Vicki, who bravely battled cancer for four years before her passing in 2010. He took great pride in spending quality time with his sons, engaging in everyday tasks, and enjoying snowmobiling adventures out west. Alan was a proud 'Papa' and 'Grandpa Al' to his four beloved grandchildren.

Later in life, Alan met Shelly Lerew, and in addition to traveling together, they shared the joys of camping, attending races, and trail-riding UTVs. Together, they built a life and home in Groton.

Alan's days were filled with hard work, yet he always made time for those who mattered most. He was known for his generosity, and his love was expressed through acts of service.

In the community, Alan stood as a pillar, contributing time and effort to various causes, extending a helping hand wherever needed. No matter how deep the snow, Alan would be the first to be out clearing people's driveways. His impact reached far and wide, leaving an enduring mark on those fortunate enough to know him.

Beyond his agricultural pursuits, Alan was a skilled builder, contributing to the construction of over ten homes in and around Groton. He was a member of the Groton Methodist Church, served as a past president of the North Central Livestock Association, and coached basketball for his sons in elementary school.

Alan had a passion for classic cars and even built his own chopper in his earlier years. He enjoyed snowmobiling, ATV trail riding, camping, playing pool, attending stock car races, and car shows.

Alan's 68 years were characterized by a profound love for family, a deep connection to the land, and a steadfast commitment to the community he called home. His legacy of hard work, kindness, and a love for life will be remembered by all who had the privilege of knowing him. Simply a good and honorable man.

We look forward to our next signature Alan hug and smile when we see him again.

Celebrating his life are his sons, Nicholas (Jenna) Strom of Groton, Jackson (Lindsey) Strom of Fargo, four grandchildren, Ava, Zoey, Sully, and Oliver, his mother, Doris Strom of Aberdeen, and partner, Shelly LeRew of Groton; mother-in-law Dorothy (Fritz) Fiala, Sisters-in-law Ginger (Joe) Kuschel, Julie Schaller, and many nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends.

Preceding him in death is his father Lloyd Strom; wife Vicki Strom; father-in-law Casey Clark; sister-in-law Colleen Schnaidt; brother-in-law Scott Clark.

Honorary Casketbearers will be Kevin Anderson, Ralph Merkel, Barney Dombrowe, Jerry Johnson, Jerry Ray Johnson, Curt Merkel.

Casketbearers will be Dave Dell, Dave Stahl, Bruce Merkel, Larry Harry, Bob Krueger and Korey Freudenthal.

Memorials may be directed to the United Methodist Church, 906 North 2nd Street, Groton, SD 57445.

Groton School Board reviews expenditure increases during opt-out discussion, review district report card

by Elizabeth Varin

With general fund revenue nearly flat lined through the last five years, the Groton Area School District Board is looking for ways to handle continuously rising expenses.

Superintendent Joe Schwan continued his presentation on what a potential fiscal year 2025 opt-out could look like during Monday's school board meeting.

The district has seen a little movement on the revenue side, though that has been achieved through transferring anywhere from \$500,000 to \$700,000 from the district's capital outlay fund to the general fund. Those transfers make up around 10 percent of the district's general fund.

However, the district has seen an increase in expenditures from \$4.85 million in fiscal year 2020 to an estimated \$5.94 million budgeted for fiscal year 2024.

A majority of fiscal year 2023 spending – \$3.42 million – consisted of salaries for teachers, staff and administrators at the district. Another \$947,000 went toward employee benefits. The remaining money – \$1.03 million – went toward other expenses, including \$472,000 spend on care and upkeep at the schools.

There's not one line item that can be cut to make the situation turn around, Schwan said.

"There's no magic bullet," he added.

Salaries make up about 80 percent of the budget, he added.

It seems obvious that unless the district is willing to cut six or seven positions and cut all extracurriculars, the district is going to have to make some type of change, said Board Member Tigh Fliehs.

Even if extracurricular activities were cut, it would only be about five percent of the total budget, said Board Vice President Marty Weismantel.

"The moral of the story is if you're a business and you take numbers like this to the bank, you'll be looking for a new lender or at your assets," he said.

Having that much of a budget dedicated to salaries and benefits is typical for a school district, said Business Manager Becky Hubsch.

"You can't cut eight people. That's a whole wing over here. Who's going to be here for the kids?" she asked. "That's one of the tough things."

Board Member Heather Lerseth-Fliehs said she was "surprised how little we get from the state. Is that fair?"

Superintendent Schwan replied, "No. It's not fair."

However, state aid used to be calculated differently, he said. The numbers used to be easier to understand, where money was allocated based on the number of students a district had enrolled.

"There was really nothing wrong with that formula," he said. "There just wasn't funding for it."

Now, the state counts some taxes the district used to receive as revenue the state no longer has to provide to the districts.

Board Member Tigh Fliehs added he'd also like have something to show the community how many cuts the district has absorbed in the last ten years. Some teachers have retired, and, instead of hiring a new staff member, those duties were reabsorbed by others in the district.

The Board will continue reviewing whether an opt-out would be the most fiscally responsible choice at its next meeting in December. If the board chooses to proceed with an opt-out, they would need to make that decision in January or, at the latest, in early February, Schwan said.

Groton Area's report card is in

Superintendent Schwan reviewed the district's report card, released by the state Department of Education in October.

The elementary school ranked well in student performance, which is based on Smarter Balance Assessment in English language arts and math. However, the school didn't score well in the student progress section, which measure student growth in English language arts and math.

"That's a place where we could grow," Schwan said.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 143 ~ 7 of 89

The middle school also scored well in student performance, with seventh graders in spring 2023 scoring 79.55 percent in English language arts vs. the state average of 51 percent. Those students also scored 61.36 percent in math vs. the state average of 41 percent.

Eighth graders in Spring 2023 also did well, scoring 81.08 percent in English language arts vs. the state average of 49 percent, as well as 72.97 percent in math vs. the state average of 38 percent.

"Those are among some of the top," Schwan said. "Very good numbers."

The middle school also suffered in the student progress category, which gives an indication on "where we should focus our attention," he said.

"It's not tell-all data," Schwan said, adding that it is why the district also does MAPs testing to track student progress. "But it (the state report card) tells us something."

"...It's one test on one day. Take it as what it is."

The high school scores showed student progress for eleventh graders in Spring 2023. More than 90 percent of those students scored at or near standard or above standard in reading, writing, listening, speaking, research and inquiry.

- High schoolers in Groton are signing up for spring dual credit classes. The state Department of Education has been working to resolve the issue of whether dual credit classes will count as half a high school credit or a full high school credit, but a proposed compromise was rejected, and they're back at the drawing board, said middle school/high school Principal Shelby Edwards. A change could impact grade point averages for high schoolers, which could affect students' rank. In Groton, Edwards said, the school will continue to count college courses with three credits or below as half a high school credit, while college courses with four or more credits counted as a full high school credit. "We'll stick with that until they come up with another plan," she said.

- The board approved hiring Tanner Pietz as the K-12 vocal music teacher. Pietz will begin teaching Dec. 11 after graduating from Northern State University in December with a degree in music education. Pietz did part of his student teaching in Langford, and completed the rest in Aberdeen. "He's going to be really good," Superintendent Schwan said. "...He's ready to get going, and he's going to fit in here."

- The board voted to hire Troy Zoellner as junior high wrestling coach for the 2023-2024 season.

- The board approved three volunteer assistants on Monday for the winter sports season. Becky Hearnen will be a volunteer assistant for the girls basketball program, and Chris Ehresman and Jeremy Krueger will be volunteer assistants for the wrestling program.

- Work will be wrapping up soon on the HVAC system for the high school arena and gym, Superintendent Schwan told the board. Fay's Heating and Cooling has been on-site for the past couple of weeks demolishing the air handling unit being replaced in the old gym and installing the new one. The next work involves completing the ducting and plumbing connections and finishing the controls.

- The elementary school has added three new students to its enrollment since the school board's Oct. 10 meeting. Two student were enrolled into the first grade, while one was enrolled into the second grade.

- Elementary students will be taking their MAPs tests in the next few weeks. The test allows teachers to track students' progress and are administered multiple times throughout the school year.

- District administrators are working to implement electronic filing for W-2's and 1099s, said Business Manager Becky Hubsch. Before, the district mailed in printed documents.

- Business Manager Becky Hubsch told the board of Superintendent Joe Schwan's Innovator of the Year award from the South Dakota School Superintendents Association. Board President Deb Gengerke added that Schwan was recently caught helping a student change a flat tire, so he's not only an innovator, but teaches hands-on skills too.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 143 ~ 8 of 89

That's Life/Tony Bender

Let's talk ailments

If I only have to get up once during the night, it's a victory. However, if I don't have to get up at all, it probably means I'm dehydrated, and cramps will wake me up, anyway.

I'm feeling my high mileage these days, but the time it takes for me to leap out from under the covers when I feel a cramp coming on involves world class speed. Panic is a great motivator. Have you ever felt a cramp coming on, gotten your legs tangled in the sheets, and fallen out of bed on your face? Me neither.

Even a trip to the bathroom is complicated in the winter because I like a cold room and a pile of quilts. If I'm crawling out from under the covers, trust me, I really gotta go. A lot of shriveling can take place during that 30-foot trek.

I'm not sure how or when this happened, but I've become somewhat self-involved, fixated on my ailments, and decidedly more obtuse when dealing with social situations.

"How are you doing?" someone will ask.

"It's the wierdest dang thing. I can't raise my left arm."

"You realize it was a rhetorical question, right?"

"So, you don't care how I'm doing?"

"Dude, I don't even know you."

At least I know you'll listen because you're paying for this newspaper. You want to get your money's worth.

Anyway, prednisone is your friend. After a couple of doses, my shoulder was shouldering again, but I still don't know why it acted up. My right shoulder was the one I messed up playing baseball. It was also my tackling shoulder. Maybe the left shoulder felt ignored.

Clint Eastwood said once, "A man's got to know his limitations." Well, I've lost count of my growing limitations, but I do try to exercise good judgement. For one, don't lift heavy things alone. That's a lesson learned the hard way.

A few years ago, I decided I could move a vintage Coke machine down a couple of steps into my man cave by myself—with the proper tools, of course, a dolly. Well, it got away from me as I clung to the dolly, I went airborne, and when it stopped short, I kept going and smashed face-first into the pop machine. Loosened my teeth and got a bloody nose. Wile E. Coyote would have been proud.

I've been more cautious since breaking my hip almost two years ago. "Don't do stupid stuff," my surgeon advised after putting my hip back together with so much metal and wire, I'm guaranteed intimate moments with strangers at every airport I visit.

Unfortunately, some weeks ago, I ended up with a flat tire in Strasburg, and even though I got a hand from the local deputy, I still managed to pull a butt muscle in that hip while trying to loosen the lug nuts that had apparently been tightened by the Incredible Hulk.

Sometimes you can't avoid doing stupid stuff. Well, I could have, but that would have made me look like a slacker. Pride goeth before the limp.

I thought I was fine until it flared up last week. It didn't help that I had to do a lot of driving, including to Fargo for the football championships, so it stiffened up. The motel clerk watched curiously as I one-stepped and grimaced down the steps. I'm sure all the able-bodied 20-year olds got the first floor rooms.

"Tweaked my hip," I explained.

"Maybe it's the weather."

"Thank you Dr. Desk Clerk."

I discovered that by pulling my right foot in a bit when I walked, my hip felt better. However, then my knee started to hurt. After the national anthem, they rushed me into the medical tent. I'll say it again: prednisone is your friend. The good news is, I think I'm now in the running for Comeback Sports Reporter of the Year.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 143 ~ 9 of 89

1940 - 1945 We Will Remember

The following eight pages is excerpt #6 1940 - 1945 We Will Remember

Waiting on the first draft so that I can make a few changes and make sure the pictures are placed correctly. In the meantime, I get to send some excerpts.

I have mentioned a number of times how important I think it is that we find a way to keep the history of our little area of SD history alive. There was a great article in the Austin daily paper that talks about the need to retain the stories of WWII. Over 16 million served but only 119,000 are still alive. If you click on "article" you will be able to read it.

I had the chance to participate in an interview with a young lady who was putting together a podcast on women in the military during WWII. The podcast is available for you to listen to. Just click on "podcast" and there you go. The interview was over an hour but this podcast is under 7 minutes and included an introduction. She included a little of my discussion of Joyce Sundling, a Groton/Andover teacher Mercedes Julson, and one of the Blader girls, Jeanette Blader Reid. I hope you enjoy.

In any event here are some of the stories from 1944.

Lee Raines

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 143 ~ 10 of 89

1944 – War Year Three

1944 – Diary – January 1 took the Christmas tree down. Sewed on a blouse for Beth. Ralph hauled cobs into the shed. January 2 Beth and I went to church. Sang in the choir. Beth and Stanley played with Stanley's chemistry set. January 3 washed out a few things on the board. Ralph hauled coal for the schoolhouse. January 6 made rolls and lefse. Went to choir practice. Very cold. Ralph bought 14 ewes @ \$16 per head. January 7 cleaned the whole house. Took a bath. Ralph and I went to Besgles for supper. Beth came home sick. January 8 sewed on Ralph's PJs. Beth sick in bed. January 9 Ralph and I went to church. Made cookies in the PM. Ralph and I went to the Miller's for supper. Dressed two chickens. January 10 cooked the chickens. Beth better but did not go to school. January 13 baked 72 rolls, made lemon filling. Ralph sold 28 lambs weighed 115 pounds. Two ewes weight 390 \$6.30. January 14 Ralph and I went to Sioux Falls. Got Ralph a white shirt. January 15 Ralph and I took stove pipes down and Beth cleaned the house. Went to town in the evening. January 17 warm day. Baked chocolate frosted cookies. Went to the show in the evening. "Riding High". January 20 Beth had exams in the PM. In the AM, Miller hauled our oats. At Miller's for supper. At 2:30 PM it blew dirt. Horrible. Beth and Joyce went to choir with soldiers. January 21 Ralph went to the dentist. I helped sort ewes in the PM with Ralph. January 22 made a cake. Ralph bought oats from Glandy's. Virgil hauled them. Beth cleaned Ann's house and worked at Pummels. Got \$2.00. January 23 went to church with Miller's. Virgil hauled our oats to Egan – had them cleaned and brought them back. Warm, windy day. I took Beth and Joyce to "Phantom of the Opera". I didn't like it. January 24 washed. Didn't have so much. Cloudy and windy so they didn't dry. Dried them in the house. January 26 Ralph took the car to Pipestone and got the wheels lined up. January 27 windy and rainy. Wiped up water in the house. January 28 Ralph cleaned out the hog and chicken houses. Roy Smith here selling bonds. Ralph bought \$750.00. January 30 Ralph went to church with Miller's. Made rolls and cookies. Had oyster stew \$.75 a plate.

By gaining supremacy in the Atlantic in 1943, the Allies facilitated a huge buildup of American troops and equipment in Britain. Between January and June 1944, 800,000 soldiers crossed the Atlantic to bolster the long-anticipated invasion of German-occupied France, designated Operation Overlord. **The influx of so many U.S. soldiers to Britain caused the citizens to say that the soldiers were "over paid, over sexed and over here".** Allied pilots blasted French railways and bridges to stop their foes from rushing reserves to Normandy. Battle-tested Anglo-American commanders, including Eisenhower, Patton, and Montgomery, prepared to lead troops against Germany's Erwin Rommel, who was assigned to the French coastal defenses while most of the Germany Army tried to repel the Soviets on the Eastern Front. **This is obviously a military press-release. Actually, Patton was still in Eisenhower's doghouse at the time and was commanding a make-believe Army. He was also very close to being sent home for actions detrimental to good order. It did keep the Germans guessing – they still believed that Patton would lead the attack at Calais. Patton did not even come ashore until D-Day plus 60 when he**

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 143 ~ 11 of 89

was made commanding general of the Third U.S. Army directly reporting to General Bradley, commander of all U.S. Forces in Europe.

An announcement from the Naval Procurement Office in Minneapolis brings news that Miss Joyce Benson, daughter of the Rev. and Mrs. L.C. Benson of this city, was sworn into the WAVES recently and is now receiving a four-week training course at Hunter college in New York city. She is a graduate of the Groton high school and of State college, Brookings. Her brother, Sgt. Robert G. Benson is an aerial gunner on a heavy bomber and is stationed at Salt Lake City at the present time.

Marvin Schliebe, U.S. Navy, Petty Officer Second Class, died at sea on January 14, 1944. He originally was from Aberdeen and married Goldie Bernice Schliebe of Groton. Survived by his wife and son – Larry Marvin Schliebe. He was born January 10, 1922, in Columbia, South Dakota. Schliebe is memorialized at Tablets of the Missing at Honolulu, Hawaii. Awarded World War II Victory Medal, Purple Heart, Combat Action Ribbon, American Campaign Medal, Navy Presidential Unit Citation, Navy Good Conduct Medal, Asiatic Pacific Campaign Medal, and Navy Expeditionary Medal. There is a conflicting date of death – January 14 or February 14, 1944. He is interred at the Black Hills National Cemetery in Sturgis. He entered the service on October 29, 1942.



In a letter dated 6 February 1946, Mr. Fred Schliebe received a letter from the U.S. Navy that read in part “Your son, Marvin Herman Fredrick Schliebe, Machinist’s Mate second class, United States Naval Reserve, has been carried on the official records of the Navy Department in the status of missing in action as of 14 January 1944. The ship to which he was attached, the USS YO-159, exploded and sank at sea as the result of probable submarine attack about 200 miles east of Pentecost Island, New Hebrides Islands. A few minutes afterwards, your son was observed in the water wearing his life jacket. A thorough search of the area was made by air and surface craft but proved to be unsuccessful. To date, no further information concerning your son has been received by the Navy Department. In view of the additional length of time that has elapsed since your son was reported to be missing in action, because no official nor unconfirmed reports of his survival have since been received, and in view of the fact that his name has not appeared on any lists or reports of personnel liberated from Japanese prisoner of war camps, I am reluctantly forced to the conclusion that he is deceased. In compliance with Section 5 of Public Law 490, 77th Congress, as amended, the death of your son is, for the purposes of termination of pay and allowances, settle of accounts and payment of death gratuities, presumed to have occurred on 14 January 1946.”

January 24 – U.S. Army Air Forces Staff Sergeant Walter Nies, 23, of Eureka, South Dakota, was the tail gunner aboard a B-17 Flying Fortress bomber that was part of a bombardment mission to Sofia, Bulgaria. German fighters attacked the B-17s formation over Yugoslavia while it was attempting to return to its home base in Italy. The attack was largely ineffectual, but Nies’ aircraft began having engine trouble shortly after and was forced to crash land on a beach near Ulcinj, Montenegro. The crew was captured by the Germans and all the enlisted men, including Nies, were sent to Stalag Luft 6,

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 143 ~ 12 of 89

a prisoner of war camp in Heydekrug, Germany. Nies was one of only three Americans who died in that POW camp. He died May 28 after being shot. German reports said he was trying to escape, but U.S. prisoner testimony following the war claimed he had been shot while on his way to the latrine in the early morning before the prisoners' nightly lockdown had been lifted. After the war, the American Graves Registration Command (AGRC), the organization that searched for and recovered fallen American personnel in the European Theater, was unable to recover the three Americans' remains because Stalag Luft 6, now inside Lithuania because of post-war border shifting, was deep inside the Soviet occupation zone. Nies was declared non-recoverable on March 25, 1954.

After Lithuania became independent in 1992, it was requested that the U.S. Embassy in Vilnius investigate Nies' case. They discovered the Soviet Union destroyed Stalag Luft 6 in 1955 and reverted the area to farmland. In 2006, a team of researchers investigated the site and recommended excavation. It took until 2019 before the site was investigated. In 2021, the remains found at the site were transferred to the DPAA Laboratory at Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska, for analysis. To identify Nies' remains, scientists from DPAA used dental and anthropological analysis, as well as material and circumstantial evidence. Additionally, scientists from the Armed Forces Medical Examiner System used DNA analysis. Nies' name is recorded on the Tablets of the Missing at Luxembourg American Cemetery, an American Battle Monuments Commission site in Luxembourg City, Luxembourg, along with others still missing from World War II. A rosette was placed next to his name to indicate he has been accounted for. Nies was buried in Eureka, December 9, 2022.

February 1944 – Diary – February 2 did the usual work. Went to club dinner. Went to town about 6:00. Ann had a party for Philip (assume a nephew of my grandmother). February 3 sewed all PM on Ralph's PJs. Made ice cream in the PM. Hollie and Stanley came up and helped eat it. February 4 went to Gladys Valentine's sale. Had a nice dinner and fun. Philip was drafted into the Army. Went to Fort Snelling, MN. February 5 Beth worked at Pummels got \$2.00. February 7 got a letter from Don and nine new pigs. February 8 sent a letter to Don. February 10 Ralph sold his lambs 134, weight 112 pounds for \$15.25 each, and one ewe and one buck. Got \$2,250.93. Cold and stormy. February 11 Ralph took Beth to the corner (assume waited for a school bus). February 12 very cold. 18 below. Had to pull the car to start it. Ralph and Beth went to town. Beth worked at Pummels \$2.00. Had a farewell party for H. Allen and Fred Walton. (Assume entered the military.) February 13 made a dress for Beth in the PM. February 14 did a big washing with the machine. Nice and sunny but cold. Washed and waxed the kitchen floor. Ralph sold 33 hogs (each 318 pounds @\$13.20). Got \$1,368.00. February 15 mended and fixed Ralph's PJs. Baked rolls and cinnamon bread. February 17 Ralph and Miller's went to Sioux Falls. He took my sewing machine head \$12.15. February 18 Ralph went to town and got butter and groceries. Beth went to town in the evening. Cold. Lawrence Rosheim (nephew) killed in battle. February 19 went to town in the evening. Very nice warm day. February 25 Ralph sold 14 sows to Gerald for \$615.00. Rained during the evening. February 26 Don left San Francisco for Hawaii at 4:00 PM. February 27 Beth and I went to church. Wrote to Don. February 28 washed. Had a big one. Clothes did not dry completely.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 143 ~ 13 of 89

The Andover Gorillas paced by lofty Bob Marske, who accounted for 21 of the 28 points his team scored to win over the Groton Tigers 22 points captured the second district basketball crown in a closely contested game Saturday evening. The tall Andover man, termed Andover's one-man team, thus takes his place with Howard Bastian of Redfield and Kenneth Ogren of Langford, both of whom grew up taller than the average of the men playing basketball in their time. Marske, in common with the two mentioned, was a good shot, and that, coupled with his towering height made him a formidable opponent. The Andover team came through its conference schedule undefeated, but had been trounced once by Webster and again by Groton, but the Tigers lacked a little of the "fire power" Saturday evening that served them well in leading them to a 38 to 32 victory over the district champions on February 18. In the championship tilt, the Andover cagers, played a strategy which served well, namely to feed the ball to their tall center and allow him to shoot. Raynes was the only other Andover man to pot a basket during the game. In addition he scored a gift shot as did DeBilzan and Nostrud. The Tigers were not standing still, however. They lost only after the game's struggle of the entire tournament. Coming from behind 8 to 15 at the half they evened the score in the third quarter with a sixteen all count but with Thede surrounded by a stone wall of guards and Voigt missing out several shorts (sic) he has made with ease during the season, they were unable to stem the tide and the third quarter finished trailing the champs 17 to 19, although outplaying them in that quarter. The final minutes of the game were marked by the usual excitement and as the whistle blew Andover was leading by six points and the score stood 28 to 22. Odland led the Tigers with 16 points. Voigt having four and Larson two.

March 4 – Big Bob Marske and his Andover high school teammates will carry the Region 1 banner into the state Class B high school basketball tournament at Aberdeen next week. Marske, six-foot six-inch center who led Andover to the Lake Region conference championship and the District 2 crown, scored 21 points as Andover defeated Sisseton 47-35 in the finals of the region tournament here last night. A capacity crowd saw the championship battle. Clark downed Amherst 42-29 to take third place.

March 9 – Opening games in the state Class B tournament tomorrow are Andover v/s Lake Norden; Bridgewater v/s Madison; Tripp v/s Deadwood; and Agar v/s Moberly.

May 15 – Troop Trains – from Groton Independent: Troop trains speeding over the transcontinental rail lines are common these days. The thousands of mothers and fathers who have boys in the service view them with feelings that cannot be described. Many of them wave to the boys in friendly greeting, hoping that other mothers and fathers may be waving a like greeting to a train that is carrying their son or sons, no one knows where. The movement of troops from one part of the country to another will have an influence in the world we are to know after the war. Most of those boys will know our land better than millions of their forbears. The states they have seen will be more than places on the map to them. This fact is going to have immense bearing upon their attitude toward their country. It will be too bad for some people who are not treating soldiers and sailors as they deserve to be treated. We must remember that when the war is over, these soldiers and sailors are going to run the governmental show.

June 1944 – Diary – June 1 nice day. Ralph and Beth went to town early. Beth went to Sioux Falls and Ralph plowed the garden. June 2 got up early and planted the garden. Warm and

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 143 ~ 14 of 89

windy. June 3 cleaned upstairs and made rolls. Rained in the afternoon. Beth and Chuck went to Brookings. June 4 wiped up water from rain. Ralph and I went to church. Went to show in the evening "Madame Curie". June 5 went to town in the PM and got a permanent. June 6 got a letter from Don. June 9 Ralph plowed corn. Ironed towels and dish towels. June 10 Ralph plowed corn. Washed and waxed kitchen floor. Made a cake. Cold and cloudy. June 11 rained early in AM. Entry full of water. Wiped up water and detailed lambs. June 12 rained off and on and sunny too. Beth herded sheep. Sheared sheep in the evening. June 13 rained most of the morning. Wiped up water. Made prune bread. Cleaned the house in the evening. June 14 made rolls. Had club in the PM. Had about 20 members. Served chicken, rolls, prune bread and cookies. June 15 went to the show in the evening "Russia". Beth went with George Engstrom to the dance. June 16 Beth herded sheep and went to town to clean mother's house. Ralph plowed corn. Rained in the evening. Went to shower for Viola Johnson, gave \$.50. Rained hard during the night. June 17 wiped up water in porch and entry. Baked cookies. Beth herded sheep. Ralph plowed corn. Went to town in the evening. I got a new blue silk jersey \$14.00. June 18 fixed my dress. Went to confirmation. Went out for lunch and supper. Wrote to Don in the evening. Cold and windy. June 19 Beth herded, and Ralph plowed corn. Got a box from Don. June 20 Ralph shingled entry. June 21 hoed the garden. Ralph helped Roy put up hay. Warm. Good corn day. June 22 Beth herded. Fixed a dress. Went to aid lunch. Went to a show in the evening. June 23 Ralph helped Al put up hay. Ralph and I drove sheep down to Miller's. June 24 Ralph planted corn on the 80. I baked bread, cake, and cookies. Went to town in the evening. June 25 we all went to church. Beth and Chuck went to Dell Rapids and went to the show "Up in Armies". Wrote to Don. June 26 washed out a few clothes. Ralph plowed corn in the PM. Philip came home. Ralph plowed corn in the evening. Dr. Miller injured. June 28 cold. Ralph plowed corn. Beth cleaned the car. Dr. Miller died. June 29 Ralph plowed corn. Beth and I went to Sioux Falls. I got white gloves and shoes. June 30 Beth is 18 years old today. I gave her material for a dress. Ralph gave her \$1.00.

June 19 – Two 19-year-olds from Esmond, SD, a township northeast of Mitchell, died together on June 19, 1944, when their huge flat-bottom ship hit an underwater mine as it tried to approach Utah Beach, 13 days after the D-Day landings. These two were identical twin brothers, Julius Heinrich (Henry) Otto Pieper, and Ludwig Julius (Louie) Wilhelm Pieper. While Louie's body was soon found, identified, and laid to rest, his brother's remains were only recovered in 1961 by French salvage divers and not identified until 2017. For decades, Henry was known only as Unknown X-9352 at a World War II American cemetery in Belgium where he was interred. On Tuesday (June 20, 2018) Julius, his identity recovered, was laid to rest beside his twin brother in Normandy, 74 years after the two Navy men died together when their ship shattered while trying to reach the blood-soaked D-Day beaches.

Lt. Maurice E. Clark, son of Mr. and Mrs. Harry L. Clark was announced as missing in action last Wednesday, July 26th, his parents received the following telegram from him. Sans origin, Via RCA, Harry

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 143 ~ 15 of 89

L. Clark, Groton, S. Dak. "All well and safe. Please don't worry. Love, M.E. Clark." This telegram brought a message of cheer to Lt. Clark's family and friends in Groton, and the Independent wishes to express it (sic) pleasure in sharing the happiness thus brought to his parents. Maurice is well known in Groton vicinity, and is held in high respect by those who know him best. Any hardship he may have suffered for his country, will make this community indebted to him, and will add to the esteem in which he is already held. Since the above was written Mr. and Mrs. Clark received a letter from their son, Lt. M.E. Clark in which the latter indicated some of the distance he had walked by saying that he had worn out a pair of shoes while finding his way back to his air base.

A telegram from Maj. Donald Bowles to his parents, Mr. and Mrs. F.C. Bowles, states that Maj. Bowles has been advanced to Lieutenant Colonel. The many friends of Lt. Col. Bowles will be glad to learn of his deserved advancement. He is a graduate of the Groton high school, and took his college work at Brookings, where he received military training leading to the rating of second lieutenant. At the outbreak of the war he was called into service from the ranks of reserve officers.

Mr. and Mrs. Adolph Nelson of Houghton received word from the war department that their son, PFC. Carroll E. Nelson was seriously wounded in action, July 20, in New Guinea.

Word from PFC. Norman Thurston, who was hospitalized on the Hawaiian Islands, says that he is recovering nicely from a bullet wound in his shoulder, and hopes to be released from the hospital soon. He was injured in the Saipan invasion.

We have received information to the effect that Pvt. Donald Cook and Cpl. Robert Cook, sons of Mr. and Mrs. Milo Cook, and also Cpl. Robert Dombrowe, son of Mr. and Mrs. Fred R. Dombrowe, arrived home in Groton Tuesday. These boys have seen service in the south Pacific. Borden C. Meyers, T-4, son of Mr. and Mrs. W.G.P. Meyers, arrived home Wednesday morning. He had accompanied Pvt. Donald Cook, Cpl. Robert Cook and Cpl. Robert Dombrowe, as far as Chicago, where he became separated from them.

Word was received in Groton that Pvt. Frederick J. Weinbender, son of Mr. and Mrs. John Weinbender, former proprietors of the Yellowstone café here, was killed in action, July 13, in New Guinea. Pvt. Weinbender inlisted (sic) in March 1943, in a paratroop division. He took his training at Ft. Benning, Ga., and was shipped overseas last November. Pvt. Weinberger attended high school at Scotts Bluff, Neb., while his parents resided in that city. The Weinbenders have recently disposed of their business interests here and removed to Aberdeen.

September 1944 – Diary – September 2 Beth and I worked all AM cleaning. Started to thresh flax. Broke down. Gave them lunch. Ralph took a piece of the machine to town. Went to town in the evening and went to "Three Men in White". September 3 Beth went to town in the AM to get ice cream. Threshed flax in the PM. Gave them ice cream. Beth went to town in the evening with Chuck. September 4 cleaned basement. Ralph threshed flax at Madison's all day. Got a letter from Don. September 5-6 Ralph threshed at Madison's and Schultz's and finished at Schultz's. September 7 Ralph cut the rest of the flax. September 8 Ralph plowed on the 80. Took lunch to him. We canned 10 ½ quarts of peaches. Beth went to Virginia's to

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 143 ~ 16 of 89

get tomatoes. Scrubbed kitchen floor and waxed it. September 9 sewed and baked bread. Ralph helped Al put hay in his barn. Ralph got home about 8:00. September 10 rained a little. Canned nine quarts of tomatoes. Made a cake. Ralph finished plowing on the 80. Beth took lunch to him. Wrote to Don. Went to show in the evening "Hail to the Conquering Hero". Beth and Chuck went to Luther League. September 11 Ralph went out to sell seed corn. Left clothes out all night. September 12 rained off and on all day. Ralph out selling seed corn. September 13 Ralph sold seed corn. Got stuck. Stanley pulled us out. September 15 Ralph out all-day selling seed corn. Nice summer day but wind blew all day. Beth went to the dance with Mickey and Dean and got a letter from Don. September 16 canned tomatoes. Made dill pickles. Ralph sold corn all day. Nice warm day. September 17 made an apple sauce cake. Ralph, Beth, and Helen went to church. Went to a show in the evening "Love a Soldier". September 18 rained most of the day. Dressed two chickens. Fried them. Went to Methodist Church for supper and wrote Don. September 21 Beth and Ralph went to town. Beth got a permanent and I worked on a mattress pad. September 22 Ralph went over to Waxhahl's to help fill silo. We canned 8 1/2 quarts of apple sauce. Went to mother's and canned 13 pints of corn. Rained most of the day. September 23 Ralph helped Waxdahl fill silo. Broke down. Went to town in the evening. September 24 sealed pickles. Went to church. Went to show "Shine on Harvest Moon". September 25 Ralph helped Miller fill silo. We washed, had a big one. September 26 Beth and I ironed. Ralph gone all day filling silo. Beth and I went to town in PM. Beth washed car. September 27 Ralph gone, filled silo at Wiley's. Beth and I went to Brookings so she could enter college. Left her with her roommate. September 28 Ralph helped Smith fill silo. Sent a letter to Beth. September 29 got a letter from Don and Beth. Ralph plowed west of trees. September 30 made rolls and a cake. Beth came home in the PM.

A memorial service will be held in the Groton Methodist church Sunday afternoon, Sept. 24th, at 3:00 o'clock, for Pfc. Vere C. Insley of the Putney neighborhood. Pfc. Insley died of wounds received while the U.S. forces were fighting in Guam. A service for him will be the first of its kind in the Groton community.

October 4 – Ore B. Fitch, Private, was born April 4, 1923, and raised around Langford, was killed in action on October 4, 1944. Parents were Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Fitch. Fitch entered the U.S. Army/Air Corps in February 1943. He served with the 766th Bomber Squadron (Consolidated B-24 Liberators) of the 461st Bomber Group. He is buried in the Langford cemetery. He enlisted in Sacramento, CA. The Squadron departed for the Mediterranean Theater of Operations on January 1, 1944. The squadron was engaged primarily in the strategic bombing campaign against Germany, attacking communications, industrial facilities, and other enemy strategic targets in Austria, Czechoslovakia, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Romania, and Yugoslavia. It operated out of Torretto Airfield, Italy from February 1944 through June 30, 1945. Following V-E Day, the squadron returned to the U.S., where it was inactivated in August 1945.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 143 ~ 17 of 89

First Lt. Lyle Schuelke is among the Groton boys who have made their honorable contribution to the war which America and her allies are now waging overseas. Lt. Schuelke has been awarded the Silver Star for gallantry in service. The citation for his medal reads: "When the assault companies of his regiment were retarded by heavy mortar and machinegun fire, Schuelke ignoring his own safety, proceeded to a forward position within observation and range of hostile guns and directed an accurate artillery bombardment on the emplacements. His gallant action resulted in destruction of the enemy and greatly facilitated the advancement of the regiment". Lt. Schuelke was reared on a farm near Groton and attended Groton high school graduating in the class of 1936. His advanced studies were taken in Huron college where he showed skill in athletics, besides receiving honor in other school activities. Lt. Schuelke's wife lives at Huron. His brother, Second Lt. Robert Schuelke is now overseas. He is a graduate of State college, taking his basic training in Camp Wolters, Tex., and was commissioned at Ft Benning, Ga. He was also, stationed at Camp Howze, Texas. First Lt. Lyle Schuelke and his brother Lt. Robert are the sons of Mr. and Mrs. A.J. Schuelke of this vicinity.

Corporal Edwin O. Sundberg of Pierpont, S.D. recently was awarded the Bronze Star for heroic achievement in action while serving with Lieutenant General Mark W. Clark's Fifth Army in Italy. Sundberg, a radio operator with a field artillery battalion of the 91st "Wild West" division, was cited for his courage in operating his radio while under intense enemy fire. Sundberg stayed at his post until artillery fire directed from his set had silenced several enemy machine guns. He entered the army in October, 1942. Cpl. Sundberg is known by quite a number in this community (**Groton**). He is a brother-in-law to Mrs. Lawrence Rohwer of the Groton vicinity. Cpl. Sundberg's friends will be glad to learn of his advancement and the honorable record he is making in the service. **Edwin Sundberg was born on September 6, 1916, and died on May 10, 2001. He is buried in the Groton cemetery.**



Lt. Quentin Davidson, youngest son of Mr. and Mrs. D.J. Davidson of Bristol, was missing in action over Germany, November 30, according to a telegram received Wednesday morning. Serving as co-pilot on a flying fortress, he sailed for Europe early in September. In the last letter written home, dated Nov. 29, he anticipated going on a mission the following day. His wife resides at Bancroft, Neb., and teaches at Ashland, Neb. Besides his parents, his brothers, Maurice and Vincent reside at Bristol and his sister, Mrs. Victor Friberg, at Webster. **Quentin Davidson was born on November 15, 1920, and died on November 30, 1944. He was a member of the U.S. Army Air Corps. He was killed in action near Merseburg, Germany when on his 17th mission he and other members of the squadron were off course, due to weather. The airplane was damaged, and the crew bailed out. The pilot and co-pilot attempted to land the plane, but the plane exploded on contact.**



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Some lawmakers frustrated by lack of specific data from governor's workforce campaign

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - NOVEMBER 13, 2023 4:25 PM

PIERRE — Some lawmakers expressed frustration Monday upon learning the state's \$5 million workforce recruitment campaign — which includes television ads featuring Gov. Kristi Noem — is not directly measuring how many workers it recruits.

Members of the Legislature's Appropriations Committee heard a report from the Governor's Office of Economic Development that included information on the Freedom Works Here campaign. The campaign ads feature Noem taking on the roles of high-demand workers, such as plumbers or welders, while inviting them to the state.

Finance Director Travis Dovre said the campaign has focused on neighboring states, plus California, Colorado and Nevada. He said the campaign's social media posts, commercials and other marketing efforts have generated more than 800 million "impressions" — a measurement of the number of times an ad has been seen — while 7,568 people have requested more information on South Dakota.

A slide in his presentation said 1,900 people "are in the final stages of finding their career here." Under questioning from legislators, state Department of Labor Secretary Marcia Hultman said that's the number of out-of-state people who have asked for a state-assigned job adviser to help them find work in South Dakota.

Dovre said attributing an exact number of those people to Freedom Works Here is difficult because what makes someone move to a state is complicated.

"We will probably never be able to have an exact number," he said. "Website traffic is up, click-through rates are above national averages, so whatever we're doing with those ads is getting people's attention."

That didn't satisfy Rep. Chris Karr, R-Sioux Falls.

"Is there any other way you intended to measure the success of this campaign, quantitatively?" Karr asked. "Something more accurate than how many people are coming to the state, for whatever reasons? Because people were coming to the state before this campaign."

Dovre said the data to do that is not available, and the campaign is "a long game."

"So, the answer is no." Karr said. "I think you guys can figure this out. You hire all these national companies that have all this experience. I imagine one of them might have an idea."

The \$5 million contract for Freedom Works Here went to a politically connected Ohio firm, Go West Media. The firm is a subsidiary of The Strategy Group, whose CEO Ben Yoho also manages Vivek Ramaswamy's Republican presidential campaign.

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

Hotel will apologize to Native Americans as part of Justice Department agreement

BY: SEARCHLIGHT STAFF - NOVEMBER 13, 2023 10:59 AM

A woman will step away at least temporarily from the operations of a Rapid City hotel and bar to resolve allegations of discrimination against Native Americans, and the business will also issue a public apology, according to the U.S. Department of Justice.

The department announced over the weekend that it entered into a consent decree with the owners and operators of the Grand Gateway Hotel and Cheers Sports Lounge and Casino.

Under the consent decree, which must be approved by the U.S. District Court for the District of South Dakota, Connie Uhre will be barred from serving as an officer or director of the company or from exercising any management duties or being involved in any operations on behalf of the Grand Gateway Hotel for four years. The defendants will also issue a public apology and send it to tribal organizations in South Dakota and throughout the Great Plains.

The department's lawsuit alleged the defendants prevented Native Americans from booking rooms at the hotel and made public statements discouraging Native Americans from setting foot on the property.

Attorney General Merrick Garland said in a news release that the actions were "reminiscent of a long history of prejudice and exclusion Native American communities have faced."

Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke of the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division said the defendants' conduct was "egregious, motivated by naked animus, and amounted to an outright ban on Native American customers seeking access to a public establishment."

South Dakota U.S. Attorney Alison J. Ramsdell called the Justice Department's actions "a forceful reminder to all business owners in South Dakota that refusing services on the basis of race is against the law and will not be tolerated."

The department's lawsuit, filed in October 2022, alleged that the Retsel Corporation and two of its directors, Connie Uhre and Nicholas Uhre, had discriminated against Native American customers.

Specifically, the complaint alleged that in March 2022, Connie Uhre told other Rapid City hotel owners and managers that she did "not want to allow Natives on property ... The problem is we do not know the nice ones from the bad natives ... so we just have to say no to them!" Uhre then announced on Facebook that "[w]e will no long[sic] allow any Native American" in the Grand Gateway or in the Cheers Sports Lounge and Casino.

The complaint further alleged that on at least two occasions in March 2022, the defendants turned away Native Americans who sought to book rooms.

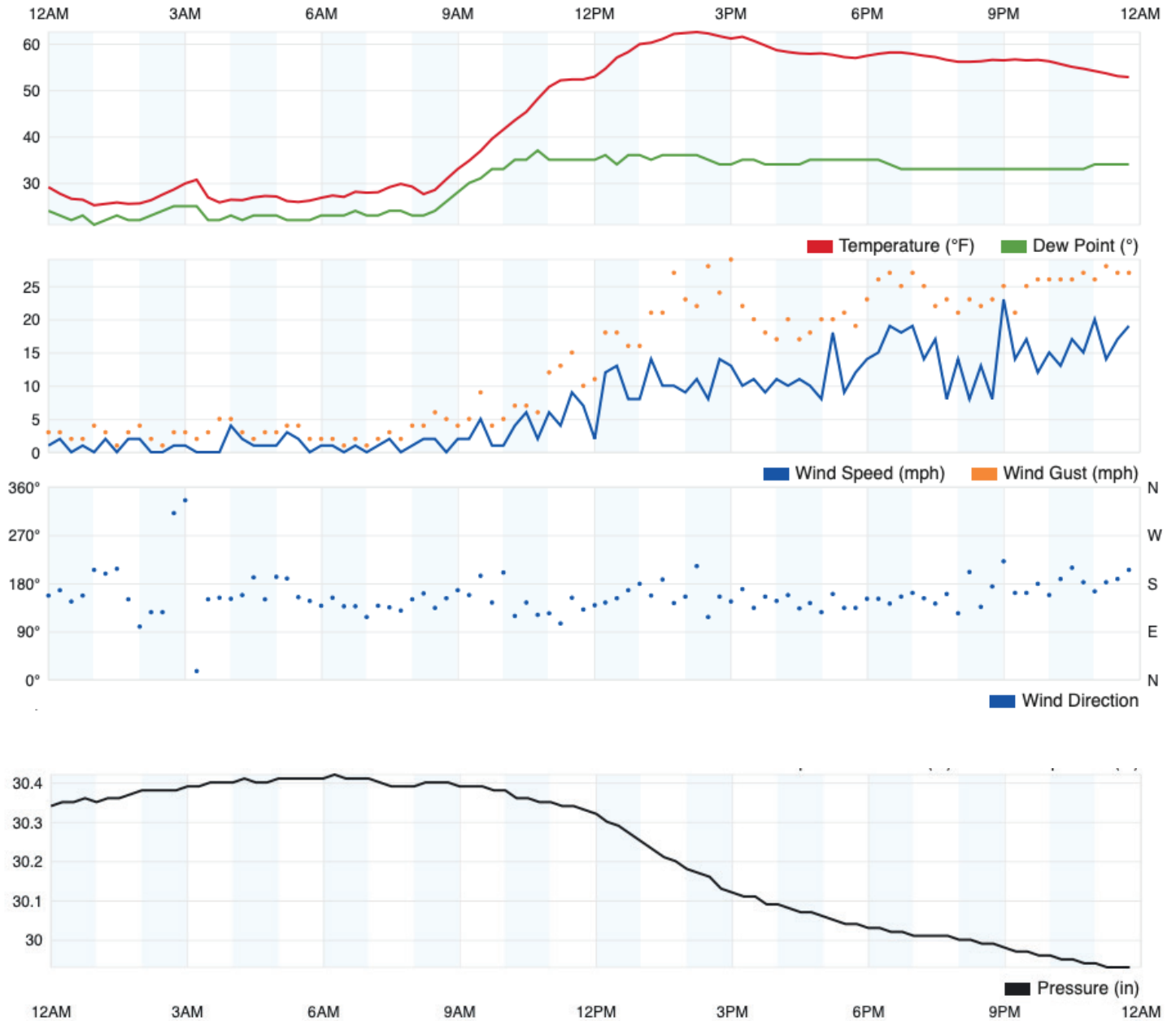
The consent decree requires that the defendants retain a compliance officer to oversee compliance with its terms, implement and publish an anti-discrimination policy, institute a complaint process, undergo training, and develop an affirmative marketing plan. Those provisions will be in effect for the next three years.

While the consent decree resolves the Justice Department lawsuit, the business is also a defendant in other litigation that remains pending.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 143 ~ 20 of 89

Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



Broton Daily Independent

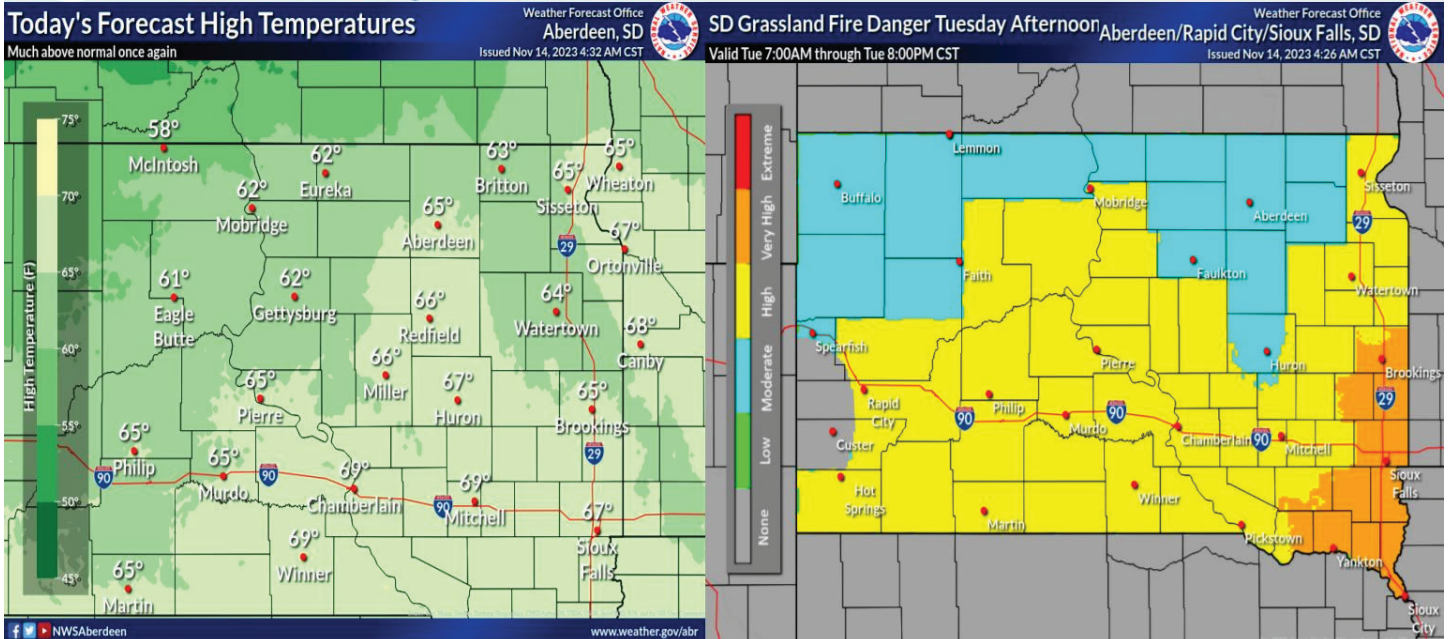
Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 143 ~ 21 of 89

Tue Nov 14	Wed Nov 15	Thu Nov 16	Fri Nov 17	Sat Nov 18	Sun Nov 19	Mon Nov 20
64° F 28° F	60° F 43° F	51° F 25° F	50° F 29° F	53° F 34° F	50° F 36° F	43° F 28° F
S 22 MPH	S 14 MPH	SSW 27 MPH	SW 15 MPH	W 9 MPH	SE 13 MPH	N 16 MPH

Very Mild Today and Less Wind

November 14, 2023 4:42 AM

Elevated Fire Danger This Afternoon



National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration U.S. Department of Commerce
National Weather Service Aberdeen, SD

We'll continue with the mild temperatures again today, with 60s expected for highs. Southerly winds will continue to be breezy and gusty this morning for eastern areas, but a decrease in speeds is anticipated by this afternoon. A cold front will also move east across the area today and switch winds to the northwest throughout the day. Expect conditions to be less windy than Monday across central South Dakota.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 143 ~ 22 of 89

Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 62 °F at 2:09 PM

Low Temp: 25 °F at 1:05 AM

Wind: 29 mph at 2:53 PM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 9 hours, 36 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 68 in 2015

Record Low: -17 in 2014

Average High: 43

Average Low: 20

Average Precip in Nov.: 0.40

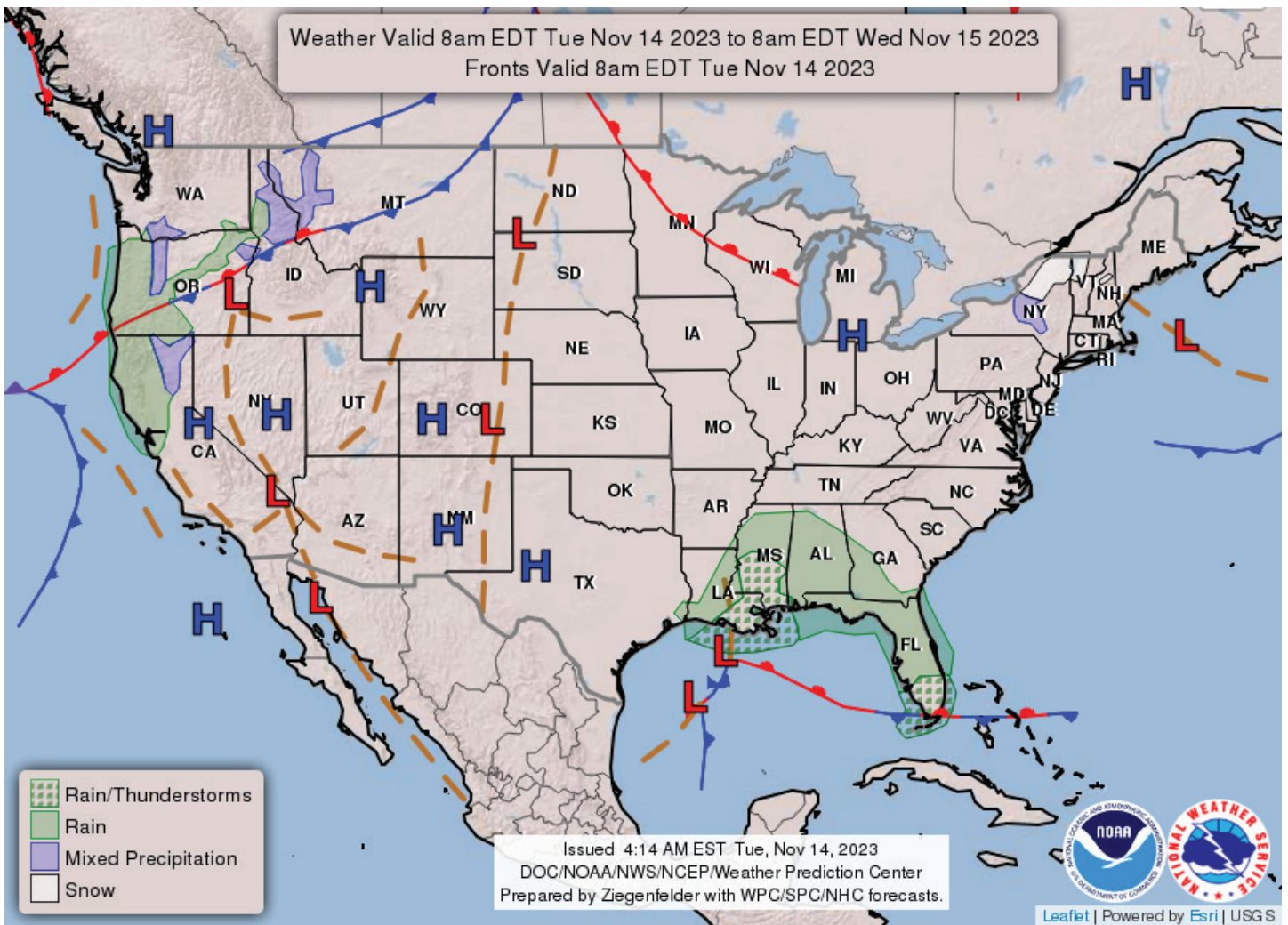
Precip to date in Nov.: 0.17

Average Precip to date: 20.87

Precip Year to Date: 23.15

Sunset Tonight: 5:05:18 PM

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:29:42 AM



Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 143 ~ 23 of 89

Today in Weather History

November 14, 1997: A low-pressure system produced snow and blowing snow, creating near whiteout conditions at times. Six inches of snow fell in the Sisseton foothills by Friday evening in Roberts and eastern Marshall Counties. Strong north winds gusting to near 35 mph, combined with the snow, caused visibilities to fall below one-half mile at times over a large portion of northeast South Dakota during the evening of the 13th and through the 14th. Classes were canceled around Summit because of near-whiteout conditions, while classes were delayed for two hours in Britton. Interstate 29 was closed just north of the Grant County line for a time after a semi-trailer rolled. Some snowfall amounts include; 6.5 inches in Summit; 6.2 inches in Waubay; 6.0 inches in Roscoe; and 5.0 inches in Sisseton and Wilmot.

1921: During the afternoon hours, thunderstorms brought severe hail to portions of Alabama. The hailstones ranged from about the size of buckshot to as large as a baseball. The largest stoned weighed as much as a pound.

1964 - With the help of a fresh three inch cover of snow, the temperature at Ely, NV, dipped to 15 degrees below zero to establish an all-time record low for the month of November. That record of -15 degrees was later equalled on the 19th of November in 1985. (The Weather Channel)

1969: Apollo 12 was launched into a threatening gray sky with ominous cumulus clouds. Pete Conrad's words 43 seconds after liftoff, electrified everyone in the Control Center: "We had a whole bunch of buses drops out," followed by "Where are we going?" and "I just lost the platform." Lightning had stricken the spacecraft. Warning lights were illuminated, and the spacecraft guidance system lost its attitude reference.

1974 - A storm produced 15 inches of snow at the Buffalo, NY, airport, and 30 inches on the south shore of Lake Erie. (David Ludlum)

1986 - An early season cold wave set more than 200 records from the northwestern U.S. to the east coast over a seven day period. For some places it proved to be the coldest weather of the winter season. (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders - 1987)

1987 - The first major snowstorm of the season hit the Southern and Central Rockies, producing 12 inches at the Brian Head ski resort in Utah overnight. Strong and gusty winds associated with the storm reached 52 mph at Ruidoso NM. In the eastern U.S., the temperature at Washington D.C. soared to 68 degrees, just three days after being buried under more than a foot of snow. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - A massive storm produced snow and gusty winds in the western U.S., with heavy snow in some of the higher elevations. Winds gusted to 66 mph at Show Low AZ, and Donner Summit, located in the Sierra Nevada Range of California, was buried under 23 inches of snow. Heavy rain soaked parts of California, with 3.19 inches reported at Blue Canyon. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Unseasonably warm weather prevailed east of the Rockies. Temperatures reached 70 degrees as far north as New England, and readings in the 80s were reported across the southeast quarter of the nation. Nineteen cities reported record high temperatures for the date. For the second time in the month Dallas/Fort Worth TX equalled their record for November with an afternoon high of 89 degrees. The high of 91 degrees at Waco TX was their warmest of record for so late in the season. Heavy snow blanketed parts of Wyoming overnight, with a foot of snow reported at Cody, and ten inches at Yellowstone Park. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 143 ~ 24 of 89

Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

HOW MUCH GOOD SHOULD WE HAVE?

It was the first parent-teacher conference of the year. Mrs. Adams was a bit fearful as she entered her son's classroom. Seated across from her son's teacher she did not know what to expect.

"Mrs. Adams," began the teacher, "it is a delight to have your son as a student in my class. He is so good!"

"My son?" gasped Mrs. Adams. She was shocked beyond belief.

"Yes. Charles is a model student," the teacher continued.

Then, turning to her son, Mrs. Adams said to Charles, "Your teacher said that you are a good student. Even a model student. Why can't you be good at home?"

"Well, Mom," he replied slowly, "I only got so much goodness in me and I decided to use it in school."

Goodness is an expression of "God-like-ness" that should reside inside of every believer and find its way outside of us in showing God's love and grace to others. "God-like-ness" should come easily, naturally, and constantly in our relationships with others.

As we become more of who God wants us to be, more "God-like," we must allow Him to move freely in us and through us. As we sense His love flooding into our hearts, showing "God-like-ness" should not be something we force ourselves to do. Rather, it is something we do without even thinking about it because we are a child of God.

Prayer: Help us, Heavenly Father, to express "God-like-ness" to others as You have expressed God-love to us. May our 'God-like-ness' reflect Your love for them. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Therefore, whenever we have the opportunity, we should do good to everyone - especially to those in the family of faith. Galatians 6:10



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

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 143 ~ 25 of 89

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

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 143 ~ 26 of 89

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Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 143 ~ 27 of 89



WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS: 11.10.23

13 33 59 68 70 8

MegaPlier: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$245,000,000

NEXT 17 Hrs 31 Mins 25
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 11.13.23

17 18 20 44 51 4

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$2,200,000

NEXT 1 Days 16 Hrs 46
DRAW: Mins 25 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 11.13.23

8 10 30 45 47 14

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT 17 Hrs 1 Mins 25
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 11.11.23

8 9 17 30 34

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$53,000

NEXT 1 Days 17 Hrs 1
DRAW: Mins 25 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 11.13.23

13 14 20 67 69 14

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT 1 Days 17 Hrs 30
DRAW: Mins 25 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 11.13.23

24 33 35 37 42 21

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$255,000,000

NEXT 1 Days 17 Hrs 30
DRAW: Mins 25 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the Associated Press

Carter, Perry combine for 10 3-pointers to lead Kansas State over South Dakota State 91-68

MANHATTAN, Kan. (AP) — Cam Carter scored 25 points, Tylor Perry added 22 and the pair combined for 10 3-pointers to lead Kansas State to a 91-68 victory over South Dakota State on Monday night.

Carter shot 10 of 20 from the floor and 4 of 8 from long range. Perry was 7-of-9 shooting and made 6 of 8 from beyond the arc. R.J. Jones added 14 points and Will McNair Jr. scored 10 for Kansas State (2-1).

K-State built a double-digit lead about seven minutes into the game and led 38-29 at the break. South Dakota State pulled within eight points early in the second half before a 23-13 Wildcats' surge stretched the lead to 66-48 with 10:35 to play. It was their largest lead of the game. Jones and Perry each hit a pair of 3s during the run.

Kansas State shot 57% overall (35 of 61). Carter and Perry also combined for 11 of 24 Wildcats assists.

Charlie Easley scored 21 points on 9-of-15 shooting to lead South Dakota State (1-2). Luke Appel chipped in 16 points and seven rebounds. Zeke Mayo finished with 11 points.

Kansas State plays Providence in the Baha Mar Hoops in Nassau, Bahamas on Friday.

South Dakota State faces UCF in St. Augustine, Florida on Sunday.

Republican Rep. Jess Olson, of Rapid City, resigns South Dakota House seat, citing health issues

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Republican Rep. Jess Olson, of Rapid City, announced Monday that she has resigned from her South Dakota House seat effective immediately, citing unspecified ongoing health issues.

"It has been my platform to support children and families and address workforce issues across South Dakota," Olson said in a Facebook post. "While we have more work to do, I am proud of the legislation we have been able to pass supporting adoptive and foster families and increasing access to employment opportunities."

Olson has represented District 34 since 2019. She helped enact legislation this year to clean up references in South Dakota statutes and the state Constitution that referred to the governor as a "he," to reflect that South Dakota has its first woman governor.

"We have a long history of strong female leaders in South Dakota," Olson said in a statement at the time. "It's time for our laws and Constitution to reflect the leaders that the people of South Dakota have elected to represent them."

Olson was among a minority of representatives this year to vote against a bill limiting several forms of gender-affirming medical care for minors. She also broke with fellow Republicans in voting against a bill to restrict drag shows. Last year she voted against a bill to limit teaching on critical race theory. She sponsored legislation that became law this year to protect women from being held criminally liable if they get an abortion.

Olson did not specify her health problems but said she'd been managing them "for some time," and that her focus for now needs to be on her health care and family.

"A break is not easy but necessary, and I look forward to the possibility of returning to public service in the future," she wrote.

Gov. Kristi Noem wished her a speedy recovery and requested public input on filling her vacant seat.

Those wishing to be considered or to offer nominations should email Ben Koisti at Ben.Koisti@state.sd.us. Nominations should include the candidate's name, current physical address, resume, cover letter, and letters of recommendation. Nomination materials are due by Dec. 5.

South Dakota hotel owner sued for race discrimination to apologize and step down

By SUMMER BALLENTINE Associated Press

A South Dakota woman who said she would ban Native Americans from her hotel cannot manage the establishment for four years and must publicly apologize under agreement with the U.S. Justice Department.

The federal agency announced the apology last week as part of a consent decree with owners of Rapid City's Grand Gateway Hotel.

Hotel co-owner Connie Uhre in March 2022 posted on social media that she would no longer allow American Indians on the property because of a fatal shooting at the hotel involving two teenagers who police said were Native American.

"We will no long(er) allow any Native American(s) on (our) property," Uhre wrote in a Facebook post, while offering a "very special" hotel rate to travelers and ranchers.

Members of the Indigenous-led activist group NDN Collective were denied hotel rooms shortly after Uhre's posts.

After months of boycotts and protests against the hotel and its owners, the Justice Department stepped in and sued, alleging racial discrimination against American Indians.

In a statement announcing the consent decree, Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke described Uhre's behavior as "hateful," saying it "invokes a long and painful history of negative stereotypes against and exclusion of the Native American community."

"We applaud the Tribal elders, local officials, and advocates who took a stand against this shameful conduct," Clarke said. "Our settlement should send a message to public establishments across the country that their doors must be open to all communities regardless of race."

A lawyer for the Uhres did not respond to a request for comment by The Associated Press. Email and voice message requests for comment to NDN Collective were not immediately returned Monday.

The hotel shut down for about a month because of the protests. Uhre was arrested May 31, 2022, accused of spraying a cleaning product at NDN Collective demonstrators outside the hotel.

As part of the consent decree, which still needs approval from a U.S. District Court judge, the company must apologize for Uhre's posts in letters to tribal leaders and in newspapers throughout South Dakota.

Rapid City, known to many as the gateway to Mount Rushmore, is home to more than 77,000 people. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, at least 11% of its residents identify as American Indian or Alaska Native.

Testing Shows Massive Water, Sewage Leaks in Hideaway Hills, Increasing Danger from Mine Collapse

RAPID CITY, S.D.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Nov 13, 2023--

Testing by the Northdale Sanitary District in Black Hawk, South Dakota, shows water and sewage lines underneath the Hideaway Hills neighborhood are leaking millions of gallons of fluid into the soil every year, worsening already dangerous conditions there.

That neighborhood and its 158 homes are the subject of a class action lawsuit that has its origins in April 2020 when a sinkhole opened and neighbors discovered an abandoned, state-operated gypsum mine beneath the homes.

For generations, South Dakota operated gypsum mines to support its for-profit cement company. Trials to determine South Dakota's liability and potential damages it may have to pay in the case are scheduled for next year.

In June and August 2022 and April 2023, the sanitary district, which is responsible for providing water and sewage services in the area, conducted testing in which it placed video cameras into the underground water and sewage lines. The results of those tests became available only last week and only after attorneys at the Fox Rothschild law firm, who represent the Hideaway Hills homeowners, filed a subpoena.

The results show that the water lines have been disturbed by the collapse of the soils and are leaking 28,000 gallons a day, or more than 10 million gallons every year. The sewage lines are also leaking, the tests show, and some of the sewage is remaining in the pipes and is corroding the underside of manhole covers.

"This was already a health and safety issue, but now it's clearly a disaster just waiting to happen," says attorney Kathleen Barrow, who represents the neighbors whose homes have been left worthless by virtue of the mine collapse. "Every single gallon of water and sewage that leaches into the soils there is literally dissolving the gypsum underneath the homes above. The experts tell me we are one water main break away from disaster."

The case is Andrew Morse and John and Emily Clarke et al. v. State of South Dakota, No. 46CIV-20-000295 in the Meade County 4th Judicial District.

Worsening warming is hurting people in all regions, US climate assessment shows

By SETH BORENSTEIN and TAMMY WEBBER Associated Press

Revved-up climate change now permeates Americans' daily lives with harm that is "already far-reaching and worsening across every region of the United States," a massive new government report says.

The National Climate Assessment, which comes out every four to five years, was released Tuesday with details that bring climate change's impacts down to a local level.

Overall, it paints a picture of a country warming about 60% faster than the world as a whole, one that regularly gets smacked with costly weather disasters and faces even bigger problems in the future.

Since 1970, the Lower 48 states have warmed by 2.5 degrees (1.4 degrees Celsius) and Alaska has heated up by 4.2 degrees (2.3 degrees Celsius), compared to the global average of 1.7 degrees (0.9 degrees Celsius), the report said. But what people really feel is not the averages, but when weather is extreme.

With heat waves, drought, wildfire and heavy downpours, "we are seeing an acceleration of the impacts of climate change in the United States," said study co-author Zeke Hausfather of the tech company Stripe and Berkeley Earth.

And that's not healthy.

Climate change is "harming physical, mental, spiritual, and community health and well-being through the increasing frequency and intensity of extreme events, increasing cases of infectious and vector-borne diseases, and declines in food and water quality and security," the report said.

Compared to earlier national assessments, this year's uses far stronger language and "unequivocally" blames the burning of coal, oil and gas for climate change.

The 37-chapter assessment includes an interactive atlas that zooms down to the county level. It finds that climate change is affecting people's security, health and livelihoods in every corner of the country in different ways, with minority and Native American communities often disproportionately at risk.

In Alaska, which is warming two to three times faster than the global average, reduced snowpack, shrinking glaciers, thawing permafrost, acidifying oceans and disappearing sea ice have affected everything from the state's growing season, to hunting and fishing, with projections raising questions about whether some Indigenous communities should be relocated.

The Southwest is experiencing more drought and extreme heat – including 31 consecutive days this summer when Phoenix's daily high temperatures reached or exceeded 110 degrees – reducing water supplies and increasing wildfire risk.

Northeastern cities are seeing more extreme heat, flooding and poor air quality, as well as risks to infrastructure, while drought and floods exacerbated by climate change threaten farming and ecosystems in rural areas.

In the Midwest, both extreme drought and flooding threaten crops and animal production, which can affect the global food supply.

In the northern Great Plains, weather extremes like drought and flooding, as well as declining water

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 143 ~ 31 of 89

resources, threaten an economy dependent largely on crops, cattle, energy production and recreation. Meanwhile, water shortages in parts of the southern Great Plains are projected to worsen, while high temperatures are expected to break records in all three states by midcentury.

In the Southeast, minority and Native American communities -- who may live in areas with higher exposures to extreme heat, pollution and flooding — have fewer resources to prepare for or to escape the effects of climate change.

In the Northwest, hotter days and nights that don't cool down much have resulted in drier streams and less snowpack, leading to increased risk of drought and wildfires. The climate disturbance has also brought damaging extreme rain.

Hawaii and other Pacific islands, as well as the U.S. Caribbean, are increasingly vulnerable to the extremes of drought and heavy rain as well as sea level rise and natural disaster as temperatures warm.

Brown University climate scientist Kim Cobb, who wasn't part of the assessment team, said, "at the center of the report are people — across every region of the country - who have escalating risks associated with climate change as well as clear opportunities for win-win climate action."

The United States will warm in the future about 40% more than the world as a total, the assessment said. The AP calculated, using others' global projections, that would slate America to get about 3.8 degrees (2.1 degrees Celsius) hotter by the end of the century.

Hotter average temperatures means weather that is even more extreme.

"The news is not good, but it is also not surprising," said University of Colorado's Waleed Abdalati, a former NASA chief scientist who was not part of this report. "What we are seeing is a manifestation of changes that were anticipated over the last few decades."

The 2,200-page report comes after five straight months when the globe set monthly and daily heat records. It comes as the U.S. has set a record with 25 different weather disasters this year that caused at least \$1 billion in damage.

"Climate change is finally moving from an abstract future issue to a present, concrete, relevant issue. It's happening right now," said report lead author Katharine Hayhoe, chief scientist at the Nature Conservancy and a professor at Texas Tech University. Five years ago, when the last assessment was issued, fewer people were experiencing climate change firsthand.

Surveys this year by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research show that.

In September, about 9 in 10 Americans (87%) said they'd experienced at least one extreme weather event in the past five years — drought, extreme heat, severe storms, wildfires or flooding. That was up from 79% who said that in April.

Hayhoe said there's also a new emphasis in the assessment on marginalized communities.

"It is less a matter ... of what hits where, but more what hits whom and how well those people can manage the impacts," said University of Colorado's Abdalati, whose saw much of his neighborhood destroyed in the 2021 Marshall wildfire.

Biden administration officials emphasize that all is not lost and the report details actions to reduce emissions and adapt to what's coming.

Americans on every level of government are "stepping up to meet this moment," said White House science adviser Arati Prabhakar. "All of these actions, taken together, give us hope because they tell us that we can do big things at the scale that's required, at the scale that the climate actually notices."

By cleaning up industry, how electricity is made and how transport is powered, climate change can be dramatically reduced. Hausfather said when emissions stops, warming stops, "so we can stop this acceleration if we as a society get our act together."

But some scientists said parts of the assessment are too optimistic.

"The report's rosy graphics and outlook obscure the dangers approaching," Stanford University climate scientist Rob Jackson said. "We are not prepared for what's coming."

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 143 ~ 32 of 89

As fighting empties north Gaza, humanitarian crisis worsens in south

By WAFAA SHURAFU and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — Another 200,000 people have fled northern Gaza since Nov. 5, the U.N. humanitarian office said Tuesday, as Israeli ground forces battle Palestinian militants around hospitals where patients, newborns and medics are stranded with no electricity and dwindling supplies.

The humanitarian office, known as OCHA, says only one hospital in the north is capable of receiving patients. All the others are no longer able to function and mostly serve as shelters from the fighting, including Gaza's largest, Shifa, which is surrounded by Israeli troops and where 36 babies are at risk of dying because there is no power for incubators.

The war, now in its sixth week, was triggered by Hamas' surprise attack into Israel, in which militants massacred hundreds of civilians and dragged some 240 hostages back to Gaza. Israel launched heavy airstrikes for nearly three weeks before sending troops and tanks into the north. The war has killed thousands of Palestinian civilians and wreaked widespread destruction on the impoverished enclave.

Israel has urged civilians to evacuate Gaza City and surrounding areas in the north, but the southern part of the besieged territory is not much safer. Israel carries out frequent airstrikes from north to south, hitting what it says are militant targets but often killing women and children.

U.N.-run shelters in the south are severely overcrowded, with an average of one toilet for 160 people. In all, some 1.5 million Palestinians, more than two thirds of Gaza's population, have fled their homes.

People stand in line for hours for scarce bread and brackish water. Trash is piling up, sewage is flooding the streets and taps run dry because there is no fuel for water pumps or treatment plants. Israel has barred fuel imports since the start of the war, saying Hamas would use it for military purposes.

The onset of rainy, cold weather added to the misery. At a tent camp outside a hospital in the central town of Deir al-Balah, people trudged through mud as they stretched plastic tarps over flimsy tents.

"All of these tents collapsed because of the rain," said Iqbal Abu Saud, who had fled Gaza City with 30 of her relatives. "How many days will we have to deal with this?"

The U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees, which is struggling to provide basic services to over 600,000 people sheltering in schools and other facilities in the south, said it may run out of fuel by Wednesday, forcing it to halt most aid operations. It said it was unable to continue importing limited supplies of food and medicine through Egypt's Rafah crossing, Gaza's only link to the outside world.

With Israeli forces fighting Palestinian militants in the center of Gaza City, both sides have seized on the plight of hospitals. Images of doctors trying to keep newborns warm at Shifa have circulated widely.

Israel accuses Hamas of using hospitals as cover for its fighters, alleging that Hamas has set up its main command center in and beneath Shifa, without providing visual evidence. Both Hamas and Shifa Hospital staff deny the Israeli allegations.

On Monday, the military released footage of a children's hospital that its forces entered over the weekend, showing weapons it said it found inside, as well as rooms in the basement where it believes the militants were holding hostages. The video showed what appeared to be a hastily installed toilet and ventilation system, as well as a motorcycle with a bullet hole in it, in the basement.

The Health Ministry in Hamas-ruled Gaza rejected the allegations, saying the basement shown was part of the hospital and had been turned into a shelter for displaced people.

"The hospital was forcefully evacuated at gunpoint ... Why didn't they detain any of the alleged resistance or alleged hostages?" the statement said. It denied the facility was related to a tunnel that Israeli forces uncovered nearby.

For weeks, Shifa staff members running low on supplies have performed surgery on war-wounded patients, including children, without anesthesia and using vinegar as antiseptic. After the weekend's mass exodus, about 650 patients and 500 staff remain in the hospital, which can no longer function, along with around 2,500 displaced Palestinians sheltering inside with little food or water.

The Health Ministry said 32 patients, including three babies, have died since its emergency generator ran out of fuel Saturday. It said the 36 babies, as well as other patients, are at risk of dying.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 143 ~ 33 of 89

Early Tuesday, the Israeli military said in a statement that it had started an effort to transfer incubators from Israel to Shifa. It wasn't clear if the incubators had been delivered or how they will be powered.

International law gives hospitals special protections during war. Hospitals can lose those protections if combatants use them to hide fighters or store weapons, but staff and patients must be given plenty of warning to evacuate, and the harm to civilians cannot be disproportionate to the military objective.

The International Committee of the Red Cross tried Monday to evacuate some 6,000 people from another Gaza City hospital, Al-Quds, but said its convoy had to turn back because of shelling and fighting. Israel released a video showing what it said was a militant with a rocket-propelled grenade launcher entering Al-Quds Hospital. An Israeli tank was stationed nearby.

The U.S. has pushed for temporary pauses to allow wider distribution of badly needed aid. Israel has agreed only to daily windows during which civilians can flee northern Gaza on foot along two main roads.

As of last Friday, more than 11,000 Palestinians, two-thirds of them women and minors, have been killed since the war began, according to the Health Ministry in Gaza, which does not differentiate between civilian and militant deaths. About 2,700 people have been reported missing.

Health officials have not updated the toll, citing the difficulty of collecting information.

At least 1,200 people have died on the Israeli side, mostly civilians killed in the initial Hamas attack. Palestinian militants. The military says 46 soldiers have been killed in ground operations in Gaza, and that thousands of militants have been killed.

About 250,000 Israelis have evacuated from communities near Gaza, where Palestinian militants still fire barrages of rockets, and along the northern border, where Israel and Lebanon's Hezbollah militant group have repeatedly traded fire since the start of the war.

The war has also fueled tensions in the Israeli-occupied West Bank. At least seven Palestinian were killed overnight during an Israeli raid in Tulkarem, the Palestinian Health Ministry said Tuesday. There was no immediate comment from the army. More than 190 Palestinians have been killed in the West Bank since Oct. 7, mainly during violent protests and gunfights sparked by arrest raids.

Internal documents show the World Health Organization paid sexual abuse victims in Congo \$250 each

By MARIA CHENG AP Medical Writer

LONDON (AP) — Earlier this year, the doctor who leads the World Health Organization's efforts to prevent sexual abuse travelled to Congo to address the biggest known sex scandal in the U.N. health agency's history, the abuse of well over 100 local women by staffers and others during a deadly Ebola outbreak.

According to an internal WHO report from Dr. Gaya Gamhewage's trip in March, one of the abused women she met gave birth to a baby with "a malformation that required special medical treatment," meaning even more costs for the young mother in one of the world's poorest countries.

To help victims like her, the WHO has paid \$250 each to at least 104 women in Congo who say they were sexually abused or exploited by officials working to stop Ebola. That amount per victim is less than a single day's expenses for some U.N. officials working in the Congolese capital — and \$19 more than what Gamhewage received per day during her three-day visit — according to internal documents obtained by The Associated Press.

The amount covers typical living expenses for less than four months in a country where, the WHO documents noted, many people survive on less than \$2.15 a day.

The payments to women didn't come freely. To receive the cash, they were required to complete training courses intended to help them start "income-generating activities." The payments appear to try to circumvent the U.N.'s stated policy that it doesn't pay reparations by including the money in what it calls a "complete package" of support.

Many Congolese women who were sexually abused have still received nothing. WHO said in a confidential document last month that about a third of the known victims were "impossible to locate." The WHO said nearly a dozen women declined its offer.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 143 ~ 34 of 89

The total of \$26,000 that WHO has provided to the victims equals about 1% of the \$2 million, WHO-created "survivor assistance fund" for victims of sexual misconduct, primarily in Congo.

In interviews, recipients told the AP the money they received was hardly enough, but they wanted justice even more.

Paula Donovan, who co-directs the Code Blue campaign to eliminate what it calls impunity for sexual misconduct in the U.N., described the WHO payments to victims of sexual abuse and exploitation as "perverse."

"It's not unheard of for the U.N. to give people seed money so they can boost their livelihoods, but to mesh that with compensation for a sexual assault, or a crime that results in the birth of a baby, is unthinkable," she said.

Requiring the women to attend training before receiving the cash set uncomfortable conditions for victims of wrongdoing seeking help, Donovan added.

The two women who met with Gamhewage told her that what they most wanted was for the "perpetrators to be brought to account so they could not harm anyone else," the WHO documents said. The women were not named.

"There is nothing we can do to make up for (sexual abuse and exploitation)," Gamhewage told the AP in an interview.

The WHO told the AP that criteria to determine its "victim survivor package" included the cost of food in Congo and "global guidance on not dispensing more cash than what would be reasonable for the community, in order to not expose recipients to further harm." Gamhewage said the WHO was following recommendations set by experts at local charities and other U.N. agencies.

"Obviously, we haven't done enough," Gamhewage said. She added the WHO would ask survivors directly what further support they wanted.

The WHO has also helped defray medical costs for 17 children born as a result of sexual exploitation and abuse, she said.

At least one woman who said she was sexually exploited and impregnated by a WHO doctor negotiated compensation that agency officials signed off on, including a plot of land and health care. The doctor also agreed to pay \$100 a month until the baby was born in a deal "to protect the integrity and reputation of WHO."

But in interviews with the AP, other women who say they were sexually exploited by WHO staff asserted the agency hasn't done enough.

Alphonsine, 34, said she was pressured into having sex with a WHO official in exchange for a job as an infection control worker with the Ebola response team in the eastern Congo city of Beni, an epicenter of the 2018-2020 outbreak. Like other women, she did not share her last name for fear of reprisals.

Alphonsine confirmed that she had received \$250 from the WHO, but the agency told her she had to take a baking course to obtain it.

"The money helped at the time, but it wasn't enough," Alphonsine said. She said she later went bankrupt and would have preferred to receive a plot of land and enough money to start her own business.

For a visiting WHO staffer working in Congo, the standard daily allowance ranges from about \$144 to \$480. Gamhewage received \$231 a day during her three-day trip to the Congolese capital Kinshasa, according to an internal travel claim.

The internal documents show that staff costs take up more than half of the \$1.5 million the WHO allotted toward the prevention of sexual misconduct in Congo for 2022-2023, or \$821,856. Another 12% goes to prevention activities and 35%, or \$535,000, is for "victim support," which Gamhewage said includes legal assistance, transportation and psychological support. That budget is separate from the \$2 million survivors assistance fund, which assists victims globally.

The WHO's Congo office has a total allocated budget of about \$174 million, and its biggest funder is the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

The U.N. health agency continues to struggle with holding perpetrators of sexual abuse and exploita-

tion to account in Congo. A WHO-commissioned panel found at least 83 perpetrators during the Ebola response, including at least 21 WHO staffers. The youngest known victim was 13.

In May 2021, an AP investigation revealed that senior WHO management was told of sexual exploitation during the agency's efforts to curb Ebola even as the abuse was happening but did little to stop it. No senior managers, including some who were aware of the abuse during the outbreak, were fired.

After years of pressure from Congolese authorities, the WHO internal documents note it has shared information with them about 16 alleged perpetrators of sexual abuse and exploitation who were linked to the WHO during the Ebola outbreak.

But the WHO hasn't done enough to discipline its people, said another Congolese woman who said she was coerced into having sex with a staffer to get a job during the outbreak. She, too, received \$250 from the WHO after taking a baking course.

"They promised to show us evidence this has been taken care of, but there has been no follow-up," said Denise, 31.

The WHO has said five staffers have been dismissed for sexual misconduct since 2021.

But in Congo, deep distrust remains.

Audia, 24, told the AP she was impregnated when a WHO official forced her to have sex to get a job during the outbreak. She now has a five-year-old daughter as a result and received a "really insufficient" \$250 from WHO after taking courses in tailoring and baking.

She worries about what might happen in a future health crisis in conflict-hit eastern Congo, where poor infrastructure and resources mean any emergency response relies heavily on outside help from the WHO and others.

"I can't put my trust in (WHO) anymore," she said. "When they abandon you in such difficulties and leave you without doing anything, it's irresponsible."

Live updates | Thousands more flee northern Gaza as Israeli troops battle Palestinian militants

By The Associated Press undefined

Fighting between Israeli troops and Palestinian militants in northern Gaza caused another 200,000 people to flee south in the past 10 days, the U.N. humanitarian office said Tuesday.

The humanitarian office, known as OCHA, said only one hospital in the north is capable of treating patients. Some of the fighting is around hospitals where patients, newborns and medics are stranded with no electricity and dwindling supplies. Israel accuses Hamas of using hospitals as cover for its fighters, alleging that Hamas has set up its main command center in and beneath Shifa hospital, the largest in the besieged territory. Both Hamas and Shifa hospital staff deny the Israeli allegations.

The southern part of Gaza is not much safer. Israel carries out frequent airstrikes against what it says are militant targets that often kill women and children.

More than two-thirds of Gaza's population of 2.3 million have fled their homes since the war began.

Gaza City, the largest urban area in the territory, is the focus of Israel's campaign to crush Hamas following the militant group's deadly Oct. 7 incursion into southern Israel that set off the war.

More than 11,000 Palestinians, two-thirds of them women and minors, have been killed since the war began, according to the Health Ministry in Gaza, which does not differentiate between civilian and militant deaths. About 2,700 people have been reported missing.

More than 1,200 people in Israel died, most of them in the Hamas attack, and about 240 hostages were taken from Israel into Gaza by Palestinian militants.

Currently:

- Thousands flee Gaza's main hospital but hundreds, including babies, still trapped by fighting
- Is Hamas hiding in Gaza's main hospital? Israel's claim is now a focal point in a dayslong stalemate
- EU nations condemn Hamas for what they describe as use of hospitals, civilians as 'human shields'
- Biden's initial confidence on Israel gives way to the complexities and casualties of a brutal war

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 143 ~ 36 of 89

— Detroit-area doctor grieves the loss of 20 relatives killed during Israel's war against Hamas

— Find more of AP's coverage at <https://apnews.com/hub/israel-hamas-war>

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

RESIDENTS OF KIBBUTZ BEGIN TO RETURN AFTER HAMAS ATTACK

KFAR AZA, Israel — Residents of Kfar Aza kibbutz in southern Israel have started to return to pick up what remains of their belongings.

The kibbutz was one of more than 20 towns and villages that were attacked on Oct. 7 by Hamas militants, sparking the war with Israel.

Ayelet Katzir's husband, David Kachko Kazir, was killed by Hamas during the raid.

"I came here to pick plants from my garden and some things that he liked, like he had a special mug, some of his clothes," she said. "I'm very glad that I came here but it's so difficult. It's very difficult."

Before the attack, the kibbutz was a modestly prosperous place with a school, a synagogue and a population of more than 700.

More than 1,200 people in Israel have died, most of them in the Hamas attack, and about 240 hostages were taken from Israel into Gaza by the militants. More than 11,000 Palestinians have been killed since the war began, according to the Health Ministry in Gaza.

113 CITIZENS OF SWEDEN AND DENMARK TO LEAVE GAZA, DIPLOMATS SAY

COPENHAGEN, Denmark -- At least 113 citizens of Sweden and Denmark will be able to leave Gaza on Tuesday, Swedish and Danish media said, quoting the foreign ministries of the two countries.

The Aftonbladet daily in Sweden said 100 Swedish nationals will be allowed to leave, while Danish broadcaster DR said 13 people are expected to be able to depart.

Previously, about 60 Swedes were able to cross the border into Egypt, Aftonbladet said, while two people with Danish citizenship have been able to leave Gaza.

CHINA, OTHER NATIONS CONDEMN ISRAELI MINISTER'S STATEMENT ON NUCLEAR OPTION IN GAZA

UNITED NATIONS — China, many Arab nations and Iran condemned an Israeli minister's statement that an option in Israel's war against Hamas could be to drop a nuclear bomb on the Gaza Strip.

At Monday's opening of a U.N. conference whose goal is to establish a nuclear-free zone in the Middle East, speaker after speaker said the Israeli statement posed a threat to the region and the wider international community.

The condemnations and criticisms were in response to comments by Israel's Heritage Minister Amihai Eliyahu on the possible use of nuclear weapons in Gaza in a radio interview on Sunday. His remarks were quickly disavowed by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who suspended Eliyahu from cabinet meetings.

Israel has neither confirmed nor denied its nuclear capability. It is widely believed to possess nuclear weapons, and a former employee at its nuclear reactor served 18 years in Israeli prison for leaking details and pictures of Israel's alleged nuclear weapons program to a British newspaper in 1986.

China's deputy U.N. ambassador Geng Shuang said Beijing was "shocked" at what "Israeli officials said about the use of nuclear weapons in the Gaza Strip," calling the statements "extremely irresponsible and disturbing" and saying they should be universally condemned.

He stressed that the statements run "counter to the international consensus that a nuclear war cannot be won and must not be fought." And he urged Israeli officials to retract the statement and become a party to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, considered the cornerstone of nuclear disarmament, as a non-nuclear weapon state "as soon as possible."

SURVIVORS WHO ESCAPED SHIFA HOSPITAL ARE NOW LIVING IN TENTS WITH LITTLE FOOD

KHAN YOUNIS, Gaza Strip — Sitting in a tent next to Nasr Hospital in southern Gaza, 10 members of the al-Tarabish family survive on what little they have: Pieces of days-old flatbread and dried herbs kept in a plastic sandwich bag.

Nermin Abu al-Tarabish says she feels lucky to be alive, having escaped heavy bombardment around Shifa hospital in Gaza City.

"Some were cut to pieces, some fell to the ground, some were screaming and making noises, and I was

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 143 ~ 37 of 89

running while the people were running," she said.

"It was a tragic day," she said. "I had never experienced anything like this day in my life."

As night fell, ambulance vans pulled up to the hospital in Khan Younis, unloading wounded from Israel's relentless bombardment surrounded by distraught relatives — many looking stunned as medics ran to receive the new patients.

One woman collapsed in grief and was helped to her feet by bystanders, as hospital staff wheeled out bodies wrapped in white sheets from the front entrance.

SEN. BERNIE SANDERS CALLS FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION ON GAZA HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

UNITED NATIONS – U.S. senator and former Democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders says the humanitarian situation in Gaza must be addressed immediately "or thousands of people may die," following a meeting with U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

Sanders told reporters before Monday afternoon's meeting that "we have a horrendous situation" where Hamas started a war "by a barbaric attack" against innocent people in Israel, where some 1,200 people were killed. At least 11,000 Palestinians have been killed in Israel's response, "including many, many children," Sanders said.

"The goal now is to do everything we can to save lives – get the humanitarian aid in as quickly as possible," he said.

U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric said Guterres and Sanders discussed the situation in the Middle East, and the secretary-general briefed the senator on the U.N.'s humanitarian operations in the region. The U.N. chief has repeatedly called for a humanitarian ceasefire to deliver humanitarian aid to Gaza.

Sanders, who is an independent but caucuses with the Democrats, said he asked for the meeting with Guterres as Vermont's senator, not as a representative of the Biden administration.

UN SAYS FUEL SHORTAGE HAMPERS AID DELIVERY INSIDE GAZA

UNITED NATIONS – The fuel crisis in Gaza is so dramatic that trucks filled with aid arriving through the Rafah crossing from Egypt won't be unloaded starting Tuesday because there is no fuel for the forklifts, or for vehicles to deliver the food, water and medicine they're carrying to those in desperate need, a senior U.N. humanitarian official says.

Andrea De Domenico, the U.N. humanitarian coordinator for the Palestinian territories, said "lives in Gaza are hanging by a thread due to the bleeding of fuel and medical supplies." And he said since Israeli troops arrived in Gaza City center five days ago, it has been too dangerous for the U.N. to coordinate any operation in the north.

De Domenico said in a video press conference with U.N. correspondents from east Jerusalem that the intensified fighting over the weekend around Shifa hospital, the biggest in Gaza City, damaged critical infrastructure including water tanks, oxygen stations and the cardiovascular facility in the maternity ward. Three nurses were reported killed, he said.

ISRAEL RELEASES VIDEO ALLEGEDLY SHOWING HAMAS USED HOSPITAL FOR FIGHTERS AND HOSTAGES

JERUSALEM — Israel's military released video Monday from what it said was a children's hospital that its forces moved into over the weekend. The video showed weapons it said were found inside, as well as rooms in the basement where it believes the militants were holding some of the around 240 hostages they abducted during the initial attack.

"Hamas uses hospitals as an instrument of war," said Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, the army's chief spokesman, standing in a room of the Rantisi Children's Hospital decorated with a colorful children's drawing of a tree, with explosive vests, grenades and RPGs displayed on the floor.

He showed another area that he said could have been used to hold hostages. It included what appeared to be a hastily installed toilet and air vent, a baby bottle and a motorcycle. He said forensic experts were examining the scenes.

BIDEN SAYS SHIFA HOSPITAL 'MUST BE PROTECTED' AND CALLS FOR 'LESS INTRUSIVE ACTION' BY ISRAEL

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden on Monday said that Gaza's largest hospital "must be protected,"

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 143 ~ 38 of 89

and called for "less intrusive action" by Israeli forces.

Fighting between Israeli forces and Palestinian militants has encircled the sprawling medical facility, prompting thousands to flee.

"It is my hope and expectation that there will be less intrusive action," Biden said in the Oval Office.

Shifa hospital has been without electricity and water for three days, and gunfire and bombings outside the compound have made the situation more difficult.

"We do not want to see fire fights in hospitals," said White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan at a briefing. "We want to see patients protected. We want to see hospitals protected. We have spoken with the Israeli government about this and they have said they share that view that they do not want to see fire fights in hospitals."

Sullivan said there were no easy answers on how Israel pushes military operations around the hospital, but these were questions for the Israeli military and not the U.S.

GAZA SITUATION IS 'DESPERATE' AS HOSPITALS AND RESCUERS RUN OUT OF SUPPLIES, GROUP SAYS
GENEVA — The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies says a race to find survivors under the rubble of destroyed buildings in Gaza has been thwarted by insufficient access for rescuers, as Israel's military campaign in the enclave continues.

Tommaso Della Longa, spokesman for the Geneva-based humanitarian agency, says the situation in Gaza remains "desperate." The Al-Quds hospital operated by the Palestinian Red Crescent Societies "was simply closed" on Sunday, he said.

While access to bombed-out areas is difficult, even the paramedics who are able to get through have no access to heavy machinery like bulldozers that could help clear ground to access any possible survivors under the rubble.

"Our colleagues are literally trying to save people from the rubble with their hands," Della Longa told the Associated Press.

Israel has allowed scores of aid trucks -- carrying food, water and medical supplies but no fuel -- to enter Gaza as the military campaign goes on. United Nations and other officials say that's a trickle compared to the hundreds of trucks that entered Gaza daily before the conflict.

Della Longa applauded efforts to bring a humanitarian pause or more aid into Gaza, but "we know that is complicated" -- and time is of the essence.

"The problem we have," he said, "is that the people in Gaza don't have time."

HOSTAGES' FAMILIES RALLY IN JERUSALEM TO DEMAND UNITED NATIONS SECURE THEIR RELEASE
JERUSALEM — Families of hostages being held by Hamas in Gaza gathered outside the main U.N. offices in Jerusalem on Monday to demand the world body secure the release of their loved ones.

A representative of the group handed over a letter to the top U.N. official in Jerusalem addressed to Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

"We urge you to exercise your moral and executive authority as secretary general of the United Nations," Gil Dickman said reading out the letter addressed to Guterres.

The family members held pictures of their loved ones as they gathered around toddler beds placed outside the U.N. compound in Jerusalem.

"I just came to ask for the U.N. to help us," said Yoav Engel, father of Ofir Engel, held hostage by Hamas.

"My kid is there 38 days and other 238 people, babies, kids, teenagers, adults, sick men. And no one know what's going on with them," Engel said.

Pascal Soto, the top official of the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, told the families Guterres is "doing his outmost" to secure the release of hostages and was in talks with different stakeholders, including Qatar,

China, Iran, Arab nations condemn Israeli minister's statement about dropping a nuclear bomb on Gaza

By EDITH M. LEDERER Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — China, Iran and a multitude of Arab nations condemned an Israeli minister's statement that a nuclear bomb on the Gaza Strip was an option in the Israel-Hamas war, calling it a threat to the world.

At Monday's long-planned opening of a United Nations conference whose goal is to establish a nuclear-free zone in the Middle East, many ambassadors expressed condemnations and criticisms of comments by Israel's Heritage Minister Amihai Eliyahu, who later called his remarks in a radio interview Sunday "metaphorical." Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu quickly disavowed the comments and suspended him from cabinet meetings.

Israel has neither confirmed nor denied its nuclear capability. It is widely believed to possess nuclear weapons, and a former employee at its nuclear reactor served 18 years in Israeli prison for leaking details and pictures of Israel's alleged nuclear arsenal program to a British newspaper in 1986.

China's deputy U.N. ambassador Geng Shuang said Beijing was "shocked," calling the statements "extremely irresponsible and disturbing" and should be universally condemned.

He urged Israeli officials to retract the statement and become a party to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, considered the cornerstone of nuclear disarmament, as a non-nuclear weapon state "as soon as possible."

Geng said China is ready to join other countries "to inject new impetus" to establishing a nuclear weapons-free zone in the Mideast, saying there is greater urgency because of the situation in the current region.

U.N. disarmament chief Izumi Nakamitsu, who opened Monday's fourth conference, didn't mention Israel. But she said: "Any threat to use nuclear weapons is inadmissible."

Nakamitsu reiterated the "urgency ... of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction," stressing that "cool heads and diplomatic efforts" must prevail to achieve peace between Israel and the Palestinians, based on a two-state solution.

Oman's U.N. Ambassador Mohamed Al-Hassan, speaking on behalf of the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council which includes Saudi Arabia, said the threat to use nuclear weapons in Gaza "reaffirms the extremes and brutality of the Israeli occupation against the Palestinian people" and their "disregard for innocent life." He called on the U.N Security Council and the IAEA to take decisive action on the matter.

Lebanon's Charge d'Affaires Hadi Hachem also condemned the Israeli heritage minister's comments, stressing that "this self-acknowledgment of having nuclear weapons and the threat of using them by its officials, poses a serious threat to both regional and international peace and security."

He urged Israel to stop "such rhetoric or posturing" and join the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty as a non-nuclear weapon state.

Iran's U.N. Ambassador Amir Iravani told the conference the nuclear threats directed toward Palestinians by high-ranking Israeli officials highlight Israel's "pride" in having these weapons in its hands.

"The secrecy surrounding Israel's nuclear capabilities poses a significant threat to regional stability," he said. "In these critical times, the imperative to establish such a zone in the Middle East has never been more urgent."

Israel did not speak Monday but Netanyahu has said his country's biggest threat remains the possibility of a nuclear-armed Iran, and it is prepared to prevent that from happening.

Efforts to create a nuclear-weapon-free zone date back to the 1960s and include a call by parties to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty in 1995 and a 1998 General Assembly resolution asking countries to contribute to establishing it. The first U.N. conference aimed at creating a zone was held in November 2019.

Russia's ambassador to the IAEA and other U.N. organizations based in Vienna, Mikhail Ulyanov, told delegates Monday that given the new escalation of violence in the Middle East, a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region "is more pertinent than ever."

But he said Moscow is "extremely uncomfortable" that along with the two other sponsors of the 1995

resolution – the United States and the United Kingdom – the promise to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Mideast has not been met after almost 30 years. And for more than 20 years, “there’s been almost no progress whatsoever,” he said.

Medics and patients, including babies, stranded as battles rage around Gaza hospitals

By NAJIB JOBAIN and JACK JEFFERY Associated Press

KHAN YOUNIS, Gaza Strip (AP) — Battles between Israel and Hamas around hospitals forced thousands of Palestinians to flee from some of the last perceived safe places in northern Gaza, stranding critically wounded patients, newborns and their caregivers with dwindling supplies and no electricity, health officials said Monday.

With Israeli forces fighting in the center of Gaza City, the territory’s main city, both sides have seized on the plight of hospitals as a symbol of the larger war, now in its sixth week. The fighting was triggered by Hamas’ Oct. 7 surprise attack into Israel, whose response has led to thousands of deaths — and much destruction — across Gaza.

Israel accuses Hamas of using hospitals as cover for its fighters, alleging that Hamas has set up its main command center in and beneath Gaza’s largest hospital, Shifa, without providing visual evidence. Both Hamas and Shifa Hospital staff deny the Israeli allegations.

On Monday, the military released footage of a children’s hospital that its forces moved into over the weekend, showing weapons it said it found inside, as well as rooms in the basement where it believes the militants were holding some of the around 240 hostages they abducted during the initial attack.

“Hamas uses hospitals as an instrument of war,” said Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, the army’s chief spokesperson, standing in a room of the Rantisi Children’s Hospital decorated with a colorful children’s drawing of a tree. Explosive vests, grenades and RPGs were displayed on the floor.

Meanwhile, gunfire and explosions raged Monday around Shifa, which has been encircled by Israeli troops for days. Tens of thousands of people have fled the hospital in the past few days and headed to the southern Gaza Strip, including large numbers of displaced people who had taken shelter there, as well as patients who could move.

For Palestinians, Shifa and the other hospitals in the combat zone evoke the suffering of civilians. U.N. monitors said Tuesday that only one hospital in northern Gaza is still operating, with the others forced to shut down because of nearby fighting and the lack of fuel, power, water and medicine.

For weeks, Shifa staff members running low on supplies have performed surgery on war-wounded patients, including children, without anesthesia. After the weekend’s mass exodus, about 650 patients and 500 staff remain in the hospital, which can no longer function, along with around 2,500 displaced Palestinians sheltering inside with little food or water.

After power for Shifa’s incubators went out days ago, the Health Ministry in Hamas-ruled Gaza on Monday released a photo it says shows about a dozen premature babies wrapped in blankets together on a bed to keep them at a proper temperature. Otherwise, “they immediately die,” said the Health Ministry’s director general, Medhat Abbas, who added that four of the babies had been delivered by cesarean section after their mothers died.

U.S. President Joe Biden said Monday that Shifa “must be protected.”

“It is my hope and expectation that there will be less intrusive action,” Biden said in the Oval Office.

Early Tuesday, the Israeli military said in a statement that it had started an effort to transfer incubators from Israel to Shifa. It wasn’t clear if the incubators had been delivered or how they will be powered.

International law gives hospitals special protections during war. But hospitals can lose those protections if combatants use them to hide fighters or store weapons, according to the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Still, there must be plenty of warning to allow evacuation of staff and patients, and if harm to civilians

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 143 ~ 41 of 89

from an attack is disproportionate to the military objective, it is illegal under international law. In an editorial published Friday in Britain's The Guardian newspaper, International Criminal Court prosecutor Karim Khan said the attacker must meet a high burden of proof to show that a hospital has lost its protections.

The Red Cross was attempting Monday to evacuate some 6,000 patients, staff and displaced people from another hospital, Al-Quds, after it shut down for lack of fuel, but the Red Cross said its convoy had to turn back because of shelling and fighting. On Monday, Israel released a video showing what it said was a militant with a rocket-propelled grenade launcher entering Al-Quds Hospital. An Israeli tank was stationed nearby.

At Shifa Hospital, the Health Ministry said 32 patients, including three babies, have died since its emergency generator ran out of fuel Saturday. It said 36 babies, as well as other patients, are at risk of dying because life-saving equipment cannot function.

Goudat Samy al-Madhoun, a health care worker, said he was among around 50 patients, staff and displaced people who made it out of Shifa and to the south Monday, including a woman who had been receiving kidney dialysis. He said those remaining in the hospital were mainly eating dates.

Al-Madhoun said Israeli forces fired on the group several times, wounding one man who had to be left behind. The dialysis patient's son was detained at an Israeli checkpoint on the road south, he said.

The military said it placed 300 liters (79 gallons) of fuel several blocks from Shifa, but Hamas militants prevented staff from reaching it. The Health Ministry disputed that, saying Israel refused its request that the Red Crescent bring them the fuel rather than staff venturing out for it. The fuel would have provided less than an hour of electricity, it said.

The U.S. has pushed for temporary pauses to allow wider distribution of badly needed aid. Israel has agreed only to daily windows during which civilians can flee northern Gaza on foot along two main roads. U.N. monitors said that about 200,000 people moved south along the two routes since Nov. 5. Israel has described the corridors to the south as safe, but at the same time continues to strike what it says are militant targets across the territory, often killing women and children.

Israel's stated goal of separating civilians from Hamas militants has come at a heavy cost: More than two-thirds of Gaza's 2.3 million people have fled their homes.

Those who make it south face a host of other difficulties. U.N.-run shelters are overflowing, and the lack of fuel has paralyzed water treatment systems, leaving taps dry and sending sewage into the streets. Israel has barred the import of fuel for generators.

As of last Friday, more than 11,000 Palestinians, two-thirds of them women and minors, have been killed since the war began, according to the Health Ministry in Gaza, which does not differentiate between civilian and militant deaths. About 2,700 people have been reported missing.

Health officials have not updated the toll, citing the difficulty of collecting information.

At least 1,200 people have died on the Israeli side, mostly civilians killed in the initial Hamas attack. Palestinian militants are holding nearly 240 hostages seized in the raid, including children, women, men and older adults. The military says 44 soldiers have been killed in ground operations in Gaza.

About 250,000 Israelis have evacuated from communities near Gaza, where Palestinian militants still fire barrages of rockets, and along the northern border, where Israel and Lebanon's Hezbollah militant group repeatedly trade fire, including on Monday.

Fire that indefinitely closed vital Los Angeles freeway was likely arson, governor says

By JOHN ANTCHAK, JULIE WATSON and JEFF McMURRAY Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Arson was the cause of a massive weekend fire that charred and indefinitely closed a vital section of a Los Angeles freeway, causing major traffic headaches for hundreds of thousands of commuters, California authorities said.

Gov. Gavin Newsom said investigators were trying to determine if one person or more were involved.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 143 ~ 42 of 89

He gave no other details.

"I have to stress that we have determined what started the fire," Newsom told reporters Monday.

The fire erupted Saturday in two storage lots under Interstate 10 where construction materials combusted quickly and the fire grew. It left many columns charred and chipped and the deck guardrails twisted. Crews shored up the most damaged section for the safety of workers clearing the debris. It's still unclear what structural damage, if any, the blaze caused to the freeway.

Beyond a massive traffic headache, the closure is expected to be felt well beyond the metropolis, including possibly slowing the transport of goods from the twin ports of LA and Long Beach, federal officials have said. The ports handle more than half the goods coming into the country. President Joe Biden had been briefed on the fire.

"It's disrupting in every way, whether you are talking about traveling to and from work or your child care plans and the flow of goods and commerce, this will disrupt the lives of Angelenos," LA Mayor Karen Bass said.

Los Angeles residents were urged to avoid travel to the area Monday and to work from home if possible.

"Our streets cannot handle 300,000 cars," Bass said, referring to how many vehicles use the I-10 stretch daily.

Officials have said the damage is reminiscent of the 1994 Northridge earthquake that flattened thoroughfares. After the quake, it took more than two months to repair I-10 — and that was considered significantly fast.

Newsom said early tests show that the deck "appears to be much stronger than originally assessed." Concrete and rebar samples taken Monday from the superstructure, decks and columns will help determine "whether or not we're tearing this down and replacing it, or we're continuing the recovery and repairs," he said.

"This isn't going to be resolved in a couple of days, and it's not going to take a couple years," Federal Highway Administrator Shailen Bhatt told The Associated Press. "But whether it's weeks or months, we're still too early to tell."

Bhatt said the fiery June 11 crash of a tractor-trailer hauling gasoline in Philadelphia that collapsed an elevated section of Interstate 95, snarling traffic and hurting area businesses, highlights the impact of such disasters not only on a city but on the nation.

"The ports are still open and the goods will still flow, but when you remove a section of the interstate that carries 300,000 vehicles a day, there's going to be spillover impacts," Bhatt said. "The concern there is the quicker we can get this open, the faster we can remove an impediment."

Drivers were tested Monday during the first weekday commute since the raging fire. Some freeway exits backed up as people were forced to use crowded surface streets to bypass the damaged freeway stretch south of downtown.

Some routes, however, had lighter traffic, suggesting drivers heeded warnings from the city to make alternate plans. Cellphones blasted Monday with a predawn reminder for residents to plan different routes or expect significant delays.

"Our businesses are just bouncing back from the Covid shutdowns. Business was just getting good," said Blair Besten, director of LA's Historic Core business improvement district. She's worried about the lingering effects of this closure.

Flames reported around 12:20 a.m. Saturday ripped through two storage lots in an industrial area beneath I-10, burning parked cars, stacks of wooden pallets and support poles for high-tension power lines, city fire Chief Kristin Crowley said. No injuries were reported.

At least 16 homeless people — including a pregnant woman — living underneath the freeway were brought to shelters. More than 160 firefighters responded to the blaze, which spread across 8 acres (3 hectares) and burned for three hours.

California Fire Marshal Daniel Berlant said investigators have identified where the fire started and what the cause was after sorting through the rubble for evidence but did not specify what they found. He said there is no suspect information yet. He said they are talking to witnesses, including homeless people and

nearby business owners.

Storage yards under highways are common statewide, with the money from the leases going to public transit. Newsom said the practice would be reevaluated following the fire.

The governor said California has been in litigation with Apex Development, Inc., the owner of the business leasing the storage property where the fire started. The lease is expired, Newsom said, and the business had been in arrears while illegally subleasing the space to five or six other entities.

"They've been out of compliance for some time, that's why we're going to court" early next year, Newsom said.

Mainak D'Attaray, an attorney for Apex Development, confirmed the lawsuit in an email to The Associated Press.

"We are currently investigating ourselves what happened at the yard under the freeway. As such, we are not prepared to give an official statement or answer questions until we have determined what actually occurred," D'Attaray said.

Ertugrul Taciroglu, chair of the civil and environmental engineering department at the University of California, Los Angeles, said part of the challenge is how expensive real estate has become.

"Every piece of land is being utilized, so I can see the pressure or the incentives for making use of these spaces under these highways," he said.

Two contractors have been hired to clean up the hazardous material and to shore up the freeway, according to California Secretary of Transportation Toks Omishakin.

Repairs will require environmental waivers and federal funding, officials said.

In 2011, a fire from a poorly maintained fuel tanker that burst into flames damaged a stretch of State Route 60 — a key freeway connecting LA with its eastern suburbs — and took six months to reopen at a cost of \$40 million.

The city and county of Los Angeles in 2020 agreed to provide housing for almost 7,000 people living under freeways and near exit and entrance ramps. In approving the deal, a federal judge said unhoused residents in those areas face particularly deadly hazards.

Defense to call witnesses in trial of man accused of attacking Nancy Pelosi's husband with hammer

By OLGA R. RODRIGUEZ Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Defense attorneys for David DePape, the man on trial for the attack of former U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's husband in the couple's San Francisco home, will call witnesses Tuesday as they argue DePape is not guilty of the crimes he's been charged with.

The trial's third day will start with a final witness from the prosecution, and defense attorneys say they hope to wrap up their case by day's end. The case would then go to jurors.

Prosecutors say DePape bludgeoned Paul Pelosi in the early hours of Oct. 28, 2022, just days before the midterm elections, and that he had rope and zip ties with him. DePape has pleaded not guilty to attempted kidnapping of a federal official and assault on the immediate family member of a federal official with intent to retaliate against the official for performance of their duties.

Defense attorney Jodi Linker told jurors last week that she won't dispute that DePape attacked Pelosi. Instead, she will argue that DePape believed that he was taking action to stop government corruption, the erosion of freedom in the United States, and the abuse of children by politicians and actors. She said that means the charges that DePape was trying to interfere with Nancy Pelosi's official duties don't fit.

Paul Pelosi took the stand Monday and recounted publicly for the first time what happened the night of the attack.

"It was a tremendous sense of shock to recognize that somebody had broken into the house and looking at him and looking at the hammer and the ties, I recognized that I was in serious danger, so I tried to stay as calm as possible," he testified.

The Pelosis' home has an alarm system with motion detectors, but Pelosi said he never put it on when

he was home alone because his movements would trigger it.

He recalled being awakened by a man bursting into the bedroom door asking, "Where's Nancy?" He said that when he responded that his wife was in Washington, DePape said he would tie him up while they waited for her.

He later testified that he was able to call police from his cellphone and that DePape hit him with a hammer when police arrived.

Earlier, prosecutors played police body camera footage showing Pelosi facedown on the floor as paramedics help him. One holds a white towel against Pelosi's head as another puts a neck and head brace on him before several first responders help him onto a stretcher chair. Pelosi's face and hands are covered in blood. He later underwent surgery to repair a skull fracture and injuries to his right arm and hands.

FBI Special Agent Stephanie Minor, who was in charge of the investigation, testified that video showed DePape hit Paul Pelosi at least three times.

DePape showed little emotion during most of the testimony, only smiling and releasing a muted chuckle when, at his attorney's request, Minor read a list of topics that appeared on his blog. They included Communism, corruption, COVID-19, Jewish people, "Gamergate," guns, immigrants, memes and wamon, a word used to describe a woman who does nothing but complain.

If convicted, DePape faces life in prison. He has pleaded not guilty to charges in state court of attempted murder, assault with a deadly weapon, elder abuse, residential burglary and other felonies. A state trial has not been scheduled.

After his arrest, DePape, 43, allegedly told a San Francisco detective that he wanted to hold Nancy Pelosi hostage. He said if she told him the truth, he would let her go and if she lied, he was going to "break her kneecaps" to show other members of Congress there were "consequences to actions," according to prosecutors.

Defense attorneys have listed four possible witnesses: Daniel Bernal, Nancy Pelosi's San Francisco chief of staff; extremism and antisemitism researcher Elizabeth Yates; federal public defender Catherine Goulet; and one unidentified witness.

A missing sailor's last message from Hurricane Otis was to ask his family to pray for him

By MARÍA VERZA Associated Press

ACAPULCO, Mexico (AP) — During the first minutes of Oct. 25 when Hurricane Otis roared into Acapulco Bay with 165 mph winds, sailor Ruben Torres recorded a 10-second audio message from a yacht called the Sereno.

"All things considered I'm alright, but it's really horrible, it's really horrible, it's really horrible," he said over the howling wind and the boat's beeping alarms. "Family, I don't want to exaggerate, but pray for us because it's really awful out here."

The Sereno was one of 614 boats — yachts, ferries, fishing boats — that according to Mexico's Navy were in the bay that night and ended up damaged or on the ocean floor. Of those aboard the Sereno, one person survived, while Torres and the boat's captain remain missing.

Otis killed at least 48 people officially, most drowned, and some 26 are missing. Sailors, fishermen and their families believe there are many more.

Sailors in the region typically board their boats during a storm rather than stay on land where they'd be safe, so that they can bring the boats to sheltered parts of Acapulco Bay instead of leaving them where a storm could slam them against docks and do damage.

But Otis was no normal storm. When sailors went to sea that day no one expected that the tropical storm would strengthen to a Category 5 hurricane in 12 hours and make a direct hit on Acapulco, leaving no part of the bay safe.

Susana Ramos, the wife of Ruben Torres, heard her husband's message only days later.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 143 ~ 45 of 89

Torres' family knew his routine when a hurricane approached: He went aboard to help care for the boat and the crew sailed it near the naval base in an area more protected by mountains that ring the bay. Ramos prepared dry clothing for his return.

Around 7 p.m. Oct. 24, Torres spoke to his oldest son, now 14. Ramos overheard him describe how it looked then with whole hillsides in Acapulco going dark as the power started to fail. But Torres said he had his lifejacket at the ready and the engines going in case.

Hours later, the family's home began to flood. Buckets of water were entering. "The walls were like they were crying," Ramos said. But the really scary part was "the penetrating hissing of the air" like the screeching of a tire over their heads and the creaking of the house.

She remembered that her husband always said don't fear the water, fear the wind.

When Torres recorded that last message asking his family to pray for him, a dozen members were huddled inside the concrete house.

Otis' damage on land was evident at first light. The city awoke isolated, without power, phone signal or water. Tens of thousands of homes were destroyed, entire neighborhoods flooded, luxury hotels were hollowed out without walls or windows. Trees, power poles and debris were everywhere.

Details of the situation at sea have trickled in more slowly.

Alejandro Martínez Sidney, a business leader and member of a fishing cooperative, has been hearing the accounts of surviving sailors. He said they were caught by surprise at the storm's sudden strength. An alert went out about 10 p.m. on the night before Otis made landfall, telling sailors to beach their boats.

"It was too late," Martínez Sidney said.

Many, like Torres, had already sailed to what were believed to be more protected parts of the bay. Others, who didn't want to damage their boats by beaching them, followed suit but ended up trapped in a whirlpool in the middle of bay, he said survivors told him.

It was like a "mega tornado" that devoured them, Martínez Sidney said.

Ramos was worried. The next day she crossed 8 miles of devastated cityscape – walking through mud, riding a motorcycle, and hitching rides on trucks -- to reach the Sereno's dock.

Seeing boats aground on Acapulco's waterfront boulevard shook her. Looking out to the bay, the boats looked like old, wrecked toys, she said.

Shouting her husband's name, she pushed through other families looking for their loved ones. She was taken to see six bodies that had been recovered. None was from the Sereno.

Then she started to check hospitals, lists of dead and missing that began to circulate. She went to the naval base, the morgue. There she had just enough battery on her phone to show them a photo of Torres.

She said that when she heard an official say that if they confirmed anything they would call her, she understood that she would have to be the one to look for him.

Several days later, when power and a phone signal began to return sporadically in some areas, she finally got her husband's message. It made her feel powerless.

"It's so heartbreaking for me to have that last message," she said.

Sailors and fishermen immediately started searching in whatever craft remained seaworthy. Sometimes they had to siphon gasoline from parked cars for their motors.

Some yacht owners, like that of the Sereno, rented boats and small planes to search while also getting necessities to crew members' families who had lost everything.

Ramos and her brother-in-law crisscrossed Acapulco on a motorcycle, chasing rumors of survivors. A crew member from the Sereno was found alive on an island in the bay.

The sailor told Ramos through tears how they had all jumped into the water with their lifejackets on, but that he had managed to cling to a floating marine fender, a bumper-like device from the boat that saved him.

Families have protested that authorities should lead the search because they have better equipment.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 143 ~ 46 of 89

Enrique Andrade, a teacher searching for his younger sister Abigail who was aboard a ship called the Litos, said he has accompanied the Navy, divers and agents from the state prosecutor's office on searches. Of the Litos, they've only found "a little door," he said.

Andrade said authorities did not do enough to warn crew members. "The Navy knew what was coming, the sea terminals knew too and they still didn't share the information" soon enough, Andrade said.

The Navy has recovered 67 small boats, but there are more than 500 more longer than 40 feet, according to Alejandro Alexandres González, a captain who spoke to reporters during one search effort.

Ramos' life now consists of a daily visit to the morgue, where samples of her children's DNA have been taken, and perching her cell phone at a window of her home where there sometimes is a signal, in case of news about her husband's whereabouts.

Sleeping in her mother's embrace and thinking of her children has given her strength.

The small grocery she had rented to help her husband pay off their debts and live in a neighborhood with less violence was one of the thousands of businesses cleared out by desperate residents after Otis. She tries to convince herself she will be able to start over.

Showing photos of the 10th birthday of their youngest daughter they had celebrated a week earlier, Ramos said the girl had kept her eyes on the door hoping her father would return.

Ramos hopes that on Nov. 17, when her husband would turn 33, they will have news.

"It would be really great if they told me, at least, there he is; a miracle if they would tell me, he's hospitalized there, come ... and I would carry him back."

Biden administration slow to act as millions are booted off Medicaid, advocates say

By AMANDA SEITZ and KENYA HUNTER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Up to 30 million of the poorest Americans could be purged from the Medicaid program, many the result of error-ridden state reviews that poverty experts say the Biden administration is not doing enough to stop.

The projections from the health consulting firm Avalere come as states undertake a sweeping re-evaluation of the 94 million people enrolled in Medicaid, government's health insurance for the neediest Americans. A host of problems have surfaced across the country, including hours-long phone wait times in Florida, confusing government forms in Arkansas, and children wrongly dropped from coverage in Texas.

"Those people were destined to fail," said Trevor Hawkins, an attorney for Legal Aid of Arkansas.

Hawkins helped hundreds of people navigate their Medicaid eligibility in Arkansas, as state officials worked to "swiftly disenroll" about 420,000 people in six months' time. He raised problems with Arkansas' process — like forms that wrongly told people they needed to reapply for Medicaid, instead of simply renew it — with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

Nothing changed, he said.

"They ask questions but they don't tell us what is going on," Hawkins said of CMS. "Those should be major red flags. If there was a situation where CMS was to step in, it would have been Arkansas."

Nearly a dozen advocates around the country detailed widespread problems they've encountered while helping some of the estimated 10 million people who've already been dropped from Medicaid. Some fear systemic problems are being ignored.

Congress ended a COVID-19 policy last year that barred states from kicking anyone off Medicaid during the pandemic, requiring them to undertake a review of every enrollee's eligibility over the next year. But the Democratic-led Congress also gave Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra the power to fine states or halt disenrollments if people were improperly being removed.

HHS has shared little about problems it has uncovered.

Earlier this year, the agency briefly paused disenrollments in 14 states, but did not disclose which states were paused or for what reasons.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 143 ~ 47 of 89

In August, HHS announced thousands of children had been wrongly removed in 29 states that were automatically removing entire households, instead of individuals, from coverage. CMS required the states to reinstate coverage for those who had been terminated under that process, said Daniel Tsai, the director of the CMS Center for Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program Services.

"We are using every lever that we have to hold states accountable," Tsai said.

Florida tried twice to remove Lily Mezquita, a 31-year-old working mom in Miami, Florida, from Medicaid during her pregnancy this year. She pleaded her case in 17 phone calls — some with wait times stretching as long as two hours — before she was finally reinstated in August from her hospital bed while in preterm labor. Mezquita would explain the state's law, which says she's guaranteed coverage through her pregnancy and 12 months after giving birth.

"No matter how much I tried to explain, no one was willing to listen," she said. "They're making errors, and they're very confident in their errors."

Because her coverage didn't immediately register in the state's system, Mezquita paid out-of-pocket for pills doctors prescribed to prevent pre-term labor from arising again, and she missed follow-up appointments to check on her baby girl.

If trends continue, as many as 30 million people could end up being dropped from Medicaid once states finish reviewing their Medicaid rolls, according to Avalere's projections. The numbers dwarf the Biden administration's initial projections that only 15 million people would lose coverage throughout the process.

"We have to say it's going poorly," Massey Whorley, a principal at Avalere, said of the Medicaid redeterminations. "This has been characterized by much higher-than-expected disenrollment."

Most have been removed for procedural reasons, like failing to send back their renewal form or mail in proper paperwork. That points to bigger problems with how the states are determining Medicaid eligibility: their notices aren't reaching people, don't make sense or they're requiring unnecessary paperwork. Many of the people removed for those reasons may still qualify for Medicaid.

In Arkansas, which has finished its Medicaid redeterminations, public records shared with the AP show more than 70% of people were kicked off Medicaid because the state couldn't reach them, they didn't return their renewal form or provide requested paperwork.

"I can't say how many calls I've gotten from people who just got out of the emergency room and found out they don't have coverage," Hawkins said.

The state's Department of Human Services says it tried to reach people with additional calls, emails and texts. It believes the high number of procedural disenrollments were the result of people who no longer qualified for Medicaid not mailing back their renewal forms, spokesman Gavin Lesnick told AP in an email. Lesnick said CMS has never asked Arkansas to pause disenrollments.

Long phone wait times and notices that don't include reasons why people are being kicked off Medicaid have plagued the process in Florida, said Lynn Hearn, an attorney at the Florida Health Justice Project. Hearn helped Mezquita appeal her case to the state. Earlier this year, the nonprofit sued the state over its handling of the process.

"We've seen CMS reluctant to step in on the issues that we've raised," Hearn said. "We have seen errors in state processing that indicate more than anomalies — more like systemic issues."

The Florida Department of Children and Families has had an 87% response rate to its renewal forms and call wait times are under five minutes, spokeswoman Mallory McManus said in an email.

Medicaid enrollees in North Carolina, meanwhile, are also having trouble reaching their local office by phone or getting calls returned when they leave a message, said Cassidy Estes-Rogers, the director of family support and healthcare at the Charlotte Center for Legal Advocacy. State officials didn't immediately respond to questions about phone troubles.

Estes-Rogers said she meets regularly with local CMS officials about problems.

"They just don't come back to us with any information on how that was resolved, and we don't see any immediate effects from it," she said.

Similar problems have arisen in Texas, where website and app outages have meant families don't even

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 143 ~ 48 of 89

get the electronic notices stating their Medicaid coverage was up for renewal, said Graciela Camarena, the child health outreach program director for the Children's Defense Fund in Texas.

"They were visiting the doctor's office or the pediatricians' office — that's where they found out they were denied," Camarena said.

Camarena said CMS has met with her organization to go over some of the issues. Some Texas lawmakers have asked CMS to investigate issues in the state, where nearly 1 million have lost Medicaid.

CMS has not asked the state to stop the process, Texas Health and Human Services spokeswoman Jennifer Ruffcorn said in an email. The agency "is continuously working to improve" its app and website, she added.

Local groups have also been funneling up problems to national groups that CMS meets with weekly, Tsai said. In some cases, issues raised to the agency don't violate federal regulations.

"However," Tsai said, "You look at what's happening and you say, 'how is this a good, consumer friendly-process?'"

CMS has tried to play nice with states on Medicaid, hoping they can help improve the enrollment process for many years to come said Jennifer Wagner, the director of Medicaid eligibility and enrollment for the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. The organization has been working with local groups to notify CMS of problems.

"There is a question, in some states, if it's time to shift toward enforcement," she said.

At summit, Biden aims to show he can focus on Pacific amid crises in Ukraine, Mideast and Washington

By AAMER MADHANI and COLLEEN LONG Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — President Joe Biden is looking to use this week's summit of Asia-Pacific leaders to show world leaders the United States has the gumption, attention span and money to focus on the region even as it grapples with a multitude of foreign and domestic policy crises.

Biden's highly anticipated meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping on Wednesday is the main event of his four-day visit to San Francisco, where leaders from the 21 economies that make up the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum are gathering for their annual summit. The talks with Xi are of enormous importance as the leaders of the world's two biggest economies try to find a measure of stability after what's been a difficult year for U.S.-China relations.

But the White House also wants to demonstrate to APEC's leaders that Biden can remain focused on the Pacific while also trying to keep the Israel-Hamas war from exploding into a broader regional conflict and to persuade Republican lawmakers to continue to spend billions more on the costly Ukrainian effort to repel Russia's nearly 21-month old invasion.

"President Biden this coming week will be doing a lot more than just meeting with President Xi," White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan told reporters in Washington on Monday. He added that Biden would put forward his economic vision for the region, make the case that the U.S. is "the very eminent driver" for sustainable economic growth in the Asia-Pacific, and hold the region out as critical to U.S. economic growth.

White House officials say they are cognizant that fellow APEC nations want to see better dialogue between the U.S. and China because it reduces the risk of regional conflict. At the same time, they also know that others in the region are concerned that the Pacific is too often seen through a prism in which the dominant power centers in Washington and Beijing make decisions for the region without engagement from less powerful nations.

To that end, the White House is expected to unveil new initiatives to advance clean economy investments and develop anti-corruption and taxation policies through its Indo-Pacific Economic Forum, an economic strategy announced last year aimed at countering Beijing's commercial strength in the region.

The strategy, known by the acronym IPEF, was designed to foster trade and demonstrate American commitment to the region, after then-President Donald Trump announced in 2017 that the U.S. was with-

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 143 ~ 49 of 89

drawing from the Trans-Pacific Partnership, or TPP, an Obama-era trade deal with 12 countries.

"The U.S. is really aiming to use APEC as a way to demonstrate its lasting economic commitment to the region overall," said Neils Graham, associate director for the Atlantic Council GeoEconomics Center.

Much of the APEC's membership is "tepid, at best" on IPEF, said Joshua Kurlantzick, a senior fellow for Southeast Asia at the Council on Foreign Relations. While TPP fell apart under Trump, the region has seen major trade deals sealed in recent years involving China, Japan, South Korea and other major regional economies. APEC members have some interest in aspects of IPEF, such as efforts aimed at bolstering supply chain resilience and the clean energy economy, but want to see Biden create further access to U.S. markets.

Biden during his presidency has declined to pursue new comprehensive free-trade agreements with other countries. Administration officials quietly argue that while such pacts promote global commerce they are viewed suspiciously by Americans and some in Congress as a vehicle for sending factory jobs overseas.

Biden on Monday welcomed Indonesian President Joko Widodo, a fellow APEC leader, to the White House for talks before both travel to San Francisco. The Oval Office visit came at a somewhat awkward moment as Widodo, the leader of the world's most populous Muslim country, has been fiercely critical of Israel's operations in the Gaza Strip.

Biden, meanwhile, has been unapologetic in standing staunchly by Israel and backing its right to defend itself following the Oct. 7 attacks by Hamas militants that left 1,200 dead. Israel's retaliatory operations in Gaza have killed more than 11,000, sparking outrage from a slew of world leaders. The Indonesian president, in a speech at Georgetown University on Monday, lamented that "human life seems meaningless" as Israel prosecutes its operations.

Their differences on the Israel-Hamas war notwithstanding, Biden made clear during his sit-down with Widodo that he's looking to improve ties with the Southeast Asian power on combating the climate crisis and other issues.

The White House effort to herd APEC members to sign on to a summit-concluding joint declaration, a fixture at most international summits, could be complicated by diverging views among members on the Israel-Hamas and Ukraine wars.

"We're certainly working for having a strong consensus statement in APEC, for the leaders to be able to release at the end of the week," said Ambassador Matt Murray, the senior U.S. official for APEC.

Among close allies expected to be in San Francisco are Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol and Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos, Jr.

Historically frosty relations between South Korea and Japan have rapidly thawed over the last year as they share concerns about China's assertiveness in the Pacific and North Korea's persistent nuclear threats.

Biden is expected to remind Xi about the U.S. commitment to the Philippines, following a recent episode in which Chinese ships blocked and collided with two Philippine vessels off a contested shoal in the South China Sea, according to a senior administration who spoke on the condition of anonymity to preview some of Biden's agenda.

The Philippines and other neighbors of China are resisting Beijing's sweeping territorial claims over virtually the entire sea.

The potential for a government shutdown is also looming over the summit, with the current stopgap spending measure set to expire Friday. House Speaker Mike Johnson unveiled a proposal Saturday that would extend funding for some agencies and programs until Jan. 19. The stopgap measure excludes the roughly \$106 billion funding requested by Biden for Israel, Ukraine and the U.S. border with Mexico.

Sullivan warned that a government shutdown would be a "devastating blow" to U.S. standing around the globe.

"It would send a signal to the world that the United States cannot pull together on a bipartisan basis to sustain government funding, and to show a united face to the world at a moment when you see this turbulence around the world," Sullivan said.

Thousands in Mexico demand justice for LGBTQ+ figure found dead after death threats

By MEGAN JANETSKY Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Thousands marched in Mexico's capital Monday night demanding justice for Jesús Ociel Baena, an influential LGBTQ+ figure who was found dead at home in the central city of Aguascalientes after receiving death threats.

Baena was the first openly nonbinary person to assume a judicial post in Mexico, becoming a magistrate in the Aguascalientes state electoral court, and broke through other barriers in a country where LGBTQ+ people are often targeted with violence.

The state prosecutor's office confirmed that Baena was found dead Monday morning next to another person, who local media and LGBTQ+ rights groups identified as Baena's partner, Dorian Herrera.

State prosecutor Jesús Figueroa Ortega said at a news conference that the two displayed injuries apparently caused by a knife or some other sharp object.

"There are no signs or indications to be able to determine that a third person other than the dead was at the site of the crime," Figuerora Ortega said.

The suggestion that suicide was one possibility in the deaths quickly sparked outrage, with LGBTQ+ groups calling it another attempt by authorities to simply brush aside violence against their communities. People who knew Baena said the magistrate in recent weeks was chipper and talked passionately about the future.

Federal Security Secretary Rosa Icela Rodríguez said at a briefing that authorities were investigating the deaths and it remained unclear if "it was a homicide or an accident." Some homicides in Mexico have a history of being quickly minimized by authorities as crimes of passion.

Alejandro Brito, director of the LGBTQ+ rights group Letra S, said Baena's visibility on social media made the magistrate a target and urged authorities to take that into consideration in their investigation.

"They were a person who received many hate messages, and even threats of violence and death, and you can't ignore that in these investigations," Brito said. "They, the magistrate, was breaking through the invisible barriers that closed in the nonbinary community."

Brito was echoed by thousands who gathered in the heart of Mexico City lighting candles over photos of Baena and other victims of anti-LGBTQ+ violence. They shouted "Justice" and "We won't stay silent" and demanded a thorough investigation into the deaths.

Among them was Nish López, who came out as nonbinary in March, partly in response to Baena's inspiration.

"I loved them because they made people uncomfortable, but they knew what they were doing," López said. "Through institutions they showed that you can inspire change regardless of your gender identity."

In becoming a magistrate in October 2022, Baena was thought to be the first nonbinary person in Latin America to assume a judicial position. Baena broke through another barrier this May as one of a group of people to be issued Mexico's first passports listing the holders as nonbinary.

Baena appeared in regularly published photos and videos wearing skirts and heels and toting a rainbow fan in court offices and advocated on social media platforms, drawing hundreds of thousands of followers.

"I am a nonbinary person. I am not interested in being seen as either a woman or a man. This is an identity. It is mine, for me, and nobody else. Accept it," Baena posted on X, formerly Twitter, in June.

Last month, the electoral court presented Baena with a certificate recognizing the magistrate with the gender neutral noun "maestre," a significant step in Spanish, a language that splits most of its words between two genders, masculine or feminine.

While Mexico has made significant steps in reducing anti-LGBTQ+ violence, Brito's Letra S documented at least 117 lesbian, gay and bisexual and transgender people slain. Many were grisly killings, including brutal stabbings and public slayings.

The National Observatory of Hate Crimes Against LGBTI+ Persons in Mexico registered 305 violent hate crimes against sexual minorities in 2019-2022, including murder, disappearances and more.

Brito said he worried that Baena's death could provoke further violence against LGBTQ+ people. "If this was a crime motivated by prejudice, these kinds of crimes always have the intention of sending a message," Brito said. "The message is an intimidation, it's to say: 'This is what could happen to you if you make your identities public.'"

But for López, the nonbinary Mexican who walked with throngs of people in heels and many others in the crowd Monday night, the overwhelming feeling wasn't fear. They wanted to carry on Baena's legacy. "I'm not scared, I'm angry," López said. "I'm here to make myself visible."

The last government shutdown deadline ousted the House speaker. This week's showdown could be easier

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — The last time Congress tried to fund the government to prevent a federal shutdown, it cost House Speaker Kevin McCarthy his job.

This time, new Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., appears on track for a better outcome Tuesday as the House prepares to vote on a stopgap package to keep the government running into the new year. If approved, the Senate would act next, ahead of Friday's shutdown deadline.

The new Republican leader faces the same political problem that led to McCarthy's ouster, and is unlikely to win enough support from his Republican majority to pass the bill on its own. Instead, Johnson will be forced to rely on Democrats to ensure passage to keep the federal government running.

Johnson has called it a "necessary bill" that he hoped would put House Republicans "in the best position to fight" for their conservative priorities in the new year.

Under his proposal, Johnson is putting forward a unique — critics say bizarre — two-part process that temporarily funds some federal agencies to Jan. 19 and others to Feb. 2. It's a continuing resolution, or CR, that comes without any of the deep cuts conservatives are demanding. It also fails to include President Joe Biden's request for nearly \$106 billion for Ukraine, Israel, border security and other supplemental funds.

"I think it's a very big mistake," said Rep. Chip Roy, R-Texas, a member of the hard-right Freedom Caucus. Roy said there's "a whole lot of opposition" among House Republicans to partnering with Democrats to pass the bill.

The Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries said his party is "carefully evaluating" the proposal from the Republican leadership before giving approval.

"We remain concerned," he said about the two-part approach. Veteran lawmakers on both sides of the aisle have called it cumbersome, unusual and unworkable.

But Jeffries in a letter to Democratic colleagues noted that the GOP package met the Democratic demands to keep funding at current levels without steep reductions or divisive Republican policy priorities.

"We have articulated that we will not accept any extreme right-wing policy provisions in connection with funding the government," Jeffries wrote.

With the House narrowly divided, Johnson cannot afford many defections from Republicans, which is forcing him into the arms of Democrats.

Winning bipartisan approval of a continuing resolution is the same move that led McCarthy's hard-right flank to oust him in October, days after the Sept. 30 vote to avert a federal shutdown. For now, Johnson appears to be benefiting from a political honeymoon in one of his first big tests on the job.

"Look, we're going to trust the speaker's move here," said Rep. Drew Ferguson, R-Ga.

The Senate, where Democrats have a slim majority, has also signaled its willingness to accept Johnson's package ahead of Friday's deadline to fund the government.

Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell said the House GOP package "will keep the lights on," and he will support it.

But McConnell, R-Ky., noted that Congress still has work to do toward Biden's request to provide U.S. military aid for Ukraine, Israel and other needs. Senators are trying to devise a separate package to fund U.S. supplies for the overseas wars and bolster border security, but it remains a work in progress.

If approved, passage of another continuing resolution would be a stunning capstone to the House GOP's first year in the majority. The Republicans have worked tirelessly to cut federal government spending only to find their own GOP colleagues are unwilling to go along with the most conservative priorities. Two of the Republican bills collapsed last week as moderates revolted.

Instead, the Republicans are left funding the government essentially on autopilot at the levels that were set in bipartisan fashion at the end of 2022, when Democrats had control of Congress but two parties came together to agree on budget terms.

All that could change in the new year when 1% cuts across the board to all departments would be triggered if Congress fails to agree to new budget terms and pass the traditional appropriation bills to fund the government by springtime.

The 1% automatic cuts, which would take hold in April, are despised by all sides — Republicans say they are not enough, Democrats say they are too steep and many lawmakers prefer to boost defense funds. But they are part of the debt deal McCarthy and Biden struck earlier this year. The idea was to push Congress to do better.

1 in 3 US Asians and Pacific Islanders faced racial abuse this year, AP-NORC/AAPI Data poll shows

By TERRY TANG and LINLEY SANDERS Associated Press

Despite ongoing advocacy and legislation to combat anti-Asian racism that arose after the pandemic, about a third of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders say they have experienced an act of abuse based on their race or ethnicity in the last year, including being on the receiving end of verbal harassment, slurs, physical threats or cyberbullying.

A new poll from AAPI Data and The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research finds 15% of Asian American and Pacific Islanders specifically say they believe they have ever been the victim of a hate crime. About half — 51% — believe racism is an “extremely” or “very serious” problem in the U.S.

From as early as a decade ago to as recently as two weeks ago, Jennifer Lee, a 29-year-old Filipino American in San Diego, can recall being called racial slurs and being discriminated against. She recently interviewed for a job at a tutoring service.

The interviewer assumed Lee was Japanese and said: “You people are always so obedient. Why? That’s so pathetic,” she shared.

About 2 in 10 Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (23%) say they have experienced being verbally harassed or abused in the last year, and 22% have been called a racial or ethnic slur. About 1 in 10 say they have been physically assaulted or threatened physically. About a third of Asian American and Pacific Islanders say they often or sometimes face discrimination because of their race or ethnicity when applying for jobs.

Last month, the FBI reported an overall 7% increase in hate crimes, even as the agency’s data showed anti-Asian incidents in 2022 were down 33% from 2021. That seeming contradiction doesn’t surprise Stephanie Chan, director of data and research at Stop AAPI Hate, an advocacy group.

“We know that Asian Americans are among the most likely to not report the crime that they’ve experienced,” Chan said. “It’s really sobering to see that even when the world seems to have returned to normal, after the pandemic, these levels are still really elevated in terms of anti-Asian American hate.”

The poll also shows President Joe Biden gets mediocre ratings from Asian Americans, who viewed him favorably at 52%. That’s still higher than U.S. adults overall who viewed the president favorably at 44% in a June AP-NORC poll. Vice President Kamala Harris, who is of Asian American and African American descent, is also seen favorably by about half (47%) of Asian Americans.

Lee, a Democrat, believes the president should be a role model and not turn a blind eye to racism. But she has reservations about Biden, who is just shy of his 81st birthday, filling that role.

“It seems like he’s more performative and he’s trying to say whatever the people want to hear. Also, I understand he’s of an older age, not that all people of that age are Joe Biden. But mentally, I think he’s

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 143 ~ 53 of 89

not all there," Lee said.

"Asian Americans are really no different than the national mood, which is Biden favorability is low," said Natalie Masuoka, professor of political science and Asian American Studies at UCLA. "The relatively lower favorability for Biden actually could impact turnout at lower-level offices."

The lukewarm feelings about Biden should be a warning for the Democratic Party not to take AAPI voters, who tend to be mostly Democrats, for granted, Masuoka added.

Still, former President Donald Trump, who is seeking a rematch with Biden, fares even worse than the current commander-in-chief, with 7 in 10 saying they have an unfavorable opinion of Trump. No current Republican candidate asked about in the poll is viewed favorably by more than 1 in 4, while two candidates of Indian descent — Vivek Ramaswamy and Nikki Haley — each remain largely unknown by at least 4 in 10 Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

Thomas Lee, of Long Island, New York, fears the possibility of Trump getting reelected could lead to an increase in discrimination and hate crimes.

"His followers are typically more of the like ... very far radical rights. They don't mesh well with minorities," Thomas Lee said. "Of course, it's got to be dependent on him becoming president, but that is kind of like the direction where I feel like it's very likely that something's going to happen."

The 42-year-old Taiwanese American switched from Republican to Democrat before the 2020 presidential election, partly due to the anti-Asian sentiment he attributed to Trump. In the first year of the pandemic, Thomas Lee felt like he needed protection every time he and his family went out. He also has unease about Biden's age, but would rather have him than Trump back in the White House.

But Tia Davis, a 26-year-old Pacific Islander and Black California resident, downplayed the idea that people like her face significant racism and praised Trump. As a person of Samoan descent, she said the worst other Samoans have to endure is "healthy teasing."

Beyond that, Davis, who switched from Democrat to Republican after Trump was elected, said she wants a president who is a smart businessman. How they deal with racism and hate crimes is not a crucial factor.

"I'm more concerned about feeding my family," she said.

The survey shows how AAPI communities' perceptions of levels of discrimination runs along political party lines. Democrats are more likely than Republicans to say that Asian Americans and other people of color face "a great deal" or "quite a bit" of discrimination and that white Americans do not. Overall, the poll shows about half of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders identify as Democrats and about a quarter lean Republican.

Many Asian American and Pacific Islanders are not optimistic about anti-Asian racism easing in the future. About half believe they are at least somewhat likely to be a victim of discrimination because of their race or ethnicity within the next five years, and 40% believe it's at least somewhat likely they will be the target of a hate crime based on race or ethnicity within the same period. Of those who have been hate crime victims, 20% believe it's "very" or "extremely likely" to happen again sometime in the next five years.

Still, Chan, of Stop AAPI Hate, hopes this poll lessens people's ignorance surrounding anti-Asian discrimination. She hopes people will understand it's more than just hate crimes, which tend to get the most media coverage.

"People's daily lives are impacted by things like verbal harassment or bullying in schools or online acts of hate or civil rights violations," Chan said. "Like not even being allowed to dine at a restaurant or stay at a hotel or being rejected for an Uber ride. I would say pay attention to these. These are the experiences that we're having in America today."

Inflation likely eased last month thanks to cheaper gas but underlying price pressures may stay high

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Inflation in the United States likely remained high last month, a trend that if sustained could raise concerns at the Federal Reserve, which is considering whether to raise interest rates

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 143 ~ 54 of 89

again. Still, cheaper gas might have slowed a broad measure of overall inflation in October.

Excluding volatile food and energy prices, core inflation is forecast to have risen 0.3% from September to October for a third straight month, according to economists surveyed by FactSet. Monthly increases at that pace would be too high to meet the Fed's 2% annual inflation target. Economists pay particular attention to core prices, which are believed to provide a good signal of inflation's likely future path.

Tuesday's report from the Labor Department is expected to show that overall consumer prices ticked up just 0.1% from September to October, much lower than the 0.4% and 0.6% increases in August and September. A 2% monthly drop in energy prices was likely the main reason for the smaller rise.

The figures arrive as Fed officials, led by Chair Jerome Powell, are assessing whether inflation is still slowing from its peaks of last year or whether progress has stalled and another rate hike might be necessary. To fight high inflation, the Fed has raised its benchmark rate 11 times in the past year and a half, to about 5.4%, the highest level in 22 years.

The central bank's rate hikes have increased the costs of mortgages, auto loans, credit cards and many forms of business borrowing, part of a concerted drive to slow growth and cool inflation pressures. The Fed is trying to achieve a "soft landing" — raising borrowing costs just enough to curb inflation without tipping the economy into a deep recession.

The rate increases have had some impact: Year-over-year inflation has dropped from a peak of 9.1% in June 2022, the highest level in four decades, to 3.7% in September. That figure is forecast to have fallen further in October to 3.3%.

Yet strong consumer spending and solid job growth have suggested that the economy might not be cooling enough to drive inflation down, particularly in services fields like medical care, housing and travel. Prices are often "stickier" in those industries because they mainly reflect labor costs, which are not directly affected by interest rates.

Last week, Powell warned that if inflation didn't cool fast enough, the Fed "will not hesitate" to raise rates further. Still, the central bank's policymakers have left their key short-term rate unchanged since July, and most economists say they think the Fed is done hiking.

Prices first accelerated in 2021 as consumers stepped up spending amid a fading pandemic. Much greater demand ran headlong into snarled supply chains, which led retailers and other companies to quickly jack up prices. Inflation has since eased as supply chains have improved and higher borrowing rates have weakened some industries, notably housing.

But in his remarks last week, Powell said that further reductions in inflation might require a cooldown in spending in addition to further improvements in supply networks — a distinction that potentially points to further hikes.

Chronic core inflation for an extended period could eventually force the Fed to raise its rate benchmark again. Core prices are expected to have risen 4.1% in October from a year ago for a second straight month, according to FactSet. Some analysts think it might have accelerated to 4.2%, which would be the first such pickup since March.

"If core is sticky... then there's little doubt that the Fed will look to (raise rates) again," Jim Reid, a research strategist at Deutsche Bank, wrote in a note to clients. "So we're at an important juncture."

Economists are expected to keep a close eye on several metrics in Tuesday's report, including the cost of rent and housing, health insurance and services such as dining out, entertainment and travel.

Starting with Tuesday's price report, the government will alter how it calculates health insurance costs, and the changes are expected to result in higher overall inflation rates in the coming months. Health insurance costs have fallen 3.5% each month for the past year, according to the government's measure. But under its updated methods, they're expected to flip to increases of about 0.5% a month through next spring. The change partly reflects the upheaval in the health care industry after the pandemic, which is affecting the health insurance figures with a lag.

Housing costs, including rents and the cost of owning a home, jumped 0.6% from August to September, a much faster than expected increase. Analysts expect a smaller gain from September to October, because

real-time measures of apartment rents from data providers have shown that the cost of new leases has been rising much more slowly for this year.

Grocery prices are expected to have risen about 0.2% last month. After soaring by double-digits in 2022 compared with a year earlier, grocery costs are now rising at a modest 2.4% annual rate.

Still, many economists say a key reason why most Americans hold a gloomy view of the economy despite very low unemployment and steady hiring is that the costs of things they buy regularly — milk, meat, bread and other groceries — remain so much higher than they were three years ago. Many of these items are still growing more expensive, though more gradually.

“It’s the overall price level that I think is affecting people,” Tom Barkin, president of the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond, said in an interview with the financial news agency MNI. “People are going to the grocery store with very clear memories of how much a 12-pack of Diet Coke cost three years ago and comparing it to how much a 12-pack of Diet Coke costs today. And that change ... is still weighing on sentiment.”

Defense digs into Manuel Ellis’ drug use at trial of Washington officers accused in man’s death

By ED KOMENDA Associated Press

TACOMA, Wash. (AP) — A lawyer for one of three Washington state police officers charged in the death of Manuel Ellis — a 33-year-old Black man who was punched, shocked with a Taser and then put in a chokehold and held face-down as he pleaded for breath — urged jurors Monday to focus on Ellis’ drug use and prior arrests.

The opening statement from Casey Arbenz, an attorney representing Tacoma officer Matthew Collins, came seven weeks into the trial, after prosecutors rested their case last Thursday. Collins and Officer Christopher Burbank face second-degree murder and manslaughter charges, while Officer Timothy Rankine is charged with manslaughter in Ellis’ death in Tacoma on March 3, 2020.

Three witnesses have testified that they saw Collins and Burbank attack Ellis as he walked past their vehicle, and two of them recorded cellphone video of the struggle. But Arbenz highlighted two previous arrests — in 2015 and 2019 — when Ellis was under the influence of methamphetamine, suggesting it made him aggressive.

“We know how drugs affect Mr. Ellis based on those two incidents,” Arbenz said.

Ellis died hogtied and handcuffed, nearly three months before George Floyd’s death at the hands of police would spark an international outcry against police brutality. It became a touchstone for racial justice demonstrators in the Pacific Northwest that summer.

The trial is the first under a 5-year-old Washington state law designed to make it easier to prosecute police who wrongfully use deadly force.

Ellis repeatedly told officers he could not breathe while they applied pressure as he lay prone on the pavement. The Pierce County medical examiner ruled his death a homicide caused by oxygen deprivation from physical restraint. Lawyers for the officers blame the death on methamphetamine in Ellis’ system, combined with a heart irregularity.

Prosecutors with the Washington attorney general’s office have opposed the efforts of defense attorneys to include testimony about Ellis’ past arrests, arguing that those cases are not relevant and that Ellis isn’t the one on trial.

Arbenz also sought to highlight Collins’ military background and asked jurors to take into account “his 13 years of service to our city and our country ... the way he’s fought for you.” Pierce County Superior Court Judge Bryan Chushcoff admonished the attorney, calling the comment inappropriate.

Rankine’s attorney, Mark Conrad, called to the stand a former restaurant shift manager who was present on Sept. 21, 2019, when Ellis was arrested for investigation of attempted robbery at a Tacoma fast food restaurant.

Before closing, co-workers informed the shift manager that a shirtless man with camouflage pants and a belt wrapped around his hand entered the store and attempted to take money out of the drawer.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 143 ~ 56 of 89

Pierce County Sheriff's Deputy Arron Wolfe, who helped arrest Ellis in 2019, testified that he found Ellis naked and running in and out of the street.

After ordering Ellis to the ground, Wolfe said, he stood with his firearm at the ready. After being compliant for a short time, Ellis then "hopped up and ran at me." Wolfe ordered Ellis to the ground again and he complied, but Wolfe said Ellis charged one more time and a Taser was used to subdue him.

Wolfe offered the following description of Ellis' demeanor that night: "Very wide eyes. Overheating. Breathing heavily. Grunts. Excitable utterances. Sweating profusely. Not listening to commands."

The defense presented the jury with a bystander video of the 2019 arrest that showed Ellis charging deputies before they deployed the Taser.

Pierce County Sheriff's Deputy Gabriel Bol, who used the Taser that night, said Ellis recovered "very quick" and "basically bounced off the ground," forcing the deputy to use the Taser again.

Boll said Ellis told him he had used "meth and weed."

After his 2019 arrest, Ellis woke up in a hospital, where a medical technician, Cody Pollock, treated his wounds. Pollock testified that Ellis "sat up, postured at me and made a fist at me." Ellis's actions, he said, were "a step up from the normal aggressiveness" he encountered on the job.

Ellis' demeanor in the hospital was "anxious and fearful" but not aggressive, according to nurse's notes introduced into evidence. A doctor at the hospital recommended follow-up care in a discharge note in which he urged Ellis — in all caps — to stop using meth.

The trial is expected to last another month.

Arson likely caused fire that damaged vital artery of Los Angeles freeway, governor says

By JOHN ANTCHAK, JULIE WATSON and JEFF McMURRAY Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Arson was the cause of a massive weekend fire that charred and indefinitely closed a vital section of a Los Angeles freeway, causing major traffic headaches for hundreds of thousands of commuters, California authorities said Monday.

Gov. Gavin Newsom said investigators were trying to determine if one person or more were involved. He gave no other details.

"I have to stress that we have determined what started the fire," Newsom told reporters.

The fire erupted Saturday in two storage lots under Interstate 10. Construction materials combusted quickly and the fire grew. It left many columns charred and chipped and the deck guardrails twisted. Crews shored up the most damaged section for the safety of workers clearing the debris. It's still unclear what structural damage, if any, the blaze caused to the freeway.

Beyond a massive traffic headache, the closure is expected to be felt well beyond the metropolis, including possibly slowing the transport of goods from the twin ports of LA and Long Beach, federal officials have said. The ports handle more than half the goods coming into the country. President Joe Biden had been briefed on the fire.

"It's disrupting in every way, whether you are talking about traveling to and from work or your child care plans and the flow of goods and commerce, this will disrupt the lives of Angelenos," LA Mayor Karen Bass said.

Los Angeles residents were urged to avoid travel to the area Monday and to work from home if possible.

"Our streets cannot handle 300,000 cars," Bass said, referring to how many vehicles use the I-10 stretch daily.

Officials have said the damage is reminiscent of the 1994 Northridge earthquake that flattened thoroughfares. After the quake, it took more than two months to repair Interstate 10 — and that was considered significantly fast.

Newsom said early tests show that the deck "appears to be much stronger than originally assessed." Concrete and rebar samples taken Monday from the superstructure, decks and columns will help determine "whether or not we're tearing this down and replacing it, or we're continuing the recovery and repairs,"

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 143 ~ 57 of 89

he said.

"This isn't going to be resolved in a couple of days, and it's not going to take a couple years," Federal Highway Administrator Shailen Bhatt told The Associated Press. "But whether it's weeks or months, we're still too early to tell."

Bhatt said the fiery June 11 crash of a tractor-trailer hauling gasoline in Philadelphia that collapsed an elevated section of Interstate 95, snarling traffic and hurting area businesses, highlights the impact of such disasters not only on a city but on the nation.

"The ports are still open and the goods will still flow, but when you remove a section of the interstate that carries 300,000 vehicles a day, there's going to be spillover impacts," Bhatt said. "The concern there is the quicker we can get this open, the faster we can remove an impediment."

Drivers were tested Monday during the first weekday commute since the raging fire. Some freeway exits backed up as drivers were forced to use crowded surface streets to bypass the damaged freeway stretch south of downtown.

Some routes, however, had lighter traffic, suggesting drivers heeded warnings from the city to make alternate plans. Cellphones blasted Monday with a predawn reminder for residents to plan different routes or expect significant delays.

"Our businesses are just bouncing back from the Covid shutdowns. Business was just getting good," said Blair Besten, director of LA's Historic Core business improvement district. She's worried about the lingering effects of this closure.

Flames reported around 12:20 a.m. Saturday ripped through two storage lots in an industrial area beneath I-10, burning parked cars, stacks of wooden pallets and support poles for high-tension power lines, city fire Chief Kristin Crowley said. No injuries were reported.

At least 16 homeless people, including a pregnant woman, living underneath the freeway were brought to shelters. More than 160 firefighters responded to the blaze, which spread across 8 acres (3 hectares) and burned for three hours.

California Fire Marshal Daniel Berlant said investigators have identified where the fire started and what the cause was after sorting through the rubble for evidence but did not specify what they found. He said there is no suspect information yet. He said they are talking to witnesses, including homeless people and nearby business owners.

Storage yards under highways are common statewide, with the money from the leases going to public transit. Newsom said the practice would be reevaluated following the fire.

The governor said California has been in litigation with Apex Development, Inc., the owner of the business leasing the storage property where the fire started. The lease is expired, Newsom said, and the business had been in arrears while illegally subleasing the space to five or six other entities. "They've been out of compliance for some time, that's why we're going to court" early next year, he said.

Mainak D'Attaray, an attorney for Apex Development, confirmed the company was in litigation with the state.

"We are currently investigating ourselves what happened at the yard under the freeway. As such, we are not prepared to give an official statement or answer questions until we have determined what actually occurred," D'Attaray said in an email.

Ertugrul Taciroglu, chair of the civil and environmental engineering department at the University of California, Los Angeles, said part of the challenge is how expensive real estate has become.

"Every piece of land is being utilized, so I can see the pressure or the incentives for making use of these spaces under these highways," he said.

Two contractors have been hired to clean up the hazardous material and to shore up the freeway, according to California Secretary of Transportation Toks Omishakin.

Repairs will require environmental waivers and federal funding, officials said.

In 2011, a fire from a poorly maintained fuel tanker that burst into flames damaged a stretch of State Route 60 — a key freeway connecting LA with its eastern suburbs — and took six months to reopen at a cost of \$40 million.

The city and county of Los Angeles in 2020 agreed to provide housing for almost 7,000 people living under freeways and near exit and entrance ramps. In approving the deal, a federal judge said unhoused residents in those areas face particularly deadly hazards.

Is Hamas hiding in Gaza's main hospital? Israel's claim is now a focal point in a dayslong stalemate

By JOSEF FEDERMAN Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Gaza's Shifa Hospital has become the focus of a dayslong stalemate in Israel's war against the Hamas militant group.

Shifa is Gaza's largest and best-equipped hospital. Israel, without providing visual evidence, claims the facility also is used by Hamas for military purposes. It says Hamas has built a vast underground command complex center below the hospital, connected by tunnels, something Gaza health officials and Hamas deny.

Since Israel declared war against Hamas in response to a deadly cross-border attack by Hamas on Oct. 7, its forces have moved in on Shifa. While Israel says it is willing to allow staff and patients to evacuate, Palestinians say Israeli forces have fired at evacuees and that it is too dangerous to move the most vulnerable patients. Meanwhile, doctors say the facility has run out of fuel and that patients are beginning to die.

Here is a closer look at the Shifa standoff.

A HOSPITAL AND A SHELTER

Shifa is the leading hospital in a health care system that has largely collapsed after years of conflict, chronic underfunding and an Israeli-Egyptian blockade aimed at weakening Hamas.

Shifa has over 500 beds and services like MRI scans, dialysis and an intensive care unit. It conducts roughly half of all the medical operations that take place in Gaza, according to the Health Ministry in the Hamas-run territory.

After the war erupted, tens of thousands crammed into the hospital grounds to seek shelter. As the war has moved closer to the hospital, most of those huddling there have fled south — joining some two-thirds of the territory's 2.3 million residents who have left their homes.

But hundreds of people, including medical workers, premature babies and other vulnerable patients, remain, staffers say.

On Saturday, the hospital announced that its last generator had run out of fuel. Health officials say at least 32 patients, including three babies, have died. They say 36 other babies are at risk of dying because life-saving equipment can't function.

The Health Ministry released a photo Monday showing about a dozen premature babies wrapped in blankets on a bed to keep them warm. "I hope that they will remain alive despite the disaster in which this hospital is passing through," said ministry spokesman Medhat Abbas.

International law gives hospitals special protections during war. Hospitals can lose those protections if combatants use them to hide fighters or store weapons, according to the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Still, there must be plenty of warning to allow evacuation of staff and patients. If harm to civilians from an attack is disproportionate to the military objective, it is illegal under international law.

ISRAEL'S CASE AGAINST HAMAS

Israel has long accused Hamas of using civilians as human shields. The group often fires rockets toward Israel from crowded residential areas, and its fighters have battled Israeli troops inside densely populated neighborhoods.

Throughout the war, Israel has released photos and video footage showing what it says are weapons and other military installations inside or next to mosques, schools and hospitals.

Late Monday, Israel's chief military spokesman, Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, showed footage of what he said was a Hamas weapons cache found in the basement of Gaza's Rantisi Hospital for Children.

Hagari said he entered the hospital with Israeli troops on Monday, a day after the facility's last patients were evacuated. The hospital ran out of fuel last week, and Israel had ordered people to leave as it conducts its ground offensive.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 143 ~ 59 of 89

Hagari entered a room decorated with a colorful children's drawing of a tree, with weapons lying across the floor. He said they included explosive vests, automatic rifles, bombs and rocket-propelled grenades.

" Hamas uses hospitals as an instrument of war," he said.

He showed another area that he said appears to have been used to hold hostages.

It included what appeared to be a hastily installed toilet and air vent, a baby bottle and a motorcycle — scarred by a bullet hole and apparently used to carry hostages. One windowless room had curtains on the wall that he said could be used as a backdrop in a video. Hagari said forensic experts were examining the scenes.

"This is not the last hospital like this in Gaza, and the world should know that," Hagari said.

The army has claimed that Hamas is operating inside Shifa and underneath it in bunkers, some of which it says are accessible from the hospital itself. It also claims hundreds of Hamas fighters sought shelter at Shifa after the Oct. 7 massacre, in which at least 1,200 people in Israel were killed.

Israel says these claims are based on intelligence. However, it has released no visual evidence to support the claims. Hagari last month unveiled maps showing where Israel believes Hamas' underground command centers are located, including one next to hospital's reception area and another next to the dialysis department.

He also showed off simulated illustrations of what these centers allegedly look like, but acknowledged: "This is only an illustration."

Israel also released a video of what it said was a captured militant answering questions during an interrogation. The militant, speaking quietly but clearly under duress, says that most tunnels are "hidden in hospitals."

"At Shifa, for example, there are underground levels," the militant says. "Shifa is not small. It's a big place that can hide things."

The army also released a voice recording of what it says are two anonymous Palestinians in Gaza discussing the presence of a tunnel under Shifa. The recording could not be verified.

Ghazi Hamad, a senior Hamas official, rejected the Israeli claims about Shifa as "false and misleading propaganda."

"The occupying forces have no evidence to prove it," Hamad said. "We have never used civilians as human shields because it goes against our religion, morality and principles."

HOW WILL THE STANDOFF END?

Israel on Sunday said it had tried to deliver some 300 liters (about 80 gallons) of fuel to the hospital in plastic containers several hundred meters (yards) from the facility. But as of Monday, the fuel had apparently not been taken.

Israel accused Hamas of preventing medical workers from retrieving the containers. Hospital officials said the fuel should be delivered by the Palestinian Red Crescent and that the quantity of fuel was insufficient in any case.

Israel offered safe passage for people to leave. But those who tried to go described a terrifying experience.

Goudhat Samy al-Madhoun, a health care worker, said some 50 people left the facility on Monday, including a woman who had been receiving kidney dialysis. He said Israeli forces fired on the group several times, wounding one man who had to be left behind.

U.S. President Joe Biden on Monday said the hospital "must be protected" and called for "less intrusive action" by Israeli forces.

"It is my hope and expectation that there will be less intrusive action," Biden said in the Oval Office.

The Israeli army has said it is aware of the complexities, but says Hamas should not expect immunity.

"We're not looking to take control of hospitals. We're looking to dismantle their infrastructure," said Lt. Col. Richard Hecht, another Israeli army spokesman.

"We'll go in, we'll do what we have to do and leave," he said. "What it's going to look like, it's hard to say."

Maryanne Trump Barry, the former president's older sister and a retired federal judge, dies at 86

By MARYCLAIRE DALE and KAREN MATTHEWS Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Maryanne Trump Barry, a retired federal judge and former President Donald Trump's oldest sister, has died at age 86 at her home in New York.

Until her retirement in 2019, Barry was a senior judge on the 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, a level below the Supreme Court.

The NYPD confirmed that officers were sent to Barry's Manhattan home just before 4:30 a.m. and discovered a deceased 86-year-old woman. The cause of death was not immediately clear. Her death was confirmed by a judicial official who spoke on condition of anonymity because the news hadn't been announced publicly by either the court or Trump's family.

Trump's campaign did not immediately respond to a request for comment, but the former president's eldest son, Donald Trump Jr., spoke briefly about his aunt as he exited a Manhattan courthouse Monday, calling it a "rough day for myself and my family,"

Trump Jr. told reporters after testifying in a civil fraud trial that he had been informed of the news as he pulled up to the courthouse Monday morning.

"I'm very close with her grandson. We hang out all the time. And so it's obviously a rough day for that," he said.

Before becoming a judge, Barry became an Assistant U.S. Attorney in 1974. She was nominated to the federal court in New Jersey by President Ronald Reagan. She was later elevated to the U.S. Court of Appeals by President Bill Clinton. She retired in 2019 amid an investigation into her family's tax practices.

Barry stayed largely out of the spotlight during her brother's presidency, but drew headlines after her niece, Mary Trump, revealed that she had secretly recorded her aunt while promoting a book that denounced the former president. In the recordings, Barry could be heard sharply criticizing her brother, at one point saying the former president "has no principles" and is "cruel."

Years before her brother became president, Barry wrote in a 2006 immigration case that judges had too little leeway to evaluate who should get to remain in the U.S. because of rigid laws that force "knee-jerk" decisions.

The case involved a man from Northern Ireland, Malachy McAllister, denied asylum by the 3rd Circuit panel on which she sat. Barry urged the federal government to intervene in the case.

"I refuse to believe that 'Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free ...' is now an empty entreaty. But if it is, shame on us," wrote Barry, who said McAllister's actions came as the Irish sought to end more than 800 years of British rule.

McAllister, a former member of the paramilitary Irish National Liberation Army, was convicted in the 1981 wounding of a British police officer.

Barry was also known for her wry sense of humor, evident in a 2015 case over fan access to Super Bowl tickets.

When the NFL compared the distribution practice to Catholic parishes that got a bounty of tickets to see the pope in Philadelphia, Barry's colleagues joked that the pope was skipping New Jersey altogether.

"We're used to it," Barry quipped.

Trump, who was one of five children, now has one living sibling, his sister Elizabeth Trump Grau.

The former president's younger brother, Robert Trump, died in 2020 at 71, and Trump held a service at the White House in his honor. His older brother, Fred Trump Jr., died of a heart attack at 42, which the family blamed on alcoholism.

Donald Trump's ex-wife Ivana Trump died in 2022 at the age of 73.

The news of Barry's death was first reported by the Daily Voice in Nassau County.

Why David Cameron is a surprising choice as new UK foreign policy chief after fateful Brexit vote

By SYLVIA HUI Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — As political comebacks go, former British Prime Minister David Cameron's return to government as foreign secretary is more dramatic and unexpected than most.

After unsuccessfully campaigning during the 2016 Brexit referendum for Britain to vote to "remain" in the European Union, Cameron resigned immediately and has been out of politics since.

He is not even a lawmaker, and his return to senior government leadership as an unelected member of Parliament's House of Lords, though not unprecedented, is rare and has prompted concerns about accountability.

"I know it's not usual for a prime minister to come back in this way, but I believe in public service," Cameron told reporters Monday.

Monday's major Cabinet reshuffle announced by Prime Minister Rishi Sunak sees Cameron joining a small club of former British premiers who have returned to government in a lesser role. Only about a dozen other former British leaders have done so since the 1700s.

Questions have been raised about Sunak's decision given that Cameron's legacy on Brexit and other political decisions remains deeply contentious.

A look at Cameron's career and reactions to his comeback:

POLITICAL LEGACY

An Oxford-educated former public relations executive, Cameron led the Conservatives back to power in 2010 after 13 years in opposition. He led Britain for six years, and in the first of his two terms in office his party shared power with the smaller Liberal Democrats in an uneasy coalition.

Cameron was 43 when he entered No. 10 Downing Street as one of the youngest prime ministers in British history, and many observers at the time compared his youthful charisma to that of former Labour premier Tony Blair.

Like Blair he worked to steer his party toward the middle ground, championing what he called "compassionate Conservatism" in a bid to boost the Tories' popularity.

But for many, his harsh austerity economics and his fateful decision to hold the Brexit vote remain the landmarks of his time in power, with the impact of both still reverberating in the U.K.

Under Cameron, Britain's government made deep cuts to social welfare and other public spending in healthcare and education in the aftermath of the 2008 global economic crash.

His promise to hold a referendum on EU membership, a bid to placate rebellious Conservatives and to ward off the right-wing U.K. Independence Party, spelled his downfall. Cameron's "remain" side was defeated, gaining 48% of the vote compared to 52% for the "leave" camp backed by Euroskeptics including former Prime Minister Boris Johnson.

The U.K. left the EU in 2020 after a messy divorce, and thorny post-Brexit trade disputes continue to loom over politics in Northern Ireland.

CHINA AND OTHER FOREIGN POLICIES

During his tenure, Cameron led closer economic and trade ties between Britain and China, presiding over a so-called "golden era" of Sino-British relations as he drank beer with Chinese President Xi Jinping at an English pub during a state visit.

His stance is now criticized by many in Britain as having been misguided given that Beijing's influence is increasingly seen as a threat to international security. Last year Sunak explicitly distanced himself from Cameron's China stance, describing it as "naïve" amid growing tensions with Beijing over Russia's war in Ukraine.

In a statement, Cameron acknowledged he disagreed with Sunak over some decisions but stressed that he will now back Sunak as the U.K. heads to a general election next year.

In 2013, Cameron suffered a foreign policy blow when his own Conservatives joined the opposition in rejecting his plans for U.K. military intervention against Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 143 ~ 62 of 89

LOBBYING SCANDAL

More recently Cameron was embroiled in a scandal after revelations that he privately lobbied government officials in a bid to secure access to emergency coronavirus loans for a now-bankrupt financial services firm.

Questions about Cameron, who worked as a part-time adviser to Greensill Capital starting 2018, prompted accusations of unscrupulousness in the Conservative Party and calls for lobbying rules to be tightened.

WHY CAMERON, WHY NOW?

Sunak's office maintains that Cameron is "an established figure on the world stage" who can bring "a huge amount of experience" to the role.

But many observers see Sunak's move to bring back Cameron as a gamble with uncertain pay-off.

"(Sunak) is trying to look to others who might represent a smoother form of government than he's been able to deliver," Toby Helm, political editor of The Observer, told the BBC. But "it may look like he can't find enough sensible people in his own party," he said.

"Cameron will come across as a competent, appealing foreign secretary to some," he added. "But I think the imagery that surrounds him, the impression that appointment gives, is somewhat desperate."

Transport Secretary Mark Harper, who worked under Cameron when he was leader, was among others who praised the move.

"Given the challenges facing us with the war in Ukraine (and) what's going on in the Middle East, having a really experienced person coming in as foreign secretary, I think, is an excellent move," Harper said.

QUESTIONS OF ACCOUNTABILITY

Some also say Cameron's accountability is in question because he is serving a top government job not as an elected lawmaker but as an appointed Lord in Parliament's upper house. It is unusual, though not unheard of, for secretaries of state to be in the House of Lords.

In his new position, Cameron will not face regular questioning in the House of Commons as he would if he were serving in that chamber.

"Amid (an) international crisis, Sunak has chosen an unelected failure from the past who MPs cannot even hold to account," said the opposition Labour Party's David Lammy.

Lindsay Hoyle, the Speaker of the Commons, said that "given the gravity of the current international situation," he is looking into options on ensuring lawmakers can scrutinize Cameron.

Endangered sperm whales now have their first protected area in the Caribbean island of Dominica

By DÁNICA COTO Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — The tiny Caribbean island of Dominica is creating the world's first marine protected area for one of earth's largest animals: the endangered sperm whale.

Nearly 300 square miles (800 square kilometers) of royal blue waters on the western side of the island nation that serve as key nursing and feeding grounds will be designated as a reserve, the government announced Monday.

"We want to ensure these majestic and highly intelligent animals are safe from harm and continue keeping our waters and our climate healthy," Dominica Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit said in a statement.

Scientists say the reserve not only will protect the animals, but it will also help fight climate change.

Sperm whales defecate near the surface because they shut down non-vital functions when they dive to depths of up to 10,000 feet (3,000 meters). As a result, nutrient-rich poop remains along the ocean surface and creates plankton blooms, which capture carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and drag it to the ocean floor when they die. And sperm whales in Dominica are believed to defecate more than whales elsewhere, said Shane Gero, a whale biologist and founder of the Dominica Sperm Whale Project, a research program focused on sperm whales in the eastern Caribbean.

It's unclear why sperm whales seem to defecate more in Dominica. Gero said it could be they're eating twice as much, or maybe there's something particular about the type of squid they're eating.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 143 ~ 63 of 89

"In some respects, sperm whales are fighting climate change on our behalf," Gero said in an interview. Less than 500 sperm whales are estimated to live in the waters surrounding Dominica, part of a population that moves along the Lesser Antilles chain, swimming as far south as St. Vincent and north into Guadeloupe. Unlike sperm whales elsewhere in the world, the ones around the eastern Caribbean don't travel very far, Gero said.

He noted that sperm whales are a matrilineal society, with young males leaving and switching oceans at some point in their lives. As a result, protecting the species is key, especially if few female calves are born, he said.

"One calf being entangled can mean the end of a family," he said.

Sperm whales can produce a single calf every five to seven years.

In waters around Dominica and elsewhere, sperm whales have been hit by ships, entangled in fishing gear and affected by agricultural runoff, limiting their survival. In the pre-whaling days, an estimated 2 million sperm whales roamed the Earth's deep waters before they were hunted for oil used to burn lamps and lubricate machinery. Now, some 800,000 are left, Gero said.

The government of Dominica said the reserve will allow sustainable artisanal fishing and delineate an international shipping lane to avoid more deaths of sperm whales, which have the largest brain in the world and can grow up to 50 feet (15 meters).

Once the reserve is created, the prime minister said his administration will appoint an officer and observers to ensure the area is respected and that whale tourism regulations are enforced. Visitors can still swim with sperm whales and see them from a boat, but in limited numbers.

The move was praised by scientists and conservationists including Enric Sala, an explorer-in-residence at National Geographic.

"The government of Dominica has realized that the sperm whales, which were probably here before humans, are also citizens of Dominica," he said. "These whales will spend most of the year offshore the island. So, they are taking care of some of their citizens in a way that few nations have ever done before."

An estimated 35 families of sperm whales spend most of their time in waters surrounding Dominica. Gero said some are likely more than 60 years old, and they communicate via clicking sounds in a vocalization known as codas.

"That's kind of like asking, 'I'm from Dominica, are you?'" Gero said. "It's a symbolic marker."

Gero and his team of researchers also have named individual whales. One is dubbed "Snow" because one scientist was reading a Margaret Atwood book with a character named "Snowman." Another sperm whale was nicknamed "Fruit Salad" because a researcher happened to be snacking on that at the time. That whale's calf was named "Soursop," in keeping with the theme.

Paul Pelosi testifies about being attacked with a hammer at his San Francisco home

By OLGA R. RODRIGUEZ Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Paul Pelosi recounted publicly for the first time Monday what happened the night he was attacked by a man in the San Francisco home he shares with former U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, recalling how shocking it was to see a man standing at his bedroom door, then how the man whacked him in the head with a hammer.

"It was a tremendous sense of shock to recognize that somebody had broken into the house and looking at him and looking at the hammer and the ties, I recognized that I was in serious danger, so I tried to stay as calm as possible," Pelosi told jurors as he testified in the trial of David DePape, who is shown on video carrying out the attack.

Prosecutors say DePape bludgeoned Pelosi in the early hours of Oct. 28, 2022, just days before the mid-term elections, and that he had rope and zip ties with him. DePape has pleaded not guilty to attempted kidnapping of a federal official and assault on the immediate family member of a federal official with intent to retaliate against the official for performance of their duties.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 143 ~ 64 of 89

Defense attorney Jodi Linker told jurors last week that she won't dispute that DePape attacked Pelosi. Instead, she will argue that DePape believed "with every ounce of his being" that he was taking action to stop government corruption, the erosion of freedom in the United States, and the abuse of children by politicians and actors. She said that means the government's charges that DePape was trying to retaliate or interfere with Nancy Pelosi's official duties don't fit.

Paul Pelosi's testimony came on the trial's second day, after prosecutors brought forward FBI agents who collected the electronics DePape was carrying and searched the room he lives in, a U.S. Capitol police officer who watches the surveillance cameras at the Pelosis' home and another who has protected Nancy Pelosi since 2006, a Bay Area Rapid Transit police sergeant, and a digital forensics expert.

Pelosi said he has not discussed the attack with anyone and has encouraged his family not to as well "because it has been too traumatic."

The Pelosis' home has an alarm system with motion detectors, but Pelosi said he never put it on when he was home alone because his movements would trigger it.

He recalled being awakened by a man bursting into the bedroom door asking, "Where's Nancy?" He said that when he responded that his wife was in Washington, DePape said he would tie him up while they waited for her.

"We had some conversation with him saying she was the leader of the pack, he had to take her out, and that he was going to wait for her," Paul Pelosi said.

Earlier, prosecutors played police body camera footage showing Pelosi facedown on the floor as paramedics help him. One holds a white towel against Pelosi's head as another puts a neck and head brace on him before several first responders help him onto a stretcher chair. Pelosi's face and hands are covered in blood.

He later underwent surgery to repair a skull fracture and injuries to his right arm and hands.

Some witnesses helped verify time stamps on footage from surveillance cameras at the Pelosis' home, which are set to Eastern Time, and on BART trains, which were an hour behind Pacific Time.

FBI Special Agent Stephanie Minor, who was in charge of the investigation, testified that video showed DePape hit Paul Pelosi at least three times.

DePape showed little emotion during most of the testimony, only smiling and releasing a muted chuckle when, at his attorney's request, Minor read a list of topics that appeared on his blog. They included Communism, corruption, COVID-19, Jewish people, "Gamergate," guns, immigrants, memes and wamon, a word used to describe a woman who does nothing but complain.

Minor testified DePape started gathering items for the attack two months beforehand, in August 2022, purchasing body cameras, USB memory sticks, a large backpack and a sleeping bag. She also said FBI agents found two inflatable unicorn costumes and a box of crayons but didn't explain the purpose of those items.

Federal prosecutors have said the evidence and FBI testimony will show DePape researched his targets online, collecting phone numbers and addresses, even paying for a public records service to find information.

If convicted, DePape faces life in prison. He also has pleaded not guilty to charges in state court of attempted murder, assault with a deadly weapon, elder abuse, residential burglary and other felonies. A state trial has not been scheduled.

Pelosi's testimony mirrored the series of events that prosecutors previously laid out.

He recounted how DePape had let him enter the bathroom, where Pelosi was able to grab his cellphone and use it to call 911 as DePape looked on, urging Pelosi to tell police that he was a friend. Pelosi said he tried to tell police what was happening without aggravating DePape.

Pelosi said he then suggested the two head downstairs after DePape told him he was tired and wanted to sleep. Pelosi recalled being thankful when the police arrived, only for DePape to then hit him with the hammer. He said he woke up in a pool of his own blood.

After his arrest, DePape, 43, allegedly told a San Francisco detective that he wanted to hold Nancy Pelosi hostage. He said if she told him the truth, he would let her go and if she lied, he was going to "break her kneecaps" to show other members of Congress there were "consequences to actions," according to

prosecutors.

DePape slept in a cot in a garage with no kitchen or bathroom in the Bay Area city of Richmond, according to photographs shown by prosecutors. He had been doing odd carpentry jobs to support himself and allegedly told authorities he had other targets, including a women's and queer studies professor, California Gov. Gavin Newsom, actor Tom Hanks and President Joe Biden's son Hunter.

Donald Trump Jr. lauds dad's real estate exploits as ex-president's civil fraud trial begins defense

By MICHAEL R. SISAK and JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Donald Trump Jr. returned to court Monday as something of a character witness for his father's real estate empire, waxing exuberantly about the former president's "incredible vision" and portfolio of "great, iconic projects" at the New York civil fraud trial now threatening his company's future.

The namesake son made an encore appearance at the Manhattan trial as defense lawyers started calling their own witnesses. Trump Jr. first testified two weeks ago, called in by New York State Attorney General Letitia James' office, which is suing the Trump family business.

"I'd say it's good to be here, your honor, but I have a feeling that the attorney general would sue me for perjury if I said that," he joked Monday before embarking on a detailed and rosy history of the family's Trump Organization.

James, a Democrat, alleges Donald Trump, his company and top executives, including sons Eric and Donald Trump Jr., exaggerated his wealth by billions of dollars on his annual financial statements. The documents were given to banks, insurers and others to secure loans and make deals. James is seeking more than \$300 million in what she says were ill-gotten gains, and she wants the defendants banned from doing business in New York.

The defendants deny any wrongdoing, and the former president and current Republican front-runner insisted in fiery testimony last week that his company is "the opposite of fraud." Eric Trump and his sister Ivanka Trump, a former Trump Organization executive and White House adviser, also took the stand.

Trump Jr.'s testimony Monday set the tone for a defense case that's expected to last into mid-December. After a six-week state case that delved heavily into financial statements, spreadsheets and loan deals, the scion aimed to show a broader — and sparkling — picture of the Trump Organization to the judge who'll decide its fate.

Questioned by his own lawyer, he spent more than an hour narrating a slideshow titled "The Trump Story," complete with a timeline of the company's evolution and photographs of golf courses, hotels and other major projects. He spoke glowingly about his father's early years as a developer of Manhattan skyscrapers and the "vision he had to do things differently."

"He's an artist with real estate. He sees the things other people don't," Trump Jr. testified, playing up his father's accomplishments while skipping over his casino bankruptcies and other failures.

During his first round of testimony earlier this month, the son said that he never worked on the annual financial statements at the heart of James' lawsuit. He said he relied on the company's longtime finance chief and outside accountants to verify their accuracy.

At times, his testimony Monday had the feel of a real estate pitch or an episode of "Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous." State lawyer Colleen Faherty tried to forestall the superlative-laced spiel, arguing Trump Jr.'s amped testimony was "unfocused to anything relevant" to the case. Judge Arthur Engoron disagreed, saying he found it interesting.

After Trump Jr. finished his sunny portrait, Faherty noted a Bloomberg report Friday that the company's loan for a Wall Street office building was sent to a special servicer, a sign it could be at risk of default. Trump's lawyers blamed the loan issue on the civil case. His company said it's never missed a payment and was fully complying with the loan terms.

Faherty also pointed out that the owner of a Trump-branded and managed hotel in Honolulu announced Friday it was buying out the agreement, partnering with Hilton and renaming the resort.

"It is ditching the Trump name?" Faherty asked.

"If they want to buy it out for millions of dollars, I'm OK with that," Trump Jr. replied.

Before the trial, Engoron ruled that Donald Trump and other defendants committed fraud by inflating his net worth and the value of assets on his financial statements. The judge imposed a punishment that could strip Trump of some marquee properties, though an appeals court is keeping them in his control for now.

The Trumps' lawyers contend that the state failed to meet "any legal standard" to prove the remaining allegations at issue in the trial: conspiracy, insurance fraud and falsifying business records.

Engoron rebuffed the defense's request last week to end the trial early through what's known as a directed verdict. Engoron did not rule on the request, but indicated the trial would move ahead as scheduled.

When he became president in 2017, Donald Trump handed day-to-day management of his company to Eric and Donald Trump Jr. and named Trump Jr. as a trustee of a trust he established to hold his assets while in office.

Asked Monday about his vision of the Trump Organization's future, Trump Jr. said with a chuckle: "I guess a lot of that depends on what happens next November. We'll probably be put on hold a little while, for the foreseeable future, and sued to oblivion. But after that, we'll keep doing what we do."

Detroit-area doctor grieves the loss of 20 relatives killed during Israel's war against Hamas

ROCHESTER HILLS, Mich. (AP) — Each time Dr. Emad Shehada's phone rings, the suburban Detroit pulmonologist worries that it could be more bad news about loved ones in Gaza.

He said that so far, 20 cousins and other relatives have been killed since the start of Israel's campaign against Hamas following the militant group's deadly Oct. 7 incursion into southern Israel that set off the war.

More than 11,000 Palestinians, two-thirds of them women and minors, have been killed since the war began, according to the Health Ministry in Gaza, which does not differentiate between civilian and militant deaths. About 2,700 people have been reported missing.

More than 1,200 people in Israel died, most of them in the Hamas attack, and about 240 hostages were taken from Israel into Gaza by Palestinian militants.

Among those Shehada grieves are his cousin, Mohammad Khrais, three of Khrais' children and 19-year-old Mayar, who was pregnant.

"When you hear about these conflicts, your heart is broken for all these people that they die," Shehada told WXYZ-TV for a story Thursday. "But when it hits somebody you know, it's totally different."

"It's been horrible," he added. "A hell of a month. I mean, it's a nightmare that does not want to end."

Shehada, whose medical practice is north of Detroit in Rochester Hills, was born in Kuwait and lived in Syria before moving to the United States about two decades ago. He studied at Wayne State University in Detroit.

Both his parents were born in a village outside Gaza. They now live in the United States. Shehada, 47, also has one sister in the U.S., but another remains in Gaza, he said.

The two communicate via text messages because listening to her tear-filled voice as the war rages is difficult, Shehada said.

"The house next to my sister was struck by a missile where I had 12 relatives living there," he said. "That house was only 10 meters (32 feet) from my sister's house."

The 2024 Republican presidential field is rapidly shrinking. But is it too late to stop Trump?

By STEVE PEOPLES, MEG KINNARD and THOMAS BEAUMONT Associated Press
COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — The Republican Party's once-crowded 2024 presidential primary field has suddenly shrunk to just a handful of viable candidates.

But a day after Sen. Tim Scott of South Carolina stunned many of his own staff by suspending his

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 143 ~ 67 of 89

campaign, it's unclear whether the GOP is any closer to coalescing behind a clear alternative to former President Donald Trump. Instead, the fight between Nikki Haley and Ron DeSantis for a distant second place appears to be intensifying. And some lower-tier candidates insist on battling for relevance, despite growing pressure to bow out of the race altogether.

Meanwhile, Trump's team is cheering on the muddle for second place with Iowa's Jan. 15 kickoff caucuses just two months away.

Still, there were new positive signs on Monday for Haley, Scott's South Carolina rival, who had been rising in the Republican contest even before the senator's sudden announcement.

Billionaire investor Stanley Druckenmillier, who had given money to Scott, pledged his support for Haley during a Monday interview as he spoke publicly about the 2024 race for the first time. He emphasized the need for the GOP to coalesce behind the former United Nations ambassador before primary voting begins.

"Now I'm hoping the field clears and it's Nikki Haley one-on-one with the former president," Druckenmillier told The Associated Press. "As long as the field is cleared before the actual primaries, I think that's what's important."

But DeSantis is showing no signs of going away as he narrows his focus on Iowa's leadoff caucuses.

The Florida governor's spokesperson, Andrew Romeo, says he has a new opportunity in Iowa with Scott and former Vice President Mike Pence out of the race. He pointed to Iowa's influential group of religious conservatives who have warmed to DeSantis' strong opposition to abortion and LGBTQ rights as part of his aggressive "war on woke."

Just last week, DeSantis scored the biggest endorsement of the 2024 campaign by nabbing the backing of Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds, who promises to lend the Florida governor her folksy charm — and her statewide political machine.

"Tim Scott and Mike Pence were surging resources in Iowa, looking to attract evangelical supporters, and unlike Nikki Haley, Ron DeSantis is making headway with those voters," Romeo said. "In the coming weeks, these voters will see that Nikki Haley's record and values don't match her rhetoric."

The prominence of the Haley-DeSantis feud underscores just how quickly the 2024 Republican field has winnowed compared to the last time Trump was on the ballot.

At this time in the 2016 primary season, 13 Republican presidential candidates were still competing on the debate stage across two nights. The 2024 primary season opened with eight Republicans in the opening debate this August, while no more than four are expected to qualify for next month's debate in Alabama: Haley, DeSantis, conservative entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy and former New Jersey Gov. Christie.

North Dakota Gov. Doug Burgum and former Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson failed to qualify for the the last debate, although they're still in the race. Pence, who would not have qualified for the last debate, suspended his campaign last month facing a similar dilemma.

Trump's team is cheering on the feud between Haley and DeSantis, who are largely focused on tearing down each other, while the former president remains the overwhelming GOP front-runner.

Privately, Trump's allies believe that Haley will see the biggest short-term polling bump as a result of Scott's departure. But they also believe that Trump, who has a substantial lead, is likely to extend his already huge advantage.

The Trump campaign issued a statement on Monday highlighting Haley's plans to invest \$10 million in an advertising campaign across Iowa and New Hampshire beginning in early December, which is designed to give her an advantage over DeSantis.

"In a big blow to Ron DeSanctimonious, a new report notes that Nikki 'Birdbrain' Haley will spend \$10 million in advertising skewering DeSanctus in Iowa and New Hampshire," the Trump campaign said, pointing to Haley's recent rise in the polls and using the former president's derisive monikers for the two. "She is gaining momentum while he is dropping like a rock."

Meanwhile, some were still grappling with Scott's sudden decision to suspend his presidential bid.

The South Carolina senator, the only African American remaining in the GOP race, surprised most of his staff when he announced his decision during a Sunday night interview on Fox News. After the public announcement, Scott explained his rationale further during a private all-staff call, according to a senior

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 143 ~ 68 of 89

staffer who spoke with the AP on the condition of anonymity to discuss the private conversation. The staffer said the campaign sensed that primary voters were reluctant to support someone other than Trump.

In an email to supporters on Monday afternoon, Scott said he felt the message is unambiguous for him. "I think the voters, who are the most remarkable people on the planet, have been clear in what they are telling me: 'not now, Tim.' I do not think they are saying 'no.' But I do think they are saying 'not now,'" he wrote.

Scott entered the 2024 campaign to much anticipation — especially in Iowa — as a close friend to Iowa Sen. Joni Ernst and a devoted evangelical Christian.

At times, his presidential ambitions looked promising.

Scott's campaign and a super PAC supporting him spent a combined \$24 million in advertising, mostly in Iowa. During his Iowa trips, Scott made his Christian faith and biblical fluency central to his candidacy and often met with evangelical ministers.

Iowa GOP activists frequently named him among the prospects they were considering throughout the summer. They cited his upbeat style and hopeful message, an implied contrast with the grievance-driven messaging from Trump.

Despite the big Iowa focus and positive message, however, he struggled to break through. And his modest share of support in late-summer Iowa polls shrunk by late fall as DeSantis and Haley appeared more viable.

Republican bundler Eric Levine, a Trump critic who raised more than \$100,000 for Scott's campaign in recent weeks, praised the South Carolina senator's willingness to step aside "for the good of the country."

"It is an act I think others should emulate now. We should start rallying behind a single candidate," Levine said, declaring his support for Haley. "It's Nikki time."

Still, Devin O'Malley, a Republican communications strategist who had advised Pence's campaign, warned that coalescing behind a Trump alternative is only the first challenge for Republicans wishing to defeat Trump.

He warned that the winnowing process could also lead to a more vitriolic confrontation with the former president.

"The sooner that everyone else gets out, the sooner that Trump's ire is drawn on the one candidate. He's just going to wear people down and out," O'Malley said. "That urge to respond to him and to compete with the insults and attacks is overwhelming. I don't think that Haley and DeSantis are conditioned to that."

White House hoping Biden-Xi meeting brings progress on military communications, fentanyl fight

By COLLEEN LONG and AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. officials expressed hope Monday that this week's highly anticipated face-to-face meeting between President Joe Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping will produce some concrete results, including the possible reestablishment of military communication between the two nations and a shared effort to combat illicit fentanyl trafficking.

The two leaders will meet Wednesday on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in San Francisco. The Biden-Xi bilateral will be the marquee moment of the forum, which is dedicated to promoting trade, investment and economic development among nations around the Pacific Ocean.

Biden and Xi have not spoken in a year. Their last meeting was at the Group of 20 summit in Indonesia last fall. And since then, tensions between the two nations have grown following a series of events touched off by the shooting down of a Chinese spy balloon that had wafted across the U.S. earlier this year.

The frosty relationship between the two economic superpowers has global implications: China and the U.S. produce roughly 40% of the world's goods and services.

U.S. officials have set relatively low expectations for the Biden-Xi meeting, suggesting that simply getting back to a baseline of routine communication would be a good benchmark for success. Still, White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan said Monday there could be some movement toward shared goals, through "intense diplomacy."

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 143 ~ 69 of 89

"All in all we're looking forward to a productive meeting," Sullivan said. "President Biden has a long history with President Xi and their conversations are direct, they're straightforward and President Biden believes there is no substitute for leader-to-leader, face-to-face diplomacy to manage this complex relationship."

Among those goals: the reestablishment of communications between military leaders of the two nations. U.S. military contacts with China have eroded, particularly since the pandemic, and are now almost nonexistent, even as the number of unsafe or unprofessional incidents between the two nations' ships and aircraft have spiked.

The U.S. has consistently viewed military relations with China as critical to avoiding any missteps and to maintaining a peaceful Indo-Pacific region. They became even more important as China stepped up its efforts to aggressively militarize manmade islands in the Pacific as part of a broader campaign to control the South China Sea, including international transit by other ships and aircraft.

China has also long complained about U.S. Navy and Air Force movements in the western Pacific, along with other U.S. moves to impose sanctions and other economic restrictions. Canceling military talks is viewed by China as a way to punish Washington.

But there are small signs of progress. China's defense ministry last week said the two militaries held a conference call on the search for the remains of American prisoners of war and missing personnel, discussing case investigations and cooperation on military archives.

Sullivan also said there were other areas where U.S. and Chinese interests overlap, particularly on the effort to combat fentanyl trafficking.

The powerful opioid is the deadliest drug in the U.S. today. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention states that drug overdose deaths have increased more than sevenfold from 2015 to 2021.

Mexico and China are the primary sources for fentanyl and fentanyl-related substances trafficked directly into the U.S., according to the Drug Enforcement Administration, which is tasked with combating illicit drug trafficking. Nearly all the chemicals needed to make fentanyl come from China, and the drugs are then mass-produced in Mexico and trafficked via cartels into the U.S.

Sullivan said Biden would also use the meeting to address China's relations with Iran and Taiwan.

China has perceived American contact with Taiwan as encouragement to make the island's decades-old de facto independence permanent. Concern about the issue is heightened as Taiwan prepares to hold presidential elections in January. Under the "One China" policy, the U.S. recognizes Beijing as the government of China and doesn't have diplomatic relations with Taiwan, but it has maintained that Taipei is an important partner in the Indo-Pacific.

Sullivan said Biden would "set out a vision for peace and stability and the maintenance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait."

The Democratic president is also expected to let Xi know that he would like China to use its burgeoning sway over Iran to make clear that Tehran or its proxies should not take action that could lead to expansion of the Israel-Hamas war. The Biden administration sees the Chinese, a big buyer of Iranian oil, as having considerable leverage with Iran, which is a major backer of Hamas.

"President Biden will make the point to President Xi that Iran acting in an escalatory, destabilizing way that undermines stability across the broader Middle East is not in the interests" of China or "any other responsible country," Sullivan said.

The White House announced Monday that Biden would also meet with Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador later this week. The two leaders will discuss the growing migration issue at the U.S.-Mexico border and beyond.

Preparations for the summit are evident around San Francisco.

The city has erected tall steel barricades downtown that snake around the streets surrounding the Moscone Center and other venues where APEC events will be held this week. Finance and diplomatic leaders from the 21 APEC economies are also gathering this week; Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen opened the finance ministers meeting Monday.

The San Francisco Police Department has beefed up patrols throughout downtown. In the area around Union Square, where many summit dignitaries have booked up the city's four-star hotels, locals have taken

note that the city's significant homeless population seems less prevalent than usual.

The Supreme Court says it is adopting a code of ethics, but it has no means of enforcement

By MARK SHERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court on Monday adopted its first code of ethics, in the face of sustained criticism over undisclosed trips and gifts from wealthy benefactors to some justices, but the code lacks a means of enforcement.

The policy, agreed to by all nine justices, does not appear to impose any significant new requirements and leaves compliance entirely to each justice.

Indeed, the justices said they have long adhered to ethics standards and suggested that criticism of the court over ethics was the product of misunderstanding, rather than any missteps by the justices.

"The absence of a Code, however, has led in recent years to the misunderstanding that the Justices of this Court, unlike all other jurists in this country, regard themselves as unrestricted by any ethics rules," the justices wrote in an unsigned statement that accompanied the code. "To dispel this misunderstanding, we are issuing this Code, which largely represents a codification of principles that we have long regarded as governing our conduct."

The ethics issue has vexed the court for several months, over a series of stories questioning the ethical practices of the justices. Many of those stories focused on Justice Clarence Thomas and his failure to disclose travel, other hospitality and additional financial ties with wealthy conservative donors including Harlan Crow and the Koch brothers. But Justices Samuel Alito and Sonia Sotomayor also have been under scrutiny.

In September, Justice Elena Kagan acknowledged that there were disagreements among the justices over the contents of an ethics code, but did not specify what they were. The justices achieved unanimity Monday, but predictably offered no explanation for how they got there.

Liberal critics of the court were not satisfied, with one group saying the code "reads a lot more like a friendly suggestion than a binding, enforceable guideline."

Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse, D-R.I., one of the loudest voices complaining about the court's ethical shortcomings, was among several leading Democrats who mixed praise for the court with a call to do more.

"This is a long-overdue step by the justices, but a code of ethics is not binding unless there is a mechanism to investigate possible violations and enforce the rules. The honor system has not worked for members of the Roberts Court," Whitehouse said.

A court ethics code proposed by Whitehouse that cleared the Senate Judiciary Committee without any Republican support would allow for complaints and investigation by lower-court judges. Three justices, Amy Coney Barrett, Brett Kavanaugh and Kagan have voiced support for an ethics code in recent months. In May, Chief Justice John Roberts said there was more the court could do to "adhere to the highest ethical standards," without providing any specifics.

Public trust in and approval of the court is hovering near record lows, according to a Gallup Poll released just before the court's new term began on Oct. 2.

As recently as last week, Sen. Dick Durbin, D-Ill., chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, said the justices could quiet some of the criticism and a Democratic push to impose an ethics code on the court by putting in place their own policy.

Durbin said Monday that the code appears to fall short of what is needed.

Durbin's panel, which has been investigating the court's ethics, has been planning to subpoena Crow and conservative activist Leonard Leo about their roles in organizing and paying for justices' luxury travel. The committee has scheduled a vote on the subpoenas for Thursday.

Republicans complained that Democrats were mostly reacting to decisions they didn't like from the conservative-dominated court, including overturning the nationwide right to an abortion.

The Democratic-backed ethics bill also would require that justices provide more information about

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 143 ~ 71 of 89

potential conflicts of interest and written explanations about their decisions not to recuse. It would also seek to improve transparency around gifts received by justices. The Democratic bill had little prospect of becoming law in the Republican-controlled House, much less the closely divided Senate.

The push for an ethics code was jump-started by a series of stories by the investigative news site ProPublica detailing the relationship between Crow and Thomas. Crow has for more than two decades paid for nearly annual vacations, purchased from Thomas and others the Georgia home in which the justice's mother still lives and helped pay for the private schooling for a relative.

ProPublica also reported on Alito's Alaskan fishing trip with a GOP donor, travel that Leo helped arrange. The Associated Press reported that Sotomayor, aided by her staff, has advanced sales of her books through college visits over the past decade. The AP also reported that universities have used trips by justices as a lure for financial contributions by placing them in event rooms with wealthy donors.

The court's initial step on ethics, in the spring, also did not mollify critics. Roberts declined an invitation from Durbin to testify before the Judiciary panel, but the chief justice provided a "Statement on Ethics Principles and Practices" signed by all nine justices that described the ethical rules they follow about travel, gifts and outside income.

The statement provided by Roberts said that the nine justices "reaffirm and restate foundational ethics principles and practices to which they subscribe in carrying out their responsibilities as Members of the Supreme Court of the United States."

The statement promised at least some small additional disclosure when one or more among them opts not to take part in a case. But the justices have been inconsistent in doing so since.

Israel-Hamas war misinformation is everywhere. Here are the facts

By The Associated Press undefined

Misinformation about the latest Israel-Hamas war is thriving on social media platforms, where misrepresented video footage, mistranslations and outright falsehoods often crowd out real reporting from the conflict.

In recent weeks, users have pushed false claims that "crisis actors" are staging scenes of carnage and that U.S. Marines are flooding in to fight on the ground in Gaza.

Here is a closer look at the latest misinformation spreading online — and the facts.

CLAIM: A video shows a makeup artist applying dirt and fake blood to a young girl on a stretcher, proving that people in Gaza are faking injuries in the latest Israel-Hamas war.

THE FACTS: The video is behind-the-scenes footage from a short film made in Lebanon, and was not made to mislead people, the director confirmed to The Associated Press.

In recent weeks, social media users have repeatedly misrepresented videos to falsely accuse Palestinians of being "crisis actors" in the war, as part of a conspiracy theory dubbed "Pollywood."

In the latest example, people are sharing a clip that begins with a child who appears to be wounded being treated on a stretcher as protesters wave Palestinian flags. As the video goes on, however, a makeup artist can be seen applying makeup to the girl to depict blood and wounds, and the child smiles at the camera.

The video was shared on multiple social media platforms including X, formerly known as Twitter, claiming it shows how Palestinians "fake injuries."

"The Palestinians are fooling the international media and public opinion. DON'T FALL FOR IT," reads one post on X, which garnered more than 10,000 likes. "Pollywood gets busted again."

However, the video is actually behind-the-scenes footage of a short film. The director, Mahmoud Ramzi, first uploaded the actual film, "The Reality," to his Instagram account on Oct. 28. The movie is clearly not intended to look like real footage of the conflict.

Ramzi confirmed to The Associated Press that the short film was shot in Lebanon and said it was to show the "pain that Gaza's people endured."

"It was not filmed to mislead people or to fabricate any truth, because what's happening in Gaza don't

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 143 ~ 72 of 89

need any form of fabrication, the videos are all over the media,” Ramzi wrote in an Instagram message. The behind-the-scenes footage was posted to Instagram on Oct. 29 by an actor, Rami Jardali. “Backstage Reality,” reads a translated version of the caption on Instagram.

Ramzi also shared a video on his Instagram story refuting the false claims. The video states the film shows “the suffering of the people in Gaza, but in an artistic way.”

— Associated Press writer Karena Phan in Los Angeles contributed this report.

CLAIM: A collage of nine images features the same Palestinian “crisis actor” pretending to be a wounded patient, a dead body and others in the ongoing Israel-Hamas war.

THE FACTS: Not all the photos show the same man. The person who appears to be pretending to be a dead war victim is actually a Thai child wearing a Halloween costume last year. The wounded patient is actually a 16-year old Palestinian boy who lost a leg in the West Bank over the summer.

Social media users are claiming the collage proves Palestinians are faking the gravity of the situation in Gaza.

Most of the nine pictures in the post show a man dressed in different outfits, with captions ranging from “freedom fighter” to “American idol.”

At the center of the collage is an image of a person wrapped head-to-toe in a white sheet but seated upright and looking at a phone in their hands. The text on the photo reads “revived corpse.”

The image to the left of it shows a man with eyes closed laying on a hospital gurney with electronic sensors attached to his bare chest as medical staff attend to him. The text on that photo reads, “Resilient patient.”

“This is a misinformation war. Make no mistake about it. The propaganda is real,” wrote one Instagram user who shared the collage. “Ask yourself: why do they need? #Pallywood #Gaza #FreePalestine from #Hamas.”

But not all of the photos in the montage show the same person.

For example, the photo of the “revived corpse” was originally posted on Oct. 29, 2022, on Facebook by a woman in Thailand.

The post included other photos of her two sons dressed as dead people for Halloween. A local news outlet also shared the mother’s photos on Facebook, noting in a post written in Thai that the pair took third place in a shopping mall costume contest in Nakhon Ratchasima, a major city in the country’s northeast.

As to the image of the “resilient patient” in the collage, it is actually a photo of a Palestinian teen injured months before the latest war with Israel erupted in early October.

Mohammed Zendiq, 16, had his leg amputated following July clashes at a refugee camp in the West Bank, according to an Aug. 25 report from the International Solidarity Movement, a Palestinian-led group.

Other photos in the collage depict a young Palestinian man named Saleh Aljafarawi.

The Gaza resident, who didn’t respond to messages seeking comment, describes himself as an artist on his YouTube page and has been regularly posting images and videos of himself amid the ongoing war on his Facebook, Instagram and other social media accounts.

— Associated Press writer Philip Marcelo in New York contributed this report.

CLAIM: A video shows Russian President Vladimir Putin announcing Russia will send “help to Palestine.”

THE FACTS: The video is from 2021 and shows Putin speaking about the defeat of Nazism at Russia’s Victory Day military parade. Russia has so far issued carefully calibrated criticism of both sides in the Israel-Hamas war.

Since the start of the conflict in October, social media users have repeatedly shared false claims about foreign leaders’ comments on the war.

In the latest instance, users are sharing the old video of Putin speaking in Russian at a podium alongside clips of a parade featuring military equipment and personnel.

“Putin Announced Russia Will Openly Help To Palestine,” reads the caption overlaying the footage cir-

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 143 ~ 73 of 89

culating online.

However, the footage, from May 2021, shows Putin speaking at the annual Victory Day military parade in Moscow's Red Square, which marks the anniversary of the end of World War II. The full broadcast can be seen in a post on YouTube.

A transcript of the full speech published by the Russian news agency Tass shows Putin spoke about the defeat of Nazism in World War II while warning that Nazi beliefs remain strong. He did not mention the current conflict in the Middle East.

Anna Borshchevskaya, a senior fellow in The Washington Institute and an expert of Russian foreign policy toward the Middle East, confirmed Putin says in the video: "Glory to the victors."

Borshchevskaya added that Putin has historically made efforts to build good relations with Israel but Hamas leadership has made repeated visits to Moscow as well.

"Putin has always positioned himself as someone who can talk to all sides," Borshchevskaya told the AP.

Putin has not made any explicit claims around Russia's stance over the Israel-Hamas war, though he publicly declared in early October that Moscow could play the role of mediator.

The Russian leader has condemned the Oct. 7 attack by Hamas militants, but at the same time warned Israel against blockading the Gaza strip, the AP reported.

— Karena Phan.

CLAIM: A video shows a soldier being thrown to the ground as an airstrike hits an Israeli tank.

THE FACTS: The imagery is computer generated and was taken from the trailer for a video game called Squad.

The video, which is circulating on X, the platform formerly known as Twitter, appears to show a soldier walking among military vehicles. As an armored vehicle comes up on his left, he waves his hand and says, "Let him through," before an airstrike hits the vehicle and the soldier is thrown to the ground.

One user shared the video with the caption, "The scene of the destruction of an Israeli tank in the attack of Hamas..."

Another post on X of the same video with a similar caption in Urdu had more than 18,000 likes.

But the clip is identical to the initial scenes of the trailer released for an update to the first-person shooter game Squad in December 2022.

Offworld Industries, the game developer that makes Squad, did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

This is not the first time clips of video game footage have been misrepresented as a real-life war. Video of the military simulation game Arma 3 has been shared as both footage of the latest Middle East conflict as well as the war in Ukraine.

— Karena Phan.

CLAIM: Pro-Palestinian rallies at the University of California, Los Angeles, and the University of Pennsylvania called for "Jewish genocide."

THE FACTS: The chant uttered in videos of recent demonstrations is being misrepresented. Protestors aren't saying "We want Jewish genocide," but "Israel, we charge you with genocide." Experts and advocates say it's a typical refrain heard at pro-Palestinian rallies.

One video being miscaptioned shows a group of people chanting protest slogans as they marched through the UCLA campus.

"In UCLA hundreds of students chanting: 'Israel Israel you can't hide, we want Jewish genocide,'" wrote one Instagram user in a post sharing the video. "This is not 1930s Germany, this is in Los Angeles October 26th 2023!"

Another video captures similar sounding protest chants at Penn's campus in Philadelphia on Oct. 16.

"Students @uofpenn gathered chanting 'We want Jewish genocide' 'there is only 1 solution' in reference to the Nazis 'final solution,'" wrote an Instagram user who shared the clip in a post. "There has possibly

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 143 ~ 74 of 89

never ever been a more dangerous time to be a Jewish student as Antisemitism continues to grow as a disease.”

But the anti-Israel chants are being misquoted, Jewish and pro-Palestinian groups say.

The protestors are actually chanting, “Israel, Israel, you can’t hide: We charge you with genocide,” the Anti-Defamation League, which frequently speaks out against anti-Semitism and extremism, confirmed in an Oct. 31 email.

It’s a familiar refrain at anti-Israel rallies, but non-Israel-related versions are also heard at other protests, the New York-based Jewish group noted on a page on its webpage debunking false information about the ongoing conflict.

Penn Students Against the Occupation, which organized the Penn rally, dismissed the claims as “blatant disinformation” in a statement posted on Instagram.

The chants at UCLA were similarly misquoted, the university said on a webpage correcting misinformation related to campus events.

Dan Gold, who heads Hillel UCLA, a major Jewish organization on campus, noted his organization has called out the rally for its harmful rhetoric in its public statements.

But he personally observed the protest and confirmed there was no direct call to exterminate Jews.

— Philip Marcelo.

CLAIM: An ad for British department store Marks & Spencer shows a Palestinian flag burning in a fireplace.

THE FACTS: The image shows red, green and silver paper hats — traditionally worn at British Christmas dinners — burning in a fireplace. It’s an outtake from a Christmas commercial filmed in August that was meant to “playfully” illustrate how people don’t enjoy some Christmas traditions, including donning the hats.

On social media, some had falsely claimed the image depicted a burning Palestinian flag.

“MARKS AND SPENCER SHOW THE PALESTINIAN FLAG BURNING IN A PROMO,” reads one post on X, formerly Twitter. “Their hashtag makes it clear that they intended to burn the Palestinian flag.”

But the image, which the company removed from its social media accounts after the issue arose, was meant to poke fun at a British Christmas tradition, not malign Palestinians, Marks & Spencer wrote in a statement shared on its social media sites on Nov. 1.

“Today we shared an outtake image from our Christmas Clothing and Home advert, which was recorded in August,” the statement reads. “It showed traditional, festive coloured red, green and silver Christmas paper party hats in a fire grate. While the intent was to playfully show that some people just don’t enjoy wearing paper Christmas hats over the festive season, we have removed the post following feedback and we apologise for any unintentional hurt caused.”

In a caption on its since-deleted Instagram post, Marks & Spencer wrote, “This Christmas, do only what you love... like saying no to paper hats (although, if we’re honest, we’re partial).” The sentiment is echoed in the final version of the commercial, which features “Queer Eye” fashion expert Tan France, singer Sophie Ellis Bextor, and actors Zawe Ashton and Hannah Waddingham.

The latest Israel-Hamas war began on Oct. 7 after Hamas launched a deadly incursion into southern Israeli towns — more than a month after the Marks & Spencer commercial was filmed.

Jewish protesters and allies block Israeli consulate in Chicago, demanding a cease-fire in Gaza

By CLAIRE SAVAGE Associated Press/Report for America

CHICAGO (AP) — Hundreds of Jewish peace activists and their allies converged at a major train station in downtown Chicago during rush hour Monday morning, blocking the entrance to the Israeli consulate and demanding U.S. support for an Israel cease-fire as battles rage in northern Gaza.

Midwestern Jews and allies traveled to Chicago from Iowa, Missouri, Minnesota, Michigan, Indiana, Wisconsin and Illinois for the demonstration, organizers said.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 143 ~ 75 of 89

The Israeli consulate in Chicago is in a building connected to the Ogilvie Transportation Center, a major commuter rail station.

Over 100 protesters who had blocked escalators leading to the consulate were arrested for misdemeanor trespassing and escorted out of the building, according to Ben Lorber, who helped organize the protest led by Chicago chapters of Jewish Voice for Peace, IfNotNow, and Never Again Action. That information was not confirmed by Chicago police, who could not immediately provide information on the number and reasons for arrests, and how many demonstrators participated.

The fighting was triggered by Hamas' Oct. 7 surprise attack on Israel, whose response has led to thousands of deaths — and much destruction — across Gaza.

Advocacy group Jewish Voice for Peace led a similar sit-in in New York City's Grand Central Station on Oct. 27, where a sea of protesters filled the main concourse during evening rush hour, chanting slogans and unfurling banners demanding a cease-fire as Israel intensified its bombardment of the Gaza Strip. At least 200 demonstrators were detained by New York police officers.

And more than 300 people were arrested in Washington, D.C., on Oct. 19 for illegally demonstrating, and three people were charged with assaulting police after protesters descended on Capitol Hill to call for a cease-fire between Israel and Hamas.

The Chicago rally is unique from the previous Jewish Voice demonstrations because in the Midwest, "progressive Jewish communities are far smaller and separated by distance," according to an emailed press release from organizers.

Chicago protesters cheered Monday as police led demonstrators from the building with hands zip-tied behind their backs, many in black T-shirts that read, "Not in our name."

"We will not let a genocide happen in our name," said Clara Belitz of IfNotNow Chicago during an Instagram livestream of the protest. "Our Jewish values compel us to speak out." IfNotNow describes itself as a movement of American Jews organizing to end U.S. support of "the Israeli government's apartheid system."

A spokesperson for Metra, the city's commuter rail system, said that trains continued to run normally, but protesters blocked the southern exit and commuters were forced to leave the station through other doors.

"They shut down access to our platforms from the 500 West Madison building," where the consulate is located, said Meg Reile, a spokesperson for Metra. "Trains continued to run throughout."

The Israeli consulate in Chicago did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Column: F1 learns it overestimated fan demand for Las Vegas, the most expensive race of the year

By JENNA FRYER AP Auto Racing Writer

LAS VEGAS (AP) — There is no such thing as a flawless first-year event, so go ahead and accept that there will be bumps and bruises in Formula One's \$500 million Las Vegas Grand Prix.

The warning signs were as bright as The Sphere when early pricing opened for this week's extravaganza, the most expensive grand prix to attend on this year's 24-race calendar.

With multimillion-dollar hospitality packages, exorbitant hotel rates and an initial average "get-in price" of about \$2,000, this race was never about attracting new fans to the global motorsports series or growing the American audience. F1 owner Liberty Media clearly viewed a race in Las Vegas as an international showstopper for the highest of the high rollers.

Renee Wilm, CEO of the grand prix, vowed "we will be sold out by the time of the event" on a Nov. 3 earnings call by Formula One Group.

Well, the big race has finally arrived and tickets are still available, both directly and on a dramatically reduced secondary market. Hotel prices along the Strip have plummeted and all signs suggest first-time F1 race promoter Liberty appears to have grossly overshot the price point for drawing in new fans and spenders.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 143 ~ 76 of 89

Ticket prices slashed as much as 60% for some of the days ahead of Saturday night's race are only a small part of the behind-the-scenes heartburn. Locals were infuriated by the daily disruptions caused by construction of the 3.85-mile (6.2 kilometer) street circuit that utilizes a large portion of the Strip while highlighting several Las Vegas landmarks with a 17-turn layout that's been likened to a "flying pig."

There were early reports that F1 was demanding exorbitant licensing fees from any business that had a view of the track. F1 eventually relaxed its fees, but not before reportedly threatening to erect structures that would block the views. There are fresh concerns as to how casino employees will get to work once the Strip is closed so Max Verstappen can win another race in a season where he long ago clinched the championship.

The Caesars Palace Grand Prix ran in 1981 and 1982 on another mocked course, that time because it utilized a huge chunk of parking lot. This race has had almost two years of hype; this is F1's baby, backed by Liberty, which spent \$240 million to purchase property at the end of the Strip for construction of the paddock area and a permanent pit building.

That investment was included in one-time costs Greg Maffei, president and CEO of Liberty, highlighted when Ben Swinburne of Morgan Stanley asked on the earnings call "are you guys still expecting this sort of approaching \$500 million of revenue?"

"I think those revenue numbers approaching that (are) still a reasonable estimate on profitability," Maffei replied. "We've seen some one-time and start-up costs that may have been larger than anticipated. But remembering how this is impactful to us, not only directly, but indirectly, this is a very profitable race for us. Once we get past some of these initial start-up costs ... it will increase. Let's be clear, this year, we optimize for being there, being on time and having a great race.

"That's not to say we won't have some of (those) objectives next year, but I think we'll be able to optimize on other variables as well and increase profitability."

F1 and Liberty want Las Vegas to become a long-term fixture on the F1 schedule.

This week will be deemed a success by its promoters when all is said and done because F1's return to Las Vegas after 41 years is a star-studded entertainment event. When the race was announced in early 2022, Liberty was clearly chasing the Netflix-driven, newfound popularity of F1 within the United States.

Las Vegas' addition to the 2023 calendar is the third stop in the U.S. — more than any other country — and fifth in North America. Before the behind-the-scenes "Drive to Survive" docudrama that exploded at the height of the pandemic, Austin, Texas, was the home of the lone F1 stop in the U.S. until Miami was added in 2022. The U.S. last hosted three F1 races in one season in 1982.

But nothing about this weekend is targeted toward the new American fan, starting with the pricing or when cars are even on the track. The Saturday night race itself isn't scheduled to begin until 10 p.m. local — it is meant to be televised in Europe during the Sunday morning hours — and as such Las Vegas' nighttime temperatures are expected to make for the coldest race in series history.

There is plenty to do while waiting for the actual racing. The parties and special events run all week and feature "The Netflix Cup," a live event that will pit drivers from "Drive to Survive" and golfers from "Full Swing" in a match-play tournament.

Verstappen, who clinched a third consecutive world championship with six races remaining and has won 17 of 20 races this season, is unimpressed.

"First of all, I think we are there more for the show than the racing itself if you look at the layout of the track," Verstappen said. "But you know, I'm actually not that into it. I'm more like, 'I'll go there and do my thing and be gone again.'"

And that's the other problem with this ballyhooed event. Barring a complete disaster, Verstappen and Red Bull should win again this weekend and American racing fans don't find his dominance all that appealing. Viewership on ESPN this season is down 8% from last year, but his Nov. 5 win in Brazil was still the most-watched show that day on the sports network and averaged a larger audience in 18-to-34 demographic than the NASCAR championship finale, according to SportsMedia Watch.

F1 is still hitting high marks with its global audience, which appreciates the nuances of the racing series

and understands the best competition isn't usually for the win. F1 President Stefano Domenicali touched on that with investors.

"The other teams are still competing firstly, with tight battles all the way down the field at every event," Domenicali said on the earnings call. He noted that six different teams have scored podium finishes this season, and Ferrari, McLaren and Mercedes have improved.

"We have more battles left to witness for the remainder of the season, even with the number of teams shifting focus to their 2024 cars," Domenicali said. "With gaps in performance appearing to be closing over recent events, we hope for a real challenge for Max next year."

Ex-leader David Cameron makes shock return to UK government as Sunak rolls the dice with a shakeup

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — With his country mired in economic doldrums and his party trailing in the polls as an election nears, U.K. leader Rishi Sunak rolled the dice and shook up his government on Monday, appointing former Prime Minister David Cameron to the post of foreign secretary.

The move — called bold by Sunak's supporters and desperate by his critics — came in a Cabinet overhaul that saw Sunak jettison his powerful but controversial interior minister, Home Secretary Suella Braverman, in a bid to reset his faltering government.

The government hailed Cameron's experience, acquired as U.K. leader between 2010 and 2016, and said Sunak was building "a strong and united team" with a shuffle that tips the government's balance from the Conservative Party's hard right to the center.

But Sunak is taking a risk in giving a new political life to the leader responsible for the most divisive issue Britain has faced in years: Brexit.

The Conservatives have been in power for 13 years, but opinion polls for months have put them 15 to 20 points behind the opposition Labour Party amid a stagnating economy, persistently high inflation, an overstretched health care system and a wave of public sector strikes.

Cameron's appointment surprised seasoned politics-watchers. It's rare for a non-lawmaker to take a senior government post, and it has been half a century since a former prime minister held a Cabinet job. The government said Cameron had been appointed to Parliament's unelected upper chamber, the House of Lords, alongside his new job.

"I know it's not usual for a prime minister to come back in this way," the now-Lord Cameron acknowledged. "But I believe in public service."

"I hope that six years as prime minister, 11 years leading the Conservative Party, gives me some useful experience and contacts and relationships and knowledge that I can help the prime minister to make sure we build our alliances, we build partnerships with our friends, we deter our enemies and we keep our country strong," Cameron, 57, told broadcasters.

Cameron's foreign policy legacy is mixed. As prime minister, he backed a NATO-led military intervention in Libya in 2011 that toppled Moammar Gadhafi and deepened that country's chaos. In 2013, he tried and failed to gain Parliament's backing for U.K. airstrikes against President Bashar al-Assad's forces in Syria. He also announced a short-lived "golden era" in U.K.-China relations shortly before that relationship soured.

And he will be forever remembered as the unwitting author of Brexit, a rupture that roiled Britain's politics, economy and place in the world. Cameron called a 2016 EU membership referendum, confident the country would vote to stay in the bloc. He resigned the day after voters opted to leave.

Bronwen Maddox, director of international affairs think-tank Chatham House, said Cameron "will bring undoubted strengths into the top team and to the U.K.'s relationships abroad," where many will welcome him as "a heavyweight and moderate foreign secretary."

"The concern must be, however, that these could be outweighed by the controversial legacy he brings too," she said.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 143 ~ 78 of 89

Sunak was a strong backer of the winning "leave" side in the referendum. But his decision to appoint Cameron and dismiss Braverman will likely infuriate the Conservative Party's right wing and inflame tensions in the party that Sunak has sought to soothe. It could win back centrist voters dismayed by the party's lurch to the right, at risk of losing Brexit-backing working-class voters who switched support to the Conservatives from Labour during the last national election in 2019.

Prominent right-wing lawmaker Jacob Rees-Mogg said sacking Braverman was "a mistake, because Suella understood what the British voter thought and was trying to do something about it."

Sunak had been under growing pressure to fire Braverman — a hard-liner popular with the party's authoritarian wing — from one of the most senior jobs in government, responsible for handling immigration and policing.

Braverman, a 43-year-old lawyer, has become a leader of the party's populist wing by advocating ever-tougher curbs on migration and a war on human rights protections, liberal social values and what she has called the "tofu-eating wokerati." Last month she called migration a "hurricane" heading for Britain and described homelessness as "a lifestyle choice."

In a highly unusual attack on the police last week, Braverman said London's police force was ignoring lawbreaking by "pro-Palestinian mobs." She described demonstrators calling for a cease-fire in the Israel-Hamas war as "hate marchers." She repeated the claims in an article for the Times of London that was not approved in advance by the prime minister's office, as would usually be the case.

On Saturday, far-right protesters scuffled with police and tried to confront a large pro-Palestinian march by hundreds of thousands through the streets of London. Critics accused Braverman of helping to inflame tensions.

It was the final straw for Sunak, who fired her in a phone call on Monday morning.

Braverman said Monday that "it has been the greatest privilege of my life to serve as home secretary," adding that she would "have more to say in due course."

As home secretary, Braverman championed the government's stalled plan to send asylum-seekers who arrive in Britain in boats on a one-way trip to Rwanda. A U.K. Supreme Court ruling on whether the policy is legal is due on Wednesday.

Critics say Braverman has been positioning herself for a party leadership contest that could come if the Conservatives lose power in an election expected next year.

In other changes, Former Foreign Secretary James Cleverly moved to the Home Office to replace Braverman.

Sunak also named Victoria Atkins as the new health secretary and moved her predecessor, Steve Barclay, to the environment portfolio. Most other senior ministers kept their jobs, including Treasury chief Jeremy Hunt.

Last month Sunak tried to paint his government as a force of change, saying he would break a "30-year status quo" that includes the governments of Cameron and other Conservative predecessors. Opposition politicians accused him of zig-zagging in desperation by bringing Cameron back.

"A few weeks ago, Rishi Sunak said David Cameron was part of a failed status quo. Now he's bringing him back as his life raft," said Labour lawmaker Pat McFadden.

As well as bringing about Brexit, Cameron's government imposed years of public-spending cuts after the 2008 global financial crisis that have frayed the country's welfare system and state-funded health service. After leaving office he was caught up in a scandal over his lobbying for Greensill Capital, a financial services firm that later collapsed.

Tim Bale, a professor of politics at Queen Mary University of London, said Cameron's appointment was a sign of the government's "desperation."

"It's difficult to believe that this is going to impress voters, whether they are convinced Brexiteers who despise David Cameron for being a remainer or convinced remainers who despise David Cameron for holding and losing a referendum," Bale said.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 143 ~ 79 of 89

This year's Biden-Xi summit has better foundation but South China Sea and Taiwan risks won't go away

By KEN MORITSUGU Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — The course of events in the year since the last meeting between Presidents Joe Biden and Xi Jinping offers cautious hope that they will have better luck this time around. But it also shows how easily any agreement they reach could once again veer off course.

The U.S. and Chinese leaders meet Wednesday while attending the annual Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in San Francisco.

They go into the meeting on the back of five months of government-to-government talks that have accelerated in recent weeks and expanded to cultural and business exchanges. In contrast, the November 2022 meeting in Bali, Indonesia, took place after China had suspended talks to express anger over a visit by then-U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to Taiwan.

"This rests on a stronger foundation than the Bali meeting did," said Jude Blanchette, a China expert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. "Substantively and contextually this meeting is taking place in a moderately better environment."

But tensions over Taiwan and flare-ups between China and the Philippines in the South China Sea are a sobering reminder that an unexpected incident could set back efforts to improve ties, just as an apparently errant Chinese balloon did early this year.

Talk also only goes so far with the two governments fundamentally at odds over technology, defense, trade and Taiwan. Last month, the Biden administration expanded restrictions on technology exports to China.

Recent experience has shown that more frequent communication "does not exclude the continued expansion and escalation of America's preparations for war and high-tech deterrence against China, nor does it exclude China's corresponding countermeasures, protests and preparations," said Shi Yinhong, an international relations professor at Renmin University of China,

Rather than achieving major breakthroughs, the hope is that the leaders will set the tone for meaningful dialogue on a range of issues in the coming months, Blanchette said. "The more probable reality is it's going to be a little bit of that but we have a lot of speed bumps that can trip up the two at any point."

ONE YEAR IN US-CHINA RELATIONS

NOVEMBER 2022

Nov. 14: Biden meets Xi for three hours during the Group of 20 meeting in Bali, Indonesia, in his first in-person meeting with the Chinese leader since becoming president.

DECEMBER

Dec. 6: The Biden administration approves the sale of more than \$425 million of spare aircraft parts for Taiwan's F-16 fighters, C-130 transport planes and other U.S.-supplied weapons systems.

JANUARY 2023

Jan. 18: U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen meets Vice Premier Liu He in Zurich. It is the highest-ranking contact between the two countries since the Biden-Xi meeting in Bali.

FEBRUARY

Feb. 2: U.S.-China ties are upended by reports that a Chinese surveillance balloon is flying over the United States. Secretary of State Antony Blinken calls off a planned trip to China.

Feb. 18: Blinken tells Wang Yi, China's top foreign policy official, at a meeting in Munich that China must never send a surveillance balloon over the U.S. again. Wang criticizes the U.S. for shooting it down.

Feb. 21: A U.S. congressional delegation affirms America's commitment to democracy and freedom in a meeting in Taiwan with President Tsai Ing-wen.

MARCH

March 1: The U.S. approves the sale of \$619 million of missiles, launchers and other munitions for Taiwan's F-16 fighter jets.

MAY

May 10-11: Jake Sullivan, the U.S. national security adviser, tells Wang at talks in Vienna that the U.S.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 143 ~ 80 of 89

wants to move beyond the balloon incident.

May 26: A Chinese fighter jet flies in front of a U.S. reconnaissance plane over the South China Sea in what the U.S. military calls an "unnecessarily aggressive maneuver."

JUNE

June 2-4: China's Defense Minister Li Shangfu turns down a meeting with U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin at the Shangri-La defense dialogue in Singapore. On June 3, a Chinese navy ship cuts across the path of an American destroyer in the Taiwan Strait.

June 18-19: Blinken meets Xi and Wang in Beijing in what will become the first of four U.S. Cabinet-level officials to visit over two months.

JULY

July 8: Yellen travels to Beijing to meet officials including Vice Premier He Lifeng, who has taken over the economic portfolio from now former Vice Premier Liu He.

July 19: Chinese Vice President Han Zheng tells visiting U.S. climate envoy John Kerry that China is willing to work with the U.S. on reducing global warming as long as its political demands are met.

AUGUST

Aug. 23: The Biden administration approves the sale to Taiwan of \$500 million in infrared search tracking systems and related equipment for F-16 fighters.

Aug. 28-29: Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo, meeting senior officials in Beijing, rebuffs their appeals to reduce U.S. controls on technology exports to China.

SEPTEMBER

Sept. 9: Biden has a brief exchange with Chinese Premier Li Qiang while both are at the Group of 20 summit in India.

Sept. 11: A Chinese naval formation led by the aircraft carrier Shandong sails about 70 miles (110 kilometers) southeast of Taiwan to conduct drills simulating air, submarine, sea and land attacks.

Sept. 16-17: Sullivan and Wang hold 12 hours of talks in Malta.

Sept. 17: China's military sends 103 aircraft toward Taiwan in a 24-hour period, an unusually high number. Chinese warplanes fly toward the island and back on almost a daily basis.

Sept. 18: Chinese Vice President Han Zheng holds talks with Blinken during the U.N. General Assembly in New York.

Sept. 22: The U.S. Treasury Department and China's Ministry of Finance launch working groups to discuss economic and financial issues.

OCTOBER

Oct. 9: Xi meets U.S. Senate delegation led by Majority Leader Chuck Schumer. It's the first congressional delegation to visit China in four years.

Oct. 17: The U.S. broadens its export controls to stop China from acquiring advanced computer chips and the equipment to manufacture them.

Oct. 18: Russian President Vladimir Putin meets Xi in Beijing on a rare trip abroad to attend China's Belt and Road Forum. China and the U.S. are divided over the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Oct. 22: Chinese ships collide with two Philippine ships delivering supplies to troops in the South China Sea, prompting a warning from the U.S. that it would defend the Philippines in case of an armed attack.

Oct. 24: A Chinese fighter jet flies within 10 feet (3 meters) of an American B-52 bomber flying over the South China Sea in a nighttime intercept. Separately, China announces the dismissal of Defense Minister Li Shangfu with no explanation why.

Oct. 25: Xi has a surprise meeting with California Gov. Gavin Newsom, who is on a weeklong visit to China to deepen cooperation on climate.

Oct. 27: Wang meets Biden in Washington, D.C., as well as Sullivan and Blinken as two sides hammer out details for a Biden-Xi summit. Wang meets Biden, Sullivan and Blinken in Washington, D.C.

Oct. 30: The U.S. sends the Pentagon's top China official to China's annual Xiangshan forum on security. China's Vice President Han Zheng meets two American veterans who were part of the Flying Tigers command that helped defend China against Japan in World War II.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 143 ~ 81 of 89

NOVEMBER

Nov 2: U.S. farm industry groups hold forum in Beijing to strengthen agricultural trade. American Ballet Theatre opens its first tour to China in a decade.

Nov. 4-7: Climate envoys John Kerry and Xie Zhenhua meet in California ahead of a U.N. climate change conference that starts on Nov. 30 in Dubai.

Nov. 6: The U.S. and China hold arms control talks in Washington. The U.S. has expressed concern about China's growing nuclear arsenal.

Nov 9: The Chinese and U.S. militaries discuss via video link the search for the remains of American prisoners of war and missing personnel.

Nov. 9-10: Vice Premier He Lifeng travels to San Francisco to meet Yellen, who says the talks helped lay the groundwork for a productive Biden-Xi summit.

Nov. 10: Members of the Philadelphia Orchestra perform in Beijing to mark 50th anniversary of its historic 1973 visit.

Nov. 15: Xi and Biden holding summit during Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation meeting in San Francisco.

South Carolina Sen. Tim Scott abruptly ends 2024 presidential bid, shocking even his campaign staff

By MEG KINNARD Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — Republican presidential candidate Tim Scott abruptly announced late Sunday that he was dropping out of the 2024 race, a development that surprised his donors and stunned his campaign staff just two months before the start of voting in Iowa's leadoff GOP caucuses.

The South Carolina senator, who entered the race in May with high hopes, made the surprise announcement on Fox News Channel's "Sunday Night in America" with Trey Gowdy, one of his closest friends. The news was so unanticipated that one campaign worker told The Associated Press that campaign staff found out Scott was dropping out by watching the show.

"I love America more today than I did on May 22," Scott said Sunday. "But when I go back to Iowa, it will not be as a presidential candidate. I am suspending my campaign. I think the voters who are the most remarkable people on the planet have been really clear that they're telling me, 'Not now, Tim.'"

Scott's impending departure comes as he and the rest of the GOP field have struggled in a race that has been dominated by former President Donald Trump. Despite four criminal indictments and a slew of other legal challenges, Trump continues to poll far ahead of his rivals, leading many in the party to conclude the race is effectively over, barring some stunning change of fortune.

Scott, in particular, has had trouble gaining traction in the polls, despite millions spent on his behalf by high-profile donors. In his efforts to run a positive campaign, he was often overshadowed by other candidates — particularly on the debate stage, where he seemed to disappear as others sparred. It was unclear whether Scott would qualify for the upcoming fourth debate, which will require higher polling numbers and more donors.

Scott is the second major candidate to leave the race since the end of October. Former Vice President Mike Pence suspended his campaign two weeks ago, announcing at a Republican Jewish Coalition gathering in Las Vegas that "This is not my time." Pence, however, was polling behind Scott and was in a far more precarious financial position.

Scott said he wouldn't immediately be endorsing any of his remaining Republican rivals.

"The voters are really smart," Scott said. "The best way for me to be helpful is to not weigh in on who they should endorse."

He also appeared to rule out serving as vice president, saying the No. 2 slot "has never been on my to-do list for this campaign, and it's certainly not there now."

Scott's departure leaves Nikki Haley, Trump's first United Nations ambassador and the former South Carolina governor, as the sole South Carolinian in the race. As governor, Haley appointed Scott — then

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 143 ~ 82 of 89

newly elected to his second U.S. House term — to the Senate in 2012, and the fact that both were in the 2024 race had created an uncomfortable situation for many of the donors and voters who had supported them both through the years.

It also sparked some unpleasant on-stage moments during the first three GOP debates, with the long-time allies — who for a time had also shared political consultants — trading tense jabs. After the surprise announcement, some of Scott's donors said they would be switching to back Haley in the primary.

In a post on X on Sunday night, Haley called Scott "a good man of faith and an inspiration to so many," adding that the GOP primary "was made better by his participation in it."

Scott's team was so surprised by his exit that just 13 minutes before he announced his departure, his campaign sent out an email soliciting supporters for donations to further Scott's "strong leadership and optimistic, positive vision to lead our country forward." Saying that "EVERYTHING is on the line" to win the White House, the email went on offering readers "ONE LAST CHANCE to donate this weekend and help Tim reach his campaign goal."

Scott held an all-staff call after the Gowdy interview, explaining his decision to end his bid and reiterating what he said on TV, according to a senior campaign staffer.

But campaign staffers expressed their extreme irritation to the AP in light of the candidate recently shifting staff and money from New Hampshire to Iowa in an effort to boost his standing in the leadoff caucus.

The senior staffer characterized the experience as incredibly frustrating, saying that staff had been working around the clock to accommodate the move, only to completely reverse it. As with the campaign worker who said Scott's staff found out about his departure by watching the senator on TV, the worker was not authorized to discuss the internal deliberations publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Many donors were surprised and saddened by Scott's announcement, though they praised him for stepping aside to give Republicans a chance to coalesce behind a Trump alternative.

Eric Levine, a New York-based donor who was raising money for Scott, said he was caught totally off-guard.

"He stepped aside with dignity. He is a true patriot. I could not have been prouder to have supported him," said Levine, a vocal Trump critic. He said he would now be supporting Haley.

"She is our last best hope to defeat Donald Trump and then take back the White House," Levine said.

Chad Walldorf, a South Carolina businessman and longtime Scott supporter and donor, thought Scott's decision was in the best interest of the Republican Party.

"I've always thought the field needs to winnow quickly so we can get behind a good alternative to Trump, so I greatly respect Tim for unselfishly stepping aside rather than waiting until too late," said Walldorf, who added he's now backing Haley.

Mikee Johnson, a South Carolina businessman and Scott donor who served as his national finance co-chairman, told the AP that he knew before Scott's TV appearance that he would be suspending his campaign.

"He is honorable, knows his supporters were prepared to support him for the duration, and was not going to ask that of his friends and supporters," said Johnson. "He is energized and ready for the next phase. ... I told him I did not have a single regret."

Many of Scott's former 2024 rivals issued statements Sunday night wishing him well.

On social media, DeSantis commended him as a "strong conservative with bold ideas about how to get our country back on track," adding, "I respect his courage to run this campaign and thank him for his service to America and the U.S. Senate."

Pence called Scott "a man of faith and integrity who brought his optimistic vision and inspiring personal story to people all across this country."

Trump's campaign did not immediately respond to news of Scott's exit. But Trump has been careful not to criticize the senator, leading some in his orbit to consider Scott a potential vice presidential pick.

The former president and his team had welcomed a large field of rivals, believing they would splinter the anti-Trump vote and prevent a clear challenger from emerging.

Scott's next political move is unclear. He has said that his 2022 Senate reelection would be his last and has at times been mentioned as a possible candidate for South Carolina governor, which is next up in 2026.

Gov. Henry McMaster, a Trump backer, is term-limited, and the GOP primary is expected to be heated.

Rescuers dig to reach 40 workers trapped in collapsed road tunnel in north India

By BISWAJEET BANERJEE Associated Press

LUCKNOW, India (AP) — Rescuers were digging through dirt and parts of a collapsed road tunnel Monday to reach 40 workers trapped by a landslide at the construction project in northern India.

All of the construction workers are safe, police officer Prashant Kumar said, adding that they have been supplied with oxygen and water. He said the rescuers had established contact with the trapped individuals.

The collapse occurred Sunday in Uttarakhand, a mountainous state dotted with Hindu temples that attracts many pilgrims and tourists.

Massive construction of buildings and roadways have taken place in recent years in Uttarakhand. The trapped workers were building part of the Chardham all-weather road, a flagship federal government project connecting various Hindu pilgrimage sites.

The number of workers trapped was confirmed Monday by Rajesh Pawar, the project manager at the Navyug Construction Company, which is overseeing the construction of the tunnel.

Rescue efforts began Sunday, with authorities pumping oxygen through a pipe into the collapsed section of the tunnel to help workers breathe.

“The team has progressed 15 meters (yards) into the tunnel, with an additional 35 meters (yards) yet to cover,” Kumar said, adding that more than 150 rescuers had used drilling equipment and excavators to clear debris through the night.

The collapsed portion of the 4.5-kilometer (2.7-mile) tunnel is about 200 meters (500 feet) from the entrance, officials told the Press Trust of India news agency.

In January, Uttarakhand state authorities moved hundreds of people to temporary shelters after a temple collapsed and cracks appeared in over 600 houses because of the sinking of land in and around Joshimath town in the region.

In crowded field of psychedelic startups, Filament CEO makes case for ‘natural’ drugs

By MATTHEW PERRONE AP Health Writer

A recent boom in psychedelic research has given way to a bumper crop of startups seeking to harness the potential of mind-altering drugs for treating depression, addiction and other conditions.

In this crowded field, Vancouver-based Filament Health has a unique approach: extracting drugs like psilocybin and mescaline from natural sources, including mushrooms and cacti, rather than synthesizing the ingredients in a laboratory.

Filament is studying its mushroom-based psilocybin as a treatment for opioid and stimulant use disorder. And more than a dozen other companies and academic centers are using the company’s drugs in trials of depression, chronic pain and other disorders.

Filament CEO Benjamin Lightburn spoke with The Associated Press about the ethical, therapeutic and medical case for using naturally derived psychedelics. The answers have been edited for length and clarity.

Q: What do you mean by “natural psychedelics” and how are they produced?

A: It means we’re deriving them from natural sources, like plants and fungi, because that is in fact the way that humanity has been interacting with these substances in their natural form for thousands of years. It’s only recently that we had access to synthetic chemical manufacturing techniques.

Since our products come from natural sources, we believe it allows people to maintain a certain connection to how humans have been ingesting these substances for years and years and to important aspects of many traditional communities.

A natural product contains much more than just one single active compound, right? And so in the case

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 143 ~ 84 of 89

of magic mushrooms, for instance, they contain much more than just psilocybin. They contain other compounds like psilocin and a dozen or more other active ingredients.

Just like when you drink a cup of coffee there is much more than just caffeine. There's a whole entourage of different compounds, which in the case of coffee gives it a flavor, aroma and terroir.

Q: Do you think patients will be able to tell the difference when they take these drugs?

A: It's our hypothesis that the presence of these other compounds may contribute to differences or perhaps even improvements in the therapeutic potential of these complex natural mixtures. After all, these substances did evolve in nature alongside humans.

Q: Your company also prioritizes ethically and sustainably harvesting these plants. How does that work?

A: The iboga plant, which contains the psychedelic ibogaine, is probably the best example of that at Filament. We've been working with groups in West Africa, in Gabon, where the iboga plant is indigenous and, in fact, is also involved with important cultural practices by the Bwiti people.

So it's very important for us to make sure that any source of supply that's being imported from overseas, it's being done sustainably, No. 1, of course. And No. 2, that the proper procedures for informed consent with the local indigenous community are put in place and procedures for reciprocity and equitable benefit sharing.

We obviously believe in sharing the benefit of any commercial products that get manufactured back with the local community who, after all, have been stewarding and shepherding this cultural resource for the previous millennia.

Q: What is the advantage of all of these practices when there are so many competitors in the psychedelic space?

A: We're really the only one that is focused 100% on natural. And we've actually been able to successfully manufacture these products and get them into clinical trials.

There is a ton of interest from different researchers all around the world to use our psychedelic drugs. And there's a lot of interest, I think, from the investment community to fund our own internal drug development.

If you believe psychedelics are a thing that's going to be here to stay and you believe that people are going to at least want a choice to have a natural psychedelic product, then I think it's fair to say that Filament is going to be sticking around for the long haul.

Nikki Haley will launch a \$10M ad campaign to try to overtake Ron DeSantis in the GOP primary

By STEVE PEOPLES AP National Political Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Nikki Haley's presidential campaign will reserve \$10 million in television, radio and digital advertising across Iowa and New Hampshire beginning in the first week of December, a massive investment designed to give the former United Nations ambassador an advantage over Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis at a critical moment in the GOP nomination fight.

Details of the advertising plans, which represent the Haley campaign's first official advertising reservation, were obtained by The Associated Press ahead of a public announcement expected Monday. Haley's planned investment, as of now, is more than five times larger than DeSantis' current advertising reserves for the same time period, according to the media tracking firm AdImpact.

Haley's move comes as she fights to emerge as the clear alternative to former President Donald Trump to represent the GOP against President Joe Biden next fall. DeSantis stands as Haley's strongest competition for her party's second-place slot, although the Florida governor's campaign has shown signs of financial strain following a tumultuous summer.

Trump remains the overwhelming front-runner in the GOP primary. Rival campaigns are betting that if they can emerge as the main alternative to Trump that they can consolidate enough support to mount a strong challenge against him or replace him if he falters. Trump faces four criminal indictments, including a

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 143 ~ 85 of 89

case focusing on his efforts to overturn his 2020 general election defeat in Georgia and another on felony charges for working to overturn the results of the 2020 election in the run-up to the violent Jan. 6, 2021 riot by his supporters at the U.S. Capitol.

In U.S. politics, fundraising and advertising strategy can often be more consequential than a candidate's policies or personality. But money raised and spent by campaigns only tell part of the story in the 2024 election.

South Carolina Sen. Tim Scott, whose allied super PAC had booked \$7.5 million in ads through Iowa's Jan. 15 caucuses, dropped out of the race late Sunday. Scott had struggled to register in polls nationally and October polls found him trailing far behind Trump and Haley, his fellow South Carolinian.

Haley will run her advertising through Iowa's Jan. 15 caucuses and New Hampshire's primary to follow. As of now, the DeSantis campaign is spending only in Iowa.

Haley's campaign declined to say whether the ads would attack DeSantis or Trump directly. But campaign manager Betsy Ankney called out DeSantis' campaign, which after winning the endorsement of Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds argued that Haley and others in the GOP field could only be "spoilers."

"Nikki Haley's momentum and path to victory are clear," Ankney said. "The same can't be said for Ron DeSantis, who, even with a decent showing in Iowa, can't afford a cup of coffee at the Red Arrow diner in New Hampshire and is a mere tourist in South Carolina."

DeSantis' campaign reported just \$5 million available to spend in the primary at the end of September, although spokesman Andrew Romeo said DeSantis raised millions more last month, including \$1 million since last week's GOP presidential debate.

"As Americans look behind the curtain, they will see (Haley) does not have the extensive record of conservative achievements that Ron DeSantis boasts," Romeo said Monday in response to Haley's advertising plans. "It's clear there is no way Nikki Haley can beat Donald Trump, and every dollar spent on her candidacy is an in-kind to the Trump Campaign. ... We are confident the Iowa voters will see who will best represent them and their values."

The DeSantis campaign, which has gone through two rounds of layoffs already, continues to look to an allied super PAC to help build out campaign infrastructure and supplement advertising spending. Haley's campaign has also leaned on an allied super PAC to keep pace with DeSantis' allies in recent months. The rival super PACs have largely kept pace with each other.

As of Sunday, Haley's super PAC had reserved nearly \$4.9 million in advertising from Monday through January compared to almost \$4 million reserved by DeSantis' super PAC, according to AdImpact.

DeSantis' opponents flagged another shift in spending as a potential sign of financial stress. The pro-DeSantis Never Back Down moved late last week to shift roughly \$700,000 in advertising initially set to run this month into January instead. The move leaves DeSantis with no advertising in New Hampshire whatsoever over the next two weeks.

Kristin Davison, who leads Never Back Down, said no advertising dollars were "cut." Instead, she said they were "optimized and placed to complement (the) campaign and get January started."

Future advertising reserves don't require payment until just before the ads run, while the bill for this month's ads were about to come due. In short, the maneuver could have been a way to save money in the short term, although Davison described the decision as standard operating procedure.

Davison expressed optimism about the direction of the DeSantis campaign, pointing to Reynolds' endorsement last week, which was "not only a huge endorsement and validator for Gov. DeSantis, but also a real setback for Nikki Haley."

"I think it effectively kills her in Iowa not to have the governor's support," Davison said.

As DeSantis and Haley intensify their rivalry, Trump continues to dominate in polling and fundraising.

In his most recent federal filing, Trump's campaign committee reported more than \$37.5 million cash on hand at the end of September, which was more than DeSantis and Haley combined.

Haley acknowledged Trump's political strength on Sunday, but she also outlined her path forward.

"We have plenty of money that we're going to be on TV with," she said on "Fox News Sunday." "We're going to be strong in New Hampshire. We're going to be strong in South Carolina, because we spent our

money well. We've got great ground games in every one of those states. And we're going to keep surging."

Biden's initial confidence on Israel gives way to the complexities and casualties of a brutal war

By ZEKE MILLER AP White House Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — In the early days and hours after the horrific Hamas attack on Israeli civilians on Oct. 7, President Joe Biden spoke with stark declarations and unqualified support for the longtime U.S. ally.

Now, a month on, that unambiguous backing has given way to the complexities and haunting casualties of the war, and the Biden administration is imploring Israel to rein in some of its tactics to ease civilian suffering in Gaza.

As condemnation of the conflict has grown around the world, stoking anti-Israel sentiment, the Democratic president is also confronting the limits of the U.S. ability to direct the outcome — not only about the war, but what comes after it.

"There's no going back to the status quo as it stood on October the 6th," Biden said three weeks after the attack. But even if Israel is successful in crippling or eradicating Hamas, there will also need to be a shift in Washington, where successive U.S. administrations have sought to manage the Middle East conflict and where the political will has been lacking to devise ways to end it.

And yet the path forward is uncertain, at best. "It's entirely unclear if there is a 'morning after,'" said Shibley Telhami, the Anwar Sadat Professor for Peace and Development at the University of Maryland. He noted this could be "an extended period of violence at a different scale for many, many months or years to come."

"But if there is something possible, they can't just put a plan on the table," he added. "They have to take new American positions of their own, that are transformative, that are different, that are like something we have not seen."

Telhami said after his staunch support for Israel, the president would need to take equally dramatic steps to secure buy-in from Palestinians to bring about a political resolution to the conflict, starting with reining in Israeli settlements in the West Bank that Palestinians view as infringing on their future state.

In recent weeks, U.S. officials have held internal discussions and talks with allies on post-Hamas governance in Gaza, and resurrected talk of working toward a two state solution, with, as Biden expressed Sunday to Qatar's emir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, a "future Palestinian state where Israelis and Palestinians can live side by side with equal measures of stability and dignity."

Yet there has been little progress on how to get there, and some in the Biden administration have grown increasingly worried that the mounting death toll in Gaza will make that aim even more difficult.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, who last week appeared to criticize Israel for not doing enough to minimize harm to civilians among whom Israel says Hamas seeks shelter, has called for a return to unified Palestinian governance over the West Bank and Gaza under the beleaguered Palestinian Authority. The internationally recognized group lost control over Gaza to Hamas in 2007, and is viewed skeptically among its own populace for perceived cooperation with Israel.

Jake Sullivan, Biden's national security adviser, on Sunday went further, laying out a vision of what the U.S. sees as a path forward, but one that still has no buy-in from key players in the region.

In an interview on CBS' "Face the Nation," Sullivan said that "the basic principles of the way forward are straightforward." That path, he said, included "no reoccupation of Gaza, no forcible displacement of the Palestinian people. Gaza can never be used as a base for terrorism in the future and Gaza's territory should not be reduced."

The Palestinian Authority has openly dismissed that notion. "We are not going to go to Gaza on an Israeli military tank," Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh told PBS recently.

"The Palestinian Authority is saying it doesn't want to take on the task that the Biden administration is pushing unless it gets some kind of real commitment to a major diplomatic initiative leading to a two-state outcome," said Nathan Brown, professor of political science and international affairs at George Washington

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 143 ~ 87 of 89

University.

Within the Democratic Party, there are also clear signs of discord. Nearly half of Democrats disapprove of how President Joe Biden is handling the Israel-Hamas conflict, according to a new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research — showing a deep divide within his party over the war.

In Congress, so far there is no consensus about Biden's proposal to pass an aid package that includes assistance to Israel, Ukraine and Taiwan, and additional money to address issues at the southern border of the U.S.

There are also emerging signs of division between the U.S. and Israeli positions on the war's endgame, with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu insisting that Israel will retain security control over Gaza for the long term, a stance the White House has rejected, and ruling out alternatives like an international monitoring force.

"The only force right now that can guarantee that Hamas, that terrorism is not — does not reappear and take over Gaza, again, is the Israeli military," Netanyahu told NBC's "Meet the Press." "So overall, military responsibility will have to be in Israel."

And in an interview with CNN's "State of the Union," Netanyahu appeared to rule out returning Gaza to the Palestinian Authority, saying whatever group takes over must "demilitarize" and "de-radicalize Gaza."

"There has to be a reconstructed civilian authority," he said of the Palestinian Authority. "There has to be something else."

More than 1,200 Israelis, mostly civilians, were killed when Hamas fighters launched a surprise attack on Israeli border communities, in the deadliest day for Jews since the Holocaust. Nearly 240 — including children and the elderly — remain captive in Gaza, Israeli officials say. Israel's war to "destroy" Hamas in Gaza has killed more than 11,000 people, the Health Ministry in Hamas-run Gaza says, though it doesn't differentiate between civilians and fighters. The U.S. believes thousands of women and children are among the dead.

Until Hamas' attack, Biden's administration had largely relegated the region on the back burner, as it focused first on a pivot to Asia then on responding to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Now, Biden faces a challenge that has splintered his political support at home and the unity of U.S. allies abroad.

"Clearly, Israel has the military ability to take out Hamas," said Senate Intelligence committee chairman Sen. Mark Warner, D-Va., on "Fox News Sunday." "But this is also a battle about hearts and minds -- hearts and minds in terms of maintaining support for Israel in this country, in the world and in the region."

Military training efforts for Ukraine hit major milestones even as attention shifts to Gaza

By JOHN LEICESTER Associated Press

A FRENCH ARMY BASE, France (AP) — Battle cries pierce the smoke and rat-a-tat-tat of gunfire as Ukrainian soldiers fight through and take enemy trenches and dugouts that hide gruesome, bloody remains.

"Grenade!" one screams in Ukrainian. Another yells: "Let's go, let's go, let's go, let's go!"

This time, no lives or limbs were lost. Because this time, the rounds fired were blanks and the "enemy" troops were, in fact, French soldiers whose intention was not to kill the Ukrainians but instead to help shape them into better, more lethal warriors.

But soon, the war games these troops played in the mud in France will become all too real, when the Ukrainians return home and are sent to the front lines against Russia's forces.

As the Russian invasion grinds into a second winter and casualties — already estimated in the hundreds of thousands — continue to mount on both sides, combat training programs provided by Ukraine's allies are helping it hold out and its odds of eventual victory. By continuing to prepare Ukrainian troops for battle even as the Israel-Hamas war diverts global attention, Ukraine's backers also are making concrete their promises to stick with it for the long haul.

France is on course to have trained 7,000 Ukrainians this year — some in Poland, others at French bases — as part of a European Union military assistance mission for Ukraine that launched a year ago

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 143 ~ 88 of 89

this week. The French army granted The Associated Press access to a training base in rural France last week to observe the latest class of Ukrainian infantrymen being put through its paces at the tail end of a four-week course.

The EU mission's initial goal was to train 15,000 soldiers, but it has far exceeded that target and now expects to hit 35,000 by the end of this year. All but three of the EU's 27 member countries, plus non-member Norway, have provided training courses or instructors, the EU Commission says.

The United States has trained about 18,000, mostly in Germany, with an additional 1,000 in the pipeline, the Pentagon says.

In Britain, 30,000 have learned soldiering in the past 17 months, a training program the U.K. government says is unprecedented since World War II.

As well as basic training with weapons, battlefield first aid and other skills, instructors are also imparting specialized military know-how, ranging from clearing mines and launching waterborne attacks aboard small boats to equipment repair, officer training and even help for Ukrainian military chaplains.

With their return to Ukraine just days away, the grimness of the future that awaits the trainees at the French base was perceptible in the men's determined, unsmiling looks. Civilians not long ago, they now carried themselves like soldiers. They addressed each other with nicknames. There was liberal swearing as the men caught their breaths after storming trenches with fake grenades and blank rounds.

French instructors left animal remains in the complex of dugouts and ditches to harden the troops to battlefield bloodshed. Only the officers had previous front-line experience, the chief French training officer said.

He said Ukraine is looking to France for tactics and know-how that could help its forces bust through Russian defenses. Because of French military concerns for the base's security, the officer, Lt. Col. Even, could only be identified by his rank and first name.

"One can clearly see in Ukraine that the front line is relatively frozen, with two belligerents who employ very similar doctrines," he said. "So today, one of the keys being sought in an attempt to break this inertia is to try to develop maneuvering schemes that can bother and even shake up the adversary."

As well as seeing their assault on freshly dug trenches, the AP also observed Ukrainians vigorously defending a mock-up village against a French "enemy" attack and concealing themselves in rain-drenched woodlands. Translators bridged the language gap between the soldiers and their French hosts.

French trainers said they've learned through experience that it's unwise to get too friendly with the trainees — because some of them are sure to be killed back home. Despite sharing the bonding discomforts of long days and nights in the French wilds, they sever ties when the training is done, with soldiers under orders not to swap phone numbers or other contacts.

"You have to burn bridges because otherwise you ask yourselves too many questions. When you find out that this or that person is dead, you're bound to ask yourself what you did wrong: 'Did we work enough on this or that tactic? Should I have insisted more on this point?'" said one of the instructors, Capt. Xavier.

"We're doing our utmost," he said. "Asking yourself afterward what you did wrong or could have done better is torturing yourself for nothing."

Today in History: November 14

Marshall University football team killed in plane crash

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, Nov. 14, the 318th day of 2023. There are 47 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Nov. 14, 1970, a chartered Southern Airways plane crashed while trying to land in West Virginia, killing all 75 people on board, including the Marshall University football team and its coaching staff.

On this date:

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 143 ~ 89 of 89

In 1851, Herman Melville's novel "Moby-Dick; Or, The Whale" was published in the United States, almost a month after being released in Britain.

In 1910, Eugene B. Ely became the first aviator to take off from a ship as his Curtiss pusher rolled off a sloping platform on the deck of the scout cruiser USS Birmingham off Hampton Roads, Virginia.

In 1915, Black leader and educator Booker T. Washington died in Tuskegee, Alabama at age 59.

In 1940, during World War II, German planes destroyed most of the English town of Coventry.

In 1965, the U.S. Army's first major military operation of the Vietnam War began with the start of the five-day Battle of Ia Drang.

In 1969, Apollo 12 blasted off for the moon, three months after Apollo 11 became the first manned mission to land on it.

In 1972, the Dow Jones Industrial Average closed above the 1,000 level for the first time, ending the day at 1,003.16.

In 1973, Britain's Princess Anne married Captain Mark Phillips in Westminster Abbey.

In 1996, singer Michael Jackson married his plastic surgeon's nurse, Debbie Rowe, in a ceremony in Sydney, Australia.

In 1997, a jury in Fairfax, Virginia, decided that Pakistani national Aimal Khan Kasi (eye-MAHL' kahn KAH'-see) should get the death penalty for gunning down two CIA employees outside agency headquarters. (Five years later on this date, Kasi was executed.)

In 2012, Israel said it had killed the leader of Hamas' military wing in a wave of airstrikes launched in response to days of rocket fire out of Hamas-ruled Gaza.

In 2013, former Boston crime boss James "Whitey" Bulger was led off to prison to begin serving a life sentence at 84 for his murderous reign in the 1970s and '80s.

In 2020, Donald Trump supporters unwilling to accept Democrat Joe Biden's election victory gathered in cities across the country including Washington, D.C., where thousands rallied.

In 2021, a 9-year-old Dallas boy became the tenth and youngest person to die from injuries sustained during a crowd surge at the Astroworld music festival in Houston nine days earlier.

In 2022, a University of Virginia student shot and killed three members of the school's football team as they returned to campus from a field trip.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Kathleen Hughes is 95. Former NASA astronaut Fred Haise is 90. Composer Wendy Carlos is 84. Britain's King Charles III is 75. Rock singer-musician James Young (Styx) is 74. Singer Stephen Bishop is 72. Blues musician Anson Funderburgh is 69. Pianist Yanni is 69. Former U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice is 69. Former presidential adviser Valerie Jarrett is 67. Actor Laura San Giacomo (JEE'-ah-koh-moh) is 62. Actor D.B. Sweeney is 62. Rapper Reverend Run (Run-DMC) is 59. Actor Patrick Warburton is 59. Rock musician Nic Dalton is 59. Country singer Rockie Lynne is 59. Pop singer Jeanette Jurado (Expose) is 58. Retired MLB All-Star pitcher Curt Schilling is 57. Rock musician Brian Yale is 55. Rock singer Butch Walker is 54. Actor Josh Duhamel (du-MEHL') is 51. Rock musician Travis Barker is 48. Contemporary Christian musician Robby Shaffer is 48. Actor Brian Dietzen is 46. Rapper Shyheim is 46. Rock musician Tobin Esperance (Papa Roach) is 44. Actor Olga Kurylenko is 44. Actor-comedian Vanessa Bayer is 42. Actor Russell Tovey is 42. New York Mets shortstop Francisco Lindor is 30. Actor Cory Michael Smith is 37. Actor Graham Patrick Martin is 32. NHL forward Taylor Hall is 32.