

Groton Daily Independent

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Coming up

Saturday, Nov. 25

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

Sunday, Nov. 26

United Methodist: Conde worship, 8:30 a.m.; Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Groton worship, 10:30 a.m. (No Sunday school)

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

Snow Queen Contest, 4 p.m., GHS Gym

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

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

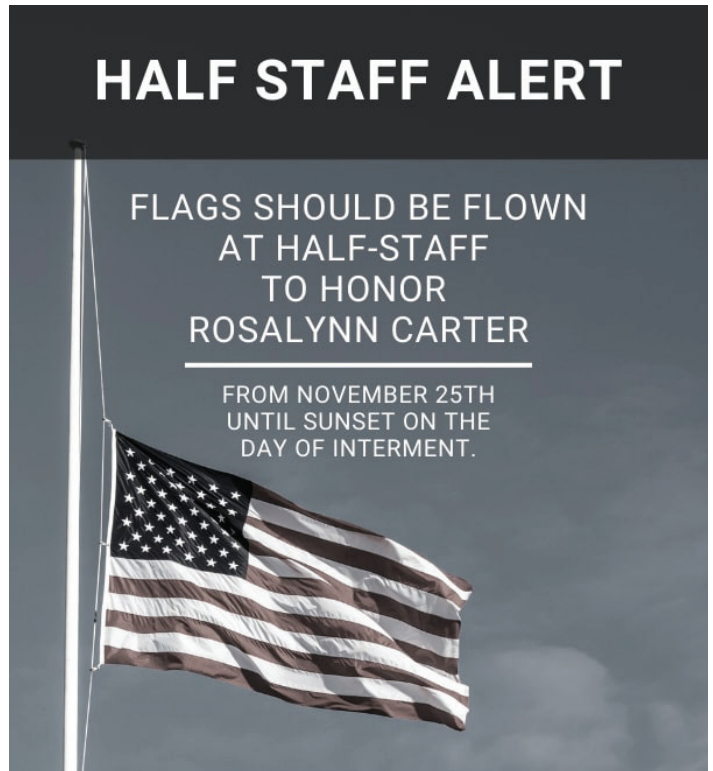
First Presbyterian Church: Bible Study, 9:30 a.m.; Worship, 11 a.m.



HALF STAFF ALERT

FLAGS SHOULD BE FLOWN
AT HALF-STAFF
TO HONOR
ROSALYNN CARTER

FROM NOVEMBER 25TH
UNTIL SUNSET ON THE
DAY OF INTERMENT.



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

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

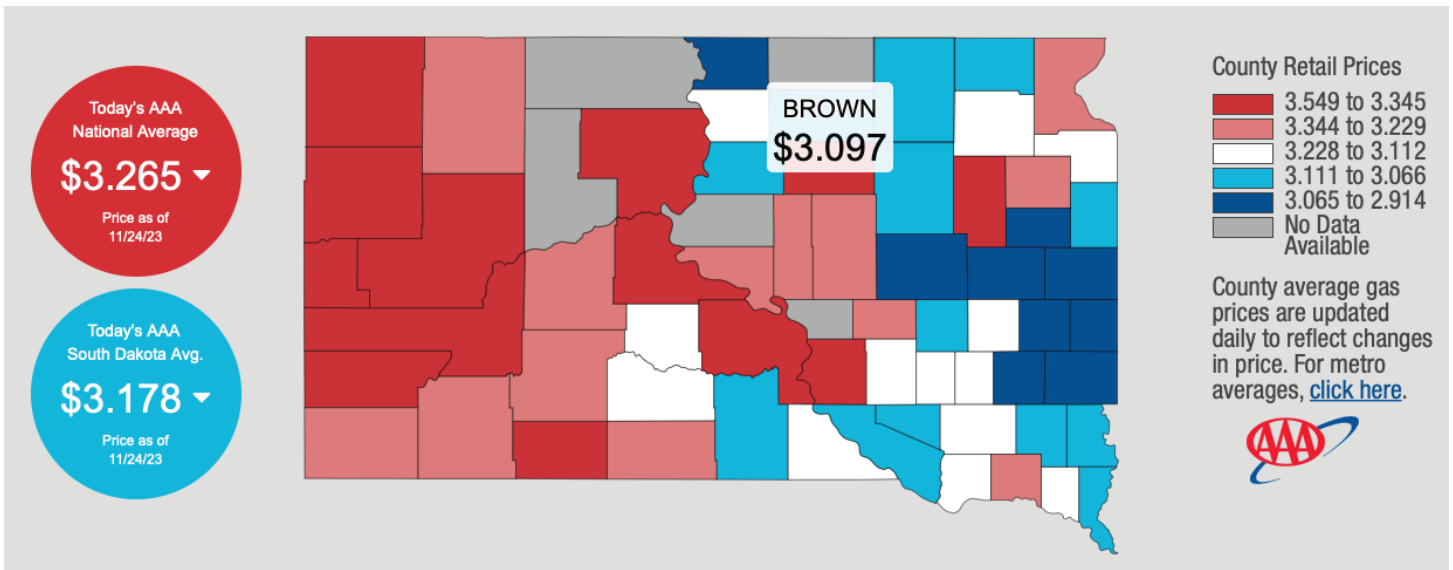
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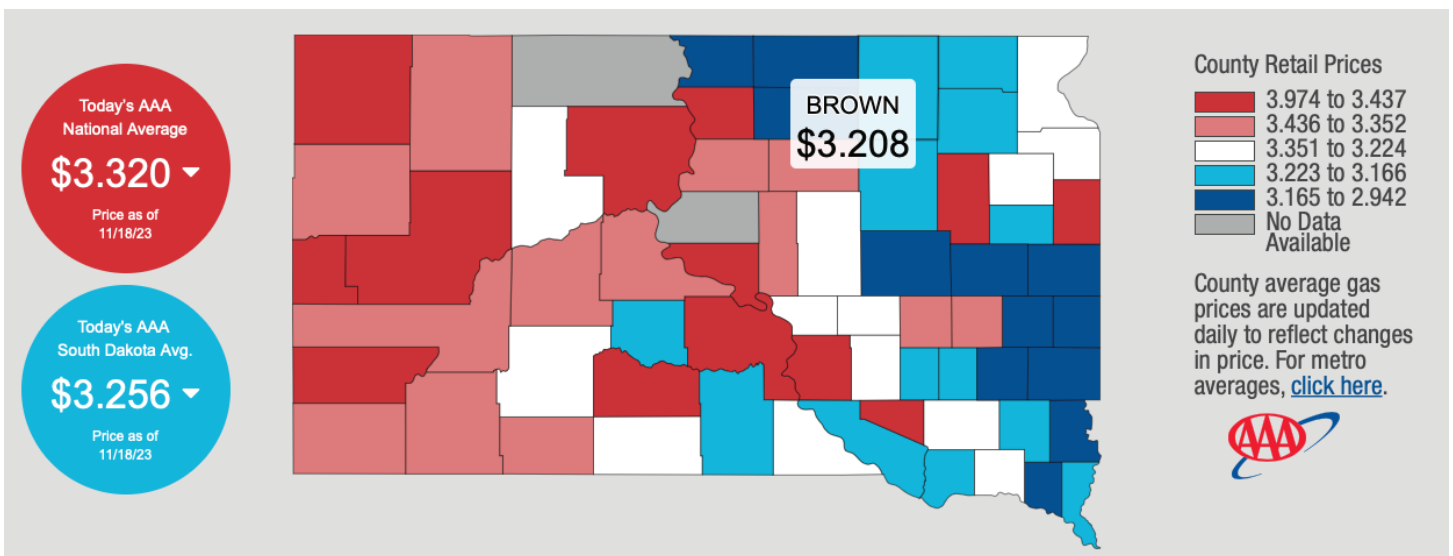
South Dakota Average Gas Prices

	Regular	Mid-Grade	Premium	Diesel
Current Avg.	\$3.178	\$3.376	\$3.852	\$4.093
Yesterday Avg.	\$3.199	\$3.373	\$3.878	\$4.090
Week Ago Avg.	\$3.269	\$3.442	\$3.922	\$4.188
Month Ago Avg.	\$3.549	\$3.714	\$4.213	\$4.743
Year Ago Avg.	\$3.490	\$3.671	\$4.144	\$4.968

This Week



Two Weeks Ago



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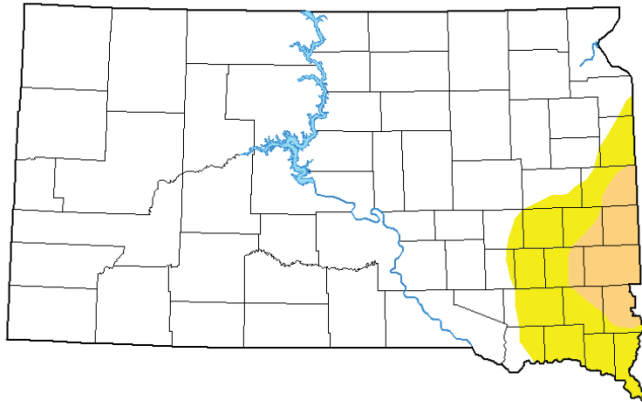
Drought Classification

None
D0 (Abnormally Dry)
D1 (Moderate Drought)

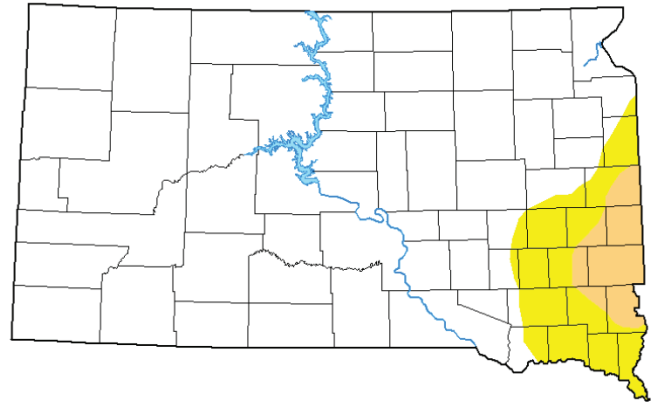
D2 (Severe Drought)
D3 (Extreme Drought)

D4 (Exceptional Drought)
No Data

Drought Monitor



November 21



November 14

There were few changes in the drought depiction, despite some light to moderately heavy precipitation late in the monitoring period. By November 19, Kansas led the High Plains with topsoil moisture rated 68% very short to short, followed by Colorado at 64% and Nebraska at 55%. On that date, Kansas also led the U.S. with 32% of its winter wheat rated in very poor to poor condition, nearly twice the national value of 17%.

Groton Prairie Mixed Bowling League Week #1 Results

Team Standings: Jackelopes – 3, Chipmunks – 3, Coyotes – 2, Foxes – 2, Shihtzus – 1, Cheetahs – 1

Men's High Games: Brad Waage – 198, Mike Siegler – 187, Tony Waage – 184

Women's High Games: Vicki Walter – 165, Darci Spanier – 160, Julie Holt – 156

Men's High Series: Brad Waage – 549, Mike Siegler – 514, Tony Waage – 494

Women's High Series: Vicki Walter – 460, Darci Spanier – 428, Alexa Schuring – 398

Conde National League

Nov. 20 Team Standings: Cubs 25, Tigers 23, Braves 23, Mets 22½, Giants 21½, Pirates 17

Men's High Games: Ryan Bethke 211, 184; Chad Furney 190; Butch Farmen 174

Men's High Series: Ryan Bethke 530, Butch Farmen 509, Chad Furney 484

Women's High Games: Sam Bahr 167, Nancy Radke 161, Suzi Easthouse 157

Women's High Series: Suzi Easthouse 460, Sam Bahr 454, Nancy Radke 427

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ALL OVER ROOFING

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

605.759.0000
1205 6TH AVE SW SUITE 2, ABERDEEN, SD 57401



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....

25.) have to say white water rafting in class four rapids was one of the most fun activities I have ever

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NSU Men's Basketball

Four Score in Double Figures in Friday Win over Peru State

Aberdeen, S.D. – The No. 21 Northern State University men's basketball kept their momentum rolling Friday, defeating Peru State from Wachs Arena. The Wolves broke away with under five to play in the first half and didn't look back, soaring to a 29-point victory.

THE QUICK DETAILS

Final Score: NSU 94, PSC 65

Records: NSU 2-4 (1-0 NSIC), PSC 6-1

Attendance: 1909

HOW IT HAPPENED

Northern scored 47 points in each half, notching their largest margin of victory this season

The Wolves shot 50.6% from the floor, 33.3% from the 3-point line, and 63.6% from the foul line; and held the Bobcats to 26-of-67 (38.8%) from the floor

NSU notched a game leading 46 rebounds, 19 assists, eight steals, and three blocks

They tailed not only a game high, but season high 56 points in the paint and 35 points off the bench, as well as 21 second chance points, 17 points off turnovers, and eight fast break points

Four Wolves scored in double figures with Josh Dilling dropping 19, followed by the trio of Augustin Reede, Jacksen Moni, and Isaiah Hagen with 16

Hagen led the team off the bench with his career high total, adding six rebounds, two assists, and two steals

Michael Nhial was the final Wolf in double figures, but this time off the glass with ren rebounds

Kobe Busch dished out a team leading five assists and added six rebounds and three points for the Wolves

NORTHERN STATE STATISTICAL STANDOUTS

Josh Dilling: 19 points, 57.1 field goal%, 4 rebounds, 4 assists

Jacksen Moni: 16 points, 7 rebounds, 4 assists

Isaiah Hagen: 16 points, 70.0 field goal%, 6 rebounds, 2 assists, 2 steals

Augustin Reede: 16 points, 50.0 field goal%

UP NEXT

The Wolves return to Wachs Arena tomorrow night for finale of the Dacotah Bank Classic. Northern tips off against Trinity Bible College at 5 p.m. following the Northern State women versus Sioux Falls.

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Excerpt #7 - 1940 - 1945 We Will Remember

Here is the Excerpt #7 for 1945. Hope this finds everyone enjoying their Thanksgiving holiday.
- Lee Raines

1945 – Johnny and Jane Come Marching Home

January 1945 – Diary – January 1 did the usual work. I sewed all day on Beth’s red plaid wool skirt. We washed out a few things. Beth and Chuck went to the show “Jimmie Cold”. January 2 did the usual work. Cold. Took Beth and Joyce to Brookings for college. Knitted on Beth’s mittens in the evening. January 3 made butter. January 4 finished Beth’s mittens. Helped Ralph start the car. Cold. January 5 was very cold; wind blew from the northeast. Fixed my hair and Ralph and I went to town. On January 6 made bread and mincemeat cookies. Ralph took the car to town and stayed all day. Went to the schoolhouse and made arrangements for the party. January 8 very cold. January 12 washed dishes and separator. Made a batch of fudge. Ralph and I went to Brookings to get his harness (assume for horses). January 13 went to Brookings. Harness not big enough. We stayed in Brookings and listened to the barn dance. January 14 went to church. Wrote to Don in the PM. Went to show in the evening “Together Again”. Not too good. January 15 washed in the machine. Had trouble and Ralph went to town to get a part for it. Still didn’t work. Dried them in the house. Didn’t get many of them dry. January 16 still drying clothes. Went to Beverly’s Stanley Products demonstration. Bought hand cleaner, silver polishing cloth, nail brush, and moth balls. Got a letter from Don and Beth. January 17 blew hard from the south. Went to a club dinner at the schoolhouse. Sewed in the evening. Snowed but warm. January 19 Ralph hauled straw all day. Beth came home via the bus. Ralph went to town to get her. January 20 made lefse and cake. Chuck and Beth went to town. January 21 didn’t go to church. Felt awful. Rested and wrote Don. January 23 ironed and pressed Ralph’s suit. January 24 put new stove pipes on the heater. Scrubbed and waxed living room floor. Washed all windows downstairs. Went to a show in the evening “Abbott and Costello”. January 25 got a letter from Beth. Wrote to Beth. Ralph got a box of candy from Beth for his birthday. January 26 Ralph 45 today. January 29 did usual work. Cold. Ralph sick. I went to June Smith’s Stanley Products demonstration. Beth and Chuck broke up. January 30 cooked chicken and made jam. Got my cherry pie makings ready. Ralph still sick. January 31 made two cherry pies. Had a big crowd at the club dinner. 67. Baked rolls in the evening.

January GI 4 – The increasingly critical tire shortage has caused ODT to abandon all thought of relaxing the so-called national 35-mile an hour speed limit for highway travel. Recently consideration had been given to lift the limit, possibly to 45 miles and (sic) hour, but all suggestions for modifications now are out the window, for the immediate future at least. Tests have shown the 35-mile limit has been observed only spottily in the past. It was established by the ODT in October, 1942, as a means of conserving tires. The only major modification has been to permit trucks carrying vital war supplies to travel faster by flying an emergency pennant. There is no federal enforcement of the limit. Actually, it amounts to an appeal to states and municipalities for their cooperation in bringing about this limit.

Tightening of shoe rationing is imminent, it was learned recently. Reliable sources said the current policy of two pairs a year cannot be continued in 1945. They predicted that the next shoe coupon will not be validated until mid-summer at the earliest, instead of May 1, as scheduled originally. It was understood OPA probably will announce this revision shortly. However, the agency is expected to

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maintain validity of the three shoe stamps now in use, airplane stamps Nos. 1, 2, and 3. Principal reason for prospective reduction of civilian supplies is the increased military requirements for shoes and other leather products. These demands are higher than ever as a result of the tough going in Europe. Then there has been "scare buying" of shoes in a few cities this week following the drastic food rationing measures. Some consumers moved quickly to cash shoe stamps fearing these too might be invalidated as were large blocks of meat and processed food stamps. Apparently OPA hopes a disclosure that shoe coupons will have to last longer than planned will put a stop to any run.

January 27 – Soviets liberate the last prisoners at Auschwitz concentration camp after hurried efforts by the SS to evacuate and dismantle the complex. Auschwitz was the largest Nazi killing center and concentration camp complex. In the weeks preceding the arrival of Soviet units, Auschwitz camp personnel had forced the majority of Auschwitz prisoners to march westward in what would become known as "death marches". When they entered the camp, Soviet soldiers found over 6,000 emaciated prisoners alive. These prisoners greeted the soldiers as their liberators. As at Majdanek (liberated in July 1944), there was evidence of mass murders in Auschwitz. The retreating Germans had destroyed most of the warehouses in the camp. But in those warehouses that remained, Soviet soldiers found personal belongings of the victims. Among those personal items were hundreds of thousands of men's suits, more than 800,000 women's garments, and more than 14,000 pounds of human hair.

Art Krage, U.S. Army, (brother of Emil Krage) after completing basic training was assigned to Seventh U.S. Army. Was not involved in some of the first battles of WWII, including an operation called Operation Torch in North Africa, but he joined them when the Seventh U.S. Army invaded Southern Sicily and captured the city of Palermo. In August 1944, Seventh U.S. Army units assaulted the beaches of southern France in the St. Tropez and St. Raphael area. While in combat there, Art was shot in his right arm and right leg. He returned to the U.S. and recovered from his wounds at Walter Reed Hospital. He received a Purple Heart, and Bronze Star for his dedication to his country. LeRoy Solberg, U.S. Army, entered the service May 26, 1944, and was discharged January 17, 1946. He was born September 2, 1925, and died October 22, 1980. He is buried in the Webster cemetery. Robert Schuelke, Captain, U.S. Army, 103rd Infantry Division, Europe, Purple Heart recipient, Combat Infantry Badge, Bronze Star, European Battle Stars (3), and served from April 18, 1944, until he was discharged January 18, 1947. Graduated from Groton High School in 1940. Schuelke was born March 11, 1923, and died February 10, 2008, and is buried in the Groton cemetery.

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Emil Krage, U.S. Army, Private First Class, (brother of Art Krage) served from 1944 through 1945, in the infantry and was assigned to the Fifth Army. The Fifth Army was part of the Allied Forces that had successfully forced the German Army out of North Africa. It was also part of the Northern Allied forces that landed at Salerno, Italy. After four major offensives between January and May 1944 the Fifth Army and Allies advanced beyond Rome, taking Florence. It was during a battle on June 22, 1944, when Emil was shot in his left arm, shoulder, and his right hand by a machine gun. He remained in a hospital in Naples for six months and another seven months in the Billings Hospital in Indiana. Emil was awarded the Purple Heart, Bronze Star, and European Theater of Operations medal. Native of Columbia.



Emil Krage

February GI 2 – Friends of Brig. Gen. LaVerne Saunders in this area had the pleasure of hearing his voice on the NBC network, Sunday afternoon, on the army hour program. General Saunders has been at Walter Reed hospital since November as the result of the fracture of both legs and right arm in the crash of his plane Sept. 17, in India. In a critical condition, the former West Point athlete, was flown to the hospital 57 hours after the accident. He had been traveling alone in a twin-engined bomber on an administrative mission when the crash occurred and lay undiscovered for eight hours. General Saunders' father, George Saunders, and a brother, Earl, and family reside in Stratford. Friends of Gen. Saunders will be pleased to learn that he is rapidly recovering from his recent injuries.

A pall of sadness fell on this community Wednesday when Mr. and Mrs. A.J. Karnopp received a message from the Navy department stating that a careful check had shown their son, Wallace Edward Karnopp, S 1-c was not among the survivors of the U.S. ships caught in a typhoon on December 18, in the Pacific. Wallace, familiarly known to his any friends as "Bud" was born in this vicinity on Feb. 2, 1925. He attended grade school at East Hanson Prairie Pride school and graduated from Groton high school with the class of 1943. Wallace was the second East Hanson boy to give his life in World War II, Vere Insley, having been killed in July in the battle for Guam.

February 14 – Robert J. Haire, U.S. Marines, Fighter Pilot, was lost when his plane went down somewhere in the Pacific. The Marines reported him as coming from Putney. He had a sister, Rachel Haire who was also in the U.S. Marines and a 1st Lieutenant. He entered the service October 26, 1943, and died February 14, 1945. He was born in September 1919 and graduated from the South Dakota School of Mines with a degree in electrical engineering. According to military records, he was buried in St. John's Cemetery, Block 21, Lot 2, Grave 3, Groton, SD. His parents received \$1,485 in death gratuity pay (six months pay). His body was recovered from San Nicolas Island and delivered to the U.S. Naval Hospital, San Diego, California and shipped to the next of kin for private burial. Subsequent to his death, Haire's parents were given an American Campaign Medal and the Victory Medal for his service during World War II.

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Second Lieutenant Clara L. Ruden of Groton, South Dakota, Nurse, general duty, is serving with the 56th Evacuation Hospital, Fifth Army unit set up to treat the more seriously wounded men on the Italian front. Stationed at times within range of German guns, the 56th has served in support of the Italian campaign since September, 1943, when the continent of Europe was invaded for the first time until the current fencing for approaches to the Po Valley. The 56th went ashore at Casablanca, French Morocco, April 16, 1943 and set up the following June 20 at Bizerte, Tunisia, where it received and treated wounded evacuated from the Sicilian campaign. The evacuation hospital was landed at Paestum, Italy, September 27, 1943, and set up October 6, at Avellino, where it was the foremost evacuation hospital to the Fifth Army front. It was moved along as the front advanced until late in the siege of Cassino, when the hospital unit prepared for its biggest assignment, service on the Anzio beachhead. The 56th went ashore at Anzio, January 26, 1944, and received more than 1000 patients in its first 36 hours of activity there. Evacuating seriously wounded patients to hospital ships and landing craft in the harbor in an average of from three to five days, hospital personnel worked feverishly under constant threat of German planes and guns. For a time, the 56th did the work of two evacuation hospitals. Lieutenant General Mark W. Clark, then Fifth Army commander, commended the unit for outstanding devotion to duty and meritorious conduct during the beachhead operation.



Clara Ruden



Merle Lorenzen

Merle E. Lorenzen, PFC, U.S. Marines, Co. B, 1 Battalion, 9th Marines, 3rd Marine Division, #1 Mortar Gunner, was killed in action on March 7, 1945, on Iwo Jima from a shot to the head. He was from Bath and was born December 29, 1925. The Navy Department issued his father, Chris Lorenzen a check for \$406.80 for death gratuity pay. This represented six months of pay. I also noticed that he had life insurance in the amount of \$10,000 payable to his father. Finally, his last pay was \$73.17. The following valuables were found among the personal effects of Lorenzen and returned to his parents: one identification card; one social security card; 43 pictures, and one dime. There are no indications that any of these personal effects were ever received, even after they were traced and requested by the family. He was originally buried in Iwo Jima, Volcano Island, Plot #1, Row #34, Grave #1672, 4th Marine Division Cemetery, Iwo Jima on March 14, 1945. His parents received his Purple Heart in a letter dated May 23, 1945. In 1948, Lorenzen's parents were informed that he was awarded the Victory Medal World War II and a Presidential Unit Citation with ribbon bar and one star awarded the Assault Troops of the Fifth Amphibious Corps, Reinforced. His body was returned to the U.S., Fort Meade National Cemetery (a designated national cemetery), Sturgis which is now the Black Hills National Cemetery. His body was returned by the War Department in 1949 for internment. Merle graduated from Bath High School in 1943.

March 12 - Claremont – Mr. and Mrs. Frank Feser have received word their son Sgt Harold Feser, was wounded on Luzon in the Philippines January 22. Harold Feser, U.S. Army, Sergeant, Company B, 63rd Infantry Regiment, 6th Infantry Division, entered the service in June 1941, and died February 3, 1945, in the Philippines. He was initially interred in the U.S. Armed Forces Cemetery, Santa Barbara #1,

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Luzon, Philippines. He died from shrapnel wounds to the abdomen. A letter from his mother, Mrs. Frank Feser, dated May 1945, read as follows "Thank you so much for your kind letter of April 27 in regards to our son Sgt. Harold Feser. It is now 4 mo.'s. since we heard from Harold, and it is now over 3 months since he was wounded, and we have no word as to his condition, or whereabouts. Any information you can obtain for us will be greatly appreciated I can assure you. P.S. Just as I finished writing the first page of this letter, came a messenger with the awful news our son had died in Feb. of wounds received in battle." According to this telegram, Harold was already dead when the wire of February 26 reached us, telling of his wounded slightly. Why haven't we been notified sooner, or could there be some mistake? Will there be a possibility of his body being brought back to the states later? And may I ask where he is now buried." A letter was written dated May 26, 1945, from a major general, The Adjutant General of the Army, apologizing for the communication problems associated with Feser's death and related notifications. I personally cannot imagine what the families felt during this process, and I am quite sure that they were not the only family with stories like this to tell. In October 1947, Frank Feser completed the form "Request for Disposition of Remains" asking that Feser be returned to the U.S., Groton, SD, to the attention of Alfred P. Paetznick, Funeral Director. In September 1948, Feser was disinterred (skeletal). Hard to imagine, but it was February 26, 1949, when Alfred Paetznick acknowledged receipt of Sgt Feser.

Okinawa was the bloodiest battle of the Pacific War. The most complete tally of deaths during the battle is at the Cornerstone of Peace monument at the Okinawa Prefectural Peace Memorial Museum, which identifies the names of each individual who died at Okinawa in World War II. As of 2022, the monument lists 241,686 names, including 149,611 Okinawans, 77,485 Imperial Japanese soldiers, 14,010 Americans, and smaller numbers of people from South Korea, the United Kingdom, North Korea, and Taiwan.

This letter was written to Wallace Karnopp after he died. It was written by A High School Friend and printed in the April 12, 1945, edition of the Groton Independent.

"Well boy, it looks like you have taken off for greener pastures. Life and war is quite a deal isn't it. It wasn't so long ago that we were back in high school together. You were a grade ahead of me – I wasn't your best pal – I was just another guy; but I always liked you. Everybody liked you because you were yourself – not, putting anything on, just an average kid. I better quit this flattering, even though I do mean it, for you won't like it – you never did. Remember the time you and I got kicked out of class because someone dropped a bunch of matches in the ventilating fan. You took the rap that time for somebody else rather than let a pal down. That's the kind of a guy you are. You took the rap for us guys again didn't you? They say that "No greater love has any man than he who gives his life for his friend". Well Wally I guess you ring the bell again. You did give your life. You gave it for Gene, for Glenn, Walt, Verny – yes and me; and every other guy and girl that wants to live a happy decent life. You've done your part Wally, now its up to the rest of us to follow through. Not all of us guys are in the service, we have got the soft end of it, that's for sure, but more and more fellows are going every day. The rest of us at home, well let's not fool ourselves we aren't sacrificing anything, just doing whatever we can to help. We kids didn't have anything to do with selling scrap iron to the Japs, did we? But its our generation that is stopping it. That is why I wrote this letter. I want you to know that we guys and girls

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aren't going to let you down. We can't ever let this happen again. But Wally remember we are human – please ask God to help us in our task – help us keep the light burning in our hearts that we may do justice to you who died.” A High School Friend

May 1945 – Diary – May 1 rained. Porch flooded. Cold. May 2 baked bread and finished cleaning. Ralph went to town. Sent clothes to Beth. May 3 cleaned living room, cleaned wallpaper, washed woodwork, windows, floors were waxed and polished furniture. May 4 Beth came home with some kids. We went to class play “April Day” with Miller’s. Real cute. Ralph dragged all day. May 5 Beth went to Brookings. Got back home at one. Got groceries. Dragged for Ralph in the afternoon. Ralph planted corn west of the trees and started on the 80. May 6 Ralph went to town to get some seed corn. Beth went to the junior/senior prom with Joe Cherney. I went to see the banquet. May 7 finished cleaning the kitchen. Terribly windy. Got the news that the war was over in Europe. Schools and stores closed. Beth and Joyce went to Brookings. Ralph planted corn on the 80. Went to church in the evening. May 8 washed dishes and separator. Went to town. V.E. Day announced officially. Ralph planted corn on the 80. May 9 Ralph finished planting corn on the 80. Snowed and melted all day. May 10 Guy Chamberlain committed suicide. May 11 washed a big load. Clothes got dry. Ralph went to town and to the show. Planted corn all day. May 12 Ralph planted corn. Got a picture of Don in the mail. May 13 Mother’s Day. Washed separator and dishes. Ralph and I went to church. Wrote to Don and took Beth to Lone Tree to catch the bus to Brookings. Ralph and I went to the second show “I Can’t Help Singing”. May 14 got \$5.00 and a Mother’s Day card from Don. Ralph planted corn. May 15 Ralph went to Pipestone to get part for tractor. May 17 Ralph got done planting corn. May 18 Ralph used Ray Smith’s packer on some of the corn. Made an apron for Mrs. Talmadger. May 19 didn’t have any Saturday work to do but did have seven men for lunch and four for supper. They shelled corn. Didn’t get done. Beth and Joyce came home for a few hours. Ralph and Lester gave them some gas. May 20 rained early in the morning. Cloudy and cold. Wrote to Don. May 21 Ralph went to Pipestone and then to Flandreau. Lonesome. May 22 Ralph dragged, disced, and planted east of the house. Got eight new pigs. May 23 Ralph dragged the corn on the 80. Rained and hailed during the night. May 24 cleaned up mud and water on the porch. Ralph helped Jay shell corn. Very warm. Terrible rain in the evening. Most we have had in a long time. May 25 cleaned the whole house. Beth came home with Mary Dailey. We washed and fixed our hair. Went to the second show “Practically Yours”. May 26 made a white cake. Took a bath. Ralph and I went to town in the evening. Chuck came out and got Beth. They went to town. May 27 rained most of the day. Ralph went to see Mr. Hogest and took him some corn. Took Beth and Joyce to the Lone Star (bus stop) and wrote to Don. Went to church to hear a colored choir from Sioux Falls. May 28 got up early. Washed. Had more than four lines full. Got a letter from Don. May 29 Ralph took tractor to town. Didn’t come home to dinner. May 30 Ralph started to plow corn. No mail. Nice warm day. May 31 Ralph plowed corn in the PM. Ralph and I went to town to get repairs. Rained a lot on the way home.

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May GI 3 – The following commendation was issued to the 411th Infantry, 103rd Division, to which Lieut. Robert E. Schuelke is attached and he participated in the action “In addition to the commendation of the entire personnel of the 103rd Division for its aggressive, rapid and successful passage of the Vosges Mountains, from St. Die to Barr, Itterswiller, and Darnbach, you and all members of your Command are particularly commended for your most rapid and aggressive flanking action by way of the difficult Hochwald Pass which resulted in the surprise of the enemy and the rapid capture of Barr and Andlau. It is believed that for the first time in modern history, a successful attack has been made through the pass to Steige and Maisonscoutte and over the Hochwald to Barr and Andlau C.C. Haffner, Jr., Major General, United States Army”. Lieut. Lyle Schuelke was with the 1st U.S. Infantry Division, when its actions resulted in the following commendation from Major General, Clarence R. Huebner, “Late in the evening of 16 December 1944, your division was alerted to oppose a rising enemy tide and took up positions across the Bullingen-Elsenborn road to deny access to this vital highway to Europe and the Northwest During thirty days of this defensive operation, the 1st U.S. Infantry Division, notwithstanding the fact that all combat elements were under strength met attacks in force repeatedly hurled at it by the 1st SS Panzer Division, the 12th SS Panzer Division and the 3rd Parachute Division, which then constituted the elite troops of the German Reich, and with courage, confidence and consummate skill, defeated the enemy at every turn During the defensive phase of this operation from 17th December, 1944 to 14th January, 1945, you destroyed approximately 50 enemy tanks, inflicted heavy casualties on the 12th SS Panzer Division and practically annihilated the 3rd Parachute Division. On 15th January, 1945, the 1st U.S. Infantry Division, reinforced, attacked. Fighting with elan and skill found only in the finest troops, through severe storms and heavy snow in freezing temperature you forced the enemy back several miles, retook the towns of Faymonville, Schoppen, Montenaus, Moderscheid, Onderval, Eibertingen, and Ambleve, captured 1,165 prisoners of war and inflicted other severe losses on the enemy”.

May GI 31 – Military memorial services were held at Conde in St. John’s Catholic church for Pfc. Bernard L. Conley, who was killed in action April 12th in Germany. Pfc. Conley enlisted and left for service February 18, 1942. He was sent to England in November, 1944, as a tank driver and served also in France, Holland, and Germany, where he gave his life for his country and was the first Conde boy to be a casualty in World War II. Pfc. Conley was born July 26, 1920, at Conde. He was the youngest son of Mr. and Mrs. L.D. Conley, Sr. He received his education in Conde and graduated from the Conde high school with the class of 1939. Bernard was preceded in death by his parents and one brother, John. Two of his brothers, Marion and Raymond live in Conde. Mr. and Mrs. H.A. Somers of Andover, attended the funeral rites.

Mr. and Mrs. Walter Byington of Mobridge, were notified recently that their son, Lt. Keith Byington, B-24 pilot, and a prisoner of war in Germany since August 17, 1943, was liberated April 29, and will be sent home in a few weeks. A 1937 graduate of Mobridge high school, Lt. Byington went overseas to serve with the U.S. Eighth air force in September, 1942. In a letter written on the day he was liberated, Lt. Byington says: “The great day has finally arrived. Now you can stop worrying and start cooking. Hope to be home in about six weeks – just as soon as the delousing and other necessary procedures can be taken care of.”

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The army and the navy, in a joint report issued Thursday, have announced that their services have suffered almost a million casualties since the beginning of the war. The army has lost 886,525, on a basis of individual names received here through May 14. Navy losses of 109,564 make the total 996,089. This is an increase of 9,875 above the last report. The breakdown on army casualties and corresponding figures for the preceding week: Killed 181,739 and 178,854; wounded 550,506 and 533,249; missing 57,802 and 66,684; prisoners 96,478 and 89,152. Under Secretary of War Patterson said that 302,910 of the wounded have returned to duty and 25,856 of the prisoners have been officially listed as exchanged or returned to military control. Similar figures for the navy: Killed 42,807 and 41,986; wounded 52,005 and 50,421; missing 10,505 and 10,620; prisoners 4,247 and 4,248.

June 14 – Donald Knapp, U.S. Marines, PFC, who enlisted April 26, 1941, and in 1942 went overseas and saw action on Guadalcanal, Bougainville, and the Philippines. He was killed in action in the Philippines on June 14, 1945. He was the son of Mr. and Mrs. Carl Knapp of Groton. He was born and raised in Newark, SD, until his enlistment. Cause of death is listed as “vehicle accident” and an accidental death. Jeep accident. He was a combat infantryman with Company 122, Hq 164th Infantry. He was buried in the U.S. Armed Forces Cemetery Dumaguete, #1, Negros, Philippines. In a letter dated September 11, 1946, Mr. Carl W. Knapp, Newark, SD was told that Knapp was interred in the U.S. Armed Forces Cemetery, Leyte #1, grave #7279. In July 1948, Carl Knapp informed the U.S. military that Knapp would be returned and buried in the Groton cemetery. In April 1949, the body was returned to Groton and Carl Knapp certified that he disbursed \$85.00 in personal funds in connection with the interment of the remains. The body (skeletal) was delivered to A. Paetznick, Funeral Director.

Mr. and Mrs. A.J. Schuelke received word from their sons, Lt. Robert Schuelke, stationed near Stuttgart, Germany and Lt. Lyle Schuelke, who is near Nuremberg, Germany that they had a chance to visit with each other on July 1st. Bob went down to Nuremberg to spend a day with his brother and that was the first time in two and half years that the boys had seen each other. **Lyle Schuelke was born on November 9, 1918, and died on July 8, 1982. He is buried in Huron. He entered the service on July 11, 1942, and was discharged on December 26, 1945. He married Betty Jean Martin of Huron in February 1943.**

Mr. and Mrs. Lester Smith of Clark have lost their second boy to the service of the country. Word has just been received that Pvt. Kendell Smith was killed in action in Okinawa on June 16. He had been previously wounded during May, but recovered and was sent back into action. Kendell's brother, Thayne, was lost on a submarine early in the war. Another son, Vernon, is in the army. Kendall graduated from Clark high school, a member of the class of 1944. He has been in the army less than a year.

August 6-9 – The U.S. drops an atomic bomb on Hiroshima, Japan, and three days later, Nagasaki.

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The damage done to Hiroshima by the first atomic bomb was described by photographic officers who had studied photographs of the city as equivalent to about what 150 Super Fortresses would have accomplished with high explosive bombs. This, however, was not intended to indicate the maximum potential of the new weapon. Damage done to one city would not necessarily be the same as damage to another, because of varying factors such as construction, terrain, etc. The 150 Super Fortresses statement concerned only damage to Hiroshima. Any statement fixing a death toll is pure guess, since no one knows what this new type bomb will do. Even after the U.S. dropped the nuclear bombs on Japan, the Japanese military refused to surrender. It was only after the Emperor interceded and demanded surrender, that the Japanese military gave up. Prior to dropping the bombs, the military ordered 500,000 Purple Hearts to be used during the invasion of Japan. Imagine if the bombs had not worked, Japan had not surrendered, and the Allies invaded Japan to end the war. Casualties were estimated to approach 2 million killed, wounded, etc. Only the U.S. has ever used a nuclear weapon in war.

Tuesday evening President Truman announced the unconditional surrender of Japan. Mr. Truman in an impromptu speech at the White House lawn told a huge crowd of spectators that this was a great for democracy; that it marked the final triumph over fascism and would go down in history as one of the most noteworthy days. He further stated that the whole country now should unite in efforts to preserve the future peace of the world. General Douglas MacArthur has been appointed the supreme Allied Commander to receive the Japanese surrender. Locally the long delayed news of the surrender was received with a great deal of joy and celebration. The shrieking nose of the fire siren, ringing of the church bells, the curfew and making of auto horns heralded the arrival of peace to the Allied nations. The celebration continued late into the night. At 11:00 o'clock Wednesday morning a united church service was held at the school auditorium where the people of Groton gathered to pay their respect to almighty God who has given us the peace which will once again bring freedom and democracy to the world; also to the boys and girls on the far-flung battlefields who have fought a good fight and won. Most of the business places of Groton were closed in honor of V-J Day.

September 7 – Clark High School has an ex-Groton coach this year and Groton has acquired the former Clark coach, adding a new angle to Northeast Conference competition. Buddy Elkins, who resigned at Clark when called for induction into the Army, was rejected due to his age at the last minute. Perry Doney, seven years at Groton but in a defense plant for the last three years had been hired by Clark. Then Elkins was signed by Groton. Doney will have 11 lettermen from the team that won three of seven for Elkins and considers prospects “fair to good”.

September GI 13 – Urging neighborly participation on the part of all citizens of Groton and vicinity, Superintendent H. W. Iverson suggested seven good reasons why teenagers who have not graduated from high school should return to school in September. The Back-to-School Drive this year aims nationally at not merely maintaining present high school enrollment but at increasing it. Since 1940 the nation's high school enrollment has dropped by more than one million, Superintendent Iverson said. “These youngsters have done a good job helping out in the war effort,” he declared. “But it is time now

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that they go back to their full-time jobs of attending school". Mr. Iverson's suggestions to teenagers follows: 1. Invest in yourself. 2. Don't fence yourself in. 3. You can be better than you are. 4. Keep in step. 5. Soldiers are coming back from war to go to school. 6. Post-war standards will be higher. 7. Even a few hours of school a day are better than no school at all.

Pvt. Irvin Flihs, son of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Flihs, Sr., left for Camp Reucker, Ala., Sunday evening, after a 10-day furlough at home. **Entered the Army on April 2, 1945, and was discharged on December 13, 1945. Irvin was born on October 3, 1924, and died on August 9, 2004. Graduated from Groton High School in 1942.**



Lt. Helen Raecke

Lt. Helen Raecke, 25-year-old Army nurse, died in the Camp Butner hospital yesterday of injuries resulting from a fall while horseback riding. She was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Raecke, Groton and served with the 139th evacuation hospital in France, Germany, and Austria. **She was born January 12, 1920, and died October 29, 1945. She is buried in the Groton cemetery.**

November 1945 – Diary - November 1 baked two pumpkin pies and rolls. Had company for supper. November 2 Allen and Ralph picked four loads of corn. Allen here for supper. Cold and windy. November 3 Beth and Chuck went to Sioux Falls. Beth got a new coat \$66.00. Very cold. Ralph hauled some hay. Went to town in the evening. November 6 Ralph helped Allen pick corn all day. Warm day. Didn't need a fire in the heater. Got a letter from Don. Ralph went to town in the evening. November 7 Ralph helped Allen pick corn all day. Mr. Kipp called and told us that he bought the farm. I went to town and to the movie "Liddie Son of Lassie". November 8 snowed so they didn't pick corn. Went to town and got my hair fixed. Ralph bought Elingson farm for \$1,520. November 9 both Ralph and I were sick, but Ralph still helped Allen pick corn in the afternoon. Cleaned the whole house. Sewed and knitted in the evening. Cold. November 10 windy and cold. Had to pull the car to start it. Battery all in, Ralph went to town in the afternoon to get a new battery. Signed contract for farm. November 11 did the usual work. Knitted. Wrote to Don. Went to the second show. Rained in the evening. November 12 stores were closed. Rained. November 13 picked corn in the AM. Vernon and Allen here for supper. Cold and cloudy. November 14 went down to Miller's. Washed dishes and separator. Went to the second show "Marriage is a Private Affair". Cold but not so bad. November 15 Ralph picked corn with Miller's in the AM. Too muddy in the PM. Got a letter from Beth. November 16 got \$5.00 from Don on my birthday. November 17, am 49 years old. Did the usual work. Baked bread and doughnuts. Ralph picked corn in the AM for Allen. Ralph and I had supper in town. November 18 roasted beef. Made a pie. Took Miller's to our new farm. All went to "West to the Show". November 19 did the usual work. Washed living room storm windows and windows. Ralph picked Allen's corn all day. Knitted and sewed. November 20 made cupcakes. Allen and Ralph picked corn in the AM. Had oysters for supper. November

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21 Allen picked corn here. Made lefsa. Beth came home from Brookings. Stayed home in the evening and listened to the radio. November 23 cold when we got up but washed anyway. Real nice day. Hung most of them out. Allen picked corn here all day. Beth went to town with Stan. Ironed some. November 24 picked corn here all day. Went to town in the evening. Went up to mother's. November 25 got dinner about 4:00. Took Beth and Joyce to Brookings. Then to show "Weekend at the Waldorf". November 26 picked corn here all day. Had three men for supper. November 27 baked two pies. Went to Suthererd's sale. Sold lunches. Ralph and Allen picked corn in the PM. November 28 went down to Miller's and got dinner for Ralph and Allen. Went to town to get Ralph's suit and my shoes. Went to a show in the evening "Johnny Angel". Cloudy and cold. November 29 went down to Hollie's and had her comb out my hair. Went to Sioux Falls to the pioneer seed corn banquet. Did a little shopping and had supper in Dell Rapids. November 30 knitted and sewed and watched the Northern States Power man move poles.

The mystery of the government's construction project on highway 37, five miles north of Groton, has been cleared up, and is now revealed by John E. Reiley, chief radio electrician in charge of the unit, as being the U.S. coast guard deparment's (sic) high frequency direction finder for ships and planes in trouble at sea. "Purpose of the Brown county unit, which is near the geographical center of the country, is to pick up any distress signals from either ocean, which might "go by" the east coast or west coast, direction finders," Chief Reiley said.

United States Employment Service offices in South Dakota are prepared to handle up to 2,000 job-seeking veterans per month during the period January to June, 1946, E.F. Jorgenson, Acting State Director, announced recently. This is based upon the recently announced release of six million from the armed forces during the first six months of 1946, of which approximately 24,000 are expected to return to South Dakota. Reports from local USES offices show that approximately 50 per cent of veterans discharged contact the local offices for assistance. During the first six months of this year approximately 2,500 South Dakota veterans received discharges, which is approximately 360 per month. The increased rate is already being felt, however, since the USES officer in the state received notices of 2,072 veterans discharged during September. By January, 1946, the monthly rate is expected to reach 4,000 for the state and present indications are that the figure will remain fairly constant through June of next year.

Groton housewives rejoiced over the announcement made by Secretary of Agriculture Anderson Friday releasing all meats, canned fish and all food fats from the rations list. The meat and fats rationing program began March 29, 1943, with its termination effective Saturday, Nov. 24, at 12:00 a.m. There is no immediate prospect of lifting the sugar rationing which is the only household item remaining on the list. Sugar stamps 38 in book four is valid for five pounds of sugar through December 31. Sugar stamp 39 becomes valid January 1, 1946.

We the People

The South Dakota Humanities Council is making available a weekly column -- "We the People" -- that focuses on the U.S. Constitution. It is written by David Adler, who is president of The Alturas Institute, a non-profit organization created to promote the Constitution, gender equality, and civic education.



By David Adler

"Justice Douglas Went East, But Appointed to Court as a Westerner"

President Franklin D. Roosevelt wanted to nominate William O. Douglas to the U.S. Supreme Court to fill the vacancy left by the retirement of Justice Louis Brandeis in 1939, but there was a problem, a geographical problem.

Douglas, a resident of Connecticut since his days as a Yale Law Professor, and four current Justices— Hughes, Stone, Frankfurter and Roberts—were Easterners. While no formal requirement for geographical representation on the Court existed, presidents had generally followed a long, if somewhat loose, tradition that suggested geographical balance in the Court's membership. The nomination of Douglas to the Court seemed untenable and would generate political headaches for the Roosevelt Administration.

Pressure was building for the appointment of someone West of the Mississippi. President Roosevelt was being pushed to nominate Senator Lewis Schwollenbach, but opposition from the other Senator from the State of Washington undercut that effort. At that juncture, fellow New Dealers Jerome Frank and Thomas Corcoran reminded Roosevelt of Douglas's deep roots in Washington and suggested that his nomination to the Court might be framed through the prism of Western geography. The geographical factor proved persuasive to Roosevelt, who needed only a slender reed on which to rest Douglas's nomination. Roosevelt had long been hoping for the chance to place Douglas on the

Court. The two had developed a kinship grounded on political ideology, aspirations for America, personal and political ambition, poker and, in an important way, a shared history of dealing with polio.

As Douglas's chances of joining the Court were rising, some questioned his loyalty to the New Deal. In response, Douglas delivered a fiery speech in which he condemned the financial community and, drawing upon the reforms that he had engineered as Chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission as well as his promotion of changes in the nation's laws governing bankruptcy and debtor-creditor relations, confirmed his reformist character and his commitment to the New Deal. The speech proved to be a resounding success. A week later, Roosevelt nominated Douglas to the High Court, and on April 4, 1939, he was confirmed by the Senate on a 62-4 vote.

The Court that Justice Douglas joined was philosophically supportive of the New Deal and its emphasis on labor laws and government regulation of business. Douglas earned his reputation, at least initially, for his opinions that sustained regulations of the business community. Some of his opinions remain largely undisturbed, particularly those that established standards reviewing agency ratemaking and those that held a combination to fix prices was illegal per se, that is, without further inquiry into their reasonableness.

Many Americans will recall Justice Douglas's contributions to the defense and expansion of civil rights, including freedom of speech, freedom of the press and the right to privacy. His most famous civil liberties opinion was *Griswold v. Connecticut* (1965), in which he identified a constitutional right to privacy, which emanated from the "penumbras" of rights enshrined in the First, Third, Fourth, Fifth and Ninth Amendments. His theory reflected an intellectual indebtedness to Justice William Brennan, but Douglas was the Justice remembered for the theory, and he was roundly criticized by many scholars at the time for the introduction of a "right" that seemed to emerge from the shadows and lacked substance. In time, however, many of his critics came to embrace the right to privacy and shared his expectation that it is central to freedom in a democracy.

Some citizens will recall the efforts in April 1970 of House Minority Leader Gerald R. Ford, at the behest

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of President Richard Nixon, to bring articles of impeachment against Justice Douglas, just the second time in U.S. history that a Supreme Court Justice was the subject of impeachment. The first involved Justice Samuel Chase in 1804. Chase was impeached by the House of Representatives but acquitted in the Senate trial.

President Nixon orchestrated the impeachment attacks against Douglas in retaliation for the Senate's defeat of two of his Supreme Court nominees, Harold Carswell and Clement Haynsworth. Nixon had characterized Douglas as "the darling of the liberals" and sought his removal from the bench. Minority Leader Ford brought the articles of impeachment, citing Douglas's activities off the bench that involved, essentially, a \$300 payment for a magazine article that he wrote and an excerpt of his book, "Points of Rebellion," published in another magazine. As it developed, Douglas's publisher approved publication of the excerpt without Douglas's knowledge.

A subcommittee of the of the House Judiciary Committee was charged with task of investigating Douglas's activities. After eight months, the committee announced it had no evidence that Douglas had committed an impeachable offense. The Nixon-Ford attempt to remove Justice Douglas from the Court had proved futile.

Justice Douglas served on the Court longer than any other justice in American history. On December 31, 1974, Douglas suffered a debilitating stroke. He was partially paralyzed and never recovered his full capacities. He was absent from the Court for the rest of the Supreme Court Term. He tried to return the following fall but didn't have much strength. On November 12, 1975, he submitted his resignation letter to President Gerald R. Ford.

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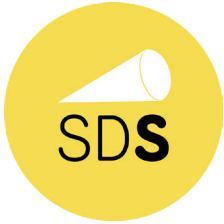
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State's \$3 million Big Sioux cleanup project is slow to catch on

**Officials double incentives for landowners;
some say program duplicates existing local efforts**

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - NOVEMBER 24, 2023 3:10 PM

A \$3 million program created by the state in 2021 to reduce agricultural pollution in the Big Sioux River has attracted two sign-ups, while drawing criticism for duplicating existing local projects.

Meanwhile, the state has doubled the financial incentives for landowners in an effort to attract more interest.

Rep. Chris Karr, R-Sioux Falls, introduced the 2021 bill that allocated the \$3 million. He questions why the state Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources created a new program.

"What they're doing makes no sense," he said in an interview with South Dakota Searchlight. "When I pitched this bill, I suggested we put the money into existing programs."

Department spokesperson Brian Walsh did not speak with South Dakota Searchlight but answered questions in writing via email. He said there isn't a similar local program that covers the entire Big Sioux River watershed. Having multiple programs available as conservation tools, he wrote, "provides us with a great opportunity to implement on-the-ground practices to improve water quality throughout the watershed."

Both the state and local programs offer payments to landowners who agree to grow and maintain grass strips along the river and its tributaries. That helps filter out livestock waste and runoff from farm fields before it enters the Big Sioux River. The river starts in northeast South Dakota and flows through cities including Sioux Falls before joining the Missouri River at Sioux City.

New state program

The new state program, called the Riparian Buffer Initiative, is managed by the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources. The 2021 law that provided the \$3 million of funding includes a deadline of June 30, 2025, to spend the money.

Participating landowners cannot cut the grass (to make hay, for example) during peak summer recreational months, nor can their livestock graze it until fall. Enrolled land must otherwise have at least 4-inch-high grass. Buffer strips must range from 50 to 120 feet wide, and participants must enroll for at least 10 years.

The program initially offered landowners annual payments ranging from \$131 to \$219 per acre of enrolled cropland and \$36 to \$53 for pastureland, depending on local land rental rates.

"We found that was not enough to move the needle," said Bill Smith, of the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources, while speaking recently to the Legislature's budget committee during a public meeting in Pierre.

So the department increased annual payments. They're now up to \$575 per acre for cropland and up to \$157 per acre for pastureland, depending on local land rental rates.

Smith said the program had two enrolled landowners — totaling 51 acres in Day County and costing \$32,050 of the \$3 million — as of Oct. 19. The department anticipates another three enrollments totaling 53 more acres by the end of 2023.

Smith said the program can be "stacked" on top of other conservation programs, like the federal Conservation Reserve Program and the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, both of which offer landowners payments to keep environmentally sensitive land out of agricultural production.

The department is also offering funding from the program to help farmers and ranchers create differ-

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ent water sources for livestock, because the buffer strips along the creek are fenced off during certain seasons. Funding can also be used to help small and medium livestock operations manage waste, up to \$250,000 for each project.

The department said there is one waste management system in the later stages of design in Codington County that will use \$63,000 of program funding.

Existing local programs

Meanwhile, there are already at least three similar local initiatives.

Two of them are the Seasonal Riparian Area Management program for pastureland created in 2013, and the Riparian Area Management program for cropland and pastureland created in 2008. They're part of the Big Sioux River Project, sponsored by the East Dakota Water Development District and Minnehaha Conservation District.

The programs were created in response to Big Sioux River water quality concerns. They've enrolled over 100 landowners and nearly 3,600 acres, totaling almost 89 miles of stream protection.

While similar to the new state program, there are differences, including contracts up to 15 years and a slightly different window of time for grazing livestock in the seasonal program. Money for the local programs comes from a combination of federal, state and local funds. The highest payments from those programs are less than the highest payments now offered by the state.

The Big Sioux River Project efforts cover all but the northeastern corner of the watershed. That corner has another similar effort by the Prairie Coteau Watershed Project, which administers a Riparian Area Management program. The project is sponsored by eight county conservation districts.

Cory Zirbel manages the Prairie Coteau project. He wasn't sure how many of the acres and landowners the program has enrolled specifically in the Big Sioux River watershed, because the project also includes areas outside the watershed, but he felt confident saying dozens of landowners and hundreds of acres.

Zirbel and Barry Berg, of the Big Sioux River Project, said they do not know why the state developed a new program rather than giving the \$3 million to the existing programs and projects. They said they were not part of that discussion in Pierre.

Berg said his team and the state are currently working to figure out how the programs compare and the best way to administer them. He said one possibility is making landowners eligible for payments from both the state and local programs.

Karr is disappointed in what's come of his bill and the new program.

"The goal was to get the dollars out and start educating landowners on the importance of the program, and now we've lost two years," Karr said. "There's a timeline on this money. Why did we spend two years trying to do, essentially, what was already working?"

Charlie Johnson, an organic farmer just south of Madison with land in the Big Sioux River watershed, said he had never heard of the new state program. He said the doubled incentives are indicative of a struggling program.

"To me, it looks like a public official trying to save face for a program that's fallen flat on its face," Johnson said. He said that while the state's updated offer is attractive, he's curious how landowners enrolled in the older programs are going to feel about a new state program raising its rates.

"I'd be upset," he said.

At the recent public meeting of the Legislature's Appropriations Committee, Smith said the department sent letters to 1,293 landowners about the upgraded program, which have resulted in 28 calls and emails. Plus, the department is planning to promote the program at some upcoming events. He said the department is also working with partners including the state Department of Game, Fish and Parks, Ducks Unlimited and Pheasants Forever to help promote the program.

Smith said that beyond the payment amounts, losing flexibility and control over land is the primary thing keeping landowners from participating.

David Kruger is a conservation-focused farmer living near Twin Brooks. He said committing a piece of land to one purpose for a decade can prove a financial or land management mistake, and giving up that

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freedom and control makes people nervous.

"You can't know what the future holds," Kruger said. However, he said the higher payments might encourage more enrollments.

Pollution problems and enforcement

The nonprofit Friends of the Big Sioux River has water samples from one of the river's tributaries showing E. coli levels almost 200 times higher than safe levels. The group has also identified livestock manure as the primary culprit. Heavy rainfall can wash manure from a ranch, fertilized field or feedlot into the river, especially if buffer strips are not in place.

Smith showed the legislative committee an eastern South Dakota map with multiple dots representing small- to medium-sized cattle operations in the watershed. He elaborated on one that "had a drainage ditch that ran right near it that dumped into the Big Sioux. That's one we'd like to get into the program."

Sen. Jim Bolin, R-Canton, asked Smith if the department is considering using penalties in addition to incentives.

"Currently, you're in the persuasion mode," Bolin said. "Do you anticipate going into a different type of situation, like in states like Minnesota, where there are requirements that are brought forward?"

"Our intent is to be in persuasion mode," Smith replied. "We don't have anything as far as requiring people to do buffers."

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.

COMMENTARY

Governor shouldn't be the one to choose replacement legislators

Process reduces the power of voters and lawmakers

DANA HESS

Two Republican legislators from Rapid City have resigned. Sen. Jessica Castleberry of District 35 had to resign so she can get busy repaying \$600,000 in pandemic relief funding she received through state government, in violation of the Legislature's ethics rules. Rep. Jess Olson of District 34 said she resigned for health reasons. According to The Dakota Scout, there may be some questions about her ethics, as well; a business she owns has had contracts with the state.

It's now up to Gov. Kristi Noem to appoint their replacements, a constitutional oddity that allows the executive branch of state government sway over the make-up of the legislative branch.

It's been enshrined in the state constitution since 1947 that the governor will appoint legislative replacements in the event of a death or resignation while in office.

The process for filling a vacancy, as set forth in the governor's news release announcing Olson's resignation, seems quite straightforward. People in Olson's district can apply or nominate others for the job. The governor's office requires the candidate's name, physical address, resume, cover letter and letters of recommendation. Candidates are then interviewed and the governor chooses the replacement.

It seems like a fairly transparent process, yet it leaves out the very people who will be served by the new legislators. The best they can do is throw a name into a hat. It's the governor who decides, and people in Olson's and Castleberry's districts are left to be represented by someone who's beholden to the governor for the new job.

There have been attempts in the past to cut the governor out of the process for selecting replacement legislators. The most recent effort, in 2021, failed gloriously.

Rep. Drew Dennert, a Republican from Aberdeen, sponsored House Joint Resolution 5002 which offered a constitutional amendment that took the replacement process away from the governor's office.

HJR 5002 didn't include the mechanism for filling a legislative vacancy, leaving that decision to the statutory power of the Legislature. However, Dennert shared his vision of how that would work when present-

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ing the bill on the House floor. As Dennert saw it, the process would be like the mechanism used when a candidate backs out of running for office prior to Election Day. The local central committee, made up of elected officials, would screen candidates and choose the best one.

While Dennert's vision falls short of being a vote of the people, it does rely on citizens who know the district and its particular concerns. It's not reliant on an executive looking for a new legislator willing to move in lockstep with the governor's agenda.

"It should be the people of each legislative district who choose their own representatives," Dennert told his colleagues.

Testimony on the House floor opposing the bill was generally of the "if it ain't broke, don't fix it" variety. "We're talking about changing the constitution, so let's be careful," said Fort Pierre Republican Will Mortenson. "Let's be sure we're addressing a clear and present problem."

That sentiment echoed earlier testimony against the resolution in the House State Affairs Committee. Tony Venhuizen, who at the time was the governor's chief of staff, said the current system was working fine. "There isn't an obvious, better system to replace it," Venhuizen said, warning that if decisions couldn't be made in a new system about who should be the replacement legislator, vacancies would stay open.

Rep. Jamie Smith, a Sioux Falls Democrat, said his party was acutely aware of the governor's ability to appoint replacement legislators. He said at the end of each week of the session the Democratic caucus was admonished to drive safely because the "governor appoints your replacement."

Dennert's resolution made it through the committee on an 8-5 vote before crashing and burning in the full House, 23-46.

If the make-up of South Dakota's Legislature reflected that of some other states or the U.S. Congress, it would be split almost evenly between Republicans and Democrats. While that's not going to happen here anytime soon, the way the constitution is written, in the event of a vacancy, the governor would have the ability to change the balance of power in the Legislature.

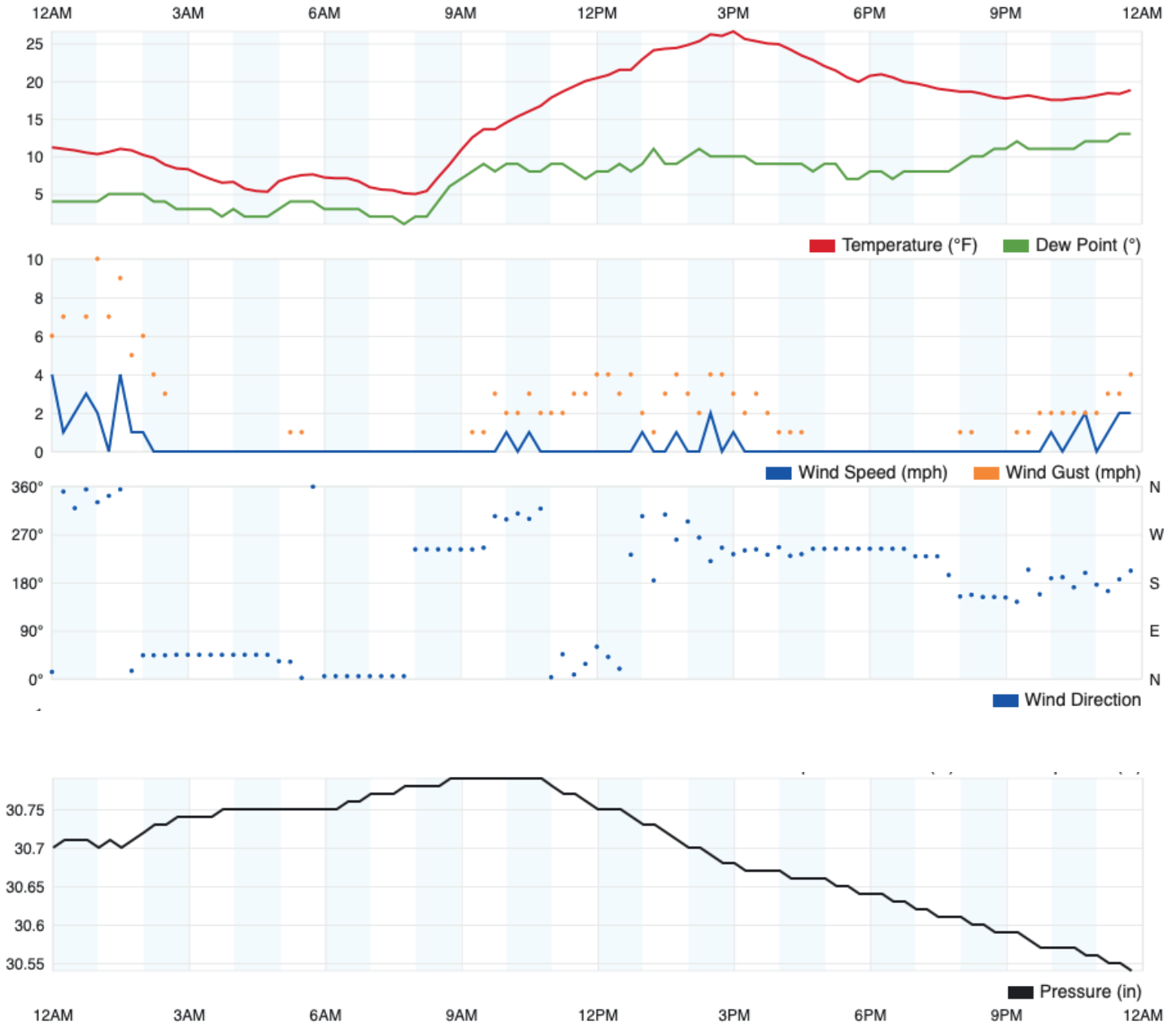
Running the executive branch is a big enough job without the governor having the constitutionally sanctioned ability to mess with the make-up of the Legislature. Rep. Dennert was on the right track. The current system may not be broken, but it could still use some fixing.

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

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Sat Nov 25	Sun Nov 26	Mon Nov 27	Tue Nov 28	Wed Nov 29	Thu Nov 30	Fri Dec 1
30°F	29°F	30°F	43°F	43°F	40°F	37°F
20°F	10°F	13°F	23°F	21°F	21°F	23°F
SSW 11 MPH	NW 20 MPH	WSW 7 MPH	S 15 MPH	WNW 13 MPH	ENE 7 MPH	ENE 11 MPH



Unsettled Before Milder Temps Next Week

November 25, 2023
3:08 AM



Today

➤ AM Light Snow...PM Clearing, Highs 27-35°



Tonight

➤ Snow Showers & Windy (30-45mph), Lows 17-22°



Sunday

➤ AM Snow Showers & Windy (35-45mph), Highs 26-32°



Monday

➤ Partly Cloudy & Breezy (20-35mph), Highs 28-42°

One system departing this morning will continue to generate some light snow (Dusting to less than half an inch). Another system brings stronger winds for Sunday along with some snow showers. Mild temps expected for the upcoming week

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 27 °F at 2:57 PM

Low Temp: 5 °F at 8:03 AM

Wind: 10 mph at 1:00 AM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 9 hours, 12 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 64 in 1960

Record Low: -22 in 1996

Average High: 38

Average Low: 15

Average Precip in Nov.: 0.64

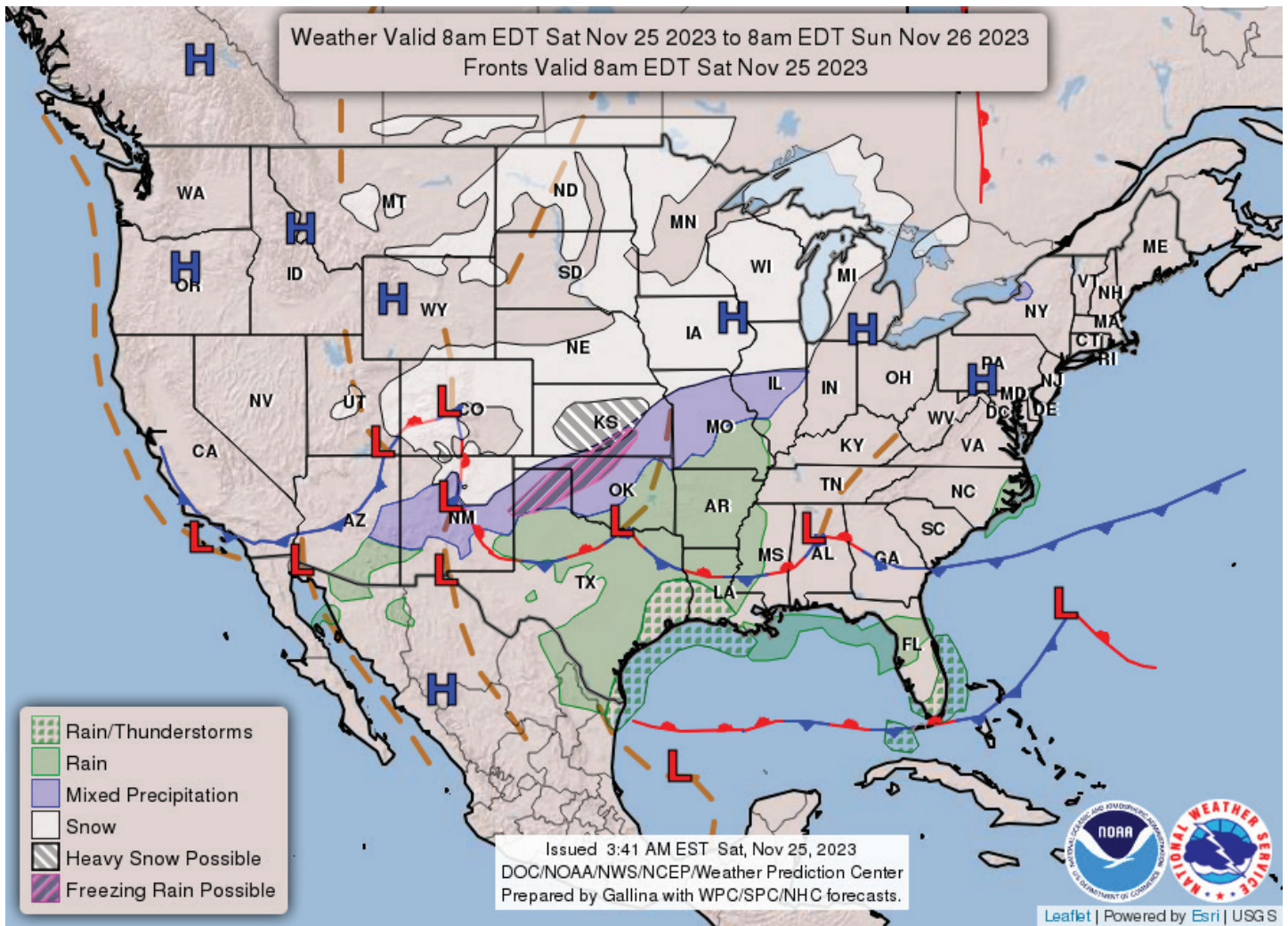
Precip to date in Nov.: 0.19

Average Precip to date: 21.11

Precip Year to Date: 23.17

Sunset Tonight: 4:55:50 PM

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:44:09 AM



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Today in Weather History

November 25, 1896: A major blizzard occurred throughout South Dakota, beginning on the 25th and continuing until the 27th. The storm began in most locations as rain and sleet, which turned to snow, accompanied by strong northerly winds. The 26th was the peak of the storm, and the heaviest snow and strongest wind occurred throughout the north, northeast, west and southwest portions of the state. In eastern and southeastern South Dakota, sleet was extraordinarily heavy on the 26th. There were many reports received of large quantities of trees stripped of smaller branches and limbs due to the weight of the sleet. Across the state, telegraph lines were flattened in all directions, and the poles were broken off in many places. Although there was very little loss of livestock in areas with available shelter, there were heavy individual losses on the ranges of South Dakota. Several people also perished on the ranges west of the Missouri River when they became lost in the storm without livestock. Reports of snowfall totals from the storm are very limited but included 17 inches at Aberdeen and 12 inches at Mellette. This blizzard was the most prominent individual feature in a November that was overall frigid, with a state mean temperature of 16.5 degrees, which was 17.2 degrees below normal at the time. The month still stands as the coldest November on record in Aberdeen, with an average temperature nearly 7 degrees Fahrenheit colder than the next coldest November (1985). The lowest reported temperature during the month was -29 F at Webster. Aberdeen recorded a low of -25 F on the 29th with a high temperature of -8 F that same day. The month currently stands as the snowiest November on record and second snowiest overall month on record for Aberdeen, with 32.8 inches, behind 38.5 inches recorded in February 1915.

November 25, 1703: The greatest windstorm ever recorded in the southern part of Great Britain reaches its peak intensity which it maintains through November 27. Winds gust up to 120 mph, and 9,000 people perish in the mighty gale, most of them sailors of the British fleet. The storm continued through December 2nd. It was reported that 4,000 oaks died in the New Forest and an attempt to count the toll of trees in Kent gave up at 17,000. At sea, the Eddystone Lighthouse was washed away, killing six people. Daniel Defoe wrote a journal called *The Storm* (1704) about this event. The storm has been called the first substantial work of modern journalism.

1950: Called the "storm of the century" this storm impacted the eastern part of the US, killing hundreds and causing millions of dollars in damages. New York City recorded a 94 mph wind gust and Bear Mountain, just north of the city recorded a 140 mph gust. Record low temperatures were reported on the southern end of this storm in Tennessee and North Carolina. This storm was unique as Pittsburgh saw 30 inches of snow, while Buffalo saw 50 degrees with 50 mph wind gusts.

1970 - The temperature at Tallahassee, FL, dipped to 13 degrees, following a high of 40 degrees the previous day. The mercury then reached 67 degrees on the 26th, and highs were in the 70s the rest of the month. (The Weather Channel)

1983 - The Great Thanksgiving Weekend Blizzard hit Denver, CO. The storm produced 21.5 inches of snow in 37 hours, closing Stapleton Airport for 24 hours. The snow and wind closed interstate highways around Denver. Visibility at Limon CO was down to zero for 24 hours. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - An early morning thunderstorm in southeastern Texas produced high winds which rolled a mobile home east of Bay City killing two of the four occupants. Thunderstorms produced locally heavy rains in central and eastern Texas, with nine inches reported at Huntsville, and 8.5 inches at Wimberly. Snow fell across northern and central Lower Michigan, with totals ranging up to nine inches at Cadillac. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather in Arkansas, eastern Oklahoma and northwest Texas during the day and into the night. Thunderstorms in Texas produced softball size hail at Alba, and wind gusts to 80 mph at Krum. Hail and high winds caused nearly five million dollars damage at Kaufman TX, and strong downburst winds derailed twenty-eight freight cars at Fruitvale TX. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

ONE PRAYER - DIFFERENT ANSWERS?

Janie had been rude and disobedient and refused to follow her mother's instructions. Wanting her to learn the importance of being obedient, and the necessity of prayer, her mother sent her to her room asking her to talk with God and pray for His help. In a few moments, she returned to the kitchen, where her mother was preparing the evening meal.

"Mom," she announced, "I prayed about my disobedience."

"Good," said her mother. "Did you ask God to help you to be kind and obedient?"

"No, Mom, I didn't," she answered. "Instead, I asked Him to help you put up with me."

Jesus said something important about obedience: "Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me." He also said, "If you love Me, you will keep my commands." There is always a connection in Scripture between love and obedience.

If we say that we love God, we will demonstrate that love by being obedient to Him and following His teachings. When we look at the life of Jesus, we see a relationship between a Father and His Son, founded on love and reflected in obedience. His life set the standard for us to follow.

It was the sinless and sacrificial life of Jesus that ultimately shows us what obedience to God requires. When we waver in our willingness to obey Christ, we must examine our commitment to Him and be willing and courageous to do what He asks us to do no matter what it costs us.

Prayer: Help us, Heavenly Father, in our struggle to be obedient to You. We know that self-centeredness often overwhelms us. Give us Your strength to persevere. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. John 14:21



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

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2023 Community Events

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

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The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:
11.24.23

6 15 45 59 68 1

MegaPlier: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$335,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
11.22.23

17 19 37 42 45 7

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$2,400,000

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 8 Mins 23 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
11.24.23

3 12 15 38 44 9

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 23 Mins 23 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
11.22.23

3 17 28 29 35

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$65,000

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 23 Mins 23 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
11.22.23

20 21 30 55 56 14

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 52 Mins 22 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
11.22.23

20 24 33 39 42 21

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$340,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 52 Mins 22 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the Associated Press

Bird flu still taking toll on industry as 1.35 million chickens are being killed on an Ohio egg farm

By JOSH FUNK Associated Press

More than 1.3 million chickens are being slaughtered on an Ohio egg farm as the bird flu continues to take a toll on the industry.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture said all 1.35 million chickens on the farm in Ohio's Union County will be slaughtered to help limit the spread of the highly contagious virus after a case was confirmed in the flock this week.

The outbreak that began in early 2022 has been much less severe this year as fewer cases of the virus are being found among the wild birds that spread it. But there have still been 8.1 million birds killed this year to help control the spread of the disease and 5.8 million of those have come just this month as several large egg farms have been struck. That includes 1.2 million birds at one Iowa egg farm and another 940,000 chickens at one Minnesota egg farm that had to be killed.

Egg farms tend to be much larger than turkey or chicken farms, sometimes with millions of birds. That's a big part of why Iowa — the nation's largest egg producing state — has been hit the hardest in this outbreak with nearly 17.3 million birds killed. Ohio is also one of the top egg producing states but it has seen only 5.1 million birds killed because of bird flu.

This week, there have also been sizeable bird flu cases confirmed on farms in Minnesota, Maryland, South Dakota, Wisconsin, Georgia and California. But the biggest one of those cases was the Maryland chicken farm where 198,200 birds were killed.

In 2022, nearly 58 million birds were slaughtered as part of the outbreak. The highly contagious virus is spread easily by wild birds through droppings and nasal discharges.

Farmers are working hard to keep the virus from infecting their flocks by taking steps like requiring workers to shower and change clothes before entering barns, sanitizing trucks that enter a farm and investing in separate sets of tools for every barn. But the virus is difficult to keep out particularly along the main pathways for migrating birds who are headed south for the winter.

Officials say bird flu doesn't represent a significant health threat. Human cases are extremely rare and none of the infected birds are allowed into the nation's food supply. Properly cooking poultry and eggs to 165 degrees Fahrenheit (73.89 degrees Celsius) will also kill any viruses.

Hamas is set to release 14 Israeli hostages for 42 Israel-held Palestinians in a second truce swap

By NAJIB JOBAIN, SAMY MAGDY and DAVID RISING Associated Press

KHAN YOUNIS, Gaza Strip (AP) — Egyptian officials said Hamas was preparing to release 14 Israeli hostages Saturday for 42 Palestinian prisoners held by Israel, as part of an exchange on the second day of a cease-fire that has allowed critical humanitarian aid into the Gaza Strip and given civilians their first respite after seven weeks of war.

On the first day of the four-day cease-fire, Hamas released 24 of the about 240 hostages taken during its Oct. 7 attack on Israel that triggered the war, and Israel freed 39 Palestinians from prison. Those freed from captivity in Gaza were 13 Israelis, 10 Thais and a Filipino.

On Saturday, Hamas provided mediators Egypt and Qatar with a list of 14 hostages to be released, and the list has been passed along to Israel, according to a Egyptian official, speaking on condition of anonymity because he was not permitted to talk about details of the ongoing negotiations. A second Egyptian official, also speaking on condition of anonymity, confirmed the details.

Under the truce agreement, Hamas will release one Israeli hostage for every three prisoners freed, and

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Israel's Prison Service had already said earlier Saturday it was preparing 42 prisoners for release.

It was not immediately clear how many non-Israeli captives may also be released.

Overall, Hamas is to release at least 50 Israeli hostages, and Israel 150 Palestinian prisoners during the four-day truce, all woman and minors.

Israel has said the truce can be extended an extra day for every additional 10 hostages freed — something United States President Joe Biden said he hoped would come to pass.

Separately, a Qatari delegation arrived in Israel on Saturday to coordinate with parties on the ground and "ensure the deal continues to move smoothly," according to a diplomat briefed on the visit. The diplomat spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to do discuss details with the media.

The start of the truce Friday morning brought the first quiet for 2.3 million Palestinians reeling and desperate from relentless Israeli bombardment that has killed thousands, driven three-quarters of the population from their homes and leveled residential areas. Rocket fire from Gaza militants into Israel went silent as well.

For Emad Abu Hajer, a resident of the Jabaliya refugee camp in the Gaza City area, the pause meant he could again dig through the rubble of his home, which was flattened in an Israeli attack last week.

He found the bodies of a cousin and nephew Friday, bring the death toll in the attack to 19. With his sister and two other relatives still missing, he resumed his digging Saturday.

"We want to find them and bury them in dignity," he said.

The United Nations said the pause enabled it to scale up the delivery of food, water, and medicine to the largest volume since the resumption of humanitarian aid convoys on Oct. 21. It was also able to deliver 129,000 liters (34,078 gallons) of fuel — just over 10% of the daily pre-war volume — as well as cooking gas, a first time since the war began.

In the southern city of Khan Younis on Saturday, a long line of people with gas cans and other containers waited outside a filling station hoping to get some of the newly delivered fuel.

As he waited for fuel, Hossam Fayad lamented that the pause in fighting was only for four days.

"I wish it could be extended until people's conditions improved," he said.

For the first time in over a month, aid reached northern Gaza, the focus of Israel's ground offensive. The Palestinian Red Crescent said 61 trucks carrying food, water and medical supplies headed to northern Gaza on Saturday, the largest aid convoy to reach the area since the start of the war.

The U.N. said it and the Palestinian Red Crescent were also able to evacuate 40 patients and family members from a hospital in Gaza City, where much of the fighting has taken place, to a hospital in Khan Younis.

The relief brought by the cease-fire has been tempered, however, for both sides — among Israelis by the fact that not all hostages will be freed and among Palestinians by the brevity of the pause. The short truce leaves Gaza mired in humanitarian crisis and under the threat that fighting could soon resume.

Amal Abu Awada, a 40-year-old widow who fled a Gaza City-area camp for Khan Younis with her three children earlier in November, ventured out Friday to a U.N. facility looking for food and water, but said there was none available.

"We went back empty handed," she said. "But at least there are no bombs, and we can try again."

FIRST HOSTAGES FREED

After nightfall Friday, a line of ambulances emerged from Gaza through the Rafah Crossing into Egypt carrying the freed hostages. The freed Israelis included nine women and four children 9 and under.

The released hostages were taken to three Israeli hospitals for observation. The Schneider Children's Medical Center said it was treating eight Israelis — four children and four women — and that all appeared to be in good physical condition. The center said they were also receiving psychological treatment, adding that "these are sensitive moments" for the families.

At a plaza dubbed "Hostages Square" in Tel Aviv, a crowd of Israelis celebrated at the news.

The hostages included multiple generations. Nine-year-old Ohad Munder-Zichri was freed along with his mother, Keren Munder, and grandmother, Ruti Munder. The fourth-grader was abducted during a holiday visit to his grandparents at the kibbutz where about 80 people — nearly a quarter of all residents of the

small community — are believed to have been taken from.

The plight of the hostages has raised anger among some families that the government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was not doing enough to bring them home.

Hours later, 24 Palestinian women and 15 teenage boys held in Israeli prisons in the occupied West Bank and east Jerusalem were freed. In the West Bank town of Beitunia, hundreds of Palestinians poured out of their homes to celebrate, honking horns and setting off fireworks that lit up the night sky.

The teenagers had been jailed for minor offenses like throwing stones. The women included several convicted of trying to stab Israeli soldiers, and others who had been arrested at checkpoints in the West Bank.

According to the Palestinian Prisoners' Club, an advocacy group, Israel is currently holding 7,200 Palestinians, including about 2,000 arrested since the start of the war.

A LONGER PEACE?

The war erupted when several thousand Hamas militants stormed into southern Israel, killing some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and taking scores of hostages, including babies, women and older adults, as well as soldiers.

Majed al-Ansari, a spokesperson for the Foreign Ministry of Qatar, said the hope is that momentum from the deal will lead to an end to the violence. Qatar served as a mediator along with the U.S. and Egypt.

Israeli leaders have said they would resume fighting eventually and not stop until Hamas, which has controlled Gaza for the past 16 years, is crushed. Israel has set the release of all hostages as the second goal of the war, and officials have argued that only military pressure can bring them home.

At the same time, the government is under pressure from the families of the hostages to make the release of the remaining captives the top priority, ahead of any efforts to end Hamas control of Gaza.

The Israeli offensive has killed more than 13,300 Palestinians, according to the Health Ministry in the Hamas-run Gaza government. Women and minors have consistently made up around two-thirds of the dead, though the latest number was not broken down. The figure does not include updated numbers from hospitals in the north, where communications have broken down.

Ukraine's military says Russia has launched its largest drone attack since the start of the invasion

By SAMYA KULLAB Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russia on Saturday morning launched its most intense drone attack on Ukraine since the beginning of its full-scale invasion in 2022, targeting the Ukrainian capital, military officials said.

"Kyiv was the main target," Ukrainian Air Force Commander Mykola Oleshchuk wrote on his Telegram channel.

In total, Russia launched 75 Iranian-made Shahed drones against Ukraine, of which 74 were destroyed by air defenses, Ukraine's air force said.

The attack was "the most massive air attack by drones on Kyiv," said Serhii Popko, head of the Kyiv city administration. Ukrainian air force spokesman Yuriy Ihnat confirmed later that the air defenses shot down 66 air targets over the capital and surrounding region throughout the morning.

At least five civilians were wounded in the hourslong assault, which saw several buildings damaged by falling debris from downed drones, including a kindergarten. The wounded included an 11-year-old child, according to Kyiv mayor Vitali Klitschko.

In the city's Solomiansky district, debris left a crater in the courtyard of a residential area, and the windows of a nearby building were blown out. Residents, most of them elderly, received medical attention at the scene. Others took shelter in a nearby subway station. As people were clearing up debris and broken glass in the neighborhood, the hum of a fresh wave of drones could be heard nearby.

The assault on Kyiv began at 4 a.m., continuing in waves for over six hours, and caused power outages in 77 residential buildings and 120 institutions, according to Popko. Ukraine's Energy Ministry said 17,000 people were without power in the Kyiv region as a result of the attack, noting that four power lines were

damaged. Power was restored in the early afternoon.

"Our soldiers shot down most of the drones. Unfortunately, not all," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy wrote on Telegram. "But we continue to work to strengthen our air defense and shoot down more," he said.

The attack was carried out on the morning of Holodomor Memorial Day which commemorates the man-made famine in Soviet Ukraine that killed millions of Ukrainians from 1932 to 1933. It is marked on the fourth Saturday in November.

In addition to Kyiv, the Sumy, Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhzhia, Mykolaiv and Kirovohrad regions were also targeted.

Meanwhile, shelling killed one person and wounded three in the southern Kherson region, regional Gov. Oleksandr Prokudin said on Saturday. According to Prokudin, the region had been shelled 100 times over the previous 24 hours.

An Israeli-owned ship was targeted in suspected Iranian attack in Indian Ocean, US official tells AP

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — A container ship owned by an Israeli billionaire came under attack by a suspected Iranian drone in the Indian Ocean as Israel wages war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip, an American defense official said Saturday.

The attack Friday on the CMA CGM Symi comes as global shipping increasingly finds itself targeted in the weeklong war that threatens to become a wider regional conflict — even as a truce has halted fighting and Hamas exchanges hostages for Palestinian prisoners held by Israel.

The defense official, who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity to discuss intelligence matters, said the Malta-flagged vessel was suspected to have been targeted by a triangle-shaped, bomb-carrying Shahed-136 drone while in international waters. The drone exploded, causing damage to the ship but not injuring any of its crew.

"We continue to monitor the situation closely," the official said. The official declined to elaborate on what intelligence the U.S. military gathered to assess Iran was behind the attack.

Al-Mayadeen, a pan-Arab satellite channel that is politically allied with the Iranian-backed Lebanese militant group Hezbollah, reported that an Israeli ship had been targeted in the Indian Ocean. The channel cited anonymous sources for the report, which Iranian media later cited.

CMA CGM, a major shipper based in Marseille, France, did not immediately respond to a request for comment. However, the vessel's crew had been behaving as though they believed the ship faced a threat.

The ship had its Automatic Identification System tracker switched off since Tuesday when it left Dubai's Jebel Ali port, according to data from MarineTraffic.com analyzed by the AP. Ships are supposed to keep their AIS active for safety reasons, but crews will turn them off if it appears they might be targeted. It had done the same earlier when traveling through the Red Sea past Yemen, home to the Iranian-backed Houthi rebels.

"The attack is likely to have been targeted, due to the vessel's Israeli affiliation through Eastern Pacific Shipping," the private intelligence firm Ambrey told the AP. "The vessel's AIS transmissions were off days prior to the event, indicating this alone does not prevent an attack."

The Symi is owned by Singapore-based Eastern Pacific Shipping, which is a company ultimately controlled by Israeli billionaire Idan Ofer. A phone number for Eastern Pacific Shipping in Singapore rang unanswered Saturday, while no one responded to a request for comment sent by email. The Israeli military referred questions to the Israeli Foreign Ministry, which did not immediately respond.

In November 2022, the Liberian-flagged oil tanker Pacific Zircon, also associated with Eastern Pacific, sustained damage in a suspected Iranian attack off Oman.

Iran's mission to the United Nations did not respond to a request for comment. However, Tehran and Israel have been engaged in a yearslong shadow war in the wider Middle East, with some drone attacks

targeting Israeli-associated vessels traveling around the region.

In the Israel-Hamas war, which began with the militants' Oct. 7 attack, the Houthis seized a vehicle transport ship in the Red Sea off Yemen. Iranian-backed militias in Iraq also have launched attacks on American troops in both Iraq and Syria during the war, though Iran itself has yet to be linked directly to an attack.

Palestinian families rejoice over release of minors and women in wartime prisoner swap

By ISABEL DEBRE Associated Press

BEITUNIA, West Bank (AP) — Over three dozen Palestinian prisoners returned home to a hero's welcome in the occupied West Bank on Friday following their release from Israeli prisons as part of a cease-fire deal between Israel and Hamas.

The procession of freed prisoners, some accused of minor offenses and others convicted in attacks, at a checkpoint outside of Jerusalem stoked massive crowds of Palestinians into a chanting, clapping, hand-waving, screaming frenzy.

Fifteen dazed young men, all in stained grey prison sweatsuits and looking gaunt with exhaustion, glided through the streets on the shoulders of their teary-eyed fathers as fireworks turned the night sky to blazing color and patriotic Palestinian pop music blared.

Some of those released were draped in Palestinian flags, others in the green flags of Hamas. They flashed victory signs as they crowd-surfed.

"I have no words, I have no words," said newly released 17-year-old Jamal Brahma, searching for something to say to the hordes of jostling journalists and thousands of chanting Palestinians, many in national dress. "Thank God."

Tears fell down his father Khalil Brahma's cheeks as he brought his son down from his shoulders and looked him in the eye for the first time in seven months. Israeli forces had arrested Jamal at his home in the Palestinian city of Jericho last spring and detained him without charge or trial.

"I just want to be his father again," he said.

The release of the Palestinian prisoners from Israeli jails came just hours after two dozen hostages, including 13 Israelis, were released from captivity in Gaza in the initial exchange of Israeli hostages and Palestinian prisoners during the four-day cease-fire that started Friday.

Under the deal, Hamas is to release at least 50 hostages, and Israel 150 Palestinian prisoners, over the four days. Israel said the truce can be extended an extra day for every additional 10 hostages freed.

Although the atmosphere was festive in the town of Beitunia near Israel's hulking Ofer Prison in the West Bank, people were on edge.

The Israeli government has ordered police to shut down celebrations over the release. Israeli security forces at one point unleashed tear gas canisters on the crowds, sending young men, old women and small children sprinting away as they wept and screamed in pain.

"The army is trying to take this moment away from us but they can't," Mays Foqaha said as she tumbled into the arms of her newly released 18-year-old friend, Nour al-Taher from Nablus, who was arrested during a protest in September at the Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. "This is our day of victory."

The Palestinian detainees freed Friday included 24 women, some of whom had been sentenced to years-long prison terms over attempted stabbings and other attacks on Israeli security forces. Others had been accused of incitement on social media.

There were also the 15 male teenagers, most of them charged with stone-throwing and "supporting terrorism," a broadly defined accusation that underscores Israel's long-running crackdown on young Palestinian men as violence surges in the occupied territory.

For families on both sides of the conflict, news of the exchange — perhaps the first hopeful moment in 49 days of war — stirred a bittersweet jumble of joy and anguish.

"As a Palestinian, my heart is broken for my brothers in Gaza, so I can't really celebrate," said Abdulqader

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Khatib, a U.N. worker whose 17-year-old son, Iyas, was placed last year in "administrative detention," without charges or trial and based on secret evidence. "But I am a father. And deep inside, I am very happy."

Israel is now holding an all-time high of 2,200 Palestinians in administrative detention, according to the Palestinian Prisoners' Club, an advocacy group, in a controversial policy that Israel defends as a counter-terrorism measure.

Since Oct. 7, when Hamas took roughly 240 Israeli and foreign citizens hostage and killed 1,200 Israelis in its unprecedented rampage through southern Israel, Palestinians have wondered about the fate of their own prisoners.

Israel has a history of agreeing to lopsided exchanges. In 2011, Hamas got Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to release more than 1,000 Palestinian prisoners in exchange for a single captive Israeli soldier, Gilad Schalit.

A prisoner release touches Palestinian society to its core. Almost every Palestinian has a relative in jail – or has been there himself. Human rights groups estimate that over 750,000 Palestinians have passed through Israeli prisons since Israel captured the West Bank, Gaza and east Jerusalem in 1967.

Whereas Israel views them as terrorists, Palestinians refer to them by the Arabic word for prisoners of war, and devote a good chunk of public funds to supporting them and their families. Israel and the U.S. have condemned the grants to prisoner families as an incentive for violence.

"These kinds of prisoner exchanges are often the only hope families have to see their sons or fathers released before many years go by," said Amira Khader, international advocacy officer at Addameer, a group supporting Palestinian prisoners. "It's what they live for, it's like a miracle from God."

Since the Hamas attack, Israel has escalated a months-long West Bank crackdown on Palestinians suspected of ties to Hamas and other militant groups. Many prisoners are convicted by military courts, which prosecute Palestinians with a conviction rate of more than 99%. Rights groups say Palestinians are often denied due process and forced into confessions.

There are now 7,200 Palestinians in Israeli prison, said Qadura Fares, the director of the Palestinian Prisoners' Club, with over 2,000 arrested since Oct. 7 alone.

On Friday in Beitunia, a lanky and pimply 16-year-old, Aban Hammad, stood unmoving, looking shaken by the tumult of tears, hugs and pro-Hamas chants around him. It was his first glimpse of the world after a year in prison for throwing stones in the northern town of Qalqilya. He was freed even though he had eight months of his sentence left to serve.

He turned toward his father, wrapping him into a hug. "Look, I'm almost bigger than you now," he said.

Tackling climate change and alleviating hunger: States recycle and donate food headed to landfills

By DAVID R. MARTIN and MICHAEL CASEY Associated Press

ELMSFORD, N.Y. (AP) — When Sean Rafferty got his start in the grocery business, anything that wasn't sold got tossed out.

But on a recent day, Rafferty, the store manager for ShopRite of Elmsford-Greenburgh in New York, was preparing boxes of bread, donuts, fresh produce and dairy products to be picked up by a food bank. It's part of a statewide program requiring larger businesses to donate edible food and, if they can, recycle remaining food scraps.

"Years ago, everything went in the garbage ... to the landfills, the compactors or wherever it was," said Rafferty, who has 40 years in the industry. "Now, over the years, so many programs have developed where we're able to donate all this food ... where we're helping people with food insecurities."

New York is among a growing number of states targeting food waste over concerns it is taking up diminishing landfill space and contributing to global warming as meat, vegetables and dairy release the greenhouse gas methane after being dumped in a landfill. Rescuing unwanted fruits and vegetables, eggs, cereals and other food also helps to feed hungry families.

Globally, about a third of food is wasted. In the United States, it's even higher, at 40%, according to the

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Harvard Food Law and Policy Clinic. The U.S. spends about \$218 billion each year growing and producing food that is wasted. About 63 tons (57 metric tons) goes to waste, including 52.4 tons (47.5 metric tons) that ends up in landfills and 10 tons (9 metric tons) never harvested from farms.

"What's shocking to people often is not only how much we waste ... but also the impact," said Emily Broad Leib, a Harvard University law professor and director of the school's Food Law and Policy Clinic. "Food waste causes about 8% to 10% of global greenhouse gas emissions."

Broad Leib says 20% of water in the U.S. is used to grow food "that we then just throw away, so we're basically taking water and putting it directly into a landfill."

But she and others also note there is growing awareness of the need to do something about food waste in the U.S.

In 2015, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Environmental Protection Agency announced a goal of 50% food waste reduction by 2030.

That has prompted a number of state-led initiatives, along with smaller, nonprofit efforts.

Ten states and the District of Columbia have passed legislation or executed policies to reduce, compost or donate waste. All 50 states have passed legislation shielding donors and recovery organizations from criminal and civil liability linked to donated food.

California and Vermont have launched programs converting residents' food waste into compost or energy, while Connecticut requires businesses, including larger food wholesalers and supermarkets, to recycle food waste. Farmers in Maryland can get a tax credit of up to \$5,000 per farm for food they donate.

Several states have joined New York in setting up systems allowing food to be donated. Rhode Island requires food vendors servicing education institutions to donate any unused food to food banks, while Massachusetts limits the amount of food that businesses can send to landfills, which Broad Leib said has increased food donations in the state by 22% over two years.

New York's program is in its second year, and state officials believe it's having a significant impact.

As of late October, the program had redistributed 5 million pounds (2.3 million kilograms) of food — the equivalent of 4 million meals — through Feeding New York State, which supports the state's 10 regional food banks and is hoping to double that number next year. Among those required to donate food include colleges, prisons, amusement parks and sporting venues.

"Certainly, we should be reducing the amount we waste to start with, but then we should be feeding people before we throw food away if it's good, wholesome food," said Sally Rowland, supervisor with the state Department of Environmental Conservation's Organics, Reduction and Recycling section. "To me, it's a commonsense kind of thing and I think it's just kind of built that momentum of people understanding about how much food we're really wasting."

New York's Westchester County has eight refrigerated trucks that pick up all types of perishable food, according to Danielle Vasquez, food donations coordinator for Feeding Westchester, one of the state's food banks.

The group started working with businesses in 2014 but has seen participation ramp up since the donation law went into effect last year. Much of the food collected goes to nearly 300 programs and partners throughout the county, including a mobile food pantry and the Carver Center, a nonprofit serving Port Chester's families and children, which has a pantry.

"This time of year is very important for us and a lot of families across Westchester," Vasquez said. "There is the high cost of food. There is a high cost of living. Westchester is a very expensive county to live in. ... We are here to supplement our families as much as we can so, that way, they can focus that money on paying their bills."

Among those visiting the Carver Center earlier this month was Betsy Quiroa, who lamented how the cost of everything had gone up since the coronavirus pandemic. She was counting on getting milk, eggs, fruits and vegetables during her visit and said she didn't care if the produce was dented or slightly damaged.

"Coming here is good," said Quiroa, a mother of four who relies on Social Security. "If you are not working, you buy nothing. This is the problem."

Despite New York's success, advocates for food waste worry not enough is being done to meet the 2030 goal. Broad Leib and others have called for a national effort to coordinate the various state and local policies.

There is a goal, "but we don't really have a great roadmap ... and how we're going to actually achieve that end goal by 2030, which is kind of crazy," Broad Leib said, adding that a one-person liaison office in the USDA isn't sufficient to address the problem.

Kathryn Bender, a University of Delaware assistant professor of economics, said donation programs are helpful, but she worries they might shift the burden from businesses to nonprofits, which could struggle to distribute all the food.

"The best solution for food waste is to not have it in the first place," Bender said. "If we don't need to produce all that food, let's not put all the resources into producing that food."

Retailers offer bigger Black Friday discounts to lure hesitant shoppers hunting for the best deals

By ANNE D'INNOCENZIO and ALEXANDRA OLSON AP Retail Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Shoppers venturing out to malls and stores on Black Friday found perks from champagne to virtual reality experiences and old-fashioned doorbusters, as retailers tried to entice customers who are resisting splurges and impulse buying this year.

Consumers are under pressure as their savings dwindle and their credit card debt grows. Inflation has eased but many goods and services like meat and rent are still far higher than they were three years ago.

Yvonne Carey, 72, was among the first shoppers at Macy's Herald Square store in Manhattan where she snapped up discounted Michael Kors slippers and Ugg boots for herself. But Carey said she plans to stick to the same \$1,000 budget as last year as she shops for gifts for her six grandchildren and her husband.

"The prices are crazy on everything food, clothes," Carey said.

Many retailers ordered fewer goods for this holiday season and pushed holiday sales earlier in October than last year to help shoppers spread out their spending. The trend for an early shopping push became more pronounced in 2021, when clogs in the supply network made people buy early for fear of not getting what they wanted. But this year, retailers said more shoppers were willing to wait until the last minute in hopes of finding better deals.

"In this economy it's really hard. We had to save some gift cards. We've been saving for like months ahead, to try and make it work, keep it normal," said Damaris Fay Bayard, shopping with her husband and daughter at a mall in Metairie, Louisiana.

Gone are the Black Fridays of years ago when customers would stand in line for hours in the middle of the night, or brawls would break out over high demand items. But Black Friday shopping remains a favorite tradition for many, and retailers tried to reward devotees with steeper discounts and other surprises.

"Tradition every year, get up at four o'clock, eat breakfast and come in the mall and shop all day," said Martha Stewart, singing and giddily looking through her shopping bags at Lakeside Shopping Center in Metairie.

Nearby, Jenell Rayford was delighted when workers at Lakeside popped champagne for shoppers.

"I have champagne and a new pair of shoes in my hand," Rayford said. "I just wasn't expecting all of this."

At Macy's Herald Square store, the Disney Princess shop had augmented reality allowing delighted youngsters to virtually step into one of the princess dresses. Shoppers who streamed in soon after the doors opened at 6 a.m. were greeted with discounts of between 40% and 60% on footwear, handbags and diamond jewelry.

"The customer is under pressure. You see it with what is going on in luxury. That is a recent development," Macy's CEO Jeff Gennette said in an interview with The Associated Press, adding that shoppers across all income levels are "more discerning about how they are spending their budget."

About 12,000 customers showed up at Mall of America in Bloomington, Minnesota, in the first hour of its 7 a.m. opening — 20% more than last year, said Jill Renslow, executive vice president of business development and marketing for the shopping center. She said she expects sales to be up anywhere from

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3% to 4% at the mall.

Stephen Lebovitz, CEO of mall operator CBL Properties, also said traffic was similar or better on Friday compared with a year ago based on a spot check of 18 of its 54 malls. He said more stores brought back doorbuster discounts, a Black Friday hallmark before the advent of online shopping. Palmetto Moon gave out \$25 gift cards to the first 50 people in line, while JCPenney gave out 200 discount cards every four hours.

Consumers spent \$5.6 billion on Thanksgiving Day, when most of the major stores like Macy's and Kohl's closed and shoppers focused on online shopping, according to Adobe Analytics, which tracks online spending. That was up 5.5% compared with a year ago. For the first 23 days of November, consumers spent \$76.7 billion online, up 6.8% from the same period a year ago. Online sales on Black Friday are expected to bring in \$9.6 billion, up 5.7% compared with the year-ago period, Adobe said.

The National Retail Federation, the nation's largest retail trade group, expects shoppers will spend more this year than last year, but their pace will slow.

The group has forecast that U.S. holiday sales will rise 3% to 4% for November through December, compared with 5.4% growth a year ago. The forecast is consistent with the average annual holiday increase of 3.6% from 2010 to pre-pandemic 2019. Americans ramped up spending during the pandemic, with money in their pockets from federal relief checks and nowhere to go during lockdowns.

Online discounts should be better than a year ago, particularly for toys, electronics and clothing, according to Adobe. It predicts toys will be discounted on average by 35%, compared with 22% a year ago, while electronics should see 30% cuts, compared with last year's 27%. In clothing, shoppers will see an average discount of 25%, compared with 19% last year.

Analysts consider the five-day Black Friday weekend — which includes the Monday after the holiday known as Cyber Monday — a key barometer of shoppers' willingness to spend.

This year, "it has been slow," said Gabriella Santaniello, founder of A Line Partners, an independent retail research firm in Los Angeles, who had a network of associates scoping out malls and stores in Dallas, Philadelphia, Orlando, Florida and other parts of the country on Friday. "They're getting out to shop. But I don't think they're buying as much."

Worker unrest and protests over the Israel-Gaza war clouded the shopping experience in some parts of the world. Pro-Palestinian activists staged Black Friday protests in Los Angeles and Washington. In Europe, the UNI Global Union said it organized "Make Amazon Pay" strikes and protests in 30 countries. Amazon said the strikes would not affect customers.

Black Friday is expected as usual to be the busiest shopping day of the year, according to Sensormatic Solutions, which tracks store traffic.

But some shoppers who returned to stores for Black Friday for the first time in years were unimpressed by the size of the crowds and the quality of the discounts.

Samuel Alvez, 44, and his wife bought two computer monitors and a pressure cooker at a Walmart in Germantown, Maryland, but came away disappointed in the discounts during their first Black Friday outing in years.

"Back in the day, they had these good deals in stores," Alvez said. "Now, we don't see that anymore."

Families of hostages not slated for release from Gaza during current truce face enduring nightmare

By TIA GOLDENBERG Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — Ofri Bibas Levy has been haunted by nightmares since Oct. 7, when her brother, sister-in-law and their two young children were snatched by Hamas militants from their homes and dragged into the Gaza Strip.

In those dreams she sees her captive relatives, all except for her brother Yarden. That subconscious omission may reflect her ordeal: Out of the Israeli hostages, only women and children are expected to be among the 50 people released during a four-day cease-fire between Israel and Hamas that started Friday.

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All of the Israeli men, and many women, will remain captive in Gaza for now. It was not clear if all children were expected to be freed. Hamas freed 24 people Friday, including 13 Israeli women and children, 10 people from Thailand and one Filipino.

"It's a deal that puts the families in a situation that is inhuman. Who will come out and who won't?" Bibas Levy asked. "The children come out, but my brother and many other people stay?" Her relatives were not among those freed in the first release.

The deal will bring relief to dozens whose relatives are captive — as well as to Palestinians in Gaza who have endured weeks of bombardment and dire conditions.

But with some 240 hostages in militant hands, only a fraction of families will be reunited under the current arrangement. There is some hope that the agreement could be expanded: Israel has said it will extend the truce one day for every 10 hostages freed.

Many families are expected to be left to endure the torment of not knowing the fate of their loved ones.

The plight of the hostages — who range from babies to older adults — has gripped Israelis. The captives' families have embarked on a campaign to free their loved ones that has tugged at the heartstrings of many and ratcheted up pressure on the Israeli government to make concessions and secure deals for their release.

That pressure and the families' widespread public support could force the government into extending the cease-fire even though it has pledged to keep fighting once the current truce expires.

Securing the freedom of all hostages, especially the soldiers among them, could prove difficult. Militants in Gaza see the captives as a critical bargaining chip in their war with Israel.

The leader of Islamic Jihad, a militant group allied with Hamas, said Friday that Israeli soldiers who were taken wouldn't be freed until all Palestinian prisoners held by Israel are released.

Bibas Levy has put her life on pause to devote herself to fighting for her family's release — her nephews age 10 months and 4 years were some of the youngest taken captive. The occupational therapist who moved out of a targeted southern Israeli community two months before Hamas' attack, said she will keep battling until all her relatives return.

Dani Miran — whose son Omri was taken hostage — has been distraught over his son's well-being. With the unbearable uncertainty and without a sign of life for seven weeks, he is plagued by difficult thoughts.

"My son is not on the list. He's 46 years old. and I hope that he is in a health condition where he can cope with all the hardship that there is there, that they didn't wound him, didn't torture him and didn't do things that are inhuman," Miran said.

For many families, the news of a deal has sparked a mix of emotions — grief in cases where they don't expect their loved ones to be freed and hope that it may lead to further releases.

"I wish that all of them would come back, and I believe that all of them will come back. But we must have patience, and just be strong," said Yaakov Argamani, whose daughter Noa, 26, was taken captive, along with dozens of other young adults from a music festival that came under attack.

Many families have said they cannot endure listening to the news because all the twists and turns of the negotiations are incapacitating. The current deal, brought about after weeks of fitful negotiations, appeared definite until a last-minute snag prompted a one-day delay.

"It's like a rollercoaster," said Eyal Nouri, whose aunt Adina Moshe, 72, was among those released Friday. Earlier, Nouri had said that he did not expect her to be among those freed. Moshe's husband, Said, was killed on Oct. 7.

The nightmare for many won't end even if their relatives are released, Nouri said.

After the joy of the reunion, those freed will need to reckon with the trauma of their captivity, their dead loved ones, their destroyed communities and their country at war.

"She has nothing. No clothes, no house, no husband, no town. Nothing," said Nouri. Once she's released "she'll need to build her life from scratch, at 72 years old. Our lives are completely different."

Ex-officer Derek Chauvin, convicted in George Floyd's killing, stabbed in prison, AP source says

By MICHAEL R. SISAK Associated Press

Derek Chauvin, the former Minneapolis police officer convicted of murdering George Floyd, was stabbed by another inmate and seriously injured Friday at a federal prison in Arizona, a person familiar with the matter told The Associated Press.

The attack happened at the Federal Correctional Institution, Tucson, a medium-security prison that has been plagued by security lapses and staffing shortages. The person was not authorized to publicly discuss details of the attack and spoke to the AP on the condition of anonymity.

The Bureau of Prisons confirmed that an incarcerated person was assaulted at FCI Tucson at around 12:30 p.m. local time Friday. In a statement, the agency said responding employees contained the incident and performed "life-saving measures" before the inmate, who it did not name, was taken to a hospital for further treatment and evaluation.

No employees were injured and the FBI was notified, the Bureau of Prisons said. Visiting at the facility, which has about 380 inmates, has been suspended.

Messages seeking comment were left with Chauvin's lawyers and the FBI.

Chauvin's stabbing is the second high-profile attack on a federal prisoner in the last five months. In July, disgraced sports doctor Larry Nassar was stabbed by a fellow inmate at a federal penitentiary in Florida.

It is also the second major incident at the Tucson federal prison in a little over a year. In November 2022, an inmate at the facility's low-security prison camp pulled out a gun and attempted to shoot a visitor in the head. The weapon, which the inmate shouldn't have had, misfired and no one was hurt.

Chauvin, 47, was sent to FCI Tucson from a maximum-security Minnesota state prison in August 2022 to simultaneously serve a 21-year federal sentence for violating Floyd's civil rights and a 22½-year state sentence for second-degree murder.

Chauvin's lawyer, Eric Nelson, had advocated for keeping him out of general population and away from other inmates, anticipating he'd be a target. In Minnesota, Chauvin was mainly kept in solitary confinement "largely for his own protection," Nelson wrote in court papers last year.

Last week, the U.S. Supreme Court rejected Chauvin's appeal of his murder conviction. Separately, Chauvin is making a longshot bid to overturn his federal guilty plea, claiming new evidence shows he didn't cause Floyd's death.

Floyd, who was Black, died on May 25, 2020, after Chauvin, who is white, pressed a knee on his neck for 9½ minutes on the street outside a convenience store where Floyd was suspected of trying to pass a counterfeit \$20 bill.

Bystander video captured Floyd's fading cries of "I can't breathe." His death touched off protests worldwide, some of which turned violent, and forced a national reckoning with police brutality and racism.

Three other former officers who were at the scene received lesser state and federal sentences for their roles in Floyd's death.

Chauvin's stabbing comes as the federal Bureau of Prisons has faced increased scrutiny in recent years following wealthy financier Jeffrey Epstein's jail suicide in 2019. It's another example of the agency's inability to keep even its highest profile prisoners safe after Nassar's stabbing and "Unabomber" Ted Kaczynski's suicide at a federal medical center in June.

An ongoing AP investigation has uncovered deep, previously unreported flaws within the Bureau of Prisons, the Justice Department's largest law enforcement agency with more than 30,000 employees, 158,000 inmates and an annual budget of about \$8 billion.

AP reporting has revealed rampant sexual abuse and other criminal conduct by staff, dozens of escapes, chronic violence, deaths and severe staffing shortages that have hampered responses to emergencies, including inmate assaults and suicides.

Bureau of Prisons Director Colette Peters was brought in last year to reform the crisis-plagued agency.

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She vowed to change archaic hiring practices and bring new transparency, while emphasizing that the agency's mission is "to make good neighbors, not good inmates."

Testifying before the Senate Judiciary Committee in September, Peters touted steps she'd taken to overhaul problematic prisons and beef up internal affairs investigations. This month, she told a House Judiciary subcommittee that hiring had improved and that new hires were outpacing retirements and other departures.

But Peters has also irritated lawmakers who said she reneged on her promise to be candid and open with them. In September, senators scolded her for forcing them to wait more than a year for answers to written questions and for claiming that she couldn't answer basic questions about agency operations, like how many correctional officers are on staff.

On Day One of Gaza cease-fire, Hamas and Israel carry out first swap of hostages and prisoners

By NAJIB JOBAIN, JOSEF FEDERMAN and JACK JEFFERY Associated Press

RAFAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — Hamas on Friday released 24 hostages it held captive in Gaza for weeks, and Israel freed 39 Palestinians from prison in the first stage of a swap under a four-day cease-fire that offered a small glimmer of relief to both sides.

Israel — wrenched by the abduction of nearly 240 people in Hamas' Oct. 7 attack that triggered the war — cheered as 13 Israeli women and children emerged free from Gaza. Most were in their 70s or 80s, and the youngest was a 2-year-old. Also released were 10 people from Thailand and one from the Philippines.

In Gaza, the truce's start Friday morning brought the first quiet for 2.3 million Palestinians reeling and desperate from relentless Israeli bombardment that has killed thousands, driven three-quarters of the population from their homes and leveled residential areas. Rocket fire from Gaza militants into Israel went silent as well.

Increased supplies of food, water, medicine and fuel promised under the deal began to roll into Gaza, where U.N. officials had warned that Israel's seal on the territory threatened to push it to starvation.

But relief has been tempered — among Israelis by the fact that not all hostages will be freed and among Palestinians by the briefness of the pause. The short truce leaves Gaza mired in humanitarian crisis and under the threat that fighting could soon resume.

Israel says the cease-fire could be extended if more hostages are released, and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said it had received a new list of hostages to be released by Hamas on Saturday.

But Israel has vowed to resume its massive offensive once the truce ends. That has clouded hopes that the deal could eventually help wind down the conflict, which has fueled a surge of violence in the occupied West Bank and stirred fears of a wider conflagration across the Middle East.

FIRST HOSTAGES FREED

Under the deal, Hamas is to release at least 50 hostages, and Israel 150 Palestinian prisoners over the four days. Both sides were starting with women and children. Israel said the four-day truce can be extended an extra day for every additional 10 hostages freed.

After nightfall Friday, a line of ambulances emerged from Gaza through the Rafah Crossing into Egypt carrying the freed hostages, as seen live on Egypt's state-run Al-Qahera TV. The freed Israelis included nine women and four children 9 and under.

The released hostages were taken to three Israeli hospitals for observation. The Schneider Children's Medical Center said it was treating eight Israelis — four children and four women — and that all appeared to be in good physical condition. The center said they were also receiving psychological treatment, adding that "these are sensitive moments" for the families.

At a plaza dubbed "Hostages Square" in Tel Aviv, a crowd of Israelis celebrated at the news.

Yael Adar spotted her mother, 85-year-old Yaffa Adar, in a TV newscast of the release and was cheered to see her walking. "That was a huge concern, what would happen to her health during these almost two months," she told Israel's Channel 12.

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But Yael's 38-year-old son, Tamir Adar, remained in captivity. Both were kidnapped on Oct. 7 from Kibbutz Nir Oz. "Everyone needs to come back. It's happiness locked up in grief."

The hostages included multiple generations. Nine-year-old Ohad Munder-Zichri was freed along with his mother, Keren Munder, and grandmother Ruti Munder. The fourth-grader was abducted during a holiday visit to his grandparents at the kibbutz where about 80 people — nearly a quarter of all residents of the small community — are believed to have been taken hostage.

The plight of the hostages has raised anger among some families that the government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was not doing enough to bring them home.

Hours later, 24 Palestinian women and 15 teenagers held in Israeli prisons in the occupied West Bank and east Jerusalem were freed. In the West Bank town of Beituna, hundreds of Palestinians poured out of their homes to celebrate, honking horns and setting off fireworks that lit up the night sky.

The teenagers had been jailed for minor offenses like throwing stones. The women included several convicted of trying to stab Israeli soldiers, and others who had been arrested at checkpoints in the West Bank.

"As a Palestinian, my heart is broken for my brothers in Gaza, so I can't really celebrate," said Abdulqader Khatib, a U.N. worker whose 17-year-old son, Iyas, was freed. "But I am a father. And deep inside, I am very happy."

Iyas had been taken last year into "administrative detention," without charges or trial and based on secret evidence. Israel often holds detainees for months without charges. Most of those who are tried are put before military courts that almost never acquit defendants and often don't follow due process, human rights groups say.

According to the Palestinian Prisoners' Club, an advocacy group, Israel is currently holding 7,200 Palestinians, including about 2,000 arrested since the start of the war.

CEASE-FIRE TAKES HOLD

Friday's halt in fighting brought Gaza's uprooted population a moment to catch their breath after weeks of fleeing for shelter, searching for food and fearing for family.

After the truce began Friday morning, four trucks of fuel and four trucks of cooking gas entered from Egypt, as well as 200 trucks of relief supplies, Israel said.

Israel has barred all imports into Gaza throughout the war, except for a trickle of supplies from Egypt.

Its ban on fuel, which it said could be diverted to Hamas, caused a territory-wide blackout. Hospitals, water systems, bakeries and shelters have struggled to keep generators running.

During the truce, Israel agreed to allow the delivery of 130,000 liters (34,340 gallons) of fuel per day — still only a small portion of Gaza's estimated daily needs of more than 1 million liters.

Most of Gaza's 2.3 million people are crowded into the southern portion of the territory, with more than 1 million living in U.N. schools-turned-shelters. The calm brought a chance for displaced residents of the south to visit homes and retrieve some belongings.

But the hundreds of thousands who evacuated from northern Gaza to the south were warned not to return in leaflets dropped by Israel. Israeli troops hold much of the north, including Gaza City.

Still, hundreds of Palestinians tried walking north Friday. Two were shot and killed by Israeli troops and another 11 were wounded.

Sofian Abu Amer decided to risk checking his home in Gaza City.

"We don't have enough clothes, food and drinks," he said. "The situation is disastrous. It's better for a person to die."

Israel's northern border with Lebanon was also quiet on Friday, a day after the militant Hezbollah group, an ally of Hamas, carried out the highest number of attacks in one day since fighting there began Oct. 8.

Hezbollah is not a party to the cease-fire agreement but was widely expected to halt its attacks.

A LONGER PEACE?

The war erupted when several thousand Hamas militants stormed into southern Israel, killing at least 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and taking scores of hostages, including babies, women and older adults,

as well as soldiers.

The hope is that "momentum" from the deal will lead to an "end to this violence," said Majed al-Ansari, a spokesman for the Foreign Ministry of Qatar, which served as a mediator along with the United States and Egypt.

But hours before it came into effect, Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant told troops that their respite would be short and that the war would resume with intensity for at least two more months.

Netanyahu has also vowed to continue the war to destroy Hamas' military capabilities, end its 16-year rule in Gaza and return all the hostages.

The Israeli offensive has killed more than 13,300 Palestinians, according to the Health Ministry in the Hamas-run Gaza government. Women and minors have consistently made up around two-thirds of the dead, though the latest number was not broken down. The figure does not include updated numbers from hospitals in the north, where communications have broken down.

The ministry says some 6,000 people have been reported missing, feared buried under rubble. The ministry does not differentiate between civilians and militants in its death tolls.

Israel says it has killed thousands of Hamas fighters, without presenting evidence for its count.

'Adopt an axolotl' campaign launches in Mexico to save iconic species from pollution and trout

By DANIEL SHAILER Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Ecologists from Mexico's National Autonomous university on Friday relaunched a fundraising campaign to bolster conservation efforts for axolotls, an iconic, endangered fish-like type of salamander.

The campaign, called "Adoptaxolotl," asks people for as little as 600 pesos (about \$35) to virtually adopt one of the tiny "water monsters." Virtual adoption comes with live updates on your axolotl's health. For less, donors can buy one of the creatures a virtual dinner.

In their main habitat the population density of Mexican axolotls (ah-ho-LOH'-tulz) has plummeted 99.5% in under two decades, according to scientists behind the fundraiser.

Last year's Adoptaxolotl campaign raised just over 450,000 pesos (\$26,300) towards an experimental captive breeding program and efforts to restore habitat in the ancient Aztec canals of Xochimilco, a southern borough of Mexico City.

Still, there are not enough resources for thorough research, said Alejandro Calzada, an ecologist surveying less well-known species of axolotls for the government's environment department.

"We lack big monitoring of all the streams in Mexico City," let alone the whole country, said Calzada, who leads a team of nine researchers. "For this large area it is not enough."

Despite the creature's recent rise to popularity, almost all 18 species of axolotl in Mexico remain critically endangered, threatened by encroaching water pollution, a deadly amphibian fungus and non-native rainbow trout.

While scientists could once find 6,000 axolotls on average per square kilometer in Mexico, there are now only 36, according to the National Autonomous university's latest census. A more recent international study found less than a thousand Mexican axolotls left in the wild.

Luis Zambrano González, one of the university's scientists announcing the fundraiser, told The Associated Press he hopes to begin a new census (the first since 2014) in March.

"There is no more time for Xochimilco," said Zambrano. "The invasion" of pollution "is very strong: soccer fields, floating dens. It is very sad."

Without data on the number and distribution of different axolotl species in Mexico, it is hard to know how long the creatures have left, and where to prioritize what resources are available.

"What I know is that we have to work urgently," said Calzada.

Axolotls have grown into a cultural icon in Mexico for their unique, admittedly slimy, appearance and

uncanny ability to regrow limbs. In labs around the world, scientists think this healing power could hold the secret to tissue repair and even cancer recovery.

In the past, government conservation programs have largely focused on the most popular species: the Mexican axolotl, found in Xochimilco. But other species can be found across the country, from tiny streams in the valley of Mexico to the northern Sonora desert.

Mexico City's expanding urbanization has damaged the water quality of the canals, while in lakes around the capital rainbow trout which escape from farms can displace axolotls and eat their food.

Calzada said his team is increasingly finding axolotls dead from chytrid fungus, a skin-eating disease causing catastrophic amphibian die offs from Europe to Australia.

While academics rely on donations and Calzada's team turns to a corps of volunteers, the Mexican government recently approved an 11% funding cut for its environment department.

Over its six year term the administration of President Andrés Manuel López Obrador will have given 35% less money to the country's environment department than its predecessor, according to an analysis of Mexico's 2024 budget.

Sea turtle nests break records on US beaches, but global warming threatens their survival

By CURT ANDERSON Associated Press

INDIAN ROCKS BEACH, Fla. (AP) — Just as they have for millions of years, sea turtles by the thousands made their labored crawl from the ocean to U.S. beaches to lay their eggs over the past several months. This year, record nesting was found in Florida and elsewhere despite growing concern about threats from climate change.

In Florida, preliminary state statistics show more than 133,840 loggerhead turtle nests, breaking a record set in 2016. Same for green turtles, where the estimate of at least 76,500 nests is well above the previous mark set in 2017.

High sea turtle nest numbers also have been reported in South Carolina, Alabama, North Carolina and Georgia, although not all set records like Florida, where Justin Perrault, vice president of research at Loggerhead Marinelifelife Center in Juno Beach, said the number of nests is remarkable this year.

"We had more nests than we had ever seen before on our local beaches," said Perrault, whose organization monitors Palm Beach County and broke a local record by 4,000 nests. "That's quite a bit of nesting."

There are seven species of sea turtles: loggerhead, green, leatherback, hawksbill, Kemp's ridley, olive ridley and flatback. All are considered either endangered or threatened. They come ashore on summer nights, digging pits in the sand and depositing dozens of eggs before covering them up and returning to the sea. Florida beaches are one of the most important hatcheries for loggerheads in the world.

Only about one in 1,000 sea turtle hatchlings live to adulthood. They face myriad natural threats, including predators on land and in the ocean, disruptions to nests and failure to make it to the water after hatching. This year along one stretch of Florida's Gulf Coast where 75 nests had been counted, most were wiped out by the surge from Hurricane Idalia in August.

"Unfortunately, the nests pre-Idalia were almost all lost due to the high tides and flooding on our barrier islands," said Carly Oakley, senior turtle conservation biologist at Clearwater Marine Aquarium.

Female turtles generally lay eggs in a three-year cycle, leading to up-and-down years of nests, she said. "The nesting process is very exhausting and, in this break, females regain the energy to do the process again," Oakley said.

Climate change has added to those challenges, reducing beaches as sea levels rise and causing more powerful tropical storms. Hotter air, water and sand and changes in the ocean currents turtles use to migrate also lower the odds of surviving, according to Oceana, an international conservation group.

Sand temperatures play a major role in determining sea turtle sex. In general, warmer temperatures produce more female turtles, and sand temperatures are projected to increase dramatically around the world by 2100, according to researchers at Florida State University.

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"So the warmer the nest is, the more likely that nest is to produce females," Perrault said. "Additionally, hatchlings that come out of warmer nests are much smaller and often slower."

A study led by FSU professor Mariana Fuentes that was published recently in the *Global Change Biology* journal found sea turtles will have to nest much later or much earlier than they currently do to cope with changing environmental conditions.

Even that may not be enough for every species, said Fuentes, who works in FSU's Department of Earth, Ocean and Atmospheric Science. Turtles have adapted to altered climates over millions of years, but today's rapid changes could happen too quickly for them to evolve, she said.

"We have found that even if they do change the timing of their nesting, that's not going to be sufficient to maintain the temperatures of current nesting grounds," Fuentes said.

Sea turtle mothers already have to lumber out of the water to find a good spot to nest, which can be difficult in areas where humans have built seawalls. Some female turtles make several attempts, known as false crawls, before finding a suitable location.

Racoons, coyotes and other predators raid the nests and hatchlings, once they dig their way out, have to crawl to the sea before being snatched up by birds and other animals. Electric lights can disorient them, causing turtles to head the wrong way on the beach instead of following light from the moon and stars. And when the lucky ones finally start swimming, hungry fish await.

Michelle Pate, biologist at the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, said tens of thousands of hatchlings don't make it to the water, even as nest numbers trend higher across much of the Southeast.

"If we can't get hatchlings to emerge and make it to the ocean, then an increase in nest numbers doesn't help," she said.

The increase in turtle nests this year conceals an ominous future for the animals, Perrault said.

"Yes, we're seeing record numbers, but our hatchling production may not be that great," he said. "And so in the future, 20 to 30 years from now, and these things come back to nest, we may not be seeing these record numbers that we're seeing now."

Ireland's prime minister condemns anti-immigrant protesters who rampaged through central Dublin

By DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Ireland's prime minister on Friday condemned anti-immigrant protesters who rampaged through central Dublin after three young children were stabbed, saying the rioters simply wanted to cause chaos, not protect the country's way of life.

Police made a number of further arrests on Friday evening as they mounted a significant security operation in Dublin to ensure that there was no repeat of Thursday's disorder. A number of people were taken away in police vans following sporadic altercations.

Police arrested 34 people after Thursday night's rioting when up to 500 people looted shops, set fire to vehicles and threw rocks at crowd control officers equipped with helmets and shields.

The violence began after rumors circulated that a foreign national was responsible for the attack outside a Dublin school on Thursday afternoon. Authorities haven't disclosed the suspect's nationality.

Prime Minister Leo Varadkar said Ireland's capital had endured two attacks, one on innocent children and the other on "our society and the rule of law."

"These criminals did not do what they did because they love Ireland, they did not do what they did because they wanted to protect Irish people, they did not do it out of any sense of patriotism, however warped," Varadkar told reporters on Friday morning. "They did so because they're filled with hate, they love violence, they love chaos and they love causing pain to others."

A 5-year-old girl was in critical condition at a Dublin hospital and a teacher's aide was in serious condition, police said. A 6-year-old girl continues to receive treatment for less serious injuries and another child was discharged overnight. The alleged assailant, who was tackled by witnesses, remains hospitalized in serious condition.

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Thursday's unrest came amid rising tensions over immigration in Ireland that mirror trends in other parts of Europe. Earlier this year, people carrying signs reading "Ireland is full" demonstrated in Dublin, and protesters blockaded a hotel housing asylum-seekers in County Clare on the west coast.

An analysis of more than 13 million social media posts over the past three years found that right-wing groups were increasingly using platforms such as X, formerly known as Twitter, to stir up opposition to immigration. Recent activity has characterized the refugees and asylum-seekers as an "existential threat to Ireland," according to a report from the Institute for Strategic Dialogue, a London-based group that seeks to combat extremism.

Ireland received more than 141,000 immigrants in the 12 months through April, the highest total since 2007, the latest government statistics show. The influx of migrants drove an 11.7% increase in Ireland's population over the past 11 years, contributing to a steady increase in housing prices.

When he was questioned about anti-immigration tensions earlier this year, Varadkar told Ireland's parliament that there was always a place for peaceful protest, but violence, intimidation and racism were never legitimate.

"I think when it comes to this matter, we should never lose sight of the bigger picture — we're facing a major refugee crisis not just here in Ireland but all across Europe," he said in May.

Commissioner Drew Harris, head of Ireland's national police force, described those who took part in Thursday's unrest as a "complete lunatic hooligan faction driven by far-right ideology."

More than 400 officers, including many in riot gear, were deployed throughout the city center to contain the violence. A cordon was set up around the Irish Parliament building, Leinster House, and mounted officers were dispatched to nearby Grafton Street.

One officer was seriously injured in clashes with the rioters, some of whom were armed with metal bars and covered their faces.

"These (riots) are scenes that we have not seen in decades, but what is clear is that people have been radicalized through social media and the internet," Harris told reporters.

"But I don't want to lose focus on the terrible event in terms of the dreadful assault on schoolchildren and their teacher. There's a full investigation ongoing. There's also a full investigation in respect on the disorder."

Varadkar praised people of multiple nationalities who intervened to stop the attack as it unfolded, describing them as "real Irish heroes."

One of them was Caio Benicio, a Brazilian delivery driver who stopped when he saw the teacher's aide trying to save the children. Spotting a knife, he ripped off his helmet and slammed it into the attacker with all his strength.

"I pray for her to survive," Benicio said of the child in critical condition. "I'm a parent myself, I have two kids and I know how hard it is."

Benicio told Britain's Press Association that the disturbances seemed to be caused by a "small group of people" who "wanted an excuse to do what they did."

"I'm here for about 20 years now, I don't know politics here deeply to have an opinion about it," he said. "What I can say is I know the protest is against immigrants and for me it doesn't make sense, because I'm an immigrant myself and I was the one who helped out. For me it doesn't make sense."

Daryl Hall is suing John Oates over plan to sell stake in joint venture. A judge has paused the sale

By JONATHAN MATTISE and MARIA SHERMAN Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — Daryl Hall has sued his longtime music partner John Oates, arguing that his plan to sell off his share of a joint venture would violate the terms of a business agreement the Hall & Oates duo had forged.

The move quickly prompted a judge to temporarily block the sale while legal proceedings and a previously initiated arbitration continue.

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A Nashville chancery court judge issued the temporary restraining order on Nov. 16, writing that Oates and others involved in his trust can't move to close the sale of their share of Whole Oats Enterprises LLP to Primary Wave IP Investment Management LLC until an arbitrator in a separately filed case weighs in on the deal, or until the judge's order expires — typically within 15 days, unless a judge extends the deadline.

Chancellor Russell Perkins issued the order the same day Hall filed his lawsuit, which was largely brought forth under seal, obscuring most details. An order Wednesday by the judge allowed more filings to be made public, though many details about the pair's business agreement and the proposed sale remain under wraps.

Writing in favor of sealing certain filings, Hall's attorneys reasoned that it's a private dispute under an agreement with confidential terms, concerning a confidential arbitration process.

Although the publicly released version of the lawsuit didn't specify what's at stake in the sale, Primary Wave has already owned "significant interest" in Hall and Oates' song catalog for more than 15 years. In a 2021 interview with Sky News, Hall alluded to disappointment with the sale of his back catalog.

"Oh, in the early days, it got sold off for me and I didn't get the money," he said. In the same interview, he advised artists to retain their publishing rights, saying "all you have is that."

The lawsuit contends that Hall opened an arbitration process on Nov. 9 against Oates and the other defendants in the lawsuit, Oates' wife, Aimee Oates, and Richard Flynn, in their roles as co-trustees of Oates' trust. Hall was seeking an order preventing them from selling their part in Whole Oats Enterprises to Primary Wave Music.

According to the lawsuit, Oates' team intimated at the time that the sale could close within days, although no arbitrator had been picked yet to sort through the conflict.

The lawsuit says Oates' team entered into a letter of intent with Primary Wave Music for the sale, and alleges further that the letter makes clear that the music duo's business agreement was disclosed to Primary Wave Music in violation of a confidentiality provision.

"Thus, the entire Unauthorized Transaction is the product of an indisputable breach of contract," the lawsuit states.

The case will be taken up at a Nov. 30 court hearing.

The Associated Press sent emails to attorneys for both parties and to representatives for Primary Wave Music on Friday. Still unclear is whether the dispute centers on the music catalog of Hall & Oates, a soft-rock-and-pop duo best known for its No. 1 hits "Private Eyes," "Rich Girl" and "Maneater."

Daryl Hall and John Oates got their start as Temple University students before signing with Atlantic Records in 1972. In the decades since, they have achieved six platinum albums and many more Top 10 singles with their unique approach to blue-eyed soul. Hall & Oates was inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in 2014 and its latest album, "Home for Christmas," was released in 2006. The duo continued to perform as of last year.

"We have this incredibly good problem of having so many hits," Oates told the AP in 2021, just before resuming a national tour that had been delayed because of the coronavirus pandemic. "Believe me, it's not a chore to play those songs because they are really great."

South African Olympic runner Oscar Pistorius granted parole, will be released from prison on Jan. 5

By GERALD IMRAY and MOGOMOTSI MAGOME Associated Press

PRETORIA, South Africa (AP) — Double-amputee Olympic runner Oscar Pistorius was granted parole on Friday, more than a decade after shooting his girlfriend through a toilet door at his home in South Africa in a killing that jolted the world.

He will be released from prison on Jan. 5, but will be constantly monitored by parole officials for five years until his sentence expires, the Department of Corrections said.

Pistorius' parole will come with other conditions, Department of Corrections spokesman Singabakho Nxumalo said outside of the prison where Pistorius has been incarcerated in the South African capital,

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Pretoria, for killing Reeva Steenkamp.

Pistorius won't be allowed to leave the area of Pretoria where he is set to live without permission from authorities. He will also attend a program to deal with anger issues and another program on violence against women. He will have to perform community service.

"Parole does not mean the end of the sentence. It is still part of the sentence. It only means the inmate will complete the sentence outside a correctional facility," Nxumalo said. "What will happen is that Mr. Pistorius will be allocated a monitoring official. This official will work with him until his sentence expires."

Nxumalo said the monitoring official would need to be notified of any major events in Pistorius' life, including if he wants to move to another home or get a job.

"We have to be informed of each and every activity," Nxumalo said.

Pistorius won't wear a monitoring bracelet as that is not part of South African parole procedure, Nxumalo said. Pistorius' sentence will expire on Dec. 5, 2029.

The decision to grant parole was made at a hearing at the prison earlier Friday.

Pistorius, who turned 37 this week, has been in jail since late 2014 for the Valentine's Day 2013 killing of model Steenkamp, although he was released for a period of house arrest in 2015 while one of the numerous appeals in his case was heard. He was ultimately convicted of murder and sentenced to 13 years and five months in prison.

Serious offenders in South Africa must serve at least half of their sentence to be eligible for parole, which Pistorius has done.

Pistorius was at the height of his fame and one of the world's most admired athletes when he killed Steenkamp. He shot her multiple times in the bathroom of his Pretoria villa in the predawn hours with his licensed 9mm pistol.

Pistorius' parole hearing was his second in the space of eight months. He was wrongly ruled ineligible for early release at a first hearing in March. That was due to an error made by an appeals court over when the sentence officially started.

Pistorius was initially convicted of culpable homicide — a charge comparable to manslaughter — for killing Steenkamp. That conviction was overturned and he was convicted of murder after an appeal by prosecutors. They also appealed against an initial sentence of six years for murder, and Pistorius was ultimately sentenced to 13 years and five months in prison.

Pistorius testified at his murder trial that he killed Steenkamp by mistake when he fired four times through the door thinking she was a dangerous intruder hiding in his bathroom in the middle of the night. Prosecutors argued that Steenkamp, a 29-year-old model and reality TV star, had fled to the toilet cubicle during a late-night argument and Pistorius killed her in a rage.

Pistorius was eventually convicted of murder on a legal principle known as *dolus eventualis*, which means he acted with extreme recklessness and should have known that whoever was behind the door would likely be killed. It's comparable to third-degree murder.

Steenkamp's father, Barry Steenkamp, died in September. Her mother, June Steenkamp, didn't oppose Pistorius' parole, but said in a statement before the hearing that she didn't believe Pistorius had been fully rehabilitated and was still lying about the killing.

Rob Matthews, a South African man whose 21-year-old daughter was murdered in 2004 and who became a Steenkamp family friend, read out June Steenkamp's statement. She said she wasn't opposing Pistorius' parole and didn't attend the hearing because "I simply cannot muster the energy to face him again at this stage."

Nevertheless, "I do not believe Oscar's version that he thought the person in the toilet was a burglar," June Steenkamp said in the statement. "In fact, I do not know anybody who does. My dearest child screamed for her life. ... I believe he knew it was Reeva."

While out on parole, Pistorius is expected to live at his uncle's luxurious mansion in a wealthy Pretoria suburb, where he stayed during his murder trial.

Pistorius was first sent to Pretoria's central prison, a notorious apartheid-era jail. He was moved to the city's Atteridgeville Correctional Centre in 2016 and is set to be released from there in a little over a month,

when the world will get its first public sight of him in nearly a decade.

There have been only occasional glimpses of Pistorius' life behind bars. His father has said he has been holding Bible classes for fellow prisoners, while a criminologist who worked with him said he had been driving a tractor at a part of the prison where vegetables are grown.

Pistorius' lawyers have said he has been a "model prisoner." There have been flashes of trouble, though, including an altercation Pistorius had with another inmate over a prison telephone that left him requiring medical treatment.

Pistorius killed Steenkamp just months after he had become the first double-amputee to compete at the Olympics. He was also a multiple Paralympic sprinting champion and one of sport's most marketable figures, having overcome the amputation of both his legs below the knee as a baby to run on specially designed carbon-fiber blades. He was known as the "Blade Runner."

At his sensational trial, prosecutors argued that there was another side to Pistorius' life that involved guns and angry confrontations with others. Pistorius was also found guilty of a second charge of recklessly firing a gun in a restaurant.

Sean 'Diddy' Combs accused of sexual abuse by two more women

By JAKE OFFENHARTZ Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Two more women have come forward to accuse Sean "Diddy" Combs of sexual abuse, one week after the music mogul settled a separate lawsuit with the singer Cassie that contained allegations of rape and physical abuse.

Both of the new suits were filed Thursday on the eve of the expiration of the Adult Survivors Act, a New York law permitting victims of sexual abuse a one-year window to file civil action regardless of the statute of limitations.

The filings detail acts of sexual assault, beatings and forced drugging allegedly committed in the early 1990s by Combs, then a talent director, party promoter and rising figure in New York City's hip-hop community.

One of the accusers, Joi Dickerson, said she was a 19-year-old student at Syracuse University when she agreed to meet Combs at a restaurant in Harlem in 1991. After their date, Combs "intentionally drugged" her, then brought her home and sexually assaulted her, according to the filing.

Without her knowledge, Combs videotaped the assault and later shared it with several friends in the music industry, the suit alleges. The public exposure sent Dickerson into a "tailspin," contributing to severe depression that landed her in the hospital and forced her to drop out of college.

In a separate lawsuit filed Thursday, an unnamed woman accused Combs and an R&B singer, Aaron Hall, of sexually assaulting her and a friend, then beating her several days later.

The woman — identified only as Jane Doe — said that she and her roommate returned to Hall's home with him and Combs after a music industry event in 1990 or 1991. The accuser said she was coerced into having sex with Combs. Afterward, as she was getting dressed, "Hall barged into the room, pinned her down and forced Jane Doe to have sex with him," the suit states.

When the victim later spoke to her friend, who is also not named, she learned that her friend "had been forced to have sex with Combs and Hall in another room," according to the suit. "Upon information and belief, when Combs finished with Jane Doe, he and Hall switched, and they commenced assaulting Jane Doe's friend," the suit states.

A few days later, an "irate" Combs allegedly showed up at the home of the two women in an attempt to stop them from speaking out about the abuse. He then choked the woman identified as Jane Doe until she passed out, the suit states.

In an emailed statement, a spokesperson for Combs denied the allegations, accusing the two women of seeking to exploit the New York law that temporarily extended the statute of limitations.

An email inquiry to Hall was not returned.

Tyrone Blackburn, an attorney for the unnamed accuser, said his client was in the process of securing

medical documents and witness statements to support her suit, which was filed late Thursday “in an effort to preserve the statute of limitations.”

The suit brought by Dickerson notes that the victim filed police reports in New York and New Jersey after the abuse. Inquiries to the New York City Police Department were not immediately returned. It was not clear which other jurisdictions the reports may have been filed.

After the filmed assault, Dickerson said she approached friends in the music industry asking them to confirm the existence of the “revenge porn” tape, but was rebuffed by those who were “terrified that Combs would retaliate against them and that they would lose future business and music opportunities.”

The Associated Press does not typically name people who say they have been sexually abused unless they come forward publicly, as Dickerson has done.

In years after the alleged assaults, Combs, now 54, would found his own label, Bad Boys Records, helping to produce Mary J. Blige and Biggie Smalls on his way to becoming one of the most influential hip-hop producers and executives in the genre’s history.

The pair of lawsuits follow a separate set of explosive allegations made last week by Cassie Ventura, who said that Combs subjected her to a pattern of abuse during their yearslong relationship, which began in 2005, when she was 19 and he was 37.

Among the allegations, Ventura said Combs plied her with drugs, subjected her to “savage” beatings, and forced her to have sex with male prostitutes while he masturbated and filmed them. When she tried to end the relationship in 2018, Combs raped her, she alleged.

The lawsuit was settled one day after it was filed for an undisclosed sum.

In a statement shared by her lawyers, Ventura said she wanted to resolve this matter “on terms that I have some level of control.”

Combs said: “We have decided to resolve this matter amicably. I wish Cassie and her family all the best. Love.”

Maui residents wonder if their burned town can be made safe. The answer? No one knows

By REBECCA BOONE Associated Press

When Daniel Skousen scrubs at the ash and soot covering his Maui home, he worries about the smell.

What chemicals created the burning-trash-barrel scent that has lingered since a deadly wildfire tore through Lahaina in August? Should he believe government agencies’ assessment of when the air, land and water will be safe enough for his family to return?

Or will political and economic pressures to rebuild and restore Maui’s robust tourism industry — where visitors normally spend \$14 million per day — lead officials to look at any testing results through rose-colored glasses?

“It appears very important to them to get that tourism tax revenue back,” said Skousen. “It makes you wonder if the testing will be biased.”

The fire blew out Skousen’s windows and filled his home with ash, but the building is still standing, and he hopes someday to move back in. The home next door burned to the ground.

Skousen wants a second opinion on any government environmental assessments, preferably from an expert with a stake in the community. But the raw data isn’t easy to find, and experts say the long-term health effects from fires like the one that incinerated Lahaina are mostly unknown. There are no national standards that detail how clean is clean enough for a residential home damaged by a nearby fire.

At least 100 people died in the Aug. 8 wildfire, and thousands were displaced. Nearly 7,000 were still in short-term lodging two months later.

The rubble left behind includes electrical cables, plastic pipes and vehicle tires that emit dangerous dioxins when burned; lead from melted vehicles or old house paint; and arsenic-laden ash from termite-resistant building materials.

After a major wildfire burned 1,000 homes in Boulder County, Colorado, in 2021, health officials learned

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that even professionally remediated homes were often still polluted with ash, char and other toxic substances long after the fire, said Bill Hayes, the county's air quality program coordinator.

The reason? High winds — like those that plagued Maui during the wildfire this summer — forced fine particulate matter into every crevice, Hayes said. Those particulates would sit inside window panes, behind light switches, between shingles and elsewhere until the winds started up again, re-contaminating the home.

"Char is a carcinogen, so we don't ever say any level of those particulates are safe," Hayes said. "That became a challenge in the cleanup — determining the level of when is it clean enough?"

State and federal agencies have released regular updates on Lahaina's relative safety. The water in much of the town is still unsafe to drink, and visitors have been advised to use protective gear in impacted areas. Officials say pregnant people and kids should stay out of the burn zone, though the Hawaii Department of Education says the schools, which are above the burned part of town, are safe.

Crews have installed air quality monitors throughout town and are spraying a soil sealant to prevent toxic ash from being washed into the ocean or blowing around.

An attorney representing Skousen and about two dozen other Lahaina residents sent a public records request to the Environmental Protection Agency last month asking for all records regarding residential testing of contaminants in Lahaina and their impact to human health.

The EPA's reply, sent earlier this month, wasn't reassuring: "No records could be located that are responsive to your request."

EPA spokesman Kellen Ashford told The Associated Press his agency did some environmental hazard testing in the burn zone, but only to determine the immediate risk for workers involved in the initial cleanup.

He referred further questions about such testing to the Hawaii Department of Health, which he said was responsible for determining longer-term safety for residents.

The Hawaii Department of Health's Environmental Health Services Division also told Skousen's attorney it had no records about residential testing of contaminants to release.

The Health Department declined interview requests. Spokesman Shawn Hamamoto said in an email the department will pursue additional air quality and ash testing when the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers begins removing debris from Lahaina.

"I think that they're playing 'hide the ball,'" said Skousen's attorney, Edward Neiger. "The question is, why do they feel the need to hide anything?"

Ashford acknowledged some residents are skeptical of the cleanup efforts. He said the EPA has people stationed at the Lahaina Civic Center and at work sites to talk to community members about their concerns.

Andrew Shoemaker, a fine art photographer who operated a gallery on Lahaina's famous Front Street, believes it's an important part of healing to go back to the burned areas to see what is left, but he has recently had a lung infection and doesn't want to risk his health.

"I don't even want to take the chance of going over there," he said.

Dioxins, toxic compounds that can be released when plastic pipes, tires and other household materials are burned, are a particular concern for Shoemaker. Dioxins can last for decades inside the human body, and can cause reproductive and developmental problems, damage the immune system, interfere with hormones and cause cancer, according to the World Health Organization.

The EPA has found that forest fires and household trash burning in backyard burn barrels — how Skousen now describes the scent of Lahaina — are both major sources of dioxin emissions.

Irva Hertz-Picciotto, a professor and environmental epidemiologist with University of California-Davis, said the air monitors are effective and can measure particles that are about 30 times smaller than the width of a human hair.

Still, there is a lot that scientists don't yet know about the long-term health risks posed by fires, Hertz-Picciotto said.

That post-fire smell noticed by Skousen can be a result of off-gassing, she said, which occurs when volatile organic compounds are absorbed into surfaces and released later.

Even with careful air quality monitoring, off-gassing can expose residents and cleanup workers to toxic

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fire emissions for months, and research shows only some volatile organic compounds can be trapped by high-quality air particle filters, according to the Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences at the University of Colorado Boulder.

"If it smells like burned plastic or burned electrical cables, then probably those chemicals are in the air and not healthy," Hertz-Picciotto said. "The other side of that, though, is even if you can't smell it, that doesn't mean it's safe."

Skousen is a teacher and runs a cleaning business on the side. He's spent his off hours in Lahaina working on cleaning his and his neighbors' homes. Skousen and his wife decided to homeschool their kids at their temporary residence outside of Lahaina for now rather than risk exposing them to possible health problems.

Most of the guidelines for human exposure to pollutants are based on industrial settings, where people might work 40 hours a week — not their homes, where they might spend 90% of their time, said Hayes, the Boulder County air quality coordinator. Whether a home can be made safe enough for residency comes down in part to the resident's risk tolerance, Hayes said.

"There is no black-and-white, clear-cut answer," he said. "If they have young children in the home, or anyone has respiratory conditions, they might want to do significantly more cleaning than what the guidance documents are recognizing."

The Netherlands' longtime ruling party says it won't join a new government following far-right's win

By MIKE CORDER Associated Press

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — A senator from the Netherlands' Party for Freedom was appointed Friday to investigate possible governing coalitions after the far-right party's election victory, while the party of outgoing Prime Minister Mark Rutte said it would support a center-right administration in parliament but not join the next government.

The Party for Freedom, or PVV, led by veteran anti-Islam lawmaker Geert Wilders, won 37 seats in the 150-seat lower house, indicating a seismic shift to the right for the Netherlands. Rutte's People's Party for Freedom and Democracy won 24 seats, 10 fewer than in the previous election, according to a near complete count of Wednesday's votes.

After a meeting of party leaders at the parliament, PVV Senator Gomm van Strien was appointed to investigate possible coalitions. Newly elected lawmakers will debate his findings on Dec. 6.

Van Strien said that he would begin meetings with party leaders on Monday.

Dilan Yesilgöz-Zegerius, the new leader of the People's Party for Freedom and Democracy, or VVD, tweeted that after losing 10 seats in the election, the longtime ruling party would "make possible and constructively support a center-right Cabinet with good policies," but wouldn't join a government.

Wilders called the decision, which was announced before formal coalition talks had begun, "extremely disappointing."

The election result and appointment of Van Strien pave the way for Wilders to take the lead in forming a new coalition and potentially to succeed Rutte as prime minister. However, he will likely have to convince potential coalition partners that he would tone down some of his anti-Islam policies.

His party's election platform states that the Netherlands "is not an Islamic country. No Islamic schools, Qurans and mosques."

Speaking Friday at a meeting of far-right leaders in Portugal, Marine Le Pen of France called Wilders' win a vote of conscience "that attests for the defeat of those that have been in power for the past 30 years."

One potential coalition partner for Wilders is the recently formed New Social Contract party, or NSC, which won 20 seats. The party's centrist leader, Pieter Omtzigt, said he couldn't accept "unconstitutional" policies.

Article 1 of the Dutch Constitution outlaws discrimination "on grounds of religion, belief, political opinion, race, gender, disability, sexual orientation or on any other grounds."

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In an election-night victory speech, Wilders pledged not to push any policies that would breach Dutch law or the constitution.

His foreign policy also has raised concern among the Netherlands' allies, Dutch caretaker Defense Minister Kajsa Ollongren said Friday.

Wilders' election program says "we will not send our money and defense equipment such as F-16s to Ukraine."

"I hope and expect that the support will remain," Ollongren told reporters in The Hague. She said she had received concerned calls about the issue since the election.

The caretaker administration led by Rutte will remain in office until a new coalition is formed.

In August, Rutte said that the Netherlands and Denmark would send F-16 fighter jets to Ukraine to help the fight against Russia's invading forces. An international training hub for F-16 pilots including from Ukraine was opened earlier this month in Romania.

Rutte tweeted Friday that he had held one of his regular calls with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

"The Netherlands stands with the people of Ukraine and supports Ukraine in its fight against Russian aggression," Rutte said.

Ohio voters just passed abortion protections. When and how they take effect is before the courts

By JULIE CARR SMYTH Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — Ohio's new constitutional protections for abortion access and other reproductive rights take effect Dec. 7, a month after voters resoundingly passed them. How and when their impacts are felt remains unclear.

Existing abortion-related lawsuits are moving again through the courts now that voters have decided the issue, raising questions about implementation.

The amendment declared an individual's right to "make and carry out one's own reproductive decisions" and passed with a strong 57% majority. It was the seventh straight victory in statewide votes for supporters of abortion access nationally since the U.S. Supreme Court overturned constitutional protections.

But the amendment voters approved Nov. 7 did not repeal any existing Ohio laws, prompting some anti-abortion activists to step up pressure on Republican elected officials to extend their efforts to halt, delay or significantly water it down.

"A lot of that hard work of figuring out what state laws are inconsistent with the amendment and what state laws can remain, does tend to devolve to the courts," said Laura Hermer, a professor of law at Mitchell Hamline School of Law in St. Paul, Minnesota, who studies access to health coverage and care in the U.S. "It's difficult to imagine that the Legislature will say, 'All right, you win. We're going to repeal the heartbeat ban' and so forth."

The state Legislature is controlled by Republicans whose leaders opposed the November ballot amendment, which was known as Issue 1. The Ohio Supreme Court also is controlled by Republicans, who have a 4-3 majority, and will be the final judge of constitutional questions. Several of the Republican justices have taken actions or made statements over the years that have caused abortion rights organizations and ethics attorneys to question their objectivity on the subject.

Minority Democrats in the Ohio House announced legislation two days after the election aimed at avoiding a piecemeal approach to implementing the amendment. Among other steps, they called for repealing the state's ban on most abortions after fetal cardiac activity is detected, which is around six weeks, and a 24-hour waiting period.

"There are over 30 different restrictions in place," said state Rep. Beth Liston, a physician and co-author of the Reproductive Care Act. "And I think that it is important that we don't require citizens to go to court for every restriction, and, quite frankly, that we don't let harm occur in the interim."

House Minority Leader Allison Russo was careful not to criticize the high court, which holds sway over

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the fate of those laws.

"My hope is they will uphold the rule of law and the constitution," she said.

Chief Justice Sharon Kennedy last week ordered lawyers for the state and a group of abortion clinics to tell the court how they believe the measure's passage has affected a case involving Ohio's ban on most abortions once fetal cardiac activity is detected, which has been on hold since October 2022.

A day after voters approved the amendment, U.S. District Judge Michael Barrett made a similar request of the parties in a long-running federal lawsuit challenging a set of state restrictions imposed on abortion providers' operations. They included a requirement that clinics obtain agreements with a nearby hospital for emergency patient transfers, as well as a prohibition against public hospitals entering into those agreements.

At least three other Ohio abortion laws also have been on hold in the courts.

Passing legislation to bring Ohio law in line with the new constitutional amendment has so far been a non-starter with Republican lawmakers, who mostly opposed it and took extraordinary steps to defeat it.

With a primary election in their GOP-heavy districts only months away, they are facing fierce pressure from anti-abortion groups to go in the other direction and either pass laws countering the amendment or using their supermajorities to strip courts of their power to interpret it.

"The (Ohio) Constitution specifically says reigning in out-of-control courts is the legislators' job," the anti-abortion group Faith2Action argues in a recently released video. "So let's call on the legislators to do their job, to use their constitutionally granted right to represent us and to keep pro-abortion judges from repealing Ohio laws based on an amendment that doesn't even mention a single Ohio law."

The video argues that the "right to life" created in Ohio's constitution is inalienable and that the U.S. Supreme Court's decision overturning *Roe v. Wade* punted the abortion issue to "the people's elected representatives."

But in his concurring opinion in that ruling, Justice Brett Kavanaugh, an appointee of former President Donald Trump, wrote that constitutional amendments were among the avenues for deciding the future of abortion access.

"Moreover, the Constitution authorizes the creation of new rights — state and federal, statutory and constitutional," Kavanaugh wrote. "But when it comes to creating new rights, the Constitution directs the people to the various processes of democratic self-government contemplated by the Constitution — state legislation, state constitutional amendments, federal legislation, and federal constitutional amendments."

For now, Republican Ohio House Speaker Jason Stephens has said legislation targeting the power of state courts will not be considered. GOP Senate President Matt Huffman has ruled out lawmakers pushing for an immediate repeal of Issue 1, as had once been suggested, saying nothing like that should be tried, at least in 2024.

How Attorney General Dave Yost will proceed also is being closely watched.

In a legal analysis of Issue 1 that the Republican published before the election, Yost said the amendment created a new standard for protecting abortion access that "goes beyond" the law of the land under *Roe v. Wade*.

"That means that many Ohio laws would probably be invalidated ... and others might be at risk to varying degrees," he wrote.

Hermer, the law professor, said that statement is convenient for lawyers fighting to implement the constitutional amendment but such an analysis isn't legally binding for Yost.

"He doesn't necessarily have to stand down, but, of course, having already said that, it's going to make it a bit more difficult to hold those sorts of positions," she said.

Russian consumers feel themselves in a tight spot as high inflation persists

By ANNA FRANTS Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — The shelves at Moscow supermarkets are full of fruit and vegetables, cheese and meat.

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But many of the shoppers look at the selection with dismay as inflation makes their wallets feel empty.

Russia's Central Bank has raised its key lending rate four times this year to try to get inflation under control and stabilize the ruble's exchange rate as the economy weathers the effects of Russia's military operation in Ukraine and the Western sanctions imposed as a consequence.

The last time it raised the rate — to 15%, doubled that from the beginning of the year — the bank said it was concerned about prices that were increasing at an annualized pace of about 12%. The bank now forecasts inflation for the full year, as well as next year, to be about 7.5%.

Although that rate is high, it may be an understatement.

"If we talk in percentage terms, then, probably, (prices) increased by 25%. This is meat, staple products — dairy produce, fruits, vegetables, sausages. My husband can't live without sausage! Sometimes I'm just amazed at price spikes," said Roxana Gheltkova, a shopper in a Moscow supermarket.

Asked if her income as a retiree was enough to keep food on the table, customer Lilya Tsarkova said: "No, of course not. I get help from my children."

Without their assistance, "I don't know how to pay rent and food," the 70-year-old said.

Figures from the state statistical service Rosstat released on Nov. 1 show a huge spike in prices for some foods compared with 2022 — 74% for cabbage, 72% for oranges and 47% for cucumbers.

The Russian parliament has approved a 2024-2026 budget that earmarks a record amount for defense spending. Maxim Blant, a Russian economy analyst based in Latvia, sees that as an indication that prices will continue to rise sharply.

"It is simply impossible to solve the issue of inflation in conditions ... when the military-industrial complex receives unlimited funding, when everything they ask for is given to them, when the share of this military-industrial complex in the economy grows at a very rapid pace," he told The Associated Press.

The central bank's rate hikes have slightly cooled the ruble's exchange rate slide — the rate is now about 88 to the U.S. dollar from more than 100 earlier. But that's still far higher than in the summer of 2022, when it was about 60 to the dollar.

That keeps the cost of imports high, even as import possibilities shrink because of Western sanctions.

Missouri governor granting pardons at pace not seen since WWII era

By DAVID A. LIEB Associated Press

Distraught by a romantic breakup, 16-year-old Kenny Batson vented his hurt by stomping out the windshields of cars on a for-sale lot. He landed in juvenile detention, but that was only the beginning of his trouble.

Over the ensuing years, Batson stole cigarettes, booze and cars for drunken joyrides while bouncing in and out of prison and substance abuse treatment programs. At age 20, he beat a man nearly to death, stopping only when friends pulled him away.

Now 50, Batson is a Christian pastor, a reformed man who has been pardoned for his crimes.

The governor who pardoned him knows a bit about transformations.

For a dozen years as a rural sheriff, Mike Parson was the face of justice, the man ultimately responsible for catching and locking up local lawbreakers. Now governor, Parson also has become the face of mercy by pardoning more than 600 people in the past three years, more than any Missouri governor since the 1940s.

"I still believe in law and order. I believe criminals need to be treated as such, and they've got accountability," Parson said in an interview with The Associated Press.

But "it doesn't mean they're a criminal all their life," Parson added. "I think you've got to be able to look at it."

Parson's pardoning pace in Republican-heavy Missouri coincides with a national movement to restore citizens' rights and reputations after they have served criminal sentences. Wisconsin Gov. Tony Evers, a Democrat, recently set a new state record for the number of pardons.

Minnesota also could be in store for more pardons after the Legislature this year revamped the state's

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clemency process to allow for pardons without unanimous votes by a three-person board composed of the governor, attorney general and chief justice. The governor still must be one of the two votes.

At the federal level, President Joe Biden last year pardoned thousands of people convicted of marijuana possession and encouraged governors to do the same.

The movement marks a step back from the tough-on-crime politics of the late 20th century and a return to an earlier American era when pardons and commutations were much more common.

Though the process varies, every state allows some form of clemency. Commutations shorten the length of sentences. Pardons function like official forgiveness for crimes, restoring rights such as the ability to own firearms and clearing hurdles for employment.

For Batson, the pardon helped restore a sense of self-worth by obliterating the felon label. The official document arrived in a manilla envelope more than five years after his wife put together a thick packet of recommendation letters for his clemency application.

"I literally cried and screamed when I got it. It was amazing," Batson said.

In Missouri, clemency requests are first screened by the Board of Probation and Parole, which makes confidential recommendations to the governor. There is no deadline for the governor to make a decision.

Parson inherited nearly 3,700 clemency applications when he was suddenly elevated from lieutenant governor following the resignation of scandal-plagued GOP Gov. Eric Greitens in June 2018. Some of those cases, including Batson's, dated to the tenure of Democratic Gov. Jay Nixon, who served from 2009-2017.

Parson's staff began systematically tackling the backlog in December 2020, even as more requests poured in. They set a goal of evaluating around 100 cases each month, weighing applicants' work and education history, community involvement, character references and contrition for their crimes. The types of crimes, how young offenders were and how much time had passed also came into play as Parson made his decisions.

So far, Parson has denied about 2,400 clemency requests while granting 613 pardons and 20 commutations. That's the most since Republican Gov. Forrest Donnell granted almost 1,700 pardons from 1941-1945.

In Wisconsin, Evers has granted 1,111 pardons since taking office in 2019, surpassing the record of 943 set by Republican Gov. Julius Heil from 1939-1943. Evers' actions are particularly notable because his predecessor, Republican Gov. Scott Walker, had disbanded the pardons board and issued no pardons during his eight years in office.

As a result of Parson's actions, Missouri is now categorized by the Restoration of Rights Project as one of 16 states granting frequent or regular pardons. A predictable schedule, like Parson's monthly announcements, can help dispel impressions that the process is corrupt, said Margaret Love, executive director of the nonprofit Collateral Consequences Resource Center, which runs the project.

"The thing about regular pardoning is the public comes to have confidence in it, and they understand what the governor is doing," said Love, a former pardon attorney for the U.S. Justice Department.

In Wisconsin, Evers' pardon announcements have been accompanied by a brief summary of each person's crimes and subsequent accomplishments.

Parson has publicized only the names of those granted clemency. But details of each person's criminal offenses and the dates and counties of their convictions are included in clemency documents filed with the secretary of state's office, which the AP obtained through open-records requests.

Of those granted clemency by Parson, 42% had been convicted of drug crimes, 28% of theft and 14% of burglary, according to an AP analysis. The next most common felony convictions were for driving while intoxicated, forgery and passing bad checks. On average, nearly 28 years had passed since their last convictions.

Two notable exceptions were Mark and Patricia McCloskey. The St. Louis couple who gained national attention for waving guns at racial injustice protesters were pardoned by Parson on July 30, 2021, just six weeks after Mark McCloskey pleaded guilty to misdemeanor fourth-degree assault and Patricia McCloskey pleaded guilty to misdemeanor harassment.

At least three people were pardoned for crimes committed in Polk County while Parson was sheriff there

from 1993 to 2005. They include Pete Underdal, whose frequent drinking and driving landed him in prison, and Dave Galloway, who was caught selling methamphetamine from his home.

Parson knows both men and has since been a customer of Galloway's locksmith business. But Parson said his hometown connections played no role in their pardons.

More important are the testimonials of others, such as the law enforcement officer who raided Galloway's house and years later vouched for his transformed character.

"When you get people in your community that you live in and they start saying things about you, how you changed and such, it does have an impact. It does on me," Parson said.

Galloway said he applied for clemency in 2010 but heard nothing for years. He was shocked when his request was granted in 2022.

"For Governor Parson to look at me and to recognize that rehabilitation is real and not just stuff that somebody says, based your actions and not on your words, was huge," Galloway said.

Gaza shrinks for Palestinians seeking refuge. 4 stories offer a glimpse into a diminished world

By SARAH EL DEEB Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Gaza has always been a small, crowded space with hardly any exits. Now the world for Palestinians there has shrunk to the size of whatever refuge they can find: a jammed shelter, a car, the walls of a shared apartment, or floors and benches in hospital corridors.

The strip is 25 miles (40 kilometers) long by some 7 miles (11 kilometers) wide, and Israeli troops are spread throughout the northern third. More than 2 million people, the majority of Gaza's population, cram into what's left.

Beginning in mid-October, The Associated Press has followed four people trying to survive and communicate from that diminished world, using texts, voice messages and video clips and the rare phone call from a balky 2G network whose fate also hangs in the balance. Explosions and the buzz of drones pierce some of nearly 80 recordings.

One lawyer, determined to stay in Gaza City, carries her paralyzed father from place to place to escape bombs. A U.N. worker shelters with tens of thousands of displaced, retreating to his car for a sliver of privacy. A writer is trapped between four walls and is urged by his family to stop documenting the war for their safety.

Israel says it is dismantling Hamas, the group that unleashed a surprise attack on Oct. 7 that killed around 1,200 people in Israel. Weeks of Israeli bombardment have killed more than 13,000 Palestinians, 70% of them women and children. That's more than the number of civilians killed in 18 months of war in Ukraine.

While most civilians have been able to flee the combat zone in other wars like Ukraine, Palestinians in Gaza have no escape.

All four people followed by the AP are part of its fragile professional class, living in central areas of Gaza City which has largely been spared in past conflicts but is at the heart of this one. AP contacted eight Gaza residents and these four were able to maintain the connection, despite evacuation, multiple hits on their areas and communication blackouts.

They now are nowhere near each other, but they chronicle the despair of the same shattered, anguished world that is closing in on them.

HOSEIN OWDA, U.N. WORKER

Moving day was scheduled for Oct. 7 for the Owda family. The windows were in place and the last pieces of furniture were due to arrive.

Hosein Owda had spent two years and most of his savings getting the apartment ready.

It helps to have a long timeframe for home construction in Gaza, which has been under economic blockade since 2006. It also helps to have one of Gaza's most coveted jobs, working for the U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees, known as UNRWA, which assists more than three-quarters of the Strip's population, all of them refugees.

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When he woke that morning to the barrage of Hamas rockets, Owda knew Israeli retaliation would be swift. His first thought was that the move would have to be postponed.

In a matter of days, his world fell apart with dizzying speed. Owda's new apartment was gone in one airstrike and one of his best friends killed in another. He still agonizes over ignoring pleas for help from a neighbor trying to find a daughter thrown out of a window in an Israeli strike. He was busy evacuating his own family to safety.

On Oct. 13, he and his extended family of 15 people crammed into two cars, one with a broken windshield.

They were now among 22,000 people sheltering at a U.N. vocational center in Khan Younis. There are 24 bathrooms — more than 900 people per toilet — but no beds, mattresses or running water. The numbers continue to swell.

His wife, three children and six other relatives shared a 3-by-3-yard (meter) classroom. Owda slept in the car.

"It is a struggle with life for the most basic, simple things. If you want to take a shower, this is a faraway dream," he said.

On Oct. 29, Owda learned an Israeli strike had hit Jabaliya refugee camp in Gaza city. It took him hours to confirm what he feared: Nine members of his family were killed, including his uncle, aunt and two of their three adult children. A few days later, the third died of his wounds.

Two of his cousin's daughters survived, but Owda couldn't do anything for them. The 15 miles (25 kilometers) that separated them were insurmountable.

"They are in one place, all alone, and we are far," he said. A fighter jet roared in the background of the recording.

Almost immediately after, another strike killed a friend who had been his companion on evening walks. Also killed were the man's parents, sisters and their families.

Everyone he knew had lost someone. Finding bodies was barely possible. Proper burials were out of the question.

"There is no space to grieve," he said. "Only our vital signs show we are alive. We breathe, but other than that we have lost all other signs of life."

Owda felt trapped by all the things he couldn't say: He wouldn't tell his children, ages 9, 6 and 1, that they no longer have a home, and he couldn't bring himself to tell his father about the relatives dead in the airstrike.

At least 108 of Owda's U.N. colleagues have been killed, and he said fear is spreading among the rest, who number about 13,000.

Owda had made his living trying to help Palestinian refugees. Now he lives among them in a shelter. The despair he witnessed all around consumed him. He lost 20 kilograms (44 pounds) in about a month. His gentle sense of humor vanished, replaced with the hollow voice of a drained man. He left the shelter only twice, to search for medicines for his father, but needed to hire a donkey cart because there wasn't fuel for a car.

Usually in charge of documenting the positive impact of aid on people's lives, now Owda found himself in charge of managing outbursts of anger and recording accounts of survival. One man tried to take his own life in the shelter. Children talked about seeing a chicken pecking at lifeless bodies on the road from Gaza City, and he was grateful his own children were relatively unaware of the upheaval back home.

His text messages grew more somber. Deaths among the displaced are becoming grimly routine, even in the so-called "safe zones" proclaimed by Israel. Gaza's health ministry's ability to count the dead in the north has collapsed.

"What is really shocking to me also is that the ceiling of my expectations has become so low," he said in a recording Nov. 20. "To tame an animal, you make them hungry, they will obey and that way they do what you want."

ASAAD ALAADIN, WRITER

Asaad Alaadin's home near the Israeli border ended up on the wrong side of the front line almost as

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soon as the first bombs fell.

He took shelter in central Gaza City, usually the safest spot in previous wars. On Oct. 11, he was trapped alone in a downtown office by the acrid smoke of Israeli bombs. Alaadin turned on his phone camera and breathlessly described the scene. He feared those moments could be his last.

By the next morning, it was calm enough to venture to his grandfather's house, also in central Gaza City, joining his immediate family, in-laws, and seven families of cousins. They huddled together as missiles screeched overhead.

A 33-year-old writer, Alaadin contributed to various publications, including an Arabic website aimed at Palestinians inside Israel, covering the arts, literature, protest movements and Gaza's social dynamics. His wife was in Canada for her studies, which, for a moment, seemed like a relief.

The family debated: Stay or go? They prayed together. His mother's argument won out. Time to split up. If something happens to one of us, she reasoned, "someone survives and keeps going."

They set out at 7 a.m. on Oct. 13, the day Israel's military ordered 1 million Palestinians in northern Gaza to evacuate. His father went to central Gaza; one sister stayed in Gaza City. He, his mother and a sister headed to Rafah, the southern tip of the Gaza Strip, near the border with Egypt.

Traffic was sparse at first, a car with a mattress tied to the roof and some people trudging through the smell of gunpowder and munitions with their belongings in their arms.

Hours after the Alaadins passed, the road was jammed. Explosions hit a group of trucks filled with families, leaving the ground strewn with dozens of bodies. Israel and Hamas blamed each other. The road emptied again afterwards.

They couldn't stay long in Rafah. Their hosts asked them to leave because they feared Alaadin's filming the war put them in danger.

The last core of his family broke apart. His mother and sister went to Khan Younis, a few miles (kilometers) north. Alaadin moved in with his in-laws near the border with Egypt. They, too, asked him to stop filming.

He agreed but kept sending out voice messages, which included the background rumble of warplanes. When more relatives arrived, he and his in-laws left the airy home with its garden and olive trees for a tiny apartment to make room. It was Day 10 of the war.

Their focus turned to day-to-day survival, finding water and food, securing fuel for the generator that keeps their phones charged.

Sunset brought the day's only meal — mainly pasta, beans or lentils. He treated it like a fast: to save food, build resolve and be closer to God. They listened to the radio for news, read a Kindle, and most of all, searched for network to get news from friends and family.

It was not Hamas that he felt trapped by, he said, even if the group had tried at first and failed to stop people moving south. People didn't want this bloodshed, "but the reality is our killer is not Hamas. It is the Israeli army," Alaadin said.

His mind raced down dark passages. Finding food was hard, but easier than having a strike crush you to death under your own home. Even worse was to be injured: Hospitals have run out of supplies, including anesthesia.

But the darkest passages of all were communication blackouts such as the one Israel imposed on Oct. 27. Everything beyond the walls of his in-laws' house went black. The worst imaginings filled the void.

His wife Jenin, far away in Canada, "went mad," he said.

When the internet came back on after 36 hours, it was "like the return of the soul to the body." He broke down in tears at the sound of each voice: his father, his siblings, his mother, his wife. He had feared the worst for his sister in Gaza City, and when they spoke, she wept from the stress of the bombing around her but still refused to leave.

Communication "is more important than food and drink," he said. "It tells us all the details that we need ... who is dead and who is still around."

The communication blackout marked the beginning of the Israeli ground assault into northern Gaza. Israeli troops have since moved into Gaza City and now threaten to advance south.

His sister and her children finally made it out of Gaza City by Nov. 7. He joined them and their mother

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in Khan Younis.

Communications cuts became routine. The only way to get a signal was through Israeli or Egyptian e-SIM cards or to wait for brief moments when local providers came online. Alaadin's voice recordings arrived sporadically, sometimes taking days to land. His voice croaked and grew fainter.

"We feel the danger getting closer. Gaza is shrinking," he said. "Every war, no matter how destructive, they (Israelis) never changed the features of the city. Now they have."

SALEM ELRAYYES, JOURNALIST

Salem Elrayyes considers himself a student of Gaza's urban landscape and how its growing population adapts to being hemmed in by the sea, Israel and Egypt.

Just before Oct. 7, the journalist was working on a podcast about how Gaza grows vertically — apartment towers replacing old villas, crowded shantytowns and farmland.

His 13-year-old daughter's screams at the sound of hundreds of outgoing rockets woke him early Oct. 7, alerting him to events over the fence.

"It was madness, one after the other, phsst, phsst, phsst," Elrayyes recalled.

At first, he thought it was rockets from Palestinian factions responding to an Israeli attack. Tension was in the air before Oct. 7.

The reality was harder to fathom.

A border breach, paragliders, the storming of Israeli communities. Israeli jeeps taken by Palestinians raced through Gaza's streets.

For hours, Palestinian militants controlled several Israeli communities, including villages and towns of the ancestors of current residents of Gaza before Israel's creation in 1948.

"For me it was the stuff of imagination ... I never thought that could happen," Elrayyes said.

He thought Gaza might expand for the first time, even if just by a bit. But when the Israeli retaliation came, the opposite happened.

Deaths spiraled over the following weeks. "Each strike on a building would level it. Roads were closed with rubble. Movement became hard for us and for ambulances."

The 37-year-old journalist, who had covered all of Gaza's wars since 2008, had never felt the need to even stockpile supplies in the past. Calm and grounded, he was always confident that living in central Gaza was security enough.

But a week into the war, Elrayyes and his wife decided that it was time to evacuate from their modern apartment and the roof garden his father had cared for meticulously.

His parents, who lived in the same building, took more convincing. His mother needed dialysis three times a week. He explained that Gaza City's Shifa hospital, the largest in the Strip, was already overwhelmed.

On Oct. 13, he packed clothes, passports and IDs, and drove his wife and children to an apartment in Khan Younis. He came back for his parents, taking them to a refugee camp in central Gaza near a medical center that offered dialysis.

Then he based himself at the hospital in Khan Younis, Gaza's second-largest, where he documented bombings and the deluge of killed and wounded.

He had two daily drives: One to Gaza City to check on the apartment, have a cup of coffee alone and water the plants, and the other, inside Khan Younis, to see his children. The distances weren't far — about 20 miles (35 kilometers) total.

His last trip to Gaza City was on Nov. 1. He made himself coffee at home but can't remember if he watered the plants.

Elrayyes' calm began to fray. He reminisced about quiet nights listening to music and playing with his kids or visiting friends. He dreamed of home-cooked meals.

"Not only the physical space is tightening. My private space is eroding," Elrayyes said in a long, ranting voice message.

He slept in his car outside the hospital and filed reports and photos from a tent for journalists or an emergency staircase.

At least 46 journalists and media staff have been killed in Gaza since Oct. 7, according to the Commit-

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tee to Protect Journalists, an international organization that documents threats to the media. Four were Elrayyes' friends.

By Day 17, like many in Gaza, Elrayyes had the flu. Water was scarce. Irrigation water was used for showers, and some people washed in the Mediterranean to avoid contamination. Eleven bakeries had been bombed, and only nine were left to provide for the hundreds of thousands displaced in the south.

A stale piece of bread was Elrayyes' only meal on a recent day and he wondered whether he could keep going. "We are not eating well. We are not sleeping well. We get sick easily, not to mention the rockets and whatever else they are lobbing at us," he said.

He has seen his mother twice since they evacuated. Her dialysis had been cut to twice a week, and she was growing frail.

His communications through WhatsApp with AP were a cherished connection with the outside world.

On Nov. 6, he and his wife were in the car when the dust and smoke of an explosion darkened the air around the shelter housing their children. Fearing the worst, he hit the accelerator. It took just a couple of minutes of frenzied driving behind ambulances to realize the shelter was intact.

Elrayyes couldn't bear to see the children so soon after envisioning his worst nightmare. He dropped his wife and continued to follow the ambulances.

Fears for his children haunt him. If anything happens to them "it will kill any relation between me and Gaza even after the war."

On Nov. 20, Elrayyes was called into the morgue of the hospital where he'd camped out to see four of his cousins, including an 18-month-old. They were killed in a nearby airstrike.

AYAH AL-WAKEEL, LAWYER

Ayah al-Wakeel has made a career campaigning for better rights for women. The Gaza City lawyer is used to uphill battles in a conservative society whose religious courts often side with men.

When the war broke out, she stayed focused on the right to a dignified life, raising funds to provide necessities for the thousands who followed Israeli orders to evacuate northern Gaza. But she and her family were determined not to be among them.

They, like many, feared Israel was repeating the 1948 "Nakba," — the catastrophe — when some 700,000 Palestinians were expelled or fled from homes in what is now Israel.

Back then, al-Wakeel's family was displaced from Jaffa, a city 40 miles (65 kilometers) to the north that the 33-year-old has never seen. They refused to take the chance of losing yet another home to Israel forever, she said in a voice note on Oct. 17 from her house in Gaza City.

"We had a consensus in the family," she said in a recording. "We will not leave, and we won't give them what they want. Whatever God has preordained will happen."

For 12 days, she stayed with her parents, sister, brothers, and uncles in the family building as bombs fell near them.

Then the story of displacement that began in a town al-Wakeel has never seen resumed with a vengeance in the only city she's ever known. On Oct. 19, in a series of frantic pre-dawn texts, she explained what changed their minds.

"They bombed our house over our heads. We miraculously survived," she wrote.

Her neighborhood, she wrote, was surrounded by what she called a "ring of fire," describing successive airstrikes in one block. The barrage seemed designed to drive out anyone who dared stay, she said. She and her neighbors pulled her partially paralyzed father to safety.

She wrote in fragments:

"Four people carried him"

"Each holding an arm or a leg"

Twice, her father asked them to leave him to die.

"We sat around him and said if one rocket hits, we all go together. We kept praying and reading the Shahada," she wrote, referring to the Muslim profession of faith recited when death seems near.

They managed to carry him out, but another strike hit as they fled. The family scattered, reuniting later

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at Shifa Hospital.

For six days, al-Wakeel went silent. Then briefly, she wrote: "I am sorry. I can't keep in touch now. The situation is very terrifying. I have no brain. There is no internet." A similar message landed the next day.

The next day, she wrote: "In no other war before was I so scared of strikes. After what happened to us, I am terrified beyond words. I can't keep myself together."

Again, she fell silent. It was the first communication blackout, on Oct. 27.

When she surfaced two days later, it was to report on another Israeli warning, to leave the Shifa hospital area where Israel claims Hamas built an underground headquarters.

"We don't know where to go. We are calling friends to try to find a place. We have a bus."

Eight hours later, al-Wakeel and her family joined about 14,000 people sheltering at al-Quds hospital, about 2 kilometers (1.4 miles) away.

Another evacuation order, another "ring of fire." Two neighboring apartment towers were bombed. Smoke filled the hospital and damaged one of its wards.

"The sound is really loud and terrifying. The hospital is shaking," she wrote. In a photo she shared, people slept on the floor.

The next morning, the family moved again to another hospital, their third in three days.

"Father is ok. He is just tired of moving."

Al-Wakeel thought obsessively about a cold drink of water. She was limiting her intake to two sips a day to avoid the crowded, filthy bathrooms.

Since she left home on Oct. 19, she had had one shower but had no change of clothes. She bought new underwear.

Al-Wakeel was thankful she got her period at a time when she still had some privacy. There were reports of Palestinian women searching for birth-control pills to delay their menstrual cycles.

"My sister is praying she doesn't get it until after the war," she texted on Oct. 30.

Five days of silence.

On Nov. 4, she wrote that a "ring of fire" surrounded the third hospital where they had sought shelter. They returned to Shifa, the first hospital.

"I want to collapse but I really don't have the energy for that," she wrote.

On Nov. 7, she said Shifa was unsafe but neither was going south. On the same day, al-Wakeel wrote to one of her best friends outside of Gaza: "I miss you, my love."

Israeli forces breached the hospital on Nov. 13. She has not been heard from since.

Make noise! A murder and a movie stir Italians to loudly demand an end to violence against women

By FRANCES D'EMILIO Associated Press

ROME (AP) — After the latest, horrifying killing of a college student allegedly by her resentful and jealous ex-boyfriend, students from Turin to Palermo have taken to pounding on classroom desks in unison to demand a stop to the slaying of women in Italy at the hands of men.

Just days before the killing of 22-year-old Giulia Cecchettin, Italians were already applauding a blockbuster movie about a woman who endures beatings and belittling by her overbearing husband. The movie is set in 1946, 24 years before divorce became legal in Italy and on the eve of the first time Italian women were allowed to vote. The film's exploration of the suffocating role of patriarchy in Italian society is painfully resonating today.

The moment is a remarkable confluence of fact and fiction, driving demands across Italy to protect women and to eradicate patriarchal mentalities woven into society.

Giulia Cecchettin disappeared after meeting her former boyfriend, Filippo Turetta, for a burger at a shopping mall, just days before she was to receive her degree in biomedical engineering at the University of Padua.

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Her ex-beau, a year younger, friends and family said, resented that she had finished her studies ahead of him and feared she'd move on to pursue personal and professional dreams. Everything was ready to celebrate Cecchettin's degree — red bows were tied to the metal fence outside her family home in Vigonovo, a town of 10,000 people near Venice — and a restaurant was booked for family and friends.

While at the burger place, she texted her older sister, Elena, for advice on what shoes to buy for the ceremony. It was the last her family would hear from her.

"Giulia's case shook all of Italy," actress and director Paola Cortellesi said in an interview earlier this week in Rome. "Because in her disappearance, all of Italy knew that shortly there would have been the discovery of a young woman slain at the hands of a man."

"Because by now it's the same routine. It's chilling to call it a routine," she said, referring to Italian statistics indicating roughly every three days a woman is murdered in the country at the hands of a man — often a spouse, a partner or an ex.

For the seven days before Cecchettin's body was found, on Nov. 18 — covered by black plastic bags in a ditch near a lake in the foothills of the Alps — the nation's newscasts gave macabre updates.

A few kilometers (miles) from her home, an industrial complex's video camera on a deserted street captured the image of a man, alleged by investigators to be Turetta, chasing after Cecchettin who had bolted from the car before being struck repeatedly, knocked to the ground and bundled into the car, leaving hair and bloodstains on the sidewalk.

For days, roadside surveillance cameras recorded glimpses of Turetta's car, first in northern Italy, then Austria, then Germany. On Sunday, Nov. 19, German police checked on a car parked on a highway shoulder and out of gas. Inside was Turetta.

On Wednesday, a German court ordered his extradition to Italy for investigation of suspicion of murder. A medical examiner's report noted 26 wounds, apparently inflicted by a blade, on the woman's neck, arms and legs, Italian media said.

As the real-life drama of Cecchettin's killing played out, the movie "C'è ancora domani" (There's still tomorrow) riveted audiences across Italy.

Cortellesi, who directed the movie, said her work swept up audiences "beyond the ordinary, precisely because, as I have been saying, it hit a raw nerve in the lives of everybody." A noted Italian comic actress, Cortellesi also plays the lead role of Delia, an abused Roman wife hoping for a better future for her teenage daughter.

Cortellesi recounted how, at one screening, a woman stood up and revealed to a theater full of strangers that she, too, had an abusive husband, saying "I was Delia."

Among the film's fans is Daria Dicorpo, a middle-school teacher in Rome. "Unfortunately, the theme of violence against women is always actual," she said.

In the movie, women, from lower to upper classes, are told by their husbands to keep their opinions to themselves, or, more bluntly, to shut their mouth. "Instead, no, we have to yell, we have to communicate the beauty of being women," Dicorpo said.

Italians had previously taken to the streets in silent, torchlit marches to protest the slayings of women. But Elena Cecchettin, Giulia's sister, offered an alternative: "make noise" to honor her sister. "If you have keys, rattle them," she called out.

In a letter to *Corriere della Sera* daily, Elena Cecchettin dismissed descriptions of her sister's alleged murderer as a "monster." Killers are "not sick, they are the healthy sons of patriarchy," she wrote.

"Femicide isn't a crime of passion, it's a crime of power," Elena Cecchettin wrote, using a term that refers to the slaying of women precisely because they are women or because of the power men hold over women.

On Wednesday, after final passage of a bill to protect women with such measures as increased use of electronic monitoring devices for men stalking or threatening them, lawmakers from the opposition 5-Star Movement pounded rhythmically on their desks "in a minute of noise."

Director Cortellesi appealed to the two most powerful women in Italian politics today — far-right Premier Giorgia Meloni and Elly Schlein, who heads the Democratic Party, Parliament's largest force on the left. She asked them to "do something (about women's violence) that doesn't have anything to do with keeping

their electorate happy," she said.

Schlein is pushing for bipartisan legislation to make lessons mandatory, starting in primary grades, to teach reciprocal respect between girls and boys, men and women. But the plan by Meloni's education minister envisions lessons on "relationships" for high schools.

Italy's RAI state TV reported that in the days since Cecchetti's body was found, calls to a national hotline for women fearing for their safety at the hands of men have jumped from some 200 to 400 a day—including from parents of young women.

"Women are afraid," said Oria Gargano, who heads Be Free, an organization fighting violence, sex trafficking and discrimination.

Among the handwritten notes tucked among the flowers, candles and bouquets left outside the Cecchetti family home was one reading: "Forgive us for not having done enough to change this culture."

A rapidly melting Antarctica gets the attention of UN chief ahead of COP28 climate talks

By ISABELLA O'MALLEY and ALEXANDRE PLAZA Associated Press

KING GEORGE ISLAND, Antarctica (AP) — On the cusp of the COP28 climate talks, U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres visited frozen but rapidly melting Antarctica and said Thursday that intense action must be taken at the conference where countries will address their commitments to lowering emissions of planet-warming gases.

"We are witnessing an acceleration that is absolutely devastating," Guterres said about the rate of ice melt in Antarctica, which is considered to be a "sleeping giant."

"The Antarctic is waking up, and the world must wake up," he added.

Guterres is on a three-day official visit to Antarctica. Chilean President Gabriel Boric joined him for an official visit to Chile's Eduardo Frei Air Force Base on King George Island.

Guterres also was scheduled to visit the Collins and Nelson glaciers by boat.

He described the U.N. climate change conference that begins in Dubai next week as an opportunity for nations to "decide the phase-out of fossil fuels in an adequate time frame" to prevent the world from warming 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial temperatures.

Guterres said the COP28 conference also gives nations the chance to commit to more renewable energy projects and to improve energy efficiency of existing grids and technologies.

The U.N. chief also said he thinks that Sultan al-Jaber, the president of the upcoming climate talks and head of the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company, has a "bigger responsibility" to encourage the fossil fuel industry to make more clean energy investments because of his ties to the sector.

"He needs to be able to explain to all those that are responsible in the fossil fuel industry, and especially to the oil and gas industry that is making obscene profits all over the world, that this is the moment to use those profits instead of doubling down on fossil fuels," Guterres said.

Warming air and ocean temperatures are causing Antarctic ice to melt. The frozen continent plays a significant role in regulating Earth's climate because it reflects sunlight away and drives major ocean currents.

For years, scientists and environmentalists have kept an eye on the West Antarctic Ice Sheet as an important indicator of global warming. A study published in Nature Climate Change last month said warming has increased to the point that the ice sheet will now experience "unavoidable" melting regardless of how much the world reduces emissions of planet-warming gases like carbon dioxide.

The study's lead author, Kaitlin Naughten, estimated that melting ice in Antarctica's most at-risk areas could raise global sea levels by about 1.8 meters (5.9 feet) over the next few centuries.

Another study published in Science Advances, also last month, reported that nearly 50 Antarctic ice shelves have shrunk by at least 30% since 1997 and 28 of those have lost more than half their ice in that short period of time.

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Today in History: November 25, Fidel Castro dies at 90

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Saturday, Nov. 25, the 329th day of 2023. There are 36 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Nov. 25, 2016, Fidel Castro, who led his rebels to victorious revolution in 1959, embraced Soviet-style communism and defied the power of 10 U.S. presidents during his half-century of rule in Cuba, died at age 90.

On this date:

In 1783, the British evacuated New York during the Revolutionary War.

In 1914, baseball Hall of Famer Joe DiMaggio was born in Martinez, California.

In 1915, a new version of the Ku Klux Klan, targeting blacks, Jews, Catholics and immigrants, was founded by William Joseph Simmons.

In 1947, movie studio executives meeting in New York agreed to blacklist the writers, producers and directors known as the "Hollywood Ten," who had been cited for contempt of Congress the day before.

In 1957, President Dwight D. Eisenhower had a slight stroke.

In 1961, the first nuclear-powered aircraft carrier, the USS Enterprise, was commissioned.

In 1963, the body of President John F. Kennedy was laid to rest at Arlington National Cemetery; his widow, Jacqueline, lighted an "eternal flame" at the gravesite.

In 1986, the Iran-Contra affair erupted as President Ronald Reagan and Attorney General Edwin Meese revealed that profits from secret arms sales to Iran had been diverted to Nicaraguan rebels.

In 1999, Elian Gonzalez, a 5-year-old Cuban boy, was rescued by a pair of sport fishermen off the coast of Florida, setting off an international custody battle.

In 2001, as the war in Afghanistan entered its eighth week, CIA officer Johnny "Mike" Spann was killed during a prison uprising in Mazar-e-Sharif, becoming America's first combat casualty of the conflict.

In 2002, President George W. Bush signed legislation creating the Department of Homeland Security, and appointed Tom Ridge to be its head.

In 2009, Toyota said it would replace the gas pedals on 4 million vehicles in the United States because the pedals could get stuck in the floor mats and cause sudden acceleration.

In 2012, YouTube announced that "Gangnam Style" by South Korean rapper PSY had become the site's most watched video to that time, with more than 805 million viewings.

In 2013, prosecutors closed their yearlong investigation into the shooting rampage at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, that claimed the lives of 26 victims, 20 of them children; their report said the motive of gunman Adam Lanza, who also killed his mother and himself, might never be known.

In 2021, a methane explosion in a coal mine in Siberia quickly filled the mine with toxic smoke; authorities said 46 miners and five rescuers were killed.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Kathryn Crosby is 90. Actor Christopher Riordan is 86. Pro Football Hall of Fame coach Joe Gibbs is 83. Singer Bob Lind is 81. Author, actor and economist Ben Stein is 79. Actor John Larroquette is 76. Actor Tracey Walter is 76. Movie director Jonathan Kaplan is 76. Author Charlaine Harris is 72. Retired MLB All-Star Bucky Dent is 72. Dance judge Bruno Tonioli (TV: "Dancing with the Stars") is 68. Singer Amy Grant is 63. Former NFL quarterback Bernie Kosar is 60. Rock musician Scott Mercado is 59. Rock singer-musician Tim Armstrong is 58. Actor Steve Harris is 58. Actor Billy Burke is 57. Singer Stacy Lattisaw is 57. Rock musician Rodney Sheppard (Sugar Ray) is 57. Rapper-producer Erick Sermon is 55. Actor Jill Hennessy is 54. Actor Christina Applegate is 52. Actor Eddie Steeples is 50. Actor Kristian Nairn is 48. Former NFL quarterback Donovan McNabb is 47. Actor Jill Flint is 46. Actor Jerry Ferrara is 44. Actor Joel Kinnaman is 44. Actor Valerie Azlynn is 43. Former first daughter Barbara Pierce Bush is 42. Former first daughter Jenna Bush Hager is 42. Actor Katie Cassidy is 37. Actor Stephanie Hsu is 33. Contemporary Christian singer Jamie Grace is 32.