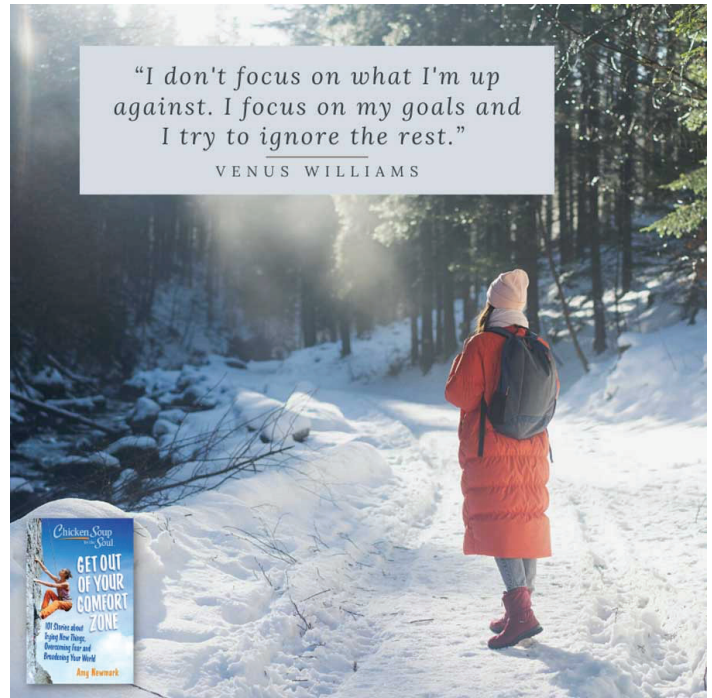


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Tuesday, Dec. 5

Senior Menu: Scalloped chicken, carrot/broccoli medley, pineapple tidbits, Gingerbread with topping, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Homemade scones.

School Lunch: Meatball subs, corn.

Girls Basketball hosts James Valley Christian: 7th grade game at 4:30 p.m., junior varsity at 6 p.m. followed by varsity.

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

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

St. John's Lutheran: Ladies Aid LWML Christmas party, noon.

United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.

Cookies & Calendars at Dacotah Bank: 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

City Council Meeting, 7 p.m.

Monday, Dec. 4

Senior Menu: Swiss steak, mashed potatoes, cauliflower, apricots, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Pancakes

School Lunch: Chicken patty, fries.

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

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

Junior High Girls Basketball hosts Northwestern. 7th grade game at 6 p.m., 8th grade game at 7 p.m.

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

United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.; Hanging of the Greens service, 11 a.m.

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

OPEN: **Recycling Trailer in Groton**
The recycling trailer is located west of the city shop. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.
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Veteran's Day Profile: Roger Overacker

Editor's Note:

We thought it would be nice to publish the Veteran's Day stories that were told at the Veteran's Day Program. This will be the first in a series of those presented at the program. The stories were told by the high school students.

Roger Overacker was a member of the U.S. Army National Guard with the 211th Engineer Company. He joined the Army as a senior in high school to serve and honor his country and make extra money.

Roger spent sixteen weeks serving at Fort Leonard Wood in Missouri for army basic training. He also traveled to Fort Lewis. His unit built bridges by hand to haul heavy military equipment.

Roger received an honorable discharge from the army. His family also received a purple heart for his brother's passing during the Vietnam War.

Following his service, he returned to his family farm in Faith and trained horses for his father. In 1968, he married his wife, Margie. They were blessed with two children, Angie and Jesse and 6 grandchildren: KayLynn, Emily, Huntley, Sterling, Faith and Luke. They made their home in Groton SD. Roger is a retired truck driver, but still helps drive for the Dunker farm.

Roger is a proud member of the American Legion. His time in the service taught him pride, honor, and respect for serving his country. When asked if there was anything he wanted to add, Roger summed things up best with "God Bless America".

Presentation of quilt

Roger, on behalf of the community and nation, with our deepest appreciation, we honor your service with this quilt of honor.



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

ALL OVER ROOFING

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MEMBER FDIC

Cookies & CALENDARS OPEN HOUSE

Stop into the Dacotah Bank Lobby for
cider, coffee, a cookie and a 2024 calendar

TUES., DEC. 5 9:00 - 4:00 PM
7 East US HWY 12 | Groton

DACOTAH BANK



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Specializing in Asphalt and Wood Shingles
Call for an estimate
Zack Witte ~ 605-695-7874
Webster, SD
No Contracts!

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Angel Tree Cards Still Left

There are still plenty of cards left on Groton's Angel Trees. The left one is at Lori's Pharmacy on the counter. The right one is at Dollar General right when you walk in.

GDILIVE.COM

GT Groton Area
Tigers

Any interest in any of
these basketball games on
GDILIVE.COM?
They are \$25 each.

Girls James Valley Christian JV
Boys Hamlin JV
Girls Hamlin JV
Boys Sisseton JV
Girls Sisseton JV
Girls Roncalli C
Girls Roncalli JV
Boys Roncalli C
Boys Roncalli JV
Girls Aberdeen Christian JV

Text Paul at 605-397-7460

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BROWN COUNTY
BROWN COUNTY COMMISSION AGENDA
REGULAR MEETING TUESDAY

December 5, 2023, 8:45 A.M.

COMMISSIONER'S CHAMBERS, COURTHOUSE ANNEX - 25 MARKET STREET, ABERDEEN SD

1. Call To Order - Pledge of Allegiance
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Opportunity of Public Comment
4. Second Reading and Possible Adoption Ordinance #261 – Title 4 Zoning, Chapter 4.2015 – “Fences”
5. Landowners concerned with Summit Carbon Solutions Rerouting Plans
6. Consent Calendar
 - a. Approval of General Meeting Minutes of November 28, 2023
 - b. Claims/Payroll
 - c. HR Report
 - d. Claim Assignment
 - e. Abatements
 - f. Travel Requests
 - g. Set Hearing Date for Retail (On-Off Sale) Malt Beverage & SD Farm Wine Licenses & Authorize Advertising
7. Other Business
8. Executive Session (if requested per SDCL 1-25-2)
9. Adjourn

Brown County Commission Meeting

Please join my meeting from your computer, tablet, or smartphone.

<https://meet.goto.com/BrCoCommission>

You can also dial in using your phone. United States: [+1 \(872\) 240-3311](tel:+18722403311)

Access Code: 601-168-909 #

Get the app now and be ready when your first meeting starts: <https://meet.goto.com/install>

Public comment provides an opportunity for the public to address the county commission but may not exceed 3 minutes.

Public comment will be limited to 10 minutes (or at the discretion of the board).

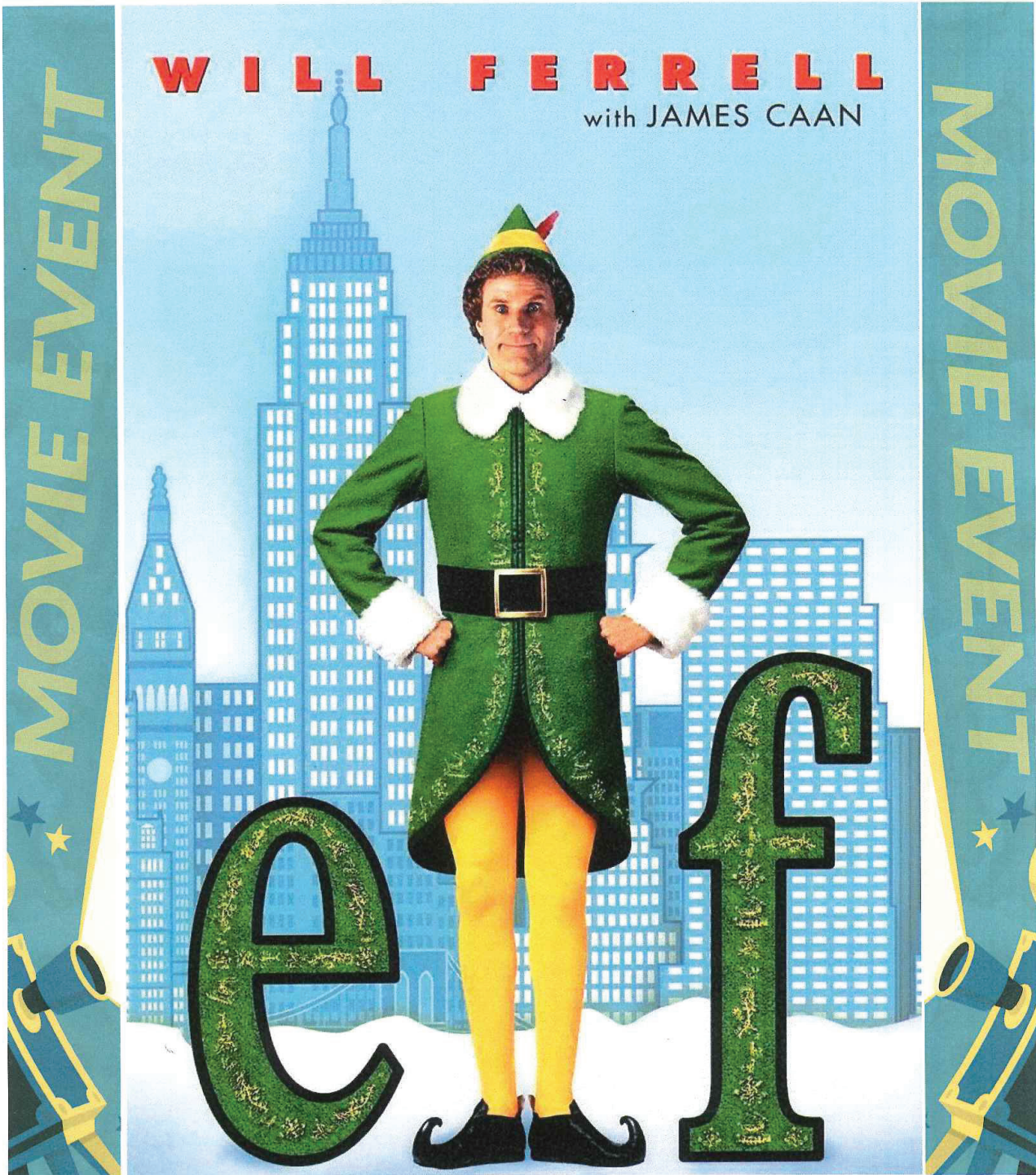
Public comment will be accepted virtually when the virtual attendance option is available.

Official Recordings of Commission Meetings along with the Minutes can be found at

<https://www.brown.sd.us/node/454>

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Wage Memorial Library
120 N Main St - Groton SD
MUST Preregister by calling the Library!
(605) 397-8422

Saturday, December 9th
11am-1pm
FREE Admission
Jungle Pizza will be served!

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Hutchinson County Fatal Crash

What: Single vehicle fatal crash
Where: 273rd Street at US 81, 5 miles north of Freeman, SD
When: 2:41 p.m., Saturday, December 2, 2023

Driver 1: Female, 17, Fatal injuries
Vehicle 1: 2006 Pontiac G6 GT

Hutchinson County, S.D.- One person died Saturday afternoon in a single vehicle crash in Hutchinson County.

The name of the person involved has not been released pending notification of family members.

Preliminary crash information indicates a 2006 Pontiac G6 GT was traveling westbound on 273rd Street near US 81, which transitions from pavement to gravel, when the driver lost control of the vehicle and rolled, coming to rest on the south side of the roadway. The driver was not wearing a seatbelt and pronounced deceased at the scene.

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

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



**'TIS THE
SEASON TO
SHOP LOCAL**

GROTON
Chamber Of Commerce

Groton Daily Independent

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**GROTON
VET CLINIC**

1503 N Broadway, Groton, 605/397-8145



Aberdeen
225-6772

1-800-843-1865

Redfield

1-800-247-4650

Webster

1-800-658-2252



JOHN DEERE

Groton December Events Calendar

Monday, Dec. 4

Senior Menu: Swiss steak, mashed potatoes, cauliflower, apricots, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Pancakes

School Lunch: Chicken patty, fries.

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

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

Junior High Girls Basketball hosts Northwestern. 7th grade game at 6 p.m., 8th grade game at 7 p.m.

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

United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.; Hanging of the Greens service, 11 a.m.

City Council Meeting, 7 p.m.

Tuesday, Dec. 5

Senior Menu: Scalloped chicken, carrot/broccoli medley, pineapple tidbits, Gingerbread with topping, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Homemade scones.

School Lunch: Meatball subs, corn.

Girls Basketball hosts James Valley Christian: 7th grade game at 4:30 p.m., junior varsity at 6 p.m. followed by varsity.

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

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

St. John's Lutheran: Ladies Aid LWML Christmas party, noon.

United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.

Cookies & Calendars at Dacotah Bank: 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

City Council Meeting, 7 p.m.

Wednesday, Dec. 6

Senior Menu: Beef stroganoff with noodles, mixed vegetables, fruit cocktail, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Cereal

School Lunch: Pizza crunchers, green beans.

Groton Chamber meeting, noon, at City Hall

Emmanuel Lutheran: Sarah Circle, 5 p.m.; Confirmation, 6 p.m.; League, 6:30 p.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Confirmation, 3:45 p.m.; Ad-

vent Service, 7 p.m.

United Methodist: Community coffee hour, 9:30 a.m.; UMYF Angel Tree Shopping and games, 6:30 p.m.

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

Thursday, Dec. 7

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

School Breakfast: breakfast pizza.

School Lunch: Chicken strips, baked beans.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Nigeria Circle, 2 p.m.

Middle School/High School Christmas program, 7 p.m., GHS Gym

Friday, Dec. 8

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

School Breakfast: Biscuits.

School Lunch: Lasagna hot dish, peas.

Basketball Double Header with Hamlin in Groton: (Gym: Boys C, 4 p.m., Girls C, 5 p.m.) Arena: Girls JV, 4 p.m., Boys JV, 5 p.m., Girls Varsity and Boys Varsity to follow

Junior High Wrestling at Sisseton, 4:30 p.m.

Saturday, Dec. 9

Santa Claus Day, 9 a.m. to 11 a.m., Professional Management Services

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.

Movie event at Wage Memorial Library, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Elda Stange's 100th Birthday party, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m., St. John's Lutheran Church

ACT Testing, 8 a.m. to noon, Groton Area School.

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TREE TRIMMING & REMOVAL
STUMP GRINDING
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605/228-3861
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New Construction
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Hoop Barns
Shops
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605/216-2677
prblocker@hotmail.com
Perry Blocker

Sunday, Dec. 10

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship with communion, 9 a.m.; Sunday school, 10:15 a.m.; choir, 6 p.m.

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

United Methodist: Worship with communion; Conde worship, 8:30 a.m.; coffee hour, 9:30 a.m.; Sunday school Christmas program practice, 9:30 a.m.; Groton worship, 10:30 a.m.; PEO meeting (outside group), 7 p.m.

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

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

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

Monday, Dec. 11

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

School Breakfast: Stuffed bagels.

School Lunch: Garlic cheese bread, cooked carrots.

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

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

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

School Board Meeting, 7 p.m.

Boys JV Wrestling Jamboree at Madison, 5 p.m.

Boys Junior High Wrestling at Webster, 4:30 p.m.

Junior High Girls Basketball at Sisseton, 7th at 4 p.m., 8th at 5 p.m.

Tuesday, Dec. 12

Senior Menu: Potato soup, ham salad croissant, tomato spoon salad, frosted brownie.

School Breakfast: Waffles.

School Lunch: Hot dogs, try taters

Emmanuel Lutheran: Church Council

United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.

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

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

Holiday Lighting Contest, 7 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Wednesday, Dec. 13

Senior Menu: Creamed chicken, buttermilk biscuit, peas, pineapple/mandarin oranges, peanut butter cookie.

School Breakfast: Egg bake.

School Lunch: Cheese nachos, refried beans.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Caroling (choir, league and 7-8 confirmation), 6 p.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Confirmation, 3:45 p.m.; Advent Service, 7 p.m.

United Methodist: Communion coffee hour, 9:30 a.m.; Parents confirmation meeting for 7-8 grade, 6:30 p.m.

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

Thursday, Dec. 14

Senior Menu: Spaghetti with meat sauce, broccoli, garlic toast, orange sherbet.

School Breakfast: Pop tarts.

School Lunch: Sloppy joes, tater tots.

Basketball Double Header at Sisseton: Aux. Gym: Boys C at 4 p.m., Girls C at 5 p.m.; Main Gym: Girls JV at 4 p.m., Boys JV at 5 p.m., Girls Varsity and Boys Varsity to follow.

Boys and Girls Northeast Conference Wrestling Tournament at Milbank, 4 p.m.

Friday, Dec. 15

Senior Menu: Lemon baked fish, rice pilaf, California blend vegetables, peach crisp, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Egg wraps.

School Lunch: Pizza, green beans.

Basketball Double Header at West Central: Boys C and Girls C, 4 p.m.; Boys JV, 5 p.m.; Girls JV, 5:15 p.m.; girls Varsity and Boys Varsity to follow.

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Saturday, Dec. 16

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.
Girls Wrestling at South Border (Ashley), 9 a.m.
Boys Wrestling at Sioux Valley (Volga), 10 a.m.

Sunday, Dec. 17

Emmanuel Lutheran: Sunday school program practice, 9 a.m.; Worship with Sunday school program, 10:30 a.m.; Choir, 6 p.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Worship with communion: at St. John's, 9 a.m.; at Zion, 11 a.m.; Sunday school, 9:45 a.m.

United Methodist: Conde worship, 8:30 a.m.; coffee hour, 9:30 a.m.; Sunday school Christmas program practice, 9:30 a.m.; Groton worship with Sunday school Christmas program during service, 10:30 a.m.

Groton CM&A: Sunday School at 9:15 a.m., Worship Service at 10:30 a.m.; Christmas program and dinner, 5 p.m. (everyone welcome to attend)

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

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

Monday, Dec. 18

Senior Menu: Baked pork chop, baked potato with sour cream, peas and carrots, pineapple/strawberry ambrosia, cookie, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Cheese omelets.

School Lunch: Tater tot hot dish.

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

St. John's Lutheran: Christian Literature Circle, 7:30 p.m.

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

Senior Citizens meet at the Groton Community Center with potluck dinner, Noon.

Junior High Girls Basketball hosts Webster in the Arena. 7th at 5 p.m., 8th at 6 p.m.

Boys JV and JH wrestling at McCook Central/Montrose (Salem), 5 p.m.

Tuesday, Dec. 19

Senior Menu: Sloppy Joe on bun, oven roasted potatoes, mixed vegetables, acini depepi fruit salad.

School Breakfast: Monty Cristo sandwich.

School Lunch: Chicken legs, mashed potatoes.

St. John's Lutheran: Quilting, 9 a.m.

United Methodist: Angel tree times at church for delivery

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

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

Girls Basketball at Aberdeen Roncalli: at the elementary school will be the 8th grade game at 4 p.m. At the High School, C game at 5 p.m. with JV and Varsity to follow.

City Council Meeting, 7 p.m.

Wednesday, Dec. 20

Senior Menu: Goulash, corn, apple crisp, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: French toast.

School Lunch: Chef salad.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Confirmation, 6 p.m.; League, 6:30 p.m.; Longest Night Service, 7 p.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Confirmation, 3:45 p.m.; Pre-school Christmas Program at 7:00 pm

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

Groton CM&A: Christmas caroling and game night, 6 pm.

Thursday, Dec. 21

FIRST DAY OF WINTER!

End of Second Quarter, early dismissal at 2 p.m.

Senior Menu: Roast beef, mashed potatoes and gravy, steamed cabbage, rainbow sherbet.

School Breakfast: Muffins.

School Lunch: Chicken nuggets, tri taters.

Elementary School Christmas Program, 1 p.m., GHS Gym.

Boys Basketball hosts Aberdeen Roncalli: C game at 5 p.m. with JV and Varsity to follow.

Boys Wrestling at Sisseton, 5 p.m.

Girls Wrestling at McCook Central/Montrose (Salem), 4 p.m.

Friday, Dec. 22

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

No School - Christmas Break

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Saturday, Dec. 23

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, Dec. 24

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m.; No Sunday school, worship with communion, 7 p.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Christmas Eve Service, 10:30 a.m.

United Methodist: Conde worship, 8:30 a.m.; coffee hour, 9:30 a.m.; Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.; Groton worship, 10:30 a.m.; Conde Christmas Eve service, 5 p.m.; Groton Christmas Eve service, 7 p.m.

Groton CM&A: Sunday School at 9:15 a.m., Worship Service at 10:30 a.m.; Candlelight Christmas Eve service, 5 p.m.

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

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

Monday, Dec. 25

CHRISTMAS DAY!

City office and public works departments closed.
No senior menu.

St. John's Lutheran: Christmas Day Service at Zion, 9 a.m.

No School - Christmas Break

Tuesday, Dec. 26

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

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

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

No School - Christmas Break

City office and public works departments closed.

Wednesday, Dec. 27

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

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

No School - Christmas Break

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

Thursday, Dec. 28

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

No School - Christmas Break

Girls Basketball hosts Aberdeen Christian. JV game at 5 p.m. followed by Varsity.

Friday, Dec. 29

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

No School - Christmas Break

Boys Basketball at Hoop City Classic in Mitchell: Groton Area vs. Pine Ridge at 12:30 p.m.

Boys and Girls Wrestling at Webster, 9:30 a.m.

Saturday, Dec. 30

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, Dec. 31

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship with communion, 9 a.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Worship at St. John's, 9 a.m.; at Zion, 11 a.m.

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

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

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

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

Weekly Vikings Recap - Bye Week

By Jack & Duane Kolsrud

The Minnesota Vikings took the week off this week as they were given the luxury of having a late-season bye week. The big news coming out of the week was that the Vikings officially activated Justin Jefferson off the Injured Reserve, ensuring that he will be back on the field for the Vikings next week when they head to Las Vegas to face the Raiders. Jefferson, who has not played in a game for the Vikings since he got injured against the Kansas City Chiefs on October 8, is currently the Vikings' third leading pass-catcher, behind TJ Hockenson and Jordan Addison, despite missing the Vikings' last seven games. The entrance of Jefferson will be an added boost for a Vikings' offense that seems to have stalled out a bit in their last couple of games.

With nothing else happening this week for the Vikings, now might be the best time to look back on the Vikings' season and analyze some of the good and the bad things that have come with this 2023 season.

The 2023 season for the Vikings has come down to two things in our opinion: injuries and turnovers. Unlike the 2022 season where the luck seemed to be entirely on the Vikings' side all season, this year has been the opposite as the Vikings have had several injuries to key players and lost the turnover battle in almost every game. Both injuries and turnovers tend to tell you less about a team's performance and more about how lucky they are. And, the Vikings have not been very lucky this season.

Coming into the season, the success of the Vikings was going to come down to two specific players: Kirk Cousins and Justin Jefferson. Hopes were high for both as Jefferson was coming off winning the NFL Offensive Player of the Year award and Cousins was building a relationship with head coach, Kevin O'Connell, that he had never seemed to have previously in Minnesota. However, the high hopes only lasted so long as the Vikings lost Jefferson in week 5 to a hamstring injury and Cousins in week 8 to an Achilles.

Most NFL teams would fold over if their two best players went out for long periods with injuries. However, the Vikings did not. With Jefferson out, the Vikings went 5-2, and without Cousins the rest of the season, the Vikings have gone 2-2 but currently sit in the sixth seed in the NFC playoffs. It is a testament to the culture that Kevin O'Connell has built in his two years here in Minnesota. He instilled in this team that despite the odds stacked against them, they still have the talent to go out and beat any team in the NFL on any given week. And even in the Vikings' two most recent losses, for which the Vikings lost by a total of a combined three points, the Vikings played like the better team in both those games, only losing because of turnovers.

That gets us to the other problem for the Vikings this season, the turnovers. Through the Vikings' first 12 games, they have amassed a total of 24 turnovers, the most in the NFL. In the Vikings' six losses this season, they have had 17 turnovers, and in their six wins, they have had only 7. In other words, the difference between a Vikings win or loss comes down to their ability to not turn the ball over, something they have still not been able to figure out given they have had seven turnovers in just their last two games before the bye week.

Looking to next week, the Vikings will head to Las Vegas to face the Raiders. After this game, and the Bengals game the following week, the Vikings will end their 2023 season with the most important stretch of football as their final three games are against the Detroit Lions and Green Bay Packers. It will be a true test of O'Connell's coaching and culture if the Vikings can pull off enough victories to place themselves in the NFC playoffs given these tough matchups.

"A Date That Will Live in Infamy"

December 7, 1941 is a "date that will live in infamy" as stated by President Theodore Roosevelt in his famous speech after the events of the Pearl Harbor bombing. That event led to the United States involvement in World War II. President's Roosevelt's speech was a call to arms and a declaration of war against this act of aggression by a foreign nation. He never wanted us to forget what happened. President Roosevelt concluded his speech by saying "With confidence in our armed forces, with the unbounding determination of our people, we will gain the inevitable triumph – so help us God."

Over eighty years later, President Roosevelt's words still have impact and meaning. There will always be threats to our country, both foreign and domestic. There have always been those who have stood up to stand against these threats and defended their country. Those who have served risk their health and safety for the greater good. The men and women of the United States Armed Forces know that they may be called upon to give the ultimate sacrifice for their country.

We must never forget those who suffered as Prisoners of War and the unknown fates of those who are still Missing in Action. Once back on the home front after the tours of duty are done and enlistments are complete, the service member will become a veteran, although transitioning back to civilian life can be challenging for some.

Many veterans will carry with them some physical, mental, or emotional toll from their service. Whether it is hearing loss or PTSD, there are service connected injuries that need to be cared for. Some are very easy to spot, like a missing limb or a scar from shrapnel injury. Others are harder to see, such as survivor guilt, substance abuse, and chronic pain which can be hidden. According to a 2022 VA study the top five causes of death for veterans in order from greatest the least were accidents, suicide, cancer, cardiovascular disease, and homicide.

As health care workers, it is our duty to care for these service men and women. We need to make sure that their physical and emotional health is cared for. That they have access to the resources earned through their service to their country. If we all work together we can ensure that no one is left behind. Our goal should be that veteran health care is not ignored. As President Roosevelt said, we need to have confidence in our armed forces and the unbounding determination of the people of this country. Together we can all make sure that those who served will never be forgotten.

Major Anderson, RN is a nurse at the Brookings Health System in Brookings, South Dakota. Follow The Prairie Doc® at www.prairiedoc.org and on Facebook and instagram featuring On Call with the Prairie Doc® a medical Q&A show celebrating its 22nd season of health information based on science, built on trust, broadcast on SDPB and streaming live on Facebook most Thursdays at 7 p.m. central.



Major Anderson, RN

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Groton Prairie Mixed Bowling League Week #2 Results

Team Standings: Jackelopes – 6, Shihtzus – 5, Coyotes – 5, Foxes – 3, Chipmunks – 3, Cheetahs – 2

Men's High Games: Tony Waage – 202, Brad Waage – 182, Mike Siegler – 179

Women's High Games: Darci Spanier – 170, Vicki Walter – 161, Alexa Schuring – 160

Men's High Series: Roger Spanier – 507, Tony Waage – 499, Lance Frohling – 494

Women's High Series: Vicki Walter – 453, Sue Stanley – 428, Dar Larson – 421

Fun Game Winners - Most 8 Spares - Coyotes with 15!



Columbia Hometown Holiday Party

Saturday, Dec. 9

5-7 p.m. at the Columbia Legion

All ages are welcome!

Christmas Music ~ Hayrides

Crafts and Games

Santa Claus

Free will offering supper will be served

Festive or ugly, wear your favorite Christmas attire!

Home decorating winners will be announced!

Come see the beautifully decorated

Columbia City Park!



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Defense lawyers decry wait times, pat-down searches at penitentiary

Legal fees could add up for taxpayers as attorneys wait to meet clients

BY: JOHN HULT - DECEMBER 3, 2023 7:00 AM

Defense attorneys in South Dakota's most populous county are at odds with the state Department of Corrections over problems with client access they say raise civil rights questions and cost taxpayers money.

An advisory group for public defenders in Minnehaha County discussed the problem during a Tuesday meeting with County Commissioner Joe Kippley, the commission's liaison to the group.

"We're learning that attorneys are having to jump through some extra hoops to get access to their clients," Kippley said.

He reached out to the DOC to learn more about the delays and the issues surrounding them but didn't get an immediate response, he said.

For months, taxpayer-funded public defenders, public advocates and court-appointed private attorneys have privately exchanged stories of delays in meeting prison clients, who have a constitutional right to representation.

Some attorneys appear for scheduled appointments, only to wait an hour or more to see clients, said Minnehaha County Public Defender Traci Smith. Others have been told that staff are unable to locate their client on prison grounds.

Those wait times translate into billable hours, which are charged to the county in cases involving court-appointed private attorneys or attorneys employed by the public defender.

"We bill for all of the time waiting to see a client for an attorney visit sitting at the pen, just as a private attorney would bill for all their time," Smith said.

Clients with court-appointed attorneys are technically charged for their attorneys' time. The county places a lien on the individual for the legal fees, Kippley said, but those fees are rarely paid off. On rare occasions, someone will appear before the commission to settle a lien in order to become eligible for a mortgage, but those situations are "the exception that proves the rule."

"You don't ever really get it back," Kippley said.

Search policy prompts additional backlash

The issue of access and delays came to a head recently over a search policy that Smith and others see as legally questionable, absent a clear security breach by attorneys.

A prison policy inked in March says that all visitors – without a noted exception for lawyers conducting official business – must first pass a background check, and "when possible," consent to a "search of my person and/or any of my personal property ... or of any vehicle that I may bring on the grounds of this facility."

The policy also includes a list of items considered contraband and outlines the penalty for attempts to pass such items along.

Visitors to DOC facilities typically empty their pockets and clear metal detectors before entry, with staff using metal detector wands to check those who set off a walk-through detector. Similar security setups are used at county courthouses, but lawyers are able to bypass them in the course of official business by flashing a State Bar membership card.

Pat-down and vehicle searches are a step beyond metal detector pass-throughs, Smith said, and may

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amount to an unreasonable search if conducted without a specific cause for suspicion. A 1981 ruling from the West Virginia Supreme Court, for example, held that pat-down searches of attorneys entering a state prison are unconstitutional unless attorneys "have created some type of security or discipline problem with regard to the inmates."

At least one attorney in Smith's office refused to sign the consent to search document and opted out of a visit.

The DOC did not reply to questions from South Dakota Searchlight on the policy, its origins, its scope or application within various facilities, or the security needs it might address.

The policy's inconsistent use has been a frustration for attorneys, said John Hinrichs, a former magistrate judge and public defender who now takes court appointments as a private attorney.

Hinrichs is a member of the public defense advisory board for Minnehaha County.

He hasn't been asked to sign a search consent form himself and said he would decline to if asked, but he has fielded complaints from others who've been presented with the document.

Hinrichs has, however, experienced delays of an hour or longer awaiting an audience with clients – even after setting up appointments in advance.

For attorneys, time spent in the waiting area of a DOC facility is a total loss.

"We're not allowed to bring electronics in, so it's not as if I can sit there and work on something else in the meantime," Hinrichs said. "Even if I could, there's no public wi-fi, so it's really dead time."

As with the attorneys in Smith's office, Hinrichs said he has to bill for the wait times, but said "I don't relish sending a bill to Minnehaha County for time that I'm idle, through no fault of my own or my clients."

Attorneys are also restricted to client visits during normal visiting hours, he said, and meetings often take place in the same shared visiting area used by friends and family.

"It makes things difficult, because the client has a right to confidential communications with his attorney," he said.

County seeks resolution

The Minnehaha County Jail is located about a mile from the penitentiary grounds, and sees many of the same attorneys who visit the prison.

Jail Warden Mike Mattson said the downtown jail does conduct background checks for its regular visitors like attorneys, clergy and drug and alcohol counselors.

He declined to share the jail's security or search policies, but said in an interview that searches beyond a general screening would require "probable cause."

A good share of the jail population consists of people awaiting trial or sentencing, which means the jail tends to open its doors to attorneys multiple times a day. Court-appointed attorneys appear so often, he said, that "I honestly can't remember the last time we had an issue" with anyone bringing a barred item into the facility.

As with the prison, video visits between attorneys and clients are available, he said. When attorneys need to meet clients face-to-face – a signature is required for a plea deal, for example – such meetings take place away from the general population. Visits are monitored by video for security, but audio of the attorney-client conversations isn't collected.

Wait times are short and rare, he said.

"If there's some sort of event going on, or just routine busyness, an attorney might have to wait three to five minutes," Mattson said. "But that's after they're already up in the jail and on the floor waiting for the inmate to be pulled out."

Commissioner Kippley, the public defender liaison, said he prefers the efficiency of the county jail system with regard to attorney access. Kippley, himself an attorney, said he hopes the DOC will work to address access and security issues at the penitentiary in a timely fashion.

"I'm making some contacts, looking for the right people to have the right conversations and hopefully reach an amicable solution," he said.

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

EARTHTALK ™

Dear EarthTalk: What is firescaping and what's the connection with native plants? – J.T., via email

Firescaping involves designing a landscape to fireproof a property while maintaining aesthetic appeal. By thoughtfully choosing and arranging plants and construction materials, the likelihood of igniting a fire, along with its potential severity and the speed at which it spreads, can be significantly reduced.

A firescape design often involves multiple zones. Zone 0, also known as a 'noncombustible zone,' is the perimeter region zero to five feet away from the home. Anything within this region should be incombustible. This most frequently means putting pavement, bricks or rocks around the border of the home to prevent any groundfires from being able to make direct contact. In addition, avoid planting vegetation beneath decks or balconies as fire and heat tends to climb upward.

All vegetation should be kept at least 10 feet away from homes for optimal fireproofing, and trees should always be kept at least 15 feet away from chimneys and powerlines. When choosing the placement of trees, consider their size at maturity versus their size at the time of planting. Additionally, the crowns of trees should be kept at least 10 feet apart via pruning. This helps avoid fire laddering, whereby flames ignite lower branches or shrubs, initiating upward movement before spreading to adjacent trees.

Zone 1 is the 'lean, clean, green' area within 30 feet of a home. Certain plants, such as junipers, conifers and other evergreens should not be planted in this region because they contain oils, resins and waxes that make them flammable. Other characteristics of incendiary plants include those containing dry or dead twigs and needles and those having strongly aromatic terpenoid leaves.

Instead, choose plants that are less 'woody', have higher moisture content, and are ground covers. Deciduous trees and shrubs, as well as succulents and some perennials, are better-suited options. Furthermore, many native plants possess evolutionary adaptations, such as deep root systems and fire-resistant bark, which make them resilient to wildfires. Incorporating a variety of native plants fosters biodiversity, which in turn promotes plant health. Diverse and healthy native ecosystems create natural firebreaks and slow the spread of fires.

The organization of vegetation and structures also play a vital role in firescaping. Incorporating materials like concrete, stone and brick in the construction of driveways, walkways, patios and fences establishes effective firebreaks while offering both functional and aesthetic value. Though bare dirt can also serve as a noncombustible fuel break, it is not recommended due to the potential of soil erosion. Buffering, or creating separation between distinct layers of ground covers, shrubs and trees, limits a fire's ability to climb and intensify. Adding water features in firescaping introduces a dynamic element that can act as a natural firebreak. Ponds, streams or other water sources can serve as barriers, hindering the progression of wildfires by creating a moisture-rich environment. Finally, removing dead vegetation is a critical component of firescaping as it eliminates potential fuel sources for fires, disrupting the continuity of combustible material.



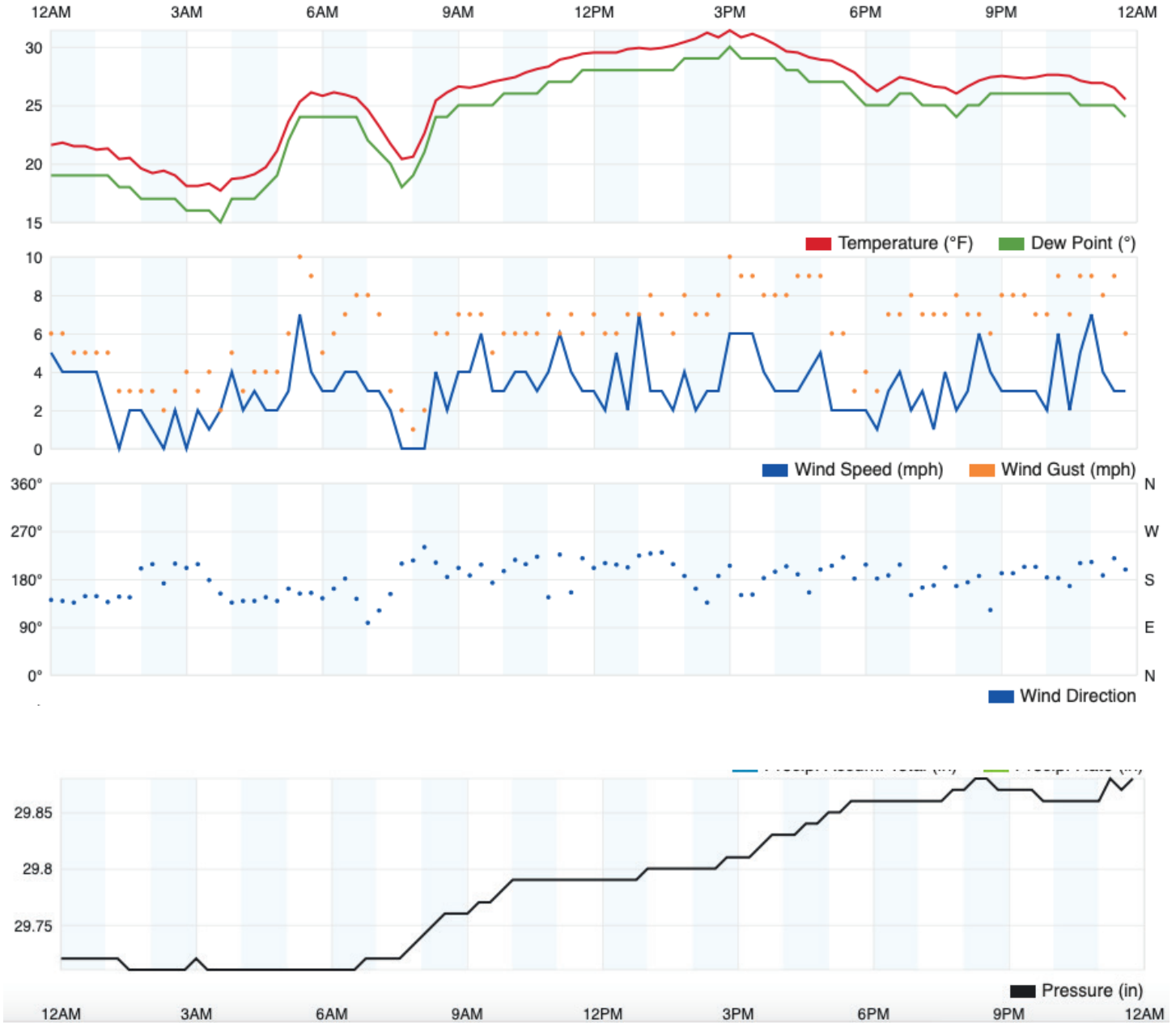
This home survived the otherwise devastating Wolverine Fire outside of Chelan, Washington in 2015 thanks to firescaping with native plants.

Credit: Kari Greer/USFS.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Mon Dec 4	Tue Dec 5	Wed Dec 6	Thu Dec 7	Fri Dec 8	Sat Dec 9	Sun Dec 10
39°F	39°F	53°F	51°F	43°F	38°F	37°F
20°F	28°F	31°F	33°F	23°F	19°F	23°F
SSW	WNW	SSW	SE	W	WNW	WNW
9 MPH	8 MPH	13 MPH	15 MPH	17 MPH	11 MPH	6 MPH
20%						



Warm Mid-Week Temps & Mostly Dry

December 3, 2023

1:51 PM

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Light Snow Showers				Light Snow Showers & Sprinkles
36-49°	36-46°	50-62°	51-62°	41-45°
Windy Central & Western SD (40-50mph)		Breezy Sisseton Hills Early (25-35mph)		



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

A clipper system will bring strong winds to western and central South Dakota Monday, with just some light amounts of moisture. Temperatures for the next several days also remain above normal, particularly mid-week.

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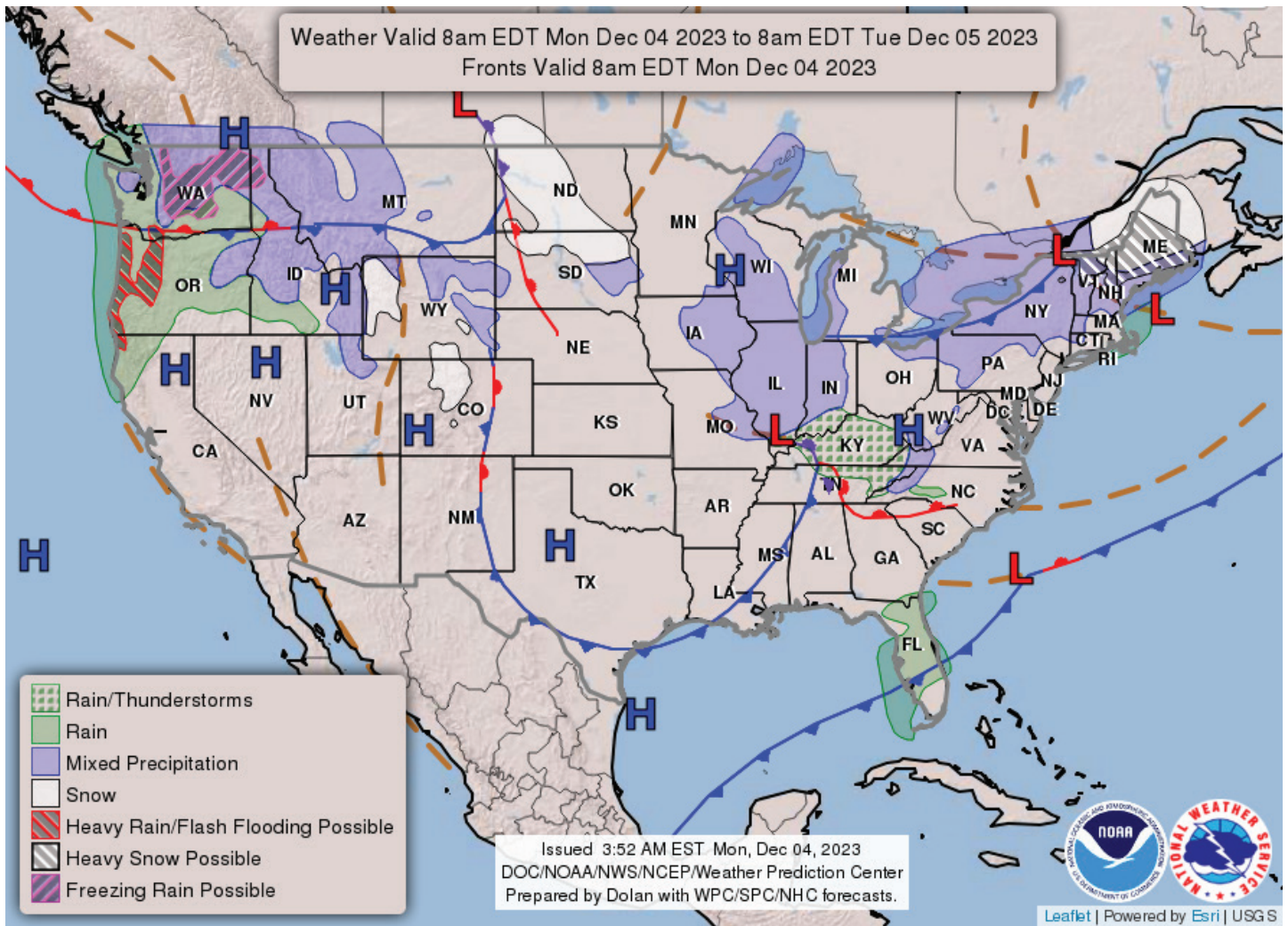
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 31 °F at 2:27 PM
Low Temp: 18 °F at 3:44 AM
Wind: 13 mph at 3:20 PM
Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 8 hours, 58 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 56 in 1979
Record Low: --18 in 1927
Average High: 33
Average Low: 12
Average Precip in Dec.: 0.08
Precip to date in Dec.: 0.00
Average Precip to date: 21.29
Precip Year to Date: 23.17
Sunset Tonight: 4:51:41 PM
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:54:33 AM



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Today in Weather History

December 4, 1993: Winds gusting to 40 to 60 mph combined with snow cover along with new snow to cause blizzard conditions making travel hazardous across north central and northeast South Dakota. Several vehicles were stranded or slid into ditches. The winds toppled a private building under construction at Selby in Walworth County. New snowfall amounts were generally from one to three inches.

December 4, 1952: The month of December started off with chilly temperatures in London. This cold resulted in Londoners to burn more coal to heat up their homes. Then on December 5, a high pressure settled over the Thames River causing a dense layer of smog to develop. The smog became so thick and dense by December 7 that virtually no sunlight was seen in London. Most conservative estimates place the death toll at 4,000, with some estimating the smog killed as many as 8,000 individuals.

1786 - The first of two great early December storms began. The storm produced 18 inches of snow at Morristown NJ, and twenty inches of snow at New Haven CT. It also resulted in high tides at Nantucket which did great damage. (David Ludlum)

1972 - Winds gusting to 70 mph sent the temperature at Livingston, MT, plunging from 52 degrees to 18 degrees in just twenty minutes. (The Weather Channel)

1982 - The temperature in New York City's Central Park reached 72 degrees to establish a record high for December. The month as a whole was also the warmest of record. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - A cold front crossing the Pacific Coast Region brought high winds and heavy rain to California. Thunderstorm winds gusted to 55 mph at Newport Beach CA, and Mount Wilson CA was drenched with 2.17 inches of rain in six hours. Gale force winds prevailed along the Northern Pacific Coast, and winds in the Tehachapis Mountains of southern California gusted to 60 mph. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Gale force winds continued to usher cold arctic air into the northeastern U.S. Winds gusted to 65 mph at Windsor Locks CT. Up to a foot of snow blanketed the higher elevations of Vermont. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Seventeen cities in the eastern U.S., including nine in Florida, reported record low temperatures for the date. Lakeland FL reported a record low of 31 degrees, and Watertown NY was the cold spot in the nation with a low of 20 degrees below zero. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2002 - An early season winter storm brought an expansive shield of snow and ice through much of the eastern U.S., from the lower Ohio Valley, southern Appalachians and into the Northeast. Snow accumulations of 4-8 inches were common along the northern edge of the precipitation shield, while a significant accrual of glaze occurred in the Carolinas. The storm caused at least 17 fatalities, mostly from traffic accidents (CNN). In the Carolinas, electric utilities provider Duke Power characterized the ice storm as the worst in the company's history, with 1.2 million customers or nearly half its entire customer base without power on the morning of the 5th. This surpassed electrical outages inflicted by Hurricane Hugo as it swept through the central Carolinas in September 1989.

2002: A total solar eclipse was experienced by millions of people from Africa to Australia, and from space.

Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

ARE YOU READY FOR CHRISTMAS?

Hal and Matt, two longtime friends, accidentally met in a department store a few weeks before Christmas. They gave each other a forced smile – as if they were happy to see each other – but wished their meeting was under different circumstances.

“You know,” said Hal, “I’ve come to the conclusion that Christmas has become a wrap race.”

“I agree,” replied Matt. “And I’ll tell you something else. I’ve finally discovered the real meaning of the word Yule.”

“Oh,” responded Hal. “What is it? I’d like to know myself.”

“It’s my wife saying in a very convincing voice, ‘You’ll buy me this and then you’ll buy me that!’ I feel like I have no choice but to buy her whatever she asks for,” replied Matt. “Everything seems to be about things.”

It would be a wise investment of our time this Christmas to try to imagine what God might have seen when He looked into the manger. Certainly it was more, much more, than a Baby. Did He see the crowds ridiculing and mocking His Son? Did He turn His head when He saw the “kiss of betrayal” from Judas? Was His mind troubled by the trial that unjustly condemned His Son? Did He weep when He saw Jesus hanging from the cross? Certainly. But let’s not forget to see the smile that was on His face and the peace that flooded into His heart when He saw the empty tomb.

Prayer: Help us, Heavenly Father, to get ready for Christmas by seeing its sights and sounds through Your eyes. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: John 14:9 Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, ‘Show us the Father?’”



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

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2023 Community Events

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

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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:
12.01.23

12 47 49 52 65 12

MegaPlier: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$377,000,000

NEXT 1 Days 17 Hrs 28
DRAW: Mins 3 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
12.02.23

3 8 11 38 48 8

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$2,600,000

NEXT 16 Hrs 43 Mins 3
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
12.03.23

11 15 28 36 40 11

TOP PRIZE:
\$7,000/week

NEXT 16 Hrs 58 Mins 2
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
12.02.23

8 19 23 24 28

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$78,000

NEXT 2 Days 16 Hrs 58
DRAW: Mins 3 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
12.02.23

6 32 37 42 67 25

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT 17 Hrs 27 Mins 3
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
12.02.23

28 35 41 47 60 3

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$412,000,000

NEXT 17 Hrs 27 Mins 3
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the Associated Press

Pilots flying tourists over national parks face new rules. None are stricter than at Mount Rushmore

By HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH Associated Press

Fewer planes and helicopters will be flying tourists over Mount Rushmore and other national monuments and parks as new regulations take effect that are intended to protect the serenity of some of the most beloved natural areas in the United States.

The air tours have pitted tour operators against visitors frustrated with the noise for decades, but it has come to a head as new management plans are rolled out at nearly two dozen national parks and monuments.

One of the strictest yet was recently announced at Mount Rushmore and Badlands National Park, where tour flights will essentially be banned from getting within a half mile of the South Dakota sites starting in April.

"I don't know what we're going to be able to salvage," complained Mark Schlaefli, a co-owner of Black Hills Aerial Adventures who is looking for alternative routes.

The regulations are the result of a federal appeals court finding three years ago that the National Park Service and the Federal Aviation Administration failed to enforce a 2000 law governing commercial air tours over the parks and some tribal lands. A schedule was crafted for setting rules, and many are wrapping up now.

But now an industry group is eying litigation, and an environmental coalition already has sued over one plan. The issue has grown so contentious that a congressional oversight hearing is planned for Tuesday.

Critics argue that the whirr of chopper blades is drowning out the sound of birds, bubbling lava and babbling brooks. That in turn disrupts the experiences of visitors and the tribes who call the land around the parks home.

"Is that fair?" asked Kristen Brengel of the National Parks Conservation Association, noting that visitors on the ground far outnumber those overhead. "I don't think so."

The air operators argue they provide unrivaled access, particularly to the elderly and disabled.

"Absolutely exhilarating, a thrilling experience" is how Bailey Wood, a spokesman for the Helicopter Association International, described them.

Sightseeing flights got their start in the 1930s as crews building the massive Hoover Dam asked the helicopter pilots working on the project to give their families flyovers, Wood said.

"It took off from there," he said, jokingly adding, "Sorry, aviation pun."

The issue hit a tipping point at the Grand Canyon in 1986 when two tour aircraft collided over the national park in Arizona, killing 25 people. Congress acted the next year and a plan was enacted to designate routes and minimum altitude for canyon flights.

Congress passed another round of legislation in 2000 with a goal of setting rules in other national parks. But bureaucratic difficulties and delays stalled compliance.

The Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility and the Hawaii Island Coalition Malama Pono sued, demanding something be done. Historically, some of the nation's busiest spots for tour operators are Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, which is home to one of the world's most active volcanoes, and Haleakala National Park.

In 2020, a federal court ordered compliance at 23 national parks, including popular sites such as Glacier in Montana, Arches in Utah and Great Smokey Mountains in Tennessee and North Carolina. That same year, the latest in which data is available, there were 15,624 air tours reported, which was down about 30% because of the pandemic, the park service said.

As of this month, plans or voluntary agreements have been adopted for most of the parks, although not all of them have taken effect. Work is still underway on five, the park service said.

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Parks exempted from developing plans include those with few flights and those in Alaska, where small planes are often the only way to get around.

"Mostly, the plans have been pretty generous to the industry, allowing them to continue as they have done in the past with some limited air tours around these parks," said Peter Jenkins, senior council for Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility.

His group went to court over a plan to allow a combined total of about 2,500 flights over the Golden Gate National Recreation Area and other nearby parks, alleging an inadequate environmental study.

Then came last month's announcement about restrictions over Mount Rushmore and the Badlands.

"This isn't a management plan," complained Ray Jilek, owner of Eagle Aviation Inc. and its chief pilot. "This is a cease and desist plan, as far as I'm concerned."

Andrew Busse of Black Hills Helicopter Inc. said his tours already don't fly directly over Mount Rushmore. The park is relatively small, so the monument to the nation's presidents is still visible from outside its boundaries, he said.

The plans are aimed at taking tribal desires into account. But Shawn Bordeaux, a Democratic state lawmaker in South Dakota and a member of the Rosebud Sioux tribe, said he hasn't heard complaints.

"We don't want them flying around trying to watch our sun dances or ceremonies or something," he said. "But as for tourism, I don't see why it's an issue."

A similarly strict plan has been proposed for Bandelier National Monument in New Mexico. Bruce Adams, owner of Southwest Safaris, flies a fixed-wing plane with tourists a couple times a week over the area known for the dwellings carved into the soft rock cliffs.

"Changing the route is going to force me to fly over Pueblo tribal lands that I have assiduously avoided doing for 49 years because I know it's going to cause noise problems," he said.

Glacier National Park, meanwhile, is phasing out the flights by the end of 2029.

Wood said the process has been "broken and rushed" and threatens to put some operators out of business.

"Litigation is one tool that is definitely under consideration," he said.

But Bregel of the National Parks Conservation Association said the resistance doesn't have much traction. An amendment to the FAA reauthorization bill that would have required the agency to factor in the economics of commercial air tours over national parks failed in July, she said.

"People go to Arches, people go to Hawaii to hear the sights and sounds of these places," Bregel said. "It's so utterly clear that the vast majority of people who are going to these parks aren't going to hear the sounds of helicopters over their heads."

Live updates | Israel's military calls for more evacuations in southern Gaza as it widens offensive

By The Associated Press undefined

Israel's military called for more evacuations in southern Gaza as it widened its offensive aimed at eliminating the territory's Hamas rulers. The war has already killed thousands of Palestinians and displaced over three-fourths of Gaza's 2.3 million residents, who are running out of safe places to go.

The Health Ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said the death toll in the territory since Oct. 7 has surpassed 15,500, with more than 41,000 wounded. The ministry does not differentiate between civilian and combatant deaths, but said 70% of the dead were women and children.

Israel says it targets Hamas operatives and blames civilian casualties on the militants, accusing them of operating in residential neighborhoods. It claims to have killed thousands of militants, without providing evidence. Israel says at least 81 of its soldiers have died.

Hopes for another temporary truce faded after Israel called its negotiators home over the weekend. Hamas said talks on releasing more of the scores of hostages seized by Palestinian militants on Oct. 7 must be tied to a permanent cease-fire.

The United States, along with Qatar and Egypt, which mediated the earlier cease-fire, say they are working on a longer truce.

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Currently:

- 3 commercial ships hit by missiles in Houthi attack in Red Sea, US warship downs 3 drones
- Biden's allies in Senate demand that Israel limit civilian deaths in Gaza as Congress debates U.S. aid
- Find more of AP's coverage at <https://apnews.com/hub/israel-hamas-war>

Here's what's happening in the war:

RIGHTS GROUPS CALL FOR A HALT IN DUTCH EXPORTS OF FIGHTER JET PARTS TO ISRAEL

THE HAGUE, Netherlands — Human rights lawyers went to court in the Netherlands on Monday calling for a halt to the export of fighter jet parts to Israel that could be used in attacks on Gaza.

The rights organizations say that delivery of parts for F-35 jets makes the Netherlands complicit in possible war crimes by Israel in its war with Hamas.

The civil case in The Hague opened as the Israeli military renewed calls for mass evacuations from the southern town of Khan Younis, where tens of thousands of displaced Palestinians have sought refuge in recent weeks, as it widened its ground offensive and bombarded targets across the Gaza Strip.

The rights lawyers want The Hague District Court to issue an injunction banning exports of F-35 parts that are stored in a warehouse in the town of Woensdrecht.

"The state must immediately stop its delivery of F-35 parts to Israel," lawyer Liesbeth Zegveld told the court.

She said Dutch customs officials asked the government if it wanted to continue exports after the Oct. 7 attacks by Hamas that triggered the Israel-Hamas war.

"The warning that the fighter jets can contribute to serious breaches of the laws of war does not, for the (Dutch) state outweigh its economic interests and diplomatic reputation," she said.

Government lawyer Reimer Veldhuis urged the court's single judge to reject the injunction, saying that even if it were to uphold the rights lawyers' legal arguments and ban exports, "the United States would deliver these parts to Israel from another place."

A decision is expected within two weeks. It can be appealed.

NETANYAHU'S CORRUPTION TRIAL RESUMES

TEL AVIV, Israel — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's corruption trial has resumed after a hiatus prompted by the Oct. 7 Hamas attack and the war it set off.

Netanyahu is on trial for alleged fraud, breach of trust and accepting bribes in three separate cases involving powerful media moguls and wealthy associates. He denies any wrongdoing.

In Monday's hearing, police investigators will be questioned over allegations that Netanyahu promoted regulatory benefits for a telecom company in exchange for favorable coverage from a news outlet it owned.

Netanyahu's lengthy trial, which began in 2020, was paused after the Hamas attack, when the country's courts were put under emergency status and all but shut down. The last hearing took place at the end of September.

HEAD OF SHIN BET SAYS IT WILL DESTROY HAMAS 'IN EVERY PLACE'

TEL AVIV, Israel — The head of Israel's domestic security agency, Shin Bet, says his organization is prepared to destroy Hamas "in every place," including in other Middle Eastern countries.

The remarks by Ronen Bar, aired late Sunday by Israel's public broadcaster Kan, echoed similar comments by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his defense minister last month.

"In every place, in Gaza, in the West Bank, in Lebanon, in Turkey, in Qatar, everywhere," Bar said in an audio recording. "It'll take a few years but we will be there to do it."

Bar compared the mission to Israel's operation to assassinate militants behind the 1972 killings of members of its Olympic team in Munich, Germany.

Kan did not say when Bar made the remarks.

Most of Hamas' top leadership lives in exile, primarily in the Gulf state of Qatar, a key player in bringing about the recently expired truce between Israel and Hamas, and the Lebanese capital of Beirut.

Israel's Mossad spy agency has been accused of involvement in a series of assassinations overseas of Palestinian militants and Iranian nuclear scientists over the years.

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YOUNG ISRAELI HOSTAGES RETURN TO SOCIAL MEDIA AFTER BEING FREED

TEL AVIV, Israel — Freed from Hamas captivity, several young Israelis are doing what young people do and are posting to TikTok.

Dancing, keeping up with trends or just thanking their followers, several young Israelis have begun appearing on social media just days after they were freed.

Alma Or, 13, who was released after 50 days in captivity, posted a video in which she dances with a friend under the text "Roses are red this trend might be over but I've just been freed from Hamas captivity."

Sahar Kalderon, 16, posted a video of herself and a friend dancing to a beat-infused track in front of a mirror, under text reading "The sound that crossed through my head the moment I came home from captivity."

Another freed captive, Gali Tarshansky, 13, has posted at least two videos since being freed, with one captioned "Captives humor."

Under a now-expired truce deal, Hamas released 105 Israeli and foreign captives it snatched on Oct. 7. Most returned physically well but doctors have cautioned it will take time for them to heal emotionally from their weeks in captivity. Four other hostages were released before the truce and one was rescued.

ISRAEL SAYS IT HAS EXPANDED GROUND OPERATIONS TO 'EVERY PART' OF GAZA STRIP

JERUSALEM — The Israeli military says it has expanded its ground operation against the Hamas militant group to "every part" of the Gaza Strip.

The army resumed its offensive on Friday after a weeklong cease-fire expired. After focusing its ground operation on the northern part of Gaza in recent weeks, it began carrying out airstrikes in southern Gaza as well. The vast majority of Gaza's population has fled to the south in search of safety.

Israeli military spokesperson Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari said late Sunday that ground troops were also pushing into the south.

"The Israeli army is continuing and expanding the ground operation against the Hamas presence in every part of the Gaza Strip," he said.

BRITAIN TO USE DRONES TO SEARCH FOR HOSTAGES IN GAZA

LONDON — The British government said its military plans to fly unarmed surveillance drones over the Gaza Strip in search of hostages taken by Hamas.

The Ministry of Defense said the flights will not have a combat role and the only information passed on will be for the purpose of rescuing hostages still held since Hamas attacked Israel on Oct. 7.

The fate of the hostages, including British nationals, has been a key concern as a weeklong cease-fire ended Friday and Israel began a new round of bombardments. During the break in fighting, Hamas released 110 hostages but another 137 remain captive, Israel said.

"Having had around 100 hostages released, there are still many more who are being held captive by Hamas," Health Secretary Victoria Atkins told Sky News on Sunday. "We want to do everything we can to help find those hostages and to secure their release."

Atkins said unmanned drones will be used to conduct the surveillance.

ITALIAN NAVAL SHIP RECEIVES FIRST PATIENT

ROME — An Italian naval ship, anchored off Egypt on Sunday, has received its first patient as part of the Italian government's commitment to care for civilians needing medical assistance in the war between Israel and Hamas in Gaza.

The Italian defense ministry, in a post on social medium platform X, quoted Defense Minister Guido Crosetto as saying that a girl was the first person to receive treatment aboard the ship, Vulcano. No details were given about her medical condition.

The ship's facilities include operating rooms.

POPE CALLS FOR ISRAEL AND HAMAS TO FOLLOW 'COURAGEOUS PATHS OF PEACE'

VATICAN CITY — Pope Francis has called the end of the truce in the Israel-Hamas "painful."

"That means death, destruction and misery," the pontiff said on Sunday in remarks read for him by an aide because he has bronchitis.

The pope, noting that many hostages are still held in Gaza, said "Let's think of them, of their families, who had seen a light, a hope of embracing again their loved ones."

He also lamented the lack of basic necessities of life in Gaza. "I hope that all who are involved can reach as soon as possible a new accord for a cease-fire and find solutions that are different than weapons, trying to follow courageous paths of peace."

US VICE PRESIDENT CALLS SCALE OF CIVILIAN SUFFERING IN GAZA 'DEVASTATING'

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates -- U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris said Israel in its war with Hamas "must do more to protect innocent civilians."

The vice president noted in remarks to reporters at the United Nations climate conference that Israel is within its rights to defend itself after the brutal Oct. 7 attack by Hamas, yet the U.S. ally must do so in accordance with international law.

"As Israel defends itself, it matters how," Harris said. "The United States is unequivocal: International humanitarian law must be respected. Too many innocent Palestinians have been killed. Frankly, the scale of civilian suffering and the images and videos coming from Gaza are devastating."

White House warns Congress the US is out of money, nearly out of time to avoid 'kneecap' to Ukraine

By ZEKE MILLER AP White House Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Biden administration on Monday sent Congress an urgent warning about the need to approve tens of billions of dollars in military and economic assistance to Ukraine, saying Kyiv's war effort to defend itself from Russia's invasion may grind to a halt without it.

In a letter to House and Senate leaders and also released publicly, Office of Management and Budget Director Shalanda Young warned the U.S. will run out of funding to send weapons and assistance to Ukraine by the end of the year, saying that would "kneecap" Ukraine on the battlefield.

She added that the U.S. already has run out of money that it has used to prop up Ukraine's economy, and "if Ukraine's economy collapses, they will not be able to keep fighting, full stop."

"We are out of money — and nearly out of time," she wrote.

Biden has sought a nearly \$106 billion aid package for Ukraine, Israel and other needs, but it has faced a difficult reception on Capitol Hill, where there is growing skepticism about the magnitude of assistance for Ukraine and where even Republicans supportive of the funding are insisting on U.S.-Mexico border policy changes to halt the flow of migrants as a condition for the assistance.

Meanwhile, the GOP-controlled House has passed a standalone assistance package for Israel, which is fighting a war with Hamas in Gaza, while the White House has maintained that all of the priorities must be met.

Congress already has allocated \$111 billion to assist Ukraine, including \$67 billion in military procurement funding, \$27 billion for economic and civil assistance and \$10 billion for humanitarian aid. Young wrote that all of it, other than about 3% of the military funding, had been depleted by mid-November.

The Biden administration has said it has slowed the pace of some military assistance to Kyiv in recent weeks to try to stretch supplies until Congress approves more funding.

"We are out of money to support Ukraine in this fight," Young wrote. "This isn't a next year problem. The time to help a democratic Ukraine fight against Russian aggression is right now. It is time for Congress to act."

The letter followed a classified Capitol Hill briefing on Nov. 29 for the top House and Senate leaders on the need for the assistance. Defense and other national security officials briefed the "big four" congressional leaders as Congress is debating President Joe Biden's nearly \$106 billion funding package, which includes \$61 billion for Ukraine but has become snared by Republican demands for U.S.-Mexico border security changes.

"They were clear that Ukraine needs the aid soon — and so does our military need the aid soon," Senate

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Majority Leader Chuck Schumer told The Associated Press in an interview.

Final goodbye: Recalling influential people who died in 2023

By BERNARD MCGHEE Associated Press

From a hot dog vendor to head of the formidable mercenary army Wagner Group, his rise through Russian society could easily be described as meteoric. But it all came to a sudden end when the plane carrying him and others mysteriously exploded.

The Aug. 23 death of Yevgeny Prigozhin put an exclamation point on what had already been an eventful year for the brutal mercenary leader. His Wagner troops brought Russia a rare victory in its grinding war in Ukraine, successfully capturing the city of Bakhmut. But internal friction with Russian military leaders later burst into the open, with Prigozhin briefly mounting an armed rebellion — the most severe challenge yet to Russian President Vladimir Putin's rule.

The rebellion was called off and a deal was struck after less than 24 hours. However, just two months later, Prigozhin joined the list of those who have run afoul of the Kremlin and died unnatural deaths.

He was just one of many noteworthy people who died in 2023.

The world also said goodbye to former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, who died Nov. 29. Serving under two presidents, Kissinger's shadow loomed large in the foreign policy arena, prompting both admiration and criticism from around the globe. And he continued his involvement in global affairs even in his final months.

Another political figure who died this year was former U.S. first lady Rosalynn Carter, who died Nov. 19. She was the closest adviser to her husband, former President Jimmy Carter, during his one term in the White House and then across four decades of global humanitarian work.

Others from the world of politics who died this year include: former Italian Premier Silvio Berlusconi; former U.S. senators Dianne Feinstein, James Buckley and James Abourezk; former British treasury chief Nigel Lawson; former Pakistani leader Pervez Musharraf; former U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor; former Chinese Premier Li Keqiang; former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari; former New Mexico governor and American ambassador to the United Nations Bill Richardson; former New Jersey Lt. Gov. Sheila Oliver; and former Greek Foreign Minister Theodoros Pangalos.

Among the entertainers who left the world this year was singer Tina Turner, who died May 24. Turner's powerful voice and stage presence brought her fame across multiple decades, first with her abusive husband, Ike Turner, in the 1960's and 70's. But after leaving their marriage, she found fame again in the 1980's with her hit "What's Love Got to Do With It."

Others in the world of arts and entertainment who died this year include: actors Suzanne Somers, Matthew Perry, Raquel Welch, Richard Belzer, Chaim Topol, Jacklyn Zeman, Lance Reddick, Alan Arkin, Paul Reubens, David McCallum, Richard Roundtree and Tom Sizemore; musicians Jimmy Buffett, Sinéad O'Connor, Rita Lee Jones, Burt Bacharach, David Crosby, Fito Olivares, Ryuichi Sakamoto, Astrud Gilberto, Coco Lee and Tony Bennett; civil rights activist and entertainer Harry Belafonte; author Cormac McCarthy; filmmaker William Friedkin; TV hosts Bob Barker and Jerry Springer; poet Louise Glück; guitarist Jeff Beck; fashion designer Mary Quant; wrestler The Iron Sheik; composer Kaija Saariaho; and "Sesame Street" co-creator Lloyd Morrisett.

Here is a roll call of some influential figures who died in 2023 (cause of death cited for younger people, if available):

JANUARY

Fred White, 67. A drummer who backed up his brothers Maurice and Verdine White in the Grammy-winning ensemble Earth, Wind & Fire. Jan. 1.

Ken Block, 55. A motorsports icon known for his stunt driving and for co-founding the action sports apparel brand DC Shoes. Jan. 2. Snowmobiling accident.

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Walter Cunningham, 90. The last surviving astronaut from the first successful crewed space mission in NASA's Apollo program. Jan. 3.

Fay Weldon, 91. A British author known for her sharp wit and acerbic observations about women's experiences and sexual politics in novels including "The Life And Loves Of A She-Devil." Jan. 4.

Russell Pearce, 75. A Republican lawmaker who was the driving force behind Arizona's landmark 2010 anti-immigration legislation known as the "show me your papers" law. Jan. 5.

Charles Simic, 84. The Pulitzer Prize-winning poet who awed critics and readers with his singular art of lyricism and economy, tragic insight and disruptive humor. Jan. 9.

Lynette "Diamond" Hardaway, 51. An ardent supporter of former President Donald Trump and one half of the conservative political commentary duo Diamond and Silk. Jan. 8.

Jeff Beck, 78. A guitar virtuoso who pushed the boundaries of blues, jazz and rock 'n' roll, influencing generations of shredders along the way and becoming known as the guitar player's guitar player. Jan. 10.

Constantine, 82. The former and last king of Greece, who won an Olympic gold medal in sailing and spent decades in exile after becoming entangled in his country's volatile politics in the 1960s. Jan. 10.

Tatjana Patitz, 56. She was one of an elite group of supermodels who graced magazine covers in the 1980s and '90s and appeared in George Michael's "Freedom! '90" music video. Jan. 11.

Lisa Marie Presley, 54. The only child of Elvis Presley and a singer-songwriter dedicated to her father's legacy. Jan. 12.

Robbie Knievel, 60. An American stunt performer who set records with daredevil motorcycle jumps following in the tire tracks of his thrill-seeking father Evel Knievel. Jan. 13.

Ray Cordeiro, 98. He interviewed music acts including the Beatles during a six-decade career on Hong Kong radio that earned him the title of the world's longest-working disc jockey. Jan. 13.

Lloyd Morrisett, 93. The co-creator of the beloved children's TV series "Sesame Street," which has used empathy and fuzzy monsters like Elmo and Cookie Monster to charm and teach generations around the world. Jan. 15.

Gina Lollobrigida, 95. An Italian film legend who achieved international stardom during the 1950s and was dubbed "the most beautiful woman in the world" after the title of one of her movies. Jan. 16.

Chris Ford, 74. A member of the Boston Celtics 1981 championship team, a longtime NBA coach and the player credited with scoring the league's first 3-point basket. Jan. 17.

David Crosby, 81. The brash rock musician who evolved from a baby-faced harmony singer with the Byrds to a mustachioed hippie superstar and troubadour in Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young. Sept. 18.

Cindy Williams, 75. She was among the most recognizable stars in America in the 1970s and 1980s for her role as Shirley on the beloved sitcom "Laverne & Shirley." Jan. 25.

Billy Packer, 82. An Emmy award-winning college basketball broadcaster who covered 34 Final Fours for NBC and CBS. Jan. 26.

Sylvia Syms, 89. She starred in classic British films including "Ice Cold in Alex" and "Victim." Jan. 27.

Barrett Strong, 81. One of Motown's founding artists and most gifted songwriters who sang lead on the company's breakthrough single "Money (That's What I Want)" and collaborated with Norman Whitfield on such classics as "I Heard It Through the Grapevine," "War" and "Papa Was a Rollin' Stone." Jan. 28.

Tom Verlaine, 73. The guitarist and co-founder of the seminal proto-punk band Television who influenced many bands while playing at ultra-cool downtown New York music venue CBGB alongside the Ramones, Patti Smith and Talking Heads. Jan. 28.

Bobby Hull, 84. A Hall of Fame forward who helped the Chicago Blackhawks win the 1961 Stanley Cup Final. Jan. 30.

FEBRUARY

Paco Rabanne, 88. The Spanish-born designer known for perfumes sold worldwide but who made his name with metallic space-age fashions that put a bold, new edge on catwalks. Feb. 3.

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Harry Whittington, 95. The man who former Vice President Dick Cheney accidentally shot while they were hunting quail on a Texas ranch more than 17 years ago. Feb. 4.

Hsing Yun, 95. A Buddhist abbot who established a thriving religious community in southern Taiwan and built universities overseas. Feb. 5.

Pervez Musharraf, 79. The general who seized power in a bloodless coup and later led a reluctant Pakistan into aiding the U.S. war in Afghanistan against the Taliban. Feb. 5.

Burt Bacharach, 94. The singularly gifted and popular composer who delighted millions with the quirky arrangements and unforgettable melodies of "Walk on By," "Do You Know the Way to San Jose" and dozens of other hits. Feb. 8.

Carlos Saura, 91. Spain's celebrated filmmaker who earned three Academy Award nominations for Best Foreign Language Film during his seven-decade career. Feb. 10.

Hugh Hudson, 86. A British filmmaker who debuted as a feature director with the Oscar-winning Olympics drama "Chariots of Fire" and made other well-regarded movies including "My Life So Far" and the Oscar-nominated "Greystroke." Feb. 10.

Hans Modrow, 95. He served as East Germany's last communist leader during a turbulent tenure that ended in the country's first and only free election. Feb. 11.

David Jude Jolicoeur, 54. Widely known as Trugoy the Dove, he was one of the founding members of the Long Island hip hop trio De La Soul. Feb. 12.

Huey "Piano" Smith, 89. A beloved New Orleans session musician who backed Little Richard, Lloyd Price and other early rock stars, and with his own group made the party favorites "Don't You Just Know It" and "Rockin' Pneumonia and Boogie Woogie Flu." Feb. 13.

Leiji Matsumoto, 85. The anime creator known for "Space Battleship Yamato" and other classics using a fantastical style and antiwar themes. Feb. 13.

Raquel Welch, 82. Her emergence from the sea in a skimpy, furry bikini in the film "One Million Years B.C." propelled her to international sex symbol status in the 1960s and '70s. Feb. 15.

Tim McCarver, 81. The All-Star catcher and Hall of Fame broadcaster who during 60 years in baseball won two World Series titles with the St. Louis Cardinals and had a long run as one of the country's most recognized, incisive and talkative television commentators. Feb. 16.

Stella Stevens, 84. A prominent leading lady in 1960s and 70s comedies perhaps best known for playing the object of Jerry Lewis's affection in "The Nutty Professor." Feb. 17.

Richard Belzer, 78. The longtime stand-up comedian who became one of TV's most indelible detectives as John Munch in "Homicide: Life on the Street" and "Law & Order: SVU." Feb. 19.

Ahmed Qureia, 85. A former Palestinian prime minister and one of the architects of interim peace deals with Israel. Feb. 22.

James Abourezk, 92. A South Dakota Democrat who grew up on the Rosebud Indian Reservation, became the first Arab American U.S. senator and was known for his quick wit as he advocated for populist causes. Feb. 24.

Betty Boothroyd, 93. The first female speaker of Britain's House of Commons. Feb. 26.

Ricou Browning, 93. A skilled swimmer best known for his underwater role as the Gill Man in the quintessential 3D black-and-white 1950s monster movie "Creature from the Black Lagoon." Feb. 27.

Gérard Latortue, 88. A former interim prime minister of Haiti who helped rebuild and unite the country after a violent coup in the mid-2000s. Feb. 27.

MARCH

Just Fontaine, 89. The French soccer great who scored a record 13 goals at the 1958 World Cup. March 1.

Barbara Everitt Bryant, 96. The first woman to run the U.S. Census Bureau and its leader during the contentious debate over how to compensate for undercounts of minority groups in the 1990 census. March 2.

Tom Sizemore, 61. The "Saving Private Ryan" actor whose bright 1990s star burned out under the weight of his own domestic violence and drug convictions. March 3.

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Kenzaburo Oe, 88. The Nobel literature laureate whose darkly poetic novels were built from his childhood memories during Japan's postwar occupation and from being the parent of a disabled son. March 3.

Judy Heumann, 75. A renowned activist who helped secure legislation protecting the rights of people with disabilities. March 4.

Gary Rossington, 71. A co-founder and last surviving original member of Lynyrd Skynyrd who helped write the classic answer song "Sweet Home Alabama" and played unforgettable slide guitar on the rock anthem "Free Bird." March 5.

Georgina Beyer, 65. A trailblazing New Zealand politician who in 1999 became the world's first openly transgender member of Parliament. March 6.

Traute Lafrenz, 103. She was the last known survivor of a German group known as the White Rose that actively resisted the Nazis. March 6.

Peterson Zah, 85. A monumental Navajo Nation leader who guided the tribe through a politically tumultuous era and worked tirelessly to correct wrongdoings against Native Americans. March 7.

Chaim Topol, 87. A leading Israeli actor who charmed generations of theatergoers and movie-watchers with his portrayal of Tevye, the long-suffering and charismatic milkman in "Fiddler on the Roof." March 8.

Robert Blake, 89. The Emmy award-winning performer who went from acclaim for his acting to notoriety when he was tried and acquitted in the killing of his wife. March 9.

Jiang Yanyong, 91. A Chinese military doctor who revealed the full extent of the 2003 SARS outbreak and was later placed under house arrest for his political outspokenness. March 11.

Bud Grant, 95. The stoic and demanding Hall of Fame coach who took the Minnesota Vikings and their mighty Purple People Eaters defense to four Super Bowls in eight years and lost all of them. March 11.

Dick Fosbury, 76. The lanky leaper who revamped the technical discipline of high jump and won an Olympic gold medal with his "Fosbury Flop." March 12.

Pat Schroeder, 82. A pioneer for women's and family rights in Congress. March 13.

Gloria Bosman, age unknown. A smooth-voiced South African jazz musician who was lauded for her contribution to the country's music industry in a career spanning more than two decades. March 14.

Jacqueline Gold, 62. She helped make lingerie and sex toys a female-friendly mainstream business as head of Britain's Ann Summers chain. March 16.

Lance Reddick, 60. A character actor who specialized in intense, icy and possibly sinister authority figures on TV and film, including "The Wire," "Fringe" and the "John Wick" franchise. March 17.

John Jenrette, 86. The former U.S. congressman was a colorful politician who was convicted in the Abscam bribery scandal in the late 1970s and whose wife talked to Playboy about an in-session dalliance on the U.S. Capitol steps. March 17.

Fito Olivares, 75. A Tejano musician known for songs that were wedding and quinceanera mainstays, including the hit "Juana La Cubana." March 17.

Willis Reed, 80. He dramatically emerged from the locker room minutes before Game 7 of the 1970 NBA Finals to spark the New York Knicks to their first championship and create one of sports' most enduring examples of playing through pain. March 21.

Darcelle XV, 92. The iconic drag queen who was crowned the world's oldest working drag performer in 2016 by the Guinness Book of World Records. March 23.

Paul O'Grady, 67. An entertainer who achieved fame as drag queen Lily Savage before becoming a much-loved comedian and host on British television. March 28.

Ryuichi Sakamoto, 71. A world-renowned Japanese musician and actor who composed for Hollywood hits such as "The Last Emperor" and "The Revenant." March 28.

Hedda Kleinfeld Schachter, 99. A bridal industry pioneer and Holocaust survivor who decided over a half century ago that brides deserved better than cookie-cutter dresses. March 29.

APRIL

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Nigel Lawson, 91. The tax-cutting U.K. Treasury chief under the late Margaret Thatcher and a lion of Conservative politics in the late 20th century. April 3.

Ben Ferencz, 103. The last living prosecutor from the Nuremberg trials, who tried Nazis for genocidal war crimes and was among the first outside witnesses to document the atrocities of Nazi labor and concentration camps. April 7.

Elisabeth Kopp, 86. An advocate of equal rights and the environment who was the first woman elected to Switzerland's seven-member executive branch. April. 7.

Michael Lerner, 81. The Brooklyn-born character actor who played a myriad of imposing figures in his 60 years in the business, including monologuing movie mogul Jack Lipnick in "Barton Fink," the crooked club owner Bugsy Calhoun in "Harlem Nights" and an angry publishing executive in "Elf." April 8.

Anne Perry, 84. The best-selling crime novelist known for her Thomas Pitt and William Monk detective series, and for her own murderous past that inspired the movie "Heavenly Creatures." April 10.

Al Jaffee, 102. Mad magazine's award-winning cartoonist and ageless wise guy who delighted millions of kids with the sneaky fun of the Fold-In and the snark of "Snappy Answers to Stupid Questions." April 10.

Mary Quant, 93. The visionary fashion designer whose colorful, sexy miniskirts epitomized Swinging London in the 1960s and influenced youth culture around the world. April 13.

Charles Stanley, 90. A prominent televangelist who once led the Southern Baptist Convention. April 18.

Richard Riordan, 92. A wealthy Republican businessman who served two terms as Los Angeles mayor and steered the city through the Northridge earthquake and the recovery from the deadly 1992 riots. April 19.

Todd Haimes, 66. He led the Roundabout Theatre Company from an off-off-Broadway company teetering on the edge of bankruptcy into a major theatrical force with works on five stages — including three Broadway theaters — and dozens of Tony Awards. April 19.

Barry Humphries, 89. A Tony Award-winning comedian internationally renowned for his garish stage persona Dame Edna Everage, a condescending and imperfectly-veiled snob whose evolving character delighted audiences over seven decades. April 22.

Len Goodman, 78. A long-serving judge on "Dancing with the Stars" and "Strictly Come Dancing" who helped revive interest in ballroom dancing on both sides of the Atlantic. April 22.

Harry Belafonte, 96. The civil rights and entertainment giant who began as a groundbreaking actor and singer and became an activist, humanitarian and conscience of the world. April 25.

Carolyn Bryant Donham, 88. The white woman who accused Black teenager Emmett Till of making improper advances leading to his lynching in Mississippi in 1955. April 25.

Jerry Springer, 79. The onetime mayor and news anchor whose namesake TV show featured a three-ring circus of dysfunctional guests willing to bare all — sometimes literally — as they brawled and hurled obscenities before a raucous audience. April 27.

LeRoy "Lee" Carhart, 81. He emerged from a two-decade career as an Air Force surgeon to become one of the best-known late-term abortion providers in the United States. April 28.

Larry "Gator" Rivers, 73. He helped integrate high school basketball in Georgia before playing for the Harlem Globetrotters and becoming a county commissioner in his native Savannah. April 29.

MAY

Gordon Lightfoot, 84. The legendary folk singer-songwriter known for "If You Could Read My Mind" and "Sundown" and for songs that told tales of Canadian identity. May 1.

Tori Bowie, 32. The sprinter who won three Olympic medals at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Games. May 2. Complications of childbirth.

Vida Blue, 73. A hard-throwing left-hander who became one of baseball's biggest draws in the early 1970s and helped lead the brash A's to three straight World Series titles before his career was derailed by drug problems. May 6.

Grace Bumbry, 86. A pioneering mezzo-soprano who became the first Black singer to perform at Germany's Bayreuth Festival during a more than three-decade career on the world's top stages. May 7.

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Rita Lee Jones, 75. Brazil's million-selling "Queen of Rock" who gained an international following through her colorful and candid style and such hits as "Ovelha Negra," "Mania de Você" and "Now Only Missing You." May 8.

Denny Crum, 86. He won two NCAA men's basketball championships and built Louisville into one of the 1980s' dominant programs during a Hall of Fame coaching career. May 9.

Heather Armstrong, 47. Known as Dooce to fans, the pioneering mommy blogger laid bare her struggles as a mother and her battles with depression and alcoholism on her website and on social media. May 9.

Jacklyn Zeman, 70. She played Bobbie Spencer for 45 years on ABC's "General Hospital." May 9.

Rolf Harris, 93. The veteran entertainer whose decades-long career as a family favorite on British and Australian television was shattered when he was convicted of sexual assaults on young girls. May 10.

Kenneth Anger, 96. The shocking and influential avant-garde artist who defied sexual and religious taboos in short films such as "Scorpio Rising" and "Fireworks," and dished the most lurid movie star gossip in his underground classic "Hollywood Babylon." May 11.

Doyle Brunson, 89. One of the most influential poker players of all time and a two-time world champion. May 14.

Jim Brown, 87. The pro football Hall of Famer was an unstoppable running back who retired at the peak of his career to become an actor as well as a prominent civil rights advocate during the 1960s. May 18.

Timothy Keller, 72. A pastor and best-selling author who founded the influential Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City. May 19.

Andy Rourke, 59. Bass guitarist of The Smiths, one of the most influential British bands of the 1980s. May 19.

Ray Stevenson, 58. The Irish actor who played the villainous British governor in "RRR," an Asgardian warrior in the "Thor" films, and a member of the 13th Legion in HBO's "Rome." May 21.

Ed Ames, 95. The youngest member of the popular 1950s singing group the Ames Brothers, who later became a successful actor in television and musical theater. May 21.

Tina Turner, 83. The unstoppable singer and stage performer who teamed with husband Ike Turner for a dynamic run of hit records and live shows in the 1960s and '70s and survived her horrifying marriage to triumph in middle age with the chart-topping "What's Love Got to Do With It." May 24.

George Maharis, 94. A stage-trained actor with rough-hewn good looks who became an icon to American youth in the 1960s as he cruised the country in a Corvette convertible in the hit television series "Route 66." May 24.

Carroll Cooley, 87. The retired Phoenix police captain was the arresting officer in the landmark case partially responsible for the Supreme Court's Miranda rights ruling that requires suspects be read their rights. May 29.

John Beasley, 79. The veteran character actor who played a kindly school bus driver on the TV drama "Everwood" and appeared in dozens of films dating back to the 1980s. May 30.

Theodoros Pangalos, 84. A former Greek foreign minister known for his undiplomatic outbursts and on whose watch Greece suffered one of its most embarrassing foreign policy debacles in 1999. May 31.

JUNE

Kaija Saariaho, 70. She wrote acclaimed works that made her the among the most prominent composers of the 21st century. June 2.

George Winston, 73. The Grammy-winning pianist who blended jazz, classical, folk and other stylings on such million-selling albums as "Autumn," "Winter Into Spring" and "December." June 4.

Astrud Gilberto, 83. The Brazilian singer, songwriter and entertainer whose off-hand, English-language cameo on "The Girl from Ipanema" made her a worldwide voice of bossa nova. June 5.

Robert Hanssen, 79. A former FBI agent who took more than \$1.4 million in cash and diamonds to trade secrets with Moscow in one of the most notorious spying cases in American history. June 5.

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Richard Snyder, 90. A visionary and imperious executive at Simon & Schuster who in bold-faced style presided over the publisher's exponential rise during the second half of the 20th century and helped define an era of consolidation and growing corporate power. June 6.

Françoise Gilot, 101. A prolific and acclaimed painter who created art for more than a half-century but was nonetheless more famous for her turbulent relationship with Pablo Picasso — and for leaving him. June 6.

The Iron Sheik, 81. A former pro wrestler who relished playing a burly, bombastic villain in 1980s battles with some of the sport's biggest stars and later became a popular Twitter personality. June 7.

Pat Robertson, 93. A religious broadcaster who turned a tiny Virginia station into the global Christian Broadcasting Network, tried a run for president, and helped make religion central to Republican Party politics in America through his Christian Coalition. June 8.

Theodore "Ted" Kaczynski, 81. Branded the "Unabomber" by the FBI, he was the Harvard-educated mathematician who retreated to a shack in the Montana wilderness and ran a 17-year bombing campaign that killed three people and injured 23 others. June 10.

Roger Payne, 88. The scientist who spurred a worldwide environmental conservation movement with his discovery that whales could sing. June 10.

Silvio Berlusconi, 86. The boastful billionaire media mogul who was Italy's longest-serving premier despite scandals over his sex-fueled parties and allegations of corruption. June 12.

Treat Williams, 71. An actor whose nearly 50-year career included starring roles in the TV series "Everwood" and the movie "Hair." June 12. Motorcycle crash.

Cormac McCarthy, 89. The Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist who in prose both dense and brittle took readers from the southern Appalachians to the desert Southwest in novels including "The Road," "Blood Meridian" and "All the Pretty Horses." June 13.

Glenda Jackson, 87. A two-time Academy Award-winning performer who had a second career as a British lawmaker before an acclaimed late-life return to stage and screen. June 15.

Daniel Ellsberg, 92. The history-making whistleblower who by leaking the Pentagon Papers revealed longtime government doubts and deceit about the Vietnam War and inspired acts of retaliation by President Richard Nixon that helped lead to his resignation. June 16.

Big Pokey, 48. A popular Texas rapper and original member of Houston's pioneering Screwed Up Click. June 18.

George Frazier, 68. The former pitcher was a World Series champion who had a nearly three-decade run as a television broadcaster. June 19.

H. Lee Sarokin, 94. The federal judge who freed boxer Rubin "Hurricane" Carter and in a landmark case famously said tobacco companies engaged in a "vast" conspiracy to conceal the dangers of smoking. June 20.

Winnie Ewing, 93. A charismatic politician who is considered the mother of the modern Scottish independence movement. June 21.

Sheldon Harnick, 99. A Tony- and Grammy Award-winning lyricist who with composer Jerry Bock made up the premier musical-theater songwriting duos of the 1950s and 1960s with shows such as "Fiddler on the Roof," "Fiorello!" and "The Apple Tree." June 23.

John Goodenough, 100. He shared the 2019 Nobel Prize in chemistry for his work developing the lithium-ion battery that transformed technology with rechargeable power for devices ranging from cellphones, computers, and pacemakers to electric cars. June 25.

Peg Yorkin, 96. She donated \$10 million to the Feminist Majority Foundation, which she co-founded and pushed to bring the most common method of abortion to the United States. June 25.

Sue Johanson, 93. A nurse who became a popular TV sex expert in Canada and the United States when she was in her 60s. June 28.

Alan Arkin, 89. The wry character actor who demonstrated his versatility in everything from farcical comedy to chilling drama, receiving four Academy Award nominations and winning an Oscar in 2007 for "Little Miss Sunshine." June 29.

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JULY

Yan Mingfu, 91. A former top Communist Party figure who acted as an envoy to pro-democracy protesters in Beijing's Tiananmen Square in 1989 and was forced out after the protests were crushed. July 3.

John Berylson, 70. An American businessman known for his enthusiastic ownership of the English soccer team Millwall. July 4. Car crash.

Coco Lee, 48. A Hong Kong-born singer and songwriter who had a highly successful career in Asia. July 5.

James Lewis, 76. The suspect in the 1982 Tylenol poisonings that killed seven people in the Chicago area, triggered a nationwide scare and led to an overhaul in the safety of over-the-counter medication packaging. July 9.

Mikala Jones, 44. A Hawaii surfer known for shooting awe-inspiring photos and videos from the inside of massive, curling waves. July 9. Surfing accident.

André Watts, 77. A pianist whose televised debut with the New York Philharmonic as a 16-year-old in 1963 launched an international career of more than a half-century. July 12.

Jane Birkin, 76. An actor and singer who made France her home and charmed the country with her English grace, natural style and social activism. July 16.

Kevin Mitnick, 59. His pioneering antics tricking employees in the 1980s and 1990s into helping him steal software and services from big phone and tech companies made him the most celebrated U.S. hacker. July 16.

Tony Bennett, 96. The eminent and timeless stylist whose devotion to classic American songs and knack for creating new standards such as "I Left My Heart In San Francisco" graced a decadeslong career that brought him admirers from Frank Sinatra to Lady Gaga. July 21.

Hugh "Sonny" Carter Jr., 80. He was an organizer in the "Peanut Brigade" that helped elect his cousin Jimmy to the White House and later enforced the president's frugal ways in the West Wing. July 23.

Sinéad O'Connor, 56. The gifted Irish singer-songwriter who became a superstar in her mid-20s was as much known for her private struggles and provocative actions as her fierce and expressive music. July 26.

Randy Meisner, 77. A founding member of the Eagles who added high harmonies to such favorites as "Take It Easy" and "The Best of My Love" and stepped out front for the waltz-time ballad "Take It to the Limit." July 26.

Paul Reubens, 70. The actor and comedian whose Pee-wee Herman character — an overgrown child with a tight gray suit and an unforgettable laugh — became a 1980s pop cultural phenomenon. July 30.

Angus Cloud, 25. The actor who starred as the drug dealer Fezco "Fez" O'Neill on the HBO series "Euphoria." July 31.

AUGUST

Sheila Oliver, 71. The New Jersey lieutenant governor rose to become one of the state's most prominent Black leaders and passionately advocated for revitalizing cities and against gun violence. Aug. 1.

Mark Margolis, 83. The Emmy-nominated actor who played murderous former drug kingpin Hector Salamanca in "Breaking Bad" and then in the prequel "Better Call Saul." Aug. 3.

William Friedkin, 87. The Oscar winning director who became a top filmmaker in his 30s with the gripping "The French Connection" and the horrifying "The Exorcist" and struggled in the following decades to match his early success. Aug. 7.

Sixto Rodriguez, 81. He lived in obscurity as his music career flamed out early in the U.S. only to find success in South Africa and a stardom of which he was unaware. Aug. 8.

Robbie Robertson, 80. The Band's lead guitarist and songwriter who in such classics as "The Weight" and "Up on Cripple Creek" mined American music and folklore and helped reshape contemporary rock. Aug. 9.

Tom Jones, 95. The lyricist, director and writer of "The Fantasticks," the longest-running musical in history. Aug. 11.

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Magoo, 50. The rapper known for his work in the hip-hop duo Timbaland & Magoo and hit song "Up Jumps da Boogie" featuring Aaliyah and Missy Elliott. Aug. 13.

Clarence Avant, 92. The judicious manager, entrepreneur, facilitator and adviser who helped launch or guide the careers of Quincy Jones, Bill Withers and many others and was known as the "Black Godfather" of music and beyond. Aug. 13.

Ada Deer, 88. An esteemed Native American leader from Wisconsin and the first woman to lead the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Aug. 15.

Jerry Moss, 88. A music industry giant who co-founded A&M Records with Herb Alpert and rose from a Los Angeles garage to the heights of success with hits by Alpert, the Police, the Carpenters and hundreds of other performers. Aug. 16.

Michael Parkinson, 88. The renowned British broadcaster who interviewed some of the world's most famous celebrities of the 20th century from Muhammad Ali to Miss Piggy. Aug. 16.

Jiri Cerny, 87. A legendary Czech music critic who introduced Western music to generations of listeners behind the Iron Curtain and became one of the voices of the 1989 anti-communist Velvet Revolution. Aug. 17.

Betty Tyson, 75. Convicted in a 1973 murder, she spent 25 years in prison before being exonerated on the basis of new evidence. Aug. 17.

James Buckley, 100. The former New York senator was an early agitator for then-President Richard Nixon's resignation and winner of a landmark lawsuit challenging campaign spending limits. Aug. 18.

John Warnock, 82. The Silicon Valley entrepreneur and computer scientist who helped invent the PDF and co-founded Adobe Systems. Aug. 19.

Ron Cephas Jones, 66. A veteran stage actor who won two Emmy Awards for his role as a long-lost father who finds redemption on the NBC television drama series "This Is Us." Aug. 19.

Howard Hubbard, 84. A retired Catholic bishop who acknowledged covering up allegations of sexual abuse in his upstate New York diocese and later married a woman in a civil ceremony. Aug. 19.

Yevgeny Prigozhin, 62. As head of the Wagner Group, he made his name as a profane and brutal mercenary boss before mounting an armed rebellion that was the most severe and shocking challenge to Russian President Vladimir Putin's rule. Aug. 23. Plane crash.

Bob Barker, 99. The enduring, dapper game show host who became a household name over a half century of hosting "Truth or Consequences" and "The Price Is Right." Aug. 26.

Samuel "Joe" Wurzelbacher, 49. He was thrust into the political spotlight as "Joe the Plumber" after questioning Barack Obama about his economic policies during the 2008 presidential campaign. Aug. 27.

Gil Brandt, 91. The Pro Football Hall of Fame member was the player personnel director alongside the stoic, fedora-wearing coach Tom Landry and media-savvy general manager Tex Schramm as part of the trio that built the Dallas Cowboys into "America's Team" in the 1970s. Aug. 31.

SEPTEMBER

Jimmy Buffett, 76. The singer-songwriter who popularized beach bum soft rock with the escapist Caribbean-flavored song "Margaritaville" and turned that celebration of loafing into a billion-dollar empire of restaurants, resorts and frozen concoctions. Sept. 1.

Bill Richardson, 75. A two-term Democratic governor of New Mexico and an American ambassador to the United Nations who dedicated his post-political career to working to secure the release of Americans detained by foreign adversaries. Sept. 1.

Steve Harwell, 56. The longtime frontman of the Grammy-nominated pop rock band Smash Mouth that was behind the megahit "All Star." Sept. 4. Acute liver failure.

Shabtai Shavit, 84. The Israeli spymaster who was credited with advancing Israel's historic peace treaty with Jordan during his term as director of the Mossad intelligence agency. Sept. 5.

Ian Wilmut, 79. The cloning pioneer whose work was critical to the creation of Dolly the Sheep in 1996.

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Sept. 9.

Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi, 95. The controversial South African politician and traditional minister of the Zulu ethnic group. Sept. 9.

Roy Kidd, 91. He coached Eastern Kentucky to two NCAA Division I-AA football championships in a Hall of Fame career. Sept. 12.

Eno Ichikawa, 83. He revived the spectacular in Japanese Kabuki theater to woo younger and global audiences. Sept. 13.

Michael McGrath, 65. A Broadway character actor who shined in zany, feel-good musicals and won a Tony Award for "Nice Work If You Can Get It." Sept. 14.

Fernando Botero, 91. A renowned Colombian painter and sculptor whose depictions of people and objects in plump, exaggerated forms became emblems of Colombian art around the world. Sept. 15.

Giorgio Napolitano, 98. The first former Communist to rise to Italy's presidency and the first person to be elected twice to the mostly ceremonial post. Sept. 22.

Matteo Messina Denaro, 61. A convicted mastermind of some of the Sicilian Mafia's most heinous slayings, Italy's No. 1 fugitive was captured after decades on the run. Sept. 25. Died in a prison hospital.

David McCallum, 90. The actor who became a teen heartthrob in the hit series "The Man From U.N.C.L.E." in the 1960s and was the eccentric medical examiner in the popular "NCIS" 40 years later. Sept. 25.

Dianne Feinstein, 90. A centrist Democrat from California and champion of liberal causes who was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1992 and broke gender barriers throughout her long career in local and national politics. Sept. 28.

Michael Gambon, 82. The Irish-born actor knighted for his storied career on the stage and screen who gained admiration from a new generation of moviegoers with his portrayal of Hogwarts headmaster Albus Dumbledore in six of the eight "Harry Potter" films. Sept. 28.

Mankombu Sambasivan Swaminathan, 98. A renowned agricultural scientist who revolutionized India's farming and was a key architect of the country's "Green Revolution." Sept. 28.

Saad Eddin Ibrahim, 85. A prominent Egyptian-American academic and pro-democracy activist during the reign of former Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. Sept. 29.

OCTOBER

Tim Wakefield, 57. The knuckleballing workhorse of the Red Sox pitching staff who bounced back after giving up a season-ending home run to the Yankees in the 2003 playoffs to help Boston win its curse-busting World Series title the following year. Oct. 1.

Dick Butkus, 80. A Hall of Fame middle linebacker for the Chicago Bears whose speed and ferocity set the standards for the position in the modern era. Oct. 5.

Michael Chiarello, 61. A chef known for his Italian-inspired Californian restaurants who won an Emmy Award for best host for "Easy Entertaining With Michael Chiarello" and appeared on Bravo's "Top Chef" and "Top Chef Masters." Oct. 6. Allergic reaction that resulted in anaphylactic shock.

Burt Young, 83. The Oscar-nominated actor who played Paulie, the rough-hewn, mumbling-and-grumbling best friend, corner-man and brother-in-law to Sylvester Stallone in the "Rocky" franchise. Oct. 8.

Hughes Van Ellis, 102. He was the youngest known survivor of the Tulsa Race Massacre and spent his latter years pursuing justice for his family and other descendants of the attack on "Black Wall Street." Oct. 9.

Kevin Phillips, 82. The author, commentator and political strategist whose landmark book, "The Emerging Republican Majority," became a blueprint for GOP thinking in the 1970s and beyond. Oct. 9

Louise Meriwether, 100. The author and activist whose coming-of-age novel "Daddy Was a Number Runner" is widely regarded as a groundbreaking and vital portrait of race, gender and class. Oct. 10.

Mark Goddard, 87. An actor best known for playing Major Don West in the 1960s television show "Lost in Space." Oct. 10.

Rudolph Isley, 84. A founding member of the Isley Brothers who helped perform such raw rhythm and blues classics as "Shout" and "Twist and Shout" and the funky hits "That Lady" and "It's Your Thing." Oct.

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11.

Louise Glück, 80. The Nobel laureate was a poet of unblinking candor and perception who wove classical allusions, philosophical reveries, bittersweet memories and humorous asides into indelible portraits of a fallen and heartrending world. Oct. 13.

Piper Laurie, 91. The strong-willed, Oscar-nominated actor who performed in acclaimed roles despite at one point abandoning acting altogether in search of a "more meaningful" life. Oct. 14.

Suzanne Somers, 76. The effervescent blonde actor who played Chrissy Snow on the television show "Three's Company" and later became an entrepreneur and New York Times best-selling author. Oct. 15.

Martti Ahtisaari, 86. The former president of Finland and global peace broker who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2008 for his work to resolve international conflicts. Oct. 16.

Bobby Charlton, 86. An English soccer icon who survived a plane crash that decimated a Manchester United team destined for greatness to become the heartbeat of his country's 1966 World Cup triumph. Oct. 21.

Bishan Bedi, 77. The India cricket great whose dazzling left-arm spin claimed 266 test wickets. Oct. 23.

Richard Roundtree, 81. The trailblazing actor who starred as the ultra-smooth private detective in several "Shaft" films beginning in the early 1970s. Oct. 24.

Richard Moll, 80. A character actor who found lasting fame as an eccentric but gentle giant bailiff on the original "Night Court" sitcom. Oct. 26.

Li Keqiang, 68. The former premier was China's top economic official and an advocate for private business but was left with little authority after President Xi Jinping made himself the most powerful Chinese leader in decades. Oct. 27.

Wu Zunyou, 60. An epidemiologist who helped drive the country's strict zero-COVID measures in China that suspended access to cities and confined millions to their homes. Oct. 27.

Matthew Perry, 54. The Emmy-nominated "Friends" actor whose sarcastic, but lovable Chandler Bing was among television's most famous and quotable characters. Oct. 28.

Ken Mattingly, 87. An astronaut who is best remembered for his efforts on the ground that helped bring the damaged Apollo 13 spacecraft safely back to Earth. Oct. 31.

NOVEMBER

Bob Knight, 83. The brilliant and combustible coach who won three NCAA titles at Indiana and for years was the scowling face of college basketball. Nov. 1.

Frank Borman, 95. The astronaut who commanded Apollo 8's historic Christmas 1968 flight that circled the moon 10 times and paved the way for the lunar landing the next year. Nov. 7.

Steve Norton, 89. He ran the first U.S. gambling facility outside Nevada — Resorts casino in Atlantic City — and gave advice around the world on how to set up and operate casinos. Nov. 12.

Don Walsh, 92. The retired Navy captain was an explorer who in 1960 was part of a two-man crew that made the first voyage to the deepest part of the ocean — to the "snuff-colored ooze" at the bottom of the Pacific's Mariana Trench. Nov. 12.

Terry R. Taylor, 71. In two trailblazing decades as the first female sports editor of The Associated Press, she transformed the news agency's emphasis into multilayered coverage of rigorous reporting, entertaining enterprise and edgy analysis. Nov. 14.

Daisaku Ikeda, 95. He headed Soka Gakkai, a Japanese Buddhist organization, that includes famed musician Herbie Hancock and other celebrities in its fold. Nov. 15.

Bobby Ussery, 88. A Hall of Fame jockey who won the 1967 Kentucky Derby and then crossed the finish line first in the 1968 edition only to be disqualified days later. Nov. 16.

George "Funky" Brown, 74. The co-founder and longtime drummer of Kool & The Gang who helped write such hits as "Too Hot," "Ladies Night," "Joanna" and the party favorite "Celebration." Nov. 16.

Rosalynn Carter, 96. The former first lady was the closest adviser to Jimmy Carter during his one term as U.S. president and their four decades thereafter as global humanitarians. Nov. 19.

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Marty Krofft, 86. A TV producer known for imaginative children's shows such as "H.R. Pufnstuf" and primetime hits including "Donny & Marie" in the 1970s. Nov. 25.

Terry Venables, 80. A charismatic and tactically innovative English soccer coach who led his national team to the European Championship semifinals in 1996 after winning trophies at club level with Barcelona and Tottenham. Nov. 25.

Tim Dorsey, 62. A former police and courts newspaper reporter who found lasting fame as the creator of the crime-comedy novel series starring Serge A. Storms, an energetic fan of Florida history and an ingenious serial killer. Nov. 26.

Frances Sternhagen, 93. The veteran character actor who won two Tony Awards and became a familiar maternal face to TV viewers later in life in such shows as "Cheers," "ER," "Sex and the City" and "The Closer." Nov. 27.

Charlie Munger, 99. He helped Warren Buffett build Berkshire Hathaway into an investment powerhouse. Nov. 28.

Henry Kissinger, 100. The former secretary of state exerted uncommon influence on global affairs under Presidents Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford, earning both vilification and the Nobel Peace Prize. Nov. 29.

Shane MacGowan, 65. The singer-songwriter and frontman of "Celtic Punk" band The Pogues, best known for the Christmas ballad "Fairytale of New York." Nov. 30.

Israel orders mass evacuations as it widens offensive; Palestinians are running out of places to go

By WAFAA SHURAFU and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — The Israeli military on Monday renewed its calls for mass evacuations from the southern town of Khan Younis, where tens of thousands of displaced Palestinians have sought refuge in recent weeks, as it widened its ground offensive and bombarded targets across the Gaza Strip.

The expanded offensive, following the collapse of a weeklong cease-fire, is aimed at eliminating Gaza's Hamas rulers, whose Oct. 7 attack into Israel triggered the deadliest Israeli-Palestinian violence in decades. The war has already killed thousands of Palestinians and displaced over three-fourths of the territory's population of 2.3 million Palestinians, who are running out of safe places to go.

Already under mounting pressure from its top ally, the United States, Israel appears to be racing to strike a death blow against Hamas — if that's even possible, given the group's deep roots in Palestinian society — before another cease-fire. But the mounting toll of the fighting, which Palestinian health officials say has killed several hundred civilians since the truce ended on Friday, further increases pressure to return to the negotiating table.

It could also render even larger parts of the isolated territory uninhabitable.

The ground offensive has transformed much of the north, including large parts of Gaza City, into a rubble-filled wasteland. Hundreds of thousands of people have sought refuge in the south, which could meet the same fate, and both Israel and neighboring Egypt have refused to accept any refugees.

Residents said they heard airstrikes and explosions in and around Khan Younis overnight and into Monday after the military dropped leaflets warning people to relocate further south toward the border with Egypt. In an Arabic language post on social media early Monday, the military again ordered the evacuation of nearly two dozen neighborhoods in and around Khan Younis.

Halima Abdel-Rahman, a widow and mother of four, said she's stopped heeding such orders. She fled her home in October to an area outside Khan Younis, where she stays with relatives.

"The (Israeli) occupation tells you to go to this area, then they bomb it," she said by phone on Sunday. "The reality is that no place is safe in Gaza. They kill people in the north. They kill people in the south."

RISING TOLL

The Health Ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said the death toll in the territory since Oct. 7 has surpassed 15,500, with more than 41,000 wounded. The ministry does not differentiate between civilian and combatant deaths, but said 70% of the dead were women and children.

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A Health Ministry spokesman asserted that hundreds had been killed or wounded since the cease-fire ended early Friday. "The majority of victims are still under the rubble," Ashraf al-Qidra said.

The Palestinian Civil Defense department said an Israeli strike early Monday killed three of its rescuers in Gaza City. The Palestinian Red Crescent rescue service said one of its volunteers was killed and an employee was wounded in a strike on a home in the urban Jabalia refugee camp, also in the north.

An Associated Press reporter in the central town of Deir al-Balah heard shooting and the sound of tanks south of the line across which Palestinians from the north were told for weeks to evacuate, but there was no immediate visual confirmation. The military rarely comments on troop deployments.

Hopes for another temporary truce faded after Israel called its negotiators home over the weekend. Hamas said talks on releasing more of the scores of hostages seized by Palestinian militants on Oct. 7 must be tied to a permanent cease-fire.

The earlier truce facilitated the release of 105 of the roughly 240 Israeli and foreign hostages taken to Gaza during the Oct. 7 attack, and the release of 240 Palestinians imprisoned by Israel. Most of those released by both sides were women and children.

The United States, along with Qatar and Egypt, which mediated the earlier cease-fire, say they are working on a longer truce.

In the meantime, the U.S. is pressing Israel to avoid more mass displacement and the killing of civilians, a message underscored by Vice President Kamala Harris during a visit to the region. She also said the U.S. would not allow the forced relocation of Palestinians out of Gaza or the occupied West Bank, or the redrawing of Gaza's borders.

But it's unclear how far the Biden administration is willing or able to go in pressing Israel to rein in the offensive, even as the White House faces growing pressure from its allies in Congress.

The U.S. has pledged unwavering support to Israel since the Oct. 7 attack, which killed over 1,200 people, mostly civilians, including rushing munitions and other aid to Israel.

Israel has rejected U.S. suggestions that control over postwar Gaza be handed over to the internationally recognized Palestinian Authority ahead of renewed efforts to resolve the conflict by establishing a Palestinian state.

GAZA'S MISERY DEEPENS

Palestinians who used last week's respite to stock up on food and other basics, and to try and bury their dead, are once again struggling to escape Israel's aerial bombardment.

Outside a Gaza City hospital on Sunday, a dust-covered boy named Saaed Shehta dropped to his knees and kissed the bloodied body of his little brother Mohammad, one of several bodies laid out after people said their street was hit by airstrikes.

"You bury me with him!" the boy cried. A health worker at Al-Ahli Baptist Hospital said more than 15 children were killed.

Israel's military said its fighter jets and helicopters struck targets in Gaza, including "tunnel shafts, command centers and weapons storage facilities." It acknowledged "extensive aerial attacks in the Khan Younis area."

The bodies of 31 people killed in the bombardment of central Gaza were taken to the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Hospital in Deir al-Balah on Sunday, said Omar al-Darawi, a hospital administrative employee. Later, hospital workers reported 11 more dead after another airstrike.

Israel says it does not target civilians and has taken measures to protect them, including its evacuation orders. In addition to leaflets, the military has used phone calls and radio and TV broadcasts to urge people to move from specific areas.

Israel says it targets Hamas operatives and blames civilian casualties on the militants, accusing them of operating in residential neighborhoods. It claims to have killed thousands of militants, without providing evidence. Israel says at least 81 of its soldiers have been killed.

Hong Kong pro-democracy activist Agnes Chow jumps bail and moves to Canada

By KANIS LEUNG Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — One of Hong Kong's best-known pro-democracy activists who moved to Canada to pursue her studies said she would not return to the city to meet her bail conditions, becoming the latest politician to flee Hong Kong under Beijing's crackdown on dissidents.

Agnes Chow, a famous young face in the city's once-vibrant pro-democracy movement, was arrested in 2020 under a Beijing-imposed national security law that was enacted following 2019 anti-government protests. She was released on bail but also served more than six months in jail in a separate case over her role in the protests.

After Chow was released from prison in 2021, she had to regularly report to the police. She said in an Instagram post on Sunday night that the pressure caused her "mental illnesses" and influenced her decision not to return to the city.

Many of her peers have been jailed, arrested, forced into self-exile or silenced after the introduction of the security law in 2020.

The suppression of the city's pro-democracy movement highlights that freedoms promised to the former British colony when it returned to China in 1997 have been eroded drastically. Both Beijing and Hong Kong have hailed the security law for bringing back stability to the semi-autonomous Chinese city.

Chow said the authorities in July offered to return her passport so she could pursue studies in Canada under the condition that she traveled to mainland China with them. She agreed, she said, and her trip in August included a visit to an exhibition on China's achievements and the headquarters of tech giant Tencent. The authorities later returned her passport.

After considering the situation in Hong Kong, her safety and her health, Chow said she "probably won't return" to the city again.

"I don't want to be forced to do things that I don't want to do anymore and be forced to visit mainland China again. If it continues, my body and my mind will collapse even though I am safe," she wrote.

Chow told TV Tokyo on Monday that she was still weighing her next steps, including the option of seeking asylum in Canada, the broadcaster reported. Asked whether she would take up political activism there, she said she wanted to do something in Hong Kong's interest, TV Tokyo said.

Hong Kong police on Monday "strongly condemned" Chow's move, without naming her, saying it was "against and challenging the rule of law."

"Police urge the woman to immediately turn back before it is too late and not to choose a path of no return. Otherwise, she will bear the stigma of 'fugitive' for the rest of her life," the police said in a statement.

The police did not respond to questions from The Associated Press on Chow's mainland China trip.

Asked about Chow's case at a daily briefing, China's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said Hong Kong is a law-based society and no one has a privilege beyond law. Any illegal acts will be punished, he said.

Chow rose to fame with other prominent young activists Joshua Wong and Nathan Law as a student leader, including in pro-democracy protests in 2014.

She co-founded the now-defunct pro-democracy party Demosisto with Wong and Law, but the party was disbanded on June 30, 2020, the same day the security law was enacted.

Wong is now in custody and faces a subversion charge that could result in life imprisonment if convicted. Law fled to Britain and the police in July offered a reward of 1 million Hong Kong dollars (\$127,600) for information leading to his arrest.

3 commercial ships hit by missiles in Houthi attack in Red Sea, US warship downs 3 drones

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Ballistic missiles fired by Yemen's Houthi rebels struck three commercial ships Sunday in the Red Sea, while a U.S. warship shot down three drones in self-defense during the hourslong assault, the U.S. military said. The Iranian-backed Houthis claimed two of the attacks.

The strikes marked an escalation in a series of maritime attacks in the Mideast linked to the Israel-Hamas war, as multiple vessels found themselves in the crosshairs of a single Houthi assault for the first time in the conflict. The U.S. vowed to "consider all appropriate responses" in the wake of the attack, specifically calling out Iran, after tensions have been high for years now over Tehran's rapidly advancing nuclear program.

"These attacks represent a direct threat to international commerce and maritime security," the U.S. military's Central Command said in a statement. "They have jeopardized the lives of international crews representing multiple countries around the world."

It added: "We also have every reason to believe that these attacks, while launched by the Houthis in Yemen, are fully enabled by Iran."

The attack began around 9:15 a.m. local time (0615 GMT) in Houthi-controlled Sanaa, Yemen's capital, Central Command said.

The USS Carney, a Navy destroyer, detected a ballistic missile fired from Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen at the Bahamas-flagged bulk carrier Unity Explorer. The missile hit near the ship, the U.S. said. Shortly afterward, the Carney shot down a drone headed its way, although it's not clear if the destroyer was the target, Central Command said.

About 30 minutes later, the Unity Explorer was hit by a missile. While responding to its distress call, the Carney shot down another incoming drone. Central Command said the Unity Explorer sustained minor damage from the missile.

Two other commercial ships, the Panamanian-flagged bulk carriers Number 9 and Sophie II, were both struck by missiles. The Number 9 reported some damage but no casualties, and the Sophie II reported no significant damage, Central Command said.

While sailing to assist the Sophie II around 4:30 p.m. local time (1330 GMT), the Carney shot down another drone heading in its direction. The drones did no damage.

The Carney, an Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer, has shot down multiple rockets the Houthis have fired toward Israel during that nation's war against Hamas in the Gaza Strip. It hasn't been damaged in any of the incidents and no injuries have been reported on board. The Defense Department initially described the assault as simply an attack on the Carney before providing more details.

Houthi military spokesman Brig. Gen. Yahya Saree claimed two of Sunday's attacks, saying the first vessel was hit by a missile and the second by a drone while in the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, which links the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden. Saree did not mention any U.S. warship being involved.

"The Yemeni armed forces continue to prevent Israeli ships from navigating the Red Sea (and Gulf of Aden) until the Israeli aggression against our steadfast brothers in the Gaza Strip stops," Saree said. "The Yemeni armed forces renew their warning to all Israeli ships or those associated with Israelis that they will become a legitimate target if they violate what is stated in this statement."

Saree also identified the first vessel as the Unity Explorer, which is owned by a British firm that includes Dan David Ungar, who lives in Israel, as one of its officers. The Number 9 is linked to Bernhard Schulte Shipmanagement.

The Sophie II's owner, Kyowa Kisen of Imabari, Japan, told The Associated Press that the ship's crew were safe and the vessel did not sustain serious damage. Managers for the two other ships could not be immediately reached for comment.

Israeli media identified Ungar as being the son of Israeli shipping billionaire Abraham "Rami" Ungar.

Iran has yet to directly address the attacks. However, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian

threatened “that if the current situation continues, the region will enter a new phase” over the Israel-Hamas war.

“All parties who are after igniting a war are warned, before it’s too late stop the killing of women and children, of which a new round has started,” Amirabdollahian said.

Iran’s top diplomat described his comments as coming after conversations with “resistance forces” in the region — a description Tehran uses for the Shiite militias it backs, including groups in Iraq, the Houthis and Lebanon’s Hezbollah, as well as the Sunni fighters of Hamas. All have threatened or attacked Israel, Iran’s regional archrival, during the war.

The Houthis have launched a series of attacks on vessels in the Red Sea, as well as launching drones and missiles targeting Israel. Analysts suggest the Houthis hope to shore up waning popular support after years of civil war in Yemen between it and Saudi-backed forces.

The U.S. has stopped short of saying its Navy ships were targeted, but has said Houthi drones have headed toward the ships and have been shot down in self-defense. Washington so far has declined to directly respond to the attacks, as has Israel, whose military continues to try to describe the ships as not having links to their country.

Global shipping had increasingly been targeted as the Israel-Hamas war threatens to become a wider regional conflict — even as a truce briefly halted fighting and Hamas exchanged hostages for Palestinian prisoners held by Israel. However, the collapse of the truce and the resumption of punishing Israeli airstrikes on Gaza and a ground offensive there had raised the risk of more seaborne attacks.

In November, the Houthis seized a vehicle transport ship also linked to Israel in the Red Sea off Yemen. The rebels still hold the vessel near the port city of Hodeida. Missiles also landed near another U.S. warship last week after it assisted a vessel linked to Israel that had briefly been seized by gunmen. Separately, a container ship owned by an Israeli billionaire recently came under attack by a suspected Iranian drone in the Indian Ocean.

The Houthis had not directly targeted the Americans for some time, further raising the stakes in the growing maritime conflict. In 2016, the U.S. launched Tomahawk cruise missiles that destroyed three coastal radar sites in Houthi-controlled territory to retaliate for missiles being fired at U.S. Navy ships at the time.

At UN climate talks, fossil fuel interests have hundreds of employees on hand

By MARY KATHERINE WILDEMAN and MICHAEL PHILLIS Associated Press

At least 1,300 employees of organizations representing fossil fuel interests registered to attend this year’s United Nations climate talks in Dubai, more than three times the number found in an Associated Press analysis of last year’s talks, as new rules took effect requiring attendees to disclose their employment.

Aside from the new disclosure rules, the figure may have been boosted by a surge in attendance as Earth staggered through a year of record heat and devastating extreme weather attributed to climate change — conference registrations are nearly double that of last year’s talks. The United Nations body responsible for running the conference also released the details of far more attendees than in past years, including people not considered part of official state delegations.

The hundreds of fossil fuel-connected people make up just a tiny share of the 90,000 people who registered to attend the climate summit known as COP28. But environmentalists have repeatedly questioned their presence at an event where meaningful negotiations have to take aim at the heart of their businesses.

Bob Deans, director of strategic engagement for the U.S.-based Natural Resources Defense Council, said his group is hoping this year’s talks are the point where oil and gas “might begin to shift from being the biggest part of the climate problem to finally being part of the fix.”

“The industry needs to turn away from a business model that relies on destroying the planet,” said Deans, whose own group registered nearly two dozen people to attend. “That business model needs to change. Dubai must be the starting point.”

The companies represented by the 1,300-plus employees make up a big part of global emissions — which

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is also why they should have a place at the conference, they said.

COP28 President Sultan al-Jaber fielded criticism in the months leading up to his role presiding over COP28 because of his other job — heading up the United Arab Emirates' national oil company. Al-Jaber alluded to the question about the proper role for fossil fuel companies in his opening remarks.

"Let history reflect the fact that this is the Presidency that made a bold choice to proactively engage with oil and gas companies," al-Jaber said. He went on to praise many of those companies for commitments to reduce emissions, but added: "I must say, it is not enough, and I know that they can do more."

On Saturday, al-Jaber announced that 50 oil companies representing almost half of global production had pledged to reach near-zero methane emissions and end routine flaring by 2030. Experts and environmentalists called it significant and meaningful, but still not enough.

COP28 comes as the planet faces a mounting imperative to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Global warming reached 1.25 degrees Celsius in October compared to pre-industrial levels, according to the European Space Agency's Copernicus Climate Change Service. And the UN warned in a pivotal September report "the window of opportunity to secure a livable and sustainable future for all is rapidly closing."

Fossil fuel companies have long had a hand in the talks, the first of which was in 1995. Research by the advocacy group Kick Big Polluters Out Coalition shows four of the "big five" oil and gas companies — Shell, Chevron, TotalEnergies and BP — have sent representatives to the annual climate talks nearly every year.

The four companies each said in statements they attend COP in order to advance green or low-carbon technologies and work toward their net-zero commitments. Low-carbon can mean such things as biofuels, hydrogen development and carbon capture and storage. All four have pledged to reach carbon neutrality by 2050.

The AP arrived at its tally for COP28 by analyzing the United Nations list of likely attendees to review details they offered upon registration, including the company they represented. Those details were checked against lists of operators and owners of coal mines, oil fields and natural gas plants, as well as manufacturers of carbon-intensive materials like steel and cement. It also included trade associations that represent those interests.

TotalEnergies registered to send a dozen people to COP28, the UN data shows. Paul Naveau, the company's head of media relations, said TotalEnergies would have six experts on climate, carbon markets and biodiversity at the talks, and its CEO Patrick Pouyanné is speaking at a side event.

"The subjects broached at these events lie at the heart of the company's ambition; our experts attend to listen to the discussions and support collective action," Naveau said.

Naveau said in response to AP questions that no TotalEnergies employees take part — or are even present for — the negotiations between countries.

Naveau highlighted the company's plans for a third of its capital spending through 2028 to go toward "low carbon" energy. He also said the company is transparent about its attendees in Dubai "in order to kill the (false) idea that our company's presence could be negative."

The Kick Big Polluters Out analysis, which covers 20 years, showed that Shell has sent the most people to the talks overall and most consistently. The company averaged six people over the last 20 years, though that's likely an undercount since the U.N. didn't require attendees to list their "home organizations" before this year.

Shell's international policy positions support phasing out coal, expanding renewables, and treating natural gas as a "partner" to renewable sources of energy. Natural gas emits less carbon than most other fossil fuels, according to the International Energy Agency, but it still contributes to climate change. The IEA describes it as having "a limited role" in transitioning from coal to renewables.

The Kick Big Polluters Out research also identified the most frequent attendees.

Arthur Lee, a 30-year employee of Chevron, has been to every COP since 1999, he said on his LinkedIn page, and is registered to attend COP28. He was a contributor to the fourth IPCC assessment, the official UN climate report, as an expert on carbon capture and storage.

David Hone, Shell's chief climate adviser, is in Dubai for at least his 17th appearance at the annual climate

talks. Hone wrote in a blog post ahead of the talks that net-zero emissions goals “will require a major emphasis on the development of carbon removal practices and technologies.”

Neither Shell nor Chevron would make the two men available for interviews.

Fossil fuel companies are depending heavily on carbon capture to meet their net zero targets, even as some experts have expressed doubt about scaling it up sufficiently. At the moment, it’s preventing about 0.1% of the energy sector’s carbon emissions from reaching the atmosphere, according to the IEA.

Rachel Rose Jackson is director of climate research and international policy at Corporate Accountability, a group in the coalition that produced the Kick Big Polluters Out analysis, said carbon capture and storage are unproven technologies at the scale that would be required.

“It’s a massive diversion of resources, capacity and money that could be going to solutions that we know work, that are cost effective, that do reduce emissions and keep fossil fuels in the ground,” she said. “These so-called solutions are often dangerous distractions.”

11 bodies recovered after volcanic eruption in Indonesia, and 12 climbers are still missing

By RAHMA NURJANA Associated Press

PADANG, Indonesia (AP) — The bodies of 11 climbers were recovered Monday a day after a furious eruption of the Mount Marapi volcano as Indonesian rescuers searched for 12 apparently still missing.

Marapi has stayed at the third highest of four alert levels since 2011, a level indicating above normal volcanic activity and prohibiting climbers or villagers within 3 kilometers (1.8 miles) of the peak, said Hendra Gunawan, the head of the Center for Volcanology and Geological Disaster Mitigation.

“This means that there should be no climbing to the peak,” Gunawan said, adding that climbers were only allowed below the danger zone, “but sometimes many of them broke the rules to fulfill their satisfaction to climb further.”

About 75 climbers had started their way up the nearly 2,900-meter (9,480-foot) mountain on Saturday and became stranded. Eight of those rescued Sunday were rushed to hospitals with burns and one also had a broken limb, said Hari Agustian, an official at the local Search and Rescue Agency in Padang, the West Sumatra provincial capital.

All of the climbers had registered at two command posts or online through West Sumatra’s conservation agency before they climbed, Agustian said. It was possible others took illegal roads or local residents were active in the area, but it couldn’t be confirmed, he said.

Marapi spewed thick columns of ash as high as 3,000 meters (9,800 feet) in Sunday’s eruption and hot ash clouds spread several miles (kilometers). Nearby villages and towns were blanketed by tons of volcanic debris. Volcanic dust and rain smeared the faces and hair of evacuated climbers, according to video on social media.

Falling ash blanketed several villages and blocked sunlight, and authorities distributed masks and urged residents to wear eyeglasses to protect them from volcanic ash. About 1,400 people live on Marapi’s slopes in Rubai and Gobah Cumantiang, the nearest villages about 5 to 6 kilometers (3.1 to 3.7 miles) from the peak.

Gunawan said that Sunday’s eruption was not preceded by a significant increase in volcanic earthquakes. Deep volcanic earthquakes were only recorded three times between Nov. 16 and on Sunday, while the deformation equipment or tiltmeter on the peak showed a horizontal pattern on the radial axis and a slight inflation on the tangential axis.

“This shows that the eruption process is taking place quickly and the center of pressure is very shallow, around the peak,” he said.

Marapi has been observed regularly erupting since 2004 with a gap of 2 to 4 years, Gunawan said.

“Marapi eruptions are always sudden and difficult to detect using equipment because the source is near the surface,” Gunawan said, “This eruption was not caused by the movement of magma.”

West Sumatra’s Search and Rescue Agency head Abdul Malik said rescuers found 11 bodies of climbers

as they searched for those who still missing and rescued three others Monday morning.

"The evacuation process of the bodies and survivors are still ongoing," he said, adding that rescuers are still searching for 12 climbers reportedly still missing.

Marapi has been active since a January eruption that caused no casualties. It is among more than 120 active volcanoes in Indonesia, which is prone to seismic upheaval due to its location on the Pacific "Ring of Fire," an arc of volcanoes and fault lines encircling the Pacific Basin.

Biden's allies in Senate demand that Israel limit civilian deaths in Gaza as Congress debates US aid

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER AND LISA MASCARO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — As a cease-fire ticked down last week and Israel prepared to resume its round-the-clock airstrikes, Sen. Bernie Sanders and a robust group of Democratic senators had a message for their president: They were done "asking nicely" for Israel to do more to reduce civilian casualties in Gaza.

Lawmakers warned President Joe Biden's national security team that planned U.S. aid to Israel must be met with assurances of concrete steps from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's hard-right government.

"The truth is that if asking nicely worked, we wouldn't be in the position we are today," Sanders of Vermont said in a floor speech. It was time for the United States to use its "substantial leverage" with its ally, Sanders said.

"And we all know what that leverage is," he said, adding, "the blank-check approach must end."

With Biden's request for a nearly \$106 billion aid package for Ukraine, Israel and other national security needs hanging in the balance, the senators' tougher line on Israel has gotten the White House's attention, and that of Israel.

Lawmakers of both parties for decades have embraced the U.S. role as Israel's top protector, and it's all but inconceivable that they would vote down the wartime aid. The Democratic lawmakers are adamant that's not their intent, as strong supporters of Israel's right of self-defense against Hamas. But just the fact that pressure is building — including from mainstream lawmakers, supporters of the Democratic president — shows the fractures in Congress as the aid debate drags on.

Sanders and the Democratic senators involved say they are firm in their stand that Israel's military must adopt substantive measures to lessen civilian deaths in Gaza as part of receiving the supplemental's \$14.3 billion in U.S. aid for Israel's war.

The warning from friendly Democrats is a complication for the White House as it faces what had already been a challenging task of getting the supplemental aid bill through Congress. Some Republicans are balking at the part of the bill that provides funding for Ukraine's war against Russia, and the funding for Israel was supposed to be the easy part.

The demand is a warning of more trouble ahead for an Israeli government that's often at odds with the U.S. in its treatment of Palestinians.

"There's a big difference between asking and getting a commitment" from Netanyahu's government on a plan to reduce civilian casualties and improve living conditions in Gaza, Maryland Democratic Sen. Chris Van Hollen told The Associated Press. Van Hollen has been one of the key senators huddling with administration officials on the demands.

"So our goal is to achieve results," Van Hollen said. "And not just set expectations."

Following the senators' warning, the Biden administration has upped its own demands to Israel since late last week, insisting publicly for the first time that Israeli leaders not just hear out U.S. demands to ease civilian suffering in Gaza, but agree to them.

Over the weekend, as an end to the cease-fire brought the return of Israeli bombardment and Hamas rocket strikes, the Israeli military said it had begun using one measure directed by the Biden administration: an online map of Gaza neighborhoods to tell civilians which crowded streets, neighborhoods and communities to evacuate before an Israeli attack.

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Heavy bombardment followed the evacuation orders, and Palestinians in the Gaza Strip said they were running out of places to go in the sealed-off territory. Many of its 2.3 million people are crammed into the south after Israel ordered civilians to leave the north in the early days of the war, which was sparked by the Oct. 7 Hamas-led attack in Israel that killed about 1,200 people, mostly civilians.

The health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza says more than 15,500 Palestinians have been killed, with 70% of them women and children.

On social media, Sanders repeated his call for an end to blank checks for Israel as Israeli forces returned to heavy bombing after the cease-fire.

While Secretary of State Antony Blinken said more measures were coming besides the online map, it wasn't clear if any would lessen civilian deaths or satisfy administration and lawmaker demands.

Israel is the top recipient of U.S. military aid over time.

Trying to attach strings to U.S. aid to Israel isn't unheard of, for Congress or for U.S. presidents. Ronald Reagan, for instance, repeatedly suspended or threatened suspensions of fighter jet deliveries to Israel over its military incursions in the region in the 1980s. This time, though, is notable since it is being discussed in a Democratic-controlled Senate.

National security adviser Jake Sullivan and other White House officials huddled with the Senate Democrats over the warning. Israeli diplomats and military officials also rushed to stem such a move, hosting lawmakers for repeated viewings of video of Hamas atrocities on Oct. 7 to make the case for the U.S. military aid.

Netanyahu's coalition has weathered calls in the past from advocacy groups and individual lawmakers. Objections concerned Palestinian civilian deaths in past Israeli wars against Hamas.

Biden from the start adopted what came to be called his "bear-hug" approach to the Israeli leader — embracing him publicly, and saving any U.S. appeals for changed behavior for private discussions. But when Biden told reporters on Nov. 24 he thought conditioning military aid to Israel was a "worthwhile thought," it helped the proposal gain traction among administration-friendly Democratic senators.

Sanders and the Democrats haven't specified what form the conditions could take, as talks continue. Several Democratic senators contend no additional law is necessary. They say existing U.S. law already mandates that countries receiving U.S. military aid heed human rights concerns.

Some Senate Democrats express dislike of the use of the term conditions and depict their action as more of a determination to influence an outcome.

No matter what, "we're going to do a robust aid package for Israel," said Sen. Tim Kaine, a Virginia Democrat. "But it's got to be consistent with humanitarian aid, and also efforts to reduce the suffering of Gazans who aren't part of Hamas."

The next Republican debate is in Alabama, the state that gave the GOP a road map to Donald Trump

By BILL BARROW Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Republican presidential candidates will debate Wednesday within walking distance of where George Wallace staged his "stand in the schoolhouse door" to oppose the enrollment of Black students at the University of Alabama during the Civil Rights Movement.

The state that propelled Wallace, a Democrat and four-term governor, into national politics is now dominated by Republicans loyal to Donald Trump, another figure who leans heavily on grievance and white identity politics. The former president will not be on stage in Tuscaloosa but remains the prohibitive favorite to win Republicans' nomination again.

Alabama's path since Wallace's rise helps explain the 2024 dynamics and how Republicans evolved nationally from the Party of Lincoln into the Party of Trump. Certainly, Trump argues he helps all races as a defender of everyday Americans forgotten by Washington elites. He even uses that as a defense against four criminal indictments, accusing establishment powers of attacking him as a way to quash citizens. That sort of approach resonated in conservative strongholds like Alabama long before Trump.

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"Alabamians, and I think most people, just don't like to be told how to live," said former state Republican chairwoman Terry Lathan, referencing Alabama's motto: "We dare defend our rights."

For Wallace, that meant fighting federal authorities on integration and then running nationally with the slogan "Stand Up for America." Trump set up his 2016 rise by spending years questioning the citizenship of President Barack Obama, the first Black president. Like Wallace, Trump is backed strongly by culturally and religiously conservative whites moved by his slogan: "Make America Great Again."

"Different from Wallace, but Donald Trump is offering a form of nostalgia," said national GOP pollster Brent Buchanan, who founded his Washington-based firm, Cygnal, in Alabama.

Historian Wayne Flynt said the common thread across the eras is a swath of voters "who feel they are not paid attention to ... that there's not much future for them." Trump, like Wallace, he said, has "brilliantly analyzed the angst and anxiety."

That doesn't mean Alabama Republicans are in lockstep. Lathan, who said "we know how wrong Wallace was" for his racism, backed Trump during her chairmanship. Now she supports Ron DeSantis; she called the Florida governor a "Reagan conservative who gets things done without being a bully."

But, she acknowledged Trump's "steamroller effect" makes him "very popular in Alabama."

Wallace, a four-time presidential candidate, was governor for 16 years spread from 1963 to 1987. That period marked a Southern political realignment, spurred in part by President Lyndon Johnson signing civil rights legislation in the 1960s: Democratic-controlled states shifted to Republicans in presidential politics and, later, other offices.

Alabama Democrats, especially, cite deep historical roots involving racism, class and urban-rural divides when explaining Wallace, Trump and the decades between them.

"To understand it, you really have to go back to the Civil War and Reconstruction," said Bill Baxley, a former state attorney general and lieutenant governor.

Now 82, Baxley said he knows how stereotypically Southern that sounds. But it's fact, he said, that Republicans being the "Party of Lincoln" made white Southerners vote Democratic for generations after the 16th U.S. president won the war.

The more layered reality of the so-called "Solid South" was that two unofficial parties operated under one banner. Moderate to progressive "national Democrats" were concentrated in north Alabama, Baxley explained, while reactionary "states-rights Dixiecrats" cohered in south Alabama. Not coincidentally, south Alabama is where plantations anchored the antebellum slavery economy. Politics became "economic populism in the north," Baxley said, and "race-issue populism" in the south.

Those fault lines shaped Democratic primaries until the late 20th century. National Democrats claimed more federal than state offices: Baxley listed Alabamians instrumental in President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal programs that paved roads, built hospitals, ran electrical and telephone lines, and spurred development in rural areas mired in poverty even before the Great Depression.

Then "Wallace came along as a talented politician who figured out how to bridge all that better than anybody else," Baxley said, adding his disappointment that Wallace still made segregation his main argument.

Dixiecrats' shift to Republicans accelerated in 1964, the first presidential election after Johnson, a Democrat from Texas, signed the Civil Rights Act. Republican challenger Barry Goldwater opposed the act and won five Deep South states. It was Alabama's first flip from Democrats since Reconstruction.

Wallace won four Deep South states as an independent in 1968. Yet in 1970, he secured his second term as governor only through a close Democratic primary runoff. That same electorate made Baxley attorney general. An unapologetic national Democrat, Baxley prosecuted Ku Klux Klan members who bombed Birmingham's 16th Street Baptist Church in 1963, and he memorably told a Klan leader in an open letter to "kiss my ass."

Meanwhile, Wallace retooled his pitch for a national audience. He sneered about "inner-city thugs" and a "liberal Supreme Court" and Washington "overreach" — a coded version of his Alabama campaigns. It wowed working-class Democratic primary audiences beyond the South. Flynt, the historian, said Trump "does best almost exactly where George Wallace did best, and for many of the same reasons."

In 1968 and 1972, Wallace held raucous rallies, railing against protesters. At New York City's Madison

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Square Garden he said such behavior in Alabama “gets a bullet in the brain.” Wallace’s 1972 campaign ended with a bullet in his spine; it paralyzed him from the waist down.

Richard Nixon wrote in his memoirs that he adopted the “Southern strategy” — law-and-order and cultural rhetoric similar to Wallace’s — to stave off Wallace. Ronald Reagan employed his versions in 1980 and 1984 landslides.

Since Wallace’s first presidential bid in 1964, Alabama’s electoral votes have gone to a Democrat once: Jimmy Carter, a neighboring Georgian, in 1976. Even then, Carter sought Wallace’s endorsement after defeating the governor in Florida’s presidential primary.

After Reagan’s inauguration, Alabama’s down-ticket races still turned on what candidate could bridge economic populism and cultural conservatism, said Democratic pollster Zac McCrary, whose firm worked for Hillary Clinton’s and Joe Biden’s presidential campaigns.

“Democrats won when they were able to play up economic sentiments and turn down the volume on the culture wars,” McCrary said. In office, they implemented more liberal economic policies at the state level, especially K-12 education spending.

Wallace won his fourth term as governor in 1982 after disavowing segregation and winning over enough Black voters. Democrats won U.S. Senate seats, including recently retired Sen. Richard Shelby’s 1986 victory. Shelby switched parties to the GOP only after Republicans’ 1994 midterm romp driven by Newt Gingrich, the eventual House speaker whom Wallace biographer Dan Carter called an heir to the Alabama governor’s legacy.

In 1996, Alabama’s other Senate seat flipped. Jeff Sessions, a staunch conservative and lifelong Republican, went on to become the first U.S. senator to endorse Trump’s 2016 presidential bid, giving him high-profile validation on his way to the nomination. Trump made Sessions attorney general but ultimately fired him.

Alabama voters had previewed the turn to Trump: While Republicans nominated moderates John McCain and Mitt Romney for president in 2008 and 2012, Alabama’s primaries went to conservative populists Mike Huckabee and Rick Santorum. Between those elections, Republicans finally took control of the Alabama Legislature in the first midterms after Obama’s election.

Today, Alabama’s two U.S. senators represent two styles of Republican politics, offering a rough analogue to Southern Democrats’ split in Wallace’s heyday.

Sen. Tommy Tuberville is a Trump acolyte. He talked to Trump from the Senate floor as Trump supporters began storming Capitol Hill on Jan. 6, 2021; now he’s blocking military promotions to protest Pentagon policies for servicemembers seeking abortions.

Sen. Katie Britt, meanwhile, is a former head of the state chamber of commerce and chief of staff to Shelby, the old-guard dealmaker first elected as a Democrat. Like her old boss, Britt operates more behind the scenes and campaigns generically on “conservative Alabama values.”

Still, as Shelby did, she avoids criticizing Trump.

Buchanan, the Republican pollster, said: “It’s Donald Trump’s world and we’re all just living in it.”

OxyContin maker bankruptcy deal goes before the Supreme Court on Monday, with billions at stake

By MARK SHERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court is hearing arguments over a nationwide settlement with OxyContin maker Purdue Pharma that would shield members of the Sackler family who own the company from civil lawsuits over the toll of opioids.

The agreement hammered out with state and local governments and victims would provide billions of dollars to combat the opioid epidemic. The Sacklers would contribute up to \$6 billion and give up ownership, and the company would emerge from bankruptcy as a different entity, with its profits used for treatment and prevention.

But the justices put the settlement on hold during the summer, in response to objections from the Biden administration. Arguments take place Monday.

The issue for the justices is whether the legal shield that bankruptcy provides can be extended to people such as the Sacklers, who have not declared bankruptcy themselves. Lower courts have issued conflicting decisions over that issue, which also has implications for other major product liability lawsuits settled through the bankruptcy system.

The U.S. Bankruptcy Trustee, an arm of the Justice Department, contends that the bankruptcy law does not permit protecting the Sackler family from being sued by people who are not part of the settlement. During the Trump administration, the government supported the settlement.

Proponents of the plan said third-party releases are sometimes necessary to forge an agreement, and federal law imposes no prohibition against them.

Lawyers for more than 60,000 victims who support the settlement called it "a watershed moment in the opioid crisis," while recognizing that "no amount of money could fully compensate" victims for the damage caused by the misleading marketing of OxyContin.

A lawyer for a victim who opposes the settlement calls the provision dealing with the Sacklers "special protection for billionaires."

OxyContin first hit the market in 1996, and Purdue Pharma's aggressive marketing of the powerful prescription painkiller is often cited as a catalyst of the nationwide opioid epidemic, persuading doctors to prescribe painkillers with less regard for addiction dangers.

The drug and the Stamford, Connecticut-based company became synonymous with the crisis, even though the majority of pills being prescribed and used were generic drugs. Opioid-related overdose deaths have continued to climb, hitting 80,000 in recent years. Most of those are from fentanyl and other synthetic drugs.

The Purdue Pharma settlement would be among the largest reached by drug companies, wholesalers and pharmacies to resolve epidemic-related lawsuits filed by state, local and Native American tribal governments and others. Those settlements have totaled more than \$50 billion.

But it would be one of only two so far that include direct payments to victims from a \$750 million pool. Payouts are expected to range from about \$3,500 to \$48,000.

Sackler family members no longer are on the company's board and they have not received payouts from it since before Purdue Pharma entered bankruptcy. In the decade before that, though, they were paid more than \$10 billion, about half of which family members said went to pay taxes.

A decision in *Harrington v. Purdue Pharma*, 22-859, is expected by early summer.

Recordings show how the Mormon church protects itself from child sex abuse claims

By MICHAEL REZENDES and JASON DEAREN Associated Press

HAILEY, Idaho (AP) — Paul Rytting listened as a woman, voice quavering, told him her story.

When she was a child, her father, a former bishop in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, had routinely slipped into bed with her while he was aroused, she said.

It was March 2017 and Rytting offered his sympathies as 31-year-old Chelsea Goodrich spoke. A Utah attorney and head of the church's Risk Management Division, Rytting had spent about 15 years protecting the organization, widely known as the Mormon church, from costly claims, including sexual abuse lawsuits.

Rytting had flown into Hailey, Idaho, that morning from Salt Lake City, where the church is based, to meet in person with Chelsea and her mother, Lorraine.

After a quick prayer, he introduced himself and said he was there "to look into" Chelsea's "tragic and horrendous" story.

Chelsea and Lorraine had come to the meeting with one clear request: Would the church allow a local Idaho bishop, which in the Mormon church is akin to a Catholic priest, to testify at John Goodrich's trial? Bishop Michael Miller, who accompanied Rytting to the meeting, had heard a spiritual confession from Chelsea's father shortly before John Goodrich was arrested on charges of sexually abusing her.

While the details of his confession remain private, the church swiftly excommunicated Goodrich.

Audio recordings of the meetings over the next four months, obtained by The Associated Press, show

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how Rytting, despite expressing concern for what he called John's "significant sexual transgression," would employ the risk management playbook that has helped the church keep child sexual abuse cases secret. In particular, the church would discourage Miller from testifying, citing a law that exempts clergy from having to divulge information about child sex abuse that is gleaned in a confession. Without Miller's testimony, prosecutors dropped the charges, telling Lorraine that her impending divorce and the years that had passed since Chelsea's alleged abuse might prejudice jurors.

Rytting would also offer hundreds of thousands of dollars in exchange for a confidentiality agreement and a pledge by Chelsea and Lorraine to destroy their recordings of the meetings, which they had made at the recommendation of an attorney and with Rytting's knowledge.

Today, John Goodrich, who did not respond to the AP's questions, is a free man, practicing dentistry in Idaho.

"Going into this meeting with Rytting, I felt like it would be very clear, once everything's laid out that, look, this is not something that we want to cover up," said Eric Alberdi, a church member who attended the meetings as Chelsea's advocate and also made recordings, which he shared with the AP.

"This is something that we want to uncover for a number of reasons, so that John ... doesn't do this again. So that Chelsea can move forward," said Alberdi, who was not bound by the confidentiality agreement and who has since left the church. "You know, covering this up did not make any sense."

In a statement to the AP, the church said "the abuse of a child or any other individual is inexcusable," and that John Goodrich, following his excommunication, "has not been readmitted to church membership."

Alberdi's recordings provide an unprecedented record of the steps the church normally takes behind closed doors to keep allegations of child sex abuse secret – steps that can leave predators free and children at risk.

"How many people can know the truth and choose to pretend they don't and leave others at risk of the same abuse and they know it and they just don't care?" Lorraine Goodrich said. "I don't understand that. I'll never understand that."

Two years earlier, in the spring of 2015, Chelsea Goodrich, then a 29-year-old graduate student in psychology living in Southern California, began to confront disturbing memories.

While her peers dated and created lasting relationships, she filled with anxiety and dread at the prospect.

"Instead of wanting to have a relationship, I just remember feeling terror and confusion and kind of disgust, like all at once, about it," she said during a series of interviews with the AP.

Her memories included several occasions, she recalled, when John Goodrich slipped into her bed at night in their house in Mountain Home, Idaho, to spoon her while he was aroused, pushing himself against her backside. On one occasion, when she was 9, she remembered her father had apologized to her for being aroused while they were playing in the family swimming pool and told her not to tell her mother.

The last similar incident Chelsea recalls occurred during a school field trip to Washington, D.C., where her father admits he climbed into bed with her in a state of arousal and slipped close behind her. John Goodrich admitted that during a recorded conversation, obtained by the AP, with Chelsea, Lorraine and one of Chelsea's brothers.

Lorraine and Chelsea had been recording their confrontations with John about the alleged abuse, which they would later turn over to police.

While grappling with these memories, Chelsea met a Mormon friend she came to trust and with whom she shared these unsettling remembrances. Her new friend told her that her father, Paul Rytting, was a high church official who often dealt with sexual abuse complaints and suggested Chelsea contact him.

Unbeknownst to Chelsea, who believed Rytting's main responsibility was to aid victims, at about that time he was deeply involved in defending the church in a highly publicized West Virginia child sex abuse lawsuit. Several Mormon families had accused the church of allowing a Mormon sex abuser, Christopher Michael Jensen, to babysit for their children, whom he allegedly abused. Jensen was sentenced to serve 35 to 75 years in prison after he was found guilty of abusing two of the children.

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As revealed by the AP last year, Rytting made sworn statements in that case – which were sealed by a judge and obtained by the AP -- describing the management of the secretive church Helpline, a phone number set up by the church for bishops to report instances of child sex abuse. Church officials say that they don't keep any records of the reports to the Helpline.

Rytting also revealed the lengths to which the church goes to ensure confidentiality for Mormon perpetrators who make spiritual confessions.

"Disciplinary proceedings are subject to the highest confidentiality possible," Rytting said in one affidavit. "If members had any concerns that their disciplinary files could be read by a secular judge or attorneys or be presented to a jury as evidence in a public trial, their willingness to confess and repent and for their souls to be saved would be seriously compromised."

Rytting did not respond to telephone calls or an email with a list of questions. In its statement the church noted that Goodrich's "communications with his bishop were protected by Idaho state law. Only the perpetrator could release the bishop from his obligation under the clergy penitent privilege and he refused to do so."

After meeting Rytting's daughter, Chelsea travelled with her to Salt Lake City and met Paul Rytting while staying at the family home.

At that time, Chelsea didn't feel ready to discuss her memories and kept them to herself, she said. But she eventually told her mother. And when Lorraine Goodrich confronted her husband in their Idaho home, in July of 2015, John confirmed becoming aroused while around his daughter -- but denied any direct sexual contact, according to recordings of the conversations.

In one recorded conversation with Chelsea and Lorraine, he blamed the devil for his decision to climb into bed with his 13-year-old daughter after hearing sexual activity in an adjoining hotel room during the trip to Washington.

"The adversary I'm sure worked on me," he said, using a Mormon term for Satan. "And that's when it was going through my mind when I climbed in bed with Chelsea and was really aroused ... with the intent of spooning and snuggling you but I didn't."

With his family and marriage in turmoil, John revealed details of his relationship with Chelsea to visiting relatives, according to a written statement from the relatives which was ultimately submitted to authorities. They urged him to go to the police. When John said he'd rather talk with a Mormon bishop, the Goodrich relatives drove him to Miller's home, where John made his confession.

Less than a year later, on Sept. 1, 2016, Chelsea and her mother met with Mountain Home police and played the recordings of their conversations with John. The next day, after a nearly two-hour interview at police headquarters, officers arrested him.

"Nothing happened," John protested, as police cuffed him during a video interview obtained by the AP. "I'm not ashamed of anything."

It was then that Chelsea decided to enlist Rytting's help and began corresponding with him by email to persuade him to allow Miller to testify against her father.

Chelsea and Lorraine also let Rytting know that church officials may have known about John Goodrich and his daughter for years. John told them, in conversations that were also recorded, that he'd "repented" details of his relationship with Chelsea to several local church leaders. Rytting told them that church leaders said they did not recall hearing any such confessions.

Then, 10 days after John's arrest in Mountain Home, another woman stepped forward with additional allegations of sex abuse after learning of the case against John. The 53-year-old single mother accused him of having nonconsensual sex with her after giving her the drug Halcion, a controlled substance John often used to sedate patients during dental procedures. She alleged that Goodrich drugged her the previous July after she cut off a sexual relationship with him.

The AP is not naming the woman because it does not identify people who make allegations of sexual abuse without their consent.

As detectives investigated the new allegations, John Goodrich, who was still facing charges in Chelsea's case, called the woman at least four times, in conversations she recorded and which the AP obtained. In

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these conversations, Goodrich asked her to lie to police while admitting he drugged her even as he tried to minimize his actions and repeatedly apologized.

"It was fun as heck, but it was wrong," he said in a recorded conversation. "Just out of principle it was wrong, and I'm just mad as hell at myself."

In July 2017, prosecutors dropped charges against John Goodrich related to Chelsea's allegations.

Six months later, a prosecutor in a neighboring county was crafting a plea deal in which he again would escape sex crime charges.

In the end, John Goodrich pleaded guilty to distribution of a controlled substance, Halcion, and a judge sentenced him to 90 days in jail and three years of probation.

At the initial meeting with Chelsea and Lorraine, Rytting said the clergy-penitent privilege law made it next to impossible for Miller to testify against John Goodrich. Now, four months later, he was back in Hailey with an offer.

Much had changed for Lorraine and Chelsea in the meantime. They'd begun to feel ostracized by the Mormon community. Miller's wife had even removed them from a local church community "sisters" email list, they told Rytting.

Miller had been an advocate for Chelsea.

During the first meeting with Rytting, Miller said John Goodrich, before his excommunication, had tried to backtrack on what he'd told Miller in confession.

"John told me one thing, and then kind of toned it way down to the stake president," said Miller, referring to a higher-ranking church official who oversees several local jurisdictions. "He told the stake president, 'Well, that's not a big deal.' I go, 'Yeah, it's a big deal.'"

"So we know he's lying, and we know he's lying at every level," Rytting responded.

Reached by phone by the AP, Miller refused to discuss details. "It's clergy privilege," he said. "If I say anything, (John Goodrich) can sue me for millions of dollars."

With Rytting in town again, Lorraine and Chelsea first made it clear that they were devastated the prosecutor had dropped the criminal case, according to the recordings.

"(The prosecutor) said 'Too bad the bishop couldn't testify,'" Lorraine told Rytting.

Rytting sounded surprised. He had not known coming into the meeting that the case was dropped, he said. He told them that the church perhaps could reach out to the prosecutor to help get things restarted.

"The message to this prosecutor is, you've got several pretty clear-cut instances where a predator, a sexual predator, has admitted," Rytting said. "And then the victims have provided information. But you don't feel any need to protect the general public?"

"She did say that if the bishop could come forward and tell, then we would have had a case. But there's nothing," Lorraine repeated.

The prosecutor, Jessica Kuehn, now works for the Pennsylvania attorney general's office and did not respond to a request for comment. The AP couldn't determine if the church ever followed up with her about the case.

About an hour into the meeting, Rytting changed the subject abruptly.

"Well, should we talk about why I'm here?" Rytting asked. "I have authorization up to \$300,000."

The offer stunned Chelsea and Lorraine. Months earlier, Rytting told them by email that the church was prepared to pay them \$90,000 - an offer the women were considering.

The payment would be made on the condition that Chelsea and her mother sign an agreement in which they promised never to use Chelsea's story as a basis for a lawsuit against the church - and that they never acknowledge the existence of the settlement.

And there was another key provision: "Second paragraph, I'll be interested in your response," Rytting said, while reviewing the document with them.

"The recommendation is that you acknowledge that there's been some recordings made of all of our communications and that you agreed to destroy those recordings within 10 days of signing this," he said.

Nondisclosure agreements - or NDAs, as they are commonly known - have been used frequently by

the Mormon church and other organizations, including the Catholic Church, as well as individuals, to keep sex abuse allegations secret. In addition to her settlement with the church, Chelsea also settled a lawsuit against her father.

In one of their recorded conversations, Rytting told Chelsea that he could check Helpline records, used by Miller to report details of John Goodrich's confession, to see whether her father had ever previously confessed to another bishop to abusing her.

But in the West Virginia abuse case against the church, Rytting gave sworn, written testimony in which he said no one at the Helpline keeps records. And another ranking church official testified in a case in Arizona that the records are destroyed at the end of each day. In comments to the AP, the church declined to clarify Rytting's apparent contradiction about whether the church keeps records on the Helpline.

Still, at their final meeting, Rytting assured Chelsea and Lorraine that church officials denied hearing John Goodrich confess previously to abusing his daughter, a claim the church backed in its statement to the AP. He urged them to accept the funds the church was offering and sign the nondisclosure agreement promising they would never sue the church.

"When John Goodrich engaged in abuse or any other criminal or sexual misconduct, he was acting in an individual capacity and NOT as an agent of the Church," Rytting wrote, ignoring the fact that Goodrich was a bishop at the time. "Accordingly, any damages arising from such misconduct will be apportioned to Mr. Goodrich and not to the Church."

Chelsea and Lorraine, distanced from their family and community, and struggling financially, accepted this assessment and signed the agreement, which did not prevent Chelsea from telling her story.

Earlier this year, Chelsea decided to share it with the AP.

She had tried going to the church for help. She'd tried the criminal justice system. But John was free with access to children through his family and dental practice.

"Right now, my main concern continues to be other children," she said.

Europe's world-leading artificial intelligence rules are facing a do-or-die moment

By KELVIN CHAN AP Business Writer

LONDON (AP) — Hailed as a world first, European Union artificial intelligence rules are facing a make-or-break moment as negotiators try to hammer out the final details this week — talks complicated by the sudden rise of generative AI that produces human-like work.

First suggested in 2019, the EU's AI Act was expected to be the world's first comprehensive AI regulations, further cementing the 27-nation bloc's position as a global trendsetter when it comes to reining in the tech industry.

But the process has been bogged down by a last-minute battle over how to govern systems that underpin general purpose AI services like OpenAI's ChatGPT and Google's Bard chatbot. Big tech companies are lobbying against what they see as overregulation that stifles innovation, while European lawmakers want added safeguards for the cutting-edge AI systems those companies are developing.

Meanwhile, the U.S., U.K., China and global coalitions like the Group of 7 major democracies have joined the race to draw up guardrails for the rapidly developing technology, underscored by warnings from researchers and rights groups of the existential dangers that generative AI poses to humanity as well as the risks to everyday life.

"Rather than the AI Act becoming the global gold standard for AI regulation, there's a small chance but growing chance that it won't be agreed before the European Parliament elections" next year, said Nick Reiners, a tech policy analyst at Eurasia Group, a political risk advisory firm.

He said "there's simply so much to nail down" at what officials are hoping is a final round of talks Wednesday. Even if they work late into the night as expected, they might have to scramble to finish in the new year, Reiners said.

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When the European Commission, the EU's executive arm, unveiled the draft in 2021, it barely mentioned general purpose AI systems like chatbots. The proposal to classify AI systems by four levels of risk — from minimal to unacceptable — was essentially intended as product safety legislation.

Brussels wanted to test and certify the information used by algorithms powering AI, much like consumer safety checks on cosmetics, cars and toys.

That changed with the boom in generative AI, which sparked wonder by composing music, creating images and writing essays resembling human work. It also stoked fears that the technology could be used to launch massive cyberattacks or create new bioweapons.

The risks led EU lawmakers to beef up the AI Act by extending it to foundation models. Also known as large language models, these systems are trained on vast troves of written works and images scraped off the internet.

Foundation models give generative AI systems such as ChatGPT the ability to create something new, unlike traditional AI, which processes data and completes tasks using predetermined rules.

Chaos last month at Microsoft-backed OpenAI, which built one of the most famous foundation models, GPT-4, reinforced for some European leaders the dangers of allowing a few dominant AI companies to police themselves.

While CEO Sam Altman was fired and swiftly rehired, some board members with deep reservations about the safety risks posed by AI left, signaling that AI corporate governance could fall prey to boardroom dynamics.

"At least things are now clear" that companies like OpenAI defend their businesses and not the public interest, European Commissioner Thierry Breton told an AI conference in France days after the tumult.

Resistance to government rules for these AI systems came from an unlikely place: France, Germany and Italy. The EU's three largest economies pushed back with a position paper advocating for self-regulation.

The change of heart was seen as a move to help homegrown generative AI players such as French startup Mistral AI and Germany's Aleph Alpha.

Behind it "is a determination not to let U.S. companies dominate the AI ecosystem like they have in previous waves of technologies such as cloud (computing), e-commerce and social media," Reiners said.

A group of influential computer scientists published an open letter warning that weakening the AI Act this way would be "a historic failure." Executives at Mistral, meanwhile, squabbled online with a researcher from an Elon Musk-backed nonprofit that aims to prevent "existential risk" from AI.

AI is "too important not to regulate, and too important not to regulate well," Google's top legal officer, Kent Walker, said in a Brussels speech last week. "The race should be for the best AI regulations, not the first AI regulations."

Foundation models, used for a wide range of tasks, are proving the thorniest issue for EU negotiators because regulating them "goes against the logic of the entire law," which is based on risks posed by specific uses, said Iverna McGowan, director of the Europe office at the digital rights nonprofit Center for Democracy and Technology.

The nature of general purpose AI systems means "you don't know how they're applied," she said. At the same time, regulations are needed "because otherwise down the food chain there's no accountability" when other companies build services with them, McGowan said.

Altman has proposed a U.S. or global agency that would license the most powerful AI systems. He suggested this year that OpenAI could leave Europe if it couldn't comply with EU rules but quickly walked back those comments.

Aleph Alpha said a "balanced approach is needed" and supported the EU's risk-based approach. But it's "not applicable" to foundation models, which need "more flexible and dynamic" regulations, the German AI company said.

EU negotiators still have yet to resolve a few other controversial points, including a proposal to completely ban real-time public facial recognition. Countries want an exemption so law enforcement can use it to find missing children or terrorists, but rights groups worry that will effectively create a legal basis for

surveillance.

EU's three branches of government are facing one of their last chances to reach a deal Wednesday.

Even if they do, the bloc's 705 lawmakers still must sign off on the final version. That vote needs to happen by April, before they start campaigning for EU-wide elections in June. The law wouldn't take force before a transition period, typically two years.

If they can't make it in time, the legislation would be put on hold until later next year — after new EU leaders, who might have different views on AI, take office.

"There is a good chance that it is indeed the last one, but there is equally chance that we would still need more time to negotiate," Dragos Tudorache, a Romanian lawmaker co-leading the European Parliament's AI Act negotiations, said in a panel discussion last week.

His office said he wasn't available for an interview.

"It's a very fluid conversation still," he told the event in Brussels. "We're going to keep you guessing until the very last moment."

Venezuelans approve a referendum to claim sovereignty over a swathe of neighboring Guyana

By REGINA GARCIA CANO and JORGE RUEDA Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) — Venezuelans on Sunday approved a referendum called by the government of President Nicolás Maduro to claim sovereignty over an oil- and mineral-rich area of neighboring Guyana it argues was stolen when the border was drawn more than a century ago.

It remains unclear how Maduro will enforce the results of the vote. But Guyana considers the referendum a step toward annexation, and the vote has its residents on edge.

The National Electoral Council claimed to have counted more than 10.5 million votes even though few voters could be seen at polling sites throughout the voting period for the five-question referendum. The council, however, did not explain whether the number of votes was equivalent to each voter or if it was the sum of each individual answer.

Venezuelan voters were asked whether they support establishing a state in the disputed territory, known as Essequibo, granting citizenship to current and future area residents and rejecting the jurisdiction of the United Nations' top court in settling the disagreement between the South American countries.

"It has been a total success for our country, for our democracy," Maduro told supporters gathered in Caracas, the capital, after results were announced. He claimed the referendum had "very important level of participation."

Yet long lines typical of electoral events did not form outside voting centers in Caracas throughout Sunday, even after the country's top electoral authority, Elvis Amoroso, announced the 12-hour voting period would be extended by two hours.

If the participation figure offered by Amoroso refers to voters, it would mean more people voted in the referendum than they did for Hugo Chávez, Maduro's mentor and predecessor, when he was re-elected in the 2012 presidential contest. But if it is equivalent to each individual answer marked by voters, turnout could drop to as low as 2.1 million voters.

"I came to vote because Essequibo is ours, and I hope that whatever they are going to do, they think about it thoroughly and remember to never put peace at risk," merchant Juan Carlos Rodríguez, 37, said after voting at a center in Caracas where only a handful of people were in line.

The International Court of Justice on Friday ordered Venezuela not to take any action that would alter Guyana's control over Essequibo, but the judges did not specifically ban officials from carrying out Sunday's five-question referendum. Guyana had asked the court to order Venezuela to halt parts of the vote.

Although the practical and legal implications of the referendum remain unclear, in comments explaining Friday's verdict, international court president Joan E. Donoghue said statements from Venezuela's government suggest it "is taking steps with a view toward acquiring control over and administering the territory in dispute."

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"Furthermore, Venezuelan military officials announced that Venezuela is taking concrete measures to build an airstrip to serve as a 'logistical support point for the integral development of the Essequibo,'" she said.

The 61,600-square-mile (159,500-square-kilometer) territory accounts for two-thirds of Guyana and also borders Brazil, whose Defense Ministry earlier this week in a statement said it has "intensified its defense actions" and boosted its military presence in the region as a result of the dispute.

Essequibo is larger than Greece and rich in minerals. It also gives access to an area of the Atlantic where energy giant ExxonMobil discovered oil in commercial quantities in 2015, drawing the attention of Maduro's government.

Venezuela's government promoted the referendum for weeks, framing participation as an act of patriotism and often conflating it with a show of support for Maduro. The country has always considered Essequibo as its own because the region was within its boundaries during the Spanish colonial period, and it has long disputed the border decided by international arbitrators in 1899 when Guyana was still a British colony.

That boundary was decided by arbitrators from Britain, Russia and the United States. The U.S. represented Venezuela on the panel in part because the Venezuelan government had broken off diplomatic relations with Britain.

Venezuelan officials contend that Americans and Europeans conspired to cheat their country out of the land and argue that a 1966 agreement to resolve the dispute effectively nullified the original arbitration.

Guyana, the only English-speaking country in South America, maintains the initial accord is legal and binding and asked the International Court of Justice in 2018 to rule it as such, but a decision is years away.

Voters on Sunday had to answer whether they "agree to reject by all means, in accordance with the law," the 1899 boundary and whether they support the 1966 agreement "as the only valid legal instrument" to reach a solution.

Maduro threw the full weight of his government into the effort. Essequibo-themed music, nationally televised history lessons, murals, rallies and social media content helped the government to divert people's attention from pressing matters, including increasing pressure from the U.S. government on Maduro to release political prisoners and wrongfully detained Americans as well as to guarantee free and fair conditions in next year's presidential election.

In a tour of Caracas voting centers by The Associated Press, lines of about 30 people could be seen at some of them, while at others, voters did not have to wait at all to cast their ballots. That contrasts with other electoral processes when hundreds of people gathered outside voting centers from the start.

The activity also paled in comparison with the hours-long lines that formed outside polls during the presidential primary held by a faction of the opposition in October without assistance from the National Electoral Council.

More than 2.4 million people participated in the primary, a number that government officials declared mathematically impossible given the number of available voting centers and the time it takes a person to cast a paper ballot. State media attributed the lack of wait times Sunday to the fast speed at which people were casting their electronic ballots.

Maduro told supporters celebrating the results that it only took him 15 seconds to vote early Sunday.

Ángela Alborno, a grassroots organizer for the ruling party, told the AP she estimated that between 23% and 24% of the voters assigned to her voting center cast ballots Sunday. Alborno, 62, said that figure was below her expectations for an event meant to bring together all Venezuelans "regardless of politics."

Guyana President Mohamed Irfaan Ali on Sunday told Guyanese his government is working continuously to ensure the country's borders "remain intact" and said people have "nothing to fear over the next number of hours, days, months ahead."

"I want to advise Venezuela that this is an opportunity for them to show maturity, an opportunity for them to show responsibility, and we call upon them once more join us in ... allowing the rule of law to work and to determine the outcome of this controversy," Ali said.

Israel expands Gaza ground offensive, vows to hit the south with 'no less strength' than the north

By NAJIB JOBAIN and KAREEM CHEHAYEB Associated Press

KHAN YOUNIS, Gaza Strip (AP) — Israel's ground offensive expanded to every part of the Gaza Strip, its military said Sunday, as it ordered more evacuations and vowed to hit south Gaza with "no less strength" than the fight that has reduced large parts of north Gaza to a moonscape.

Heavy bombardment followed the evacuation orders, and Palestinians in the sealed-off territory bordering Israel and Egypt said they were running out of places to go.

Many of Gaza's 2.3 million people fled to the south after Israel ordered civilians to leave the north in the early days of the war, which was sparked by the Oct. 7 Hamas-led attack in Israel that killed about 1,200, mostly civilians.

After dark, gunfire and shelling were heard in the central town of Deir al-Balah as flares lit the sky. Israeli drones buzzed overhead in Gaza's second-largest city, Khan Younis. U.N. human rights chief Volker Türk urged an end to the war, saying civilian suffering was "too much to bear."

Residents said the military dropped leaflets calling Khan Younis "a dangerous combat zone" and ordering them to move to the border city of Rafah or a coastal area in the southwest.

Halima Abdel-Rahman, a widow and mother of four, said she's stopped heeding such orders. She fled her home in October to an area outside Khan Younis, where she stays with relatives.

"The occupation tells you to go to this area, then they bomb it," she said by phone. "The reality is that no place is safe in Gaza. They kill people in the north. They kill people in the south."

The Health Ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said the death toll in the territory since Oct. 7 has surpassed 15,500, with more than 41,000 wounded. The ministry does not differentiate between civilian and combatant deaths, but said 70% of the dead were women and children.

A Health Ministry spokesman asserted that hundreds had been killed or wounded since a weeklong cease-fire ended Friday. "The majority of victims are still under the rubble," Ashraf al-Qidra said.

Ballistic missiles fired by Yemen's Houthi rebels struck three commercial ships in the Red Sea on Sunday, the latest in a series of maritime attacks in the Mideast linked to the war. The Iranian-backed Houthis claimed two of the attacks. A U.S. warship also shot down three drones in self-defense during the hours-long assault, the U.S. military said.

Hopes for another temporary truce in Gaza faded as Israel called its negotiators home, and senior Hamas official Osama Hamdan said talks on releasing further more hostages must be tied to a permanent cease-fire.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu says the war will continue until "all its goals" are achieved. One is to remove Hamas from power in Gaza.

The earlier cease-fire facilitated the release of 105 of the roughly 240 Israeli and foreign hostages taken to Gaza during the Oct. 7 attack, in exchange for 240 Palestinians imprisoned by Israel. Most of those released by both sides were women and children.

White House National Security Council spokesman John Kirby told NBC's "Meet the Press" the U.S. was working "really hard" for a resumption of negotiations.

The United States, Israel's closest ally, has urged Israel to avoid significant new mass displacement and to do more to protect civilians. U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris told Egypt's president that "under no circumstances" would the U.S. permit the forced relocation of Palestinians from Gaza or the West Bank, an ongoing siege of Gaza or the redrawing of its borders.

As Harris flew from Dubai and an appearance at the U.N. climate conference back to Washington, she spoke by phone with Israeli President Isaac Herzog. They discussed the situation in the West Bank, with Harris reiterating U.S. concerns with steps being taken that could escalate tensions — including extremist settler violence, according to a summary provided by Harris' office.

Harris also spoke by phone during the flight to Mahmoud Abbas, head of the Palestinian Authority, and again stated U.S. support for the Palestinian people's right to security, dignity and self-determination, according to the summary.

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On the ground in Gaza, there was fear and mourning. Outside a Gaza City hospital, a dust-covered boy named Saaed Khalid Shehta dropped to his knees beside the bloodied body of his little brother Mohammad, one of several bodies laid out after people said their street was hit by airstrikes. He kissed him.

"You bury me with him!" the boy cried. A health worker at Al-Ahli Baptist Hospital said more than 15 children were killed.

Israel's military said its fighter jets and helicopters struck targets in Gaza including "tunnel shafts, command centers and weapons storage facilities." It acknowledged "extensive aerial attacks in the Khan Younis area."

The bodies of 31 people killed in the bombardment of central Gaza were taken to the Al-Aqsa hospital in Deir al-Balah, said Omar al-Darawi, a hospital administrative employee. One woman wept, cradling a child's body. Another carried the body of a baby. Later, hospital workers reported 11 more dead after another airstrike. Bloodied survivors included a child carried in on a mattress.

Outside a hospital morgue in Khan Younis, resident Samy al-Najeila carried the body of a child. He said his sons had been preparing to evacuate their home, "but the occupation didn't give us any time. The three-floor building was destroyed completely, the whole block was totally destroyed." He said six of the bodies were his relatives.

"Five people are still under the rubble," he said. "God help us."

In a video from the same crowded al-Nasser hospital, UNICEF spokesperson James Elder said: "I feel like I'm almost failing in my ability to convey the endless killing of children here."

Israel says it does not target civilians and has taken measures to protect them, including its evacuation orders. In addition to leaflets, the military has used phone calls and radio and TV broadcasts to urge people to move from specific areas.

Israel says it targets Hamas operatives and blames civilian casualties on the militants, accusing them of operating in residential neighborhoods. It claims to have killed thousands of militants, without providing evidence. Israel says at least 78 of its soldiers have been killed.

The widening offensive likely will further complicate humanitarian aid to Gaza. Wael Abu Omar, a spokesman for the Palestinian Crossings Authority, said 100 aid trucks entered Sunday, but U.N. agencies have said 500 trucks per day on average entered before the war.

The United Nations estimates that 1.8 million Palestinians in Gaza have been displaced. Nearly 958,000 of them are packed into crowded U.N. facilities in the south, said Juliette Toma, director of communications at the U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees.

Elsewhere in the region, Lebanon's militant Hezbollah group said it struck Israeli positions near the tense Lebanon-Israel border. Eight soldiers and three civilians were wounded by Hezbollah fire in the area of Beit Hillel, army radio reported. The military said its artillery struck sources of fire from Lebanon and its fighter jets struck other Hezbollah targets.

Iraqi militants with the Iran-backed umbrella group the Islamic Resistance in Iraq said they struck the Kharab al-Jir U.S. military base in Syria with rockets. A U.S. military official, speaking on condition of anonymity in line with regulations, said rockets hit Rumalyn Landing Zone in Syria but there were no reports of casualties or damage.

Later Sunday, officials with Iranian-backed militias in Iraq said five militia members were killed in an airstrike blamed on the U.S. near Kirkuk. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to comment publicly. A U.S. official who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss a military operation not yet made public said the U.S. had carried out a "self-defense strike" near Kirkuk targeting a drone staging site.

Alaska Air to buy Hawaiian Airlines in a \$1.9 billion deal that may attract regulator scrutiny

SEATTLE (AP) — Alaska Airlines agreed to buy Hawaiian Airlines in a \$1.9 billion deal announced Sunday, potentially putting it on track for a clash with a Biden administration wary of higher airfares.

The combined company would maintain both airlines' brands, an unusual move in an industry where waves of acquisitions have led to four big brands dominating the U.S. market. On Sunday, the companies said Alaska will pay \$18 in cash for each share of Hawaiian, whose stock closed Friday at \$4.86 after losing just over half its value in the year so far.

Officials from both companies called the deal a chance to combine two carriers with few overlapping routes, which they said would create a stronger company to compete with the nation's Big Four: American Airlines, Delta Air Lines, Southwest Airlines and United Airlines. It would also create a "clear leader" in the lucrative, \$8 billion Hawaiian market, Alaska CEO Ben Minicucci said in a conference call with investors.

"We combine two companies with shared values that have competed and survived longer than most through many industry cycles, enhancing our differentiated business model and creating a stronger competitor to network carriers," he said.

The deal includes \$900 million in Hawaiian debt, bringing the acquisition's total value to \$1.9 billion. The combined airline would be based in Seattle, with Alaska's Minicucci at its head. The companies forecast the acquisition will add to profits within two years of the deal closing, which is forecast to happen between 12 and 18 months from now.

The combined airline would participate in the oneworld Alliance, which includes American Airlines, British Airways and Cathay Pacific.

Alaska and Hawaiian are both smaller than the nation's dominant carriers. They said the deal would meld two complementary networks, increasing connectivity to 138 destinations for passengers traveling through the continental United States and across the Pacific, including nonstop service to 29 international destinations in the Americas, Asia, Australia and the South Pacific.

Hawaiian has a deep and long history within the islands, stretching back to its incorporation in 1929 under the name Inter-Island Airways.

The companies said they would keep Honolulu as a key hub and that they're "committed to maintaining and growing union-represented workforce" in Hawaii. Minicucci told reporters at a news conference Sunday that it's "too soon to tell" how many non-union positions would be eliminated once the combination is completed.

"I can't tell you what that number is, but I'm hopeful that the number is not large," he said of the potential layoffs.

The companies also said the combination would triple the destinations that can be reached within one stop in North America for travelers from Hawaii.

For example, customers can not currently fly to Washington, D.C., on Hawaiian, but they would be able to through the combined company.

"Aloha, everyone," Hawaiian Airlines CEO Peter Ingram said on a call with investors.

He said Alaska approached his company about a deal and that "the Hawaiian brand will remain an important part of our home state."

The deal has been approved by the boards of both companies, but it still needs an OK from the shareholders of Hawaiian Holdings. It will also need the blessing of U.S. regulators, which have resisted more airline consolidation out of fear it could lead to higher fares.

The Biden administration is already trying to block JetBlue's proposed \$3.8 billion acquisition of Spirit Airlines, which would subsume the nation's biggest budget carrier. The Justice Department also won a lawsuit that killed a partnership between JetBlue and American Airlines.

The average domestic airline fare out of Seattle during the spring was \$409.93. That was up from \$293.08 two years earlier, according to data from the U.S. Department of Transportation. The average domestic fare out of Honolulu during the spring was \$367.94, up from \$329.93 two years earlier.

But given how little Alaska and Hawaiian's routes overlap, their proposal may not create much angst in Washington, said Henry Harteveltdt, a travel industry analyst at Atmosphere Research Group.

Just as importantly, he said, neither Alaska nor Hawaiian is an ultra-low fare airline like Spirit. That means combining them would not eliminate the kind of downward pressure on fares that a Spirit buyout might.

The airlines will need to work with their unions as they try to streamline operations, and corporate officials said they have spoken with collective bargaining leaders already. The Air Line Pilots Association said Sunday they were evaluating the proposal and awaiting more details.

Both airlines have historically paid more attention to their employees than competitors, among other similarities in their corporate cultures, Harteveltdt said. It's another reason he said he thinks a merger between the two could work. ____

This story has been corrected to show that the company boards have already approved the deal.

Harris dashed to Dubai to tackle climate change and war. Each carries high political risks at home

By WILL WEISSERT and JOSH BOAK Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Filling in for President Joe Biden, Vice President Kamala Harris flew to the Middle East to tackle a pair of challenges that have flummoxed White Houses for decades: climate change and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Each carries the risk of political blowback going into next year's presidential elections.

She spent barely 24 hours on the ground in Dubai, less time than it took to get to the United Arab Emirates and then back to Washington.

At the U.N. climate conference, when it was announced that "her excellency Kamala Harris" was taking the stage Saturday for remarks, she was not even in the room.

Harris' chair sat unoccupied as world leaders assembled for the panel spoke. When she did show up, she gave a short speech, then dashed off quickly, only to be summoned back for a group photo.

Harris was delayed because she had been on the telephone with the emir of Qatar regarding the Israel-Hamas war. And she was in a hurry after the climate event for more meetings with Arab leaders as Israeli bombardments resumed in Gaza after a temporary cease-fire.

The awkward double booking during Harris' hastily arranged Dubai trip illustrates a set of tricky — and at times potentially contradictory — policy and political crosscurrents. The Biden administration with its diverse coalition of voters is trying to navigate these crosscurrents just as the 2024 presidential race is heating up.

When Harris spoke to reporters after her day of diplomacy, her prepared remarks skipped over the U.S. pledge to commit an additional \$3 billion to a climate fund, a development she had cited in her conference speech. To the media, she focused on steps to resolve the war and prepare for what would come next.

"We all want this conflict to end as soon as possible, and to ensure Israel's security and ensure security for the Palestinian people," Harris said. "We must accelerate efforts to build an enduring peace and that begins with planning for what happens the day after the fighting ends."

Climate and conflict are matters that require a balancing act at home as a possible Biden rematch with former Republican President Donald Trump unfolds.

The Democratic administration is staking much of the U.S. economy's future on renewable energy, yet voters are frustrated by gasoline prices that are higher than when Biden took office. Similarly, the war that began on Oct. 7 has exposed a divided between Democrats over Washington's support for Israel and the suffering of Palestinian civilians.

As the 81-year-old Biden seeks a second term, Harris, 59, has taken on a larger role promoting his campaign to younger voters.

During a monthslong college tour to campuses across the country, the vice president spoke at every stop about the existential threat of climate change, only to have audience members frequently express concern that the administration and the rest of the world are not doing enough.

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In Dubai, Harris said it was "our duty and our obligation" to do more to move the world away from fossil fuels and limit the increase in average global temperatures. She said the U.S. would contribute \$3 billion to a global fund meant to help developing countries better confront climate change and was joining 90-plus nations in promising to double energy efficiency and triple renewable energy capacity by 2030.

JL Andrepont, a senior policy analyst at the environmental group 350.org, said the funding pledge was a "cautious but hopeful sign of the power of public pressure."

But Harris stopped short of calling for a phaseout of fossil fuels, something many environmental groups want in order to stop the emissions causing climate change.

"We will continue to celebrate the global wins that support justly sourced and implemented renewable energy for all and we won't stop advocating for a fast, full phaseout of all fossil fuels, including oil and gas," Andrepont said.

There is a similar level of tension among Democratic supporters over the Israel-Hamas war.

Polling by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research has shown that 50% of Democrats approve and 46% disapprove — a near split — of how Biden has dealt with the war.

Harris reaffirmed the administration's position that Israel must be able to defend itself. Yet her words after hearing from Arab leaders conveyed some frustration with the scale of Israel's response.

She described the "scale of civilian suffering" as "devastating" and said Israel must do more to protect the lives of Palestinians not involved in the fighting. Biden has previously declared the U.S. relationship with Israel was ironclad and his administration is seeking more than \$14 billion to support Israel's war efforts.

Harris also stressed the importance of a rebuilding process for homes and hospitals in Gaza region.

Amber Sherman, chair of the Black Caucus of the Young Democrats of America, said Harris' comments were "encouraging." Sherman had previously put out a statement on X, formerly Twitter, that said the Palestinians were revolting against occupation by the Israeli government, just as Black Americans had fought against slavery and white supremacy.

"It's important that people call out what's happening in Palestine," Sherman said. "We do want Gaza to be rebuilt and it's important that she mentioned that."

Yet Harris' statements were not entirely reassuring to some critics of the administration's support of Israel.

"President Biden and his administration should show their statement in action," said Nihad Awad, executive director of the Council on American-Islamic Relations. "We want the siege to be lifted."

In all, the vice president spent barely 24 hours on the ground in Dubai, less time than the roughly 15 hours each way it took to get there and back from Washington.

As she flew from Dubai, Harris spoke by phone with Israeli President Isaac Herzog and separately with Mahmoud Abbas, head of the Palestinian Authority, according to the White House.

Harris reiterated U.S. concerns with Herzog that actions were escalating tensions. With Abbas, Harris again stated U.S. support for the Palestinian peoples' right to security, dignity and self-determination, according to the readout.

The vice president's national security adviser, Phil Gordon, stayed behind in Dubai, and planned to travel to Israel and the West Bank this week to continue to discuss the U.S. commitment to a two-state solution in postwar Gaza.

While Harris was on her way back Sunday, White House national security spokesman John Kirby applauded Israel for having published online a map of where Gaza residents could go to avoid the fighting. He held that out as a sign that Israel was responsive to the kinds of concerns raised by Harris and others.

"There's not a whole lot of modern militaries that would do that," Kirby said on ABC's "This Week," "to telegraph their punches in that way. So they are making an effort."

Former US ambassador arrested in Florida, accused of serving as an agent of Cuba, AP source says

By JOSHUA GOODMAN and ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — A former American diplomat who served as U.S. ambassador to Bolivia has been arrested in a long-running FBI counterintelligence investigation, accused of secretly serving as an agent of Cuba's government, The Associated Press has learned.

Manuel Rocha, 73, was arrested in Miami on Friday on a criminal complaint and more details about the case are expected to be made public at a court appearance Monday, said two people who spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss an ongoing federal investigation.

One of the people said the Justice Department case accuses Rocha of working to promote the Cuban government's interests. Federal law requires people doing the political bidding of a foreign government or entity inside the U.S. to register with the Justice Department, which in recent years has stepped up its criminal enforcement of illicit foreign lobbying.

The Justice Department declined to comment. It was not immediately clear if Rocha had a lawyer and a law firm where he previously worked said it was not representing him. His wife hung up when contacted by the AP.

Rocha's 25-year diplomatic career was spent under both Democratic and Republican administrations, much of it in Latin America during the Cold War, a period of sometimes heavy-handed U.S. political and military policies. His diplomatic postings included a stint at the U.S. Interests Section in Cuba during a time when the U.S. lacked full diplomatic relations with Fidel Castro's communist government.

Born in Colombia, Rocha was raised in a working-class home in New York City and went on to obtain a succession of liberal arts degrees from Yale, Harvard and Georgetown before joining the foreign service in 1981.

He was the top U.S. diplomat in Argentina between 1997 and 2000 as a decade-long currency stabilization program backed by Washington was unraveling under the weight of huge foreign debt and stagnant growth, triggering a political crisis that would see the South American country cycle through five presidents in two weeks.

At his next post as ambassador to Bolivia, he intervened directly into the 2002 presidential race, warning weeks ahead of the vote that the U.S. would cut off assistance to the poor South American country if it were to elect former coca grower Evo Morales.

"I want to remind the Bolivian electorate that if they vote for those who want Bolivia to return to exporting cocaine, that will seriously jeopardize any future aid to Bolivia from the United States," Rocha said in a speech that was widely interpreted as an attempt to sustain U.S. dominance in the region.

The gambit angered Bolivians and gave Morales a last-minute boost. When he was finally elected three years later, the leftist leader expelled Rocha's successor as chief of the diplomatic mission for inciting "civil war."

Rocha also served in Italy, Honduras, Mexico and the Dominican Republic, and worked as a Latin America expert for the National Security Council.

Rocha's wife, Karla Wittkop Rocha, would not comment when contacted by the AP. "I don't need to talk to you," she said before hanging up.

Following his retirement from the State Department, Rocha began a second career in business, serving as the president of a gold mine in the Dominican Republic partly owned by Canada's Barrick Gold.

More recently, he's held senior roles at XCoal, a Pennsylvania-based coal exporter; Clover Leaf Capital, a company formed to facilitate mergers in the cannabis industry; law firm Foley & Lardner and Spanish public relations firms Llorente & Cuenca.

"Our firm remains committed to transparency and will closely monitor the situation, cooperating fully with the authorities if any information becomes available to us," Dario Alvarez, CEO of Llorente & Cuenca's U.S. operations, said in an email.

XCoal and Clover Leaf Capital did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Foley & Lardner said Rocha left the law firm in August.

Florida Republican chairman won't resign over rape allegation, saying he is innocent

By TERRY SPENCER Associated Press

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP) — The chair of Florida's Republican Party says he will not resign over a woman's allegation that he raped her, saying in an email to supporters that he is innocent. He did not address any specifics of the accusation that has roiled the state's conservative politics.

Christian Ziegler sent the statement to state Republicans on Saturday, saying that he and his wife, Bridget Ziegler, are being targeted because they are "such loud political voices." His wife co-founded the conservative group Moms for Liberty, which has led a campaign with Gov. Ron DeSantis to roll back sex education in Florida schools.

DeSantis said last week that while Christian Ziegler is innocent until proven guilty, he should resign to avoid becoming a distraction to their party. Ziegler insists he won't quit.

"We have a country to save and I am not going to let false allegations of a crime put that mission on the bench as I wait for this process to wrap up," wrote Ziegler, 40. A longtime GOP activist, he ascended to the state party's top post in February.

No charges have been filed against Ziegler, but the Sarasota Police investigation remains open. The accuser, who has known Christian Ziegler for 20 years, told police in October that he forced his way into her apartment and raped her, according to search warrant affidavits filed by police.

In his Saturday email, Ziegler did not address having told detectives that he did have sex with the woman but that it was consensual. He also didn't address his wife telling detectives that the couple and the woman had group sex once, more than a year ago.

"My family is rock solid. My wife is behind me 150% and we have methods in place to protect our (three) children, just as we have with all previous attacks that we have faced," Christian Ziegler wrote. The Zieglers did not return calls and text messages Sunday seeking further comment.

DeSantis spokesman Jeremy Redfern did not return a call and text message Sunday seeking comment on Ziegler's refusal to resign.

The police affidavits saying that the Zieglers had group sex with a woman have led Democrats and gay rights leaders to accuse the couple of hypocrisy, given that an organization Bridget Ziegler cofounded — Moms for Liberty — has joined DeSantis and the Florida GOP in pushing back against LGBTQ+ causes.

Bridget Ziegler is also an elected member of the Sarasota County school board and was appointed by DeSantis to the board that now oversees Walt Disney World's land development. DeSantis pushed through legislation last year disbanding a Disney-controlled board after the company opposed his bill that limits sex education in schools.

The rape accusation against Christian Ziegler became public last week after the Florida Center for Government Accountability, an investigative news organization, obtained a police report and the search warrant affidavits detailing the allegations.

The accuser's name is redacted in the documents. The Associated Press does not name possible victims of sexual assault without their permission.

According to text messages cited in the affidavit, the woman and the Zieglers had planned to again have group sex on Oct. 2, but the woman backed out after Bridget Ziegler "couldn't make it."

The woman says she found Christian Ziegler in her apartment's hallway later that day, that he pushed her inside and then raped her.

In text and phone conversations monitored by investigators, Ziegler offered the woman "financial help" before becoming suspicious that they were being recorded.

In a Nov. 2 interview with detectives, Ziegler said the sex was consensual and that he had recorded it. He said he deleted the video, then recovered it after the rape allegation surfaced.

Detectives seized Christian Ziegler's phone on Nov. 2, the affidavits say. None of what they have found has been made public.

Michigan vs. Alabama, Washington vs. Texas in College Football Playoff; unbeaten Florida St left out

By RALPH D. RUSSO AP College Football Writer

The final season of the four-team College Football Playoff turned out to be the most controversial with an unprecedented snub.

Michigan, Washington, Texas and Alabama were selected Sunday and Florida State became the first unbeaten Power Five conference champion to be excluded from the field.

Michigan will face Alabama in the Rose Bowl, Washington will play Texas in the Sugar Bowl on Jan. 1 and the winners will meet for the national championship Jan. 8 in Houston.

Before the CFP grows to 12 next year — an expansion that was delayed by a year because of infighting among the conference commissioners who manage the postseason system — the selection committee faced the toughest decision in the 10-year history of the format.

"Florida State is a different team than they were through the first 11 weeks," explained Boo Corrigan, the selection committee chairman who is also the athletic director at North Carolina State, Florida State's Atlantic Coast Conference rival.

The Seminoles (13-0) lost star quarterback Jordan Travis to a season-ending injury two weeks ago, but continued to win with a backup and then a third-string quarterback. The committee, though, is instructed to judge teams for what they are heading into the playoff and decided FSU without Travis is not among the best four in the country.

"I am disgusted and infuriated with the committee's decision today to have what was earned on the field taken away because a small group of people decided they knew better than the results of the games. What is the point of playing games?" Florida State coach Mike Norvell said.

He added: "What happened today goes against everything that is true and right in college football. A team that overcame tremendous adversity and found a way to win doing whatever it took on the field was cheated today. It's a sad day for college football."

Travis is a sixth-year player whose development into one of the best quarterbacks in college football has fueled Florida State's resurgence over the last three years.

"Devastated. heartbroken," Travis posted on the social media platform X. "I wish my leg broke earlier in the season so y'all could see this team is much more than the quarterback. I thought results matter. 13-0 and this roster matches up across any team in those top 4 rankings. I am so sorry."

Whichever team was left out had a good argument to get in. That created unprecedented controversy and the committee passed over FSU to pick Alabama, which upset Georgia to win the Southeastern Conference championship, and Big 12 champion Texas, which beat the Crimson Tide on the road in September.

The SEC had never missed the playoff. Alabama, which is in for the eighth time, kept that streak alive. The Crimson Tide have won the playoff three times, most recently in 2020.

Texas would have been just the second Power Five conference champion with only one loss to be left out. Instead, the Longhorns will be making their first appearance in the CFP in their last season as a member of the Big 12. Texas moves to the SEC next year.

Texas and Alabama were ranked seventh and eighth, respectively, in the committee's penultimate rankings and are now the first teams to jump from outside the top six in the second-to-last rankings into the playoff field. Georgia became the first team to enter championship weekend No. 1 and fail to make the field.

"We've never had a year with eight teams at the top as good as these are. And the five conference champions (ranked) one through five, we've never had it come out that way," CFP executive director Bill Hancock said. "My feeling is it probably was the toughest (decision ever for the committee)."

Big Ten champion Michigan is making its third straight appearance in the CFP, still looking for its first playoff victory. The Wolverines, who have stayed unbeaten amid an NCAA investigation into allegations of in-person scouting and sign-stealing, are the favorites to win the national title, according to FanDuel Sportsbook.

Michigan, looking for its first national title since 1997, opened as a 1 1/2-point favorite against Alabama.

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The Tide have won six national titles under coach Nick Saban.

"We're not going to go in there saying, 'Oh, this is Alabama, a team that's won and won and won and won and won. No. We're that team,'" Michigan running back Blake Corum told reporters.

Washington is in the CFP for the second time, breaking the Pac-12's playoff drought after six years, and doing so the year before it leaves the conference for the Big Ten. The Huskies opened as a 4 1/2-point underdog to Texas and former Washington coach Steve Sarkisian. The two played last season in the Alamo Bowl and Washington won.

Georgia's slim hopes of trying for a third consecutive national title also came to an end. The Bulldogs (12-1) had a 29-game winning streak snapped by the Crimson Tide, but leaving them out of the CFP didn't seem nearly as controversial as snubbing the Seminoles — even in a system ripe for criticism.

In 2014, Ohio State, playing with its third-string quarterback, vaulted over Baylor and TCU and into the playoff with a Big Ten title game blowout of Wisconsin. The Big 12 teams still haven't gotten over it, but the Buckeyes went on to win it all. Ohio State has been on the short end a couple of times, too, winning the Big Ten in 2017 and '18 and not getting in. But this year, the committee faced a truly vexing problem.

Florida State, which was No. 4 in the previous CFP rankings, appeared to be on the way to its second playoff appearance in mid-November when Travis suffered a serious injury in the first quarter against North Alabama and was lost for the year.

The Seminoles beat rival Florida last week with backup quarterback Tate Rodemaker, who then missed the ACC championship game against Louisville with a concussion. Florida State stayed unbeaten with a strong defensive performance, but scored only one touchdown.

"To eliminate them from a chance to compete for a national championship is an unwarranted injustice that shows complete disregard and disrespect for their performance and accomplishments. It is unforgivable," Florida State athletic director Michael Alford said.

ACC Commissioner Jim Phillips, who was among conference leaders who helped slow down the expansion process by a year after the SEC's plan to add Texas and Oklahoma was revealed in 2021, called leaving out the 'Noles "unfathomable."

"Their exclusion calls into question the selection process and whether the committee's own guidelines were followed, including the significant importance of being an undefeated Power Five conference champion," Phillips said.

As the ACC champion, Florida State will head to the Orange Bowl for a showdown with Georgia.

"It's unfortunate that some good team had to get left out," Saban said on ESPN, "but I really think that our team earned the right to be here."

Watchdog: Western arms companies failed to ramp up production capacity in 2022 due to Ukraine war

STOCKHOLM (AP) — Many Western arms companies failed to ramp up production in 2022 despite a strong increase in demand for weapons and military equipment, a watchdog group said Monday, adding that labor shortages, soaring costs and supply chain disruptions had been exacerbated by Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

In its Top 100 of such firms, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, or SIPRI, said the arms revenue of the world's largest arms-producing and military services companies last year stood at \$597 billion — a 3.5% drop from 2021.

"Many arms companies faced obstacles in adjusting to production for high-intensity warfare," said Lucie Béraud-Sudreau, director of the independent institute's Military Expenditure and Arms Production Program.

SIPRI said the revenues of the 42 U.S. companies on the list — accounting for 51% of total arms sales — fell by 7.9% to \$302 billion in 2022. Of those, 32 recorded a fall in year-on-year arms revenue, most of them citing ongoing supply chain issues and labor shortages stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Nan Tian, a senior researcher with SIPRI, said that "we are beginning to see an influx of new orders linked to the war in Ukraine."

He cited some major U.S. companies, including Lockheed Martin and Raytheon Technologies, and said that because of "existing order backlogs and difficulties in ramping up production capacity, the revenue from these orders will probably only be reflected in company accounts in two to three years' time."

Companies in Asia and the Middle East saw their arms revenues grow significantly in 2022, the institute said in its assessment, saying it demonstrated "their ability to respond to increased demand within a shorter time frame." SIPRI singled out Israel and South Korea.

"However, despite the year-on-year drop, the total Top 100 arms revenue was still 14% higher in 2022 than in 2015 — the first year for which SIPRI included Chinese companies in its ranking.

SIPRI also said that countries placed new orders late in the year and the time lag between orders and production meant that the surge in demand was not reflected in these companies' 2022 revenues.

"However, new contracts were signed, notably for ammunition, which could be expected to translate into higher revenue in 2023 and beyond," Béraud-Sudreau said.

France's anti-terrorism prosecutor opened an investigation into the killing of a tourist in Paris

By ELAINE GANLEY and SYLVIE CORBET Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — France's anti-terrorism prosecutor said Sunday he has opened an investigation into the fatal stabbing of a 23-year-old German-Filipino tourist near the Eiffel Tower in Paris, allegedly by a man who had been under surveillance for suspected Islamic radicalization.

Jean-Francois Ricard said in a news conference that suspect Armand Rajabpour-Miyandoab could face a preliminary charge of murder in connection with a terrorist enterprise. He said Rajabpour-Miyandoab is a French national who is being held in police custody.

Rajabpour-Miyandoab recorded a video before the attack in which he swore allegiance to the Islamic State group and expressed support for Islamic extremists operating in various areas, including in Africa, Iraq, Syria, Egypt's Sinai, Yemen, Iran and Pakistan, Ricard said.

The video, in Arabic, was published on Rajabpour-Miyandoab's account on X, formerly Twitter, where his recent posts included references to the Israel-Hamas war, the prosecutor said.

It wasn't immediately clear if Rajabpour-Miyandoab had legal representation. A message left Sunday with the prosecutor's office seeking to locate him for comment was not immediately returned.

Ricard said Rajabpour-Miyandoab was born in 1997 in Neuilly-Sur-Seine, outside Paris, in a family with no religious affiliation. He converted to Islam at the age of 18 and quickly adhered to Islamic extremist ideology, he said.

In 2016, he had planned to join the Islamic State group in Syria. The same year, he was convicted and imprisoned for four years, until 2020, on a charge of planning violence. He was under psychiatric treatment and was on a special list for feared radicals, the prosecutor confirmed.

Since the end earlier this year of a probation period during which he received mandatory psychiatric care, Rajabpour-Miyandoab was placed under the surveillance of intelligence services, Ricard said. His mother had in October expressed "concerns" over her son isolating himself, but no evidence was found that could have led to criminal proceedings, he added.

Three other people from Rajabpour-Miyandoab's entourage and family have been detained by police for questioning, Ricard said.

The apparently random attack near the Eiffel Tower on Saturday night has drawn special concern for the French capital less than a year before it hosts the Olympic Games, with the opening ceremony due to take place along the river in an unprecedented scenic start in the heart of Paris.

In a sign of that concern, Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne called a meeting for Sunday evening with key ministers and officials charged with security for a "total review" of measures in place and the handling of the "most dangerous individuals," her office said.

After killing the tourist, the attacker crossed the bridge to the city's Right Bank and injured two people,

a British and a French national, with a hammer, authorities said. Ricard said both of them were able to get back home on Sunday.

Video circulating on the internet showed police officers, weapons drawn, cornering a man dressed in black, his face covered and what appeared to be a knife in his right hand.

The suspect cried "Allahu Akbar" (God is great) and a police officer twice tasered the suspect before arresting him, authorities said.

Questioned by police, the suspect expressed anguish about Muslims dying, notably in Afghanistan and the Palestinian territories, and claimed that France was an accomplice, Darmanin said.

German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock said on X that the news from Paris was "shocking."

"My thoughts are with the friends and family of the young German man," she wrote. "Almost his entire life was before him. ... Hate and terror have no place in Europe."

Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni, in a post on X, expressed condolences for the victim's family and friends and hope that Europe stands together against terrorism. "A heartfelt thought to the family members and loved ones of the victim," she wrote. "May Europe stay united against every form of terrorism."

The French media widely reported that the man, who lived with his parents in the Essonne region, outside Paris, was of Iranian origin.

"This person was ready to kill others," Darmanin told reporters, who along with other government members and President Emmanuel Macron praised police officers for their response.

Well-known emergency physician Patrick Pelloux, who was among the first at the scene, told BFM-TV there was a large quantity of blood. Pelloux said he was told by the victim's entourage that the suspect stopped them to ask for a cigarette, then plunged his knife into the victim. "He aimed at the head, then the back. He knew where to strike," Pelloux said.

Ricard, the prosecutor, said the suspect had a history of contacts via social networks with one of the two men notorious for the gruesome killing of a priest during Mass in 2016 in Saint-Etienne du Rouvray. He said the suspect was also in touch with the man who killed a police couple at their home in Yvelines, west of Paris, a month earlier.

France has been under a heightened terror alert since the fatal stabbing in October of a teacher in the northern city of Arras by a former student originally from the Ingushetia region in Russia's Caucasus Mountains and suspected of Islamic radicalization. That came three years after another teacher was killed outside Paris, beheaded by a radicalized Chechen later killed by police.

The Saturday attack brought into sharp focus authorities' concern for potential terrorist violence during the 2024 Games.

Just days earlier, the Paris police chief had unveiled detailed plans for the Olympic Games' security in Paris, with zones where traffic will be restricted and people will be searched. The police chief, Laurent Nunez, said one of their concerns is that vehicles could be used as battering rams to plow through Olympic crowds.

Speaking Sunday evening on TF1 television about security concerns during the Olympics, Darmanin said this year's Rugby World Cup "took place in good conditions. So did the Pope's visit to Marseille, and so did the King and Queen of England (visit to France)."

He added that police plans prior to the attack include a security perimeter with checkpoints around the Eiffel Tower.

An Israeli raced to confront Palestinian attackers. He was then killed by an Israeli soldier

By TIA GOLDENBERG Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — Seconds after Palestinian gunmen began shooting up a busy Jerusalem bus stop last week, Yuval Castleman raced toward the scene and opened fire on the attackers — only to be shot and killed by an Israeli soldier who apparently suspected he was also an assailant.

The shooting of Castleman, who in security camera footage is seen kneeling, raising his hands and fling-

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ing open his shirt to indicate he isn't a threat, underscores what critics say is an epidemic of excessive force by Israeli soldiers, police and armed citizens against suspected Palestinian attackers.

"He took all the necessary steps so that he could be properly identified," Castleman's father, Moshe, told Israeli Army Radio on Sunday, "and they kept shooting at him."

Castleman's shooting mirrors previous incidents where Israeli security forces or civilians have opened fire on attackers who no longer appear to pose a threat, or on suspected assailants or unarmed civilians deemed to be threats.

The incident comes as tensions have been inflamed by the war between Israel and Hamas, with Israelis on edge and bracing for further attacks. It also coincides with a drive by Israel's national security minister, Itamar Ben-Gvir, to ramp up the number of gun-toting civilians.

Palestinians and human rights groups have long accused Israeli forces of using excessive force, killing attackers who no longer posed a threat and even harming innocent people mistaken for attackers and then skirting accountability.

Early Thursday, as the entrance to Jerusalem was swelling with traffic, two Hamas militants exited their car at a bus stop and opened fire on waiting commuters, killing three. In security camera footage, Castleman is seen running from the other side of the busy highway, brandishing his gun and shooting at the attackers. Soldiers are also seen opening fire.

Castleman, a 38-year-old lawyer who was on his way to work, is seen appearing to flee the gunshots. He then kneels, raises his arms and opens his shirt before he is shot.

His family is demanding to know how the heroism of their son culminated in his killing.

Israeli authorities are investigating the incident and police said initial findings showed one of the soldiers "mistakenly suspected" Castleman was an attacker. Castleman, a resident of a Jerusalem suburb, had previously worked in the Israeli security forces, according to his father, and used his own gun against the attackers. He was shot in the jaw, chin and stomach.

The Israeli military issued a statement Sunday expressing sorrow for Castleman's death. It said the soldier suspected in the shooting was questioned under caution — a step that often precedes criminal charges.

The soldier, identified by Israeli media as reservist Aviad Frija, told Israeli Channel 14 TV that he was active among "hilltop youth" — a term used to refer to radicalized Jewish teen squatters on hilltops in the occupied West Bank who have been known to attack Palestinians and their property.

Frija was not asked about Castleman's shooting. But he boasted about killing the attackers, saying doing so was every soldier's goal.

Hilltop youth are politically aligned with Ben-Gvir, a disciple of a racist rabbi, who as the minister in charge of police has been leading a drive to proliferate arms among civilians by loosening the criteria for acquiring a gun permit. Ben-Gvir said Thursday's attack proved his policies were needed.

"Weapons save lives. We see this time after time. Everywhere there are arms, citizens, police, soldiers save lives," he said at the scene, without referring to Castleman. Ben-Gvir has also pushed for a national guard force he says is meant to fill in gaps where police are spread thin. Critics say it would amount to his own personal militia.

Asked about the shooting on Saturday, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said he supported Ben-Gvir's policy to increase access to weapons even if it meant civilians like Castleman could be killed.

"The presence of armed civilians many times saved the day and prevented a bigger disaster," he told reporters. "It could be that we will pay a price for it. That's life."

Netanyahu rival-turned-wartime ally Benny Gantz called for an investigation into the proper use of guns and the regulations surrounding their use.

"That's not 'life,' but a warning sign," he posted on X, formerly Twitter.

After an uproar over his comments, Netanyahu reversed course on Sunday, calling Castleman's death a "terrible tragedy."

"He is an Israeli hero," Netanyahu said. He promised a thorough investigation and said he had called Castleman's father to offer condolences.

Thursday's incident had echoes of previous ones that have shed light on Israeli open fire rules. Most infamous was the 2016 shooting death by an Israeli soldier of a badly wounded Palestinian assailant as he lay on the ground.

The shooting by Sgt. Elor Azaria, which came as Israel was battling a low-level wave of Palestinian attacks, divided the country. While Israel's top generals pushed for the prosecution of a soldier they say violated the military's code of ethics, large segments of the public, including politicians on Israel's nationalist right, sided with Azaria. Even Netanyahu, in a nod to his nationalist base, gave only lukewarm support to his military.

Similarly, in 2015, after a deadly Palestinian attack at a bus station in the southern city of Beersheba, an Eritrean man was shot and beaten to death by a mob after being mistaken for an assailant. Two men charged with the death were acquitted, with the court siding with their claim that they believed he was an attacker.

Critics said Thursday's incident was especially severe because Castleman took what they said were clear steps to prove that he was not an attacker.

"It was an execution," wrote Shelly Yacimovich, a former leader of Israel's liberal Labor Party, on the Ynet news site. "Against the law, against open fire regulations, the sanctity of arms. Immoral. And all that would be true even if he was a terrorist."

Moshe Karadi, a former police chief, said he believed the background of the soldier who allegedly shot Castleman influenced his thought process. "The finger is lighter on the trigger there than in other places," he said, referring to the West Bank, where settler violence has flared during the war.

Karadi said Ben-Gvir's crusade to arm more civilians would lead to untrained and unqualified arms carriers. He said greater access to guns would spark increased violence against minorities and women and lead to more incidents like Thursday's killing of an innocent civilian.

Diana Buttu, a Palestinian analyst, said the incident reflected a reality that Palestinians have long lived with. She said how Castleman died — arms raised, knees to the ground — didn't surprise her given the heightened tensions since the war, coupled with what Palestinians see as the systemic use of excessive force and a drive to have more Israelis carry arms.

"It was really just a question of time until someone was gunned down in that way," she said.

After visiting Israel and Ramallah, the ICC prosecutor says he will intensify investigations

By MIKE CORDER Associated Press

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — The chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court rounded off a historic first visit to Israel and Ramallah by posting video and written messages on Sunday, saying that a probe by the court into possible crimes by Hamas militants and Israeli forces "is a priority for my office."

In a video message from Ramallah, where he met with top Palestinian leaders, Prosecutor Karim Khan said the investigation that was launched in 2021 is "moving forward at pace, with rigor, with determination and with an insistence that we act not on emotion but on solid evidence."

There have been widespread claims of breaches of international law by Hamas and Israeli forces since war erupted after the deadly Oct. 7 attacks by Hamas and other militants that killed about 1,200 people, mostly civilians, in southern Israel. Around 240 people were taken hostage.

The Health Ministry in Hamas-ruled Gaza said Saturday that the overall death toll in the strip since the start of the war had surpassed 15,200. The ministry does not differentiate between civilian and combatant deaths, but it said 70% of the dead were women and children. It said more than 40,000 people had been wounded since the war began.

Khan said in a written statement issued after his visit that he witnessed "scenes of calculated cruelty" at locations of the Oct. 7 attacks. During the visit, he spoke to family members of Israeli victims and called for the immediate and unconditional release of hostages taken by Hamas and other militants.

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"The attacks against innocent Israeli civilians on Oct. 7 represent some of the most serious international crimes that shock the conscience of humanity, crimes which the ICC was established to address," Khan said in his written statement, adding that he and his prosecutors are working "to hold those responsible to account."

In a statement released by the Forum for Hostages and Missing Families Forum, the families thanked Khan "for the extraordinary decision to come and stand by the families in the aftermath of the horrors perpetrated by Hamas in Israel on Oct. 7 and the continued detention of hostages. We expect him to work to bring Hamas terrorists to justice for crimes against humanity and genocide."

Khan said he is ready to engage with local prosecutors in line with the principle of complementarity — the ICC is a court of last resort set up to prosecute war crimes when local courts cannot or will not take action. Israel is not a member state of the court and does not recognize its jurisdiction.

Khan also visited Palestinian officials in Ramallah, including President Mahmoud Abbas, and spoke to Palestinian victims. He said of the war in Gaza that fighting in "densely populated areas where fighters are alleged to be unlawfully embedded in the civilian population is inherently complex, but international humanitarian law must still apply and the Israeli military knows the law that must be applied."

He said that Israel "has trained lawyers who advise commanders and a robust system intended to ensure compliance with international humanitarian law. Credible allegations of crimes during the current conflict should be the subject of timely, independent examination and investigation."

In his video message, Khan also said that humanitarian aid must be allowed into Gaza.

"In Gaza, it is not acceptable — there's no justification — for doctors to perform operations without light, for children to be operated upon without anesthetics," he said. "Imagine the pain of operations on children, on anybody, on any of us, without anesthetics. I also emphasized that Hamas must not divert any aid that's given."

Khan also expressed "profound concern" at what he called "the significant increase in incidents of attacks by Israeli settlers against Palestinian civilians in the West Bank.

"I emphasize, settler violence is unacceptable," he said in his video. "It's something we are investigating. We have been investigating and we are accelerating investigations. No Israeli settler armed with an ideology and a gun can think it's open season on Palestinians."

Khan said he would seek to work with "all actors" in the conflict to "ensure that when action is taken by my office it is done on the basis of objective, verifiable evidence which can stand scrutiny in the courtroom and ensure that when we do proceed we have a realistic prospect of conviction."

Beyoncé's 'Renaissance' is No. 1 at the box office with \$21 million debut

By LINDSEY BAHR AP Film Writer

Beyoncé ruled the box office this weekend.

Her concert picture, "Renaissance: A Film by Beyoncé," opened in first place with \$21 million in North American ticket sales, according to estimates from AMC Theatres Sunday.

The post-Thanksgiving, early December box office is notoriously slow, but "Renaissance" defied the odds. Not accounting for inflation, it's the first time a film has opened over \$20 million on this weekend in 20 years (since "The Last Samurai").

Beyoncé wrote, directed and produced "Renaissance," which is focused on the tour for her Grammy-winning album. It debuted in 2,539 theaters in the U.S. and Canada, as well as 94 international territories, where it earned \$6.4 million from 2,621 theaters.

"On behalf of AMC Theatres Distribution and the entire theatrical industry, we thank Beyoncé for bringing this incredible film directly to her fans," said Elizabeth Frank, AMC Theatres executive vice president of worldwide programming, in a statement. "To see it resonate with fans and with film critics on a weekend that many in the industry typically neglect is a testament to her immense talent, not just as a performer, but as a producer and director."

Despite several other new releases including "Godzilla Minus One," the Hindi-language "Animal," Angel

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Studios' sci-fi thriller "The Shift," and Lionsgate's John Woo-directed revenge pic "Silent Night," it was a slow weekend overall. Films in the top 10 are expected to gross only \$85 million in total.

But it was in this traditional "lull" that AMC Theatres found a good opportunity for "Renaissance" to shine. "They chose a great weekend," said Paul Dergarabedian, the senior media analyst for Comscore. "There was competition but it was from very different kinds of movies."

Though "Renaissance" did not come close to matching the \$92.8 million debut of "Taylor Swift: The Eras Tour" in October, it's still a very good start for a concert film. No one expected "Renaissance" to match "The Eras Tour," which is wrapping up its theatrical run soon with over \$250 million globally. Prior to Swift, the biggest concert film debuts (titles held by Miley Cyrus and Justin Bieber for their 2008 and 2011 films) had not surpassed the unadjusted sum of \$32 million.

The 39-city, 56-show "Renaissance" tour, which kicked off in Stockholm, Sweden in May and ended in Kansas City, Missouri in the fall, made over \$500 million and attracted over 2.7 million concertgoers. Swift's ongoing "Eras Tour," with 151 dates, is expected to gross some \$1.4 billion.

Both Beyoncé and Swift chose to partner with AMC Theatres to distribute their films, as opposed to a traditional studio. Both superstars have been supportive of one another, making splashy appearances at the other's premieres. Both had previously released films on Netflix ("Miss Americana" and "Homecoming"). And both are reported to be receiving at least 50% of ticket sales.

Movie tickets to the show were more expensive than average, around \$23.32 versus Swift's \$20.78, according to data firm EntTelligence.

Critics and audiences gave "Renaissance" glowing reviews – it's sitting at 100% on Rotten Tomatoes and got a coveted A+ CinemaScore from opening weekend audiences who were polled. EntTelligence also estimates that the audience, around 900,000 strong, skewed a little older than Swift's.

"To have two concert films topping the chart in a single year is pretty unprecedented," Dergarabedian said.

But to compare them too closely would be a mistake.

"Taylor Swift was a total outlier and the result of a very specific set of circumstances," he said. "These two films are similar in genre only."

Lionsgate's "The Hunger Games: The Ballad of Songbirds & Snakes" fell to second place in its third weekend with an estimated \$14.5 million. The prequel has now earned over \$121 million domestically.

"Godzilla Minus One" took third place on the North American charts with \$11 million from 2,308 locations — the biggest opening for a foreign film in the U.S. this year. The well-reviewed Japanese blockbuster distributed by Toho International cost only \$15 million to produce and has already earned \$23 million in Japan. Toho's 33rd Godzilla film is set in the aftermath of World War II, stars Ryunosuke Kamiki and was directed by Takashi Yamazaki.

"This year, we made a concentrated effort to answer the demand of the marketplace and make Godzilla globally accessible across many different platforms," said Koji Ueda, President of Toho Global, in a statement.

"Trolls Band Together" landed in fourth place in its third weekend with \$7.6 million, bringing its domestic total to \$74.8 million.

Fifth place went to Disney's "Wish," which fell 62% from its underwhelming first weekend, with \$7.4 million from 3,900 locations. Globally, it's now made \$81.6 million. The studio's other major film in theaters, "The Marvels" is also winding down in its fourth weekend with a disastrous global tally of \$197 million against the reported \$300 million it cost to make and market the superhero film.

In its second weekend, Ridley Scott's "Napoleon" earned an estimated \$7.1 million from 3,500 locations. Produced by Apple Original Films and distributed by Sony Pictures, the film starring Joaquin Phoenix has now made \$45.7 million domestically against a \$200 million budget.

Things should pick up in the final weeks of 2023, with films like "Wonka" and "The Color Purple" yet to come. The industry is looking at a \$9 billion year — still trailing the \$11 billion pre-pandemic norm, but a marked improvement from the last few years. And there are still many solid options for moviegoers, as the industry's awards season gets into full swing.

"We had a slow Thanksgiving and we're having a pretty slow weekend this weekend, but it's a great

weekend to be a moviegoer in terms of the breadth and depth of the movies out there," Dergarabedian said. Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to Comscore. Final domestic figures will be released Monday.

1. "Renaissance: A Film by Beyoncé," \$21 million.
2. "The Hunger Games: The Ballad of Songbirds & Snakes," \$14.5 million.
3. "Godzilla Minus One," \$11 million.
4. "Trolls Band Together," \$7.6 million.
5. "Wish," \$7.4 million.
6. "Napoleon," \$7.1 million.
7. "Animal," \$6.1 million.
8. "The Shift," \$4.4 million.
9. "Silent Night," \$3 million.
10. "Thanksgiving," \$2.6 million.

Thousands of climate change activists hold boisterous protest march in Brussels with serious message

BRUSSELS, Belgium (AP) — Thousands of people marched through the center of Brussels on Sunday in a boisterous rally highlighting the dangers of climate change, as the COP28 climate summit draws to an end in Dubai.

"We must save our planet. It's the only one where there's beer," read one sign at the head of the parade, led by a brass band.

But the message of the Great Climate March was serious: Act now to stop the world from destroying itself.

The activists of Climate Coalition called for politicians to put in place stronger measures to counter global warming.

One man bundled against the cold, Luc Durnez, complained that the Belgian government went to the climate summit "without a plan, and it is really a shame for us."

In Dubai, United Arab Emirates, nations were promising measures to slash the world's greenhouse emissions by nearly half in seven years to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) compared with pre-industrial times. But marchers in Brussels complained that Europe was not doing enough or fast enough.

Earth is running a fever. And UN climate talks are focusing on the contagious effect on human health

By JAMEY KEATEN Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — With Planet Earth running a fever, U.N. climate talks focused Sunday on the contagious effects on human health.

Under a brown haze over Dubai, the COP28 summit moved past two days of lofty rhetoric and calls for unity from top leaders to concerns about health issues like the deaths of at least 7 million people globally from air pollution each year and the spread of diseases like cholera and malaria as global warming upends weather systems.

World Health Organization Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said it's high time for the U.N. Conference of Parties on climate to hold its first "Health Day" in its 28th edition, saying the threats to health from climate change were "immediate and present."

"Although the climate crisis is a health crisis, it's well overdue that 27 COPs have been and gone without a serious discussion of health," he said. "Undoubtedly, health stands as the most compelling reason for taking climate action."

After two days of speeches by dozens of presidents, prime ministers, royals and other top leaders — in the background and on-stage — participants were also turning attention to tough negotiations over the

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next nine days to push for more agreement on ways to cap global warming at 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 Fahrenheit) since pre-industrial times.

Pope Francis, who was forced to abandon plans to attend because of a case of bronchitis, on Sunday said that "even from a distance, I am following with great attention the work." In remarks read at the Vatican by an aide, the pope called for an end of what he called "bottlenecks" caused by nationalism and "patterns of the past."

Protests began in earnest Sunday at COP28: In one, a group gave mock resuscitation to an inflatable Earth.

"Well, I mean, it's cheesy doing CPR on the Earth," said Dr. Joe Vipond, an emergency room physician from Alberta, Canada, who took part. "We're kind of in a lot of trouble right now," he said, so will do "anything we can do to bring attention to this issue."

Saturday capped off with conference organizers announcing that 50 oil and gas companies had agreed to reach near-zero methane emissions and end routine flaring in their operations by 2030. They also pledged to reach "net zero" for their operational emissions by 2050.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said "the promises made clearly fall short of what is required."

In comments Sunday, he called the methane emissions reductions "a step in the right direction." But he criticized the net zero pledge for excluding emissions from fossil fuel consumption — where the vast majority of the industry's greenhouse gases come from — and said the announcement provided no clarity on how the companies planned to reach their goals.

"There must be no room for greenwashing," he said.

Germany's climate envoy Jennifer Morgan said Sunday the oil and gas industry needs to go beyond just cutting emissions that are generated to make those products and slash emissions from indirect activities too, as well as fossil fuels burned by the end users.

"It's 2023," the former Greenpeace International co-director said. "I was already speaking to Shell about this in 1998."

Temperature rises caused by the burning of oil, gas and coal have worsened natural disasters like floods, heat waves and drought, and caused many people to migrate to more temperate zones — in addition to the negative knock-on effects for human health.

"Our bodies are ecosystems, and the world is an ecosystem," said John Kerry, the U.S. climate envoy. "If you poison our land and you poison our water and you poison our air, you poison our bodies."

He said his daughter Vanessa, who works with the WHO chief, "repeats to me frequently that we should not measure progress on the climate crisis just by the degrees averted, but by the lives saved."

A COP28 declaration backed by some 120 countries stressed the link between health and climate change. It made no mention of phasing out planet-warming fossil fuels, but pledged to support efforts to curb health care sector pollution, which accounts for 5% of global emissions, according to the WHO head.

In the United States, 8.5% of greenhouse gas emissions come from the health sector and the Biden Administration is trying to use funds from the Inflation Reduction Act to try to cut that down, Assistant Secretary of Health and Human Services Admiral Rachel Levine said.

U.S. officials said one of the main issues has been waste anesthesia emissions from hospitals and greenhouse gases that escape when patients are treated for respiratory diseases like asthma with albuterol inhalers.

Part of the solution may come through raising awareness: when officials used a system that showed anesthesiologists how much gas they used and how much escaped, emissions fell by as much as half, said Dr. John Balbus, the Health and Human Services climate change and health equity director.

Dr. Yseult Gibert of Montreal said 70 percent of operating-room emissions come from the way patients are given anesthesia. She said some types of anesthesia are more climate-friendly than others, without sacrificing on quality or effectiveness when it comes to care.

A report last week issued by Unitaid, which helps get new healthcare products to low- and middle-income countries, explored how product redesign, improvements in manufacturing and other measures could reduce the carbon footprint of 10 products used for health emergencies, women's and children's health, and HIV, malaria and tuberculosis.

Forest fires caused in part by climate change can have dramatic effects on homes, health and lives. Heat waves, which can be deadly, also can weigh on mental health, Gibert said, while poor air quality can make life harder for those facing lung and heart ailments and cause respiratory issues, like asthma in kids.

"Not a lot of people know that the climate crisis is a health crisis," she said.

The impact of human activity on the climate was visible to conference-goers in Dubai, an oil-rich boom city that often faces higher levels of air pollution than other places on Earth due to its location. Haze is common.

The Dubai government, on its web site, listed its Air Quality Index level mostly at "good" on Sunday.

IQAir, a Swiss vendor of air-quality monitoring products, listed Dubai as the city with the 18th-worst air quality in the world with "moderate" air quality levels as of noon local time on Sunday. It cited high levels of two types of particulate matter in the air and advised mask-wearing for "sensitive groups" and a reduction of outdoor exercise.

Father of Palestinian American boy slain outside Chicago files wrongful death lawsuit

CHICAGO (AP) — The father of a 6-year-old Palestinian American boy fatally stabbed in what authorities allege was a hate crime has filed a wrongful death lawsuit.

Oday Al-Fayoume filed the lawsuit last month against the suburban Chicago landlord charged in the attack that left his child dead and the boy's mother seriously wounded. The attack — which has renewed fears of anti-Islamic discrimination in the Chicago area's large Palestinian community — has drawn condemnation from the White House.

Authorities allege Joseph Czuba, 71, targeted Wadea Al-Fayoume and his mother Hanaan Shahin, on Oct. 14 because of their Muslim faith and as a response to the war between Israel and Hamas. Czuba pleaded not guilty in October to hate crime and murder charges.

The wrongful death lawsuit filed Nov. 21 in Will County names Czuba, his wife, Mary Czuba, both of Plainfield, and their property management company, Discerning Property Management.

Joseph Czuba allegedly told his wife to inform Shahin he wanted the family gone from the apartment where they'd lived for two years. He also allegedly said he was afraid Shahin's "Palestinian friends were going to harm them," according to the lawsuit.

The lawsuit claims Mary Czuba and the management company "were indifferent and failed to recognize a threat and prevent serious bodily harm" to their tenants. A hearing is set for March 11.

"Justice comes in many forms ... and there is, obviously, unbelievable loss in Wadea, but his mother also was injured seriously, and we believe that there are avenues to recover compensation for what the family's been through," said Ben Crane, Oday Al-Fayoume's lawyer.

The Czubas do not yet have an attorney in the wrongful death case and Mary Czuba has filed paperwork to divorce Joseph Czuba, according to court records.

Czuba remains detained in Will County as he awaits a January hearing in the criminal case. His attorney, George Lenard, has said he won't comment on the case outside court.

Kyiv investigates allegations Russian forces shot surrendering Ukrainian soldiers

By FELIPE DANA and JOANNA KOZLOWSKA Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukrainian officials on Sunday launched an investigation into allegations that Russian forces killed surrendering Ukrainian soldiers — a war crime if confirmed — after grainy footage on social media appeared to show two uniformed men being shot at close range after emerging from a dugout.

The video shows the servicemen, one of them with his hands up, walking out at gunpoint and lying down on the ground before a group of Russian troops appears to open fire. It was not immediately possible to verify the video's authenticity or the circumstances in which it was filmed, and it was unclear when the

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incident took place.

The Ukrainian General Prosecutor's office on Sunday launched a criminal investigation, hours after the Ukrainian military's press office said in an online statement that the footage is genuine.

"The video shows a group in Russian uniforms shooting, at point-blank range, two unarmed servicemen in the uniform of the Armed Forces of Ukraine who were surrendering," the prosecutor's office said in a Telegram update on Sunday.

The Russian defense ministry did not immediately respond to an emailed request for comment. As of Sunday evening, there were no public statements from the Russian government or military on the video.

Kyiv, its Western allies and international human rights organizations have repeatedly accused Moscow of breaching international humanitarian law since it launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. The Kremlin denies these allegations.

The video first appeared Saturday on DeepState, a popular Ukrainian Telegram channel covering the war. The post claimed the footage came from the front lines near Avdiivka, a Ukrainian holdout in the country's part-occupied east where there has been fierce fighting in recent weeks.

The General Prosecutor's Office on Sunday said that the alleged killing took place in the Pokrovsk district, which includes Avdiivka and surrounding areas.

"It's clear from the video that the Ukrainian servicemen are taking the necessary steps that show they are surrendering," Ukraine's human rights chief, Dmytro Lubinets, said hours after the footage emerged on Saturday.

In a statement posted to Telegram, Lubinets described the incident as "yet another glaring example of Russia's violations of international humanitarian law."

Oleksandr Shtupun, a spokesperson for the Ukrainian military grouping that is fighting near Avdiivka, was cited by Ukrainian media as saying the video was "glaring confirmation" of Moscow's disrespect for the laws of war.

In March, footage of a man exclaiming "Glory to Ukraine" before being gunned down in a wooded area sparked national outcry in Ukraine, as senior officials alleged that he was an unarmed prisoner of war killed by Russian soldiers.

Last summer, Kyiv and Moscow also traded blame for a shelling attack on a prison in occupied eastern Ukraine that killed dozens of Ukrainian POWs. Both sides claimed the assault on the facility in Olenivka was aimed at covering up atrocities, with Ukrainian officials charging captive soldiers had been tortured and executed there.

The U.N.'s human rights chief in July rejected Moscow's claim that a rocket strike had caused the blast.

Also on Sunday, Ukraine's energy ministry reported that close to 1,000 towns and villages suffered power outages that day, with hundreds of settlements in the west battered by wintry weather and others affected by ongoing fighting.

The Institute for the Study of War, a Washington-based think tank, late on Saturday assessed that military operations have slowed down all along the frontline in Ukraine due to poor weather, with mud bogging down tracked vehicles and making it hard for lighter equipment and infantry to advance.

Even so, Shtupun, of Ukraine's Tavria military command that oversees the stretch of frontline near Avdiivka, said in a separate statement Sunday that Russian infantry attacks had intensified in the area over the past day. In a Telegram post, he insisted Ukrainian troops were "holding firm" in Avdiivka and another nearby town.

In the southern Ukrainian city of Kherson, at least two people died and seven more were wounded after Russian forces on Sunday shelled a high-rise apartment block and other civilian buildings, the head of the city's military administration said in a series of Telegram posts.

One of the updates by Roman Mrochko featured a blurred photo of what he said was the body of a deceased civilian, apparently lying on a dirt road or in a yard outside the high-rise. The photo's authenticity could not be independently verified.

Regional Gov. Oleksandr Prokudin separately reported on Sunday that Russian shelling that day damaged

two of Kherson's hospitals. He did not immediately reference any casualties.

Earlier in the day, a 78-year-old civilian died in a village northeast of Kherson after Russian shells slammed into his garage, according to a Telegram update by the regional Ukrainian military administration.

Republicans had New Yorkers lead the way in expelling Santos. Will it help them keep the majority?

By KEVIN FREKING Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — George Santos is gone from the House, but his name is certain to pop up in key congressional races across New York next year. Democrats are targeting five seats held by first-term Republicans and looking to associate them with their former colleague in the state's congressional delegation as often as they can.

How successful Democrats are in that effort could help determine which party holds the majority in the House in 2025.

The strategy of association was evident as Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries of New York castigated Republicans in comments leading up to Santos' expulsion on Friday.

"Look, House Republicans knew a lot about George Santos before he was elected. And we have reason to believe either intentionally kept that information out of the public domain or willfully turned a blind eye," Jeffries said. "And then, when the information exploded into the public domain, continue to coddle George Santos and play footsie with him for the better part of the year."

The concern about Santos possibly tainting other Republican members' standing with voters was evident as New Yorkers made themselves front and center in the drive to expel Santos.

Rep. Anthony D'Esposito, a Republican whose district borders Santos' district, offered the expulsion legislation so that it had to be acted on within two days, even though it had been authored by a Mississippi lawmaker, GOP Rep. Michael Guest, chairman of the House Ethics Committee.

Those watching D'Esposito read the resolution on television saw Rep. Nick LaLota sitting to his left and Rep. Mike Lawler sitting directly behind him. Both are first-term lawmakers from New York whose districts favored Democrat Joe Biden in the 2020 presidential election. Biden carried D'Esposito's district by more than 14 percentage points.

D'Esposito also led the debate for proponents of expulsion when the resolution reached the House floor. Santos led the debate for those arguing against the resolution. LaLota and Lawler also spoke, as did Rep. Marc Molinaro, another New York Republican who at one point grew exasperated as concerns were raised about the House setting a precedent of expelling members before they had their day in court.

"Dear God, Mr. Speaker, my future former colleague is divorced from reality," Molinaro said. "He has manufactured his entire life to defraud the voters of his district of an honest choice for a member of Congress."

Santos won his Long Island-based district with 54% of the vote, flipping a seat that had been held by the Democrats. But soon after, reports began to emerge that Santos had lied about having Jewish ancestry, a career at top Wall Street firms and a college degree. He turned into a distraction and an embarrassment to his party. Then came federal charges and the highly critical report from the House Ethics Committee. Santos has pleaded not guilty.

In an adjoining district, D'Esposito won with 52% of the vote, Lawler won a suburban district just north of New York City with 50% of the vote. Also able to generate close victories were Molinaro with 51% and Brandon Williams, also with, 51%.

In May, all five of the Republicans voted to refer to the Ethics Committee a Democratic-sponsored resolution to expel Santos. It was a party-line vote. In a second expulsion effort some six months later, all five voted for expelling Santos, and they did so again Friday.

Molinaro said he believes voters will move on from Santos and noted that 2024 is a presidential election year, with the race for the White House garnering more of the attention.

"George Santos is a dishonest fraud and should be judged based on his actions. The rest of us should

be based on our actions," he said.

D'Esposito made clear after offering the Republican-led expulsion resolution that GOP leadership agreed that members of the New York delegation should be seen as leading the effort.

House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., could be seen talking to the New Yorkers for several minutes before D'Esposito offered the expulsion resolution as a counterpart to a Democratic-led resolution earlier that day. After the vote, Johnson was headed to New York for fundraising events with several of the Republicans involved in removing Santos.

Asked why a New Yorker was offering a resolution sponsored by a congressman from Mississippi, D'Esposito said Guest "understood how important it is to New Yorkers, especially us freshmen."

"We flipped seats that are important, that made this majority," D'Esposito said. "And if we want to keep those seats, I think what we should do is rid ourselves of the stain that is George Santos."

A special election for the Santos seat is likely to be held in mid-to-late February under a timeframe set by state law. Democrats will have a strong chance of winning back the seat. The already crowded field includes Tom Suozzi, a Democrat who previously represented the district before an unsuccessful run for governor.

Rep. Richard Hudson, chairman of the campaign arm for House Republicans, dismissed the threat of Santos tainting other Republicans. Hudson said voters next year will be caring about the toll of inflation and whether their kids are safe in their neighborhoods and at their schools.

"They are not going to care about who used to be the congressman from somewhere nearby," said Hudson, R-N.C.

Democrats disagree and say the expulsion was too little, too late. Ellie Dougherty, a spokesperson for the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, said New York Republicans spent months protecting Santos.

"Whether it's on Long Island or in the Hudson Valley or Central New York, we'll make sure voters know who's responsible for enabling distrust and corruption ahead of next year's elections — and that's the Republican Party," she said.

Pope Francis says he's doing better but again skips his window appearance facing St. Peter's Square

By FRANCES D'EMILIO Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — For a second Sunday, an ailing Pope Francis skipped his popular window appearance to the public in St. Peter's Square, but in televised remarks said he's doing better even though his voice wouldn't let him read all his comments aloud.

As he did a week earlier, Francis delivered very brief remarks from the chapel of the Vatican hotel where he lives and where he is recovering from what he has said is infectious bronchitis. Thousands of people in the square followed his words from giant screens set up outdoors.

Francis, whose 87th birthday is later this month, also said he is following from afar the workings of the U.N. climate conference in Dubai. The pontiff was due to go to the COP28 conference on Friday to address the gathering.

During his first chapel appearance on Nov. 26, he insisted he would make the trip despite his illness. He instead canceled it following his doctors' orders and stayed at the Vatican, where he has received antibiotics intravenously.

"Dear brothers and sisters, good day. Also today, I won't be able to read everything. I'm getting better, but the voice still isn't" enough to read everything, Francis said. He then passed the microphone to a priest who read prepared remarks, including about the end of the truce in the Israeli-Hamas war.

"It's painful that the truce has been broken," Francis said in the remarks read by the priest. "That means death, destruction and misery," the pontiff said. He called for the release of the remaining hostages who were seized from Israel in the Hamas' Oct. 7 attack, and lamented the lack of basic necessities of life in Gaza after Israel launched its war against Hamas.

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On Thursday, Francis told an audience of health care workers that he was advised against making the Dec. 1-3 trip to the United Arab Emirates because "it's very hot there, and you go from heat to air conditioning," Of his current illness, Francis told that audience: "Thank God it wasn't pneumonia. It's a very acute, infectious bronchitis."

Previously the Vatican had said Francis was suffering from a lung inflammation and the flu. Francis had a previous case of acute bronchitis in the spring, when he was hospitalized for three days so he could receive intravenous antibiotics.

Francis said that "even from a distance, I am following with great attention the work of COP28 in Dubai. I am close" to the conference. He said he was renewing his appeal so that "climate change is answered by concrete political change."

In his Sunday remarks about climate change, Francis urged the end of what he called "bottlenecks" caused by nationalism, and "patterns of the past." He added: "let's embrace a common vision, committing all of us and now, without delay, to a necessary global ecological conversion."

Today in History: December 4

The "Million Dollar Quartet" makes legendary recording in Memphis

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Monday, Dec. 4, the 338th day of 2023. There are 27 days left in the year.

Today's Highlights in History:

On Dec. 4, 1956, Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash, Jerry Lee Lewis and Carl Perkins gathered for the first and only time for a jam session at Sun Records in Memphis.

On this date:

In 1783, Gen. George Washington bade farewell to his Continental Army officers at Fraunces Tavern in New York.

In 1918, President Woodrow Wilson left Washington on a trip to France to attend the Versailles (veh-SY) Peace Conference.

In 1942, during World War II, U.S. bombers struck the Italian mainland for the first time in a raid on Naples.

In 1965, the United States launched Gemini 7 with Air Force Lt. Col. Frank Borman and Navy Cmdr. James A. Lovell aboard on a two-week mission. (While Gemini 7 was in orbit, its sister ship, Gemini 6A, was launched on Dec. 15 on a one-day mission; the two spacecraft were able to rendezvous within a foot of each other.)

In 1978, San Francisco got its first female mayor as City Supervisor Dianne Feinstein was named to replace the assassinated George Moscone.

In 1980, the bodies of four American churchwomen slain in El Salvador two days earlier were unearthed. (Five Salvadoran national guardsmen were later convicted of murdering nuns Ita Ford, Maura Clarke and Dorothy Kazel, and lay worker Jean Donovan.)

In 1986, both houses of Congress moved to establish special committees to conduct investigations of the Iran-Contra affair.

In 1992, President George H.W. Bush ordered American troops to lead a mercy mission to Somalia, threatening military action against warlords and gangs who were blocking food for starving millions.

In 1995, the first NATO troops landed in the Balkans to begin setting up a peace mission that brought American soldiers into the middle of the Bosnian conflict.

In 2000, in a pair of legal setbacks for Al Gore, a Florida state judge refused to overturn George W. Bush's certified victory in Florida and the U.S. Supreme Court set aside a ruling that had allowed manual recounts.

In 2016, a North Carolina man armed with a rifle fired several shots inside Comet Ping Pong, a Washington, D.C., pizzeria, as he attempted to investigate an online conspiracy theory that prominent Democrats