

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 29, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 308 ~ 1 of 63

- [1- Upcoming Events](#)
- [2- 1440 News Headlines](#)
- [3- Weber Landscaping Greenhouse Ad](#)
- [4- Prairie Doc: Based on Science, Built on Trust](#)
- [5- Names Released in Lyman County Fatal Crash](#)
- [5- Pennington County Fatal Crash](#)
- [6- Witte Exteriors Ad](#)
- [7- Thompson has perfect score in first week of Trap Shooting](#)
- [8- Weekly Vikings Roundup](#)
- [9- EarthTalk - Sand](#)
- [10- SD Search Light: Three counties will vote on banning ballot tabulator machines, requiring hand-counting](#)
- [11- SD SearchLight: Contents of memorial to mountain man Hugh Glass revealed at Neihardt event](#)
- [13- Weather Pages](#)
- [18- Daily Devotional](#)
- [19- Subscription Form](#)
- [20- Lottery Numbers](#)
- [21- News from the Associated Press](#)



Monday, April 29

Senior Menu: Baked cod, macaroni and cheese, spinach salad with tomatoes fruit cocktail, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Pancake on stick.

School Lunch: Garlic cheese bread, cooked carrots.

FFA Banquet, GHS Gym, 6 p.m.

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

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

JH Track at Groton Area, 2 p.m.

Tuesday, April 30

Senior Menu: Teriyaki chicken, rice pilaf, cauliflower and broccoli, pineapple strawberry ambrosia whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Scones.

School Lunch: Hot dogs, baked beans.

Track at Milbank, 1:30 p.m.

Elementary Spring Concert, 7 p.m.

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

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

United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 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.
© 2024 Groton Daily Independent

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 29, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 308 ~ 2 of 63

1440

In partnership with **smartasset**[™]

Arrests of campus protesters demonstrating against the ongoing war in Gaza continued over the weekend, including more than 100 people at Boston's Northeastern University early Saturday. Dozens more were arrested at Washington University in St. Louis, Arizona State University, and Indiana University, adding to more than 600 people detained at colleges across the US in recent weeks (see map).

Two separate storm systems traveled across several states over the weekend, leaving at least five people dead and several others injured. Tornadoes struck Oklahoma, Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas, and Missouri, with warnings extending across parts of Texas, Louisiana, Wisconsin, and Illinois. Tens of millions of Americans were under a severe weather watch, and more than 100,000 people were left without power. See photos of the damage here.

Russian troops captured two villages in eastern Ukraine over the weekend. The news marks Russia's biggest gains since capturing the industrial city of Avdiivka in February.

Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

The 2024 NFL Draft wrapped over the weekend; see draft grades for all 32 teams.

Harvey Weinstein hospitalized following his 2020 rape conviction being overturned by appeals court last week. Taylor Swift scores her 14th Billboard No. 1 album with "The Tortured Poets Department," tying Jay-Z for most ever for a solo act.

Two-time WNBA MVP Candace Parker announces retirement.

Science & Technology

Newly unveiled humanoid robot powered by generative AI learns new tasks in less than one day; previous generation from startup Sanctuary took two weeks. Apple resumes talks with OpenAI to incorporate ChatGPT into its next mobile operating system.

One in five samples of retail milk analyzed revealed traces of bird flu, likely from current outbreak among dairy cows; officials say products are safe to consume, no recalls issued.

Researchers find link between Laron syndrome, which causes a rare form of dwarfism, and cardiovascular benefits; findings challenge conventional theory of the condition, point to potential treatments for other diseases.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close higher Friday (S&P 500 +1.0%, Dow +0.4%, Nasdaq +2.0%); gains driven in part by Alphabet and Microsoft earnings, and Alphabet's announcement of first-ever dividend as well as \$70B stock buyback.

Paramount board to reportedly fire CEO Bob Bakish; announcement expected as Paramount works toward merger with Skydance Media in coming weeks, including expected appointment of Skydance CEO David Ellison to lead Paramount.

The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation closes Pennsylvania-based Republic First Bank Friday, the first lender to fail this year following Citizens Bank in November 2023; an estimated four to five regional banks close each year in strong economy.

Politics & World Affairs

Hamas delegation to visit Egypt today; Israel's latest proposal reportedly offers cease-fire in exchange for the release of hostages. World Central Kitchen to restart operations in Gaza weeks after Israel's deadly April 1 strike.

Iraq's parliament passes law imposing a 10- to 15-year prison sentence for same-sex relations and one- to three-year sentence for gender-transition surgery. More than 60 countries have laws criminalizing homosexuality.

US health officials document the first known cases of HIV transmission via cosmetic needles; case occurred at an unlicensed medical spa in New Mexico.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 29, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 308 ~ 3 of 63



Based on Science, Built on Trust

As we approach the end of our 22nd season, I would like to thank our audience for trusting us to bring them health information that is current and accurate. There are many doctors out there who cannot make the same claims as the Prairie Doc's and I would like to take this opportunity to help sort out those charlatans and quacks from trusted sources of health information.

While tasty and refreshing, I would not trust Dr. Pepper for medical advice. Nor would I trust Dr. Evil from Austin Powers, despite his claims that he went to "four years of Evil Medical School". I like to read Dr. Seuss' books, but I would not let him take a look. While I think he is a dear, I would not let him peek in my ear. He is not the doctor that I want to see if I needed an appendectomy.

While you can trust Doc Martin and his shoes to help you look cool, I am certain he has no medical training. Doc Brown from Back to the Future is another doctor I'm not sure I would listen to. Beside the fact that he likely has a PhD rather than an MD/DO degree, can you really trust someone who would make a time machine out of a Delorian?

"The Doctor" from Doctor Who, is someone whom his companions trust with their life. Unfortunately a sonic screwdriver will not replace a stethoscope for making a medical diagnosis. The Doctor has also been known to put those companions in grave danger from Darleks and Cybermen. Although Dr. Steven Strange from the Marvel Universe is a legitimate doctor by training, I suspect he allowed his license and board certification to lapse when he became an Avenger. Thus he would not be my first choice for current medical advice or treatment. Similarly, I would not let Doc Octo, a known villain from the Spider-Man series, use any of his mechanical arms examine me.

Dr. Benjamin Franklin Pierce, aka "Hawkeye", from M.A.S.H. was an excellent surgeon, but his treatments and techniques are decades out of date. We have come a long way in surgery and anesthesia since the Korean War. I would also trust Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman, but only if I was living back in the 1800's on the prairie. The current Prairie Docs have much more training and knowledge than she had access to at the time.

As you can see, there are many doctors out there. However, when looking for medical advice, you need not only someone you can trust, but also someone who has the training to give you the most current and up to date advice. The Prairie Docs strive to answer your medical questions each week with such information. So tune in and ask anything. We are here to help you stay healthy out there, with health information that is based on science and built on over twenty years of trust.

Jill Kruse, D.O. is part of The Prairie Doc® team of physicians and currently practices as a hospitalist 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 providing health information based on science, built on trust, on SDPB and streaming live on Facebook most Thursdays at 7 p.m. central.



Jill Kruse, DO

Names Released in Lyman County Fatal Crash

What: Two vehicle fatal crash
Where: SD Highway 248 and 305th Avenue, Presho, SD
When: 2:55 p.m., Thursday, April 25, 2024

Driver 1: Jan Steven Bothma, 31-year-old male from Presho, SD, no injuries
Vehicle 1: Case IH Patriot field sprayer

Driver 2: Chance Michael Veurink, 33-year-old male from Vivian, SD, fatal injuries
Vehicle 2: 2021 Ford Ranger
Seat Belt Use: Yes

Lyman County, S.D.- A 33-year-old man died from injuries in a two-vehicle crash Thursday afternoon in Presho, SD.

Preliminary crash information indicates Jan S. Bothma, the driver of a Case IH Patriot agricultural sprayer, was traveling northbound on 305th Avenue. At the same time, Chance M. Veurink, the driver of a 2021 Ford Ranger was headed westbound on SD Highway 248. The Case IH failed to stop at the intersection where it collided with the pick-up truck. Veurink died at the scene. Bothma did not sustain injuries.

Pennington County Fatal Crash

What: Two vehicle fatal crash
Where: Upper Spring Creek Road & Arena Drive, four miles south of Rapid City, SD
When: 5:03 p.m., Saturday, April 27, 2024

Driver 1: Male, 18, fatal injuries
Vehicle 1: 2023 Kawasaki ER400DPFNN
Helmet Use: Yes

Driver 2: Male, 89, no injuries
Vehicle 2: 2022 Honda Ridgeline
Seat Belt Use: Yes

Pennington County, S.D.- An 18-year-old man died Saturday evening in a two-vehicle crash four miles south of Rapids City, SD.

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

Preliminary crash information indicates the driver of a 2023 Kawasaki motorcycle was traveling eastbound on Upper Spring Creek Road. The driver of a 2022 Honda Ridgeline was traveling westbound on the same road and began making a left turn onto Arena Drive when the oncoming motorcycle struck the rear passenger side of the pick-up. The driver of the motorcycle was transported to a nearby hospital where he later died from his injuries. The driver of the pick-up had no injuries.

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.

**Storm Damage
To Your Roof?**



WITTE 
EXTERIORS LLC

Specializing in Asphalt and Wood Shingles

Call for an estimate

Zack Witte ~ 605-695-7874

Webster, SD

No Contracts!

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 29, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 308 ~ 7 of 63

Thompson has perfect score in first week of Trap Shooting

The first week of the 2024 High School Trap Shooting Season concluded with the top five shooters having a score of 245 out of 250. Turner Thompson had a perfect score of 50 out of 50 to lead Groton Area. Twenty-four out of 26 shot a score of 20 or better.

Groton Area students participate in the South Dakota State High School Clay Target League.

Athlete Name	Rd1	Rd2	Tot.
THOMPSON, TURNER	25	25	50
SCEPANIAK, ISAIAH	24	25	49
SMITH, TREY	24	25	49
HOLMES, ASHTON	25	24	49
FEIST, CADENCE	23	25	48
MITCHELL, PAISLEY	24	24	48
MITCHELL, PAYTON	24	24	48
MOREHOUSE, WESLEY	24	23	47
KAMPA, JAEGER	23	23	46
SPERRY, OWEN	23	22	45
KAMPA, TRISTAN	21	23	44
FLIEHS, FAITH	23	21	44
POWERS-DINGER, MICHAEL	22	22	44
FROST, CHARLIE	23	20	43
SPERRY, ASHLYN	22	21	43
WAMBACH, BRYSON	21	22	43
HANSON, LAYNE	21	22	43
STANGE, TYTON	20	21	41
SCEPANIAK, NOAH	21	20	41
THOMPSON, TARYN	18	22	40
PIGORS, GENTRY	15	22	37
LEICHT, TUCKER	18	18	36
KUTTER, IAN	15	17	32
KOTZER, ADELINE	13	15	28
HOLMES, SYDNEY	6	10	16
RUDEBUSCH, JACLYN	2	3	5

Weekly Vikings Roundup

By Jordan Wright

The NFL draft made history last week. For the first time, no defensive player was taken in the first 14 picks, and there were 23 offensive players taken in the first round, beating the previous record of 19. The six quarterbacks taken also tied an NFL record that was set in 1983. The Vikings were one of the teams to take a QB in the first round, and they're hoping for similar results to 1983, considering three of those six QBs are now in the Hall of Fame (John Elway, Jim Kelly, and Dan Marino).

Heading into the draft, most analysts assumed the Vikings would have to move way up to secure their franchise QB. However, General Manager Kwesi Adofo-Mensah called the league's bluff and waited until the 10th pick to get his guy J.J. McCarthy. Moving up just one spot saved a considerable amount of draft ammunition that would be needed later in the first round, when the Vikings moved from 23 to 17 to grab perhaps the best defensive player in the draft, edge rusher Dallas Turner.

J.J. McCarthy – If you read my previous column, you know I wasn't high on McCarthy. However, I trust Vikings' head coach Kevin O'Connell – a former NFL QB – to know a whole heck of a lot more about the position than I do. They identified McCarthy as someone they could win with, and they didn't need to trade three (or more) first-round picks to get him. I'd call that a win.

McCarthy is a winner, having only lost three games since high school. He's also a champion, helping Michigan win a ring just a few months ago. His arm strength, accuracy, and mobility are good enough, and everyone around him raves about his leadership ability. My concern is that he wasn't asked to go out and win games for Michigan. In fact, in the championship game, he only threw 18 passes (completing 10) for 180 yards and zero touchdowns. He also only had one game this past season where he threw more than 30 passes. Will he be able to handle an increased workload in the NFL? Or will he simply be a game manager at the next level? Only time will tell.

Dallas Turner – A player I thought the Vikings would take at 11 if they elected to wait on a QB, Turner has the makings of a defensive cornerstone. He was a team captain at Alabama, a First-Team All-SEC selection, and the SEC defensive player of the year.

Because of the run of offensive players in this draft, the Vikings were able to get an elite player at one of football's most important positions. With Danielle Hunter leaving in free agency, the Vikings needed to find someone to start opposite Jonathan Greenard – and Turner is perhaps the best possible outcome in that scenario. Now, defensive coordinator Brian Flores has a lot more firepower for his blitz-heavy system.

Due to the trades Minnesota made during the draft (and before it when they traded for the 23rd overall pick), the Vikings didn't have any picks on day two. Next week, we cover the picks made in rounds five through seven. Skoll!

EARTHTALK ™

Dear EarthTalk: Could plain-ol' beach sand be the next frontier in renewable energy?

-- Paul C., Baltimore, MD

In our ongoing quest for sustainable energy solutions, innovative technologies are necessary to complement renewable sources like solar and wind power. One such potential breakthrough revolves around an unexpected but abundant resource: beach sand.

Sand batteries represent an emerging approach to energy storage, particularly effective in harnessing and retaining energy from intermittent sources like solar and wind. The physical properties of sand, such as its ability to store heat at high temperatures, make it an excellent medium for energy retention. This capacity is being leveraged by innovative technologies to create a more stable and reliable energy supply, as sand can efficiently accumulate and release heat as required.

The science behind sand batteries involves heating sand to high temperatures using surplus energy generated from renewable sources. This stored heat can then be converted back into energy when needed. This system capitalizes on the thermal properties of sand to create a natural battery that can offer both heating solutions and electricity generation. As National Renewable Energy Laboratory's (NREL) Patrick Davenport notes, "Sand and concrete silos with refractory insulation are very inexpensive materials that can lead to low-cost energy storage." A few key players currently pioneering this technology include Polar Night Energy in Finland, which has implemented a sand battery for residential and commercial heating, and EnergyNest in Norway, which specializes in thermal energy storage using similar principles.

Using sand for energy storage offers multiple benefits: it is abundant, low-cost, eco-friendly, and can store heat for long periods. This makes sand an attractive option for enhancing the stability of renewable energy systems, and providing a reliable energy supply even during times of low sunlight or wind.

Sand battery technology is currently being tested and used in various projects worldwide, not only demonstrating the viability of sand as an energy storage solution but highlighting its potential scalability and integration into existing energy infrastructures.

Despite the potential, challenges that include technical, economic and logistical hurdles that be addressed. Developing and deploying sand battery technology on a large scale requires significant research and development efforts. Additionally, the role of government and private investment is crucial in overcoming barriers and driving forward the innovation needed for widespread adoption.

Sand batteries are a promising solution for renewable energy storage, potentially revolutionizing how we store and utilize energy from renewable sources. Their ability to provide a stable, reliable energy supply could be a game-changer for the renewable sector.



Sand batteries represent an emerging approach to energy storage, particularly effective in harnessing & retaining energy from solar and wind. Credit: Pixabay.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Three counties will vote on banning ballot tabulator machines, requiring hand-counting

Auditors warn of financial consequences ahead of election

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER - APRIL 28, 2024 6:00 AM

Three South Dakota counties will ask voters during the June 4 primary if they should ban the use of tabulator machines in future local elections.

If the measures pass, the auditor's offices in each county would have to hand-count ballots in the Nov. 5 general election and thereafter. The votes – in Gregory, Haakon and Tripp counties – were forced by citizen-initiated petitions at the county level.

Petitioners say they want to ban tabulators because they're concerned about election security and integrity.

State law allows citizens to petition their local governments to put a proposed law to a public vote. The petitions require signatures from 5% of registered voters in a jurisdiction.

The auditors in each county are now working to educate their citizens on the election process, including the accuracy and safety of tabulators, and highlighting the potential financial consequences of hand-counting ballots.

"More than anything, I want my county to be educated about how our elections run," said Stacy Pinney, Haakon County auditor.

Similar petitions are circulating in 35 counties, according to South Dakota Canvassing, the nonprofit that helped organize the statewide effort. Petitions have been rejected in counties including Lawrence and McPherson, where some county officials cited legal problems with the petition language. Meanwhile, Fall River County is the only county in South Dakota that will hand-count ballots during the primary election.

In Haakon County, Pinney plans to hold three town halls ahead of the June 4 primary to answer county residents' questions. The final town hall will coincide with her statutorily required public test of the tabulator machines. She'll also present to the local high school's senior government class about the election process.

Pinney said many county residents don't know there's a resolution board that handles votes cast aside by a tabulator when those votes need further study for voter intent. She added that some people aren't aware they can ask for a new ballot if they make a mistake.

In Haakon County, the cost of the general election without hand-counting will already be about \$10,000 to \$15,000, Pinney said.

If the ballot initiative passes, Pinney expects she'll need 10 extra people to hand-count ballots. That can cost anywhere from \$5,000 to \$10,000 more, she estimates.

Julie Bartling, Gregory County auditor, said if her county's tabulator ban passes, she'll have to break up the south-central county's three precincts into six or 10 precincts to have manageable ballot amounts for hand counters.

That will cost the county \$5,000 to \$8,000 more – assuming she can convince poll workers who've already been working 12-hour days to stay longer and hand-count ballots.

"A lot of people think hand-counting is cheaper, but it really isn't," Bartling said.

Bartling said some people think different ballots can be used, but, by law, the county has to use the same ballot whether it hand-counts or uses machines. For Gregory, the tabulator machines cost less than \$2,000 each election to use, Bartling said.

Tripp County Auditor Barb DeSersa said she'll have to find another 65 people to hand-count ballots if the measure passes. DeSersa oversaw Tripp County's 2022 general election hand-counting effort, when it was the only county in South Dakota to hand-count all its ballots.

DeSersa was awake for 40 hours straight between Election Day and the day after in 2022, with a significant amount of that time supervising volunteers hand-counting ballots. Several races had to be recounted by volunteer counting boards – sometimes three or four times that night.

If the ban passes, she won't have poll workers hand-count, and she'll have five hand-count volunteers per precinct rather than three. The extra two will be "onlookers to ensure everything is done correctly," DeSersa said.

Tripp and Gregory counties will each conduct a post-election audit of all cast ballots after the primary, rather than the state-required 5% audit.

"I'm anxious for the post-election audit because I want people to know that their automated counting machines are accurate," Bartling said. "They're counting correctly and the post-election audit will show that and prove it."

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

Contents of memorial to mountain man Hugh Glass revealed at Neihardt event

BY: PAUL HAMMEL - APRIL 28, 2024 1:00 PM

WAYNE, Nebraska — A "reveal" of what a Nebraska poet hid inside a lonely monument a century ago revealed more of what Mother Nature could wreck over the span of 100 years.

On Saturday, descendants of John Neihardt revealed what they'd found inside an "altar to courage" that the poet and members of a fan club from what's now Wayne State College planted in the rocky soil of northwestern South Dakota in 1923.

The homemade, concrete monument memorialized the courage of mountain man Hugh Glass, who was left for dead in August 1823 after being mauled by a grizzly bear but then crawled and limped 200 miles to get help.

Neihardt challenged students from Wayne State (then Nebraska Normal College) to return in 100 years to rededicate and open a time capsule he buried within the monument, which he said contained an "original manuscript."

Drilled, chiseled into monument

His family carefully drilled and chiseled into the thigh-high monument last October after removing it from its location near Lemmon, South Dakota, where Glass was mauled.

But on Saturday they revealed that what they could retrieve from inside were still-wet fragments of a special Neihardt edition of a student newspaper, The Goldenrod, as well as pieces of Neihardt's book containing his epic poem describing the heroic crawl, "The Song of Hugh Glass."

Coralie Hughes, a granddaughter of Neihardt, said that despite the lack of a new work from Nebraska's "poet laureate in perpetuity," the family had accomplished its goal of fulfilling the "challenge" to open up the time capsule and not destroying the monument in the process.

"I was hoping for a personal note to the world from my grandfather," Hughes said. "Maybe he did (leave one) because a lot of what we found was unintelligible."

The paper fragments, when found inside a tin box imbedded in the concrete, were still wet, which she said may have been the result of several times when the monument was flooded.

The monument was originally built on dry, private ranch land near the confluence of two forks of the Grand River, but it ended up on the banks of a federal reservoir that flooded at least four times since 1953.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 29, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 308 ~ 12 of 63

Hughes said the family was told by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, which owns the reservoir, that the monument had to be moved if it was to be breached.

She said the family proceeded gingerly in drilling into the monument so as not to destroy it. The first thing to be discovered— using a snake-like video camera — were fragments of a pop bottle that contained a letter from two newlyweds— J.T. and Myrtle Young of Lincoln — who arrived too late to sign a document Neihardt said was signed by those present and placed inside a tin box.

The Neihardt family decided against trying to retrieve the glass fragments or trying to dig out all the paper fragments inside the embedded tin box for fear of destroying the monument, which was relocated to the John Neihardt State Historic Site in Bancroft, Nebraska.

Some papers remain inside the tin box, Hughes said, but they are just “crumbling” pieces.

“We didn’t want to keep going,” said Alexis Petri of Kansas City, who produced a short documentary on the family’s work to retrieve the monument.

Her documentary and the “reveal” were presented Saturday at the annual spring conference of the Neihardt Foundation held at Wayne State College. Neihardt graduated from the school, then called Nebraska Normal College, at age 15.

‘Wonderful to see something tangible’

The event focused on the saga of the almost forgotten monument, the taking up of the challenge by Wayne State professor Joseph Weixelman and his class to rededicate the monument and the eventual decision to relocate the monument to Nebraska.

Mary McDermott, who drove from Holdrege with her daughter to view the final chapter in the mystery of the monument, betrayed no disappointment that some rare manuscript wasn’t found.

“It’s wonderful to see something tangible from 100 years ago,” she said.

“I’m impressed that there was something still there,” said her daughter Alizabeth.

Marianne Reynolds, the executive director of the Neihardt Center, said the fragments retrieved would be sent to the Ford Conservation Center in Omaha for further analysis.

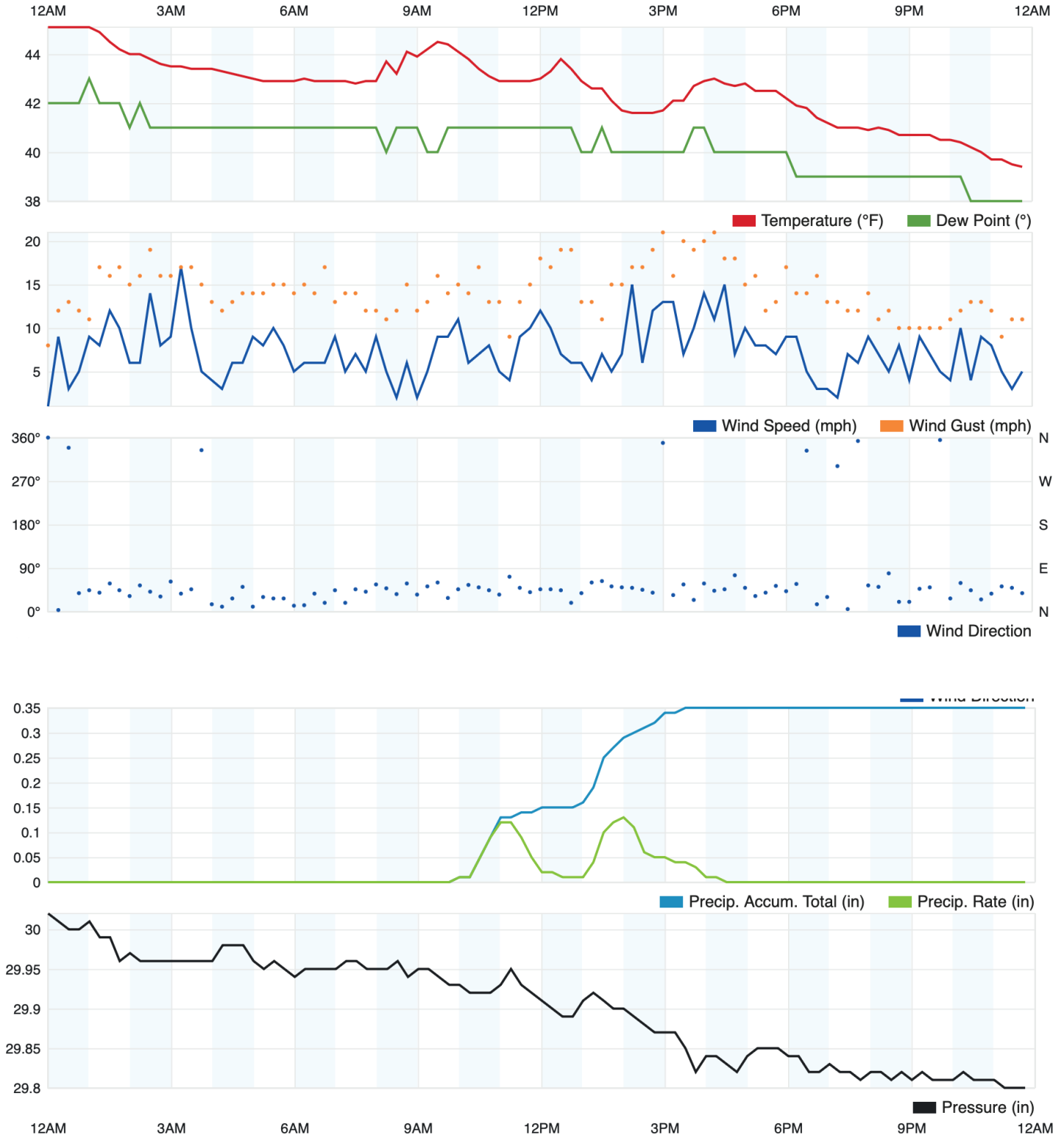
After that, she said, they would be put on display at the center in Bancroft. A kiosk is envisioned so that visitors can play the documentary produced by Petri, Reynolds added.

Senior Contributor Paul Hammel covered the Nebraska state government and the state for decades. Previously with the Omaha World-Herald, Lincoln Journal Star and Omaha Sun, he is a member of the Omaha Press Club’s Hall of Fame. He grows hops, brews homemade beer, plays bass guitar and basically loves traveling and writing about the state. A native of Ralston, Nebraska, he is vice president of the John G. Neihardt Foundation. Hammel retired in April but continues to contribute to the Nebraska Examiner.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 29, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 308 ~ 13 of 63

Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



Broton Daily Independent

Monday, April 29, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 308 ~ 14 of 63

Today

Tonight

Tuesday

Tuesday Night

Wednesday



Chance Showers then Slight Chance Showers

High: 52 °F



Mostly Cloudy

Low: 34 °F



Showers

High: 62 °F



Mostly Clear

Low: 35 °F



Sunny then Slight Chance Showers

High: 64 °F



Continued Unsettled

April 29, 2024
3:43 AM

Today

Clearing

Highs:
47-62°

Tonight

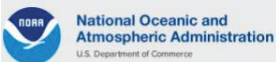
Lows:
33-47°

Tuesday

Highs:
57-64°

Winds

	Mon					Tue								
	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am	3am	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	
Aberdeen	15	15	15	14	8	10	12	13	20	21	21	26	22	
Britton	13	15	15	16	8	7	9	12	18	26	25	25	24	
Brookings	18	21	21	20	8	6	7	9	15	22	23	24	25	
Chamberlain	18	17	16	12	9	14	18	20	18	18	23	26	16	
Clark	18	20	20	17	9	9	14	18	25	28	25	26	26	
Eagle Butte	16	15	15	12	16	22	28	25	30	35	38	36	24	
Ellendale	14	15	14	13	8	8	10	12	18	21	20	24	20	
Eureka	14	14	15	13	10	14	17	24	26	24	25	28	21	
Gettysburg	18	17	17	13	13	18	23	26	25	24	29	30	23	
Huron	21	20	20	16	8	10	14	16	22	22	23	30	22	
Kennebec	18	18	17	12	12	18	21	20	21	23	30	30	20	
McIntosh	14	14	13	12	17	24	29	30	30	36	40	41	28	
Milbank	16	20	20	17	9	6	6	7	14	22	22	21	28	
Miller	18	18	18	15	9	13	17	21	23	21	24	28	21	
Mobridge	15	14	15	10	14	16	20	24	25	25	29	33	23	
Murdo	17	16	15	10	16	24	25	22	28	32	35	30	18	
Pierre	15	15	15	8	12	18	22	22	21	25	32	31	20	
Redfield	18	17	16	15	9	12	15	18	23	21	22	28	21	
Sisseton	15	20	20	17	9	6	7	8	15	25	25	23	29	
Watertown	18	21	21	20	10	7	8	12	18	24	23	25	30	
Webster	18	22	21	20	10	8	12	14	22	29	26	28	31	
Wheaton	13	17	18	15	9	7	8	9	14	21	23	21	22	



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Rain departs today with partial clearing. A quick moving system crosses the forecast area tomorrow, with showers and non-severe thunderstorms.

Broton Daily Independent

Monday, April 29, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 308 ~ 15 of 63



Timing & Probability of 1/2" Tuesday

April 29, 2024
3:48 AM

	Mon					Tue							
	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am	3am	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm
Aberdeen	20	15	10	5	0	0	0	5	70	70	90	90	10
Britton	20	20	20	10	0	0	0	5	50	50	95	95	20
Brookings	10	5	10	5	0	0	0	5	5	40	100	95	15
Chamberlain	5	0	0	0	0	5	5	10	40	65	35	30	0
Clark	20	15	10	5	0	0	5	5	55	55	90	90	10
Eagle Butte	0	0	0	0	5	5	5	20	50	50	10	10	5
Ellendale	20	20	10	5	0	0	0	5	70	70	90	90	15
Eureka	20	5	0	0	0	5	5	10	85	85	70	70	5
Gettysburg	10	5	0	0	0	5	5	15	70	70	35	35	5
Huron	15	10	5	0	0	0	5	5	30	70	90	80	5
Kennebec	5	0	0	0	0	5	5	10	55	55	15	15	0
McIntosh	0	0	0	0	5	10	10	25	70	70	30	30	5
Milbank	35	15	5	5	0	0	0	0	30	30	90	90	30
Miller	15	5	0	0	0	0	5	10	80	80	65	65	5
Mobridge	10	5	0	0	0	5	5	20	70	70	40	40	5
Murdo	0	0	0	0	0	5	5	20	50	50	10	10	0
Pierre	5	0	0	0	0	0	5	15	50	50	10	10	0
Redfield	15	10	5	0	0	0	0	10	70	70	85	85	5
Sisseton	35	15	5	5	0	0	0	5	35	35	95	95	30
Watertown	25	15	5	5	0	0	0	0	40	40	90	90	15
Webster	25	15	10	5	0	0	0	5	45	45	90	90	20
Wheaton	45	20	5	5	0	0	0	0	20	20	90	90	40

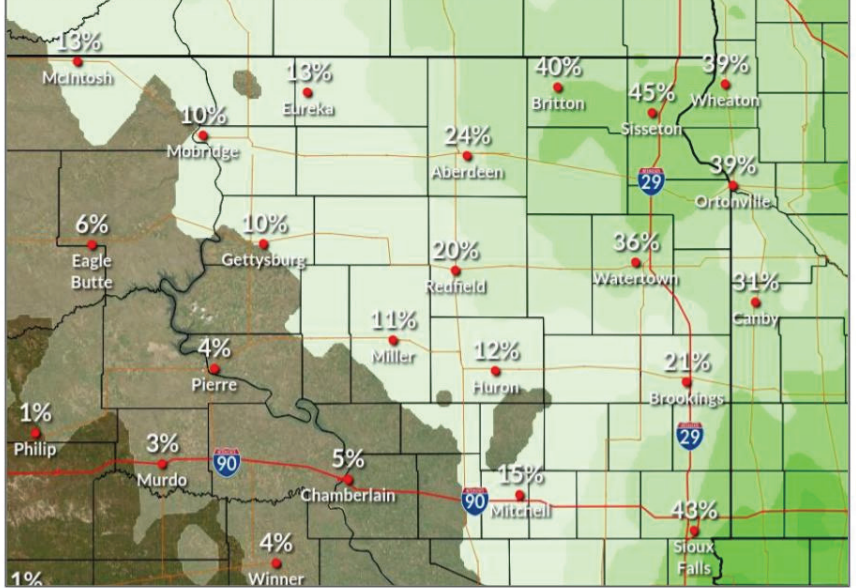
Percent Chance of 0.50" of Rain or More

For the 24 hours ending on Wed May 1, 2024 at 7:00AM CDT

Weather Forecast Office

Aberdeen, SD

Issued Apr 29, 2024 2:53 AM CDT



Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 29, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 308 ~ 16 of 63

Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 45 °F at 12:36 AM

Low Temp: 40 °F at 11:22 PM

Wind: 21 mph at 2:56 PM

Precip: : 0.35

Day length: 14 hours, 17 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 92 in 1934

Record Low: 16 in 1966

Average High: 64

Average Low: 37

Average Precip in April: 1.82

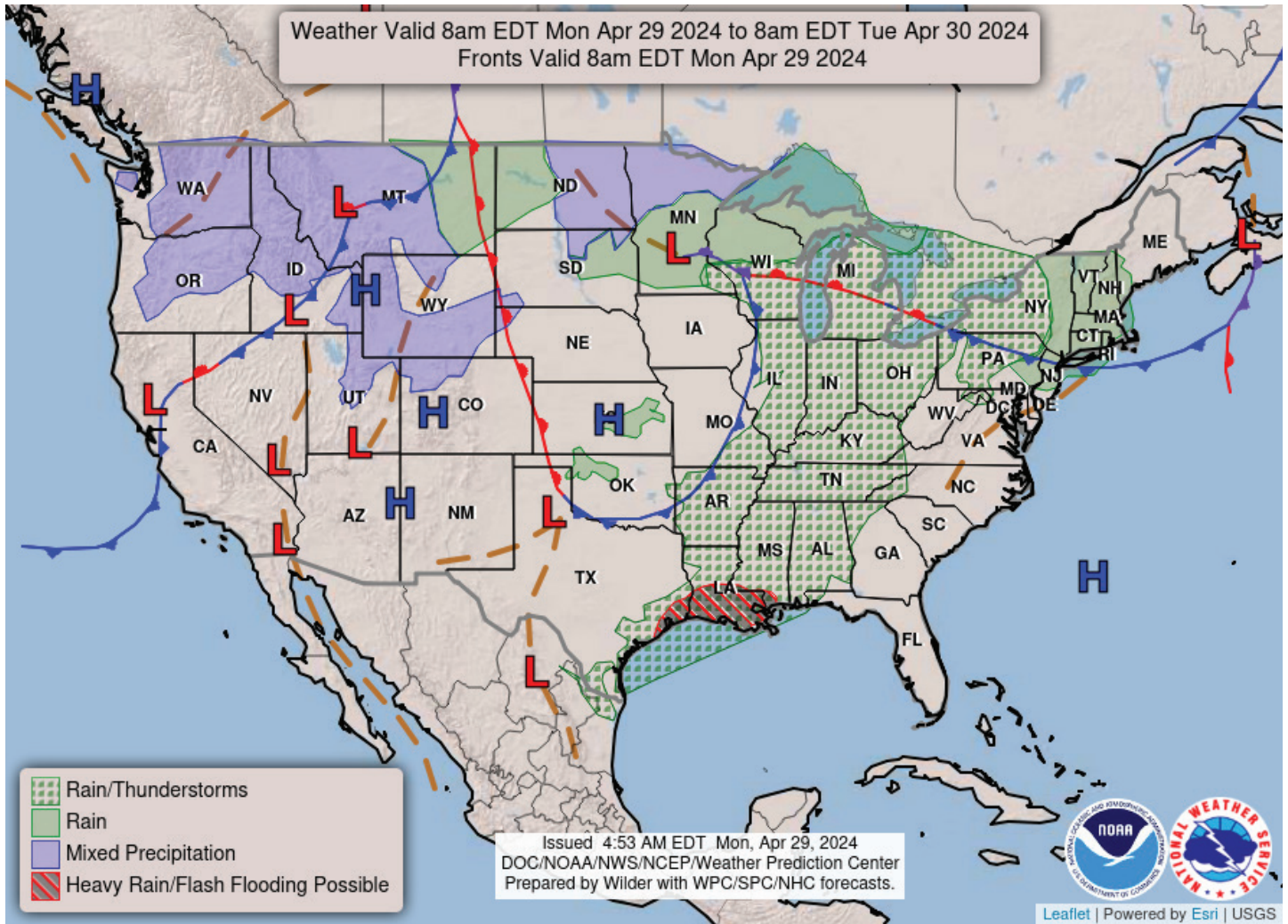
Precip to date in April: 3.25

Average Precip to date: 3.88

Precip Year to Date: 4.20

Sunset Tonight: 8:38:37 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:19:09 am



Today in Weather History

April 29, 1942: An estimated F3 tornado moved east through Marshall County, destroying almost every building on a farm northeast of Kidder. Barns were heavily damaged on two other farms. One person was reported killed, with five others injured.

1905 - The town of Taylor, in southeastern Texas, was deluged with 2.4 inches of rain in fifteen minutes. (The Weather Channel)

1910: The temperature at Kansas City MO soared to 95 degrees to establish a record for April. Four days earlier the afternoon high in Kansas City was 44 degrees following a record cold morning low of 34 degrees.

1963 - A tornado, as much as 100 yards in width, touched down south of Shannon, MS. The tornado destroyed twenty-seven homes along its eighteen mile path, killing three persons. Asphalt was torn from Highway 45 and thrown hundreds of yards away. Little rain or snow accompanied the tornado, so it was visible for miles. (The Weather Channel)

1973 - The Mississippi River reached a crest of 43.4 feet, breaking the previous record of 42 feet established in 1785. (David Ludlum)

1987: A storm off the southeast coast of Massachusetts blanketed southern New England with heavy snow on the 28 through the 29th. Totals of three inches at Boston, 11 inches at Milton, and 17 inches at Worcester Massachusetts were records for so late in the season. Princeton Massachusetts was buried under 25 inches of snow.

1988 - Thunderstorms produced large hail and high winds in central Texas. Baseball size hail was reported at Nixon, and wind gusts to 70 mph were reported at Cotulla. Heavy rain in Maine caused flooding along the Pemigewasset and Ammonoosuc Rivers. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather in Arkansas, Louisiana and eastern Texas, with more than 70 reports of large hail and damaging winds. Softball size hail was reported at Palestine TX. Hail as large as tennis balls caused ten million dollars damage around Pine Bluff AR. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 - A storm system crossing northern New Mexico blanketed parts of the Rocky Mountain Region and the Northern High Plains with heavy snow, and produced blizzard conditions in central Montana. Much of southern Colorado was buried under one to three feet of snow. Pueblo tied an April record with 16.8 inches of snow in 24 hours. Strong canyon winds in New Mexico, enhanced by local showers, gusted to 65 mph at Albuquerque. Afternoon temperatures across the Great Plains Region ranged from the 20s in North Dakota to 107 degrees at Laredo TX. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1991: Southeast Bangladesh was devastated by a tropical cyclone with sustained winds of approximately 155 mph in the during the late night hours. A 20-foot storm surge inundated the offshore islands south of Chittagong and pushed water from the Bay of Bengal inland for miles. Best estimated put the loss of life from this cyclone between 135,000 and 145,000 people.

Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

A man who was greatly overweight made an appointment with a psychiatrist. He wanted to know why he could not control his eating.

"Why," he asked, "am I so fat?"

Pausing to think for a moment, the psychiatrist responded, "Because your life is focused on food. When you go to a baseball game, you indulge in hotdogs and beer. When you watch TV, it means snacks like candy, chips and other snacks. When..."

Before he gave another example the patient interrupted and said, "You're right. Now tell me, what type of food do you serve during your sessions?"

Whatever is uppermost in our minds is what we live for and eventually die for. Jesus, wanting us to be sure our priorities are the ones that lead us to living God-pleasing lives said, "Blessed are those who are hungry and thirsty for righteousness for they will be satisfied."

Whenever we surrender to anything in our life that is self-destructive or self-defeating, it is a sure sign that He does not have His proper place of honor in our lives. Peace and healing come only from Him.

Prayer: Lord, as we look at our lives, may we realize that if things are out of control, we need to search our hearts for Your solution. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Blessed are those who are hungry and thirsty for righteousness for they will be satisfied. Matthew 5:6



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

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 29, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 308 ~ 19 of 63

The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

Subscription Form

All prices listed include 6.5% Sales Tax

- Black & White \$48.99/year
- Colored \$79.88/year
- Colored \$42.60/6 months
- E-Weekly* \$31.95/year

* The E-Weekly is a PDF file emailed to you each week. It does not grant you access to the GDI/Video Archives.

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City _____

State, Zip Code _____

E-mail _____

Phone Number _____

Mail Completed Form to:

Groton Independent

P.O. Box 34

Groton, SD 57445-0034

or scan and email to paperpaul@grotonsd.net

Groton Daily Independent

www.397news.com

Subscription Form

This option will grant you access to the GDI/Video Archives.

- 1 Month \$15.98
- 3 Months \$26.63
- 6 Months \$31.95
- 9 Months \$42.60
- 12 Months \$53.25

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City _____

State, Zip Code _____

Phone Number _____

The following will be used for your log-in information.

E-mail _____

Password _____

Pay with Paypal. Type the following into your browser window:

paypal.me/paperpaul



Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 29, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 308 ~ 20 of 63



WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:
04.26.24

15 23 53 57 61 9

MegaPlier: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$257,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 15 Hrs 47
Mins 50 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
04.27.24

9 13 16 39 48 3

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$2,050,000

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 2 Mins 51
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
04.28.24

4 25 32 35 40 9

TOP PRIZE:
\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 17 Mins 51
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
04.27.24

6 7 25 28 34

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$75,000

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 15 Hrs 17
Mins 51 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
04.27.24

12 28 36 47 65 22

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 46 Mins 51
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
04.27.24

9 30 53 55 62 23

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$164,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 46 Mins 51
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the Associated Press

Scotland's leader resigns as he struggles to win support for weakened government

By DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Scotland's first minister, Humza Yousaf, has resigned rather than face a no-confidence vote just days after he torpedoed a coalition with the Green Party by ditching a target for fighting climate change.

Yousaf, whose Scottish National Party has been weakened by a campaign finance scandal and divisions over transgender rights, stepped down after failing to strike a deal with a breakaway nationalist party whose single seat could have given him a majority in Scotland's devolved regional parliament.

With no prospect of victory, Yousaf on Monday quit rather than face defeat later this week when Scottish lawmakers were scheduled to vote on motions of no confidence in Yousaf and his government.

The debacle in Scotland adds to the fevered political climate in the broader United Kingdom, where concerns about immigration, health care and government spending have undermined support for the ruling Conservative Party.

THIS IS A BREAKING NEWS UPDATE. AP's earlier story follows below.

LONDON (AP) — Scotland's leader is under pressure to resign as he struggles to engineer a deal to rescue his government after he torpedoed a coalition with the Green Party by ditching a key target for fighting climate change.

First Minister Humza Yousaf, whose Scottish National Party has been weakened by a campaign finance scandal and divisions over transgender rights, is scrambling to win the support of a breakaway nationalist party whose one seat in the Scottish parliament would allow him to survive a no-confidence vote later this week.

The crisis began earlier this month when Yousaf jettisoned Scotland's goal of cutting carbon emissions by 75% by 2030, then ended a coalition agreement with the Greens and unceremoniously kicked the party's two representatives out of his Cabinet. Yousaf has scheduled a news conference for noon local time (1100 GMT) in the Scottish capital, Edinburgh, where he is expected to resign, the BBC reported.

"Hurt egos have destroyed countries before now, so it's not exactly surprising that they are currently leading to the mess we're in," Murray Pittock, an expert on Scottish nationalism at the University of Glasgow, told The Associated Press. "And you can't hurt people's egos any more than by chucking them straight out of ministerial office with no warning and their entire party with them."

The debacle in Scotland adds to the fevered political climate in the broader United Kingdom, where concerns about immigration, health care and government spending have undermined support for the ruling Conservative Party.

The Tories and the main opposition Labour Party have each proposed a no-confidence motion in Yousaf and his government as they seek to weaken the SNP before a U.K.-wide parliamentary election expected to take place later this year. On Thursday, England and Wales will hold local elections that are seen as a barometer of support for the government.

In an effort to save his government, Yousaf had written to all of the party leaders asking for separate meetings to discuss their concerns "in a hopefully constructive spirit."

But the tight electoral math in Scotland means that Yousaf's fate hinges on the upstart Alba Party, which holds just one seat in the Scottish Parliament. The SNP has 63 of the 128 voting lawmakers, leaving Yousaf one vote short of what he needs to eke out a victory.

Founded in 2021 by former SNP leader and First Minister Alex Salmond, Alba sees itself as the true voice of Scottish independence. Alba's only member of the Scottish Parliament is Ash Regan, who opposed Yousaf in the last SNP leadership election before defecting to Alba.

As the price of its support for the government, Alba is demanding that Yousaf put independence at the

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 29, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 308 ~ 22 of 63

top of his agenda, move away from divisive "identity politics" and focus on issues such as jobs, education and investment in Scottish industry.

Salmond said on Sunday that he was hoping for a "positive outcome" from the talks, but Alba's leaders would be meeting to get ready for an election in case things don't work out.

"We have, obviously, to prepare that things don't work out, in which case there could be an election in Scotland," he told the BBC.

Alba's central role in the crisis is symbolic of the disarray confronting Scotland's independence movement a decade after voters rejected the SNP's plan to sever ties with the U.K.

Yousaf became the leader of the SNP and first minister of Scotland in March 2023 after former leader Nicola Sturgeon stepped down, citing the toll more than eight years in office had taken on her.

Sturgeon's resignation came amid a police investigation into allegations that the party had misused money donated to fund a second independence referendum.

Sturgeon was questioned and released without being charged last June. Her husband, former SNP treasurer Peter Murrell, was charged with embezzlement earlier this month. Both deny any wrongdoing in the case.

Support for the SNP also declined after the party backed legislation to make it easier for people to change their gender, and implemented a hate crime law that made transgender identity a protected characteristic, even though the same protections weren't given to all women.

Then came Yousaf's decision to scrap the 2030 target for greenhouse gas reductions.

Although he said Scotland would still achieve its goal of net-zero carbon emissions by 2045, the decision sparked tensions with his coalition partners. The Green Party initially backed the change, but party leaders said they would poll the broader membership and reverse course if necessary.

Last Thursday, Yousaf decided to end the coalition abruptly.

Labour is the biggest beneficiary of the ructions within the SNP, because both parties support left-leaning policies on issues such as worker rights and government spending. That has huge implications for this year's general election as Labour tries to wrest control of the U.K. Parliament from the Conservatives.

The Labour vote in Scotland dropped to 18.6% in the 2019 general election from 45.6% in 1997. During the same period, support for the SNP jumped to 45% from 22.1%. Labour currently has just one member of Parliament from Scotland, compared with 43 for the SNP.

An early election in Scotland could help Labour build momentum for its U.K.-wide general election campaign, Pittock said.

"The other side to the big picture is that pragmatism is really important in politics," Pittock said. "Populism, virtue signaling, ideology, ideologically driven legislation — all of these things have a real price, and Scotland is currently paying it."

Demonstrations roil US campuses ahead of graduations as protesters spar over the war in Gaza

By CHRISTOPHER WEBER, CAROLYN THOMPSON and MARGERY BECK Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Protests are roiling college campuses across the U.S. as upcoming graduation ceremonies are threatened by disruptive demonstrators, with students and others sparring over the war in Gaza and its mounting death toll.

Many campuses were largely quiet over the weekend as demonstrators stayed by tents erected as protest headquarters, although a few colleges saw forced removals and arrests. Many students are demanding their universities cut financial ties with Israel over the large-scale operation in Gaza it says was launched to stamp out the militant Palestinian group Hamas.

Protesters on both sides of the rancorous debate shouted and shoved each other during dueling demonstrations Sunday at the University of California, Los Angeles. The university stepped up security after "some physical altercations broke out among demonstrators," Mary Osako, vice chancellor for UCLA Strategic Communications, said in a statement. There were no reports of arrests or injuries.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 29, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 308 ~ 23 of 63

About 275 people were arrested on Saturday at various campuses including Indiana University at Bloomington, Arizona State University and Washington University in St. Louis. The number of arrests nationwide approached 900 since New York police removed a pro-Palestinian protest encampment at Columbia University and arrested more than 100 demonstrators on April 18.

The plight of students who have been arrested has become a central part of protests, with the students and a growing number of faculty demanding amnesty for protesters. At issue is whether the suspensions and legal records will follow students through their adult lives.

Faculty members at universities in California, Georgia and Texas have initiated or passed largely symbolic votes of no confidence in their leadership.

White House national security spokesman John Kirby said President Joe Biden "knows that there are very strong feelings" but would leave managing the protests to local authorities.

"People should have the ability to air their views and to share their perspectives publicly but it has to be peaceful," Kirby said on ABC's "This Week."

Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell, in an interview that aired Sunday, called it "a dangerous situation" and placed the responsibility with college administrators.

"There's also antisemitism, which is completely unacceptable. I've been shocked to see that in this country," he said on NBC's "Meet the Press."

HOW IT STARTED

The nationwide campus protests began as a response by some students to Israel's offensive in Gaza after Hamas launched a deadly attack on southern Israel on Oct. 7.

Militants killed about 1,200 people, most of them civilians, and took roughly 250 hostages. Vowing to stamp out Hamas, Israel has killed more than 34,000 Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, according to the local health ministry.

Israel and its supporters have branded the university protests as antisemitic, while critics of Israel say it uses such allegations to silence opponents. Although some protesters have been caught on camera making antisemitic remarks or violent threats, organizers of the protests, some of whom are Jewish, say it is a peaceful movement aimed at defending Palestinian rights and protesting the war.

Student demonstrations have sprung up across the U.S. in various locations including New York, California, Missouri and Massachusetts.

NEW YORK

Early protests at Columbia University in New York City, where demonstrators set up tents in the center of the campus, sparked pro-Palestinian demonstrations across the country. The demonstrations have caused the school to hold remote classes.

Columbia has set a series of deadlines for protesters to leave the encampment, which they have missed, but the school said in an email to students that bringing back police "at this time" would be counterproductive. The students and administrators have engaged in negotiations to end the disruptions, the university said in a statement Saturday night.

On Sunday, students walked among dozens of colorful tents in front of Low Library, where rows of chairs already have been set up in preparation for commencement in May.

CALIFORNIA

At UCLA, police set up barricades before hundreds of demonstrators on both sides joined a growing crowd Sunday near tents where pro-Palestinian students have been staying around-the-clock.

Pro-Israel demonstrators who arrived for a "Stand in Support of Jewish Students" rally said their goal was to "stand up against hatred and antisemitism." The counterprotest was organized by the Israeli-American Council, whose leader Elan Carr urged marchers to remain peaceful, the Los Angeles Times reported.

"We don't want any violence," Carr told the crowd as the rally ended. "Don't engage. You go right to your cars, you move peacefully. Can we agree?"

Across town, the University of Southern California said it was open Sunday after administrators shut down the campus a day earlier because of what the school called vandalism and disruptions.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 29, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 308 ~ 24 of 63

USC drew criticism after refusing to allow this year's class valedictorian, who has publicly supported the Palestinian cause, to make a commencement speech. Administrators then scrapped the keynote speech by filmmaker Jon M. Chu. Last week the school announced the cancellation of its main graduation event, a day after more than 90 protesters were arrested by police in riot gear.

In the northern part of the state, officials on Saturday ordered an "enforced hard closure" of California State Polytechnic University, Humboldt. Two halls remained occupied by pro-Palestinian demonstrators. The school said Sunday that the cost of the occupation was estimated to be in the millions, including damage done by "theft, vandalism and graffiti."

MISSOURI

Washington University in St. Louis locked some campus buildings and arrested protesters Saturday. Photos showed uniformed police attempting to remove masked protesters as others, also wearing masks, linked arms to thwart the efforts.

The university said in a statement that more than 100 people, including 23 students and four university employees, were arrested on suspicion of trespassing. Megan Green, president of the St. Louis Board of Aldermen, said in a social media post that she was present and the protest remained calm "until the police came in like an ambush."

Green Party presidential candidate Jill Stein said in a social media post that she and two of her campaign managers were among those arrested.

The university's statement defended the action and said protesters "did not have good intentions on our campus and that this demonstration had the potential to get out of control and become dangerous."

Some of those arrested also face charges of resisting arrest and assault resulting from injuries to three police officers including a severe concussion, a broken finger and a groin injury, the statement said.

The Missouri chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations condemned the arrests as "heavy-handed."

MASSACHUSETTS

Police in riot gear cleared an encampment on the campus of Northeastern University in Boston on Saturday.

About 102 protesters were arrested and will be charged with trespassing and disorderly conduct, the Massachusetts State Police said.

Northeastern said in a statement that the demonstration, which began two days ago, had become "infiltrated by professional organizers" with no affiliation to the university and antisemitic slurs, including "kill the Jews," had been used.

The Huskies for a Free Palestine student group disputed the university's account, saying in a statement that counterprotesters were to blame for the slurs and no student protesters "repeated the disgusting hate speech."

Students at the Boston protest said a counterprotester attempted to instigate hate speech but insisted their event was peaceful.

Spain's Prime Minister Sánchez says he'll continue in office after days of reflection

By CIARÁN GILES and JOSEPH WILSON Associated Press

MADRID (AP) — Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez on Monday ended days of speculation about his future by saying he will continue in office "with even more strength."

Sánchez shocked his country last Wednesday by taking five days off to think about his future, following the decision by a court to open preliminary proceedings against his wife on corruption allegations.

"I have decided to continue on with even more strength at the helm of the government of Spain," he said in a televised speech after informing King Felipe VI of the decision earlier Monday.

His resignation would have deprived Europe of its longest-serving Socialist prime minister currently in charge of a major European Union country right before European elections in June.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 29, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 308 ~ 25 of 63

"It is a decision that does not mean a return to the status quo, this will mark a before and after, I promise you that," Sánchez said, without detailing what steps he could take to curtail "the smear campaign" he says he and his family is facing.

The eurozone's fourth-largest economy had been in suspense since Sánchez, prime minister since 2018, posted an emotional letter on X on Wednesday before he holed up in his Moncloa Palace, the prime minister's residence in Madrid. In it he said the moves against wife were too personal an attack on his family and he needed time to decide on his priorities.

In that letter, where he declared himself "deeply in love" with wife Begoña Gómez, he said that he could no longer just stand aside and watch her being targeted by a legal probe brought by allegations by a right-wing platform that accused her of using her position to influence business deals.

The group, Manos Limpias, or "Clean Hands," acknowledged that the complaint was based on newspaper articles. Spanish prosecutors say it should be thrown out.

The expectation Monday was such that Spain's state broadcaster had put up a 10-minute countdown clock before his announcement on the screen during their morning news talk show.

Speaking from the steps of Moncloa Palace, Sánchez said that he and his wife "know that this campaign to discredit them won't stop" but that he has decided that he couldn't give his adversaries the satisfaction of giving up.

Rallies by his supporters over the past few days played a part in his decision, he said.

Essentially Sánchez had four options: resign, seek a parliamentary vote of confidence, call a new election or remain in office.

Any one of them could upset key legislative plans as well as a crucial election in the Catalonia region in May and the European Parliament election in June.

Sánchez said that the letter, the unprecedented hiatus that has been criticized, and his final decision to stay on "was not done out of a political calculus."

"I am aware that I have shown a degree of personal intimacy that is not normally permitted in politics," he added.

Whether it was genuinely motivated by concerns for his family or not, it will have a political impact.

"He gifted himself a free campaign rally for five full days. Those who were with him will now be with him to the death," Montserrat Nebrera, political analyst and professor of constitutional law at the International University of Catalonia, told The Associated Press.

"It looks like a campaign move to boost the polarization of the electorate between those who are with him and those who are against him," she said. "It is designed to have an impact in the Catalan elections and even more so in the European elections, which were not looking great for the Socialists."

Sánchez, 52, was able to form a new minority leftist coalition government in November to start another four-year term thanks to the exceedingly fragile support of a handful of small regional parties. While popular internationally, he is loved or despised in Spain.

Sánchez blamed the investigation against his wife on online news sites politically aligned with the leading opposition conservative Popular Party and the far-right Vox party that spread what he called "spurious" allegations.

His supporters say this should be a wake-up call to react against baseless attacks that Sánchez says are poisoning Spanish politics.

The Popular Party, however, said Sánchez's behavior was frivolous, adolescent and unbecoming of a leader. The Popular Party and the far-right Vox party have been attacking Sánchez relentlessly for years, regularly comparing him to a dictator and a traitor to Spain for doing deals with separatist parties that support him in Parliament.

"We live in a society that teaches us and demands us to to keep going at full throttle no matter what," Sánchez said during his short speech. "But sometimes in life the only way to move forward is to stop and reflect and decide with clarity what path we want to take."

Likely missile attack by Yemen's Houthi rebels targets a container ship in the Red Sea

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — A suspected missile attack by Yemen's Houthi rebels targeted a container ship in the Red Sea on Monday, authorities said, the latest assault in their campaign against international shipping in the crucial maritime route.

The attack happened off the coast of Mokha, Yemen, the British military's United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations center said, without offering any other immediate details.

It urged vessels to exercise caution in the area.

The private security firm Ambrey said a salvo of three missiles targeted a Malta-flagged container ship traveling from Djibouti onward to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

"The vessel was targeted due to its listed operator's ongoing trade with Israel," Ambrey said.

CMA CGM, a Marseille, France-based shipper, had its Malta-flagged CMA CGM Manta Ray due to sail to Jeddah from Djibouti on Monday. However, the shipper said the vessel remained at harbor in Djibouti and could not have been targeted in the incident.

The Houthis did not immediately acknowledge any attack, though suspicion fell on the group. It typically takes the rebels several hours to claim their assaults.

The Houthis say their attacks on shipping in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden are aimed at pressuring Israel to end its war against Hamas in Gaza, which has killed more than 34,000 Palestinians there. The war began after Hamas-led militants attacked Israel on Oct. 7, killing 1,200 people and taking some 250 others hostage.

The Houthis have launched more than 50 attacks on shipping, seized one vessel and sunk another since November, according to the U.S. Maritime Administration.

Houthi attacks have dropped in recent weeks as the rebels have been targeted by a U.S.-led airstrike campaign in Yemen. Shipping through the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden has declined because of the threat.

American officials have speculated that the rebels may be running out of weapons as a result of the U.S.-led campaign against them and after firing drones and missiles steadily for months. However, the rebels have renewed their attacks in the past week.

The Houthis on Saturday claimed they shot down another of the U.S. military's MQ-9 Reaper drones, airing footage of parts that corresponded to known pieces of the unmanned aircraft. U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Bryon J. McGarry, a Defense Department spokesperson, acknowledged to The Associated Press on Saturday that "a U.S. Air Force MQ-9 drone crashed in Yemen." He said an investigation was underway, without elaborating.

Israeli officials concerned about possible ICC arrest warrants as pressure mounts over war in Gaza

By JOSEF FEDERMAN and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israeli officials appeared increasingly concerned that the International Criminal Court may issue arrest warrants against the country's leaders, as international pressure mounts over the war in Gaza. Airstrikes overnight into Monday killed 22 people in a southern city, according to hospital records.

The deaths in Rafah included six women and five children, one of whom was just 5 days old, according to the records and an Associated Press reporter. Israel is planning an invasion of the city — though its closest ally, the United States, and others have repeatedly warned against it, saying an offensive would spell catastrophe for the more than a million Palestinians sheltering there.

Meanwhile, Israeli officials have referred in recent days to an ICC probe launched three years ago into possible war crimes committed by Israel and Palestinian militants going back to the 2014 Israel-Hamas war. The probe is also looking at Israel's construction of settlements in occupied territory the Palestinians want for a future state.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 29, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 308 ~ 27 of 63

There was no comment from the court on Monday, and it has given no indication warrants in the case are imminent.

But Israel's Foreign Ministry said late Sunday that it had informed Israeli missions of "rumors" that warrants might be issued against senior political and military officials. Foreign Minister Israel Katz said any such warrants would "provide a morale boost" to Hamas and other militant groups.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Friday that Israel "will never accept any attempt by the ICC to undermine its inherent right of self-defense."

"The threat to seize the soldiers and officials of the Middle East's only democracy and the world's only Jewish state is outrageous. We will not bow to it," he posted on the social media platform X.

It was not clear what sparked the Israeli concerns. A series of Israeli announcements in recent days about allowing more humanitarian aid into Gaza appears to be aimed in part at heading off possible ICC action.

ICC prosecutor Karim Khan said during a visit to the region in December that the investigation is "moving forward at pace, with rigor, with determination and with an insistence that we act not on emotion but on solid evidence."

Neither Israel nor the United States accept the ICC's jurisdiction, but any warrants could put Israeli officials at risk of arrest in other countries. They would also serve as a major rebuke of Israel's actions at a time when pro-Palestinian protests have spread across U.S. college campuses.

The International Court of Justice, a separate body, is investigating whether Israel has committed acts of genocide in the ongoing war in Gaza, with any ruling expected to take years. Israel has rejected allegations of wrongdoing and accused both international courts of bias.

Israel has instead accused Hamas of genocide over its Oct. 7 attack that triggered the war. Militants stormed through army bases and farming communities across southern Israel, killing some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and taking around 250 hostages.

In response, Israel launched a massive air, sea and ground offensive that has killed over 34,000 Palestinians, mostly women and children, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which does not distinguish between civilians and combatants in its tally.

Israel blames the high civilian death toll on Hamas because the militants fight in dense, residential areas. The military says it has killed over 12,000 militants, without providing evidence.

The war has driven around 80% of Gaza's population of 2.3 million from their homes, caused vast destruction in several towns and cities, and pushed northern Gaza to the brink of famine.

Israel has vowed to expand its ground offensive to Rafah, where over 1 million Palestinians have sought shelter from fighting elsewhere. Israel says Rafah is the last Hamas stronghold, with thousands of fighters embedded there.

U.S. President Joe Biden's administration, which has provided crucial military and political support for the offensive, has urged Israel not to invade Rafah over fears it could cause a humanitarian catastrophe — concerns he reiterated in a phone call with Netanyahu on Sunday.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken is expected to visit Israel on his latest trip to the region that began in Saudi Arabia on Monday.

The U.S., Egypt and Qatar are meanwhile pushing Israel and Hamas to accept an agreement they drafted that would free some of the hostages and bring about at least a temporary cease-fire. Hamas is still believed to be holding around 100 hostages and the remains of some 30 others after most of the rest were freed in exchange for the release of Palestinian prisoners last year.

Hamas has said it will not release the remaining hostages without an agreement to end the war. Netanyahu has rejected that demand, saying Israel will continue its offensive until Hamas is destroyed and all the hostages are returned.

Tractor-trailers with no one aboard? The future is near for self-driving trucks on US roads

By TOM KRISHER AP Auto Writer

PITTSBURGH (AP) — On a three-lane test track along the Monongahela River, an 18-wheel tractor-trailer rounded a curve. No one was on board.

A quarter-mile ahead, the truck's sensors spotted a trash can blocking one lane and a tire in another. In less than a second, it signaled, moved into the unobstructed lane and rumbled past the obstacles.

The self-driving semi, outfitted with 25 laser, radar and camera sensors, is owned by Pittsburgh-based Aurora Innovation. Late this year, Aurora plans to start hauling freight on Interstate 45 between the Dallas and Houston areas with 20 driverless trucks.

Within three or four years, Aurora and its competitors expect to put thousands such self-driving trucks on America's public freeways. The goal is for the trucks, which can run nearly around the clock without any breaks, to speed the flow of goods, accelerating delivery times and perhaps lowering costs. They'll travel short distances on secondary roads, too.

The companies say the autonomous trucks will save on fuel, too, because they don't have to stop and will drive at more consistent speeds.

The image of a fully loaded, 80,000-pound driverless truck weaving around cars on a super-highway at 65 mph or more may strike a note of terror. A poll conducted in January by AAA found that a decisive majority of Americans — 66% — said they would fear riding in an autonomous vehicle.

But in less than nine months, a seven-year science experiment by Aurora will end, and driverless trucks will start carrying loads between terminals for FedEx, Uber Freight, Werner and other partners. Aurora and most of its rivals plan to start running freight routes in Texas, where snow and ice are generally rare.

For years, it seemed as though the initial venture for autonomous vehicles would be ride hailing in large cities. But General Motors' Cruise robotaxi unit is struggling in the aftermath of a serious crash. And Alphabet's Waymo faces opposition to expanding its autonomous ride service in California. The result is that self-driving trucks are poised to become the first computer-controlled vehicles deployed in widespread numbers on public roads.

The vehicles have drawn skepticism from safety advocates, who warn that with almost no federal regulation, it will be mainly up to the companies themselves to determine when the semis are safe enough to operate without humans on board. The critics complain that federal agencies, including the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, take a generally passive approach to safety, typically acting only after crashes occur. And most states provide scant regulation.

But Aurora and other companies that are developing the systems argue that years of testing show that their trucks will actually be safer than human-driven ones. They note that the vehicles' laser and radar sensors can "see" farther than human eyes can. The trucks never tire, as human drivers do. They never become distracted or impaired by alcohol or drugs.

"We want to be out there with thousands or tens of thousands of trucks on the road," said Chris Urmson, Aurora's CEO and formerly head of Google's autonomous vehicle operations. "And to do that, we have to be safe. It's the only way that the public will accept it. Frankly, it's the only way our customers will accept it."

Phil Koopman, a professor at Carnegie Mellon University who studies vehicle automation safety, said he agreed that self-driving trucks can theoretically be safer than human-driven ones — for the very reason that they lack drivers who might become distracted or impaired. But he cautioned that the vehicles' computers inevitably will make errors. And just how the trucks will fare in real-world situations, he said, will depend on the quality of their safety engineering.

With billions of dollars in investments at stake, Koopman said, he wonders how the companies will balance safety decisions against cost concerns.

"Everything I see indicates they're trying to do the right thing," he said. "But the devil is in the details."

On the test track, reporters saw Aurora's semis avoid simulations of road obstacles, including pedestrians, a blown tire, even a horse. But the trucks were running at only 35 mph (56 kilometers per hour) in

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 29, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 308 ~ 29 of 63

a controlled environment with nothing unexpected happening. (The trucks are being tested with human safety drivers on Texas freeways at speeds of 65 mph (105 kph) or higher.)

On the track, the trucks spotted obstacles more than a quarter-mile away and acted immediately to avoid them. Urmson said the trucks' laser sensors can detect people walking on a highway at night, far beyond the distance of headlights.

Since 2021, Aurora trucks have autonomously hauled freight over 1 million miles on public highways — but with human safety drivers in the cabs. There have been only three crashes, Urmson said, all of them caused by mistakes by human drivers in other vehicles.

A federal database that started in June 2021 shows at least 13 crashes with other vehicles involving autonomous semis, including three involving Aurora. In all the cases, the crashes were caused by other vehicles changing lanes or rear-ending the trucks. Sometimes, human safety drivers took over just before the crash.

Aurora won't compromise safety, Urmson said, even if ensuring it might delay the timetable for achieving a profit.

"If we put a vehicle on the road that isn't sufficiently safe — that we aren't confident in the safety of — then it kills everything else," he said.

Last month, when Urmson displayed the trucks to Wall Street analysts in Pittsburgh, he said the publicly held company expects to turn a profit by late 2027 or early 2028. To meet that goal, Aurora must succeed in putting thousands of the trucks on the roads, hauling freight from terminal to terminal and collecting a per-mile charge from customers.

The company's competitors — Plus.ai, Gatik, Kodiak Robotics and others — also plan soon to put driverless trucks on the roads hauling freight for customers. Gatik expects it to happen this year or next; the others haven't set timetables.

Don Burnette, CEO of Kodiak, said freeways are a better environment for autonomous vehicles than congested cities where ride-hailing robotaxis have been running. There are fewer pedestrians, and fewer unexpected things happen. Still, there are higher speeds and longer braking distances.

In testing on highways with human backup drivers, Burnette said, Kodiak has never experienced a crash in which its trucks were at fault.

"At the end of the day," Burnette said, "these trucks should be much safer than human drivers."

Almost every year in the United States, a tractor-trailer plows into traffic that is stopped because of road construction, often causing deaths and injuries. By contrast, Burnette said, autonomous trucks pay attention all the time and are always watching 360 degrees.

Perhaps so. But at a Buc-ee's mega convenience store and gas station along Interstate 45 about 35 miles south of Dallas, the prospect of driverless semis struck a note of fear.

"It sounds like a disaster waiting to happen," said Kent Franz, a high school basketball coach in Chandler, Oklahoma, who was traveling to Houston for a wedding. "I've heard of the driverless cars — Tesla, what have you — and the accidents they've been having. Eighteen-wheelers? Something that heavy, relying on technology that has proven it can be faulty? Doesn't sound very comfortable to me."

Patti Pierce, a retired accountant from Plano, Texas, said she would be OK with the technology — in about a decade.

"I don't want to be on the road with them right now," she said. "I like the gadgets in my car, but I'm not sure the technology is good enough right now to have a truck that drives itself."

No federal regulations specifically cover autonomous vehicles, Koopman of Carnegie Mellon noted. Most states have no such regulations, either. Koopman said the automated-vehicle industry has persuaded many states to bar local governments from enacting such regulations. The result, he said, is that the public must trust the companies that are deploying autonomous semis.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, both part of the federal Department of Transportation, lack authority to stop autonomous vehicles from going on the roads. If something goes wrong, though, they can require recalls or order trucks out of service.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 29, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 308 ~ 30 of 63

"You can't expect the government to protect you here," Koopman said. "The company's going to decide when they think they're safe, and the only thing the regulator is going to do is judge them after the fact."

For the past five years, the motor carrier administration has been preparing safety standards for trucks with automated driving systems. The standards will govern inspections, maintenance and the remote monitoring of the trucks. But it's unclear when the rules will emerge from the regulatory process.

In the meantime, the autonomous semi companies say they can help address a truck driver shortage, estimated by the industry to amount to 64,000 drivers. Yet there also are worries that autonomous trucks eventually will supplant human drivers and cost them their livelihoods.

The Teamsters union, which represents about 600,000 drivers, most of them truckers, is pushing state legislatures to require human drivers to monitor the self-driving systems, contending that they are unsafe. A 2021 Transportation Department study concluded that the nationwide use of fully automated semis was years away, giving drivers time to transition to other transportation and logistics jobs that will be created.

Aurora's Urmson said he thinks driverless semis will complement the work already done by human drivers, because many more goods will have to be moved for a growing population.

"If you're driving a truck today," he said, "my expectation is you're going to be able to retire driving a truck."

Blinken says Israel must still do more to boost humanitarian aid to Gaza

By MATTHEW LEE AP Diplomatic Writer

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia (AP) — U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Monday that Israel must still do more to increase the flow of humanitarian aid into the besieged Gaza Strip and that he would use his current Middle East trip — his seventh to the region since the Israel-Hamas war started in October — to press that case with Israeli leaders.

Speaking to Gulf Cooperation Council foreign ministers in Riyadh, Blinken said best way to ease the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza would be to conclude an elusive cease-fire agreement that would release hostages held by Hamas. But, in the meantime, he said it was critical to improve conditions now.

"The most effective way to address the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, to alleviate the suffering of children, women and men, and to create space for a more just and durable solution is to get a cease-fire and the hostages out," he said.

"But we're also not waiting on a cease-fire to take the necessary steps to meet the needs of civilians in Gaza," Blinken said. He said that because President Joe Biden has been insisting that Israel do more, including in his phone call with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Sunday, there had been improvements, although not nearly enough.

"We have seen measurable progress in the last few weeks, including the opening of new crossings and increased volume of aid delivery to Gaza and within Gaza, and the building of the U.S. maritime corridor, which will open in the coming weeks. But it is not enough. We still need to get more aid in and around Gaza," he said.

"We need to improve deconfliction with humanitarian assistance workers. And we have to find greater efficiency and greater safety and deconfliction is at the heart of that. And, finally we have to make sure that we're focusing not just on inputs, but on impact."

Scores of relief workers have been killed since the conflict began, and a deadly Israeli attack on a World Central Kitchen aid convoy in Gaza this month only highlighted the dangers and difficulties of protecting them. Israel has said the strike was a mistake and has disciplined officials involved.

World Central Kitchen says it would resume operations in Gaza on Monday after a four-week suspension.

The war has ground on since Hamas' deadly Oct. 7 attacks on Israel with little end in sight: more than 34,000 Palestinians have been killed, hundreds of thousands more are displaced and a humanitarian crisis in Gaza is worsening.

The conflict has fueled mass protests around the world that have spread to American college campuses. U.S. support for Israel, particularly arms transfers, has come under particular criticism, something the administration is keenly aware poses potential problems for Biden in an election year.

Blinken's trip comes amid renewed concerns about the conflict spreading in the Middle East and with once-promising prospects for Israeli-Saudi rapprochement effectively on hold as Israel refuses to consider one of the Saudis' main conditions for normalized relations: the creation of a Palestinian state.

Meanwhile, the Biden administration has been warning Israel against a major military operation on the southern Gaza city of Rafah, where more than a million Palestinians have fled to escape fighting further north. Israel has not yet launched such an offensive, but Netanyahu has repeatedly said that one will take place, asserting that it is the only way to wipe out Hamas.

Both topics were discussed during the Biden-Netanyahu phone call on Sunday, according to the White House and U.S. officials.

During his trip, Blinken said he would also underscore the absolute importance of not allowing the Israel-Hamas conflict to engulf the region.

The danger of conflagration was underscored this month when a suspected Israeli attack on an Iranian consular building in Syria prompted an unprecedented direct missile and drone response by Iran against Israel. An apparent retaliatory Israeli strike on Iran followed.

Although the tit-for-tat cycle appears to have ended for now, deep concerns remain that Iran or its proxies in Iraq, Lebanon, Syria or Yemen could act in such a way as to provoke a greater response from Israel or that Israel might take action that Iran feels it must retaliate for.

The Latest | Israeli airstrikes on Rafah kill at least 22 people, Palestinian health officials say

By The Associated Press undefined

Israeli airstrikes on the southern Gaza city of Rafah have killed at least 22 people, including six women and five children, Palestinian health officials said. One of the children killed in the strikes overnight into Monday was just 5 days old.

Israel has regularly carried out airstrikes on Rafah since the start of the war and has threatened to send in ground troops, saying Rafah is the last major Hamas stronghold in the coastal enclave. Over a million Palestinians have sought refuge in the city on the Egyptian border. The United States and others have urged Israel not to invade, fearing a humanitarian catastrophe.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Monday begins his seventh diplomatic mission to the Middle East since the Israel-Hamas war began more than six months ago.

Blinken's visit — which includes a little more than a day in Saudi Arabia before stops in Jordan and Israel on Tuesday and Wednesday — comes amid renewed concerns about the conflict spreading in the Middle East and with once-promising prospects for Israeli-Saudi rapprochement effectively on hold as Israel refuses to consider one of the Saudis' main conditions for normalized relations: the creation of a Palestinian state.

The Israel-Hamas war was sparked by the unprecedented Oct. 7 raid into southern Israel in which militants killed around 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducted around 250 hostages. Israel says the militants are still holding around 100 hostages and the remains of more than 30 others.

The war has killed more than 34,000 Palestinians, according to local health officials, around two-thirds of them children and women.

Currently:

- Hamas is reviewing an Israeli proposal for a cease-fire in Gaza, as a planned Rafah offensive looms
- Biden and Netanyahu speak as pressure is on Israel over planned Rafah invasion and cease-fire talks
- Blinken is back in the Middle East this week. He has his work cut out for him
- Top French diplomat arrives in Lebanon in attempt to broker a halt to Hezbollah-Israeli clashes
- Arrests roil US campuses nationwide ahead of graduation as protesters demand Israel ties be cut
- AP's full coverage of Israel-Hamas war

Here is the latest:

ISRAELI OFFICIALS APPEAR INCREASINGLY CONCERNED ICC MAY ISSUE ARREST WARRANTS

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 29, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 308 ~ 32 of 63

JERUSALEM — Israeli officials appear to be increasingly concerned that the International Criminal Court may issue arrest warrants against the country's leaders.

The ICC launched a probe three years ago into possible war crimes committed by Israel and Palestinian militants going back to the 2014 Israel-Hamas war, but it has given no indication such warrants are imminent. There was no comment from the court on Monday.

Israel's Foreign Ministry said late Sunday that it had informed Israeli missions of "rumors" that warrants might be issued against senior political and military officials.

Foreign Minister Israel Katz said "we expect the court to prevent the issuance of arrest warrants against senior Israeli officials," saying such warrants would "provide a morale boost" to Hamas and other groups that Israel is fighting.

A series of Israeli announcements in recent days about allowing more humanitarian aid into Gaza appears to be aimed in part at heading off possible ICC action.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Friday that Israel "will never accept any attempt by the ICC to undermine its inherent right of self-defense."

"The threat to seize the soldiers and officials of the Middle East's only democracy and the world's only Jewish state is outrageous. We will not bow to it," he posted on the social platform X. It was not clear what prompted the post.

The ICC investigation covers allegations going back to the 2014 war between Israel and Hamas, as well as Israel's construction of Jewish settlements in occupied territory that the Palestinians want for a future state.

ICC prosecutor Karim Khan said during a visit to the region in December that the investigation is "moving forward at pace, with rigor, with determination and with an insistence that we act not on emotion but on solid evidence."

Neither Israel nor its close ally the United States accept the ICC's jurisdiction, but any warrants could put Israeli officials at risk of arrest in other countries. They would also serve as a major rebuke of Israel's actions toward the Palestinians.

The International Court of Justice, a separate body, is investigating whether Israel has committed acts of genocide in the ongoing war in Gaza, with any ruling expected to take years. Israel has rejected allegations of wrongdoing and accused both international courts of bias.

HAMAS' MILITARY WING SAYS IT ATTACKED AN ISRAELI ARMY POST FROM SOUTHERN LEBANON BEIRUT — Hamas' military wing says it hit an Israeli army post from southern Lebanon.

The Qassam Brigades said in a statement that the Monday morning shelling of the army command in northern Israel was in retaliation for "the massacres committed by the Zionist enemy in Gaza."

Hamas has fired rockets from Lebanon on several occasions since the Israel-Hamas war started in October.

The militant Hezbollah group, an ally of Hamas, has also attacked Israeli army posts from Lebanon. Hezbollah has exchanged near-daily strikes with Israeli forces in the border region — and sometimes beyond — for almost seven months.

More than 350 people have been killed in Lebanon, including 273 Hezbollah fighters and more than 50 civilians. On the Israeli side, 12 soldiers and 10 civilians have been killed.

ISRAELI AIRSTRIKES KILL AT LEAST 22 PEOPLE IN RAFAH, PALESTINIAN OFFICIALS SAY

RAFAH, Gaza Strip — Israeli airstrikes on the southern Gaza city of Rafah have killed at least 22 people, including six women and five children, Palestinian health officials say. One of the children killed in the strikes overnight into Monday was just 5 days old.

Israel has regularly carried out airstrikes on Rafah since the start of the war and has threatened to send in ground troops, saying Rafah is the last major Hamas stronghold in the coastal enclave. Over a million Palestinians have sought refuge in the city on the Egyptian border. The United States and others have urged Israel not to invade, fearing a humanitarian catastrophe.

The overnight strikes hit three family homes. The first killed 11 people, including four siblings aged 9 to 27, according to records at the Abu Yousef al-Najjar Hospital, where the bodies were taken. The second strike killed eight people, including a 33-year-old father and his 5-day-old boy, according to hospital

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 29, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 308 ~ 33 of 63

records. The third strike killed three siblings, aged 23, 19 and 12. An Associated Press reporter saw the bodies at the hospital.

Israel blames the high civilian death toll on Hamas because the militants fight in densely populated areas. But the military rarely accounts for individual strikes, which often kill women and children.

BLINKEN BEGINS HIS SEVENTH DIPLOMATIC MISSION TO THE MIDDLE EAST SINCE WAR BEGAN RIYADH, Saudi Arabia — U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Monday begins his seventh diplomatic mission to the Middle East since the Israel-Hamas war began more than six months ago.

Just ahead of Blinken's visit — which includes a little more than a day in Saudi Arabia before stops in Jordan and Israel on Tuesday and Wednesday — President Joe Biden spoke by phone Sunday with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Blinken's trip comes amid renewed concerns about the conflict spreading in the Middle East and with once-promising prospects for Israeli-Saudi rapprochement effectively on hold as Israel refuses to consider one of the Saudis' main conditions for normalized relations: the creation of a Palestinian state.

The conflict has fueled mass protests around the world that have spread to American college campuses. U.S. support for Israel, particularly arms transfers, has come under particular criticism, something the administration is keenly aware poses potential problems for Biden in an election year.

BIDEN SPEAKS WITH NETANYAHU AGAIN AS PRESSURE BUILDS FOR CEASE-FIRE TEL AVIV, Israel — U.S. President Joe Biden has again spoken with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the White House said Sunday, as pressure builds on Israel and Hamas to reach a deal that would free some Israeli hostages and bring a cease-fire in the nearly seven-month-long war in Gaza.

The White House said that Biden reiterated his "clear position" as Israel plans to invade Gaza's southernmost city of Rafah despite global concern for more than 1 million Palestinians sheltering there. The U.S. opposes the invasion on humanitarian grounds, straining relations between the allies. Israel is among the countries U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken will visit as he returns to the Middle East on Monday.

Biden also stressed that progress in delivery of humanitarian aid to Gaza be "sustained and enhanced," according to the statement. The call lasted just under an hour, and they agreed the onus remains on Hamas to accept the latest offer in negotiations, according to a U.S. official who spoke on condition of anonymity because the official wasn't authorized to comment publicly.

There was no comment from Netanyahu's office.

Horses show off in Versailles, keeping alive royal tradition on soon-to-be Olympic equestrian venue

By SYLVIE CORBET Associated Press

VERSAILLES, France (AP) — The historic Versailles Palace Gardens will soon host the Paris Olympics equestrian sports.

Meanwhile, the select number of riders of the National Equestrian Academy handling the palace's famed royal stables continue to care for their beloved horses: Almost every day at dawn, they enjoy the quietness and splendor of grass lawns and woods of the park of the Versailles Palace, before thousands of visitors from across the world spread in.

The elite academy — founded by French horse trainer and impresario Bartabas who decided to revive the splendid building in 2003 — has only 12 riders. After years of hard work, they take part in a prestigious show at the Great Stables of Versailles every weekend to the delight of spectators.

While the Academy is open to both genders, women form the majority of applicants.

"We are only women here now," said one of those experienced riders, Fanny Lorré, gleefully smiling as she noted how big of a change it was from the once male-dominated world of equestrianism.

Lorré, 28, is known as an 'ecuyères' — the French word for squire or horse rider, and has a vast knowledge of the royal stables' history.

Commissioned by France's King Louis XIV, or Sun King, the stables were built between 1679 and 1682

opposite the palace's main entrance. They once housed more than 2,000 horses during the 18th century. Now, the Academy's riders train about 40 horses, notably including Lusitanos, a Portuguese breed known to be a favorite of Louis IV.

The Great Stables were built "just before the King arrived here in Versailles. He wanted very big and wonderful stables because he had a lot of horses," Lorré said. "Horses at that time were very important in the court and in the everyday life."

"They built it in only three years, which is quite amazing when you see how big the building is," she added. "And it was also a school for the people at that time (who wanted to) learn how to ride ... a little bit of philosophy, mathematic and everything so they can become the best person in the kingdom."

Under the monarchy, horses were used by the royal family, its entourage and visitors to go hunting, show their equestrian skills and enjoy rides in the Versailles gardens. They were an essential part of the festivities and a symbol of the King's power.

After the French Revolution, in the 19th century, the army took over the stables, using them for its cavalry regiments until World War II. They were then used as a storage facility for the Versailles district's archives and later for horse carriages until Bartabas stepped in and formed the academy.

Its members are known for their contemporary take on equestrian art. They receive fencing, dancing and Japanese archery classes to help them hone skills used in their weekly shows.

As the Paris Games approach, the palace — which will host equestrian and modern pentathlon events during the July 26 - Aug. 11 — is starting to buzz with excitement.

The Academy members, though not participating in the games, are looking forward to seeing Olympic riders galloping in the gardens of the Versailles Palace, Lorré said.

"There's a lot of historical meaning have those Olympics in the gardens," Academy rider Dounia Kazzoul, 26, noted, "because the King used to organize a lot of (theater) plays and shows in those gardens. So it's really great to have that here!"

Grandstands, outdoor arenas and gallop tracks are now being set up for the Games across the park, where up to 40,000 people are expected to attend the cross-country part of the event. Olympic horses will be housed in temporary, air-conditioned facilities built close to the competition site.

The palace itself will remain open to the public during the Games. To coincide with the Olympics, it will be holding an exhibition dedicated to horses and equestrian civilization in Europe from July 2 July to November 3.

The National Equestrian Academy will continue to present its show at Versailles this summer until Aug. 7. Visitors can also discover the nearby Gallery of Coaches, which contains one of the largest collections of coaches in Europe.

Oklahoma towns hard hit by tornadoes begin long cleanup after 4 killed in weekend storms

By KEN MILLER Associated Press

SULPHUR, Okla. (AP) — Small towns in Oklahoma began a long cleanup Monday after tornadoes flattened homes and buildings and killed four people, including an infant, widening a destructive outbreak of severe weather across the middle of the U.S.

Punishing storms that began late Saturday in Oklahoma injured at least 100 people, damaged a rural hospital, washed out roads and knocked out power to more than 40,000 customers at one point, state officials said. Tornadoes on Friday in Iowa and Nebraska also caused wide destruction and were blamed for one death.

The destruction was extensive in Sulphur, a town of about 5,000 people south of Oklahoma City, where a tornado crumpled many downtown buildings, tossed cars and buses and sheared the roofs off houses across a 15-block radius.

"You just can't believe the destruction," Oklahoma Gov. Kevin Stitt said during a visit to the hard-hit

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 29, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 308 ~ 35 of 63

town. "It seems like every business downtown has been destroyed."

Stitt said about 30 people were injured in Sulphur, including some who were in a bar as the tornado struck. Hospitals across the state reported about 100 injuries, including people apparently cut or struck by debris, according to the Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management. An infant was among those killed, Hughes County Emergency Management Director Mike Dockrey told Oklahoma television station KOCO.

White House officials said President Joe Biden spoke to Stitt on Sunday and offered the full support of the federal government.

The deadly weather in Oklahoma added to the dozens of reported tornadoes that have wreaked havoc in the nation's midsection since Friday. Another death was reported Sunday in Iowa, where officials in Pottawattamie County said a man critically injured during a tornado Friday had died.

In Oklahoma, authorities said the tornado in Sulphur began in a city park before barreling through the downtown, flipping cars and ripping the roofs and walls off of brick buildings. Windows and doors were blown out of structures that remained standing.

"How do you rebuild it? This is complete devastation," said Kelly Trussell, a lifelong Sulphur resident as she surveyed the damage. "It is crazy, you want to help but where do you start?"

Carolyn Goodman traveled to Sulphur from the nearby town of Ada in search of her former sister-in-law, who Goodman said was at a local bar just before the tornado hit the area. Stitt said one of the victims was found inside a bar but authorities had not yet identified those killed.

"The bar was destroyed," Goodman said. "I know they probably won't find her alive ... but I hope she is still alive."

Farther north, a tornado near the town of Holdenville killed two people and damaged or destroyed more than a dozen homes, according to the Hughes County Emergency Medical Service. Another person was killed along Interstate 35 near the southern Oklahoma city of Marietta, state officials said.

Heavy rains that swept into Oklahoma with the tornadoes also caused dangerous flooding and water rescues. Outside Sulphur, rising lake levels shut down the Chickasaw National Recreation Area, where the storms wiped out a pedestrian bridge.

Stitt issued an executive order Sunday declaring a state of emergency in 12 counties due to the fallout from the severe weather.

At the Sulphur High School gym, where families took cover from the storm, Jackalyn Wright said she and her family heard what sounded like a helicopter as the tornado touched down over them.

Chad Smith, 43, said people ran into the gym as the wind picked up. The rain started coming faster and the doors slammed shut. "Just give me a beer and a lawn chair and I will sit outside and watch it," Smith said. Instead, he took cover.

Residents in other states were also digging out from storm damage. A tornado in suburban Omaha, Nebraska, demolished homes and businesses Saturday as it moved for miles through farmland and into subdivisions, then slammed an Iowa town.

The tornado damage began Friday afternoon near Lincoln, Nebraska. An industrial building in Lancaster County was hit, causing it to collapse with 70 people inside. Several were trapped, but everyone was evacuated, and the three injuries were not life-threatening, authorities said.

One or possibly two tornadoes then spent around an hour creeping toward Omaha, leaving behind damage consistent with an EF3 twister, with winds of 135 to 165 mph (217 to 265 kph), said Chris Franks, a meteorologist in the National Weather Service's Omaha office.

Nebraska Gov. Jim Pillen and Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds spent Saturday touring the damage and arranging for assistance for the damaged communities. Formal damage assessments are still underway, but the states plan to seek federal help.

Panama's leading presidential candidate is a late entry promising a return to better times

By JUAN ZAMORANO Associated Press

PANAMA CITY (AP) — The leading candidate to be Panama's next president is a last-minute stand-in who promises to return the Central American country to a boom time that experts say will be difficult to recapture.

José Raúl Mulino, a maritime lawyer and former security minister, was thrust to the top of the presidential ticket after Panama's electoral authorities ruled former President Ricardo Martinelli ineligible following his money laundering conviction and sentencing.

Lacking Martinelli's charisma and popular appeal, but benefitting from the supermarket magnate's voracious support, Mulino has maintained a healthy lead in the field crowded with eight candidates ahead of the May 5 election.

The remaining field features a couple of also-rans from previous elections — Ricardo Lombana and Rómulo Roux — as well as former President Martín Torrijos. Those three are in a virtual tie for second behind Mulino, according to recent polls. Mulino skipped all three presidential debates.

Mulino has campaigned with promises to create jobs and stop migration through Panama's Darien jungle, where more than a half million people trekked last year. The message has resonated with an electorate tired of the country's political establishment, but nostalgic for the days of a humming economy.

Panama, however, is not growing like it was during Martinelli's 2009-2014 presidency, and experts expect the economy to slow next year.

A factor in the economic deceleration is the Supreme Court's decision to declare as unconstitutional legislation that granted a 20-year concession to a huge copper mine. The decision came after weeks of street protests by a wide slice of Panamanian society roiled by concerns over water access — amid a troubling drought — and nationalist fervor about the deal with a Canadian mining company.

The extended drought has also reduced traffic through the Panama Canal, a critical economic engine for the country.

There is a constitutional challenge to Mulino's candidacy because he was not selected through a party primary and does not have a running mate. The Supreme Court has not made clear when it will rule on that challenge.

The rise of Mulino's candidacy has unfolded as Martinelli's own legal saga plays out.

Already banned by the U.S. government, Martinelli was convicted of money laundering in Panama last July and this March electoral authorities disqualified him from the election, launching Mulino into the top spot on the Achieving Goals party ticket.

By then Martinelli was already holed up the Nicaraguan embassy, where he fled as Panamanian authorities planned to take him into custody to serve out his 10-year sentence.

Martinelli has campaigned for Mulino via social media platforms from behind the embassy's walls, infuriating the Panamanian government, which has refused Nicaragua's requests to let him leave the country.

At his final campaign event on Sunday, Mulino played a video that Martinelli had made from inside the Nicaraguan Embassy. In it, Martinelli said he was politically persecuted and urged his supporters to vote for Mulino.

Martinelli "can't be here with us because of the unjust political persecution against him," Mulino told the crowd.

"Most Panamanians are angry and mad at the country's political class," said Michael Shifter, adjunct professor for Latin American Studies at Georgetown University. "Mulino benefits from Martinelli's image and the perception that the country was much better off during the former president's term."

That fact is not lost on Mulino, who is seldom seen without his blue "Martinelli Mulino 2024" cap and who has promised to help Martinelli if elected.

At a recent campaign rally on the outskirts of Panama City, Mulino emphasized his message of bringing Panama "an administration of hope, of employment ... because we're going to work, work and work bring

back the faith and confidence in our system and reinforce our democracy.”

“Mulino is someone who can pull the country out of the scourge of crime and this downturn we have, which is the lack of jobs,” said Adriano Cueto Valencia, a 61-year-old worker walking with Mulino through a working class neighborhood of the capital.

Fidedigna Pérez, a 73-year-old retiree living with her son, agreed. “This man is serious. People think he’s arrogant, but I know that he can help us bring down food prices, help the poor. That’s why Martinelli made him the candidate.”

Mulino says that when he was Martinelli’s security minister he managed to expel the now extinct Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia guerrilla group from Panama’s territory along the dense Darien jungle shared with Colombia. But experts say that’s the same time that immigration through that shared border began picking up, in addition to a busy illicit trade in drugs and weapons.

Nonetheless, Mulino promises without providing details that he will stop the migration, which last year hit the historic high of more than half a million people.

“We are going to close the Darien and we are going to repatriate all of these people, respecting human rights,” Mulino said at one recent campaign event. Panamanian authorities with the support of the U.S. government made similar claims more than a year ago before crossings doubled again.

While he was security minister, Mulino was also strongly criticized for violently putting down protests by Indigenous banana plantation workers in two provinces in 2010. Two people were killed and more than 100 were injured.

“There are too many unknowns with Mulino,” said Rodrigo Noriega, a political analyst and columnist with the La Prensa newspaper. “The anti-corruption issue, the (repression of) social protest issues ... and the soft handling of the issue of Ricardo Martinelli’s corruption.”

Millions of Afghans made Pakistan home to escape war. Now many are hiding to escape deportation

By RIAZAT BUTT and ADIL JAWAD Associated Press

KARACHI, Pakistan (AP) — Born and raised in Pakistan to parents who fled neighboring Afghanistan half a century ago, an 18-year-old found himself at the mercy of police in Karachi who took his cash, phone and motorbike, and sent him to a deportation center.

Scared and bewildered, he spent three days there before he was sent back to Afghanistan, a place he has never been to, with nothing but clothes on his back.

The youth is one of at least 1.7 million Afghans who made Pakistan their home as their country sank deeper into decades of war. But they’ve been living there without legal permission, and are now the target of a harsh crackdown on migrants who Pakistan says must leave.

Some 600,000 Afghans have returned home since last October, when the crackdown began, meaning at least a million remain in Pakistan in hiding. They’ve retreated from public view, abandoning their jobs and rarely leaving their neighborhoods out of fear they could be next for deportation.

It’s harder for them to earn money, rent accommodation, buy food or get medical help because they run the risk of getting caught by police or being reported to authorities by Pakistanis.

The youth, who had been working as a mechanic in an auto shop since he was 15, spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of arrest and deportation.

He has applied for the same documentation that his family has, but he won’t get it. Pakistan isn’t issuing paperwork for Afghan refugees or their children.

“My life is here. I have no friends or family in Afghanistan, nothing,” the young man told The Associated Press. “I wanted to come back (to Pakistan) sooner, but things had to calm down first,” he said, referring to the anti-migrant raids sweeping the country at the time.

Taliban authorities gave him 2,500 afghanis (\$34) once he entered Afghanistan to start a new life. They dispatched him to northeastern Takhar province, where he slept in mosques and religious schools because he knew nobody to stay with. He passed his time playing cricket and football, and borrowed other people’s

phones to call his family.

Six weeks later, he traveled from Takhar to the Afghan capital, Kabul, then to eastern Nangarhar province. He walked for hours in the dark before meeting up with human smugglers hired by his brother in Pakistan. Their job was to get him to Peshawar, the capital of Pakistan's northwest Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, for the price of \$70.

He is relieved to be reunited with his family. But he is vulnerable.

Police have daubed numbers on homes in his neighborhood to show how many people live there and how many have documentation. Hundreds of Afghan families have fled the area since the operation began. There are fewer people to hide among.

Such neighborhoods in Karachi are easily home to tens of thousands of Afghans. But they have no drainage systems, health care or education facilities. There are few women on the streets, and those who venture out wear burqas, often the blue ones more commonly seen in Afghanistan.

Lawyer Moniza Kakar, who works extensively with the Afghan community in Karachi, said there are generations of families with no paperwork. Without it, they can't access basic services like schools or hospitals.

Afghans were already under the radar before the crackdown, and rumours abound that Pakistan wants to expel all Afghans, even those with documentation. Pakistan says no such decision has been made.

In another Karachi neighborhood with a mostly Afghan population, people scatter when police arrive, disappearing into a maze of alleys. A network of informants spread news of the visits.

Kakar despairs at the plight of Afghans who remain in Pakistan. "Sometimes they don't have food so we appeal to the U.N. to help them out," she said. To earn money or get medical help, they would have previously traveled from such neighborhoods into the heart of Karachi, but they can't afford these journeys anymore. They're also likely to be arrested, she added.

Some show Kakar their ID cards from the time of Gen. Zia Ul-Haq, the military dictator whose rule of Pakistan coincided with the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. "They wonder why they don't have citizenship after 40 years. They don't share their location. They don't go out. They live in property rented in someone else's name."

There are children who were born in Pakistan who have grown up and have children of their own. "The children don't have any identity paperwork. All of them have an undecided future," said Kakar.

Syed Habib Ur Rehman works as a media coordinator at the Afghanistan Consulate General in Karachi. He spends a lot of time in these communities.

"There are empty homes, empty shops," Rehman said. "Markets are empty. The Pakistanis we know don't agree with what is happening. They say they have spent a good life with us. Their business has gone down because so many Afghan families have left."

The Afghans interviewed by the AP had different reasons for never securing their status. Some said they were overseas working. Others didn't have time. Nobody thought Pakistan would ever throw them out.

Mohammad Khan Mughal, 32, was born in Karachi and has three children. Before the crackdown started, the Afghan ran a tandoor business. Police told him to close down.

"My customers started complaining because they couldn't buy bread from me," he said. He and his family went to the southwestern city of Quetta in Baluchistan province to escape the raids.

He returned to Karachi a few days later, and has no intention of leaving.

"This is my home," he said, with pride and sadness. "This is my city."

How Columbia University's complex history with the student protest movement echoes into today

By DEEPTI HAJELA Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — College students taking up space and making demands for change. University administrators facing pressure to get things back under control. Police brought in to make arrests. At other schools: students taking note, and sometimes taking action.

Columbia University, 2024. And Columbia University, 1968.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 29, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 308 ~ 39 of 63

The pro-Palestinian demonstration and subsequent arrests at Columbia that have set off similar protests at campuses nationwide these days and even internationally aren't new ground for students at the Ivy League school. They're the latest in a Columbia tradition that dates back more than five decades — one that also helped provide inspiration for the anti-apartheid protest of the 1980s, the Iraq war protests, and more.

"When you're going to Columbia, you know you're going to an institution which has an honored place in the history of American protest," said Mark Naison, professor of history and African & African American Studies at Fordham University and himself a participant in the 1968 demonstrations. "Whenever there is a movement, you know Columbia is going to be right there."

STUDENTS ARE AWARE OF THE HISTORY

It's part of Columbia's lore, students taking part in this month's demonstrations point out — recognized by the school itself in commemorative anniversary programming and taught about in classes.

"A lot of students here are aware of what happened in 1968," said Sofia Ongele, 23, among those who joined the encampment in response to this month's arrests.

The end of an academic year was also approaching in April of that year when students took over five campus buildings. There were multiple reasons. Some were protesting the university's connection to an institute doing weapon research for the Vietnam War; others opposed how the elite school treated Black and brown residents in the community around the school as well as the atmosphere for minority students.

After several days, Columbia's president allowed a thousand New York Police Department officers to be brought in to clear most demonstrators out. The arrests, 700 of them, were not gentle. Fists were flying, clubs swinging. Dozens of students and more than a dozen officers were injured.

It's never been forgotten history. That includes now, when pro-Palestinian students calling on the university to divest from any economic ties to Israel over the war in Gaza set up a tent encampment earlier this month and more than 100 were arrested. It helped spark similar demonstrations at campuses around the country and world.

The storied protest past is one of the reasons Ongele chose Columbia for college and came here from her native Santa Clarita, California. "I wanted to be in an environment where people were indeed socially conscious," she said.

When it comes to protest, "We have not only the privilege but the responsibility to continue in the shoes of those who came before us," Ongele said. The goal, she said: to ensure "that we're able to maintain the integrity of this university as one that is indeed socially aware, one that does have students that do care deeply about what goes on in the world, what goes on in our communities, and what goes on in the lives of the students that make up our community."

Columbia University officials did not respond to an email asking about the school's position on the legacy of the 1968 events. Those events, like the current protest, "sparked a huge increase in student activism around the country," Mark Rudd, a leader of that protest, said in an email to The Associated Press. "Myself and others spent the entire year after April 1968 traveling the country, spreading to campuses the spirit of Columbia."

NOT EVERYONE SUPPORTS THE PROTESTS

But the echoes of the past aren't only in inspiration. Then, as now, the protest had its detractors. Naison said the disruption to campus life, and to law and order, angered many at Columbia and outside of it.

"Student protesters are not popular people in the United States of America," he said. "We weren't popular in the '60s. We accomplished a tremendous amount. But we also helped drive the country to the right."

That has a corollary these days with those critical of the protests, who have condemned what they say is a descent into antisemitism. Some Jewish students have said they have felt targeted for their identity and afraid to be on campus and university presidents have come under political pressure to clamp down and use methods like police intervention.

Columbia University President Minouche Shafik had just testified in front of a congressional panel investigating concerns about antisemitism at elite schools when the camp initially went up. Despite her requesting police action the next day for what she called a "harassing and intimidating environment," Republicans in

Congress have called for her resignation.

"Freedom of speech is so important, but not beyond the right to security," said Itai Dreifuss, 25, a third-year student who grew up in the United States and Israel. He was near the encampment this past week, standing in front of posters taped to a wall of the people who were taken hostage by Hamas in the Oct 7 attack that set off the current conflagration.

That feeling among some students that personal animosity is being directed against them is a difference between 1968 and now, Naison said. That conflict between demonstrators and their decriers "is far more visceral," Naison asserts, which he says makes this time even more fraught.

"It's history repeating itself, but it's also uncharted territory," he said. "What we have here is a whole group of people who see these protests as a natural extension of fighting for justice, and a whole other group of people who see this as a deadly attack on them and their history and tradition. And that makes it very difficult for university officials to manage."

Deforestation in Indonesia spiked last year, but resources analyst sees better overall trend

By VICTORIA MILKO Associated Press

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — From trees felled in protected national parks to massive swaths of jungle razed for palm oil and paper plantations, Indonesia had a 27% uptick in primary forest loss in 2023 from the previous year, according to a World Resources Institute analysis of deforestation data. But the loss is still seen as historically low compared to the 2010s, it said.

"Deforestation has been declining from six or so years ago, when there were peak rates," said Rod Taylor, global director of the forests program at WRI. "It's good news and commendable for Indonesia."

But others saw cause for concern in the uptick, and tied some of the more recent deforestation to the world's appetite for mining Indonesia's vast deposits of nickel, which is critical for the green energy transition.

The latest data from the University of Maryland's Global Land Analysis and Discovery laboratory was shared on Global Forest Watch — a platform run by WRI that provides data, technology and tools for monitoring the world's forests.

A vast tropical archipelago stretching across the equator, Indonesia is home to the world's third-largest rainforest, with a variety of endangered wildlife and plants, including orangutans, elephants and giant forest flowers. Some live nowhere else.

Since 1950, more than 74 million hectares (285,715 square miles) of Indonesian rainforest — an area twice the size of Germany — have been logged, burned or degraded for development of palm oil, paper and rubber plantations, nickel mining and other commodities, according to Global Forest Watch. Indonesia is the biggest producer of palm oil, one of the largest exporters of coal and a top producer of pulp for paper. It also exports oil and gas, rubber, tin and other resources.

Expansion of industrial plantations occurred in several locations adjacent to existing palm oil tree and pulp and paper plantations on the tropical islands of Kalimantan and West Papua, according to the analysis.

The Indonesian Ministry of Environment and Forestry said the expansion occurred in concessions granted before the current administration took office in 2014.

The Indonesian Ministry of Environment and Forestry did not respond to questions and a request for comment sent by The Associated Press.

Global Forest Watch's data on Indonesia's loss of primary forests — which are old-growth forests typically high in stored carbon and rich in biodiversity — are higher than the official Indonesian statistics. That's because much of the primary forest loss in Indonesia, according to the analysis, is within areas that Indonesia classifies as secondary forest — areas that have regenerated through largely natural processes after human actions such as agriculture clearing or timber harvest. Secondary forests typically have reduced capacity for storing carbon than primary forests.

Deforestation linked to the mining industry occurred in Sumatra, Sulawesi, Maluku and Kalimantan, ac-

ording to the analysis.

Indonesia has the world's largest reserves of nickel — a critical material for electric vehicles, solar panels and other goods needed for the green energy transition. And part of this deforestation can be directly linked to the expansion of Indonesia's nickel industry, said Timer Manurung, director of Auriga Nusantara, a nongovernmental conservation organization based in Indonesia.

Manurung said it's not clear exactly how much of Indonesia deforestation is due to mining. But he called it a "significant driver," and said the government's rapid development of the country's mining and nickel industry — including more than 20 new smelters to process the nickel ore — is "repeating Indonesia's oil palm and pulpwood mistakes" of increasing deforestation.

But Taylor noted that deforestation done on a massive scale seems to be shrinking, compared to the past.

In the 2010s there was gargantuan oil palm, timber and large-scale plantation expansion across Indonesia. Research in the *Nature Climate Change* journal found that the deforestation rate doubled to approximately 2 million hectares per year during 2004-2014.

In 2023, primary forest loss in patches greater than 100 hectares made up just 15% of the loss, according to the analysis.

Taylor attributes this lack of large-scale deforestation patches to the reputational risks that companies face if they are found to be razing trees. In recent decades nongovernmental organizations, consumers and governments — including the European Union — have pushed for companies to move away from deforestation practices.

In 2018 Indonesian President Joko Widodo put a three-year freeze on new permits for palm oil plantations. And the rate of deforestation slowed between 2021-2022, according to government data.

But small-scale primary forest loss was still prevalent throughout the country, including within several protected areas such as Tesso Nilo National Park and Rawa Singkil Wildlife Reserve on the island of Sumatra. Both areas are home to critically endangered animals such as tigers and elephants.

A wetter than usual El Nino — which usually leads to less rainfall and higher temperatures that can cause rapid spread of fires set to clear land for agriculture — contributed to a quieter than expected fire season, Taylor said. So did investments made by the Indonesian government in fire prevention capabilities, as well as efforts to suppress fire by local communities.

During Indonesia's last El Nino in 2015-2016, fires intentionally started to clear land for agriculture rapidly spread, sending haze across Southeast Asia. Several Indonesian provinces declared states of emergencies, respiratory illnesses spiked and thousands of Indonesians had to flee their homes.

"The good news in Indonesia is that the fire prevention measures are much more sophisticated than they were in years past," said Taylor. "It's really making a difference."

Arrests roil campuses nationwide ahead of graduation as protesters demand Israel ties be cut

By CAROLYN THOMPSON and MARGERY BECK Associated Press

Protests are roiling college campuses nationwide as schools with graduation ceremonies next month face demands they cut financial ties to Israel because of the Israel-Hamas war.

Many campuses were largely quiet over the weekend but protesters on both sides of the issue shouted and shoved each other during dueling demonstrations Sunday at the University of California, Los Angeles. About 275 people were arrested on Saturday at various campuses including Indiana University at Bloomington, Arizona State University and Washington University in St. Louis. The number of arrests nationwide approached 900 since New York police removed a pro-Palestinian protest encampment at Columbia University and arrested more than 100 demonstrators on April 18.

Since then, students have dug in at dozens of pro-Palestinian encampments around the country, prompting a range of responses from administrators: arrests and criminal charges, student suspensions or simply continued pleas to leave. The plight of students has become a central part of protests, with both the students and a growing number of faculty demanding amnesty for protesters. At issue is whether the

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 29, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 308 ~ 42 of 63

suspensions and legal records will follow students through their adult lives.

Faculty members at universities in California, Georgia and Texas have initiated or passed largely symbolic votes of no confidence in their leadership.

White House national security spokesman John Kirby said President Joe Biden “knows that there are very strong feelings” but would leave managing the protests to local authorities.

“People should have the ability to air their views and to share their perspectives publicly but it has to be peaceful,” Kirby said on ABC’s “This Week.”

In an interview that aired Sunday, Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell called it “a dangerous situation” and placed the responsibility with college administrators.

“There’s also antisemitism, which is completely unacceptable. I’ve been shocked to see that in this country,” he said on NBC’s “Meet the Press.”

HOW IT STARTED

Early protests at Columbia University in New York City sparked pro-Palestinian demonstrations across the country and students and administrators there have engaged in negotiations, the university said in a statement Saturday night.

Columbia has set a series of deadlines for protesters to leave the encampment — which they have missed — but bringing back police “at this time” would be counterproductive, the school wrote in an email to students.

On Sunday, students walked among dozens of colorful tents that continue to stand.

CALIFORNIA

At the University of California, Los Angeles, police set up barricades before hundreds of demonstrators on both sides joined a growing crowd Sunday near where pro-Palestinian students have been staying around-the-clock in tents. Counter-protesters who organized a “Stand in Support of Jewish Students” rally said their goal was to “stand up against hatred and antisemitism.”

Across town, the University of Southern California said it was open Sunday after being shut down a day earlier because of what the university called vandalism and disruptions.

USC drew criticism after refusing to allow the valedictorian, who has publicly supported the Palestinian cause, to make a commencement speech. Administrators then scrapped the keynote speech by filmmaker Jon M. Chu. Last week the school announced the cancelation of its main graduation event, a day after more than 90 protesters were arrested by police in riot gear.

In the northern part of the state, officials on Saturday ordered an “enforced hard closure” of California State Polytechnic University, Humboldt. Two halls remained occupied by pro-Palestinian demonstrators. The school said Sunday that the cost of the occupation — including damage done by “theft, vandalism and graffiti” — was estimated to be in the millions.

MISSOURI

Washington University in St. Louis locked some campus buildings and arrested protesters Saturday. Photos showed uniformed police attempting to remove masked protesters as others, also wearing masks, linked arms to thwart the efforts.

In a statement, the university said more than 100 people — including 23 students and four university employees — were arrested on suspicion of trespassing. Megan Green, president of the St. Louis Board of Aldermen, said in a social media post that she was present and the protest remained calm “until the police came in like an ambush.”

Green Party presidential candidate Jill Stein said in a social media post that she and two of her campaign managers were among those arrested.

The university’s statement defended the action and said protesters “did not have good intentions on our campus and that this demonstration had the potential to get out of control and become dangerous.”

Some arrested also face charges of resisting arrest and assault, including for injuries to three police officers, the statement said. Those injuries include a severe concussion, a broken finger and a groin injury.

The Missouri chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations condemned the arrests as “heavy-

handed.”

MASSACHUSETTS

In Boston, police in riot gear cleared an encampment on the campus of Northeastern University on Saturday.

Massachusetts State Police said about 102 protesters were arrested and will be charged with trespassing and disorderly conduct.

Northeastern said in a statement that the demonstration, which began two days ago, had become “infiltrated by professional organizers” with no affiliation to the university and antisemitic slurs, including “kill the Jews,” had been used.

The Huskies for a Free Palestine student group disputed the university’s account, saying in a statement that counterprotesters were to blame for the slurs and no student protesters “repeated the disgusting hate speech.”

Students at the Boston protest said a counterprotester attempted to instigate hate speech but insisted their event was peaceful.

US CAMPUSES AND THE ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR

The nationwide campus protests began in response to Israel’s offensive in Gaza. Hamas launched a deadly attack on southern Israel on Oct. 7, when militants killed about 1,200 people, most of them civilians, and took roughly 250 hostages. Vowing to stamp out Hamas, Israel launched an offensive in Gaza. In the ensuing war, Israel has killed more than 34,000 Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, according to the local health ministry.

Israel and its supporters have branded the university protests as antisemitic, while critics of Israel say it uses such allegations to silence opponents. Although some protesters have been caught on camera making antisemitic remarks or violent threats, organizers of the protests, some of whom are Jewish, say it is a peaceful movement aimed at defending Palestinian rights and protesting the war.

Tornadoes kill 4 in Oklahoma, leaving trail of destruction and thousands without power

By KEN MILLER Associated Press

SULPHUR, Okla. (AP) — Tornadoes killed four people in Oklahoma, including an infant, and left thousands without power Sunday after a destructive outbreak of severe weather flattened buildings in the heart of one rural town and injured at least 100 people across the state.

More than 20,000 people were still without electricity hours after tornadoes began late Saturday night. The destruction was extensive in Sulphur, a town of about 5,000 people, where a tornado crumpled many downtown buildings, tossed cars and buses and sheared the roofs off houses across a 15-block radius.

“You just can’t believe the destruction,” Oklahoma Gov. Kevin Stitt said during a visit to the hard-hit town. “It seems like every business downtown has been destroyed.”

Stitt said about 30 people were injured in Sulphur, including some who were in a bar as the tornado struck. Hospitals across the state reported about 100 injuries, including people apparently cut or struck by debris, according to the Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management. An infant was among those killed, Hughes County Emergency Management Director Mike Dockrey told Oklahoma television station KOCO.

White House officials said President Joe Biden spoke to Stitt on Sunday and offered the full support of the federal government.

The deadly weather in Oklahoma added to the dozens of reported tornadoes that have wreaked havoc in the nation’s midsection since Friday. Another death was reported Sunday in Iowa, where officials in Pottawattamie County said a man critically injured during a tornado Friday had died.

In Oklahoma, authorities said the tornado in Sulphur began in a city park before barreling through the downtown, flipping cars and ripping the roofs and walls off of brick buildings. Windows and doors were blown out of structures that remained standing.

“How do you rebuild it? This is complete devastation,” said Kelly Trussell, a lifelong Sulphur resident as

she surveyed the damage. "It is crazy, you want to help but where do you start?"

Carolyn Goodman traveled to Sulphur from the nearby town of Ada in search of her former sister-in-law, who Goodman said was at a local bar just before the tornado hit the area. Stitt said one of the victims was found inside a bar but authorities had not yet identified those killed.

"The bar was destroyed," Goodman said. "I know they probably won't find her alive ... but I hope she is still alive."

Farther north, a tornado near the town of Holdenville killed two people and damaged or destroyed more than a dozen homes, according to the Hughes County Emergency Medical Service. Another person was killed along Interstate 35 near the southern Oklahoma city of Marietta, state officials said.

Heavy rains that swept into Oklahoma with the tornadoes also caused dangerous flooding and water rescues. Outside Sulphur, rising lake levels shut down the Chickasaw National Recreation Area, where the storms wiped out a pedestrian bridge.

Stitt issued an executive order Sunday declaring a state of emergency in 12 counties due to the fallout from the severe weather.

At the Sulphur High School gym, where families took cover from the storm, Jackalyn Wright said she and her family heard what sounded like a helicopter as the tornado touched down over them.

Chad Smith, 43, said people ran into the gym as the wind picked up. The rain started coming faster and the doors slammed shut. "Just give me a beer and a lawn chair and I will sit outside and watch it," Smith said. Instead, he took cover.

Residents in other states were also digging out from storm damage. A tornado in suburban Omaha, Nebraska, demolished homes and businesses Saturday as it moved for miles through farmland and into subdivisions, then slammed an Iowa town.

The tornado damage began Friday afternoon near Lincoln, Nebraska. An industrial building in Lancaster County was hit, causing it to collapse with 70 people inside. Several were trapped, but everyone was evacuated, and the three injuries were not life-threatening, authorities said.

One or possibly two tornadoes then spent around an hour creeping toward Omaha, leaving behind damage consistent with an EF3 twister, with winds of 135 to 165 mph (217 to 265 kph), said Chris Franks, a meteorologist in the National Weather Service's Omaha office.

Nebraska Gov. Jim Pillen and Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds spent Saturday touring the damage and arranging for assistance for the damaged communities. Formal damage assessments are still underway, but the states plan to seek federal help.

Candace Parker, a 3-time WNBA champion and 2-time Olympic gold medalist, announces retirement

By DOUG FEINBERG AP Basketball Writer

Candace Parker always said she'd know when it would be time to retire. That day came Sunday.

The three-time WNBA champion and two-time Olympic gold medalist announced on social media that her career was over after 16 seasons.

"The competitor in me always wants 1 more, but it's time," Parker wrote in an Instagram post. "My HEART & body knew, but I needed to give my mind time to accept it."

Parker, 38, had told The Associated Press in November she wanted to play another season if she could get healthy from a foot injury that kept her off the court last season. But she cautioned that she didn't want to "cheat the game," or herself, and expressed the same in announcing her retirement ahead of the Aces' attempt to win a third title in a row. Parker has had 10 surgeries over her career.

"I promised I'd never cheat the game & that I'd leave it in a better place than I came into it. ... I always wanted to walk off the court with no parade or tour, just privately with the ones I love," she wrote. "What now was to be my last game, I walked off the court with my daughter. I ended the journey just as I started it, with her."

Parker played her first 13 seasons in the league with the Los Angeles Sparks, establishing her dominance

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 29, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 308 ~ 45 of 63

early as a No. 1 pick who won Rookie of the Year and league MVP in the same season. Parker was the only WNBA player to accomplish that feat, averaging 18.5 points, 9.5 rebounds and 3.4 assists while helping the Sparks to a 10-win improvement in 2008.

Parker earned her second MVP award in 2013 and won her first title in 2016 with the Sparks. She'd go on to win a second title with the Chicago Sky in 2021 and a third with the Las Vegas Aces last season.

"It's tough, it's bittersweet for myself because I would have loved to have her with us this year. On the other hand I know exactly what it feels like when it's time, it's time. The body tells you. It's not what your mind or your heart is saying. It's your body," Aces coach Becky Hammon said. "She changed the game. She changed what it meant to be a positional basketball player. She played all positions. She's the one when you talk about people that are now playing and coming up, they practiced Candace Parker's moves."

She's the only player in league history to win a championship with three different teams.

"The memories Candace Parker created for a generation of women's basketball fans will remain ingrained in our collective conscience forever, but she has given so much more to the game beyond her accolades and statistics," the Aces said in a statement. "As a teammate and mentor, a mother and wife, a baller, broadcaster, and businesswoman she has inspired countless young people, both boys and girls, to chase and achieve their dreams."

Parker played for the late Pat Summitt's last two national championship teams at Tennessee in 2007 and 2008. She then left with one year of eligibility remaining.

She won Olympic gold medals in 2008 and 2012 before shockingly being left off the 2016 team.

"I think obviously Candace has had an amazing career. I'm a little bit sad about it because you love going up against her, the legend that she is," Liberty star Breanna Stewart said. "What she has done on and off the court has been amazing for our league. Appreciate all she's done to help me get to where I am. We'll definitely miss her this season."

Liberty coach Sandy Brondello coached Parker overseas in Russia for a few years during the winter.

"She's a trailblazer. Just a wonderful human being and what she's done for this sport," Brondello said. "Hopefully it's celebrated. I've got a lot of respect for her. Our kids grew up together when I was coaching in Russia. It's kind of sad. Everyone knows when it's the right time."

Parker began working in broadcasting during her playing career. She has worked as an analyst for the NCAA Tournament with CBS Sports and for NBA TV.

She had surgery on her foot in July 2023 and told the AP it still pained her at the end of last year.

"This offseason hasn't been fun on a foot that isn't cooperating," she wrote in her post Sunday. "My mission in life, like Pat Summitt always said, is to 'chase people and passions and you will never fail.' Being a wife & mom still remains priority #1 & I've learned that time flies, so I plan to enjoy my family to the fullest!"

Australian prime minister describes domestic violence as a 'national crisis' after protests

CANBERRA, Australia (AP) — Australia's Prime Minister Anthony Albanese on Monday described domestic violence as a "national crisis" after thousands rallied around the country against violence toward women.

Thousands protested in cities around Australia on Sunday to draw attention to the deaths of 27 women so far this year allegedly caused by acts of gender-based violence in a population of 27 million.

Albanese said on Monday the rallies were a call to action for all levels of Australian government to do more to prevent gender-based violence.

"Quite clearly, we need to do more. It's not enough to just have empathy," Albanese told Nine Network television.

"The fact that ... a woman dies every four days on average at the hand of a partner is just a national crisis," he added.

There were 17 rallies held across Australia over the weekend, with an estimated 15,000 people demonstrating in the city of Melbourne.

Albanese said he will host a meeting of Australian state and territory leaders on Wednesday to discuss a coordinated response.

Albanese, his Women's Minister Katy Gallagher and Social Services Minister Amanda Rishworth received a hostile response when they attended a rally in the capital Canberra on Sunday.

Protesters yelled at the government leaders, "we want action" and "do your job."

Albanese said there needed to be more focus on perpetrators and prevention of violence. "We need to change the culture, we need to change attitudes — we need to change the legal system," Albanese told the rally.

Biden and Netanyahu speak as pressure's on Israel over planned Rafah invasion and cease-fire talks

By TIA GOLDENBERG, JON GAMBRELL and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — The White House on Sunday said U.S. President Joe Biden had again spoken with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as pressure builds on Israel and Hamas to reach a deal that would free some Israeli hostages and bring a cease-fire in the nearly seven-month-long war in Gaza.

The White House said that Biden reiterated his "clear position" as Israel plans to invade Gaza's southernmost city of Rafah despite global concern for more than 1 million Palestinians sheltering there. The U.S. opposes the invasion on humanitarian grounds, straining relations between the allies. Israel is among the countries U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken will visit as he returns to the Middle East on Monday.

Biden also stressed that progress in delivery of humanitarian aid to Gaza be "sustained and enhanced," according to the statement. The call lasted just under an hour, and they agreed the onus remains on Hamas to accept the latest offer in negotiations, according to a U.S. official who spoke on condition of anonymity because the official wasn't authorized to comment publicly. There was no comment from Netanyahu's office.

A senior official from key intermediary Qatar, meanwhile, urged Israel and Hamas to show "more commitment and more seriousness" in negotiations. Qatar, which hosts Hamas' headquarters in Doha, was instrumental along with the U.S. and Egypt in helping negotiate a brief halt to the fighting in November that led to the release of dozens of hostages. But in a sign of frustration, Qatar this month said that it was reassessing its role.

An Israeli delegation is expected in Egypt in the coming days to discuss the latest proposals in negotiations, and senior Hamas official Basem Naim said in a message to The Associated Press that a delegation from the militant group will also head to Cairo. Egypt's state-owned Al Qahera News satellite television channel said that the delegation would arrive on Monday.

The comments by Qatar's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Majed al-Ansari in interviews with the liberal daily Haaretz and Israeli public broadcaster Kan were published and aired Saturday evening.

Al-Ansari expressed disappointment with Hamas and Israel, saying each side has made decisions based on political interests and not with civilians' welfare in mind. He didn't reveal details on the talks other than to say they have "effectively stopped," with "both sides entrenched in their positions."

Al-Ansari's remarks came after an Egyptian delegation discussed with Israeli officials a "new vision" for a prolonged cease-fire in Gaza, according to an Egyptian official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to freely discuss developments.

The Egyptian official said that Israeli officials are open to discussing establishing a permanent cease-fire in Gaza as part of the second phase of a deal. Israel has refused to end the war until it defeats Hamas.

The second phase would start after the release of civilian and sick hostages, and would include negotiating the release of soldiers, the official added. Senior Palestinian prisoners would be released and a reconstruction process launched.

Negotiations earlier this month centered on a six-week cease-fire proposal and the release of 40 civilian and sick hostages held by Hamas in exchange for freeing hundreds of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails.

A letter written by Biden and 17 other world leaders urged Hamas to release their citizens immediately. In recent days, Hamas has released new videos of three hostages, an apparent push for Israel to make

concessions.

The growing pressure for Hamas and Israel to reach a cease-fire deal is also meant to avert an Israeli attack on Rafah, the city on the border with Egypt where more than half of Gaza's 2.3 million population is seeking shelter. Israel has massed dozens of tanks and armored vehicles. The planned incursion has raised global alarm.

"Only a small strike is all it takes to force everyone to leave Palestine," Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas asserted to the opening session of the World Economic Forum in Saudi Arabia, adding that he believed an invasion would happen within days.

But White House national security spokesman John Kirby told ABC that Israel "assured us they won't go into Rafah until we've had a chance to really share our perspectives and concerns with them. So, we'll see where that goes."

The Israeli troop buildup may also be a pressure tactic on Hamas in talks. Israel sees Rafah as Hamas' last major stronghold. It vows to destroy the group's military and governing capabilities.

Aid groups have warned that an invasion of Rafah would worsen the already desperate humanitarian situation in Gaza, where hunger is widespread. About 400 tons of aid arrived Sunday at the Israeli port of Ashdod — the largest shipment yet by sea via Cyprus — according to the United Arab Emirates. It wasn't immediately clear how or when it would be delivered into Gaza.

Also on Sunday, World Central Kitchen said that it would resume operations in Gaza on Monday, ending a four-week suspension after Israeli military drones killed seven of its aid workers. The organization has 276 trucks ready to enter through the Rafah crossing and will also send trucks into Gaza from Jordan, a statement said. It's also examining if the Ashdod port can be used to offload supplies.

The war was sparked by Hamas' attack on Oct. 7 into southern Israel, which killed 1,200 people, mostly civilians, according to Israeli authorities, who say another 250 people were taken hostage. Hamas and other groups are holding about 130 people, including the remains of about 30, Israeli authorities say.

Israel's retaliatory assault on Hamas has killed more than 34,000 people, most of them women and children, according to health authorities in Gaza, who do not distinguish between civilians and combatants in their tally.

The Israeli military blames Hamas for civilian casualties, accusing it of embedding in residential and public areas. It says it has killed at least 12,000 militants, without providing evidence.

Putin likely didn't order death of Russian opposition leader Navalny, US official says

By AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. intelligence officials have determined that Russian President Vladimir Putin likely didn't order the death of imprisoned opposition leader Alexei Navalny in February, according to an official familiar with the determination.

While U.S. officials believe Putin was ultimately responsible for the death of Navalny, who endured brutal conditions during his confinement, the intelligence community has found "no smoking gun" that Putin was aware of the timing of Navalny's death — which came soon before the Russian president's reelection — or directly ordered it, according to the official.

The official spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the sensitive matter.

Soon after Navalny's death, U.S. President Joe Biden said Putin was ultimately responsible but did not accuse the Russian president of directly ordering it.

At the time, Biden said the U.S. did not know exactly what had happened to Navalny but that "there is no doubt" that his death "was the consequence of something that Putin and his thugs did."

Navalny, 47, Russia's best-known opposition politician and Putin's most persistent foe, died Feb. 16 in a remote penal colony above the Arctic Circle while serving a 19-year sentence on extremism charges that he rejected as politically motivated.

He had been behind bars since January 2021 after returning to Russia from Germany, where he had

been recovering from nerve-agent poisoning that he blamed on the Kremlin.

Russian officials have said only that Navalny died of natural causes and have vehemently denied involvement both in the poisoning and in his death.

In March, a month after Navalny's death, Putin won a landslide reelection for a fifth term, an outcome that was never in doubt.

The Wall Street Journal first reported about the U.S. intelligence determination.

Top French diplomat arrives in Lebanon in attempt to broker a halt to Hezbollah-Israel clashes

By ABBY SEWELL Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — French Foreign Minister Stéphane Séjourné arrived in Lebanon on Sunday as part of diplomatic attempts to broker a de-escalation in the conflict on the Lebanon-Israel border.

Séjourné met with United Nations peacekeeping forces in south Lebanon and with Lebanon's parliament speaker, army chief, foreign minister and caretaker prime minister.

France "is refusing to accept the worst-case scenario" of a full-scale war in Lebanon, he told journalists after the meetings.

"In southern Lebanon, the war is already here, even if it's not called by that name, and it's the civilian population who's paying the price," he said.

The Lebanese militant group Hezbollah has exchanged near-daily strikes with Israeli forces in the border region — and sometimes beyond — for almost seven months against the backdrop of Israel's war against Hezbollah ally Hamas in Gaza.

Israeli strikes have killed more than 350 people in Lebanon, most of them fighters with Hezbollah and allied groups but also including more than 50 civilians. Strikes by Hezbollah have killed at least 10 civilians and 12 soldiers in Israel. Tens of thousands are displaced on each side of the border.

A French diplomatic official who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to journalists said the purpose of Séjourné's visit was to convey France's "fears of a war on Lebanon" and to submit an amendment to a proposal Paris had previously presented to Lebanon for a diplomatic resolution to the border conflict.

Western diplomats have brought forward a series of proposals for a cessation of hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah. Most of those would hinge on Hezbollah moving its forces several kilometers (miles) from the border, a beefed-up Lebanese army presence and negotiations for Israeli forces to withdraw from disputed points along the border where Lebanon says Israel has been occupying small patches of Lebanese territory since it withdrew from the rest of south Lebanon in 2000.

The eventual goal is full implementation of a U.N. resolution that brought to an end a brutal monthlong war between Israel and Hezbollah in 2006.

The previous French proposal would have involved Hezbollah withdrawing its forces 10 kilometers (6 miles) from the border.

Hezbollah has signaled willingness to entertain the proposals but has said there will be no deal in Lebanon before there is a cease-fire in Gaza. Israeli officials, meanwhile, have said that a Gaza cease-fire does not automatically mean it will halt its strikes in Lebanon, even if Hezbollah does so.

Séjourné declined to provide more details about the latest version of France's proposal ahead of his planned trip to Israel on Tuesday. He said he will have "consultations" with Israeli authorities to move toward an agreement.

The French foreign minister also pushed for the Lebanese political factions to come to an agreement on a candidate to fill a year-and-a-half-long presidential vacuum. Séjourné said that Lebanon needs a president in place in order to be "invited to the negotiating table" and to be able to implement any agreement that might be reached on the border issue.

During the talks, Lebanese officials also raised the issue of the ongoing presence of more than 1 million Syrian refugees in Lebanon, which has become an increasingly contentious issue. Lebanese officials have

increasingly called for Western countries to facilitate their return to Syria.

Séjourné acknowledged the burden placed on Lebanon by hosting such a large number of refugees, and said that "all concerned parties must work to make this return possible in a voluntary, dignified and safe manner in accordance with international law."

Pope visits Venice to speak to the artists and inmates behind the Biennale's must-see prison show

By NICOLE WINFIELD and PAOLO SANTALUCIA Associated Press

VENICE, Italy (AP) — Venice has always been a place of contrasts, of breathtaking beauty and devastating fragility, where history, religion, art and nature have collided over the centuries to produce an otherworldly gem of a city. But even for a place that prides itself on its culture of unusual encounters, Pope Francis' visit Sunday stood out.

Francis traveled to the lagoon city to visit the Holy See's pavilion at the Biennale contemporary art show and meet with the people who created it. But because the Vatican decided to mount its exhibit in Venice's women's prison, and invited inmates to collaborate with the artists, the whole project assumed a far more complex meaning, touching on Francis' belief in the power of art to uplift and unite, and of the need to give hope and solidarity to society's most marginalized.

Francis hit on both messages during his visit, which began in the courtyard of the Giudecca prison where he met with the women inmates one by one. As some of them wept, Francis urged them to use their time in prison as a chance for "moral and material rebirth."

"Paradoxically, a stay in prison can mark the beginning of something new, through the rediscovery of the unsuspected beauty in us and in others, as symbolized by the artistic event you are hosting and the project to which you actively contribute," Francis said.

Francis then met with Biennale artists in the prison chapel, decorated with an installation by Brazilian visual artist Sonia Gomes of objects dangling from the ceiling, meant to draw the viewer's gaze upward. He urged the artists to embrace the Biennale's theme this year "Strangers Everywhere," to show solidarity with all those on the margins.

The Vatican exhibit has turned the Giudecca prison, a former convent for reformed prostitutes, into one of the must-see attractions of this year's Biennale, even though to see it visitors must reserve in advance and go through a security check. It has become an unusual art world darling that greets visitors at the entrance with Maurizio Cattelan's wall mural of two giant filthy feet, a work that recalls Caravaggio's dirty feet or the feet that Francis washes each year in a Holy Thursday ritual that he routinely performs on prisoners.

The exhibit also includes a short film starring the inmates and Zoe Saldana, and prints in the prison coffee shop by onetime Catholic nun and American social activist Corita Kent.

Francis' dizzying morning visit, which ended with Mass in St. Mark's Square, represented an increasingly rare outing for the 87-year-old pontiff, who has been hobbled by health and mobility problems that have ruled out any foreign trips so far this year.

And Venice, with its 121 islands and 436 bridges, isn't an easy place to negotiate. But Francis pulled it off, arriving by helicopter from Rome, crossing the Giudecca Canal in a water taxi and then arriving in St. Mark's Square in a mini popemobile that traversed the Grand Canal via a pontoon bridge erected for the occasion.

During an encounter with young people at the iconic Santa Maria della Salute basilica, Francis acknowledged the miracle that is Venice, admiring its "enchanted beauty" and tradition as a place of East-West encounter, but warning that it is increasingly vulnerable to climate change and depopulation.

"Venice is at one with the waters upon which it sits," Francis said. "Without the care and safeguarding of this natural environment, it might even cease to exist."

Venice, sinking under rising sea levels and weighed down by the impact of overtourism, is in the opening days of an experiment to try to limit the sort of day trips that Francis undertook Sunday.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 29, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 308 ~ 50 of 63

Venetian authorities last week launched a pilot program to charge day-trippers 5 euros (\$5.35) apiece on peak travel days. The aim is to encourage them to stay longer or come at off-peak times, to cut down on crowds and make the city more livable for its dwindling number of residents.

For Venice's Catholic patriarch, Archbishop Francesco Moraglia, the new tax program is a worthwhile experiment, a potential necessary evil to try to preserve Venice as a livable city for visitors and residents alike.

Moraglia said Francis' visit — the first by a pope to the Biennale — was a welcome boost, especially for the women of the Giudecca prison who participated in the exhibit as tour guides and as protagonists in some of the artworks.

He acknowledged that Venice over the centuries has had a long, complicated, love-hate relationship with the papacy, despite its central importance to Christianity.

The relics of St. Mark — the top aide to St. Peter, the first pope — are held here in the basilica, which is one of the most important and spectacular in all of Christendom. Several popes have hailed from Venice — in the past century alone three pontiffs were elected after being Venice patriarchs. And Venice hosted the last conclave held outside the Vatican: the 1799-1800 vote that elected Pope Paul VII.

But for centuries before that, relations between the independent Venetian Republic and the Papal States were anything but cordial as the two sides dueled over control of the church. Popes in Rome issued interdicts against Venice that essentially excommunicated the entire territory. Venice flexed its muscles back by expelling entire religious orders, including Francis' own Jesuits.

"It's a history of contrasts because they were two competitors for so many centuries," said Giovanni Maria Vian, a church historian and retired editor of the Vatican newspaper *L'Osservatore Romano* whose family hails from Venice. "The papacy wanted to control everything, and Venice jealously guarded its independence."

Moraglia said that troubled history is long past and that Venice was welcoming Francis with open arms and gratitude, in keeping with its history as a bridge between cultures.

"The history of Venice, the DNA of Venice — beyond the language of beauty and culture that unifies — there's this historic character that says that Venice has always been a place of encounter," he said.

Francis said as much as he closed out Mass in St. Mark's before an estimated 10,500 people.

"Venice, which has always been a place of encounter and cultural exchange, is called to be a sign of beauty available to all," Francis said. "Starting with the least, a sign of fraternity and care for our common home."

Have you heard the one about Trump? Biden tries humor on the campaign trail

By CHRIS MEGERIAN and JOSH BOAK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden is out to win votes by scoring some laughs at the expense of Donald Trump, unleashing mockery with the goal of getting under the former president's thin skin and reminding the country of his blunders.

Like a comic honing his routine, the Democratic president has been testing and expanding his jokes over the past few weeks. It started with jabs about his Republican opponent's financial problems, and now Biden regularly pokes fun at Trump's coiffed hair, his pampered upbringing and his attempt to make a few extra bucks by selling a special edition of the Bible.

The jokes are the latest attempt to crack the code on how to clap back at Trump, whose own insult comedy schtick has redrawn the boundaries of what is acceptable in modern politics. Few have had much luck, whether they try to take the high road or get down and dirty with Trump, the presumptive Republican nominee for president.

"This is a constant challenge," said Eric Schultz, a senior adviser to former President Barack Obama. Trump is "not someone who plays by the rules. So it's up to Biden to figure out how to adapt and play by new rules of engagement."

So far, Biden has been trying to thread a delicate needle to boost his chances of a second term. He uses

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 29, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 308 ~ 51 of 63

humor to paint Trump as a buffoon unworthy of the Oval Office, but the president stops short of turning the election into a laughing matter.

Sometimes he finds that a few jokes can energize an audience even more than a major policy victory and draw precious attention away from an opponent who otherwise commands the spotlight even while stuck in a New York courtroom for his first criminal trial.

The latest example came at the White House Correspondents' Association dinner on Saturday night. After years of Trump constantly needling Biden as "sleepy" and mocking his age (Biden is 81, Trump is 77), Biden lobbed the insult back after Trump appeared to doze off in court.

Biden nicknamed his rival "Sleepy Don," adding, "I kind of like that. I may use it again."

"Of course the 2024 election's in full swing and yes, age is an issue," he said. "I'm a grown man running against a 6-year-old."

Trump didn't seem to appreciate the ribbing, posting on his social media platform that the dinner was "really bad" and Biden was "an absolute disaster."

But jokes at the annual black-tie affair, which also features a professional comedian (this year it was Colin Jost of NBC's "Saturday Night Live"), are nothing new. The real meat of Biden's routine comes during campaign speeches in which he devotes a few moments to taking digs at Trump in between recitations of policy proposals and legislative accomplishments.

"Remember when he was trying to deal with COVID? He suggested: Inject a little bleach in your vein," Biden said Wednesday to a labor union, describing Trump's guidance from the White House during the pandemic. "He missed. It all went to his hair."

In Tampa, Florida, the day before, he assailed Trump for the Supreme Court's ruling that overturned abortion protections — with three justices nominated by Trump voting in the majority of *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* — and then pivoted to the former president's hawking of a \$60 "God Bless the USA" Bible.

"He described the *Dobbs* decision as a 'miracle,'" Biden said of Trump. "Maybe it's coming from that Bible he's trying to sell. Whoa. I almost wanted to buy one just to see what the hell is in it."

Biden rarely references Trump's court cases, but jokes about financial problems that began soon after the former president was ordered to pay \$454 million in a civil case in New York.

"Just the other day," Biden said at a fundraiser in Dallas last month, "a defeated-looking guy came up to me and said, 'Mr. President, I need your help. I'm being crushed with debt. I'm completely wiped out.' I had to say, 'Donald, I can't help you.'"

Even when Biden tries his hand at humor, he rarely strays far from talking about policies. He likes to note that he signed a \$1 trillion bipartisan infrastructure law — after his opponent failed to do so despite repeatedly holding White House events to drum up support for an idea that never materialized.

"He promised 'Infrastructure Week' every week for four years and never built a damn thing," Biden said this month to a group of laughing union members.

The dilemma is that Trump, who tells voters the whole American political system is hopelessly corrupt, can get away with name-calling that would backfire on other candidates. During his rallies, Trump imitates Biden as a feeble old man who cannot find the stairs after giving a brief speech, and he calls the president "crooked" and "a demented tyrant."

The Republican's campaign said the insults will only intensify as Biden tries to give them a taste of their own medicine.

Steven Cheung, a Trump campaign spokesman, said Biden is "shuffling his feet like a short-circuited Roomba," referring to the robot vacuum, while failing to address the "out-of-control border" and "runaway inflation."

Rick Tyler, who worked on the presidential campaign of Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, in 2016, said voters have a double standard because expectations are different for Trump, who first became famous as a real estate developer and the star of the reality TV show "The Apprentice."

"Celebrities don't really have standards, and Trump is in that lane," Tyler said. For a politician going up against Trump, "it's like trying to play a sport with the wrong equipment."

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 29, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 308 ~ 52 of 63

Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., found that out the hard way in the Republican primary in 2016. After Rubio joked about Trump having “small hands” — suggesting that another part of him was small, too — Trump swung back by saying, “I guarantee you there’s no problem.”

“Nobody has ever beaten Trump by getting in the ring with him,” said Alex Conant, communications director for Rubio’s campaign.

Karen Finney, who advised Democrat Hillary Clinton in her 2016 White House run, said Trump can bait opponents into “communicating on his terms, not your terms.”

“It’s the kind of thing where you have to have a balance,” she said. “You could spend all day just responding.”

But if Trump’s humor is blunt, Biden sometimes tries to get the most mileage by staying subtle. During a Pittsburgh stop earlier this month, Biden spoke elliptically about Trump’s trial, betting his audience was already in on the joke.

Trump, he said, is “a little busy right now.”

Passage of harsh anti-LGBTQ+ law in Iraq draws diplomatic backlash

By ABDULRAHMAN ZEYAD and QASSIM ABDUL-ZAHRA Associated Press

BAGHDAD (AP) — Human rights groups and diplomats criticized a law that was quietly passed by the Iraqi parliament over the weekend that would impose heavy prison sentences on gay and transgender people.

U.S. State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said in a statement that the law passed Saturday “threatens those most at risk in Iraqi society” and “can be used to hamper free-speech and expression.” He warned that the legislation could drive away foreign investment.

“International business coalitions have already indicated that such discrimination in Iraq will harm business and economic growth in the country,” the statement said.

British Foreign Secretary David Cameron called the law “dangerous and worrying.”

Although homosexuality is taboo in the largely conservative Iraqi society, and political leaders have periodically launched anti-LGBTQ+ campaigns, Iraq did not previously have a law that explicitly criminalized it.

The law passed Saturday with little notice as an amendment to the country’s existing anti-prostitution law. It imposes a sentence of 10 to 15 years for same-sex relations and a prison term of one to three years for people who undergo or perform gender-transition surgeries and for “intentional practice of effeminacy.”

It also bans any organization that promotes “sexual deviancy,” imposing a sentence of at least seven years and a fine of no less than 10 million dinars (about \$7,600).

A previous draft version of the anti-prostitution law, which was ultimately not passed, would have allowed the death sentence to be imposed for same-sex relations.

Iraqi officials have defended the law as upholding societal values and portrayed criticisms of it as Western interference.

The acting Iraqi parliamentary speaker, Mohsen Al-Mandalawi, said in a statement that the vote was “a necessary step to protect the value structure of society” and to “protect our children from calls for moral depravity and homosexuality.”

Rasha Younes, a senior researcher with the LGBT Rights Program at Human Rights Watch, said the law’s passage “rubber-stamps Iraq’s appalling record of rights violations against LGBT people and is a serious blow to fundamental human rights, including the rights to freedom of expression and association, privacy, equality, and nondiscrimination.”

A report released by the organization in 2022 accused armed groups in Iraq of abducting, raping, torturing, and killing lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people with impunity and the Iraqi government of failing to hold perpetrators accountable.

A group of Iraqi lawmakers said Sunday that they had launched a campaign to expel U.S. Ambassador Alina Romanowski, accusing her of interfering in the country’s internal affairs after she issued a statement condemning the legislation.

Iraqis interviewed Sunday expressed mixed views.

Baghdad resident Ahmed Mansour said he supports the legislation "because it follows the texts of the Quran and the Islamic religion by completely prohibiting this subject due to religious taboos."

Hudhayfah Ali, another resident of Baghdad, said he is against it "because Iraq is a country of multiple sects and religions."

"Iraq is a democratic country, so how can a law be passed against democracy and personal freedom?" he said.

Ukraine's army chief reports tactical retreat in the east, and warns of front-line pressure

By SUSIE BLANN Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukraine's troops have been forced to make a tactical retreat from three villages in the embattled east, the country's army chief said Sunday, warning of a worsening battlefield situation as Ukrainian forces wait for much-needed arms from a huge U.S. aid package to reach combat zones.

Col. Gen. Oleksandr Syrskyi reported that Russian forces continue to attack "along the entire front line" of more than 1,000 kilometers (620 miles), with pitched battles raging west of Avdiivka, the eastern city they took in February after a grueling, monthslong fight.

"The most difficult situation is in the Pokrovsk and Kurakhove directions, where fierce battles continue," Syrskyi's said in an update posted to the Telegram messaging app, referencing two Ukrainian-held cities in the war-torn Donetsk region, once a hub of industry.

"The enemy has engaged up to four brigades in these directions, is trying to develop an offensive west of Avdiivka and Marinka, making its way to Pokrovsk and Kurakhove," Syrskyi added. "Units of the Defense Forces of Ukraine, preserving the lives and health of our defenders, moved to new frontiers west of Berdychi, Semenivka and Novomykhailivka."

Two of these front-line villages lie less than 50 kilometers (31 miles) east of Pokrovsk, while the third is located just over 30 kilometers (19 miles) by road from Kurakhove.

A Washington-based think tank predicted late Saturday that Russian forces "will likely make significant tactical gains in the coming weeks," as acute ammunition shortages continue to hobble Ukraine's defense efforts.

In its latest operational assessment, the Institute for the Study of War said that Moscow's forces have opportunities to push forward around Avdiivka, and also threaten nearby Chasiv Yar. Its capture would give Russia control of a hilltop from which it can attack other key cities forming the backbone of Ukraine's eastern defenses.

Despite this, the think tank assessed that neither of these efforts by Moscow are likely to cause Kyiv's defensive lines to collapse "in the near term."

The Russian Defense Ministry on Sunday confirmed that Moscow's troops had taken a village about 15 kilometers (9 miles) north of Avdiivka, days after the war institute reported on its likely capture early on Thursday. That day's assessment described Moscow's gains as "relatively quick but still relatively marginal," adding that Russian troops had advanced by no more than 5 kilometers (3 miles) over the previous week.

U.S. President Joe Biden promised on Wednesday that U.S. weapons shipments would begin making their way into Ukraine within hours, as he signed into law a \$95 billion measure — \$61 billion of which was allocated for Ukraine — that also included assistance for Israel, Taiwan and other global hot spots. The announcement marked an end to the long, painful battle with Republicans in Congress over urgently needed assistance for Ukraine.

Elsewhere, Russian drones struck the Ukrainian Black Sea city of Mykolaiv early Sunday, setting a hotel ablaze and damaging infrastructure, according to local officials.

Vitaliy Kim, the governor of Ukraine's southern Mykolaiv province, said that the drones "seriously damaged" a hotel in its namesake capital, sparking a fire that was later extinguished. Kim also reported that the strike damaged heat-generating infrastructure in the city. He added that there were no casualties.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 29, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 308 ~ 54 of 63

Russian state agency RIA reported that the strike on Mykolaiv targeted a shipyard where naval drones are assembled, as well as a hotel housing "English-speaking mercenaries" who have fought for Kyiv. The RIA report cited Sergei Lebedev, described as a coordinator of local pro-Moscow guerrillas. His comments couldn't be independently verified.

Also on Sunday morning, the Russian Defense Ministry said that 17 Ukrainian drones were downed overnight over four regions in the country's southwest. Three drones were intercepted near an oil depot in Lyudinovo, an industrial town about 230 kilometers (143 miles) north of the Ukrainian border, Gov. Vladislav Shapsha said.

One of the Ukrainian drones damaged communications infrastructure in Russia's southern Belgorod province, which borders Ukraine, Gov. Vyachaslav Gladkov said later on Sunday. There were no immediate reports of casualties.

The Russian Defense Ministry claimed Sunday that its forces had destroyed ammunition depots and military equipment housed at three airports across Ukraine, including assault drones stored at Kamyanka Airfield in the country's east. The ministry's online update said the attacks took place over the last 24 hours. There was no immediate comment from Kyiv.

Russian shelling on Saturday and overnight wounded at least seven civilians across Ukraine, according to Ukrainian officials. A 36-year-old woman was pulled alive from the rubble after Russian shells on Sunday morning destroyed her home in the northeastern Kharkiv region, the local administration reported. Her 52-year-old neighbor was also rushed to a hospital with a stomach wound, the administration said.

College protesters want 'amnesty.' At stake: Tuition, legal charges, grades and graduation

By JOCELYN GECKER Associated Press

Maryam Alwan figured the worst was over after New York City police in riot gear arrested her and other protesters on the Columbia University campus, loaded them onto buses and held them in custody for hours.

But the next evening, the college junior received an email from the university. Alwan and other students were being suspended after their arrests at the "Gaza Solidarity Encampment," a tactic colleges across the country have deployed to calm growing campus protests against the Israel-Hamas war.

The students' plight has become a central part of protests, with students and a growing number of faculty demanding their amnesty. At issue is whether universities and law enforcement will clear the charges and withhold other consequences, or whether the suspensions and legal records will follow students into their adult lives.

Terms of the suspensions vary from campus to campus. At Columbia and its affiliated Barnard College for women, Alwan and dozens more were arrested April 18 and promptly barred from campus and classes, unable to attend in-person or virtually, and banned from dining halls.

Questions about their academic futures remain. Will they be allowed to take final exams? What about financial aid? Graduation? Columbia says outcomes will be decided at disciplinary hearings, but Alwan says she has not been given a date.

"This feels very dystopian," said Alwan, a comparative literature and society major.

What started at Columbia has turned into a nationwide showdown between students and administrators over anti-war protests and the limits of free speech. In the past 10 days, hundreds of students have been arrested, suspended, put on probation and, in rare cases, expelled from colleges including Yale University, the University of Southern California, Vanderbilt University and the University of Minnesota.

Barnard, a women's liberal arts college at Columbia, suspended more than 50 students who were arrested April 18 and evicted them from campus housing, according to interviews with students and reporting from the Columbia Spectator campus newspaper, which obtained internal campus documents.

On Friday, Barnard announced it had reached agreements restoring campus access to "nearly all" of them. A statement from the college did not specify the number but said all students who had their suspensions lifted have agreed to follow college rules and, in some cases, were put on probation.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 29, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 308 ~ 55 of 63

On the night of the arrests, however, Barnard student Maryam Iqbal posted a screenshot on the social media platform X of a dean's email telling her she could briefly return to her room with campus security before getting kicked out.

"You will have 15 minutes to gather what you might need," the email read.

More than 100 Barnard and Columbia faculty staged a "Rally to Support Our Students" last week condemning the student arrests and demanding suspensions be lifted.

Columbia is still pushing to remove the tent encampment on the campus main lawn where graduation is set to be hosted May 15. The students have demanded the school cuts ties with Israel-linked companies and ensure amnesty for students and faculty arrested or disciplined in connection with the protests.

Talks with the student protesters are continuing, said Ben Chang, a Columbia spokesperson. "We have our demands; they have theirs," he said.

For international students facing suspension, there is the added fear of losing their visas, said Radhika Sainath, an attorney with Palestine Legal, which helped a group of Columbia students file a federal civil rights complaint against the school Thursday. It accuses Columbia of not doing enough to address discrimination against Palestinian students.

"The level of punishment is not even just draconian, it feels like over-the-top callousness," Sainath said.

More than 40 students were arrested at a Yale demonstration last week, including senior Craig Birckhead-Morton. He is due to graduate May 20 but says the university has not yet told him if his case will be submitted to a disciplinary panel. He worries about whether he will receive a diploma and if his acceptance to Columbia graduate school could be at risk.

"The school has done its best to ignore us and not tell us what happens next," said Birckhead-Morton, a history major.

Across the country, college administrators have struggled to balance free speech and inclusivity. Some demonstrations have included hate speech, antisemitic threats or support for Hamas, the group that attacked Israel on Oct. 7, sparking a war in Gaza that has left more than 34,000 dead.

May commencement ceremonies add pressure to clear demonstrations. University officials say arrests and suspensions are a last resort, and that they give ample warnings beforehand to clear protest areas.

Vanderbilt University in Tennessee has issued what are believed to be the only student expulsions related to protesting the Israel-Hamas conflict, according to the Institute for Middle Eastern Understanding. More than two dozen students occupied the university chancellor's office for several hours on March 26, prompting the university to summon police and arrest several protesters. Vanderbilt then issued three expulsions, one suspension and put 22 protesters on probation.

In an open letter to Chancellor Daniel Diermeier, more than 150 Vanderbilt professors criticized the university's crackdown as "excessive and punitive."

Freshman Jack Petocz, 19, one of those expelled, is being allowed to attend classes while he appeals. He has been evicted from his dorm and is living off campus.

Petocz said protesting in high school was what helped get him into Vanderbilt and secure a merit scholarship for activists and organizers. His college essay was about organizing walkouts in rural Florida to oppose Gov. Ron DeSantis' anti-LGBTQ policies.

"Vanderbilt seemed to love that," Petocz said. "Unfortunately, the buck stops when you start advocating for Palestinian liberation."

Harvey Weinstein hospitalized after his return to New York from upstate prison

By LARRY NEUMEISTER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Harvey Weinstein's lawyer said Saturday that the onetime movie mogul has been hospitalized for a battery of tests after his return to New York City following an appeals court ruling nullifying his 2020 rape conviction.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 29, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 308 ~ 56 of 63

Attorney Arthur Aidala said Weinstein was moved to Bellevue Hospital in Manhattan after his arrival on Friday to city jails.

"They examined him and sent him to Bellevue. It seems like he needs a lot of help, physically. He's got a lot of problems. He's getting all kinds of tests. He's somewhat of a train wreck health wise," Aidala said. A message left with the hospital was not immediately returned Saturday.

Frank Dwyer, a spokesperson with the New York City Department of Correction, said only that Weinstein remains in custody at Bellevue. Thomas Mailey, a spokesperson for the state Department of Corrections and Community Supervision, said Weinstein was turned over to the city's Department of Correction pursuant to the appeals ruling. Weinstein had been housed at the Mohawk Correctional Facility, about 100 miles (160 kilometers) northwest of Albany.

On Thursday, the New York Court of Appeals vacated his conviction after concluding that a trial judge permitted jurors to see and hear too much evidence not directly related to the charges he faced. It also erased his 23-year prison sentence and ordered a retrial.

Prosecutors said they intend to retry him on charges that he forcibly performed oral sex on a TV and film production assistant in 2006 and raped an aspiring actor in 2013.

Weinstein remained in custody after the appeals ruling because he was convicted in Los Angeles in 2022 of another rape and was sentenced to 16 years in prison.

For some time, Weinstein has been ailing with a variety of afflictions, including cardiac issues, diabetes, sleep apnea and eye problems.

Aidala said he spoke to Weinstein on Friday afternoon after he was in transit to New York City from an upstate jail less than 24 hours after the appeals ruling, which was released Thursday morning.

He said his client's ailments are physical, adding that mentally he is "sharp as a tack. Feet are firmly planted on the ground."

The lawyer said it usually takes state corrections and prisons officials a week or two to arrange to transport a prisoner.

"He was not treated well. They refused to give him even a sip of water, no food, no bathroom break," Aidala said. "He's a 72-year-old sickly man."

Mailey, the state corrections spokesperson, had no comment when Aidala's remarks about Weinstein's treatment were read to him over the phone.

Aidala said he was told that Bellevue doctors planned to run a lot of tests on Weinstein before he can be returned to the Rikers Island jail complex.

The lawyer said he's scheduled to meet with Weinstein on Monday. He added that he plans to tell a judge when Weinstein goes to court on Wednesday in Manhattan that a retrial should occur after Labor Day.

Police officer hiring in US increases in 2023 after years of decline, survey shows

By CLAUDIA LAUER Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Police departments across the United States are reporting an increase in their ranks for the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic and the 2020 killing of George Floyd, which led to a historic exodus of officers, a survey shows.

More sworn officers were hired in 2023 than in any one of the previous four years, and fewer officers overall resigned or retired, according to the 214 law enforcement agencies that responded to a survey by the Police Executive Research Forum, or PERF.

Floyd's death at the hands of Minneapolis police officers spurred nationwide protests against police brutality and heightened scrutiny of law enforcement.

As more and more officers left, many of the departments had to redeploy stretched resources by shifting officers away from investigative work or quality of life issues such as abandoned vehicles or noise violations to handle increases in crime and, in some cases, the shortages meant slower response times or limiting responses to emergencies only, police officials say.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 29, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 308 ~ 57 of 63

"I just think that the past four years have been particularly challenging for American policing," said Chuck Wexler, executive director of PERF, a nonprofit policing think tank based in Washington, D.C. "And our survey shows we're finally starting to turn a corner."

Individual departments are turning that corner at different rates, however, according to Wexler, who noted many are still struggling to attract and keep officers.

As a whole, the profession "isn't out of the woods yet," he said.

The Associated Press left phone and email messages with several unions and police departments to ask about increased hiring.

The survey shows that while small and medium departments had more sworn officers than they did in January 2020, large departments are still more than 5% below their staffing levels from that time, even with a year-over-year increase from 2022 to 2023.

The survey also showed smaller departments with fewer than 50 officers are still struggling with a higher rate of resignations and retirements.

The survey asked only for numbers, Wexler said, so it's hard to say whether those officers are leaving for larger departments or leaving the profession altogether. He also said smaller departments, which account for 80% of agencies nationwide, were underrepresented in the responses PERF received.

Many larger departments have increased officer pay or started offering incentives such as signing bonuses for experienced officers who are willing to transfer, something smaller departments can't really compete with. At least a dozen smaller departments have disbanded, leaving the municipalities they once served to rely on state or county help for policing.

But even some of the highest-paying large departments are still struggling to get new hires in the door.

"I don't think it's all about money. I think it's about the way people perceive their job and feel they are going to be supported," Wexler said. "You have West Coast departments that are paying six figures, but still seeing major challenges in hiring."

In addition to pay and bonuses, many agencies are reexamining their application requirements and hiring processes.

Wexler believes some of those changes make sense, including allowing visible tattoos, reweighing the importance of past financial issues and processing applicants' background checks faster. But he cautioned that PERF does not support lowering standards for training or for applicants.

Maria "Maki" Haberfeld, chair of the Department of Law, Police Science and Criminal Justice Administration at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, says departments have been too focused on officer numbers. She worries some are lowering education requirements and other standards to bolster numbers instead of trying to find the best people to police their communities.

"Policing is a real profession that requires more skills and more education than people can understand," she said. "It's not about tattoos or running a mile in 15 minutes. It's really more about emotional intelligence, maturity and making those split-second decisions that don't use deadly force."

Haberfeld also cautioned that any staffing gains made through incentives could easily be erased, especially as officers, including some in riot gear, have been seen breaking up protests against the Israel-Hamas war at universities across the country.

"In policing, it takes decades to move forward and a split second for the public attitude to deteriorate," she said.

PERF's survey showed a more than a 20% drop in resignations overall, from a high of almost 6,500 in 2022 to fewer than 5,100 in 2023. They are still up over early pandemic levels in 2020, however, when a few more than 4,000 officers resigned across all responding departments.

As with the hiring increases, the rate of decrease in retirements tended to depend on the size of the departments. There were fewer retirements in 2023 than in 2019 at large departments, slightly more retirements at medium departments and elevated retirements at small departments. The survey found a steep drop in resignations at large agencies with 250 or more officers and medium-size agencies with between 50 and 249 officers.

In addition to pay and benefit increases, the improved retention can be partly attributed to a shift in

how some public officials view their public safety departments, Wexler says.

"We went from having public discourse about defunding the police just a few years ago to public officials waking up to the fact their workforce is leaving," he said. "I don't think there's any question that there has been a sea change among political leaders."

Donald Trump is running against Joe Biden. But he keeps bringing up another Democrat: Jimmy Carter

By BILL BARROW Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — As Donald Trump campaigns for a return to the White House, he often reaches back more than 40 years and seven administrations to belittle President Joe Biden by comparing him to 99-year-old Jimmy Carter.

Most recently, Trump used his first campaign stop after the start of his criminal hush money trial in New York to needle the 46th president by saying the 39th president, a recently widowed hospice patient who left office in 1981, was selfishly pleased with Biden's record.

"Biden is the worst president in the history of our country, worse than Jimmy Carter by a long shot," Trump said in a variation of a quip he has used throughout the 2024 campaign, including as former first lady Rosalynn Carter was on her deathbed. "Jimmy Carter is happy," Trump continued about the two Democrats, "because he had a brilliant presidency compared to Biden."

It was once common for Republicans like Trump to lampoon Carter. Many Democrats, including Presidents Bill Clinton and Barack Obama, kept their distance for years, too, after a roiled economy, energy shortages and an extended American hostage crisis led to Carter's landslide defeat in 1980. The negative vibes waned, though, with the passage of time and reconsideration of Carter's legacy as a political leader, Nobel laureate and global humanitarian.

That leaves some observers, Democrats especially, questioning Trump's attempts to saddle Biden with the decades-old baggage of a frail man who closed his public life last November by silently leading the mourning for his wife of 77 years.

"It's just a very dated reference," said pollster Zac McCrary, whose Alabama-based firm has worked for Biden. "It's akin to a Democrat launching an attack on Gerald Ford or Herbert Hoover or William McKinley. It doesn't signify anything to voters except Trump taking a cheap shot at a figure that most Americans at this point believe has given a lot to his country and to the world."

Trump loyalists insist that even a near-centenarian is fair game in the rough-and-tumble reality of presidential politics.

"I was saying it probably before President Trump: Joe Biden's worse than Jimmy Carter," said Georgia resident Debbie Dooley, an early national tea party organizer during Obama's first term and a Trump supporter since early in his 2016 campaign. Dooley said inflation under Biden justifies the parallel: "I'm old enough to remember the gas lines under President Carter."

Any comparison, of course, involves selective interpretation, and Trump's decision to bring a third president into the campaign carries complications for all three — and perhaps some irony for Trump, who, like Carter, was rejected by voters after one term.

Trump's campaign did not respond to a request for comment about his comparisons; Biden's campaign was dismissive of them.

"Donald Trump is flailing and struggling to land coherent attacks on President Biden," spokesman Seth Schuster said.

Carter remains at home in Plains, Georgia, where those close to him say he has kept up with the campaign. Biden is unquestionably the closest friend Carter has had in the White House since he left it. Biden was a first-term lawmaker from Delaware when he became the first U.S. senator to endorse Carter's underdog campaign. After he won the White House, Biden and first lady Jill Biden visited the Carters in Plains. They saw a grieving Carter privately before Rosalynn Carter's funeral in Atlanta last year.

Like Carter, Biden is seeking reelection at a time when Americans are worried about inflation. But today's

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 29, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 308 ~ 59 of 63

economy is not the same as the one Carter faced.

The post-pandemic rebound, fueled by stimulus spending from the U.S. and other governments, has been blamed for global inflation. The Federal Reserve has raised interest rates in response.

But the effective federal funds rate is 5.33% right now, while the benchmark was above 17% for a key period before the 1980 election. Rates for a 30-year mortgage are about half what they were at the peak of Carter's administration; unemployment is less than half the Carter peak. The average per-gallon gas price in the U.S., topping \$3.60 this month, is higher than the \$3 peak under Trump. It reached \$4.50 (adjusted for inflation) during Carter's last year in office.

Carter and Trump actually share common ground. They are the clearest Washington outsiders in modern history to win the presidency, each fueled by voter discontent with the establishment.

A little-known Georgia governor and peanut farmer, Carter leveraged fallout from Vietnam and the Watergate scandal. Trump was the populist businessman and reality TV star who pledged to "Make America Great Again." Both men defy ideological labels, standing out for their willingness to talk to dictators and isolated nations such as North Korea, even if they offered differing explanations for why.

Carter cautioned his party about underestimating Trump's appeal, and the Carters attended Trump's 2017 inauguration. Jimmy Carter, however, openly criticized Trump's penchant for lies. After Carter suggested Russian propaganda helped elect Trump over Democrat Hillary Clinton in 2016, Trump began to insult Carter as a failure.

Unlike Carter, Trump never accepted defeat. He falsely claimed the 2020 election was stolen, then promoted debunked theories about the election that were repeated by supporters in the mob that stormed the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, as Congress convened to certify Biden's victory. Trump left Washington the morning Biden took office, becoming the first president since Andrew Johnson in 1869 to skip his successor's inauguration.

Carter conceded to Republican Ronald Reagan, attended his inauguration, then returned to Georgia. There, he and Rosalynn Carter established The Carter Center in 1982. They spent decades advocating for democracy, mediating international conflict and advancing public health in the developing world. They built houses for low-income people with Habitat for Humanity. Jimmy Carter was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2002.

Many historians' judgment of Carter's presidency has softened.

He is credited with deregulating much of the transportation industry, making air travel far more accessible to Americans, and creating the Department of Energy to streamline and coordinate the nation's energy research. He negotiated the Camp David peace deal between Egypt and Israel. He diversified the federal judiciary and executive branch. He appointed the Federal Reserve chairman, Paul Volcker, who, along with Reagan, would get credit for the economic growth of the 1980s. Carter was the first president to raise concerns about rising global temperatures. And it was Carter, along with his diplomatic team, who negotiated the release of American hostages in Tehran, though they were not freed until minutes after Carter's term expired.

Biographies, documentaries and news coverage across Carter's 10th decade have reassessed that record.

By 2015, a Quinnipiac University poll found 40% of registered voters viewed Carter as having done the best work since leaving office among presidents from Carter through George W. Bush. When Gallup asked voters last year to rate Carter's handling of his presidency, 57% approved and 36% disapproved. (Trump measured 46% approval and 54% disapproval at the time, the first retroactive measure Gallup had conducted for him.)

"There has long been a general consensus of admiration for Carter as a person — that sentiment that he was a good and decent man," said Amber Roessner, a University of Tennessee professor who studies collective public memory and has written extensively on Carter. The more recent conclusions about Carter as a president, she added, suggest "we should consider Carter's presidency as a lens to think about re-evaluating about how we gauge the failure or success of any administration."

How that plays into Biden's rematch with Trump, Roessner said, "remains to be seen."

Regardless, the ties between the 39th and 46th presidents endure, whatever the 45th president might

say. When the time comes for Carter's state funeral, Trump is expected to be invited alongside Carter's other living successors. But it will be Biden who delivers the eulogy.

Obstacles remain as women seek more leadership roles in America's Black Church

By DARREN SANDS Associated Press

No woman had ever preached the keynote sermon at the Joint National Baptist Convention, a gathering of four historically Black Baptist denominations representing millions of people.

That changed in January when the Rev. Gina Stewart took the convention stage in Memphis, Tennessee, — the Southern city home to Christ Missionary Baptist Church where she serves as senior pastor — and delivered a rousing message, asserting that Jesus not only included women in his ministry, but identified with their suffering.

But what happened next put a spotlight on the obstacles women in Christian ministry continue to face as they carve out leadership space within the patriarchal culture of the Black Church in America. Several women pastors told The Associated Press that it should serve as the breaking point.

"This is an example of no matter how high you rise as a woman, you're going to meet patriarchy at the top of the hill," said Martha Simmons, founder of Women of Color in Ministry, which helps women navigate the process of getting ordained. "The next Norton Anthology of African American preaching is probably 20 years away, but that sermon will be in there."

Despite the enthusiastic reception for Stewart, the original recording of her historic sermon disappeared from the convention's Facebook page, setting off a social media firestorm — driven mostly by women — protesting its removal. A recording of the sermon later appeared, but it was followed by accusations the convention edited her closing remarks, which challenges the four allied denominations to support women in ministry.

National Baptist Convention, USA, President Jerry Young did not reply to requests from The Associated Press for comment. He said at another January meeting that he believed the Facebook page had been hacked and he planned to involve the FBI.

"I still don't know what happened with the sermon, but what is clear is that this was a form of erasure," Stewart said. "I was just as shocked, stunned and surprised as everyone else."

It is symptomatic of a larger problem, according to several Black women pastors interviewed by the AP. They emphasized how they were worn down by the physical and psychological toll of working in a male-dominated culture.

In some denominations, women have made progress. The African Methodist Episcopal Church estimates that one-fourth of its total staff are women, including 1,052 ordained ministers.

In the Black Church as a whole, male pastors predominate, though there's no comprehensive gender breakdown. Simmons estimates that less than one in 10 Black Protestant congregations are led by a woman, even as more Black women are attending seminary.

The conditions aren't new, but the public discourse over women's equality in ministry has rapidly gained ground due in large part to the bullhorn social media provides, said Courtney Pace, scholar-in-residence with Memphis-based Equity for Women in the Church. Pace noted how Facebook afforded Eboni Marshall Turman a venue to publicly share her grievances before filing a gender discrimination lawsuit in December against Abyssinian Baptist Church in New York.

The late theologian and civil rights activist Prathia Hall underscores this dynamic, said Pace, who wrote "Freedom Faith: The Womanist Vision of Prathia Hall." In the book, she details how Hall was a key inspiration for Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech.

"The kind of thing that happened to Gina Stewart happened a lot to Prathia Hall," Pace said. "When she was doing her work, we did not have social media, or cell phones with voice recorders and cameras in every hand. So who knows what the response to Prathia would have been with an empowered public like we have today."

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 29, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 308 ~ 61 of 63

Hall was born in Philadelphia in 1940, the daughter of a Baptist preacher. As a youth, she took part in local speech competitions where she melded folk religion and liberation theology.

But not all of Hall's relationships within the insular preaching fraternity of the National Baptist Convention were as collegial as her relationship with King, whom she said in later years did more with "I have a dream" than she could have.

Many theologically conservative Christian churches, including some Black Protestant denominations, prohibit women from preaching. They frequently cite certain biblical passages, including one they interpret as saying women ought to "be silent" in churches. Even in denominations without explicit bans, women with leadership aspirations often must contend with a patriarchal culture.

Last month, the audience was dotted with young Black women at an event hosted at the Howard Divinity School in Washington. A group convened a panel about the evolution of Black women's role in the church.

Inside the cavernous Dunbarton Chapel that Howard Divinity shares with the Howard School of Law, a half-dozen Black women representing a range of independent churches and Black Protestant denominations spoke about persevering through instability and transition.

Their current duties, some of the women said, left them exhausted and unable to grieve the members they lost to COVID-19.

One speaker was the Rev. Lyvonne Briggs. In 2019, she was being overworked and underpaid as an assistant pastor of a large Baptist church in California. Her marriage dissolved.

She restarted her life in Atlanta. During the lockdown one Sunday morning in her apartment, Briggs went live on Instagram and held a self-styled worship space for 25 people to share their experiences. It became known as The Proverbial Experience, which Briggs describes as an "African-centered, womanist series of spiritual gatherings to nourish the soul."

In two years, Briggs grew her church into a digital community of 3,000. She also wrote "Sensual Faith: The Spiritual Art of Coming Back to Your Body," a treatise on liberation from the sexual politics and objectification of Black women's bodies in the church setting.

"I don't ascribe to this idea that the Black Church is dead," Briggs told the AP. "But I do acknowledge and promote that we have to eulogize what it used to be so that we can birth something new."

One preacher who fashions himself an expert on the topic of women's role in the church, Walter Gardner of the Newark Church of Christ in Newark, N.J, sent a video link of one of his lectures when queried by the AP about his beliefs. At the end of one session, Gardner suggested that women, overall, ignore Scripture and are incapable of being taught.

That's a mindset Gina Stewart would like to change, on behalf of future generations of Black women.

"I would hope that we can knock down some of those barriers so that their journey would be just a little bit easier," said Stewart, who has continued to charge forward.

In a given week, her preaching schedule can take her to multiple cities. As an example, she traveled to Washington earlier this month after accepting a sought-after invitation to preach at Howard University's Andrew Rankin Memorial Chapel.

Stewart's goals mesh with those of Eboni Marshall Turman, who gave the Martin Luther King Jr. Crown Forum lecture in February at Martin Luther King's alma mater, Morehouse College. In December, after not being named a finalist, she had sued Abyssinian Baptist Church and its pulpit search committee for gender discrimination over its hiring process for its next senior pastor, an assertion the church and the committee disputed. No woman has ever held the post.

A former Abyssinian assistant minister, the Rev. Rashad Raymond Moore, said in an email to The Associated Press that of the several dozen applicants for the senior pastor job, "none were more exciting, promising and refreshing than Eboni Marshall Turman."

Added Moore, who now is pastor of New York City's First Baptist Church of Crown Heights, "Pastoral searches in Black congregations, historically socially conservative, are often mired in the politics of discrimination, including biases based on gender, sexual orientation, marital status and age."

Marshall Turman, a Yale Divinity School professor, offered pointed critiques in her first book at what she deemed the inherent patriarchy of Morehouse's social gospel justice tradition. She adapted her recent

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 29, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 308 ~ 62 of 63

lecture's title from the last speech ever given by King, the all-male college's most famous alumni.
The title was blunt: "I'm Not Fearing Any Man."

Today in History: April 29

Joan of Arc leads French in battle at Orleans

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Monday, April 29, the 120th day of 2023. There are 246 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On April 29, 1429, Joan of Arc entered the besieged city of Orleans to lead a French victory over the English.

On this date:

In 1916, the Easter Rising in Dublin collapsed as Irish nationalists surrendered to British authorities.

In 1945, during World War II, American soldiers liberated the Dachau (DAH'-khow) concentration camp. Adolf Hitler married Eva Braun inside his "Führerbunker" and designated Adm. Karl Doenitz (DUHR'-nihtz) president.

In 1946, 28 former Japanese officials went on trial in Tokyo as war criminals; seven ended up being sentenced to death.

In 1957, the SM-1, the first military nuclear power plant, was dedicated at Fort Belvoir, Virginia.

In 1967, Aretha Franklin's cover of Otis Redding's "Respect" was released as a single by Atlantic Records.

In 1991, a cyclone began striking the South Asian country of Bangladesh; it ended up killing more than 138,000 people, according to the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

In 1992, a jury in Simi Valley, California, acquitted four Los Angeles police officers of almost all state charges in the videotaped beating of motorist Rodney King; the verdicts were followed by rioting in Los Angeles resulting in 55 deaths.

In 1997, a worldwide treaty to ban chemical weapons went into effect.

In 2008, Democratic presidential hopeful Barack Obama denounced his former pastor, the Rev. Jeremiah Wright, for what he termed "divisive and destructive" remarks on race.

In 2010, the U.S. Navy officially ended a ban on women serving on submarines, saying the first women would be reporting for duty by 2012.

In 2011, Britain's Prince William and Kate Middleton were married in an opulent ceremony at London's Westminster Abbey.

In 2013, opening statements took place in Los Angeles in a wrongful death lawsuit brought by Michael Jackson's mother, Katherine Jackson, against concert giant AEG Live, claiming it had failed to properly investigate a doctor who cared for Jackson and was later convicted of involuntary manslaughter in his 2009 death. (The jury determined in October 2013 that AEG Live was not liable.)

In 2018, tennis great Boris Becker was sentenced to 2 1/2 years in prison for illicitly transferring large amounts of money and hiding assets after he was declared bankrupt.

In 2020, scientists announced the first effective treatment against the coronavirus, the experimental antiviral medication remdesivir, which they said could speed the recovery of COVID-19 patients.

In 2021, Brazil became the second country to officially top 400,000 COVID-19 deaths.

In 2023, hundreds of Americans fleeing two weeks of deadly fighting in Sudan reached the east African nation's port in the first U.S.-run evacuation, completing a dangerous land journey under escort of armed drones.

Today's Birthdays. Conductor Zubin Mehta is 88. Pop singer Bob Miranda (The Happenings) is 82. Country singer Duane Allen (The Oak Ridge Boys) is 81. Singer Tommy James is 77. Sen. Debbie Stabenow, D-Mich., is 74. Movie director Phillip Noyce is 74. Comedian Jerry Seinfeld is 70. Actor Kate Mulgrew is 69. Actor Daniel Day-Lewis is 67. Actor Michelle Pfeiffer is 66. Actor Eve Plumb is 66. Rock musician Phil King is 64. Country singer Stephanie Bentley is 61. Actor Vincent Ventresca is 58. Singer Carnie Wilson (Wilson

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 29, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 308 ~ 63 of 63

Phillips) is 56. Actor Paul Adelstein is 55. Actor Uma Thurman is 54. International Tennis Hall of Famer Andre Agassi is 54. Rapper Master P is 54. Actor Darby Stanchfield is 53. Country singer James Bonamy is 52. Gospel/R&B singer Erica Campbell (Mary Mary) is 52. Rock musician Mike Hogan (The Cranberries) is 51. Actor Tyler Labine is 46. Actor Megan Boone is 41. Actor-model Taylor Cole is 40. NHL center Jonathan Toews is 36. Pop singer Foxes is 35. Actor Grace Kaufman is 22.