

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 113 ~ 1 of 78

- [1- Upcoming Events](#)
- [2- 1440 News Headlines](#)
- [4- Secretary of State Announces the 2024 General Election Voter Registration Deadline](#)
- [5- Groton Area September Students of the Month](#)
- [6- 'Getting Off the Mountain' the life of Fredric Hensel, WWII's combat quadruple amputee, published in time for Veteran's Day](#)
- [7- Yankton County Fatal Crash](#)
- [8- Manhart Ad](#)
- [9- City Council Story](#)
- [11- GDI Living Heart Fitness Center Ad](#)
- [12- SD SearchLight: State lawmakers are set to receive a \\$3,000 raise](#)
- [13- SD SearchLight: Standing Rock Sioux Tribe files new lawsuit over DAPL](#)
- [15- SD SearchLight: Q&A: Kristie Fiegen, incumbent Republican candidate for Public Utilities Commission](#)
- [17- SD SearchLight: Trump vows to levy 'horrible' tariffs on imports, rejecting fears of inflation spike](#)
- [19- SD SearchLight: Meet the people leading abortion-rights ballot efforts across the U.S.](#)
- [21- SD SearchLight: Q&A: Gideon Oakes, Libertarian candidate for Public Utilities Commission](#)
- [23- SD SearchLight: Q&A: Forrest Wilson, Democratic candidate for Public Utilities Commission](#)
- [25- Weather Pages](#)
- [30- Daily Devotional](#)
- [31- Subscription Form](#)
- [32- Lottery Numbers](#)
- [33- Upcoming Groton Events](#)
- [34- News from the Associated Press](#)

## Wednesday, Oct. 16

Senior Menu: Chicken tetrazzini, carrots, pineapple, bread stick.  
School Breakfast: Cereal.  
School Lunch: Chicken pirate, pasta bake.  
Community Coffee Hour at United Methodist Church, 9:30 a.m.  
Groton C&MA: Kids' Club, Youth Group, Adult Bible Study at 7 pm.  
St. John's Lutheran: Confirmation, 3:45 p.m.  
Emmanuel Lutheran: Rosewood Court, 10 a.m.; Confirmation, 4 p.m.; League, 6:30 p.m.

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



## Thursday, Oct. 17

Senior Menu: Baked pork chop, sweet potatoes, capri blend, chocolate pudding with banana, whole wheat bread.  
School Breakfast: Pancake on stick.  
School Lunch: Flat World on ye bun (hamburgers), fries.  
Region 1A Cross Country at Webster, 3:30 p.m.  
Volleyball at Deuel (C at 5 p.m., JV at 6 p.m., varsity to follow)  
Emmanuel Lutheran: WELCA, 1:30 p.m. (final packing of LWR kits), potluck.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 113 ~ 2 of 78

# 1440

**Why 1440? The printing press was invented around the year 1440, spreading knowledge to the masses and changing the course of history. More facts: In every day, there are 1,440 minutes. We're here to make each one count.**

## US Warns Israel

The Biden administration has given Israel 30 days to expand humanitarian aid to Gaza or risk access to US military aid, a recent letter reveals. The ultimatum marks the strongest language from the White House toward Israel since the start of the Israel-Hamas war.

The US says Israel interrupted close to 90% of humanitarian aid movements last month between northern and southern Gaza as part of its campaign to isolate Hamas militants in the north. Israel has also issued evacuation orders to much of northern Gaza, where about 400,000 Palestinians are based. The US is calling for Israel to ensure passage of at least 350 humanitarian aid trucks per day into the territory.

The letter—signed by Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin—comes as Israel reportedly faces a shortage of interceptor missiles following Iranian airstrikes this month. US troops began arriving in Israel yesterday, part of a deployment trained to operate a US antimissile defense system.

## Boeing's Financial Woes

Boeing plans to raise up to \$25B through stock and debt offerings over the next three years while also entering into a \$10B credit deal with lenders, according to regulatory filings yesterday. The jetmaker seeks to bolster its finances and increase its cash balance as it works to avoid a potential downgrade to junk status by credit rating agencies, which would trigger higher borrowing costs.

The move comes as Boeing has faced a series of setbacks this year, including renewed quality concerns after a midair panel blowout on a 737 Max 9 in January and an ongoing machinists strike that has halted some production. The company is also laying off roughly 17,000 employees—10% of its workforce—as part of cost-cutting measures and is delaying the rollout of new plane models.

Boeing has failed to turn a profit since 2018 and has roughly \$58B in debt, up from about \$9B a decade ago. The company's stock has fallen nearly 56% over the last five years.

## Canada-India Tit-for-Tat

India and Canada have expelled each other's top diplomats amid escalating tensions over the June 2023 killing of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, a Sikh separatist leader, in British Columbia. Canada accused Indian officials of involvement in Nijjar's assassination, expelling India's top diplomat and five others. In return, India expelled Canada's acting high commissioner and five others.

Nijjar, an Indian-born Canadian citizen, was a prominent figure in the Khalistan movement, which seeks an independent Sikh homeland in India. The movement has been banned in India since the 1980s but has support in Canada, where about 2% of the population is Sikh. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau claimed to have credible evidence last year linking Indian government agents to Nijjar's killing, which India denies. The tensions threaten to derail long-standing economic and strategic relations between the two countries.

Separately, an Air India plane was diverted to Canada after a false bomb threat yesterday, part of a series of recent threats targeting Indian airlines.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 113 ~ 3 of 78

## Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Minnesota Lynx hosts New York Liberty tonight (8 pm ET, ESPN) in Game 3 of the WNBA Finals. MLB NL Championship Series continues tonight (8 pm ET, FS1) with the Los Angeles Dodgers taking on the New York Mets as series is tied 1-1.

New York Times issues cease and desist to AI search engine startup Perplexity over allegedly training its AI model using New York Times' content without its permission.

New York Jets acquire star WR Davante Adams in trade with the Las Vegas Raiders ... and star WR Amari Cooper traded to the Buffalo Bills from the Cleveland Browns.

## Science & Technology

Researchers develop tests to determine the relative risk of future AI agents, including whether they could change and improve their own code once released.

Brain study reveals the human nose can discern separate odors when separated by as little as 60 milliseconds; results suggest smell operates as quickly as the human eye can detect color.

Engineers make key advance toward fully 3D-printed electronic circuits; new approach creates logic gates without semiconductors, which typically require advanced fabrication technologies.

## Business & Markets

US stock markets close lower (S&P 500 -0.8%, Dow -0.8%, Nasdaq -1.0%), with Nasdaq dragged down by chipmaker sell-off.

ASML shares close down 16% after Dutch semiconductor-gear manufacturer slashes 2025 sales outlook in its Q3 earnings report, which was accidentally released early.

Walgreens Boots Alliance to shutter 1,200 unprofitable US stores, or about 10% of its worldwide locations, over the next three years; Walgreens shares close up 16% on the news.

UnitedHealth shares close down 8%—the most in four years—after company lowers 2024 and 2025 forecasts.

Goldman Sachs tops earnings and revenue expectations, reports 45% year-over-year increase in Q3 profit. United Airlines beats Q3 earnings and revenue estimates, plans \$1.5B share buyback.

## Politics & World Affairs

North Korea demolishes sections of unused roads and railways to South Korea; South Korea responds with warnings shots.

Spanish police arrest four people, seize 13 tons of illegal chemicals bound for Russia; stash includes materials considered potential precursor to chemical weapons.

Alex Murdaugh—convicted in the murder of his wife and son—settles wrongful death lawsuit with family of teen killed in boat crash involving now-deceased son; settlement closing out final case against the former lawyer.

## Secretary of State Announces the 2024 General Election Voter Registration Deadline

(Pierre, S.D.) – Secretary of State Monae L. Johnson encourages all eligible South Dakotans to register to vote ahead of the November 5, 2024 General Election. The deadline to register to vote in the upcoming election is 5:00 pm local time on October 21, 2024.

“Voting is the cornerstone of our democracy, and every eligible South Dakotan should have their voice heard,” Johnson said. “If you haven’t registered yet or need to update your information, now is the time to take action. Make sure you’re ready to participate in this important election by the October 21 deadline.”

Voter registration in South Dakota is handled by each county auditor and municipal finance officer. In addition, you may register to vote at one of the following locations:

- Driver’s license exam stations,
- Public assistance agencies providing food stamps, Medicaid, TANF, or WIC,
- Department of Human Services offices that provide assistance to the disabled,
- Military recruitment offices,
- The Secretary of State’s Office.

Voter registration information is available on the Secretary of State’s website at <https://sdsos.gov/elections-voting/voting/register-to-vote/default.aspx>. A voter registration form may be downloaded from the website and returned to your county auditor. The deadline for voter registration in South Dakota is 15 days prior to the election you wish to vote in.

Voters may find information pertaining to their registration status, polling location, and absentee ballot status through the Voter Information Portal (VIP), which can be found on the Secretary of State’s website at <https://vip.sdsos.gov/VIPLogin.aspx>. Voters may also view their sample ballot through the VIP.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 113 ~ 5 of 78

## *Groton Area September Students of the Month*



**Gretchen Dinger**  
Senior



**Carly Gilbert**  
Junior



**Teagan Hanten**  
Sophomore



**MaKenna Krause**  
Freshman



**Wesley Borg**  
Eighth Grade



**Liam Johnson**  
Seventh Grade



**Ayce Warrington**  
Sixth Grade

Groton Area School works to ensure that all levels of academic instruction also include the necessary life skills teaching, practicing, and modeling that encourages essential personal life habits that are universally understood to facilitate helping our students become good human beings and citizens.

It is learning with our heads, hearts, and hands to be caring and civil, to make healthy decisions, to effectively problem solve, to be respectful and responsible, to be good citizens, and to be empathetic and ethical individuals.

Students are selected based on individual student growth in the areas of: positive behavior, citizenship, good attendance, a thirst for knowledge, and high academic standards.

## 'Getting Off the Mountain' the life of Fredric Hensel, WWII's combat quadruple amputee, published in time for Veteran's Day

**Groton native Lee T. Raines' fifth book can be purchased online**

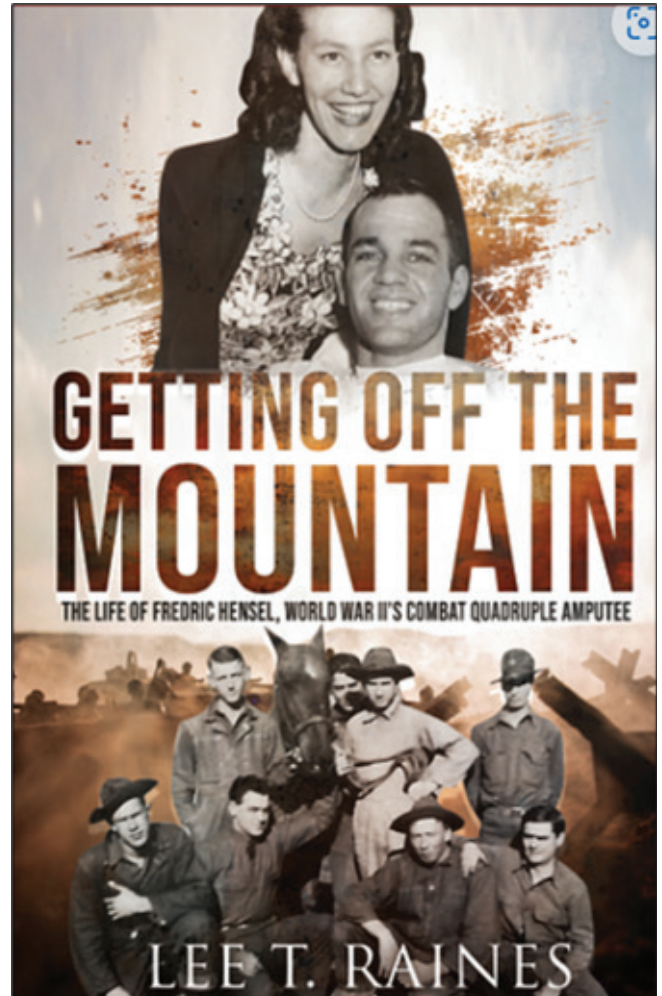
Lee T. Raines' fifth book, "Getting Off the Mountain," the life of Fredric Hensel, WWII's combat quadruple amputee, has been published in time for Veteran's Day, and can be purchased in paperback or on Kindle on Amazon. All of Raines' books can be found on [leeraines.com](http://leeraines.com).

Getting Off the Mountain is Lee T. Raines' fifth book and carries the running theme of service to country, particularly by America's small town young men and women. In this one, Raines follows the life and struggles of Fredric Hensel, the only combat "basket case" of World War II.

During Raines' research on 1940-1945 We Will Remember, he learned about a young soldier, who was called by one veteran the "bravest fighter of this war." Hensel lost all four limbs in varying severity, earning the military term "basket case," as the result of a tank mine explosion during the Battle of Okinawa.

Raines traces Hensel's roots, his life before joining the army, combat experiences and the challenges and victories upon his return to the States.

Getting Off the Mountain is an inspiring story of how one man's optimistic spirit, combined with the devotion of his wife, Jewell, and the support of friends as well as strangers, captured the attention and hearts of the public in post-war America.



## Yankton County Fatal Crash

What: Single vehicle/pedestrian fatal crash  
Where: E 19th Street and Mulberry Street, Yankton, SD  
When: 8:20 a.m., Tuesday, October 16, 2024

Driver 1: Male, 60 years old from Yankton, SD, no injuries  
Vehicle 1: Chevy Silverado  
Seat Belt Used: Yes

Pedestrian: Female, 5 years old from Yankton, SD, fatal injuries

Yankton County, S.D.- A 5-year-old girl died after being struck by a vehicle in Yankton, SD this morning.

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

Preliminary crash information indicates the driver of a Chevy Silverado was reentering the roadway on east 19th Street near Mulberry Street at a four-way stop. At the same time, a 5-year-old child was crossing the street and was struck by the truck. The driver did not see the child. The child was transported to a Yankton hospital where she was pronounced deceased.

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.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 113 ~ 8 of 78

## Working to Protect & Promote Traditional American Values

- ✓ Pro Police
- ✓ Pro Constitution
- ✓ Pro Family



Visit the Campaign Site  
[ManhartForHouse.com](https://ManhartForHouse.com)



Paid for by Manhart for State House

# MANHART

## STATE REPRESENTATIVE

## DISTRICT 1

[facebook.com/ManhartLogan](https://facebook.com/ManhartLogan) | [ManhartForHouse.com](https://ManhartForHouse.com)

**General Election - Nov. 5**  
**Absentee Voting has begun**



## Groton council gets first look at 2025 budget requests

by Elizabeth Varin

Repairs at the community center? A quarter of a million dollars for a saferoom at the park? A new electric metering system?

The City Council reviewed initial budget request items for the 2025 fiscal year. Within that, though, was a peek into a potential revenue shortfall should Initiated Measure 28 pass in November.

Initiated Measure 28 would prohibit taxes on anything sold for human consumption. "Human consumption" can be interpreted in several different ways, according to the South Dakota Legislative Research Council. Depending on what is considered human consumption – food, energy, tobacco, personal care, paper, other consumables – the state could see a reduction in revenue between \$133.6 and \$646.2 million.

That impact would also be felt by the city of Groton, said Finance Officer Douglas Heinrich. The city may see a loss of more than \$100,000 in revenue if the initiated measure is approved by voters in November. That would be a hefty loss that would require a more conservative budget.

"The city only runs \$1.1 million in general fund revenue, and \$100,000 less than that... that's a big percentage," he said. "It's not just nickels in there."

That would significantly affect the city's ability to fund some of the proposed budget requests.

Items that have been requested by different departments in the city include

- Painting City Hall (estimated \$20,000 cost)
- Installing handicap accessible doors (estimated \$10,000 cost)
- Wage increases and other equipment for the swimming pool
- Cost-of-Living increases (2.5 percent) and summer salaries increases (minimum wage increase from \$11.20 per hour to \$11.50 per hour starting Jan. 1, 2025)
- Baseball/softball funding (\$35,000 toward a new concession stand and an estimated \$2,000 for new U12 uniforms)
- Community Center repairs (\$50,000 estimate)
- Three new Bobcat mowers (\$21,000 estimate)
- Beginning the park saferoom building (\$250,000 estimated cost if FEMA approves grant funding for the project)
- A new electric metering system (\$225,000 to \$325,000 estimate plus an annual support cost)
- Increase in electric cost (Rising 2.14 percent in 2025 and 3.97 percent in 2026)
- Street resurfacing (\$125,000 estimate)
- Replace final old dump truck (\$30,000 estimate)

The first reading of a budget resolution is set to go before the City Council at its Nov. 5 meeting.

### Electrifying meter discussion takes place

New electric meters could be in place by the end of 2025.

The City Council reviewed costs associated with retrofitting and replacing the city's current system.

The meter system in town now is probably 15 years old, said Technology Specialist Paul Kosel. And the city is using the same network to connect the meters that has been in place since the 1970s.

"We've got 50 years of life expectancy from this system, which is pretty good," he said.

However, there are about 80 meters in town that have to be manually read as remote reading doesn't work with them, he said. More and more things are causing interference in the system, and the company that runs the backend system is moving away from that program.

The system Kosel priced out and presented to the council would include about \$46,000 in initial costs to get the system in place. The cost of replacing or retrofitting the current meters would range from \$148,299 to \$177,496.

Mayor Scott Hanlon pointed out that "this sounds like a good deal if we can save some money."

And that money may be needed for more meter replacements.

In about four to five year, all the water meters in town will likely be dead as the city is approaching 20

# Groton Daily Independent

**Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 113 ~ 10 of 78**

years with those meters and the batteries can die at that time, Kosel said.

"That's what we're going to have to deal with in the future," he said. "That's going to be a major water expense."

- It will soon be Groton Day! The Dacotah Prairie Museum will host an open house starting at 1 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 26. The event is in conjunction with the Groton Past Present and Future exhibit.

- Groton resident Chris Frost asked the council if he could survey the site of the city's ice rink as a way of looking into rink improvements. The goal would be to flatten out the field. The city could also put down a layer of plastic as a barrier to stop water from soaking into the ground and stop vegetation from growing and destroying the ice. "I just want to go out there and see how bad it really is," Frost said. "If it saves on water, it's worth it."

- The city received one offer to purchase a lawnmower recently declared surplus by the city. Cody Monson's \$220 bid was accepted with a unanimous vote.

- The downtown portion of Main Street will be closed from 4 to 6 p.m. Oct. 31 for Downtown Trick or Treat.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 113 ~ 11 of 78

15 N Main St. - Ste. 101  
Downtown Groton

Call/Text Paul: 605-397-7460

Call/Text Tina: 605-397-7285



Don't listen to the enemy in your mind telling you that you can't improve yourself!

Once you join and continue your membership, your rate will not increase.

Also offering Senior Citizens (age 65 and older) and anyone doing physical therapy: \$20 a month

Type	Annual Agreements		
	Month-to-month Paid Monthly	Paid Monthly	Paid Yearly
Student	<input type="radio"/> \$35.15	<input type="radio"/> \$29.82	<input type="radio"/> \$255.60
Single	<input type="radio"/> \$40.48	<input type="radio"/> \$35.15	<input type="radio"/> \$319.50
2-Person	<input type="radio"/> \$59.78	<input type="radio"/> \$54.45	<input type="radio"/> \$575.10
Family	<input type="radio"/> \$72.43	<input type="radio"/> \$67.10	<input type="radio"/> \$702.26
Daily Fee	<input type="radio"/> \$5.00		



## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

### State lawmakers are set to receive a \$3,000 raise

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - OCTOBER 15, 2024 3:39 PM

South Dakota lawmakers are set to receive a raise of nearly \$3,000 following the state Board of Finance's approval Wednesday of an obligatory pay adjustment for the next legislative session.

The change will bring 2025 lawmaker salaries to \$16,348. The figure is based on the median South Dakota salary, as required by a 2018 law.

The law sets lawmakers' compensation at one-fifth of the state's median salary, which the state says is currently \$81,740.

Legislators saw their pay decline recently, earning nearly \$14,800 for the 2023 legislative session but only about \$13,400 in 2024.

Tuesday's adjustment follows a long history of salary increases for South Dakota lawmakers. When the state's constitution was adopted in 1889, legislators were paid just \$5 per day, plus 10 cents per mile for one round trip to the capital. This compensation remained unchanged for over 30 years, aside from a brief cut in mileage reimbursement to 5 cents in 1891.

In 1921, lawmakers outside the Pierre area were granted a \$200 living expense allowance, which survived a court challenge after the South Dakota Supreme Court ruled it to be expense money rather than additional pay.

Lawmakers' salaries remained modest throughout much of the early 20th century, with multiple failed attempts to raise them. By the 1940s, legislative pay stood at around \$500 for a two-year term, until voters approved a constitutional amendment in 1946 allowing the Legislature to change salaries by statute. In 1947, the pay was raised to \$525 per session.

Subsequent increases followed, with salaries reaching \$1,800 in 1957.

In 1963, the state adopted annual legislative sessions, spurring another significant raise to \$5,000 for a two-year term in 1969. Prior to 1963, lawmakers met in Pierre once every two years.

That remained unchanged until 1988, when lawmakers earned \$8,000 per term.

In 1999, the Legislature set salaries at \$6,000 annually, with added benefits such as a daily expense allowance and mileage reimbursement. That arrangement remained until the 2018 law that now governs legislative compensation.

Lawmakers who live over 50 miles from the Capitol also currently receive up to \$166 a day to help cover the cost of travel, a hotel, and food. The state adjusts the amount every year. That allowance was intro-



**The South Dakota House of Representatives chamber at the Capitol in Pierre.** (Joshua Haiar/South Dakota Searchlight)

duced in 1974 for \$25 a day.

The 40-day, 2024 Legislative Session at the Capitol in Pierre begins January 14, 2025.

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

## Standing Rock Sioux Tribe files new lawsuit over DAPL

BY: MARY STEURER, NORTH DAKOTA MONITOR - OCTOBER 15, 2024 12:41 PM

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe on Monday filed a new lawsuit against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers arguing that the Dakota Access Pipeline is operating illegally and must be shut down.

The tribe, which has lands in North and South Dakota, has long opposed the pipeline, also referred to as DAPL. The tribe is concerned that it violates the tribe's sovereignty, endangers sacred cultural sites and threatens to pollute the tribe's water supply.

The Army Corps of Engineers has jurisdiction over the section of the pipeline that passes under Lake Oahe — a reservoir on the Missouri River — roughly a half-mile upstream from the Standing Rock Reservation.

The tribe in a 34-page complaint filed in U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia argues the Army Corps flouted federal regulations by allowing the pipeline to operate without an easement, sufficient study of possible environmental impacts or the necessary emergency spill response plans, among other alleged violations.

"We are fighting for our rights and the water that is life for Oceti Sakowin tribes," Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Chairwoman Janet Alkire said during a news conference the afternoon of Indigenous Peoples Day.

The Army Corps of Engineers did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The more than 1,000-mile-long pipeline carries crude oil from the Bakken oil fields of northwest North Dakota to Illinois, and has been operating since 2017. Its pathway includes unceded land recognized as belonging to the Sioux Nation under an 1851 treaty with the U.S. government.

The lawsuit was triggered in part by a 2024 engineering report that raised questions about the construc-



**Opponents of the Dakota Access Pipeline gather Nov. 1, 2023, in Bismarck ahead of a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers public meeting on an environmental impact statement. The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe opposes the pipeline, citing concerns for its water supply.** (Kyle Martin/

For the North Dakota Monitor)

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 113 ~ 14 of 78

tion of the pipeline crossing below Lake Oahe, representatives of the tribe said Monday.

The report calculated that up to 1.4 million gallons of bentonite clay-based drilling mud used in the horizontal directional drilling process was not fully accounted for in construction records. The report notes that there is no clear indication where the fluid migrated, but that it could have seeped into the surrounding soil.

"The Corps has failed to act and failed to protect the tribe," Alkire said of the report's findings.

The report was prepared by engineering consulting firm Exponent for environmental advocacy group Greenpeace as part of an ongoing lawsuit brought by pipeline developer Energy Transfer. Greenpeace commissioned the report to defend itself against Energy Transfer's allegations that Greenpeace defamed the pipeline during its involvement in protests against DAPL in 2016 and 2017.

Energy Transfer has requested that the report be tossed from the case, arguing that the evidence is not reliable. The company did not immediately respond to a request for comment late Monday.

A regulator at the North Dakota Department of Environmental Quality confirmed some drilling mud breached containment during construction, but said the substance never reached the lake bed and is not toxic.

"Bentonite's not a contaminant of concern," Bill Suess, who manages the Department of Environmental Quality's Spill Investigation, told the North Dakota Monitor. He noted that the clay is native to the soil. The agency didn't feel the need to formally investigate the matter, Suess said.

"This is something we see happening virtually on every horizontal boring we see," Suess said. "It happens. It's not a major issue."

The pipeline is about 95-115 feet below the bottom of the riverbed at the Lake Oahe crossing, Energy Transfer has said.

A public affairs official with the Army Corps of Engineers Omaha District last week told the North Dakota Monitor that it was not aware of such an incident.

Construction inspection reports filed with the North Dakota Public Service Commission identified no deficiencies at the Lake Oahe drilling site on Jan. 20, 2017, or Feb. 23, 2017.

Standing Rock's complaint also emphasizes that the Dakota Access Pipeline has still been allowed to operate despite that it no longer has an easement authorizing it to cross under Lake Oahe.

The Army Corps approved the easement in 2017, but a federal judge later revoked it in 2020, finding that the Corps violated environmental law by granting it without properly researching the possible environmental impacts of the pipeline.

U.S. District Court Judge James Boasberg instructed the Army Corps of Engineers to complete a more thorough environmental impact study, which is still in the works. (Boasberg also ordered the pipeline to stop operating, though that demand was ultimately overturned by an appellate court.)

A draft version of the environmental impact study released by the federal agency last year acknowledges that the construction method used to bore DAPL's pathway under Lake Oahe — horizontal directional drilling — is vulnerable to drilling fluid unintentionally migrating to the surface or seeping into other locations.

The document notes the drilling fluid is "benign" but can cause some environmental impacts.

The draft said no such incidents were observed during DAPL's construction.

Energy Transfer claims on its website that, in accordance with federal law, it always has response plans in place to properly handle any drilling mud displacement.

"If at any time during the drilling process an inadvertent return is suspected, the construction team immediately works to contain and remove any drilling mud that is released during (horizontal directional drilling) activities," the website says.

Regardless, Standing Rock representatives said Monday that enforcement actions taken against Energy Transfer related to other pipeline projects are enough reason to shut down DAPL.

The Environmental Protection Agency in 2022 proposed a ban on Energy Transfer entering into any future contracts with the federal government, the tribe noted.

Energy Transfer is not qualified to have an easement if it is debarred from federal contracts, Standing Rock argues in the complaint.

The ban was related to a criminal pollution case against Energy Transfer for two pipelines in Pennsylvania. Violations alleged in the criminal case included that Energy Transfer had used unapproved additives in the drilling fluid used to construct one of the pipelines. The company was convicted of environmental crimes under Pennsylvania law.

For this reason, Standing Rock wonders whether the drilling fluid used to bore under Lake Oahe truly contained no toxins.

"That's a question the tribe has — what was in the drilling fluid?" Don Holstrom, an environmental consultant for Standing Rock, said Monday.

Standing Rock has ground and surface water testing programs, but it lacks adequate funding for consistent, real-time water monitoring, said Peter Capossela, an attorney representing Standing Rock in the suit.

"In a sense, DAPL is an unfunded mandate on the tribal government," Capossela said during the conference.

Standing Rock also accuses the Army Corps of illegally allowing the pipeline to operate despite evidence that construction of the pipeline led to damage to Native burial sites near Standing Rock in 2016.

Energy Transfer has denied causing any damage to burial or other cultural sites, and maintains that it complied with all relevant regulations.

Additionally, the complaint accuses the Army Corps of neglecting to require Energy Transfer to share its emergency response plans with Standing Rock in the case of a spill under Lake Oahe.

Standing Rock claims that Energy Transfer has only provided redacted versions of the documents.

*Mary Steurer is a reporter based in Bismarck for the North Dakota Monitor. A native of St. Louis, Steurer previously worked as the local government reporter for the Casper Star-Tribune newspaper in Wyoming.*

## Q&A: Kristie Fiegen, incumbent Republican candidate for Public Utilities Commission

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - OCTOBER 15, 2024 8:17 AM

Republican Public Utilities Commissioner Kristie Fiegen hopes South Dakota voters give her another six-year term on Nov. 5.

The state's three elected commissioners oversee the regulation of private utility companies, which provide essential services including telecommunications, electricity and natural gas. The commissioners are assisted by a staff of analysts and lawyers.

The job of a commissioner is to ensure private utilities provide reliable services at fair rates. They also approve major projects, such as new power plants or transmission lines.

Republican former Gov. Dennis Daugaard appointed Fiegen to fill a commission vacancy in 2011. She was then elected to her own term in November 2012 and reelected in 2018. She's currently the chairperson



**Public Utilities Commissioner Kristie Fiegen participates in an election forum on Sept. 19, 2024, at Dakota Wesleyan University in Mitchell. Her opponents did not attend.** (Joshua Haiar/South Dakota Searchlight)

Joshua Haiar/South Dakota Searchlight

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 113 ~ 16 of 78

of the commission.

Fiegen, who lives in Pierre and Sioux Falls, previously served as a state legislator, as president of Junior Achievement of South Dakota, as South Dakota area manager for the National Multiple Sclerosis Society and as a sales representative for Monsanto.

Forrest Wilson, a Democrat, and Gideon Oakes, a Libertarian, are challenging Fiegen in the election. Following are portions of a Searchlight interview with Fiegen, edited for length and clarity.

## **Why are you running?**

I've always been an advocate for people and doing the right thing. Ethics is important to me, very important to me, it's my standard. And I love the state of South Dakota.

I was called by Governor Dugaard to become a public utilities commissioner to fill a vacant seat. My family and I really prayed about it: whether we wanted to get out of the nonprofit world. I love the nonprofit world and looking out for people and helping people, and so, we had to decide if I wanted to go into public service and look out for people differently. And after much prayer, I said yes to Governor Dugaard. And now I love it.

The people of this state need a strong voice at the Public Utilities Commission. They need a strong voice nationally so that South Dakota doesn't get run over by D.C. politics.

## **Summit Carbon Solutions wants to build a carbon dioxide pipeline through South Dakota, to carry carbon emissions from ethanol plants to an underground storage site in North Dakota. Summit will need a PUC permit. What's your view of the project?**

I'm not going to weigh in on that, because as commissioners, we're quasi-judicial and need to remain neutral, and let facts and evidence guide us. Everybody wants to know how we feel, but if those other two candidates make any type of statement to you and end up on the PUC considering it, they're going to be in the circuit court and thrown out of the docket; they won't be able to make a decision on it.

## **This is the issue many South Dakotans want to know your view on. Is there anything you want to say about it?**

The ex parte rules [which require commissioners to remain neutral on matters before them] talk about how the three commissioners are quasi-judicial. So, we cannot talk, listen, or discuss open dockets with other commissioners, the public, with even the Public Utilities Commission staff that's in the docket.

Is there an active carbon pipeline docket right now?

This is part of the ex parte. Or a future docket. You want a commissioner who is ethical, and I believe the ex parte rules are extremely important.

## **Does the Public Utilities Commission fairly balance the interests of utility companies and their customers?**

At the PUC, we have to balance affordability, but also, investor-owned utilities, according to state law, have the right to earn a reasonable rate of return. What we do in the Public Utilities Commission is spend an incredible amount of time, often a year, looking at all their financials.

I'll give Xcel Energy as an example. Xcel came in for a rate case in 2022 and we made a decision in June 2023. They asked for [an electric rate increase] around 18%, and we cut their request by 67% [to a 6% rate increase], and it was because I spent years in advance getting my questions ready, realizing I did not want South Dakota ratepayers to pay for the regulations of Minnesota. So, anytime they passed a new law in Minnesota, I'd take a note, and we would kick out those additional expenses.

When you look at the inflation of the last six years, it's well over 20%, and what we've done with investor-owned utilities is kept their increases well below that, and it's around 10%.



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 113 ~ 17 of 78

## How do you feel about wind, solar and batteries displacing some of the need for coal and natural gas?

In South Dakota, we generated 77% of our energy last year from renewables, and then about 23% from more traditional sources.

As a public utilities commissioner, we cannot be biased. So, we have to believe in all-above energy and adhere to the standard of a quasi-judicial judge.

What I will say is we need a mix of dispatchable, and dispatchable means that when the wind is not blowing and the sun is not showing, we still have electricity, so that is more of your base load, or a peaker; a peaker is natural gas that can fill in that gap. Baseload is more like coal or nuclear.

So, it will be interesting to see. The generation mix is changing because of Washington D.C.'s goals of net-zero. And so, we have to keep the lights on.

There was a day last June that we had 0.35%, less than 1%, from wind in our Southwest Power Pool market, which is 14 states. But then there was a day in May of 2022 when 88% of our electricity for Southwest Power Pool was generated from wind. So, we need all of the above energy to make it work and keep the lights on.

## How concerned are you about climate change vs. our ability to "keep the lights on?"

My concern as a commissioner is to keep the lights on, 365 days a year, 24 hours a day.

The issue is the acceleration of, the movement to carbon zero is too fast; the transition is too fast. So, we are counting on technology that hasn't been developed, especially in a commercial sense. So, battery storage, small modular nuclear, all those types of things need to be developed and the cost of things needs to come down to make things affordable. So, there's affordability, reliability, all of it's a balance right now.

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

## Trump vows to levy 'horrible' tariffs on imports, rejecting fears of inflation spike

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT - OCTOBER 15, 2024 4:04 PM

Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump defended his plans for steep tariffs on Tuesday, arguing economists who say that those higher costs would get passed onto consumers are incorrect and that his proposals would benefit American manufacturing.

During an argumentative hour-long interview with Bloomberg Editor-in-Chief John Micklethwait hosted by the Economic Club of Chicago, Trump vehemently denied tariffs on certain imported goods would lead to further spikes in inflation and sour America's relationship with allies, including those in Europe.

"The higher the tariff, the more likely it is that the company will come into the United States, and build a factory in the United States so it doesn't have to pay the tariff," Trump said.

Micklethwait questioned Trump about what would happen to consumer prices during the months or even years it would take companies to build factories in the United States and hire workers.

Trump responded that he could make tariffs "so high, so horrible, so obnoxious that they'll come right away." Earlier during the interview, Trump mentioned placing tariffs on foreign-made products as high as 100% or 200%.

## Smoot-Hawley memories

Micklethwait noted during the interview that 40 million jobs and 27% of gross domestic product within the United States rely on trade, questioning how tariffs on those products would help the economy.

He also asked Trump if his plans for tariffs could lead the country down a similar path to the one that followed the Smoot-Hawley tariff law becoming law in June 1930. Signed by President Herbert Hoover, some

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 113 ~ 18 of 78

historians and economists have linked the law to the beginning of the Great Depression.

Trump disagreed with Micklethwait, though he didn't detail why his proposals to increase tariffs on goods from adversarial nations as well as U.S. allies wouldn't begin a trade war.

The U.S. Senate's official explainer on the Smoot-Hawley tariffs describes the law as being "among the most catastrophic acts in congressional history." And the Congressional Research Services notes in a report on U.S. tariff policy that it was the last time lawmakers set tariff rates.

Desmond Lachman, senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, a conservative-leaning think tank, wrote last month that Trump's proposal to implement tariffs of at least 60% on goods imported from China as well as 10 to 20% on all other imports could have severe economic consequences.

"It is difficult to see how such a unilateral trade policy in flagrant violation of World Trade Organization rules would not lead to retaliation by our trade partners with import tariff increases of their own," Lachman wrote. "As in the 1930s, that could lead us down the destructive path of beggar-my-neighbor trade policies that could cause major disruption to the international trade system. Such an occurrence would be particularly harmful to our export industries and would heighten the chances of both a US and worldwide economic recession."

CRS notes in its reports that while the Constitution grants Congress the authority to establish tariffs, lawmakers have given the president some authority over it as well.

The United States' membership in the World Trade Organization and various other trade agreements also have "tariff-related commitments," according to CRS.

"For more than 80 years, Congress has delegated extensive tariff-setting authority to the President," the CRS report states. "This delegation insulated Congress from domestic pressures and led to an overall decline in global tariff rates. However, it has meant that the U.S. pursuit of a low-tariff, rules-based global trading system has been the product of executive discretion. While Congress has set negotiating goals, it has relied on Presidential leadership to achieve those goals."

## The presidency and the Fed

Trump said during the interview that he believes the president should have more input into whether the Federal Reserve raises or lowers interest rates, though he didn't answer a question about keeping Jerome Powell as the chairman through the end of his term.

"I think I have the right to say I think he should go up or down a little bit," Trump said. "I don't think I should be allowed to order it. But I think I have the right to put in comments as to whether or not interest rates should go up or down."

Trump declined to answer a question about whether he's spoken with Russian leader Vladimir Putin since leaving office.

"I don't comment on that," Trump said. "But I will tell you that if I did, it's a smart thing. If I'm friendly with people, if I have a relationship with people, that's a good thing, not a bad thing."

Journalist Bob Woodward wrote in his new book "War" that Trump and Putin have spoken at least seven



**The Republican presidential nominee, former U.S. President Donald Trump, on Tuesday, Oct. 15, spoke to the Economic Club of Chicago. In this photo, he speaks to attendees during a campaign rally at the Mosack Group warehouse on Sept. 25 in Mint Hill, North Carolina.** (Photo by Brandon Bell/Getty Images)

times and that Trump secretly sent Putin COVID-19 tests during the pandemic, which the Kremlin later confirmed, according to several news reports.

Trump said the presidential race will likely come down to Pennsylvania, Michigan and possibly Arizona. The Economic Club of Chicago has also invited Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris for a sit-down interview.

*Jennifer covers the nation's capital as a senior reporter for States Newsroom. Her coverage areas include congressional policy, politics and legal challenges with a focus on health care, unemployment, housing and aid to families.*

## Meet the people leading abortion-rights ballot efforts across the U.S.

**South Dakota's Rick Weiland among activists pushing for voters to make the call**

**BY: ELISHA BROWN AND SOFIA RESNICK - OCTOBER 15, 2024 11:46 AM**

Abortion questions are on the ballot directly in 10 states across the nation. Behind most campaigns seeking to secure abortion rights are everyday Americans who put in months — even years — of work to get these ballot measures before voters. (Maryland and New York are the exceptions, with ballot questions drafted by lawmakers instead.)

Momentum for citizen-led initiatives swelled after residents in Kansas rejected an anti-abortion constitutional amendment put forth by a Republican-dominated legislature in August 2022, just two months after the U.S. Supreme Court's *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* decision. The ruling decimated a nearly 50-year-old precedent and led dozens of states to enact abortion bans.

Anti-abortion ballot questions failed in Montana and Kentucky during the 2022 midterm elections, while referendums on reproductive rights succeeded in California, Michigan and Vermont.

Supporters framed restrictions as attacks on personal freedoms, and in some ways, managed to pull the issue away from the partisan sphere. Poll after poll has shown that the majority of Americans believe abortion should be legal in all or most cases.

After a successful reproductive-rights initiative led by physicians and advocates in Ohio last November, more coalitions followed suit. Just one citizen-led effort fizzled this year: The Arkansas Supreme Court agreed with the Republican secretary of state's decision to invalidate thousands of signatures based on paperwork errors.

Still, millions of Americans have the chance to reject or approve proposed abortion-rights amendments. This summer, States Newsroom interviewed leaders behind bids to enshrine the right to abortion in state



**Planned Parenthood Great Plains chief medical officer Iman Alsaden speaks during an event for an abortion-rights ballot petition in Kansas City on Feb. 6, 2024. Alsaden said Missouri's abortion ban harms patients and providers.** (Anna Sporre/Missouri Independent)

constitutions.

What resulted was a mosaic of advocates, from a South Dakota father of five to a Nebraska doula, who come from varied backgrounds but have a common goal of shoring up abortion access in a country that has been irrevocably changed by Roe v. Wade's demise.

### **South Dakota father leads an effort to restore abortion rights**

Dakotans for Health leader Rick Weiland, a 65-year-old father of five, spearheaded a campaign to restore abortion rights in South Dakota. He said efforts by Republican lawmakers and anti-abortion groups to derail the initiative are "desperate."

### **Arkansas OB-GYN says proposed abortion-rights amendment could revive standard of care**

A campaign volunteer, Dr. Dina Epstein was among hundreds of health care providers who publicly supported the amendment, which state officials ultimately blocked. While gathering signatures, Epstein said she was surprised by "the older, rather religious, kind of more conservative members of the community who have come up and said that they ... absolutely do not believe that the government should be making medical decisions for people."

### **Arizona ballot measure leader says abortion 'is not a dirty word'**

A 15-week abortion ban and a Civil War-era near-total ban led to a lot of confusion for abortion patients and providers, said Chris Love, Arizona for Abortion Access' spokesperson. "The confusion was obviously the point, right?"

### **Colorado abortion ballot organizer says amendment could improve access for Latinx community**

"There's this myth that all the Latinos that are religious, they're anti-choice. That's not true," said Dusti Gurule, president and CEO of Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights and co-chair of the state's abortion-access amendment campaign.

### **Florida ballot organizer aims to take politics out of abortion measure**

"In November, we're going to have young women that are maybe voting for the very first time, and if it doesn't pass, they may be facing menopause by the time there are any protections in place for them and their health care," said Natasha Sutherland, spokesperson for Floridians Protecting Freedom.

### **Missouri OB-GYN talks public health in a ban state and drawing on identity to inform patient care**

Dr. Iman Alsaden, the chief medical officer for Planned Parenthood Great Plains, has a history of providing abortions in regions with restrictions — they worked in Oklahoma when Texas passed a six-week ban in September 2021. Alsaden shared why they practice obstetrics, and the effect anti-abortion rhetoric has on doctors and patients.

### **Abortion ballot organizer: Montanans should not take reproductive rights for granted**

Kiersten Iwai is the executive director of Forward Montana, a progressive civic youth organization. Iwai's group focuses on young people and targets college campuses, which is where the group's 32-year-old leader first got her start in reproductive rights advocacy.

### **Nebraska doula fights for the right to have babies and abortions**

"I completely understand what it means to feel like you don't have any rights when it comes to what you want to do with your body or the big choices that come with pregnancy," said Jasmine Smith, a mother, full-spectrum doula and sworn campaign sponsor for Nebraska's Protect Our Rights, which is trying to overturn a 12-week ban and enshrine abortion protections in the state constitution.

### **Nevada already protects abortion, but advocates aren't taking any chances post-Dobbs**

Lindsey Harmon, president of Nevadans for Reproductive Freedom and executive director of Planned Parenthood Votes Nevada, discussed why her group wants to secure abortion access in a state where it's already protected, the influx of out-of-state patients at clinics and Nevada's status as a battleground state for the presidential race.

*Elisha Brown is the Reproductive Rights Today newsletter author at States Newsroom. She is based in Durham, North Carolina, where she previously worked as a reporter covering reproductive rights, policy, and inequality for Facing South. Her work has appeared in The New York Times, The Daily Beast, The Atlantic, and Vox. She attended American University in Washington, D.C. and was raised in South Carolina.*

*Sofia Resnick is a national reproductive rights reporter for States Newsroom, based in Washington, D.C. She has reported on reproductive-health politics and justice issues for more than a decade.*

## Q&A: Gideon Oakes, Libertarian candidate for Public Utilities Commission

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - OCTOBER 15, 2024 8:15 AM

Gideon Oakes would like South Dakota voters to elect him to a six-year Public Utilities Commission term on Nov. 5.

The state's three elected commissioners oversee the regulation of private utility companies, which provide essential services including telecommunications, electricity and natural gas. The commissioners are assisted by a staff of analysts and lawyers.

The job of a commissioner is to ensure private utilities provide reliable services at fair rates. They also approve major projects, such as new power plants or transmission lines.

Oakes, a Libertarian, helps run a family-owned bed and breakfast and some cabins near Keystone. He is also a volunteer emergency medical technician.

He previously served on the boards of the Black Hills & Badlands Association, the Keystone Rural Fire Protection District, and United Way of the Southern Black Hills. He served two terms on the town board of Keystone.

Oakes and Democratic candidate Forest Wilson are challenging Republican incumbent Kristie Feigen. Following are portions of a Searchlight interview with Oakes, edited for length and clarity.



(South Dakota Searchlight/Getty Images)

### Why are you running?

I'm running for a chance to give the voters a fresh perspective. This office doesn't turn over very often. The current commission has a collective tenure of almost half a century if you go back and look at Commissioner [Gary] Hanson's tenure, and then both Feigen and [Chris] Nelson, that's 48 years of combined tenure.

At some point, you have to ask yourself, "Are we taxpayers and the citizens of South Dakota benefitting from that much experience out of three commissioners?" And I'm going to leave that decision up to the voters. But as for me, I believe that elected office should be a calling, not a career.

## **Summit Carbon Solutions wants to build a carbon dioxide pipeline through South Dakota, to carry carbon emissions from ethanol plants to an underground storage site in North Dakota. Summit will need a PUC permit. What's your view of the project?**

I know Commissioner Feigen generally tries to avoid this topic as much as possible, and I understand ex parte laws [requiring commissioners to remain objective on matters before them] and why she doesn't want to be in a position to taint the outcome of something she's going to be requested to rule on later, but I also think that the people of South Dakota deserve straightforward answers on it if it's important enough of a topic.

And so, for me, I think any public elected official needs to stand first and foremost for the rights of the people, and that's the mark of a true public servant and a true leader. And to me, that includes the rights of property owners to say, "not on my land."

### **So do you side with the pipeline opponents?**

I don't want to comment on any specific docket, but in general, I think transactions involving people's property, and especially landowners, they need to be a voluntary exchange. Eminent domain should be limited to the most rare of circumstances. I don't think it should ever be used for private commercial gain, only public necessity and utilities.

### **Does the Public Utilities Commission fairly balance the interests of utility companies and their customers?**

I think there's always room for improvement. I'm not going to sit here and say that the current PUC is just a rubber stamp for utilities. I think they do have public interest at heart.

Let me put it this way: To me, the most effective government is that which is most local. In an ideal world, these siting issues are going to be decided by county commissioners and municipal officials who live, work, shop and worship alongside their constituency. As far as the siting issues go, those are who should be making those decisions for their own community, not a three-person bureaucracy working in an air-conditioned office.

### **But do you think the commission fairly balances interests in things like electric and natural gas rate decisions?**

I don't want to just sit here and throw mud at them. But if you look at the facts, Kristie Feigen sat on the Xcel Energy advisory board [from 1999 to 2001] prior to being appointed to the commission by Gov. Daugaard in 2011. Sometimes I wonder if those connections are truly beneficial to the voters of South Dakota.

And again, just the sheer length of time people have been in office. Are we, as the public, benefitting from that much experience? Sometimes, too much of something can be not a good thing.

### **How do you feel about wind, solar and batteries displacing some of the need for coal and natural gas?**

I think renewable energy is great. I think emerging technologies in wind, solar and even next-generation nuclear, I think they have a very important role to play, especially as we become more energy independent.

I've said that I'll work wherever I can to reduce those barriers to emerging energy technologies. Obviously, we have to balance property rights. That's always a big thing. We have to always look first and foremost to that, but in that way, when you encourage and protect property rights, I think there are a lot of folks, especially in the ag community, who would like to jump on the renewable energy bandwagon. But I think they feel shackled by the way it's always been, and the way it feels like it's always going to be.

## Can you clarify what you mean by “the way it’s always been” and “shackled”?

Effectively, the government provides a monopoly to energy providers. And in exchange for that monopoly, they regulate them. I feel like that’s somewhat of an antiquated model.

I realize that in some situations, people are going to have zero choice in power. If you are right in the middle of a private provider’s district, the local co-op isn’t going to be running a special cable to you. That’s not feasible. But, there are a lot of cases where people are on the border of a district and could actually have a choice in the matter.

I feel the government should not be protecting an inferior energy provider, if there is a choice in your neighborhood. Maybe you should have the choice to pick your energy provider when you’re on the border of a district, let the marketplace decide on that.

I realize that’s a far-off idea and a little bit fanciful, but every other industry offers choice in the matter. Why does energy have to be the outlier on that?

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

## Q&A: Forrest Wilson, Democratic candidate for Public Utilities Commission

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - OCTOBER 15, 2024 8:14 AM

Forrest Wilson would like South Dakota voters to elect him to a six-year Public Utilities Commission term on Nov. 5.

The state’s three elected commissioners oversee the regulation of private utility companies, which provide essential services including telecommunications, electricity and natural gas. The commissioners are assisted by a staff of analysts and lawyers.

The job of a commissioner is to ensure that private utilities provide reliable services at fair rates. They also approve major projects, such as new power plants or transmission lines.

Wilson, a Democrat, is the program services director for the Lead-Deadwood Boys and Girls Club. He previously worked as a community service officer in Deadwood, a career adviser at the South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation, and an assistant registrar at South Dakota Mines.



(South Dakota Searchlight/Getty Images)

Wilson and Libertarian candidate Gideon Oakes are challenging Republican incumbent Kristie Fiegen.

Following are portions of a Searchlight interview with Wilson, edited for length and clarity.

### Why are you running?

I really want to stand up and represent the little guy. I want to represent the average, everyday person who pays utilities. The cost of living has gotten exponentially out of hand. And, while I can’t do anything about the cost of housing, I truly believe that utilities is a lever that could and should be pulled to alleviate

some of that pressure on the average person.

**Summit Carbon Solutions wants to build a carbon dioxide pipeline through South Dakota, to carry carbon emissions from ethanol plants to an underground storage site in North Dakota. Summit will need a PUC permit. What's your view of the project?**

Unfortunately, or fortunately, I don't know all of the facts. And so, I am doing as much research as I possibly can while still, you know, trying to pay the bills. I cannot make an informed decision without knowing all the facts. And I don't feel comfortable commenting on it because it might be on the docket in the future. And it will probably be something I will have to adjudicate.

**Does the Public Utilities Commission fairly balance the interests of utility companies and their customers?**

No. I feel the Public Utilities Commission doesn't take into account where the people of this state are at financially.

The average person can't really just call and talk face-to-face with the commissioners and have that frank conversation. But I feel the companies have far more access to the commission than the average person does.

**How do you feel about wind, solar and batteries displacing some of the need for coal and natural gas?**

Honestly, I believe we need to diversify our grid as much as humanly possible, and future-proof our grid as much as possible. The technology in wind and solar is advancing at a huge rate, and so are batteries.

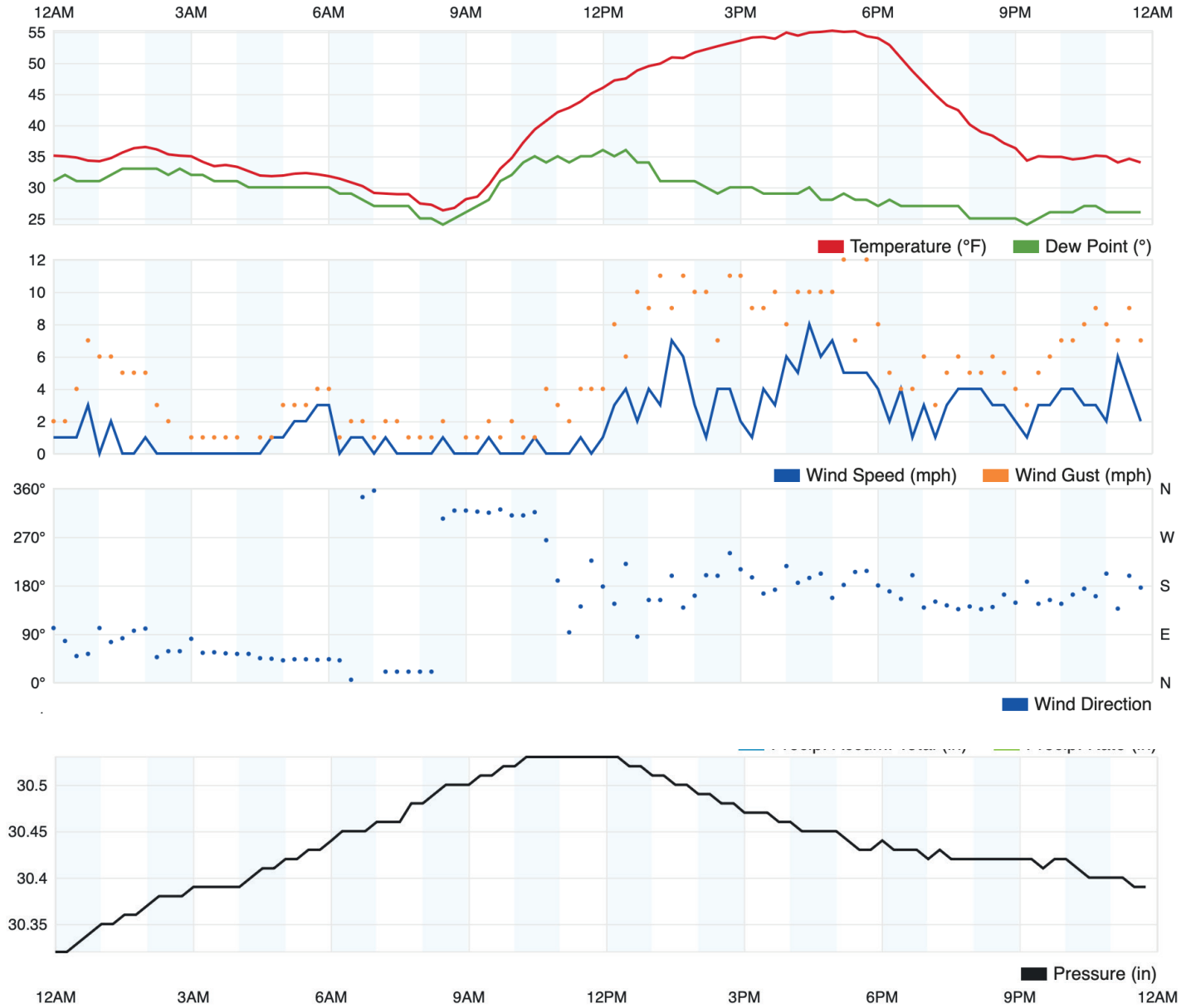
*Joshua Haiar is a reporter based in Sioux Falls. Born and raised in Mitchell, he joined the Navy as a public affairs specialist after high school and then earned a degree from the University of South Dakota. Prior to joining South Dakota Searchlight, Joshua worked for five years as a multimedia specialist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



# Groton Daily Independent








Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 113 ~ 25 of 78

## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



# Broton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 113 ~ 26 of 78

<p><b>Today</b></p>   <p><b>High: 68 °F</b></p> <p>Sunny and Breezy</p>	<p><b>Tonight</b></p>  <p><b>Low: 47 °F</b></p> <p>Clear and Breezy</p>	<p><b>Thursday</b></p>   <p><b>High: 78 °F</b></p> <p>Sunny and Breezy</p>	<p><b>Thursday Night</b></p>  <p><b>Low: 48 °F</b></p> <p>Partly Cloudy then Slight Chance Showers</p>	<p><b>Friday</b></p>  <p><b>High: 67 °F</b></p> <p>Chance Showers</p>
---	--	--	--	--



## Critical Fire Weather Conditions Expected

October 16, 2024  
3:46 AM

For both Wednesday and Thursday

### Hourly Wind Gusts



#### Hazards & Impacts

- The combination of dry grasses, southerly winds gusting to 30-45 mph and relative humidity values between 20-30%, will lead to a **Very High Grassland Fire Danger** across most of South Dakota Wednesday afternoon.



#### Location & Timing

- A **Red Flag Warning** is in effect for almost all of South Dakota this afternoon. A **Red Flag Warning** is in effect for western Minnesota as well. A Fire Weather Watch has been issued for northeastern, southern, and parts of central South Dakota on Thursday.



#### Preparedness Messaging

- Avoid burning, don't carelessly discard cigarettes, and use caution with farm equipment.

	10/16 Wed					10/17 Thu					Maximum			
	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am	3am	6am	9am	12pm		3pm	6pm	9pm
Aberdeen	37	38	39	37	36	35	36	38	39	36	36	26	18	39
Britton	39	40	41	40	43	41	41	43	43	40	41	33	23	43
Brookings	32	36	37	36	37	35	33	37	39	39	40	37	36	40
Chamberlain	36	38	41	39	39	33	31	31	33	32	32	28	23	41
Clark	36	38	40	40	40	39	38	39	40	39	40	35	30	40
Eagle Butte	38	38	37	31	29	28	26	23	26	29	26	20	24	38
Ellendale	38	39	40	37	33	32	35	36	37	37	36	24	16	40
Eureka	36	40	41	37	33	31	30	31	32	32	32	21	17	41
Gettysburg	39	40	40	37	35	31	30	31	31	30	30	20	17	40
Huron	35	37	39	38	37	33	33	37	37	37	37	32	26	39
Kennebec	39	41	43	41	41	37	35	32	31	32	30	24	21	43
McIntosh	36	36	36	32	28	26	25	25	29	31	30	22	20	36
Milbank	29	32	32	31	32	31	32	35	36	36	36	32	29	36
Miller	39	40	43	41	41	39	38	38	39	36	35	25	20	43
Mobridge	36	37	37	33	32	31	30	30	29	28	25	20	20	37
Murdo	39	40	41	41	41	37	33	31	31	32	30	22	21	41
Pierre	33	36	37	36	32	28	25	25	26	28	26	20	16	37
Redfield	35	37	40	38	36	33	35	36	37	36	36	28	21	40
Sisseton	32	33	35	33	33	35	37	38	38	36	37	31	26	38
Watertown	37	39	41	40	41	40	41	43	43	43	41	37	35	43
Webster	39	44	45	45	44	44	43	41	43	45	45	38	30	45
Wheaton	26	29	30	29	28	28	28	29	30	32	32	29	23	32



National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD

Winds and dry conditions will result in Red Flag conditions today. A Fire Weather Watch has also been issued for Thursday for parts of central and northeast South Dakota.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 113 ~ 27 of 78



## Keep an eye out for comet C/2023 A3!

October 15, 2024  
12:18 PM

Looking almost due WEST - about an hour or 2 after sunset (730 - 9'ish)

### This Evening



Upper 40s  
Falling To  
Upper 30s  
7pm - 9pm temps

### Wednesday Evening



Around 60  
Falling To  
Mid/Upper 50s  
7pm - 9pm temps

 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
U.S. Department of Commerce

National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD

With mainly clear skies aside from some high clouds, we will continue to have favorable viewing conditions for Comet #ATLAS tonight and Wednesday evening. We're down to the last few days this will be visible so take advantage!

In October  
**over 98%**  
of wildfires across central to northeastern South Dakota are  
*human caused*



**Wildfire Safety Tips**

During Hot, Dry, and Windy days...

- ✓ Obey all local burning regulations.
- ✓ Avoid activities with open flames or sparks.
- ✓ Don't use a lawn mower on dry weeds or grass.
- ✓ Properly discard cigarettes and matches.
- ✓ Be sure campfires are completely put out.
- ✓ Keep vehicles off dry grass.
- ✓ Make sure no vehicle parts drag on the ground, including towing chains.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 113 ~ 28 of 78

## Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 55 °F at 4:53 PM

Low Temp: 26 °F at 8:37 AM

Wind: 12 mph at 1:33 PM

Precip: : 0.00 (Last date we had rain: Aug. 13)

Day length: 10 hours, 56 minutes

## Today's Info

Record High: 90 in 1991

Record Low: 19 in 1976

Average High: 59

Average Low: 33

Average Precip in Oct.: 1.21

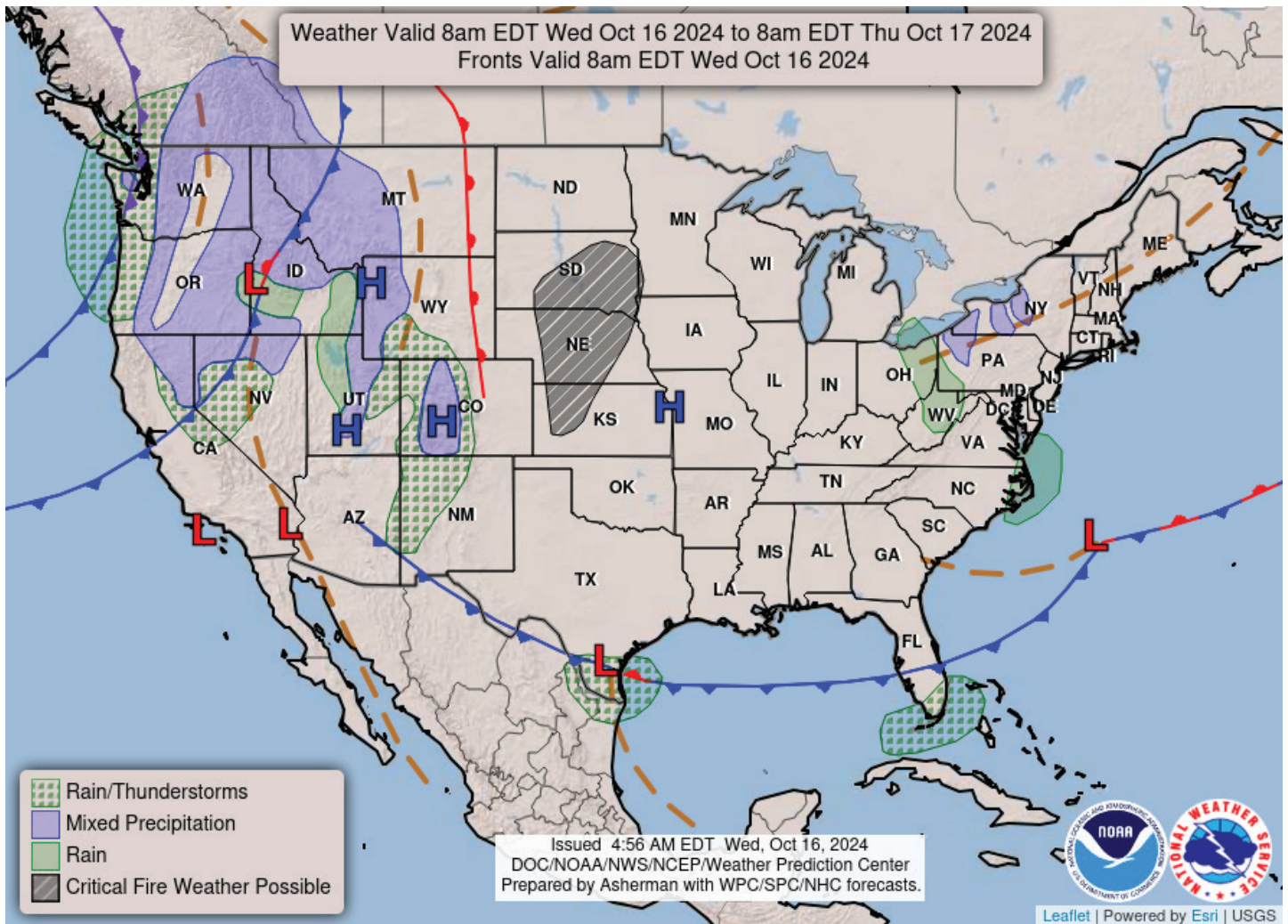
Precip to date in Oct.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 19.54

Precip Year to Date: 19.75

Sunset Tonight: 6:46:03 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:50:51 am



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 113 ~ 29 of 78

## Today in Weather History

October 16, 1980: A squall line packing damaging winds developed across portions of central South Dakota and raced into Minnesota during the afternoon and evening. The line of thunderstorms developed around 2 pm CDT and moved east and northeast at over 50 miles an hour. A large portion of southeast South Dakota was belted with winds of 50 to 70 miles an hour. Yankton reported winds of 60 to 70 mph while Sioux Falls was hit with a 62 mile an hour gust. Considerable damage was done in southeast South Dakota to trees, farm structures, and small buildings. Damage estimates were 100 to 200 thousand dollars. By late afternoon the thunderstorms were roaring through southwest Minnesota. Numerous outbuildings and many trees were downed or damaged. In Redwood County, two combines and a 24-foot travel trailer were tipped over and damaged.

1913 - The temperature in Downtown San Francisco soared to 101 degrees to equal their record for October. (The Weather Channel)

1937 - An unlikely winter-like storm produced as much as ten inches of snow in Minnesota and Iowa.

1944: The 1944 Cuba – Florida hurricane, also known as the Pinar del Rio Hurricane, struck western Cuba on this day as a Category 4. This storm killed an estimated 300 people in Cuba and nine in Florida. This hurricane is currently the 7th costliest U.S. Atlantic hurricane, with an estimated \$46.9 billion (2015 USD) in damages.

1987 - Ten cities in the southeastern U.S. reported record low temperatures for the date. The low of 34 degrees at Augusta GA marked their third straight morning of record cold. A cold front brought showers and thunderstorms to parts of the central U.S. Lightning struck a bull and six cows under a tree near Battiest OK. (The National Weather Summary)

1988: An F2 tornado carved a 6 mile long, east-northeast path through a mostly rural area of north-central Indiana. The extremely slow-moving tornado touched down 1.5 miles north of Nappanee, just 300 yards north of a high school, and shortly after that moved through a subdivision where 11 homes sustained damage.

1988 - Late afternoon thunderstorms produced severe weather in southwestern Lower Michigan and northern Indiana. One thunderstorm spawned a tornado north of Nappanee IN which caused half a million dollars damage. Six cities in California reported record high temperatures for the date. The afternoon high of 100 degrees at Red Bluff CA was the latest such reading of record for so late in the autumn season. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Heavy snow blanketed the foothills of Colorado. Up to three inches was reported around Denver. Echo Lake was buried under nineteen inches of snow. Temperatures again warmed into the 80s and lower 90s in the eastern and south central U.S. Thirteen cities reported record high temperatures for the date, including Atlantic City NJ with a reading of 84 degrees. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1999: Hurricane Irene moved across the Florida Keys producing heavy rainfall, strong winds, and high waves. A gust 102 mph was reported in Big Pine Key.

2007: A blinding sandstorm in the high desert north of Los Angeles wreaks havoc with local traffic causing a highway pileup involving dozens of vehicles. Two people die, and 16 are injured as a result of the storm, which reportedly raised dust to 1000 foot high.

2015: A well-defined waterspout was visible from Marquette, Michigan.



## KEEP 'EM DOWN!

A group of tourists was strolling along the ocean front when they saw some young boys catching crabs.

They became curious when they saw that the basket they placed the captured crabs in had no top. As a crab was being placed into the basket one of the men said, "You'd better cover the basket or all of the crabs will climb out!"

"Oh no, sir," said one of the boys. "That'll never happen. If one of them tries to climb out the others will pull him down."

How like many who attend church each Sunday and call themselves "disciples." Whenever they hear of someone being promoted or another who receives an unusual gift or special recognition for a job serving the Lord or a reward for their performance at work, they are unable to rejoice with the one whom God has blessed. They look for reasons to pull that one down. How sad that gossip, jealousy and envy rule!

Paul wrote that "Love is not jealous!" In other words, if I truly love others as God wants me to love them, I do not become jealous when God blesses them. Instead, I rejoice at His goodness to them. Whatever we have or what others have come from God. They are His blessings.

The love that Paul writes about is not a natural love. It is a God-love that comes from Christ dwelling in us. Only as we surrender to Him will we live His love, and others will see Him in the way we live.

Prayer: Help us, Lord, to rejoice when You bless others and give sincere thanks when You honor us. Fill our hearts with so much love that we will rejoice and be glad. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

*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

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 113 ~ 31 of 78

## 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](mailto:paperpaul@grotonsd.net)

## Groton Daily Independent [www.397news.com](http://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](https://paypal.me/paperpaul)

Pay with Venmo: [@paperpaul](https://venmo.com/paperpaul) Phone Number to Confirm: 7460

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 113 ~ 32 of 78



## WINNING NUMBERS

### MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:

10.15.24

22 34 44 54 62 3

MegaPlier: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$185,000,000**

NEXT 2 Days 16 Hrs 57

DRAW: Mins 53 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:

10.14.24

6 25 31 43 51 4

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$11,830,000**

NEXT 16 Hrs 12 Mins

DRAW: 53 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:

10.15.24

15 20 21 24 38 5

TOP PRIZE:

**\$7,000/week**

NEXT 16 Hrs 27 Mins

DRAW: 53 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:

10.12.24

2 4 10 17 25

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$60,000**

NEXT 16 Hrs 27 Mins

DRAW: 53 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:

10.14.24

7 29 31 41 54 8

TOP PRIZE:

**\$10,000,000**

NEXT 16 Hrs 56 Mins

DRAW: 53 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:

10.14.24

14 18 33 64 67 14

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$408,000,000**

NEXT 16 Hrs 56 Mins

DRAW: 52 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 113 ~ 33 of 78

## Upcoming Groton Events

- 07/04/2024 Firecracker Couples Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 07/09/2024 FREE SNAP Application Assistance 1-6pm at the Community Center
- 07/14/2024 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm
- 07/17/2024 Legion Auxiliary #39 Salad Buffet & Dessert Bar at the Groton Legion 11am-1pm
- 07/17/2024 Pro Am Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 07/25/2024 Dairy Queen Miracle Treat Day
- 07/25/2024 Summer Downtown Sip & Shop 5-8pm
- 07/25/2024 Treasures Amidst The Trials 6pm at Emmanuel Lutheran Church
- 07/26/2024 Ferney Open Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 9am Start
- 07/27/2024 1st Annual Celebration in the Park 1-9:30pm
- 08/05/2024 School Supply Drive 4-7pm at the Community Center
- Cancelled:** Wine on 9 at Olive Grove Golf Course 6pm
- 08/08/2024 Family Fun Fest 5:30-7:30pm
- 08/9-11/2024 Jr. Legion State Baseball Tournament
- 08/12/2024 Vitalant Blood Drive at the Community Center 1:15-7pm
- 09/07/2024 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm
- 09/07-08/2024 Groton Airport Fly-In/Drive-In, Groton Municipal Airport
- 09/08/2024 Sunflower Couples Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 10am
- 10/05/2024 Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm
- 10/11/2024 Lake Region Marching Band Festival 10am
- 10/31/2024 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm
- 10/31/2024 United Methodist Church Trunk or Treat 5:30-7pm
- 11/16/2024 Groton American Legion "Turkey Raffle" 6:30-11:30pm
- 11/28/2024 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm
- 12/01/2024 Groton Snow Queen Contest, 4:30 p.m.
- 12/07/2024 Olive Grove 8th Annual Holiday Party with Live & Silent Auctions 6pm-close
- 04/12/2025 Lion's Club Easter Egg Hunt at the City Park 10am Sharp
- 05/03/2025 Lion's Club Spring Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm
- 05/26/2025 Memorial Day Services Groton Union Cemetery with lunch at Legion Post #39, 12pm
- 07/04/2025 Firecracker Couples Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 07/09/2025 Legion Auxiliary Salad Luncheon
- 07/13/2025 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm
- 09/06/2025 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm
- 10/31/2025 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm
- 11/27/2025 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 113 ~ 34 of 78

## News from the **AP** Associated Press

### Tuesday's Scores

The Associated Press

PREP VOLLEYBALL=

Burke def. Andes Central/Dakota Christian, 25-9, 25-15, 25-6

Chester def. West Central, 29-27, 22-25, 25-20, 25-16

Clark-Willow Lake def. Flandreau, 25-15, 25-16, 21-25, 25-11

Colman-Egan def. Bridgewater-Emery, 21-25, 22-25, 25-13, 25-18, 15-11

Crow Creek Tribal School def. Little Wound, 26-24, 25-20, 28-26

Dell Rapids St Mary def. Centerville, 25-22, 25-23, 25-19

Dell Rapids def. Deubrook, 25-20, 25-15, 25-20

Edgemont def. Newell, 25-20, 25-9, 25-13

Elk Point-Jefferson def. South Sioux City, Neb., 25-22, 25-13, 25-22

Estelline-Hendricks def. James Valley Christian, 25-10, 25-10, 25-18

Ethan def. Howard, 25-16, 25-17, 25-22

Faith def. Dupree, 25-19, 25-17, 25-16

Freeman def. Oldham-Ramona-Rutland, 25-23, 25-13, 25-23

Garretson def. McCook Central-Montrose, 25-10, 25-21, 25-22

Hamlin def. DeSmet, 25-21, 25-18, 25-20

Hanson def. Menno, 25-7, 25-20, 25-12

Harding County def. Ekalaka, Mont., 25-12, 25-18, 25-20

Herreid-Selby def. Faulkton, 25-22, 23-25, 25-16, 25-20

Hill City def. St Thomas More, 25-16, 14-25, 18-25, 25-18, 17-15

Hitchcock-Tulare def. Castlewood, 25-11, 25-17, 25-12

Kadoka def. White River, 25-9, 25-14, 25-15

Lemmon High School def. Grant County, N.D., 25-16, 25-9, 25-12

Lyman def. Jones County, 25-14, 25-18, 25-23

Madison def. Milbank, 24-26, 25-19, 22-25, 25-21, 15-12

McIntosh High School def. Bison, 25-19, 25-12, 25-16

McLaughlin def. Takini, 25-20, 25-17, 25-13

Miller def. Platte-Geddes, 25-11, 25-17, 27-25

Mobridge-Pollock def. Aberdeen Roncalli, 23-25, 25-20, 25-20, 25-11

Mt. Vernon/Plankinton def. Kimball-White Lake, 31-29, 25-15, 25-20

Parkston def. Wagner, 19-25, 31-29, 25-16, 21-25, 15-12

Philip def. Wall, 25-13, 25-19, 16-25, 20-25, 15-11

Ponca, Neb. def. Vermillion, 25-11, 25-16, 25-10

Rapid City Christian def. Hot Springs, 19-25, 25-21, 25-23, 29-27

Rapid City Stevens def. Douglas, 25-14, 21-25, 25-20, 25-14

Sanborn Central-Woonsocket def. Iroquois-Lake Preston, 25-14, 25-11, 22-25, 25-16

Sioux Falls Christian def. Southwest Minnesota Christian, Minn., 25-15, 25-13, 25-14

Sioux Falls Jefferson def. Mitchell, 25-14, 25-17, 25-18

Sioux Falls Roosevelt def. Huron, 23-25, 25-19, 25-17, 25-11

Sioux Falls Washington def. Brookings, 25-22, 25-13, 25-17

Sioux Valley def. Arlington, 26-24, 25-15, 25-17

Sisseton def. Waverly-South Shore, 25-14, 25-17, 25-10

Stanley County def. Sully Buttes, 26-24, 25-13, 25-16

Tiospa Zina def. Flandreau Indian, 25-14, 25-17, 19-25, 17-25, 15-8

Tripp-Delmont-Armour def. Marty, 25-18, 25-8, 25-6  
Warner def. Redfield, 25-18, 25-9, 25-7  
Watertown def. Sioux Falls Lincoln, 25-23, 25-13, 25-22  
Webster def. Leola-Frederick High School, 25-13, 25-21, 25-19, 25-19, undefined-undefined  
Wessington Springs def. Sunshine Bible Academy, 25-17, 25-9, 25-16  
Wilmot def. Waubay/Summit, 25-18, 25-18, 25-19  
Winner def. Chamberlain, 25-9, 25-13, 25-4  
Wolsey-Wessington def. Highmore-Harrold, 25-15, 25-20, 25-8

Some high school volleyball scores provided by Scorestream.com, <https://scorestream.com/>

## Israeli strikes kill at least 15 in Qana, a Lebanese town with a dark history of civilian deaths

By KAREEM CHEHAYEB, MOHAMMAD ZAATARI and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

QANA, Lebanon (AP) — Israeli strikes have killed at least 15 people in the southern Lebanese town of Qana, which has long been associated with civilian deaths after Israeli strikes during previous conflicts with Hezbollah. Israel meanwhile struck Beirut's southern suburbs early Wednesday for the first time in nearly a week.

Israel also carried out a wave of airstrikes on the southern city of Nabatiyeh, targeting what it said were Hezbollah militant sites embedded among civilians, without providing evidence.

The strikes killed at least five people and destroyed a municipality building, according to Lebanon's Health Ministry. The city's mayor, Ahmad Kahil, was among the dead, provincial governor Huwaida Turk told The Associated Press.

Earlier this week, Israeli airstrikes destroyed Nabatiyeh's century-old market area.

There was no immediate comment from the Israeli military on the strikes in Qana late Tuesday. Lebanon's Civil Defense said 15 bodies had been recovered from the rubble of a building and that rescue efforts were still underway.

In 1996, Israeli artillery shelling on a United Nations compound housing hundreds of displaced people in Qana killed at least 100 civilians and wounded scores more, including four U.N. peacekeepers. During the 2006 war, an Israeli strike on a residential building killed nearly three dozen people, a third of them children. Israel said at the time that it struck a Hezbollah rocket launcher behind the building.

Israel resumes strikes on Beirut after 6-day pause

The strikes on southern Beirut were the first in six days, and came after Lebanon's caretaker Prime Minister Najib Mikati said the United States had given him assurances that Israel would curb its strikes on the capital. There was no immediate word on casualties.

Hezbollah has a strong presence in southern Beirut, known as the Dahiyeh, which is also a residential and commercial area home to large numbers of civilians and people unaffiliated with the militant group.

The Israeli military said it targeted an arms warehouse under a residential building, without providing evidence.

It posted an evacuation warning on the X platform ahead of the strike, saying it was targeting a building in the Haret Hreik neighborhood. An Associated Press photographer saw three airstrikes in the area, the first coming less than an hour after the notice.

Hezbollah began firing rockets into Israel on Oct. 8 in solidarity with the Palestinian militant group Hamas, following the surprise Hamas attack on southern Israel that triggered the war in Gaza. A year of low-level fighting along the Israel-Lebanon border escalated into all-out war last month, and has displaced some 1.2 million people in Lebanon.

Some 2,300 people have been killed by Israeli strikes in Lebanon since last October, more than three-quarters of them in the past month, according to Lebanon's Health Ministry.

Hezbollah's rocket attacks, which have extended their range and grown more intense over the past

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 113 ~ 36 of 78

month, have driven around 60,000 Israelis from their homes in the north. The attacks have killed nearly 60 people in Israel, around half of them soldiers.

Hezbollah has said it will keep up its attacks until there is a cease-fire in Gaza, but that appears increasingly remote after months of negotiations brokered by the United States, Egypt and Qatar sputtered to a halt.

Israel invaded Lebanon earlier this month after airstrikes killed Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah and most of his senior commanders, and has been carrying out ground operations along the border. It has vowed to continue its offensive until its citizens can safely return to communities near the border.

Palestinians say 350 bodies recovered from Israeli operation in Gaza

Israel is still at war in Gaza more than a year after Hamas' attack, in which some 1,200 people were killed, mostly civilians, and another 250 were abducted. Around 100 captives are still being held in Gaza, about a third of whom are believed to be dead.

Israel has been carrying out a major operation for more than a week in Jabaliya, an urban refugee camp in northern Gaza dating back to the 1948 war surrounding Israel's creation. Israeli forces have repeatedly returned to Jabaliya and other areas after saying that Hamas militants had regrouped.

Hospitals have received around 350 bodies since the offensive began on Oct. 6, according to Dr. Mounir al-Boursh, the director-general of Gaza's Health Ministry.

He told The Associated Press that more than half the dead were women and children, and that many bodies remain in the streets and under the rubble, with rescue teams unable to reach them because of Israeli strikes. "Entire families have disappeared," he said.

Israel's offensive has killed over 42,000 people, according to the Health Ministry, which does not say how many were fighters but says more than half were women and children. The offensive has left large areas in ruins and displaced around 90% of Gaza's population of 2.3 million people, forcing hundreds of thousands into crowded tent camps or schools-turned-shelters.

## **A full-scale replica of Anne Frank's hidden annex is heading to New York for an exhibition**

By MIKE CORDER Associated Press

AMSTERDAM (AP) — The annex where the young Jewish diarist Anne Frank hid from Nazi occupiers during World War II is heading to New York.

A full-scale replica of the rooms that form the heart of the Anne Frank House museum on one of Amsterdam's historic canals is being built in the Netherlands and will be shipped across the Atlantic for a show titled "Anne Frank The Exhibition" at the Center for Jewish History in Manhattan.

"For the first time in history, the Anne Frank House will present what I would call a pioneering experience outside of Amsterdam. To immerse visitors in a full-scale, meticulous recreation of the secret annex. Those rooms where Anne Frank, her parents, her sister, four other Jews, spent more than two years hiding to evade Nazi capture," Anne Frank House director Ronald Leopold told The Associated Press in an interview detailing the upcoming exhibition.

In July 1942, Anne Frank, then aged 13, her parents Otto and Edith, and her 16-year-old sister Margo went into hiding in the annex. They were joined a week later by the van Pels family — Hermann, Auguste and their 15-year-old son, Peter. Four months later, Fritz Pfeffer moved into the hiding place, also seeking to evade capture by the Netherlands' Nazi German occupiers.

They stayed in the annex of rooms until they were discovered in 1944 and sent to the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration and extermination camp. Anne and her sister Margot were then moved to the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, where they both died of typhus in February 1945. Anne was 15.

Her father, Otto, the only person from the annex to survive the Holocaust, published Anne's diary after the war and it became a publishing sensation around the world as a symbol of hope and resilience in the face of tyranny.

Leopold said the New York exhibit promises to be "an immersive, interactive, captivating experience" for visitors.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 113 ~ 37 of 78

It opens on Jan. 27, International Holocaust Remembrance Day, to mark the 80th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz.

While the faithfully rebuilt annex of rooms will be the heart of the exhibit, it also will trace the history of Anne's family from their time in Germany, their move to the Netherlands and decision to go into hiding, to their discovery by Nazis, deportation, Anne's death and the postwar decision by her father to publish her diary.

"What we try to achieve with this exhibition is that people, our visitors will learn about Anne not just as a victim, but through the multifaceted lens of a life, as a teenage girl, as a writer, as a symbol of resilience and of strength. We hope that they will contemplate the context that shaped her life."

The exhibition comes at a time of rising antisemitism and anger at the devastating war between Israel and Hamas in Gaza that has now spread to the Hezbollah militia in Lebanon following the deadly Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas-led attacks in southern Israel.

"With ever fewer, fewer, survivors in our communities, with devastating antisemitism and other forms of group hatred on the rise in the U.S. but also across the world, we feel ... our responsibility as Anne Frank House has never been greater," Leopold said. "And this exhibition is also in part a response to that responsibility to educate people to stand against antisemitism, to stand against group hatred."

Anne's diary will not be making the transatlantic trip.

"We unfortunately will not be able to travel with the diary, writings, the notebooks and the loose sheets that Anne wrote. They are too fragile, too vulnerable to travel," Leopold said.

Among 125 exhibits that are traveling from Amsterdam for the New York exhibition are photos, albums, artefacts such as one of the yellow stars Jews were ordered to wear in the occupied Netherlands, as well as the Best Supporting Actress Oscar won by Shelley Winters for her role in George Stevens' 1959 film "The Diary of Anne Frank."

## **At least 90 people killed and 50 injured after a gasoline tanker explodes in Nigeria, police say**

By CHINEDU ASADU Associated Press

ABUJA, Nigeria (AP) — More than 90 people have been killed and 50 others injured after a gasoline tanker overturned in Nigeria and sparked an explosion as dozens of people rushed to the vehicle to scoop up the fuel, police said Wednesday.

The explosion occurred past midnight in Jigawa state after the tanker driver lost control of the vehicle while traveling on a highway close to a university, police spokesperson Lawan Adam said.

"The residents were scooping up fuel from the overturned tanker when the explosion occurred, sparking a massive inferno that killed 94 people on the spot," Adam said.

## **Years of war in Congo have created a dire mental health crisis. But little support is available**

By SAM MEDNICK and RUTH ALONGA Associated Press

GOMA, Congo (AP) — For Nelly Shukuru, there was no way out. The fighting that forced her from her home, the squalid conditions in the displacement camp in eastern Congo, the hunger, all felt inescapable. The 51-year-old planned to hang herself.

She said a neighbor stopped her just in time. "In my mind, the suffering was permanent," said the mother of six, seated in a health clinic. "The people who have died are better off than I am."

Years of conflict in eastern Congo have created a dire mental health crisis. Aid groups say the number of people seeking care has spiked as fighting intensifies. Some of the worst affected struggle to survive in cramped, violent displacement sites that aren't conducive to recovery.

The number of people who received psychosocial support in camps around the main city of Goma increased more than 200% between January and June compared to the same period last year — from 6,600

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 113 ~ 38 of 78

to more than 20,000 — according to aid group Action Against Hunger.

The number of people reporting suicidal thoughts has jumped from about five a month at the beginning of the year to more than 120, it said.

**EDITOR'S NOTE** — This story includes discussion of suicide. If you or someone you know needs help, the national suicide and crisis lifeline in the U.S. is available by calling or texting 988. There is also an online chat at 988lifeline.org. Internationally, many governments and other organizations offer help and information on how to contact them is available online.

More than 100 armed groups have been vying for a foothold in mineral-rich eastern Congo near the border with Rwanda. The violence has escalated as the M23 rebel group, backed by Rwanda, has reemerged. The fighting has displaced millions. Over 600,000 shelter in camps near Goma.

More people are experiencing anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder as well as insomnia and excessive alcohol and drug consumption, psychologists say.

"All around us there is war, and the number of people facing difficulty is increasing daily," said Innocent Ntamuheza, a psychologist with Action Against Hunger.

But little mental health support is available. Less than 30% of the requested \$180 million for protection — which includes mental health services — in the humanitarian response plan has been funded this year, said the United Nations, which calls Congo one of the world's most neglected crises.

Shukuru said she considered killing herself in August after her drunk 21-year-old son struck her head with a rock because of a fight over a radio. Her children's drinking had worsened since arriving in the camp because they were idle, she said. The family used to farm and attend church in their hometown of Sake but fled in February when it was bombed.

Her husband, a construction worker, struggles to find jobs. The aid they receive isn't enough.

Some of the camps for displaced families are less than a day's walk from the front lines. The camp where Shukuru lives was struck by shells in May that killed some 40 people and injured others, locals and aid groups said.

Some armed men live among the camps' population. During a visit in August, The Associated Press saw men carrying guns and a truck of people in military fatigues drive through, chanting war songs. It wasn't clear if the people were with the military or self-defense groups.

In the government's attempt to push back M23, it's been supporting militia groups under a coalition called the Wazalendo. But the groups, who previously fought government forces and each other, are accused of committing human rights abuses, locals and aid groups said.

Some fighters and members of Congo's army, often stationed nearby, are also accused of sexual assault.

A 38-year-old said she was raped by three armed men in a field while she was looking for food in May. The AP does not name people who have been sexually assaulted. The mother of eight has been seeking help at a clinic run by Doctors Without Borders, also known by its acronym MSF, but said she often can't sleep at night and sees the men in her dreams.

The constant presence of armed men in the camp makes it worse.

"It reminds me of the men who raped me," she said.

People relive traumatic incidents especially when it comes to rape, said Clementine Sifa, the mental health supervisor for MSF.

In September, MSF said it treated an unprecedented number of survivors of sexual violence in Congo last year — more than 25,000 — with the trend continuing this year. The majority of people were treated in displacement camps in Goma.

Lt. Col. Guillaume Ndjike, spokesman for Congo's army in the east, said the army is trying to protect people in the camps by conducting night patrols and setting up mobile police stations. He said armed men aren't allowed in the sites, and people accused of sexual assault or murder are apprehended and held accountable.

Locals and aid workers say there is little accountability.

Some aid groups are training community leaders to spot signs of people who might need mental health support and refer them to a clinic. They watch for people who are isolated, look stressed or have lost their jobs. Stigma surrounding mental health sometimes keeps people from proactively seeking it, they said.

Those who have sought treatment say it's been helpful to learn ways to cope with anxiety and negative thoughts, including breathing techniques.

Wrapping her arms around her chest and tapping her shoulders, Josephine Mulonda said the technique called "butterfly hug" has helped reduce heart palpitations triggered by her husband's killing in January. The 52-year-old had depressive thoughts and worried how she would support their eight children.

War Child, an organization focused on helping children in conflict, uses movement, song and play to help troubled youth express themselves. Dancing in a circle at a displacement site, children chant "Let me cry, I'm crying." The group also gives parents advice on listening to their children, said Isaac Rwamakuba, War Child's coordinator in Goma for emergency responses.

But he said some of the most affected children lost families through death or separation.

Last November, a 14-year-old was separated from her family when her town was attacked. The AP is not using her name due to the sensitivity of her situation. She is cared for by another family but fears being attacked when she walks for hours into the bush to find firewood to sell.

She's considered ending her life to stop the suffering, she said. The psychological support from War Child helps at least momentarily, she said.

She has no idea if her mother is alive.

## First Italian ship with 16 intercepted migrants docks at Albanian port to process asylum request

By LLAZAR SEMINI Associated Press

SHENGJIN, Albania (AP) — An Italian navy ship on Wednesday docked at the Albanian port of Shengjin to bring the first group of 16 migrants intercepted in international waters.

The naval ship *Libra* left the port of Lampedusa on Monday with 16 men — 10 from Bangladesh and six from Egypt — who were rescued at sea after departing from Libya, a ministry spokesman said.

Last week Italy formally opened two centers in Albania where it plans to process thousands of asylum-seekers outside its borders.

The centers will only house adult men, while vulnerable people such as women, children, the elderly and those who are ill or victims of torture will be accommodated in Italy. Families will not be separated.

Italian Ambassador to Albania Fabrizio Bucci said Friday the two centers were ready to process migrants after the opening was delayed for months to consolidate the crumbling soil at one center, in Gjader where they will be accommodated.

Though the center in Gjader has capacity for 3,000 migrants, it will start with 400 and increase to 880 in a few weeks.

The number of people reaching Italy along the central Mediterranean migration route from North Africa has fallen by 61% in 2024 from 2023. According to the Italian Interior Ministry, as of Oct. 15, 54,129 migrants have arrived in Italy by sea this year, compared to 138,947 by the same date last year.

Under a five-year deal signed last November by Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni and her Albanian counterpart, Edi Rama, up to 3,000 migrants picked up by the Italian coast guard in international waters each month will be sheltered in Albania. They will be screened initially on board the ships that rescue them before being sent to Albania for further screening.

The two centers will cost Italy 670 million euros (\$730 million) over five years. The facilities are run by Italy and are under Italian jurisdiction, while Albanian guards provide external security.

The first center, an area in Shengjin, 66 kilometers (40 miles) northwest of the capital, Tirana, is used for screening newcomers. While the other center, about 22 kilometers (14 miles) to its east near the former military airport in Gjader, accommodates migrants during the processing of their asylum requests.

Italian officials expect the Gjader center will never be at full occupancy but that depends on the flow of migrants brought to Albania.

In Albania, the migrants retain their right under international and European Union law to apply for asylum in Italy and have their claims processed there, a move expected to take a maximum of 28 days, including any appeal case, to process.

Italy has agreed to welcome those who are granted asylum. Those whose applications are rejected face deportation directly from Albania.

The controversial agreement to outsource the housing of asylum-seekers to a non-EU member country has been hailed by some countries that, like Italy, are suffering a heavy burden of refugees.

The agreement was endorsed by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen as an example of "out-of-box thinking" in tackling the issue of migration into the European Union.

But it has been slammed by human rights groups as setting a dangerous precedent.

Rama has made it clear that no other country will be able to have such centers in Albania. He said Albania felt an expression of gratitude for the tens of thousands of Albanians who were welcomed by Italy when communism fell in 1991, or support extended by Rome during the economic turmoil in 1997 and in the aftermath of the 2019 earthquake.

Meloni and her right-wing allies have long demanded that European countries share more of the migration burden. She has held up the Albania agreement as an innovative solution to a problem that has vexed the EU for years.

## **Jill Biden is out campaigning again — but not for her husband anymore. She's pumping up Harris**

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE Associated Press

CLAWSON, Mich. (AP) — Jill Biden wasted no time after she stepped up to the microphone at a suburban Detroit restaurant.

"Now some have come to (the) Detroit area recently and thrown around some insults, but from what I've seen this is a vibrant, thriving city," she said. It was a swipe at Republican Donald Trump, who aimed a recent dart at the most populous city in a critical Midwestern battleground state.

The first lady was back on the campaign trail for the first time in months, but no longer pushing Democrats to support her husband, President Joe Biden. Instead, she is now putting her energy into boosting Vice President Kamala Harris, who Biden endorsed for president after he dropped his reelection bid. On Tuesday, the first lady wrapped up a five-day swing through five battleground states.

While the race itself has changed, what remains unchanged for Jill Biden is her effort to highlight contrasts with Trump, the Republican presidential nominee, in the hope that Democrats can keep the former president out of the White House and help preserve her husband's legacy.

It's one reason why she reminded the 150 or so supporters at a Harris campaign event at the restaurant in Clawson, Michigan, about 20 miles north of Detroit, that the former president had insulted Detroit days earlier by calling it "a mess" while he was there delivering a speech.

The first lady uses her campaign speeches to validate Harris

Before getting in a few digs at Trump, the first lady spends most of her speech pumping up Harris, even sharing that they have "bonded" over many things during the past four years.

"One was how we lost our mothers both to cancer, both long before we were done needing them," Biden says.

In her campaign speech, which has been retooled to focus on the vice president, she says Harris' background has helped make her "a tough, compassionate, decisive leader." She cites Harris' experience in high school helping a friend who was being molested by her stepfather, and her career as a district attorney and California's attorney general.

She promotes Harris' plans to bring down grocery and housing costs by going after "greedy" corporations, as well as her proposal to give \$25,000 in down-payment assistance to people trying to buy their



first homes.

Then Biden shifts to “what’s at stake for women in this election,” recalling how “stunned” and “devastated” she was in 2022 when the three justices Trump nominated for the U.S. Supreme Court helped undo a woman’s constitutional right to an abortion.

Harris has been the administration’s point person on the abortion and reproductive rights issue for the past two years.

“No one has to abandon their faith or deeply held beliefs to agree that the government shouldn’t be telling women what to do,” Biden says, echoing the vice president. “As president, Kamala Harris will proudly sign a national law to restore reproductive freedom to every woman in every state in our country.”

“As president, Kamala Harris is going to fight for you,” Jill Biden says.

Biden turns a lull in her teaching schedule into a swing-state blitz

A break in the fall schedule at Northern Virginia Community College, where the first lady teaches English and writing twice a week, allowed her to get back on the trail for the first time since the president announced in July that he was leaving the race and endorsing Harris.

She delivered speeches and met with small groups of campaign volunteers — bringing cookies to some of them — as she barnstormed through the battlegrounds of Arizona, Nevada, Michigan and Wisconsin on a five-day blitz that ended Tuesday in Pennsylvania.

She joined volunteers making calls at a phone bank in West Chester, a Philadelphia suburb, and spoke at an event at Montgomery County Community College in Blue Bell, another suburb.

The first lady is expected to head out again for Harris and her running mate, Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz, in the closing weeks of what remains a neck-and-neck contest.

The first lady takes on Trump

“I even hate to say it,” Biden said after the audience packed inside a small Democratic campaign office in Madison, Wisconsin, groaned at her mention of the former president’s name.

“Donald Trump wakes up every morning thinking about one person and one person only. Who?” she asked. “Himself!” the audience shouted.

The first lady said a second Trump presidency “would lead to more chaos, more greed, more division. He wants to lower taxes for rich guys like him while costs go up for everyone else.”

“And this is important, the next president will likely choose new Supreme Court justices. And our children and our grandchildren will have to live with the consequences,” she added.

The first lady encourages supporters to vote early.

“As you know, this election is going to be so close, every vote counts,” she told the phone bank volunteers in Pennsylvania before she sat down to make some calls herself.

After speaking at Montgomery County Community College, she met the president in Philadelphia, where, he too, was fulfilling his new mission of boosting Harris.

“Kamala Harris has been a great vice president. She’ll be a great president as well,” Biden said at a Democratic Party dinner.

## Many schools are still closed weeks after Hurricane Helene.

### Teachers worry about long-term impact

By JOCELYN GECKER, MORIAH BALINGIT and MICHAEL MELIA AP Education Writers

Tens of thousands of students in the Southeast are dealing with school disruptions after Hurricane Helene wreaked havoc so severe — on homes, campuses and municipal power and water systems — that some districts have no idea when they will reopen.

While virtual learning helped during the COVID-19 school closures, that has not been an option for this crisis because internet and cellphone service has remained spotty since the storm struck in late September. In hard-hit western North Carolina, some districts warn students will miss up to a month of school, and others say they can’t yet determine a timeline for returning to classrooms.

“I feel like a month is a lot, but it’s not something that can’t be overcome,” said Marissa Coleman, who

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 113 ~ 42 of 78

has sent her four children to stay with grandparents in Texas because their home in North Carolina's Buncombe County has no running water. "But if we get further into Thanksgiving and Christmas, it's like, how are they actually going to make this up?"

In mountainous Buncombe County, Helene swept away homes, cut power and destroyed crucial parts of the water system for Asheville, a city of about 94,000 people. The storm decimated remote towns and killed at least 246 people throughout the Appalachians, where massive cleanup efforts have been complicated by washed-out bridges and roads. It was the deadliest hurricane to hit the U.S. mainland since Katrina in 2005.

The Buncombe County School system, which serves over 22,000 students, told families Tuesday on the district's Facebook page no decision has been made "with regards to start date or length of day" because of a need to repair buildings, restore phone and security systems and redraw bus routes.

Even when schools reopen, educators worry the disruption could have profound effects on students' learning and emotional well-being.

Children who experience natural disasters are more prone to acute illness and symptoms of depression and anxiety, research shows. The physical and mental health impacts put them at greater risk of learning loss: Absences can undermine achievement, as can the effects of trauma on brain function.

The challenges come amid growing concerns about the impacts of climate change on students. Wildfires have swept through communities, displacing families. Many school systems with inadequate heating or air conditioning have closed during extreme weather or forced students and educators to endure sweltering or frigid temperatures. According to the World Bank, 400 million children lost school days because of "climate-related closures" in 2022.

Days after Helene made landfall, Hurricane Milton roared ashore last week farther south along the same Florida coast as a Category 3 storm. While about half the state's districts were closed, all of them they were planning to reopen by the end of this week.

Schools affected by Helene are trying to provide stability. The Buncombe district has suggested parents trade books with neighbors and friends for their kids. "Have them write, maybe about something they're looking forward to when school starts again," the district told parents on social media. "Turn everyday experiences into math problems."

Cécile Wight, a mother of two in Asheville, said she has been grateful for concern shown by schools including surveys checking on families' well-being and an elementary school bus driver who took his own car to visit each child on his route.

"That has been huge, just having the emotional support from the school system and from the people we know at the school," she said.

But uncertainty remains. Wight said her family is able to stay at their home because they have well water, but many other families have yet to return since evacuating. Most of Buncombe's 45 schools still lacked running water as of Tuesday, meaning they're unable to meet basic safety and hygiene standards.

Schools have begun exploring whether it would be possible to open without running water, relying on portable bathroom trailers. In a letter to families, Asheville Superintendent Maggie Furman said the district is considering drilling wells at each school so they don't have to rely on city water.

Coleman said her kids are eager for some kind of normalcy.

"I understand the schools are going to have to take some time to find a way to open safely, and I support that 100%. But I definitely am not in the camp of 'We need to wait until we get water back, until everything's normal again to open.' I just think that's going to be too long," Coleman said.

The Tennessee Department of Education is still trying to determine how many schools remain closed since Hurricane Helene and how many took too much damage to reopen.

Echoing the COVID-19 pandemic, several schools in Tennessee have postponed traditions like homecoming games, parades and dances. Many colleges are also granting extensions on application deadlines, officials say, to reduce high school seniors' stress.

In storm-drenched areas elsewhere, some early education providers may never reopen.

Private child care and preschool centers are particularly vulnerable in the aftermath of a natural disaster, said Militza Mezquita, senior advisor for education in emergencies at Save the Children. Many already operate on thin margins, meaning a temporary closure can easily turn permanent. As for-profit companies, they are also ineligible for many types of disaster aid. A natural disaster can wipe out 10% to 20% of providers, Mezquita said.

"Child care recovery is very critical to the whole recovery ecosystem," Mezquita said, noting the people essential to recovery — road workers, cleanup crews, doctors and nurses — often have young children that need to be looked after. "If they are not able to adequately get their children in care, they can't go to work."

Despite the instability, educators like Heather Smith, who was named North Carolina's Teacher of the Year in the spring, encourage families to see the lessons storms can provide. Smith brought along her two children, ages 8 and 4, to serve meals at her church.

"Our kids are learning so much every day, whether it's about adversity, whether it's about helping a community," said Smith, who rode out the storm at her home in Waynesville.

Similarly, Wight has been taking her children to volunteer for relief efforts at a school. She said it has helped them feel active and involved in the community.

"If COVID taught us something, it's that we can make things work. The kids are resilient," Wight said. "They will eventually catch up on the academic side of things."

## Canadian doctors who provide euthanasia struggle with the ethics of killing vulnerable patients

By MARIA CHENG and ANGIE WANG Associated Press

TORONTO (AP) — A homeless man refusing long-term care, a woman with severe obesity, an injured worker given meager government assistance, and grieving new widows. All of them requested to be killed under Canada's euthanasia system, and each sparked private debate among doctors and nurses struggling with the ethics of one of the world's most permissive laws on the practice, according to an Associated Press investigation.

As Canada pushes to expand euthanasia and more countries move to legalize it, health care workers here are grappling with requests from people whose pain might be alleviated by money, adequate housing or social connections. And internal data obtained exclusively by AP from Canada's most populous province suggest a significant number of people euthanized when they are in unmanageable pain but not about to die live in Ontario's poorest and most deprived areas.

Some doctors fear moving forward even with cases that meet Canada's legal requirements, which allow euthanasia for people with "irremediable suffering" from serious but nonfatal medical conditions and disabilities. On private forums, doctors and nurses have expressed deep discomfort with ending the lives of vulnerable people whose deaths were avoidable, according to messages provided to AP by a participant on condition of anonymity due to their confidentiality.

Some of the requests from the forums were approved and acted upon. Others were denied. But the discourse about patients who are poor, disabled or lonely shows a fraught process where medical professionals test the limits of what conditions warrant euthanasia. The controversial cases in the forums have never been disclosed through Canada's oversight system, even in an anonymized manner.

When Canada legalized assisted dying in 2016, officials said they wanted to reduce suffering and support individual autonomy and freedom of choice — and polls have consistently shown public approval. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau promised then that safeguards would prevent vulnerable people from being euthanized "because you're not getting the support and care you actually need."

But experts tasked with delivering euthanasia to people who aren't dying have called it "morally distressing" and say the legal provisions are too vague to be protective, obliging doctors and nurses to at times end the lives of people they believe might otherwise be saved.

"I don't want (euthanasia) to become the solution to every kind of suffering out there," a physician wrote

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 113 ~ 44 of 78

to colleagues on one of the private forums.

Euthanasia programs are increasing

Canada has the world's fastest-growing program for euthanasia, the practice of doctors and nurse practitioners killing patients with an injection of drugs at their request. Medically assisted suicide — patients themselves taking prescribed, lethal medication — also is legal.

But virtually all of Canada's MAiD cases — as it's widely known here, for medical assistance in dying — are euthanasia, with a doctor or nurse practitioner giving the fatal injection.

Unlike many other countries, Canada doesn't require that patients exhaust all medical treatments before seeking death.

After legalizing euthanasia in 2016, Canada broadened its law in 2021 to allow people with incurable, but not terminal, conditions — including disability alone — to seek a way to die. This vastly expanded the number of people eligible, and medical groups in some territories and provinces require doctors to inform, offer or help provide euthanasia to any patients who might qualify.

Adults with serious, incurable conditions must have a written request approved by two independent doctors or nurse practitioners. Those with nonterminal cases must be informed of other ways to relieve their suffering, among other requirements, and there's a minimum 90-day assessment period.

As the eligibility pool has grown, so has criticism among academics, disability advocacy groups and religious communities.

Doctors and nurses "do not treat MAiD as an option of last resort," said an August report published by the Christian think tank Cardus.

The nonprofit organization Inclusion Canada regularly hears from people with disabilities who are offered euthanasia, including one disabled woman whose physiotherapist suggested it when she sought help for a bruised hip, said executive vice president Krista Carr.

"Our response to the intolerable suffering of people with disabilities is: 'Your life is not worth living,'" she said. "We'll just offer them the lethal injection, and we'll offer it readily."

Doctors privately debate euthanasia cases

When euthanasia was legalized, doctors and nurse practitioners set up email discussion groups as confidential forums to discuss potentially troubling cases, with limited patient details for privacy. They're now run by the Canadian Association of MAiD Assessors and Providers.

Association President Dr. Konia Trouton told AP via email that providing euthanasia for vulnerability or financial reasons alone is "completely forbidden." Trouton said doctors and nurse practitioners consult with one another on the forums "to gain insights and learn from the experiences of others."

The participant who shared some of the email discussions with AP provided dozens of messages raising questions about the medical and ethical complexities of euthanasia requests from people nationwide who weren't terminally ill.

A middle-aged worker whose ankle and back injuries made him unable to resume his previous job told his doctor that the government's mealy support was "leaving (him) with no choice but to pursue MAiD." His doctor told forum participants the patient met legal criteria, with severe pain, strained social relationships and inability to work. Others agreed and assured the doctor the man was clearly in pain. But the doctor was hesitant because the man cited reduced government payments as a key factor.

Cases of homelessness appear regularly and spark some of the most heated debate.

One doctor wrote that although his patient had a serious lung disease, his suffering was "mostly because he is homeless, in debt and cannot tolerate the idea of (long-term care) of any kind." A respondent questioned whether the fear of living in the nursing home was truly intolerable. Another said the prospect of "looking at the wall or ceiling waiting to be fed ... to have diapers changed" was sufficiently painful.

The man was eventually euthanized.

One provider said any suggestion they should provide patients with better housing options before offering euthanasia "seems simply unrealistic and hence, cruel," amid a national housing crisis.

Physicians said keeping their opinions out of assessments was difficult — and painful, given patients'

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 113 ~ 45 of 78

emotions and desperation.

Experts not linked to the forums said that while doctors and nurses need private space for discussion, the lack of transparency about controversial cases is alarming.

"The question about who gets euthanasia is a societal question," said Kasper Raus, a researcher at Ghent University's Bioethics Institute in Belgium. "This is a procedure that ends people's lives, so we need to be closely monitoring any changes in who is getting it.

"If not, the entire practice could change and veer away from the reasons that we legalized euthanasia."

Data suggest marginalized people are affected

Critics have long warned that Canada's policies have led to euthanasia among disadvantaged people whose deaths weren't imminent. Despite publicized cases of people asking to be killed because of insufficient support, government officials have largely refuted the idea that socially disadvantaged people are being euthanized.

But in Ontario, more than three quarters of people euthanized when their death wasn't imminent required disability support before their death in 2023, according to data from a slideshow presentation by the province's chief coroner, shared with AP by both a researcher and a doctor on condition of anonymity due to its sensitive nature.

Of people killed when they weren't terminally ill, nearly 29% lived in the poorest parts of Ontario, compared with 20% of the province's general population living in the most deprived communities, the data show.

People euthanized with nonterminal conditions were "more likely to live in neighborhoods where there's higher levels of residential instability, higher material deprivation and greater dependency on government support," Ontario Chief Coroner Dr. Dirk Huyer said during his May presentation.

The figures suggest poverty may be a factor in Canada's nonterminal euthanasia cases.

But Huyer told AP that the data was only an early analysis and "it's tough to know exactly what it means," saying that his job was only to present the statistics.

Poverty doesn't appear to disproportionately affect patients with terminal diseases who are euthanized, according to the leaked data. And experts say no other country that has legalized euthanasia has seen a marked number of deaths in impoverished people.

Overall for Ontario, the data show, nonterminal patients account for a small portion of all euthanasia cases: 116 of 4,528 deaths last year. But the presentation and discussion among Ontario officials and medical professionals show rising awareness of euthanasia deaths for social reasons.

Privately, officials admit concern

Health Canada, the government agency responsible for national health policy, publishes yearly reports of euthanasia trends but hasn't released any review of cases that triggered ethical concerns.

Marie-Pier Burelle, a spokeswoman for Health Canada, said in an email that "lack of access to social supports or to health services is not and would never be part of eligibility criteria" for euthanasia. Burelle cited "stringent safeguards to affirm and protect the inherent and equal value of every person's life."

In private, though, Canadian officials have examined worrisome cases.

A document from the Ministry of the Solicitor General in Ontario sent to all euthanasia providers in the province in May noted two cases of "lessons learned" in nonterminal cases. The document was shared with AP by a doctor on condition of anonymity because it wasn't authorized for release.

In one, a 74-year-old patient who'd suffered high blood pressure, a stroke and blindness, among other difficulties, was increasingly dependent on their spouse and "expressed their interest in MAiD to their family physician, due to their vision impairment and loss of hope for improvement of their vision and quality of life."

The report cited three instances where legally mandated safeguards were not met. Among them: No assessor or expert versed in the nonterminal condition was involved, and efforts to discuss alternatives to death were "limited."

The report also said the procedure was scheduled "based on the spouse's preference of timing." Officials questioned whether "the patient's death was genuinely voluntary and free of coercion." Independent legal experts said those breaches could constitute violations of criminal law.

Some push for more reflection

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 113 ~ 46 of 78

Polls show that expanding access to euthanasia has long been supported across Canada. But the country appears to be pushing the boundaries of what's socially acceptable, experts say, and that could have global implications, as countries including Britain and France move towards legalization.

"Canada seems to be providing euthanasia for social reasons, when people don't have the financial means, which would be a big taboo in Europe," said Theo Boer, professor of health care ethics at Groningen University in the Netherlands. "That may be what Canadians want, but they would still benefit from some honest self-reflection about what is going on."

Some of that reflection is happening in the confidential providers' forums.

They've debated whether it's valid to euthanize people for obesity in several cases. One woman with severe obesity described herself as a "useless body taking up space" — she'd lost interest in activities, became socially withdrawn and said she had "no purpose," according to the doctor who reviewed her case. Another physician reasoned that euthanasia was warranted because obesity is "a medical condition which is indeed grievous and irremediable."

When a health worker inquired whether anyone had euthanized patients for blindness, one provider reported four such cases. In one, they said, an elderly man who saw "only shadows" was his wife's caregiver when he requested euthanasia; he wanted her to die with him. The couple had several appointments with an assessor before the wife "finally agreed" to be killed, the provider said. She died unexpectedly just days before the scheduled euthanasia.

Providers on the forum were divided over ending the lives of people in mourning. One case involved a woman in her 80s who required dialysis and lost her husband, sibling and cat in a six-week period. Her assessor said her suffering and request to die were tied to her husband's death rather than any medical conditions.

Some doctors said because she lost her husband — the protective factor that would make the other losses and suffering bearable — she qualified. Others recommended grief counseling instead.

A provider referenced a similar case, in which a widow requested euthanasia within weeks of her husband's death: "Her whole life system crashed. I felt much ease in providing for her and had no pushback from the coroner."

Dr. Ellen Wiebe, who has euthanized more than 400 people in Canada, told AP that while poverty inevitably exacerbates suffering, improved housing and social situations have never changed a patient's mind.

"The idea that because I'm disabled, I should lose my rights that undiseased people have is outrageous," said Wiebe, who suffers from heart disease and uses a wheelchair.

She predicted legal consequences if officials introduce more safeguards for euthanasia: "We'll just be back in court with somebody saying, 'You interfered with my basic human rights.'"

The government already faces challenges to its euthanasia laws on all sides. The advocacy group Dying with Dignity filed an August lawsuit in Ontario, alleging it's "discriminatory" to exclude mentally ill people from euthanasia. A coalition of disability-rights organizations in a lawsuit last month argued that euthanasia legislation has resulted in premature deaths of people with disabilities.

On euthanasia forums, doctors and nurses continue to struggle with cases of patients who aren't fatally ill, lamenting that Canada's health and social services can seem woefully inadequate.

"I have great discomfort with the idea of MAiD being driven by social circumstances," one provider said. "I don't have a good solution to social deprivation either, so I feel pretty useless when I receive requests like this."

## Unions face a moment of truth in Michigan in this year's presidential race

By JOEY CAPPELLETTI and MATT BROWN Associated Press  
GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (AP) — Vice President Kamala Harris rallies in Michigan's union halls, standing alongside the state's most powerful labor leader, while former President Donald Trump fires back from

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 113 ~ 47 of 78

rural steel factories, urging middle-class workers to trust him as the true champion of their interests.

As they compete for blue wall states with deep union roots, the presidential candidates are making their case to workers in starkly different terms. And nowhere is that contrast more significant than in Michigan, where both candidates are vying for workers' support in a race that could mark a pivotal moment for organized labor.

"The American dream was really born here in Michigan," United Auto Workers President Shawn Fain told a crowd of several hundred while campaigning for Harris in Grand Rapids. Fain, who described Michigan as "sacred ground" for his union at the early October rally, warned that the dream was on "life support" and that unions like his were key to protecting it for American workers.

Harris, who is planning to meet with union workers again in Michigan on Friday, hopes her message — amplified by supporters such as Fain — will resonate beyond the union families that once formed a rock-solid base for the Democratic Party. Her campaign has grown increasingly concerned about her standing with men in the blue wall states of Michigan, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania, where they are looking to union leaders to help mobilize voters in a political landscape that has shifted in the winds of a rapidly changing economy.

These concerns intensified recently when Harris failed to secure two key union endorsements that in 2020 went to President Joe Biden, who has touted himself as the most labor-friendly president in U.S. history. The International Association of Firefighters and the International Brotherhood of Teamsters both declined to endorse anyone, with the Teamsters citing a lack of majority support for Harris among their million-plus members.

The Teamsters have traditionally been less reliably Democratic than other unions, having endorsed Republican Presidents Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan in the past. Some state-level unions have also diverged from their national leadership, with Michigan's Teamsters and California's main firefighters' union backing Harris.

Still, any break in unity within the labor movement could strike a blow against a party that has worked hard to restore unions as a central source of its power at the ballot box.

"When you talk about unions, you're addressing more than just unionized workers. Most people in states like Michigan have a family member or close friend in a union," said Adrian Hemond, a longtime political strategist in Michigan. "Unions are just a vessel to get that messaging out to workers."

Trump has seized on the union non-endorsements, claiming they prove rank-and-file workers support his vision for the country.

Many Midwestern communities once core to the labor movement have shifted to the right in recent decades, often in response to economic concerns such as deindustrialization and the removal of trade barriers. In that same span, non-college-educated white voters across the country began voting more conservatively for a number of reasons, including concern about cultural issues involving race and gender.

In Michigan, home to the Big Three automakers and the largest concentration of UAW workers, Trump seeks to capture an even larger share of these votes by framing Harris as a supporter of electric vehicle mandates and trade policies that he says send jobs overseas.

Attempting to separate union workers from their leaders, he labeled Fain a "stupid idiot" and praised Tesla CEO Elon Musk for firing workers who went on strike. The UAW says that could intimidate people who work for the Trump campaign or at Tesla who might want to join a union.

In 2020, Biden narrowly carried the blue wall states that had broken with Democrats in 2016 for the first time in decades on his way to winning the White House. That election win was built on a foundation of strong support from unionized voters, who have traditionally formed a turnout machine for Democrats in the Midwest. But it stood apart from past Democratic victories in a number of significant ways.

While Trump narrowly won white voters in Michigan in 2020, the former president's vote margin was highly polarized along educational, professional and income lines; Trump won nearly two-thirds of non-college-educated white voters in the state, while Biden and Trump were drawn to a near tie among college-educated white voters, according to AP VoteCast, a comprehensive survey of the electorate.

Among Michigan's nonwhite voters, who make up 16% of the state's electorate, Biden won a resounding 80% of the vote. But signs of that coalition fracturing have emerged more recently, particularly among Arab Americans in metro Detroit, many of whom are expected to turn away from Democrats due to the Biden administration's handling of the Israel-Hamas conflict.

As Trump again seeks the presidency, his campaign hopes to boost GOP support among the state's non-college-educated white and nonwhite workers to unprecedented levels, partly to offset expected losses Trump will face with white college-educated voters, where he has hemorrhaged support since his 2020 loss and subsequent efforts to overturn the results in Michigan, Pennsylvania and other swing states.

"I think that part of the problem that Democrats are having with some of the white male, blue collar voters is not within the union itself," said Brian Rothenberg, a former UAW spokesman. "It's those folks that are children or relatives of union members that just aren't doing as well."

Harris has aimed to win over these voters by emphasizing how unions benefit all workers. At a Labor Day rally in Detroit, she said "you better thank a union member" for the five-day work week, for sick and paid leave and for vacation time.

"When union wages go up, everybody's wages go up," said Harris.

Just over a year after securing new contracts for UAW workers at Ford, General Motors and Stellantis, Fain has staked much of his political capital — and potentially his future — on supporting Harris. He argues that UAW backing for Democrats has remained steady over recent elections, with approximately 60% of members voting for the Democratic presidential nominee.

Biden became the first president to walk the picket line when he visited Michigan in late 2023 amidst the autoworker strike. A day later, Trump traveled to Michigan and appeared at a non-union plant, where he railed against Biden's electric vehicle push and told workers to "get your union leaders to endorse me, and I'll take care of the rest."

Union leaders have said his first term was far from worker-friendly, citing unfavorable rulings from the nation's top labor board and the U.S. Supreme Court, as well as unfulfilled promises of automotive jobs. They emphasize Democratic achievements in states like Michigan, including the recent repeal of a union-restricting right-to-work law enacted over a decade ago by a Republican-controlled legislature.

With membership dwindling in states like Michigan, Fain will need to attract more than just union workers to secure a victory for Harris, who has campaigned in the state alongside him. If the union president cannot deliver Michigan after all these efforts, it could raise questions about his union's political influence in future elections.

"This is a generation-defining moment, where we are right now," Fain told Michigan voters. "This election is going to determine where we go."

## **Zelenskyy to unveil 'victory plan' to Ukrainian lawmakers after presenting it to Western allies**

By SAMYA KULLAB Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy was set to at least partially unveil a plan to win the war against Russia to his country's Parliament on Wednesday after weeks of dropping hints about the blueprint to lukewarm Western allies, including U.S. President Joe Biden.

The plan — comprising military, political, diplomatic and economic elements — is considered by many as Ukraine's last resort to strengthen its hand in any future cease-fire negotiations with Russia. Thus far, however, no country has publicly endorsed it or commented on its feasibility.

Zelenskyy is keen to get the "victory plan" in place before a new U.S. president is sworn in next year, though Ukrainian officials say neither presidential candidate will necessarily improve Kyiv's standing in the war.

Zelenskyy's presentation to Parliament, announced on Monday by presidential adviser Serhii Leshchenko, comes during a bleak moment in Ukraine. The country's military is suffering losses along the eastern front as Russian forces inch closer to a strategically significant victory near the crucial logistics hub of Pokrovsk.



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 113 ~ 49 of 78

At every turn, Kyiv is outnumbered by Moscow: The country is struggling to replenish ranks with an unpopular mobilization drive; its ammunition stocks are limited; and Russia's superiority in the skies is wreaking havoc for Ukrainian defensive lines.

It's not clear how much of his victory plan Zelenskyy will reveal on Wednesday; Leshchenko indicated that it would be fully unveiled, while other officials suggested that the president would not divulge its most sensitive elements to all lawmakers.

Either way, the plan essentially puts Kyiv's future in the hands of its allies. Without it, any deal with Russia would almost certainly be unfavorable for Ukraine, which has lost a fifth of its territory and tens of thousands of lives in the conflict. Kyiv would be unlikely to ever recover occupied territory, or receive reparations for widespread destruction across the country.

Several elements of the plan have already come to light: making Ukraine a member of NATO; allowing the country to use Western long-range weapons to strike deep inside Russia; providing resources to strengthen Ukraine's air and other defenses, and intensifying sanctions against Russia.

Ukraine's surprise military incursion into Russia's Kursk region in August was also part of the plan, Zelenskyy told reporters. He said the 1,000 square kilometers (386 square miles) of territory captured by Ukraine — along with other provisions of the plan — will likely serve as a bargaining chip in negotiations with Russia.

NATO's Article 5 states that an attack against one member is considered an attack against all. Ukraine's inclusion in the alliance would deter Russian President Vladimir Putin from invading again, Ukrainian officials argue. Western leaders have so far been reluctant to guarantee an invitation, fearing escalation from Putin.

Ukrainian officials were expecting feedback from Western allies at a meeting of the Ukraine Defense Contact Group at Ramstein Air Base in Germany, during which defense leaders from 50-plus partner nations gather to coordinate weapons aid for the war. Scheduled for this past weekend, the summit was postponed after Biden canceled his attendance in response to Hurricane Milton in the U.S.

Zelenskyy has since toured Western capitals to present other key allies an outline of his vision. But none so far have given any indication they will support the plan. Some expressed concerns over the tight deadline set by Zelenskyy, who gave allies just three months to adopt the blueprint's main tenets in late September.

Thus far, the U.S. has been Kyiv's main backer during the two-and-a-half-year war. But Biden has balked at the request to use long-range weapons to strike specific targets inside Russia, fearing a possible escalation in the war. Meanwhile, an intensifying conflict in the Middle East between Israel and Hezbollah that risks embroiling Iran has diverted Washington's attention.

Many expect Democratic nominee and Vice President Kamala Harris to continue Biden's policy and maintain the status quo. Under Biden, U.S. assistance to Kyiv, though substantial, has consistently arrived too late to make a significant difference for Ukrainian forces.

Republican nominee and former President Donald Trump has only said that he'd end the war quickly, without saying how.

Meanwhile, Brazil and China have proposed alternate peace plans that Zelenskyy has rejected, saying they would merely pause the war and give Moscow time to consolidate its battered army and defense industry.

## **In the heartland of Mexico's Sinaloa cartel, the old ways have changed and violence rages**

By MARK STEVENSON Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Cellphone chats have become death sentences in the continuing, bloody factional war inside Mexico's Sinaloa drug cartel.

Cartel gunmen stop youths on the street or in their cars and demand their phones. If they find a contact who's a member of a rival faction, a chat with a wrong word or a photo with the wrong person, the phone owner is dead.

Then, they'll go after everyone on that person's contact list, forming a potential chain of kidnapping, torture and death. That has left residents of Culiacan, the capital of Sinaloa state, afraid to even leave

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 113 ~ 50 of 78

home at night, much less visit towns a few miles away where many have weekend retreats.

"You can't go five minutes out of the city, ... not even in daylight," said Ismael Bojórquez, a veteran journalist in Culiacan. "Why? Because the narcos have set up roadblocks and they stop you and search through your cellphone."

And it's not just your own chats: If a person is traveling in a car with others, one bad contact or chat can get the whole group kidnapped.

That's what happened to the son of a local news photographer. The 20-year-old was stopped with two other youths and something was found on one of their phones; all three disappeared. Calls were made and the photographer's son was finally released, but the other two were never seen again.

Residents of Culiacan had long been accustomed to a day or two of violence once in a while. The presence of the Sinaloa cartel is woven into everyday life there, and people knew to stay indoors when they saw the convoys of double-cab pickups racing through the streets.

But never have they seen the solid month of fighting that broke out Sept. 9 between factions of the Sinaloa cartel after drug lords Ismael "El Mayo" Zambada and Joaquín Guzmán López were apprehended in the United States after flying there in a small plane on July 25.

Zambada later claimed he was kidnapped and forced aboard the plane by Guzmán López, causing a violent battle between Zambada's faction and the "Chapitos" group led by the sons of imprisoned drug lord Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzmán.

Residents of Culiacan are mourning their old lives, when the wheels of the local economy were greased by cartel wealth but civilians seldom suffered — unless they cut off the wrong pickup truck in traffic.

Juan Carlos Ayala, an academic who studies the anthropology of the drug trade at the Autonomous University of Sinaloa, said that following the arrests of Guzmán López and Zambada in July, a new generation of younger, more flashy and cosmopolitan drug lords have taken over.

They fight with extreme violence, kidnapping and cellphone tracking — not the old kind of handshake deals their elders used alongside shootouts to settle matters.

"There is a new generation of leaders of drugs and organized crime here, that has other strategies," Ayala said. "They see that the tactic of shootouts hasn't worked for them, so they go for kidnapping."

"They catch one person, and he has messages from the rival group," said Ayala. "So they go after him to squeeze more information, and that starts a chain of hunting, to catch the enemy."

The new tactics are reflected in the huge wave of armed carjackings in and around Culiacan. Cartel gunmen used to steal the SUVs and pickups they favor for use in cartel convoys; but now they focus on stealing smaller sedans.

They use these to go undetected in their silent, deadly kidnappings.

Often, the first a driver knows is when a passing car tosses out a spray of bent nails to puncture his tires. Vehicles pull up front and rear to cut him off. The driver is bundled into another car. All that is left for neighbors to find is a car with burst tires, the doors open, the engine running, in the middle of the street.

The State Council on Public Safety, a civic group, estimates that in the past month there have been an average of six killings and seven disappearances or kidnappings in and around the city every day. The group said about 200 families have fled their homes in outlying communities because of the violence.

Culiacan is no stranger to violence — shooting broke out across the city in October 2019 when soldiers mounted a failed attempt to arrest another of Chapo Guzmán's sons, Ovidio. Fourteen people were killed that day.

A few days later, civic activist Estefanía López arranged a peace march and 4,000 residents turned out for it. When she tried to do something similar this year, she could get only about 1,500 people to attend a similar demonstration.

"We got a lot of messages beforehand from a lot of people who said they wanted to join and march, to support the cause, but who were afraid to come," López said.

There's reason to be afraid: Last week, gunmen burst into a Culiacan hospital to kill a patient previously wounded by gunshots. In a town north of Culiacan, drivers were astonished to see a military helicopter

seeking to corral four gunmen in helmets and tactical vests just yards from a highway; the gunmen were shooting back at the chopper.

The government's response to all this has been to blame the United States for stirring up trouble by allowing the drug lords to turn themselves in, and to send in hundreds of army troops.

But irregular urban combat in the heart of a city of 1 million inhabitants — against a cartel that has lots of .50-caliber sniper rifles and machine guns — is not the army's specialty.

Squads of soldiers went into a luxury apartment complex in the city's center to detain a suspect and they wound up shooting to death a young lawyer who was merely a bystander.

López, the peace activist, has been asking for soldiers and police to be posted outside schools, so children can return to classes — most are currently taking classes online because their parents judge it too dangerous to take them to school.

But police can't solve the problem: Culiacan's entire municipal force has been temporarily disarmed by soldiers to check their guns, something that's been done in the past when the army suspects policemen are working for drug cartels.

The local army commander recently acknowledged that it's up to the cartel factions — not authorities — when the violence will stop.

"In Culiacan, there is not even faith anymore that we will be safe, with police or soldiers," López said, noting that that has had a clear effect on daily life and the economy. "A lot of businesses, restaurants and nightclubs have been closed for the past month."

Laura Guzmán, the leader of the local restaurant chamber, said about 180 businesses in Culiacan have closed, permanently or temporarily, since Sept. 9 and almost 2,000 jobs have been lost.

Local businesses tried to organize evening "tardeadas" — long afternoons — for residents who were afraid to go out after dark, but they didn't draw enough customers.

"Young people are not interested in going out right now," Guzmán said.

For those looking to get away from the violence temporarily, the seaside resort of Mazatlan used to be only 2½ hours away by car. But that's not an option since last month when cartel gunmen hijacked passenger buses, forced the tourists off and burned the vehicles to block the road to Mazatlan.

That leaves just one option, and one only open to some.

"Those who have the economic resources get out of the city by airplane to take a break," Guzmán said.

## **Harris works to energize Black male voters while Trump continues to attack immigration policy**

By WILL WEISSERT, COLLEEN LONG and BILL BARROW Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris warned Tuesday that Republican Donald Trump would "institutionalize" harsh policing tactics that disproportionately affect Black men, while Trump blamed Harris' immigration policies for "devastating" Black and Latino communities.

"Any African American or Hispanic that votes for Kamala ... you've got to have your head examined, because they are really screwing you," Trump said of Harris, who is African American, at an evening rally in Georgia.

Earlier, during a radio town hall moderated by Charlamagne tha God, Harris promised to work to decriminalize marijuana, which accounts for arrests that also have a disproportionate impact on Black men. And she acknowledged that racial disparities and bias exist in everyday life for Black people — in home ownership, health care, economic prosperity and even voting.

Just 21 days before the final votes are cast in the 2024 presidential season, Harris and Trump are scrambling to win over Black voters, women and other key constituencies in what looks to be a razor-tight election. Harris, a daughter of Jamaican and Indian immigrants, hopes to maintain her party's traditional advantage with voters of color, while Trump is showing modest signs of momentum among Black men in particular.

A small shift among any group could swing the election.

Harris told Charlamagne that despite the persistence of racial bias, no one has a pass to sit out the election.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 113 ~ 52 of 78

"We should never sit back and say, 'OK, I'm not going to vote because everything hasn't been solved,'" she said. "This is a margin-of-error race. It's tight. I'm going to win. I'm going to win, but it's tight."

The vice president took questions that listeners called in, but also from a series of people who joined in-studio, including Pastor Solomon Kinloch Jr., pastor of Detroit's Triumph Church.

When asked about reparations, or potential government payments to the descendants of enslaved people, Harris said the notion "has to be studied, there's no question about that." It's a position she's taken before, but which Trump's campaign immediately pounced on, saying the vice president was "open" to payments that could cost billions.

Trump has called for a return to "proven crime fighting methods, including stop and frisk." The tactic, deployed by the New York City Police Department, involved stopping, questioning and sometimes frisking people deemed "reasonably suspicious." It disproportionately affected Black and Hispanic men, and in 2013 the policy was found to have violated the U.S. Constitution.

Harris said part of her challenge is that Trump's campaign is "trying to scare people away because otherwise they know they have nothing to run on. Ask Donald Trump what is his plan for Black America. Ask him."

Trump did not respond to Harris' criticism during multiple stops Tuesday, including a Fox News town hall with an all-female audience and a nighttime rally in Atlanta, where he railed against Democrats and the media and focused especially on immigrants in the country illegally.

He insisted that immigrants are "devastating" people of color by taking their jobs. He called President Joe Biden and Vice President Harris' border policies a "complete and total betrayal of African American communities and Hispanic communities."

During the town hall the former president sidestepped questions about the erosion of abortion rights, leaning instead into the nation's culture wars by vowing to ban male-born athletes from competing in women's sports.

Pressed on how he would enforce a ban, Trump responded: "You just ban it. President bans. You just don't let it happen."

Trump also stood by his recent description of his political opponents as "the enemy within" — rhetoric that evokes authoritarian regimes.

Earlier, Harris stopped by a Black-owned art gallery, joined by actors Don Cheadle, Delroy Lindo and Detroit native Cornelius Smith Jr., for a conversation with Black men focused on entrepreneurship.

Harris this week announced a series of new proposals dubbed the "Opportunity Agenda for Black Men," meant to offer Black men more economic advantages — including providing forgivable business loans of up to \$20,000 for entrepreneurs and creating more apprenticeships. The plans would also support the study of sickle cell and other diseases more common in Black men.

The focus on Black men sharpened last week when former President Barack Obama campaigned for Harris in Pittsburgh and said he wanted to speak "some truths" to Black male voters, suggesting some "just aren't feeling the idea of having a woman as president."

The vice president's campaign says it doesn't believe Black men will flip in large numbers to supporting Trump, especially after strongly backing Democrat Joe Biden, with Harris as his running mate, in 2020. They are more concerned about a measurable percentage of Black males opting not to vote at all.

Meanwhile, Harris' support among women has been generally been solid since she took over the top of the Democratic ticket, but Trump is aiming to narrow the margins on Election Day. That could be tough since the former president has seen his support among women, especially in the suburbs of many key swing states, soften since his term in the White House.

A September AP-NORC poll found more than half of registered voters who are women have a somewhat or very favorable view of Harris, while only about one-third have a favorable view of Trump. To reverse the trend, Trump has sought to cast himself as being able to personally shield women from various threats.

"You will be protected, and I will be your protector," Trump said at a September rally. He's also suggested that, should he win, women will no longer have a reason to think about abortion, after three Supreme Court judges that he appointed helped in 2022 to overturn the landmark ruling.

Harris said Tuesday that it was comical for Trump considered himself a president for women, particularly as maternal mortality is rising and roughly 1 in 3 women live in states with increasingly restrictive abortion bans.

"And they want to strut around and say this is in the best interest of women and children? And they have been silent on Black maternal mortality?" she asked.

## Georgia judge blocks ballot counting rule and says county officials must certify election results

By KATE BRUMBACK Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — A judge has blocked a new rule that requires Georgia Election Day ballots to be counted by hand after the close of voting. The ruling came a day after the same judge ruled that county election officials must certify election results by the deadline set in law.

The State Election Board last month passed the rule requiring that three poll workers each count the paper ballots — not votes — by hand after the polls close. The county election board in Cobb County, in Atlanta's suburbs, had filed a lawsuit seeking to have a judge declare that rule and five others recently passed by the state board invalid, saying they exceed the state board's authority, weren't adopted in compliance with the law and are unreasonable.

In a ruling late Tuesday, Fulton County Superior Court Judge Robert McBurney wrote, that the so-called hand count rule "is too much, too late" and blocked its enforcement while he considers the merits of the case.

McBurney on Monday had ruled in a separate case that "no election superintendent (or member of a board of elections and registration) may refuse to certify or abstain from certifying election results under any circumstance." While they are entitled to inspect the conduct of an election and to review related documents, he wrote, "any delay in receiving such information is not a basis for refusing to certify the election results or abstaining from doing so."

Georgia law says county election superintendents — generally multimember boards — "shall" certify election results by 5 p.m. on the Monday after an election, or the Tuesday if Monday is a holiday as it is this year.

The two rulings came as early in-person voting began Tuesday in Georgia.

They are victories for Democrats, liberal voting rights groups and some legal experts who have raised concerns that Donald Trump's allies could refuse to certify the results if the former president loses to Democratic Vice President Kamala Harris in next month's presidential election. They have also argued that new rules enacted by the Trump-endorsed majority on the State Election Board could be used to stop or delay certification and to undermine public confidence in the results.

In blocking the hand count rule, McBurney noted that there are no guidelines or training tools for its implementation and that the secretary of state had said the rule was passed too late for his office to provide meaningful training or support. The judge also wrote that no allowances have been made in county election budgets to provide for additional personnel or expenses associated with the rule.

"The administrative chaos that will — not may — ensue is entirely inconsistent with the obligations of our boards of elections (and the SEB) to ensure that our elections are fair legal, and orderly," he wrote.

The state board may be right that the rule is smart policy, McBurney wrote, but the timing of its passage makes implementing it now "quite wrong." He invoked the memory of the riot at the U.S. Capitol by people seeking to stop the certification of Democrat Joe Biden's presidential victory on Jan. 6, 2021, writing, "Anything that adds uncertainty and disorder to the electoral process disserves the public."

During a hearing earlier Tuesday, Robert Thomas, a lawyer for the State Election Board, argued that the process isn't complicated and that estimates show that it would take extra minutes, not hours, to complete. He also said memory cards from the scanners, which are used to tally the votes, could be sent to the tabulation center while the hand count is happening so reporting of results wouldn't be delayed.

State and national Democratic groups that had joined the suit on the side of the Cobb election board, along with the Harris campaign, celebrated McBurney's ruling in a joint statement: "From the beginning, this rule was an effort to delay election results to sow doubt in the outcome, and our democracy is stronger thanks to this decision to block it."

The certification ruling stemmed from a lawsuit filed by Julie Adams, a Republican member of the election board in Fulton County, which includes most of the city of Atlanta and is a Democratic stronghold. Adams sought a declaration that her duties as an election board member were discretionary and that she is entitled to "full access" to "election materials."

Long an administrative task that attracted little attention, certification of election results has become politicized since Trump tried to overturn his loss to Democrat Joe Biden in the 2020 general election. Republicans in several swing states, including Adams, refused to certify results earlier this year and some have sued to keep from being forced to sign off on election results.

Adams' suit, backed by the Trump-aligned America First Policy Institute, argued county election board members have the discretion to reject certification. In court earlier this month, her lawyers also argued county election officials could certify results without including certain ballots if they suspect problems.

Judge McBurney wrote that nothing in Georgia law gives county election officials the authority to determine that fraud has occurred or what should be done about it. Instead, he wrote, state law says a county election official's "concerns about fraud or systemic error are to be noted and shared with the appropriate authorities but they are not a basis for a superintendent to decline to certify."

The Democratic National Committee and Democratic Party of Georgia had joined the lawsuit as defendants with the support of Harris' campaign. The campaign called the ruling a "major legal win."

Adams said in a statement that McBurney's ruling has made it clear that she and other county election officials "cannot be barred from access to elections in their counties."

A flurry of election rules passed by the State Election Board since August has generated a crush of lawsuits. McBurney earlier this month heard a challenge to two rules having to do with certification brought by the state and national Democratic parties. Another Fulton County judge is set to hear arguments in two challenges to rules tomorrow — one brought by the Democratic groups and another filed by a group headed by a former Republican lawmaker. And separate challenges are also pending in at least two other counties.

## **Hundreds of troops kicked out under 'don't ask, don't tell' get upgraded to honorable discharges**

By TARA COPP Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Pentagon announced Tuesday that more than 800 military personnel have seen their service records upgraded to honorable discharges after previously being kicked out of the military under its former "don't ask, don't tell" policy.

It is the latest development over the decades to undo past discrimination against LGBTQ service members.

The 1951 Uniform Code of Military Justice's Article 125 had criminalized consensual gay sex. In 1993, former President Bill Clinton modified the military's policy to "don't ask, don't tell," which allowed LGBTQ troops to serve in the armed forces if they didn't disclose their sexual orientation.

That policy was repealed in 2011, when Congress allowed for their open service in the military. The 1951 UCMJ code was modified in 2013 to be limited to nonconsensual gay sex.

President Joe Biden in June announced he was issuing pardons to service members convicted under repealed military policies.

Under "don't ask, don't tell," thousands of service members still saw their military service ended without an honorable discharge, meaning they did not receive the military benefits they would have otherwise, such as education benefits, and it also could have affected their ability to apply for jobs or loans.

Last year, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin ordered a review of cases of former service members who might have been affected by the policy.

The Pentagon estimates about 13,500 service members in total were released from military service under “don’t ask, don’t tell.” With the review and upgrades of the more than 800 troops announced Tuesday, the Pentagon said that about 96% of the 13,500 personnel affected by the policy now have received an honorable discharge.

Not every case of the 13,500 needed review — some of those personnel either did not serve long enough to qualify for benefits, they were released with an honorable discharge at the time, they already had their discharges upgraded through other means, or they did not qualify for an upgrade due to other violations.

“We will continue to honor the service and the sacrifice of all our troops — including the brave Americans who raised their hands to serve but were turned away because of whom they love. We will continue to strive to do right by every American patriot who has honorably served their country,” Austin said in a statement.

## **Idaho will begin using deep veins as backup for lethal injection executions, officials say**

By REBECCA BOONE Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — Idaho will begin using central veins deep in the groin, neck, chest or arm for executions by lethal injection if attempts to insert standard IV lines fail, the Idaho Department of Correction announced Tuesday.

Using a central venous line — which involves threading a catheter through deep veins until it reaches a location near the heart — has long been a backup plan under the state’s official execution policy, but it has never been used because prison officials said the execution chamber was not designed in a way to protect the subject’s dignity during the process of inserting the line.

The execution chamber has now been remodeled so that execution witnesses can watch the central lines being inserted via a closed-circuit camera system, minimizing the possibility that the condemned person’s genitalia may be accidentally exposed.

In February, the attempted execution of Thomas Eugene Creech, a man on death row, failed after the execution team was unable to establish a peripheral IV line, close to the surface of the skin, despite trying eight times in several veins in his arms and legs. Creech’s defense attorneys have sought to prevent a second attempt on the grounds that it would amount to cruel and unusual punishment and amount to double jeopardy. A state judge dismissed those arguments in September.

The failed execution attempt prompted the state to begin renovating its execution chamber to add a room where a doctor can insert a central venous line.

It’s difficult to determine which other states allow the use of central lines for lethal injections, in part because many death penalty states keep the IV process and parts of their standard operating policies on executions hidden from public view, said Robin Maher, the executive director of the Death Penalty Information Center. The use of central lines appears to be unusual, Maher said.

“This is certainly nothing that has been used recently,” Maher said Tuesday. “It would seem to me that states that have experienced botches should not be pivoting to different methods before they solve and understand and correct the issues that caused the first problems.”

Many states, including Texas and Oklahoma, do not allow execution witnesses to see the insertion of IVs or central venous catheters, carrying out the procedures in areas that are hidden from view. In Idaho, the process of establishing an IV line or central venous catheter must be publicly witnessed because the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that it is a critical part of an execution. The federal appellate court made the ruling after The Associated Press and other news organizations in the state sued for increased witness access.

Some states use what is called a “cut-down” to access veins when execution team members are unable to set a regular IV line, using a scalpel to cut the person’s skin and soft tissue so execution team members can see the vein they are trying to access.

In 2022, an execution team in Arizona made an incision in Clarence Dixon’s groin to reach a vein, a

process that took about 25 minutes and required the execution team members to wipe up a “fair amount of blood” according to media witnesses. Dixon’s execution was declared complete about 10 minutes after he was injected. It’s not clear if Arizona officials used the cut-down method while inserting a central line, or if it was done simply so team members could see the vein.

Alabama’s lethal injection policy previously allowed for central line placement, but the procedure wasn’t used during the 2022 execution of Joe Nathan James Jr, whose lethal injection was delayed because it took hours for execution team members to successfully establish a peripheral IV. The state switched to a different method earlier this year, using nitrogen gas and oxygen deprivation to execute Kenneth Eugene Smith.

Under Idaho’s new execution policy, media witnesses and others selected to view the execution will be able to watch the insertion of the line through a closed-circuit camera system as it takes place in a separate room.

Once the central line is inserted, the condemned person will be taken to the main portion of the execution chamber where witnesses will be able to view the rest of the process through a window.

Standard peripheral IV lines are fairly straightforward to establish and typically just require a needle stick into a vein that is close to the surface of the skin in the arm or the hand. Emergency medical technicians, nurses, and other health care professionals routinely insert standard IVs.

Central venous catheters, meanwhile, often require surgical procedures to access very large vessels like the jugular or femoral veins. They must be done by a doctor, because the veins are often very close to arteries that are under higher internal pressure — increasing the risk of bleeding from accidental needle sticks — and near other organs like lungs that can collapse if they are inadvertently punctured.

Inserting a central line is a multistep process, and it typically involves numbing the site, using a needle to insert a guidewire that is threaded through the vein until it is positioned just outside of the heart and then using a scalpel and dilation tool to widen the soft tissue around the puncture site. Then the catheter can be threaded along the guidewire until it is in the correct location.

Central venous catheters are typically used for patients who need medication that is too caustic to be injected into smaller veins, or who need to be given nutrition through their veins for an extended period of time.

Last year, Republican Idaho Gov. Brad Little signed a law allowing the state to use a firing squad to execute condemned people when lethal injection is not available. The Idaho Department of Correction would first have to build a firing squad facility, however, which is expected to be an expensive and time-consuming process.

## **UN says Yemen risks being dragged into Mideast conflict that could spiral out of control**

By EDITH M. LEDERER Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Yemen risks being dragged further into the military escalation in the Middle East that keeps intensifying and could spiral out of control, the U.N. special envoy for the Arab world’s poorest nation said Tuesday.

Hans Grundberg told the U.N. Security Council that regrettably Yemen is part of the escalation — and he warned that repeated attacks on international shipping by its Houthi rebels “have significantly increased the risk of an environment disaster” in the Red Sea.

Both Grundberg and the U.N.’s acting humanitarian chief Joyce Msuya urged the Iranian-backed Houthis to halt their attacks on international shipping, which the rebel group began to support fellow Iranian-backed militant group Hamas after its Oct. 7 attack in Israel that sparked Israel’s ongoing war in Gaza.

The U.N. officials also demanded the release of dozens of U.N. personnel, staff of non-governmental organizations and diplomatic missions, and members of civil society, most detained since June.

Msuya called the Houthis’ recent referral of a significant number of those detained for “criminal prosecution” unacceptable and accusations against them false. She said three are U.N. personnel — two from the



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 113 ~ 57 of 78

Paris-based U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and one from the Geneva-based U.N. human rights office. They were detained earlier in 2021 and 2023.

Days after the June detentions, the Houthis said those being held were members of what they called an "American-Israeli spy network," an allegation vehemently denied by the U.N., NGO organizations, governments and others.

The Houthis have been engaged in a civil war with Yemen's internationally recognized government, backed by a Saudi-led coalition, since 2014, when they took control of the capital Sanaa and most of the north. Hopes for peace talks vanished after the Oct. 7 attack, which killed about 1,200 people in Israel, mainly civilians, and saw about 250 taken hostage, with about 100 still being held. Israel's offensive in Gaza has killed over 42,000 Palestinians, according to local health authorities, who do not say how many were fighters but say women and children make up more than half of the fatalities.

Grundberg told council members "Yemenis continue to yearn and work for peace," but he said hopes for progress to end the escalating violence in the Middle East "seem distant."

"Now, like many in the Middle East, their hopes for a brighter future are falling under the shadow of potentially catastrophic regional conflagration," he said.

The Houthis have targeted more than 80 merchant vessels with missiles and drones since the war in Gaza started a year ago. They seized one vessel and sank two in the campaign that also killed four sailors, and have seriously disrupted traffic in the Red Sea which once saw \$1 trillion in goods move through it in a year.

Grundberg said the Houthi attack on the Greek-flagged oil tanker Sounion in August narrowly avoided an environmental disaster and warned that repeated attacks increase the risk of an environmental catastrophe.

In response to the Houthi attacks, a U.S.-led coalition has carried out airstrikes in Yemen, and the Israelis have attacked the port of Hodeida, a key location for delivery of aid and commercial goods which are critical as the country is reliant on imports.

Msuya said the U.N. is "very alarmed" at the ongoing attacks on Hodeida and the smaller port of Ras Issa. The airstrikes damaged critical energy and port infrastructure but she said both ports are able to receive commercial and humanitarian imports.

"Power stations throughout Hodeida city are, however, running at very limited capacity," Msuya said, and the U.N. is assisting health facilities to continue essential services.

Last month, Msuya told the council the U.N. was cutting back its activities in Yemen in response to the Houthi crackdown on staff working for the U.N. and other groups.

She warned the council on Tuesday that despite escalating needs, the arbitrary detentions and "false accusations against them continue to significantly hinder our ability to provide life saving humanitarian assistance in Yemen."

"The humanitarian situation in Yemen continues to worsen, both in scale and severity," Msuya said, and "hunger continues to rise."

The number of Yemenis without enough to eat "soared to unprecedented levels" in August, and in Houthi-controlled areas severe levels of food deprivation have doubled since last year, she said.

Msuya said the U.N. appeal for \$2.7 billion for Yemen this year to help 11.2 million people is 41% funded. She said \$870 million is needed urgently, and warned that without the additional funds 9 million Yemenis across the country won't get emergency food aid in the last quarter of this year.

While cholera continues to spread, with more than 203,000 suspected cases and over 720 deaths since March, Msuya said cholera funding has already run out, and the U.N.'s health partners have been forced to close 21 of 78 diarrhea treatment centers and 97 of 423 oral rehydration centers.

## Tom Brady's purchase of a minority stake in the Las Vegas Raiders is approved by NFL team owners

By ROB MAADDI AP Pro Football Writer

ATLANTA (AP) — Tom Brady has another new role in the NFL: owner.

The seven-time Super Bowl champion purchased a minority stake in the Las Vegas Raiders, a deal unanimously approved by NFL team owners on Tuesday at the league's annual fall meeting.

In a lengthy statement on X, Brady said he was "incredibly humbled and excited" to receive approval.

"I'm eager to contribute to the organization in any way I can, honoring the Raiders' rich tradition while finding every possible opportunity to improve our offering to fans... and most importantly, WIN football games," Brady posted.

Brady also thanked Raiders majority owner Mark Davis, NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell and others.

"It's an exciting day for the Raider organization," Davis said. "Although Tom can't play, I think he can help us select a quarterback in the future and potentially train him as well."

Brady, who played 23 seasons with the Patriots and Buccaneers, takes 5% control of the Raiders. He needed to receive 24 of 32 votes. The 47-year-old Brady can't come out of retirement and play again unless he sells his stake in the team.

"It's great that Tom Brady wants to invest in the NFL," Goodell said. "He cares deeply about this game. He believes in its future and I think that's just a signal of that."

The deal was initially agreed upon in May 2023, but it took owners 17 months to give their approval over concerns Brady was receiving too much of a discount from Davis. Brady's new job as a broadcaster with Fox also was an issue because it could represent a conflict of interest.

"There were a lot of things from a structural and due diligence standpoint that had to happen, which is why it took so long for it to be approved and we finally got all that put to bed," Chiefs owner Clark Hunt said.

The NFL placed restrictions on Brady before the season to limit his access. He is not permitted to attend production meetings in person or virtually and may not have access to team facilities or players and coaching personnel. Brady may broadcast Raiders games. He also has to abide by the league constitution and bylaws that prohibit public criticism of officials and other clubs.

Brady also owns a minority stake in the WNBA's Las Vegas Aces, who are owned by Davis.

Pro Football Hall of Famer Richard Seymour, who played with Brady in New England, also received approval Tuesday to purchase a minority stake in the Raiders.

"This is the mission of a lifetime, and I accept it with both purpose and pride," Seymour posted on X. "With great opportunity comes great responsibility. And I pledge to be a worthy steward of our game—and all it makes possible."

Brady and Seymour are the fifth and sixth former NFL players to become owners after George Halas Sr., Jerry Richardson, Warrick Dunn and John Stallworth.

Davis joked that he didn't like Brady very much when he was an opponent but he tried hard to sign him as a free agent in 2020 before the 15-time Pro Bowl QB went to Tampa Bay.

"We're really proud to have him as part of the organization," Davis said. "He's a competitor, he's a bright young man. There's just so many pluses for both sides. It's great."

The Raiders haven't won a Super Bowl since capturing their third title in eight years following the 1983 season. They won their first two championships in Oakland and the last one in Los Angeles. They moved to Las Vegas in 2020 and haven't won a playoff game since losing the Super Bowl to Tampa Bay on Jan. 26, 2003.

## Lawyers for Sean 'Diddy' Combs ask judge to release identities of his accusers

By LARRY NEUMEISTER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Lawyers for Sean 'Diddy' Combs asked a New York judge Tuesday to force prosecutors to disclose the names of his accusers in his sex trafficking case.

The lawyers wrote in a letter to a Manhattan federal court judge that the hip-hop music maker needs to know the identities of his alleged victims so he can prepare adequately for trial.

Last week, a May 5 trial date was set for Combs. He has pleaded not guilty.

A spokesperson for prosecutors declined comment.

Combs, 54, remains incarcerated without bail after his Sept. 16 federal sex trafficking arrest. His lawyers have asked a federal appeals court to let him be freed to home detention so he can more easily meet with lawyers and prepare for trial.

So far, judges have concluded he is a danger to the community and cannot be freed.

The request to identify accusers comes a day after six new lawsuits were filed against Combs anonymously to protect the identities of the alleged victims. Two of the accusers were identified as Jane Does while four men were listed in the lawsuits as John Does. The lawsuits claimed he used his fame and promises of boosting their own prospects in the music industry to persuade victims to attend lavish parties or drug-fueled hangouts where he then assaulted them.

The plaintiffs in Monday's lawsuits are part of what their lawyers say is a group of more than 100 accusers who are in the process of taking legal action against Combs.

In their letter Tuesday to Judge Arun Subramanian, lawyers for Combs said the case against their client is unique in part because of the number of accusers. They attributed the quantity to "his celebrity status, wealth and the publicity of his previously settled lawsuit."

That reference appeared to cite a November lawsuit filed by his former girlfriend, Cassie, whose legal name is Casandra Ventura. Combs settled the lawsuit the next day, but its allegations of sexual and physical abuse have followed him since.

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

Combs' lawyers said the settlement of Cassie's lawsuit, along with "false inflammatory statements" by federal agents and Combs' fame have "had a pervasive ripple effect, resulting in a torrent of allegations by unidentified complainants, spanning from the false to outright absurd."

They said the lawsuits filed Monday, along with other lawsuits, and their "swirling allegations have created a hysterical media circus that, if left unchecked, will irreparably deprive Mr. Combs of a fair trial, if they haven't already."

The lawyers wrote that the government should identify alleged victims because Combs has no way of knowing which allegations prosecutors are relying on in their accusations in an indictment.

"To the extent Mr. Combs is forced to mount a defense against criminal allegations that the government does not seek to prove at trial, he is entitled to know that," the lawyers said.

The indictment alleges Combs coerced and abused women for years, with the help of a network of associates and employees, while using blackmail and violent acts including kidnapping, arson and physical beatings to keep victims from speaking out.

## Small business disaster loan program is out of money until Congress approves new funds

By MAE ANDERSON AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The Small Business Administration has run out of money for the disaster assistance loans it offers small businesses, homeowners and renters, delaying much needed relief for people applying for aid in the wake of the destruction caused by Hurricanes Helene and Milton.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 113 ~ 60 of 78

The SBA offers Economic Injury Disaster Loans to businesses and people affected by disasters. The SBA warned earlier this month that it could run out of funding, given the anticipated surge in claims from Hurricane Helene, without additional funding from Congress.

There are other disaster relief programs available, including assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, or FEMA. The FEMA aid isn't affected by the SBA shortfall.

Helene was a Category 4 storm that first struck Florida's Gulf Coast on September 26, dumped trillions of gallons of rain and left a trail of destruction for hundreds of miles across several states. Hurricane Milton swept across Florida two weeks later.

So far, the SBA has received around 37,000 applications for relief from those impacted by Hurricane Helene and made more than 700 loan offers totaling about \$48 million. It has received 12,000 applications from those impacted by Hurricane Milton.

The SBA is pausing new loan offers until it gets more funding, which means loans that have not already been offered will be delayed by at least a month. SBA Administrator Isabel Casillas Guzman said people should keep applying for the loans, however.

"We know that swift financial relief can help communities recover quickly to stabilize local economies," Guzman said in a statement. She added that the SBA will continue to process applications so assistance can be quickly disbursed once funds are replenished.

The SBA said it could also be able to make a small number of new loan offers during this time, if it gets more funds from loan cancellations or similar actions.

House Speaker Mike Johnson assured there would be strong support to provide necessary funds – when Congress returns after the November election.

"There's no question these devastating back-to-back storms have stressed the SBA funding program," Johnson, a Republican, said in a statement. "But the Biden-Harris Administration has the necessary disaster funding right now to address the immediate needs of American people in these hurricane affected areas."

The speaker has declined to recall lawmakers back to Washington to vote on aid in the aftermath of deadly hurricanes and declined to do so now. He said Congress is tracking this situation closely.

"When Members return in just a few short weeks, the Administration should have an accurate assessment of the actual dollar amount needed and there will be strong bipartisan support to provide the necessary funding," he said.

The SBA offers two different types of disaster loans. Business physical disaster loans are for repairing or replacing disaster-damaged property, including real estate, inventories, supplies, machinery and equipment. Economic injury disaster loans are working capital loans to help small businesses, small agricultural cooperatives, small businesses engaged in aquaculture, and most private, non-profit organizations meet financial obligations that cannot be met as a direct result of a disaster.

Businesses can access loans up to \$2 million. Interest rates are as low as 4% for businesses and 3.25% for nonprofit organizations.

The SBA also offers disaster loans up to \$500,000 to homeowners to repair or replace disaster-damaged or destroyed real estate. Homeowners and renters are eligible for up to \$100,000 to repair or replace disaster-damaged or destroyed personal property.

FEMA's disaster relief fund is a pot of money the agency uses to respond to disasters. The money pays for things like refunding state and local officials for debris removal and rebuilding public infrastructure damaged by disasters. FEMA also gives disaster survivors money for things like rent while their homes are uninhabitable or for emergency needs like diapers.

FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell has repeatedly said that the disaster relief fund has enough money to respond to Helene and Milton. But Criswell has said that the agency eventually will need supplemental funding from Congress. If that doesn't happen, the agency would go into what's called "immediate needs funding." That means the agency stops paying out for previous disasters and conserves its money for life-saving missions during any new ones.

For more details about all aid programs the government offers visit <https://www.disasterassistance.gov>.

## Lowriding is more than just cars. It's about family and culture for Mexican Americans

By FERNANDA FIGUEROA and MELISSA PEREZ WINDER Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — For Luis Martinez, competing in lowriding bike and car competitions is about more than glory and bragging rights. The lowrider clubs in the Chicago area have become like one big family and a source of mutual support.

"It just starts with the metal," said Martinez, who got his introduction to lowrider culture when his mother took him to a flea market. He had his first bike when he was 12.

"To me, it's about expressing my art and what I can do with my own hands," Martinez told The Associated Press as he polished a shiny red bike at his home in Mishawaka, Indiana.

A movement of expression with origins in Mexican American and Chicano communities, lowriding is an aspect of Latino history in the U.S. in which people show their pride, honor family and uplift culture. But misrepresentation of the culture in entertainment and media has often associated the lowriding's "low and slow" motto with gang culture.

Still, decades since its emergence, and as the Hispanic U.S. population increases, lowriding has experienced a boom, as evidenced by an increase in car shows and conventions nationwide.

Lowriding involves the customization of a vehicle — from the tires to the sound system — with vivid designs and colors. Unlike hot rods or muscle cars, which are often modified to have big tires and move at high speeds, the lowrider community modified the cars and bikes to go "low and slow," said Alberto Pulido, the chair of the Ethnic Studies department at the University of San Diego.

"It was a way to speak to an identity, a presence and it was done with few resources," said Pulido, who also directed the award-winning documentary, "Lowriding: Everything Comes From the Streets."

"Our community didn't have a lot of money," he said. "They might have had a little bit expendable income to buy a car but then they were kind of on their own to create their vehicles. We call that Chicano ingenuity."

Lowriding blends Latino and American culture

According to Pulido, lowriding originated in the Southwest, although there are disputes about where exactly it first appeared. Pulido said lowriders in Los Angeles would like to make the claim they were the first, while those in San Diego want their undeniable influence in the culture acknowledged.

The culture can be traced to post-World War II, when veterans were coming home with an expendable income. And with the growth of highways and freeways in California, people wanted to modify their vehicles, Pulido said.

Today, conventions attract enthusiasts from all over the U.S. Last month, what was once a small showcase with only 40 lowriders at Lincoln Park in El Paso, Texas, grew to over 300 lowriders from clubs across the U.S.

Hector Gonzalez, of the Lincoln Park Conservation Committee, said the car clubs help members travel to all the showcases in the nation. In the '70s and '80s, lowrider clubs became a representation of the community and offered mutual aid such as ride-sharing and food donations when the local government could not or would not, Gonzalez said.

"It is something that gets passed on from generation to generation," said Gonzalez, who, like most lowriders, was introduced to the community with a bike at the young age of 13. He has passed on his love for lowriding to his own children, nephews and cousins

"Kids grow up seeing the cars, they pick it up and they carry on the tradition," Gonzalez said.

Lauren Pacheco, co-founder and co-curator of the Slow and Low Chicago Low Rider Festival, described lowriding as a global, multibillion-dollar phenomenon of self-expression and innovation.

"It's a marvel of mechanical innovation," Pacheco said. "It is the beautiful artistry in the creative practice of muralism, storytelling and upholstery."

Within the last decade, lowrider conventions have grown so much that they've made their way to Japan. In Nagoya, Japanese lowriders have modified their cars, created clubs and even come to events at

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 113 ~ 62 of 78

Chicano Park in San Diego.

Lowrider community sheds gang culture stereotype

Appreciation for lowriding has increased in recent years, enthusiasts say. But that was not always the case. In the beginning, lowriding was associated with harmful stereotypes about Latinos as gangsters, Pulido said. Because the culture involved predominantly Latino participants, lowriding became racialized and that overshadowed the artistic and community service aspects of the movement.

The 1979 thriller-drama "Boulevard Nights" also helped to perpetuate the lowriders as gangsters trope. The film's main character, Raymond Avila, played by Richard Yñiguez tried to avoid getting lured into the violent street gangs of East Los Angeles. Lowriding vehicles and the lowrider "cholo" aesthetic was featured throughout the film.

While the perception of lowriding has since gotten better, Pulido said he has been to lowriding car shows where police immediately show up.

Martinez, the Indiana lowrider, said lowriding misconceptions grew in the Chicago area because the community members were tattooed in ways often associated with gang affiliation. Pacheco said the Chicago festival works to dispel those misconceptions.

"We really try not to create a space that glamorizes or romanticizes gang culture," she said. "It's really a celebration of creativity and innovation and family."

Lowriding culture becomes a booming industry

Gonzalez, the Texas lowriding showcase organizer, said the culture's focus on wheels, hydraulic systems and accessories, has helped lowriding become a booming industry.

In El Paso, people have opened small businesses orientated to the lowriding community. In the last couple of years, at least 25 new businesses opened, including body shops, upholstery shops and apparel shops, Gonzalez said.

"It has become a mainstream business," he said. "Back in the 70s and 80s, it was more of a local thing. Everybody helping each other do things on their own. Now there's just all kinds of opportunities to purchase things and have things done to your vehicle."

Originally from Dallas, Texas, Martinez said he would buy the parts he needed from a man in his neighborhood, who would buy in bulk from Lowrider magazine. He said the unfortunate thing about lowriding becoming so big is parts are now mass produced from China instead of being Mexican made.

Lowriding carries family legacy

But lowriding is not just about the often pricey task of modifying cars, Pulido said. It is about building a community that is always there for each other, throughout generations, he said.

"We have grandparents that are lowriders and then their kids and their grandkids are in tune already," Pulido said.

It's a legacy that Sonia Gomez wants for her 8-year-old son, Daniel Marquez. His late father, Alberto Marquez, had been a member of a Chicago area lowrider club. Too young to drive the car left to him by his father, Daniel has a lowriding bike that is more of a memorial to his dad.

"The bike is what he's doing to build it up," Gomez said.

The family will do an ofrenda, a display often associated with Mexican Dia de los Muertos celebrations, when local lowriding festivals are held. As part of the ofrenda, Daniel takes an image he has with his father on a lowriding bike and places it next to his actual bike, which he named "Wishing on a Star."

"We would either go on a (lowriding) cruise with my uncle, or we would go to actual car shows," Daniel recently recalled, while sitting at the driver's seat of his dad's lowriding car parked in the driveway of their home in Frankfort, Illinois.

"My mom would be there," he said pointing to the passenger seat. "And I'd be back there all squished."

## After hurricanes, the business of rebuilding lives means navigating the insurance claims process

By SALLY HO and MAE ANDERSON The Associated Press

Now that the threat of Hurricanes Helene and Milton has receded, millions of homeowners and business-owners across Florida and the Southeastern U.S. are faced with traversing the often long and laborious process of using insurance to rebuild their lives.

"You're just traumatized when you have these losses. At some point, you're just glad you're alive," said Don Hornstein, an insurance law expert at the University of North Carolina. "And then you have to turn to the business side of this. It's tough."

Helene was a Category 4 storm that first struck Florida's Gulf Coast on September 26, dumped trillions of gallons of rain and left a trail of destruction for hundreds of miles across several states. At least 246 people have died in what is now the deadliest hurricane to hit the mainland U.S. since Katrina, according to statistics from the National Hurricane Center.

Two weeks later, Hurricane Milton swept across Florida, killing at least 11 people. The Category 3 storm destroyed coastal communities, tore apart homes, filled streets with mud and spawned a barrage of deadly tornadoes.

The combined private insured losses from the two hurricanes could reach \$55 billion, according to risk management firm Moody's RMS.

Immediately after disasters like these, property insurance is likely not top of mind as people secure their safety and basic needs, but insurance claims are part of the process of resetting. Many buy the policies in hope they can help protect them when disaster strikes. But oftentimes insurance doesn't cover what the policy holder thinks it does — or thinks it should.

Rhoda Moehring, who turns 86 this month, says she doesn't have a lot of faith that insurance companies will help her salvage the flooded rental homes she owns in the river town of Steinhatchee in Florida's Big Bend.

"I usually get zip with these things," Moehring said. "Was I insured for that?' 'No, sorry, you weren't.' And it goes on and on. So I don't put a whole lot of confidence in it."

Moehring said she wasn't sure about the details of her insurance policies and she'll be relying on her son to help her navigate the claims process.

Here are some steps home and business owners should keep in mind when filing an insurance claim after a natural disaster.

### ACT FAST, DO THE MATH

After the immediate emergency response, the first thing a homeowner or business owner should do is call their insurance agent or broker. The deadline to file a claim is generally about 60 days from the date of loss.

There are different types of policies that insure against damage. In the initial call, first focus on thoroughly understanding your policy, including coverage limits, deductibles and exclusions, so that you can do a rough calculation of what is covered and what deductibles are at play to decide if you should file a claim, experts said.

Many policies have payouts in complicated percentage formulas. For example, if your roof is damaged, your policy may spell out different deductibles depending on the roofing material, the age of the roof and even the wind speed from the damage event, and the percentage paid out may be based on the insured value versus the cost of replacement, said Amy Bach, executive director of the consumer advocacy group United Policyholders.

Homeowners should weigh their options, as a minor payout may not be worth the long-term ding on your claims history. That's especially true if you don't have flood insurance, as the average home insurance policy covers wind damage but generally doesn't cover flood damage.

While Helene was primarily a flood event, there may be disputes over what is or isn't "wind-driven rain" from Milton. Hornstein said the line between wind and water is a thin but very clear line that technical

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 113 ~ 64 of 78

experts can determine. Should there be a proverbial tie, the law favors the insurance company.

"If the house was simultaneously destroyed by flood and, concurrently (by) wind, it's not covered by private insurance," Hornstein said.

Business owners should also check to see if they have business income or business interruption insurance, which covers the loss of income and other costs like expenses, salaries, or rent when a business is forced to close.

## ALL IN THE DOCUMENTS

To file a claim, keep track of and document everything. Before and after photos and videos are ideal to jog your memory of what's been lost and for proof to help bolster settlement claims. For business owners, keeping a record of costs that are incurred after the hurricane is important too.

"You may have evacuation costs, you may have business shut down interruption costs, you may have housing costs, you may have additional expenses that are unusual to your business," said Steve Powell, executive vice president of property and catastrophe for claims management firm Sedgwick.

Once a claim is filed, the insurance company's adjuster will come to survey the damage, typically within a few days if conditions allow. Be responsive to adjusters and make sure they see (and document) the damage that you see.

While it's easy to get frustrated, adjusters are likely stressed too, said Lawrence White, an economics professor at the NYU Stern School of Business.

"To the maximum extent possible, try not come across as angry. Try to come across as reasonable," White said.

If there's disagreement or concern about the accuracy or fairness of the adjuster's report from the insurance company, property owners can consider hiring a public adjuster for a second opinion. Their own adjuster can then lead the negotiations with the insurance company. First, however, owners should be aware of the fees the public adjuster charges and check their references.

"The insurance companies have totally the upper hand and when there's a public adjuster, it does level the playing field a lot for the consumer having someone who speaks insurance and speaks damage," Bach said.

## REPAIR OR LAWYER UP

Be aware of the deadlines for accepting a payment offer or filing an appeal with the insurance company.

Once you agree to an insurance payout, know that you can update the claim if more damage is discovered during the repairs though there may be deadlines for how long a homeowner has to reopen a claim.

If the back-and-forth with the insurance company drags on, you may consider hiring an attorney to reach a settlement as a last resort. A dispute that ends up in arbitration could stretch out for a year or more.

About 90% of all insurance claims are settled without escalating into a court fight, said Charles Nyce, a professor of risk management and insurance at Florida State University's College of Business.

## OTHER AID SOURCES

For those with little or no insurance, there are government programs that can assist. The application process is similar to insurance claims: Contact the agency, determine eligibility and file an application.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency offers grants for home repair or replacement for applicants who meet certain conditions. The Department of Housing and Urban Development also offers certain grants that are available for hurricane survivors.

The Small Business Administration offers low-interest loans to renters, homeowners, business owners, and non-profits that suffered losses due to disasters. However, on Tuesday that program ran out of money until its coffers are replenished by Congress — which doesn't reconvene until Nov. 12, after the election. The SBA said people should keep applying for loans, however.

For more details about these programs visit <https://www.disasterassistance.gov>.



## US warns Israel to boost humanitarian aid into Gaza or risk losing weapons funding

By TARA COPP, MATTHEW LEE and LOLITA C. BALDOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Biden administration has warned Israel that it must increase the amount of humanitarian aid it is allowing into Gaza within the next 30 days or it could risk losing access to U.S. weapons funding.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin warned their Israeli counterparts in a letter dated Sunday that the changes must occur. The letter, which restates U.S. policy toward humanitarian aid and arms transfers, was sent amid deteriorating conditions in northern Gaza and an Israeli airstrike on a hospital tent site in central Gaza that killed at least four people and burned others.

A similar letter that Blinken sent to Israeli officials in April led to more humanitarian assistance getting to the Palestinian territory, State Department spokesman Matthew Miller said Tuesday. But that has not lasted.

“In fact, it’s fallen by over 50% from where it was at its peak,” Miller said at a briefing. Blinken and Austin “thought it was appropriate to make clear to the government of Israel that there are changes that they need to make again, to see that the level of assistance making it into Gaza comes back up from the very, very low levels that it is at today.”

For Israel to continue qualifying for foreign military financing, the level of aid getting into Gaza must increase to at least 350 trucks a day, Israel must institute additional humanitarian pauses and provide increased security for humanitarian sites, Austin and Blinken said in their letter. They said Israel had 30 days to respond to the requirements.

“The letter was not meant as a threat,” White House national security spokesman John Kirby told reporters. “The letter was simply meant to reiterate the sense of urgency we feel and the seriousness with which we feel it, about the need for an increase, a dramatic increase in humanitarian assistance.”

An Israeli official confirmed a letter had been delivered but did not discuss the contents. That official, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss a diplomatic matter, confirmed the U.S. had raised “humanitarian concerns” and was putting pressure on Israel to speed up the flow of aid into Gaza.

The letter, which an Axios reporter posted a copy of online, was sent during a period of growing frustration in the administration that despite repeated and increasingly vocal requests to scale back offensive operations against Hamas, Israel’s bombardment has led to unnecessary civilian deaths and risks plunging the region into a much wider war.

“We are particularly concerned that recent actions by the Israeli government, including halting commercial imports, denying or impeding 90 percent of humanitarian movements” and other restrictions have kept aid from flowing, Blinken and Austin said.

The Biden administration is increasing its calls for its ally and biggest recipient of U.S. military aid to ease the humanitarian crisis in Gaza while assuring that America’s support for Israel is unwavering just before the U.S. presidential election in three weeks.

Funding for Israel has long carried weight in U.S. politics, and Biden said this month that “no administration has helped Israel more than I have.”

Humanitarian aid groups fear that Israeli leaders may approve a plan to seal off humanitarian aid to northern Gaza in an attempt to starve out Hamas, which could trap hundreds of thousands of Palestinians who are unwilling or unable to leave their homes without food, water, medicine and fuel.

U.N. humanitarian officials said last week that aid entering Gaza is at its lowest level in months. The three hospitals operating minimally in northern Gaza are facing “dire shortages” of fuel, trauma supplies, medications and blood, and while meals are being delivered each day, food is dwindling, U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric said.

“There is barely any food left to distribute, and most bakeries will be forced to shut down again in just days without any additional fuel,” he said.

The U.N. humanitarian office reported that Israeli authorities facilitated just one of its 54 efforts to get

to the north this month, Dujarric said. He said 85% of the requests were denied, with the rest impeded or canceled for logistical or security reasons.

COGAT, the Israeli body facilitating aid crossings into Gaza, denied that crossings to the north have been closed.

U.S. officials said the letter was sent to remind Israel of both its obligations under international humanitarian law and of the Biden administration's legal obligation to ensure that the delivery of American humanitarian assistance should not be hindered, diverted or held up by a recipient of U.S. military aid.

Israel's retaliatory offensive since the Oct. 7, 2023, attacks by Hamas has killed over 42,000 people in Gaza, according to the territory's Health Ministry. It does not differentiate between fighters and civilians but has said a little more than half the dead are women and children. The Hamas attacks killed some 1,200 people in Israel, mostly civilians, and militants abducted another 250.

The United States has spent a record of at least \$17.9 billion on military aid to Israel since the war in Gaza began and led to escalating conflict around the Middle East, according to a report for Brown University's Costs of War project.

That aid has enabled Israel to purchase billions of dollars worth of munitions it has used in its operations against Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon. However, many of those strikes also have killed civilians in both areas.

## Israel assures US it won't strike Iranian nuclear or oil sites, US officials say

By MATTHEW LEE AP Diplomatic Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Biden administration believes it has won assurances from Israel that it will not hit Iranian nuclear or oil sites as it looks to strike back following Iran's missile barrage earlier this month, two U.S. officials said Tuesday.

The administration also believes that sending a U.S. Terminal High Altitude Area Defense battery to Israel and roughly 100 soldiers to operate it has eased some of Israel's concerns about possible Iranian retaliation and general security issues.

The Pentagon on Sunday announced the THAAD deployment to help bolster Israel's air defenses following Iran's ballistic missile attacks on Israel in April and October, saying it was authorized at the direction of President Joe Biden.

However, the U.S. officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss private diplomatic discussions, cautioned that Israel's assurances are not ironclad and that circumstances could change.

The officials also noted that Israel's track record on fulfilling pledges in the past is mixed and has often reflected domestic Israeli politics that have upended Washington's expectations.

The most recent example of that was last month, when U.S. officials were told by their Israeli counterparts that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu would welcome a U.S.- and French-led temporary cease-fire initiative in Lebanon only to see Israel launch a massive airstrike that killed Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah two days later.

Netanyahu's office said in a statement that "we listen to the opinions of the United States, but we will make our final decisions based on our national interests."

Meanwhile, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and Secretary of State Antony Blinken warned their Israeli counterparts in a letter dated Sunday that it must increase the amount of humanitarian aid being allowed into Gaza within the next 30 days or Israel could risk losing access to U.S. weapons funding.

The Middle East has been bracing for an expected response from Israel after Iran launched roughly 180 ballistic missiles on Oct. 1, which the United States helped to fend off. The tit-for-tat strikes and uncertainty about whether Israel might strike strategically important energy and nuclear sites in Iran have raised fears about escalation into an all-out regional war.

Israel's offensive against Iranian-backed Hamas militants in Gaza has expanded into a ground invasion

of Lebanon targeting Hezbollah, another Iranian proxy that has been firing into Israel since the conflict in Gaza started a year ago in solidarity with Hamas.

Biden has said he would not support a retaliatory Israeli strike on sites related to Tehran's nuclear program and urged Israel to consider alternatives to hitting Iran's oil sector. Such a strike could affect the global oil market and boost pump prices just ahead of the U.S. presidential election.

There is already a deep divide among Democrats over the war, with Vice President Kamala Harris failing to get the usual Democratic endorsement of a political action group of Arab American leaders over the weekend. Former President Donald Trump didn't get backing from the Arab American PAC either.

Biden said earlier this month that he didn't know whether Netanyahu was holding up a Mideast peace deal to influence the outcome of the U.S. presidential election but noted that he was "not counting on that." Biden also noted his administration's support for Israel, which has long carried weight in American politics.

Biden and Netanyahu spoke by phone last week for the first time in seven weeks, while Defense Secretary Austin has been speaking regularly with his Israeli counterpart, Yoav Gallant.

The Pentagon said in a readout of a call from Sunday that Austin reaffirmed U.S. support for Israel's security but urged it to ensure protections for U.N. peacekeepers in southern Lebanon, shift from military operations to a diplomatic solution and "raised concern for the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza and stressed that steps must be taken soon to address it."

The White House National Security Council declined to confirm that Netanyahu offered Biden any assurances about targets.

"Our commitment to Israel's defense is ironclad," the White House National Security Council said in a statement. "We will not discuss private diplomatic discussions and would refer you to the Israeli government to speak to their own potential military operations."

## **Hezbollah vows to expand attacks in Israel after deadly strike in Lebanon's Christian heartland**

By KAREEM CHEHAYEB and BASSEM MROUE Associated Press

AITO, Lebanon (AP) — The day after a deadly Israeli airstrike in northern Lebanon — far from Hezbollah's main area of influence — the militant group's acting leader said it would aim rockets into more areas of Israel.

Naim Kassem said Hezbollah is focused on "hurting the enemy," and he signaled it would ramp up attacks further south in Israel. He mentioned the cities of Tel Aviv and Haifa, which have already been targets of attacks.

His comments in a pre-recorded, televised speech were delivered on the same day the United States said it sent a small team of troops to Israel to support an American-made missile-defense system.

The Biden administration has also sent a warning to Israel: Increase the amount of humanitarian aid it allows into Gaza within the next 30 days or risk losing access to U.S. weapons funding.

Hezbollah has fired an estimated 13,000 rockets into Israel over the past year in support of Hamas' war with Israel in Gaza. Tens of thousands of northern Israelis have been displaced from their homes, and Israel has said its escalating war with Hezbollah is aimed at stopping those rockets so families can return home.

Israel's military said Hezbollah fired over 90 projectiles into Israel on Tuesday, with no details.

On Monday, an Israeli airstrike on an apartment building in northern Lebanon killed at least 22 people. Israel said it struck a target belonging to Hezbollah, but the United Nations on Tuesday called for an independent investigation.

"We have real concerns with respect to ... the laws of war," said Jeremy Laurence, a spokesperson for the U.N.'s human rights office in Geneva. Laurence said the U.N. had received credible reports that a dozen women and children were among the dead.

In the village of Aito, in Lebanon's Christian heartland, rescue workers on Tuesday found more bodies and remains in the rubble, including the body of a child.

Aito is far from Hezbollah's main areas of influence in Lebanon's south and east. The strike was a shock

to residents, and it exacerbated fears that Israel would expand its offensive deeper into Lebanon.

"I heard a loud noise, like a boom," said Dany Alwan, who lives next door. "We ran outside, I saw the dust and the smoke and the rubble. There was a body here, another one there. It was a really ugly and painful scene."

The three-story building had been rented out to the Hijazi family, who fled their home in the southern village of Aitaroun, according to Elie Alwan, Dany Alwan's brother and the building's owner.

Some 1.2 million people have fled southern and eastern Lebanon, where the fighting between Israel and Hezbollah has been concentrated.

Several villages in southern Lebanon and the Bekaa Valley saw intensified airstrikes Tuesday. The state-run National News Agency said an Israeli airstrike on Qana in Tyre province killed at least one person and wounded 30. And the Lebanese Health Ministry said a strike on Riyak in the Bekaa Valley killed five people, including three children.

Hezbollah began targeting Israel with rockets on Oct. 8, 2023, a day after the Hamas attack on Israel that left 1,200 dead and 250 as hostages in Gaza.

Israel's ensuing war against Hamas has left more than 42,000 people dead in Gaza, according to local health officials. They do not differentiate between fighters and civilians, but have said a little over half the dead are women and children.

Hezbollah has said it will continue to target Israel until a cease-fire in Gaza is reached.

"We cannot separate Lebanon from Palestine, or Palestine from the world," said Kassem, who has led Hezbollah since Sept. 27, when its longtime leader, Hassan Nasrallah, was assassinated in an Israeli airstrike.

Over the past year, 2,350 people in Lebanon have been killed in Israeli airstrikes, according to the country's Health Ministry, which says roughly 25% have been women and children.

Meanwhile, Pentagon press secretary Maj. Gen. Pat Ryder announced that U.S. troops had arrived in Israel a day earlier. The team will operate a Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense battery to defend against ballistic missile attacks from Iran, which supports both Hezbollah and Hamas and has launched two missile attacks on Israel this year.

"Over the coming days, additional U.S. military personnel and THAAD battery components will continue to arrive in Israel," Ryder said.

Iran has warned U.S. troops would be in harm's way if they launch another attack.

## **Trump uses interview on economics to promote tariffs and riff on his favorite themes**

By PAUL WISEMAN and JILL COLVIN Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — Donald Trump seized Tuesday on an opening to sound his frequent argument that imposing huge tariffs on foreign goods would amount to an economic elixir — one that he claims would raise enormous sums for the government, protect U.S. firms from overseas competition and prod foreign companies to open factories in the United States.

Appearing before a friendly audience at the Economic Club of Chicago, the Republican presidential nominee repeatedly asserted that tariffs are misunderstood as an economic tool.

"To me," Trump said, "the most beautiful word in the dictionary is tariff. It's my favorite word. It needs a public relations firm."

If tariffs need an image makeover, it's probably because mainstream economists say they actually amount to a tax on American consumers that would make the economy less efficient and send inflation surging in the United States.

The moderator, John Micklethwait, editor-in-chief of Bloomberg News, often struggled to keep the conversation focused on economics and business. Asked, for example, whether the government should break up Google after an antitrust case, Trump started talking about fighting voter fraud in Virginia and how, in his view, Google had treated him unfairly.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 113 ~ 69 of 78

Repeatedly, Trump rerouted the interview back onto familiar ground, repeating old stories and talking points about immigrants, voter fraud and transgender athletes. He even used a fake foreign accent to recount his dealings with French President Emmanuel Macron and former German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

As president in a second term, Trump said, he would use the threat of tariffs to gain concessions from foreign leaders. He has proposed a 60% tariff on goods from China and a tariff of up to 20% on everything else the United States imports. At times, he's threatened even greater tariffs on businesses in Mexico and American firms that are considering moving overseas.

Trump said that he began the interview knowing that he and Micklethwait held vastly different views on trade and the economy. In front of a supportive audience, he seemed to relish telling Micklethwait that he was wrong. Though they weren't nearly as rowdy as his usual rally crowds, the audience members gathered in a hotel not far from Trump's were friendly throughout, laughing at his quips and applauding.

At times, the dynamic grew tense, with Micklethwait asserting that Trump's tariffs would lead to higher prices for consumers and that his promises of various tax breaks would blow up the deficit because "you're flooding the thing with giveaways."

Trump mostly responded with familiar anecdotes and stories. And he insisted that mainstream economists and journalists were wrong about the impact of tariffs, insisting that they are paid by foreign countries and not by American consumers.

"It must be hard for you to spend 25 years talking about tariffs as being negative and then have somebody explain to you that you're totally wrong," he told Micklethwait, drawing laughter.

The former president repeated his false assertion that there had been a peaceful transfer of power after the 2020 election. In fact, his supporters stormed the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, to try to stop Congress from formally counting the Electoral College votes that had given the presidency to Joe Biden.

Calling the Republicans the party of "common sense," Trump said: "We need borders. We need fair elections. We don't want men playing in women's sports. We don't want transgender operations without parental consent."

He also repeated his claim that the Biden administration had intentionally allowed hardened foreign criminals into the United States.

"They're in jail for murder, some for having the death penalty," Trump said. "They were released into our country."

Trump does not often submit to critical interviews. Though he speaks often with conservative commentators and podcast hosts, he rarely sits down for extended question-and-answer sessions with mainstream news outlets.

Trump, who has faced ridicule from Democrats and other critics for his rambling rallies, accused Micklethwait of jumping back and forth between topics.

"You've got to be able to finish a thought," Trump told Micklethwait, who often circled back to topics to try to press Trump to answer his questions.

"You've gone from the dollar to Macron," Micklethwait noted.

Trump replied that he was doing the "weave," a term he's used recently to explain his rhetorical style.

The interview played well with Trump's supporters. His former White House aide and current adviser Stephen Miller posted on X, formerly Twitter: "Trump's Bloomberg interview at the Economic Club of Chicago was the greatest live interview any political leader or politician has done on the economy in our lifetimes. Period."

## Walgreens to close 1,200 stores as US pharmacies struggle to define a new role

By TOM MURPHY AP Health Writer

Walgreens is planning to close around 1,200 locations, as the drugstore chain and its rivals struggle to define their role for U.S. shoppers who no longer look to them first for convenience.

Drugstores that once snapped up prime retail space in towns and cities across the country are in retreat.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 113 ~ 70 of 78

They've been battered by shrinking prescription reimbursement, persistent theft, rising costs and consumers who have strayed to online retailers or competitors with better prices.

The boost they received from taking the lead on vaccinations during the COVID-19 pandemic has long since faded.

Walgreens' announcement Tuesday morning comes as rival CVS Health wraps up a three-year plan to close 900 stores and Rite Aid emerges from bankruptcy, whittled down to about 1,300 locations.

As the companies retract, they raise concerns in many communities about access to health care and prescriptions.

Drugstore leaders and analysts who follow the industry say smaller versions of these chains have a future in U.S. retail, but they're still trying to understand how that will play out.

"They've really got to rethink how they do business and, most importantly, what they mean and what value they bring to the customer," said Neil Saunders, managing director of consulting and data analysis firm GlobalData.

Walgreens Boots Alliance Inc., which runs about 8,500 stores in the U.S., said in late June that it was finalizing a turnaround plan in the U.S. that might lead to hundreds of store closings.

The company said Tuesday that it will start by closing about 500 stores in its current fiscal year, which started last month.

Walgreens didn't say where the store closings would take place. It will prioritize poor-performing stores where the property is owned by the company, or where leases are expiring.

CEO Tim Wentworth told analysts Tuesday that the majority of its stores, or about 6,000, are profitable and provide the company with a foundation to build on.

"This solid base supports our conviction in a retail pharmacy led model that is relevant to our consumers, and we intend to invest in these stores over the next several years," said Wentworth, who became CEO nearly a year ago.

Wentworth said the remaining Walgreens stores will help the company respond more quickly to shifting consumer behavior and buying patterns. The company also is taking another look at what it sells in its stores and planning to offer more Walgreens-branded products.

Walgreens also is experimenting with some smaller stores that would be less expensive to operate.

Drugstores also have been pushing to offer more care, with pharmacists diagnosing and treating the flu, strep throat and COVID-19 in many states. Pharmacists say they can play a key role in keeping their customers healthy since they often see people more frequently than family doctors.

Pharmacists can help patients monitor their blood pressure, manage diabetes and quit smoking, among other things.

CVS also is squeezing primary care clinics with doctors into some of its stores. But Walgreens is backing away from a similar push.

The Deerfield, Illinois, company said in August that it was reviewing its U.S. health care operation, and it might sell all or part of its VillageMD clinic business. That announcement came less than two years after the company said it would spend billions to expand it.

Saunders, the analyst, said Walgreens has neglected its stores in recent years as it built its business through acquisitions. He said the appearance of the chain's locations has suffered, and a lack of staffing hurts customer service.

He noted that store visits are slumping, and the company has lost market share.

"And that has unraveled some of the economics of these stores," he said.

Saunders said drugstores "have really shot themselves in the foot" because they no longer have a clear way to differentiate themselves from other retailers.

"When you want to get the big bucks from consumers, you have to be a destination for something," he said. "And unfortunately, drugstores have increasingly become destinations for nothing."

## FEMA resumes door-to-door visits in North Carolina after threats tied to disinformation

By MAKIYA SEMINERA and SARAH BRUMFIELD Associated Press

ASHEVILLE, N.C. (AP) — Federal disaster personnel have resumed door-to-door visits as part of their hurricane-recovery work in North Carolina, an effort temporarily suspended amid threats that prompted officials to condemn the spread of disinformation.

Over the weekend, reports emerged that workers with the Federal Emergency Management Agency could be targeted by militia as the government responds to Hurricane Helene. A sheriff's office said Monday that one man was arrested during an investigation, but that the suspect acted alone.

FEMA made operational changes to keep personnel safe "out of an abundance of caution," agency Administrator Deanne Criswell said at a briefing Tuesday. FEMA workers were back in the field Monday, accompanied by Criswell, and she said disaster-assistance teams helping survivors apply for FEMA aid as well as state and local assistance will continue to go door-to-door. She emphasized that the agency isn't going anywhere.

"The federal family has been here working side by side with the state since Day One. These are people who put their lives on hold to help those who have lost everything," Criswell said. "So let me be clear. I take these threats seriously."

North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper said he directed the state's Department of Public Safety to coordinate law enforcement assistance for FEMA and other responders. He stressed the damage that internet rumors and falsehoods were causing and said officials may never know how many people won't apply for assistance because of bad information.

"There's still a persistent and dangerous flow of misinformation about recovery efforts in western North Carolina that can lead to threats and intimidation, breeds confusion and demoralizes storm survivors and response workers alike," Cooper said at the briefing. "If you're participating in spreading this stuff, stop it. Whatever your aim is, the people you are really hurting are those in western North Carolina who need help."

The Rutherford County Sheriff's Office said it received a call Saturday about a man with an assault rifle who made a comment "about possibly harming" FEMA employees working in the hard-hit areas of Lake Lure and Chimney Rock in the North Carolina mountains. A man was charged with "going armed to the terror of the public," a misdemeanor, and was released after posting bond.

The sheriff's office said it received initial reports that a "truckload of militia" was involved in the threat, but further investigation determined the man acted alone.

FEMA has faced rampant disinformation about its response to Helene, which hit Florida on Sept. 26 before heading north and leaving a trail of destruction across six states.

Asked what might be fueling disinformation, Cooper said social media has become more extreme, but he also pointed to politics.

"This is happening in the middle of an election where candidates are using people's misery to sow chaos for their own political objectives — and it's wrong," he said.

Former President Donald Trump and his allies have seized on the storm's aftermath to spread false information about the Biden administration's response in the final weeks before the election. Their debunked claims include false statements that victims can only receive \$750 in aid, that emergency response funds were diverted to immigrants, that people accepting federal relief money could see their land seized and that FEMA is halting trucks full of supplies.

Helene decimated remote towns throughout Appalachia, left millions without power, knocked out cellular service and killed at least 246 people. It was the deadliest hurricane to hit the U.S. mainland since Katrina in 2005.

Terrie Daughtry, a volunteer handling therapy dogs Tuesday at a FEMA Disaster Recovery Center in Asheville, said threats and misinformation — including the militia rumors — made her feel unsafe for the first time in several trips to volunteer at disaster sites.

"I'm not coming to risk my life with it all, to be shot or hurt or trampled because of lunacy," said Daughtry,

who volunteers with Therapy Dogs International. She said she previously traveled to help in the aftermath of the Pulse Nightclub shooting in Orlando, Florida, floods in Virginia and tornadoes in Texas, Oklahoma and Alabama.

She and another volunteer have been using their therapy dogs to calm people waiting in line to make FEMA claims. They hand out candy, let people pet the dogs and talk to people about their experiences.

Despite the extra stress from the "absolutely ridiculous" threats and misinformation, Daughtry said she's seen some amazing moments of human spirit. At one point on Monday, someone in line started playing a guitar and singing about having no water, she said. Eventually, the whole line sang along.

"These are special people. They're singing in horrible adversity," she said. "It made me tear up being there and it's making me tear up now."

\_\_\_ Brumfield reported from Baltimore.

## Walz unveils Harris' plan for rural voters as campaign looks to cut into Trump's edge

By ZEKE MILLER AP White House Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — Democratic vice presidential nominee Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz on Tuesday unveiled his ticket's plans to improve the lives of rural voters, as Vice President Kamala Harris looks to cut into former President Donald Trump's support.

The Harris-Walz plan includes a focus on improving rural health care, such as plans to recruit 10,000 new health care professionals in rural and tribal areas through scholarships, loan forgiveness and new grant programs, as well as economic and agricultural policy priorities. The plan was detailed to The Associated Press by a senior campaign official on the condition of anonymity ahead of its official release.

It marks a concerted effort by the Democratic campaign to make a dent in the historically Trump-leaning voting bloc in the closing three weeks before Election Day. Trump carried rural voters by a nearly two-to-one margin in 2020, according to AP VoteCast. In the closely contested race, both Democrats and Republicans are reaching out beyond their historic bases in hopes of winning over a sliver of voters that could ultimately prove decisive.

Walz, wearing a flannel coat and a campaign camo hat, announced the plan during a stop in rural Lawrence County in western Pennsylvania, one of the marquee battlegrounds of the 2024 contest. He is also starring in a new radio ad for the campaign highlighting his roots in a small town of 400 people and his time coaching football, while attacking Trump and his running mate, Ohio Sen. JD Vance.

"In a small town, you don't focus on the politics, you focus on taking care of your neighbors and minding your own damn business," Walz says in the ad, which the campaign said will air across more than 500 rural radio stations in Georgia, Michigan, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. "Now Donald Trump and JD Vance, they don't think like us. They're in it for themselves."

The Harris-Walz plan calls on Congress to permanently extend telemedicine coverage under Medicare, a pandemic-era benefit that helped millions access care that is set to expire at the end of 2024. They are also calling for grants to support volunteer EMS programs to cut in half the number of Americans living more than 25 minutes away from an ambulance.

It also urges Congress to restore the Affordable Connectivity Program, a program launched by President Joe Biden that expired in June that provided up to \$30 off home internet bills, and for lawmakers to require equipment manufacturers to grant farmers the right to repair their products.

## How the tiny Caribbean island of Anguilla has turned the AI boom into a digital gold mine

By KELVIN CHAN AP Business Writer

The artificial intelligence boom has benefited chatbot makers, computer scientists and Nvidia investors. It's also providing an unusual windfall for Anguilla, a tiny island in the Caribbean.



# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 113 ~ 73 of 78

ChatGPT's debut nearly two years ago heralded the dawn of the AI age and kicked off a digital gold rush as companies scrambled to stake their own claims by acquiring websites that end in .ai.

That's where Anguilla comes in. The British territory was allotted control of the .ai internet address in the 1990s. It was one of hundreds of obscure top-level domains assigned to individual countries and territories based on their names. While the domains are supposed to indicate a website has a link to a particular region or language, it's not always a requirement.

Google uses google.ai to showcase its artificial intelligence services while Elon Musk uses x.ai as the homepage for his Grok AI chatbot. Startups like AI search engine Perplexity have also snapped up .ai web addresses, redirecting users from the .com version.

Anguilla's earnings from web domain registration fees quadrupled last year to \$32 million, fueled by the surging interest in AI. The income now accounts for about 20% of Anguilla's total government revenue. Before the AI boom, it hovered at around 5%.

Anguilla's government, which uses the gov.ai home page, collects a fee every time an .ai web address is renewed. The territory signed a deal Tuesday with a U.S. company to manage the domains amid explosive demand but the fees aren't expected to change. It also gets paid when new addresses are registered and expired ones are sold off. Some sites have fetched tens of thousands of dollars.

The money directly boosts the economy of Anguilla, which is just 35 square miles (91 square kilometers) and has a population of about 16,000. Blessed with coral reefs, clear waters and palm-fringed white sand beaches, the island is a haven for uber-wealthy tourists. Still, many residents are underprivileged and tourism has been battered by the pandemic and, before that, a powerful hurricane.

Anguilla doesn't have its own AI industry though Premier Ellis Webster hopes that one day it will become an hub for the technology. He said it was just luck that it was Anguilla, and not nearby Antigua, that was assigned the .ai domain in 1995 because both places had those letters in their names.

Webster said the money takes the pressure off government finances and helps fund key projects, but cautioned that "we can't rely on it solely."

"You can't predict how long this is going to last," Webster said in an interview with the AP. "And so I don't want to have our economy and our country and all our programs just based on this. And then all of a sudden there's a new fad comes up in the next year or two, and then we are left now having to make significant expenditure cuts, removing programs."

To help keep up with the explosive growth in domain registrations, Anguilla said Tuesday it's signing a deal with a U.S.-based domain management company, Identity Digital, to help manage the effort. They said the agreement will mean more revenue for the government while improving the resilience and security of the web addresses.

Identity Digital, which also manages Australia's .au domain, expects to migrate all .ai domain services to its systems by the start of next year, Identity Digital Chief Strategy Officer Ram Mohan said in an interview.

A local software entrepreneur had previously helped Anguilla set up its registry system decades earlier.

There are now more than 533,000 .ai web domains, an increase of more than 10-fold since 2018. The International Monetary Fund said in a May report that the earnings will help diversify the economy, "thus making it more resilient to external shocks."

Webster expects domain-related revenues to rise further, and could even double this year from last year's \$32 million.

He said the money will finance the airport's expansion, free medical care for senior citizens and completion of a vocational technology training center at Anguilla's high school.

The income also provides "budget support" for other projects the government is eyeing, such as a national development fund it could quickly tap for hurricane recovery efforts. The island normally relies on assistance from its administrative power, Britain, which comes with conditions, Webster said.

Mohan said working with Identity Digital will also defend against cyber crooks trying to take advantage of the hype around artificial intelligence.

He cited the example of Tokelau, an island in the Pacific Ocean, whose .tk addresses became notoriously associated with spam and phishing after outsourcing its registry services.

"We worry about bad actors taking something, sticking a .ai to it, and then making it sound like they are much bigger or much better than what they really are," Mohan said, adding that the company's technology will quickly take down shady sites.

Another benefit is .AI websites will no longer need to connect to the government's digital infrastructure through a single internet cable to the island, which leaves them vulnerable to digital bottlenecks or physical disruptions.

Now they'll use the company's servers distributed globally, which means it will be faster to access them because they'll be closer to users.

"It goes from milliseconds to microseconds," Mohan said.

## **USDA launches an internal investigation into the deadly Boar's Head outbreak**

By JONEL ALECCIA AP Health Writer

U.S. Agriculture Department officials have launched an internal investigation into how the agency handled reports of serious problems at a Boar's Head deli meat plant tied to a deadly listeria outbreak, a lawmaker said Tuesday.

Sen. Richard Blumenthal said that USDA Inspector General Phyllis Fong is looking into whether federal investigators and Virginia state inspectors responded appropriately to dozens of reports of problems at the factory, including mold, insects, dripping water and meat and fat residue on walls, floors and equipment. Inspection reports dating back at least two years indicated that the conditions could pose an "imminent threat" to food safety.

The action came in response to a Sept. 5 letter from Blumenthal demanding an investigation, he said.

"USDA took virtually no action — allowing Boar's Head to continue business as usual at its chronically unsanitary Virginia plant — despite finding repeated serious violations," the Connecticut Democrat said in a statement.

At least 10 people died and nearly 50 were hospitalized in 19 states since May after eating listeria-contaminated Boar's Head products, including liverwurst, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. After recalling more than 7 million pounds of deli meat distributed nationwide, Boar's Head officials shuttered the plant in Jarratt, Virginia, and permanently stopped making liverwurst.

Officials with Fong's office did not immediately confirm the investigation. Blumenthal declined to release the agency's response. He said the internal investigation would evaluate the handling of recurrent problems and whether state inspections properly reduced the risk of tainted products entering the food supply.

The Boar's Head plant was inspected under a program that allows state inspectors to act on behalf of the federal agency.

In addition to the internal investigation, Blumenthal and Connecticut Rep. Rosa DeLauro last month asked the Justice Department to investigate whether criminal charges were warranted.

Officials with USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service have refused to share documents regarding the agency's inspections and enforcement at the plant, plus inspection reports from eight other company factories across the country. The agency denied Freedom of Information Act requests submitted by The Associated Press, saying releasing the records could "interfere with" and "hinder" potential law enforcement investigations. The AP is appealing the denial.

## **Tubeworms, snails and other weird creatures found under the seafloor**

By ADITHI RAMAKRISHNAN AP Science Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Scientists for the first time have uncovered an underworld of animal life thriving beneath the seafloor.

An expedition to a volcanically active ridge in the Pacific off South America has revealed worms, snails, giant tubeworms and other strange creatures lurking below steamy underwater hot springs.

Researchers have long studied animal communities near such hydrothermal vents. Many thought only microbes and viruses could survive underneath. To their surprise, an underwater robot last summer overturned volcanic slabs and found diverse life under the vents.

"This was totally unexpected," said study co-author Sabine Gollner with the Royal Netherlands Institute for Sea Research.

Young critters from above the seafloor could be traveling through the vents to settle in the depths, Gollner said.

The research published Tuesday in the journal Nature Communications.

Future studies will help reveal whether colonies of animal life exist below other hydrothermal vents around the globe.

"This is an initial discovery that's really promising," said Jason Sylvan, a microbiologist at Texas A&M University who was not involved with the research.

## How did a killing at a Sikh temple lead to Canada and India expelling each other's diplomats?

By SHEIKH SAALIQ Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — Relations between India and Canada are at a low point as the countries expelled each other's top diplomats over an ongoing dispute about the killing of a Sikh activist in Canada.

Canada said it had identified India's top diplomat in the country as a person of interest in an assassination plot and expelled him and five other diplomats Monday. India has rejected the accusations as absurd, and its foreign ministry said it was expelling Canada's acting high commissioner and five other diplomats in response.

It's the latest in an escalating dispute over the June 2023 killing of Sikh activist Hardeep Singh Nijjar.

What is the dispute about?

Nijjar was fatally shot in his pickup truck in June 2023 after he left the Sikh temple he led in the city of Surrey, British Columbia. An Indian-born citizen of Canada, he owned a plumbing business and was a leader in a movement to create an independent Sikh homeland, which is banned in India.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said in September 2023 there were credible allegations that India's government had links to the killing. India denied the allegations at the time but said Nijjar was involved in "terrorism."

How did relations get to this point?

Canada expelled an Indian diplomat over the dispute last year, and in response India expelled a Canadian diplomat and froze consular services for Canadians for nearly two months.

Tensions boiled over again in May, when Canadian police said they had arrested three Indian nationals accused of involvement in Nijjar's killing and were "investigating if there are any ties to the government of India." India rejected the allegations, saying Canada had a "political compulsion" to blame India.

What changed on Monday?

Now, Canada says that India's top diplomat in the country is a person of interest in the killing, and that police have uncovered evidence of an intensifying campaign against Canadian citizens by agents of the Indian government.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police said it had found evidence of the involvement of Indian agents "in serious criminal activity in Canada," including links "to homicides and violent acts" and interference in Canada's democratic processes, among other things.

Meanwhile, Canada's foreign minister, Mélanie Joly, tied the Indian officials to Nijjar's assassination and said Canada had gathered "ample, clear and concrete evidence which identified six individuals as persons of interest in the Nijjar case."

She said India had been asked to waive diplomatic immunity and cooperate in the investigation but refused.

In a statement Monday, India's foreign ministry said that the Canadian government "has not shared a

shred of evidence" with the Indian government, "despite many requests from our side." The ministry also called the accusations part of "a deliberate strategy of smearing India for political gains."

Who was Nijjar?

Nijjar was a local leader in what remains of a once-strong movement to create an independent Sikh homeland known as Khalistan. The Khalistan movement is banned in India, but has support among the Sikh diaspora, particularly in Canada.

India designated Nijjar a terrorist in 2020, and at the time of his death was seeking his arrest for alleged involvement in an attack on a Hindu priest in India.

New Delhi's anxieties about Sikh separatist groups in Canada have long been a strain on the relationship, but the two countries have maintained strong defense and trade ties, and share strategic concerns over China's global ambitions. However, India has increasingly accused Canada of giving free rein to Sikh separatists.

Sikhs make up nearly 2% of Canada's population, and more than a dozen are members of the country's parliament.

## Rulings signal US courts may be more open to lawsuits accusing foreign officials of abuses

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A U.S. court has given two top associates of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman until early November to start turning over any evidence in a lawsuit from a former senior Saudi intelligence official who says he survived a plot by the kingdom to silence him.

The order is among a spate of recent rulings suggesting U.S. courts are becoming more open to lawsuits seeking to hold foreign powers accountable for rights abuses, legal experts and advocates say. That is after a couple of decades in which American judges tended to toss those cases.

The long-running lawsuit by former Saudi intelligence official Saad al-Jabri accuses Saudi Arabia of trying to assassinate him in October 2018. The kingdom calls the allegation groundless. That's the same month the U.S., U.N. and others allege that aides of Prince Mohammed and other Saudi officials killed U.S.-based journalist Jamal Khashoggi, whose columns for The Washington Post were critical of the crown prince.

Al-Jabri's lawsuit asserts that the plot against him involved at least one of the same officials, former royal court adviser Saud al-Qahtani, whom the Biden administration has sanctioned over allegations of involvement in Khashoggi's killing.

The ruling is among a half-dozen recently giving hope to rights groups and dissidents that U.S. courts may be more open again to lawsuits that accuse foreign governments and officials of abuses — even when most of the alleged wrongdoing took place abroad.

"More and more ... it seems like the U.S. courts are an opportunity to directly hold governments accountable," said Yana Gorokhovskaia, research director at Freedom House, a U.S.-based rights group that advocates for people facing cross-border persecution by repressive governments.

"It's an uphill battle," especially in cases where little of the alleged harassment took place on U.S. soil, Gorokhovskaia noted. "But it's more than we saw, definitely, even a few years ago."

Khalid al-Jabri, a doctor who like his father lives in exile in the West for fear of retaliation by the Saudi government, said the recent ruling allowing his father's lawsuit to move forward will do more than help recent victims.

It "hopefully, in the long run, will make ... oppressive regimes think twice about transnational repression on U.S. soil," the younger al-Jabri said.

The Saudi Embassy in Washington acknowledged receiving requests for comment from The Associated Press in the al-Jabri case but did not immediately respond. Lawyers for one of the two Saudis named in the case, Bader al-Asaker, declined to comment, while al-Qahtani's attorneys did not respond.

Past court motions by lawyers for the crown prince called al-Jabri a liar wanted in Saudi Arabia to face corruption allegations and said there was no evidence of a Saudi plot to kill him.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 113 ~ 77 of 78

The Saudi government, meanwhile, has said the killing of Khashoggi by Saudi agents inside the Saudi consulate in Istanbul was a "rogue operation" carried out without the crown prince's knowledge.

Khashoggi's killing and the events alleged by al-Jabri took place in a crackdown in the first years after King Salman and his son Prince Mohammed came to power in Saudi Arabia, after the 2015 death of King Abdullah. They detained critics and rights advocates, former prominent figures under the old king, and fellow princes for what the government often said were corruption investigations.

Al-Jabri escaped to Canada. As with Khashoggi, the lawsuit alleges the crown prince sent a hit team known as the "Tiger Squad" to kill him there but claims the plot was foiled when Canadian officials questioned the men and examined their luggage. Canada has said little about the case, although a Royal Canadian Mounted Police investigator has testified that officials found the allegations credible and said they remain under investigation.

Saudi Arabia detained a younger son and daughter of al-Jabri in what the family alleges is an effort to pressure the father to return to the kingdom.

Until now, efforts to sue Saudi officials and the kingdom over Khashoggi's and al-Jabri's cases have foundered. U.S. courts have said that Prince Mohammed himself has sovereign immunity under international law.

And judgments in civil cases against foreign governments and officials can have little effect beyond the reputational hit. Courts sometimes find in favor of the alleged victim by default when a regime or official fails to respond.

U.S. courts noted the alleged plot against al-Jabri targeted him at his home in Canada, not in the United States, although al-Jabri alleges the crown prince's aides used a network of Saudi informants in the U.S. to learn his whereabouts.

Late this summer, a federal appeals court in Washington reversed a dismissal of al-Jabri's claims by a lower court. He is legally entitled to gather any evidence to see if there is enough to justify trying the case in the U.S., the appeals court said.

Federal courts ordered al-Qahtani and al-Asaker last month to start turning over all relevant texts, messages on apps and other communication in the case by Nov. 4.

It's an "exciting development," said Ingrid Brunk, a professor of international law at Vanderbilt University and an expert in international litigation.

Courts in the U.S. and other democracies have been favorite venues to bring human-rights cases against repressive governments. But rulings by the U.S. Supreme Court since 2004 had choked off such lawsuits in cases involving foreign parties, which often have little link to the U.S., Brunk said.

Lately, however, particularly strong lawsuits against foreign officials and governments have been gaining footholds in U.S. courts again, she said.

"There's been some very good lawyering here," Brunk said of al-Jabri's long-running case.

Other lawsuits also have pushed ahead. A U.S. appeals court in San Francisco last month allowed the revival of a case by Chinese dissidents accusing the Chinese government of spying on them.

Rather than suing China, however, the dissidents targeted Cisco Systems, the Silicon Valley tech company they accused of developing the security system that allowed the spying.

A federal jury trial in Florida this summer found Chiquita Brands liable in the killings of Colombian civilians by a right-wing paramilitary group that the banana company acknowledged paying. Lawyers called it a first against a major U.S. corporation.

U.S. courts also have allowed human-rights-related lawsuits naming Turkey and India to move forward recently.

Some of the uptick in human-rights cases — those naming foreign officials and governments or targeting U.S. corporations — in U.S. courts again stems from plaintiffs "pursuing really promising, really creative" legal approaches, Brunk said.

Khalid al-Jabri said the family isn't seeking money in its lawsuit. They want justice for his father, he said, and freedom for his detained sister and brother.

# Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2024 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 113 ~ 78 of 78

## Today in History: October 16, Cuban Missile Crisis begins

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Wednesday, Oct. 16, the 290th day of 2024. There are 76 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Oct. 16, 1962, the Cuban Missile Crisis began as President John F. Kennedy was informed that reconnaissance photographs had revealed the presence of nuclear missile bases in Cuba.

Also on this date:

In 1758, American lexicographer Noah Webster was born in Hartford, Connecticut.

In 1793, during the French Revolution, Marie Antoinette, the queen of France, was beheaded.

In 1859, radical abolitionist John Brown led a raid on the U.S. arsenal at Harpers Ferry in what was then a part of western Virginia. (Ten of Brown's men were killed and five escaped. Brown and six followers were captured; all were executed.)

In 1934, Chinese Communists, under siege by the Nationalists, began their "long march" lasting a year from southeastern to northwestern China.

In 1964, China set off its first atomic bomb, codenamed "596," on the Lop Nur Test Ground.

In 1968, American athletes Tommie Smith and John Carlos sparked controversy at the Mexico City Olympics by giving "Black power" salutes during a victory ceremony after they had won gold and bronze medals in the 200-meter race.

In 1978, the College of Cardinals of the Roman Catholic Church chose Cardinal Karol Wojtyla (voy-TEE'-wah) to be the new pope; he took the name John Paul II.

In 1984, Anglican Bishop Desmond Tutu was named winner of the Nobel Peace Prize for his decades of non-violent struggle for racial equality in South Africa.

In 1987, 18-month-old Jessica McClure was pulled from an abandoned well in Midland, Texas, after being stuck there for more than two days. The efforts to rescue "Baby Jessica" captured the attention of the nation.

In 1991, a gunman opened fire at a Luby's Cafeteria in Killeen, Texas, killing 23 people before taking his own life.

In 1995, the Million Man March, a gathering of Black men meant to foster unity in the face of economic and social issues affecting African Americans, was held in Washington D.C.

In 2017, Army Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl, who had been captured and held by the Taliban for five years after walking away from his post in Afghanistan, pleaded guilty to desertion and endangering his comrades.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Fernanda Montenegro is 95. Actor Barry Corbin is 84. Musician Bob Weir is 77. Actor-director Tim Robbins is 66. Rock musician Flea (Red Hot Chili Peppers) is 62. Filmmaker Kenneth Lonergan is 62. Actor Terri J. Vaughn is 55. Singer John Mayer is 47. Former WNBA point guard Sue Bird is 44. Actor Caterina Scorsone is 43. Philadelphia Phillies outfielder Bryce Harper is 32. Tennis player Naomi Osaka is 27.