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Racine County's Daily Newspaper

The Journal Times

A salvage job

No room for error as end of Raiders' season nears **SPORTS, PAGE C1**



From D.C. to Chicago

RNC coming to Milwaukee; Janesville couple killed by lightning outside White House **STATE, PAGE A3**



Upcoming events

Beer and alpacas, together at last **COMMUNITY, PAGE C1-2**



SOME SUN, SOME CLOUDS 87 • 74 FORECAST, A6 | **SATURDAY, AUGUST 6, 2022** | journaltimes.com | \$2.00

2 teens arrested for cemetery shooting

Court records indicate 19-year-old was out on bond June 2

JOURNAL TIMES STAFF

RACINE — Two teenagers, ages 19 and 16, who were arrested Thursday are accused of shooting into a crowd during a burial in Graceland Cemetery on the afternoon of June 2, the Racine Police Department said Friday.

Two people out of dozens at the burial were shot.

They are expected to face 28 felony charges each: 26 counts of first-degree recklessly endangering safety and two counts

of first-degree attempted intentional homicide. More charges could later be recommended and filed, although no charges were filed Friday.

The 19-year-old has been identified as Lamarion D. Blair. The 16-year-old, who is from Racine, has not been publicly identified. Police said the two teens are connected with a second shooting that occurred later that day on the 2800 block of Wright Avenue.

The arrests were made Thursday "after an extensive and thorough investigation," the RPD's Special Investigations Unit said.

Assisting in the investigation were federal agents from the U.S. Marshals and the Bureau of Alco-

hol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. The FBI also responded to the scene June 2.

The teenagers are accused of firing from vehicles into a crowd of mourners at the burial of Da'Shontay "Day Day" King, the Racine man shot and killed while running from police while armed May 20.

The two people who were shot were ages 19 and 35, both of them women. The 19-year-old was treated and released that day at Ascension All Saints Hospital. The 35-year-old's injuries were more serious and required surgery, but she survived.

Please see **SHOOTING**, Page A4



MARK HERTZBERG, SPECIAL TO THE JOURNAL TIMES

Two women were shot June 2 during the funeral at Graceland Cemetery for Da'Shontay "Day Day" King. Both women survived, and on Friday the Racine Police Department reported two teenagers had been arrested in connection with the shootings.



ALEX RODRIGUEZ, ALEX.RODRIGUEZ@JOURNALTIMES.COM

SALTY AND SWEET

Jordan James, of Cupcakes by Jordan James, holds a cupcake she baked topped with a piece of bacon Friday during the first day of Mount Pleasant Bacon Fest at Roma Lodge, 7130 Spring St. Bacon Fest continues Saturday 11 a.m.-7 p.m. Cupcakes by Jordan James is run by James; she bakes and decorates everything she makes herself.

ELECTIONS COMMISSION

Actions intend to keep voting secure

ALEXANDER SHUR
Lee Newspapers

The Wisconsin Elections Commission is sending postcards to thousands of voters to ensure the absentee ballots due to be delivered to addresses different from those the voters previously had on file are not fraudulent.

Those approximately 4,000 postcards are part of an Elections Commission effort announced Thursday to ensure secure absentee voting after Harry Wait of the Town of Dover admitted to fraudulently ordering absentee ballots by using other people's names in an effort to show that such fraud is possible.

Other initiatives announced Thursday include monitoring the statewide voter registration system and expediting formal complaints related to fraudulently ordering absentee ballots.

"Voters should rest assured that voting absentee remains a secure way to vote in the upcoming August 9 Partisan Primary," Elections Commission Administrator Meagan Wolfe said in a statement. "However, to provide additional reassurance, election officials at the state and local level continue to closely monitor for any indication of potentially unauthorized absentee ballot requests, no matter how rare those incidents may be."

The postcards will confirm receipt of the absentee ballot requests and state: "The absentee request indicated you would like

Please see **ELECTIONS**, Page A4

Zak's suffers devastating fire

JOURNAL TIMES STAFF

RACINE — The Racine Fire Department was dispatched to a structure fire at Zak's Fish & Chicken, 1536 Marquette St., at 11:44 a.m. Thursday.

Employees that opened up the store for the day called 911 to report an uncontrollable grease fire. All staff and customers were safely evacuated from the building, according to a release.

Twenty-two firefighters responded to the scene and worked

to extinguish the fire. According to the RFD, initial indications showed that the fire was venting from a rooftop exhaust with heavy smoke throughout the restaurant.

The fire was under control in about 20 minutes, with no civilian or firefighter injuries reported.

SEE: For videos of the fire, scan this QR code and follow the link **NEWSVU**

The cost to repair the fire damage is estimated to be greater than the value of the building, most recently assessed at \$81,000. Additionally, there was \$50,000 in damage to the contents of the building.

Please see **FIRE**, Page A4

Smoke billows out of Zak's Fish & Chicken, 1536 Marquette St., Thursday around noon.

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Tuition, state funding and diversity

New UW-Madison chancellor's agenda has familiar tone

MITCHELL SCHMIDT
Lee Newspapers

MADISON — Jennifer Mnookin spent her first day on campus meeting with students, faculty and campus leaders as she takes on the role as the 30th chancellor of the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Mnookin, who comes to Madison from her previous role as dean of the UCLA School of Law, said her primary goal is to have conversations with UW-Madison students and staff and community and state leaders to discuss ways to keep UW-Madison affordable, while also addressing challenges like accessibility, funding and diversity.

In addition to having breakfast with student leaders, touring the university's facilities and handing out Babcock Hall ice cream on Bascom Hill, Mnookin sat down with the Wisconsin State Journal to discuss her goals, which she said start with conversations.

"I am new to Wisconsin and I want to spend time talking to lots of different people both here within the university, in the broader community and all across the state, about what they most appreciate about the university and where they think we might have opportunities to do better," Mnookin said.



JOHN HART, LEE NEWSPAPERS

UW-Madison Chancellor Jennifer Mnookin interacts with UW Band members during an ice cream social event Thursday on the campus of UW-Madison.

"I certainly come with some values that I want to bring to how we think about UW-Madison and I've certainly got some ideas, but one of the things I know is vision works best when it's collectively produced," she added.

Mnookin joins UW-Madison as it faces years of declining state funding paired with a now decade-long tuition freeze and recent polling that found students in marginalized groups feel less safe on campus than majority groups.

What's more, some Republicans in the state Legislature, in-



Vos

cluding Assembly Speaker Robin Vos, R-Rochester, immediately criticized the UW Board of Regents' selection of Mnookin in May. Vos called it a "blatantly partisan selection," despite not yet meeting Mnookin, who was unanimously chosen, including by Regents appointed by both Democratic Gov. Tony Evers and former Republican Gov. Scott Walker.

Mnookin, who spent the last 17 years teaching law at UCLA, including the last six years as dean of the law school, said she's up to the challenge and hopes to find "spaces and places where we can work together productively and constructively."

"I will say that as a lawyer and a scholar I very strongly believe people can work together even when they don't agree on absolutely everything, and I also suspect that when we sit down to have those conversations it may be that some folks find that we agree maybe a little bit more than they thought," Mnookin said.

Money matters

Mnookin said she hopes to showcase the university as an asset to the state to secure additional funding from the Republican-led Legislature, as well as pursue targeted resources through philanthropy and research funding.

Another major funding resource has been tuition. Yet, while Republican lawmakers last year relinquished tuition-setting authority back to the Regents for the first time since 2013, tuition for resident undergraduates has remained frozen for the last nine years.

"From an affordability perspective, that is a plus, but over the longer term, if we don't find ways to balance affordability and to reinvest in families and individuals who need the help — but while also being a little bit closer to market for those who really can

comfortably afford it — there are risks to quality," Mnookin said.

"If the state wanted to invest in the university as a way of continuing to protect the lower tuition over time, that might be exciting," she added, "but just as all of us are finding, especially with inflation, we can't buy everything we could buy last week with the same dollars."

Supporting diversity

Mnookin said she shares the concerns of her predecessor, former UW-Madison Chancellor Rebecca Blank, on challenges of diversity on campus.

The university's 2021 Campus Climate Survey last fall found that close to three-quarters of students reported feeling welcome, respected and safe. However, the survey also found, in most cases, students of color, those with disabilities, and students in the LGBTQ+ community were less positive about their campus experience — though their responses were largely favorable and the overall results were comparable to a previous survey conducted in 2016.

"I do think that everybody wins when they have the chance to learn in a community in which many kinds of people — people with many backgrounds and people with broad experience sets and different perspectives — come together and learn together and find the places where they see the world in similar ways and the ways in which they don't," she said.

Elections

From A1

your ballot sent to an address other than your home/voter registration address."

The postcards ask voters who didn't submit those requests to call or email the commission at elections@wisconsin.gov. It will tell voters who did make such requests that they're not required to take further action.

Commissioners also agreed to refer suspicious activity to municipal clerks, which could lead to clerks canceling potentially fraudulent absentee ballot requests.

Clerks who identify and act upon suspicious activity are asked to report that to the commission and law enforcement. The commission and clerks would also work to fulfill law enforcement requests for data and information related to potentially fraudulent absentee ballot requests, the statement says.

While the website where people request absentee ballots, MyVote.wi.gov, previously contained some statutory language citing the rules, voters are now required to acknowledge a new warning before the request can be submitted. The warning states: "Any person who impersonates a registered elector, poses as another person for the purpose of voting at an

It all started here

Harry Wait isn't the only local at the heart of this statewide electoral brouhaha.

Another Racine County resident, Adrienne Melby of Burlington, told a Journal Times reporter that she had a friend try to see if they could request Melby's ballot be sent to the friend's address. But Melby says her friend accidentally went through with actually requesting the ballot on MyVote, unlike Wait who did it on purpose and requested ballots of others without their knowledge.

Melby and Wait both reported what they did to Racine County Sheriff Christopher Schmalzing. Rather than moving to make an arrest, the Racine County Sheriff's Office issued a Facebook post calling for WEC to tighten its rules. That sparked criticism of the RSCO, since it first moved to publicly criticize a state institution instead of moving to apprehend an admitted fraudster.

election, falsely procures registration or election materials, or otherwise violates the law will be referred for prosecution."

The commission also encouraged voters to check their status at MyVote to see whether an absentee ballot request has been made in their name.

Will changes be made? Probably not anytime soon

Republicans on the commission, during a special meeting Wednesday, lamented that more requirements for requesting absentee ballots have not been added to MyVote.

Under Wisconsin law, all that is needed to request a ballot be sent to any address is a registered voter's full name and birthdate, so

long as the voter has voted by mail before and their ID is on file with WEC, and the requester does not identify as indefinitely confined. The absentee ballot can then be requested to be sent to any address, although WEC is advising clerk's to now be wary of requests for a ballot that ask for it to be mailed to an address that does not match the address on file.

The Republican-led Legislature passed a bill that would have changed state law to require voter ID be provided every time an absentee ballot is requested, but Gov. Tony Evers vetoed it, saying he would veto anything that could make it more difficult to vote.

Commissioner Bob Spindell, a Republican appointee, argued that since state law doesn't even explicitly

require the birthdate information to be inputted in order to request a ballot, MyVote could be tightened without legislative action.

Spindell pitched requiring those requesting ballots to also provide the last four numbers of their social security number, even though that information would not currently be in MyVote's database and thus could make it more difficult for some to vote.

"The elephant in the room — so to speak, in my opinion — is we have to make it (MyVote) more secure," Spindell said during Wednesday's special meeting.

His fellow commissioners didn't agree that WEC should unilaterally add the extra step for requiring absentee ballots.

It is unlikely for the state Legislature to act quickly to address the issue. The Legislature is not due to reconvene until next year. A special session could be called, but there's no indication from legislative leaders that that could happen.

"There's been a proposal to require photo ID for every absentee ballot application. That's not the law. I want to make sure people understand that," said WEC Chair Don Millis, a Republican appointee. "It could have been the law. But Gov. (Tony) Evers vetoed a bill that would have required it."

Adam Rogan of The Journal Times contributed to this report.

Shooting

From A1

Witnesses said they saw shots being fired from multiple vehicles from the roads around the cemetery. Police said multiple firearms were used.

"As soon as the crowd got quiet, all you heard was gunshots," Idoana Gordon, who was at the burial, recalled the morning after when she went to visit the grave and was interviewed by a Journal Times reporter. "It was horrific. All I could do was hit the floor ... The kids who were out here were screaming and hollering about how they just want their dad, and how they hate Racine and don't want to be here no more."

Following the violence, Racine Mayor Cory Mason announced the city's curfew would be strictly enforced the following weekend in an attempt to curb youth violence.

"Today's heinous shooting at a cemetery while a family was already mourning the loss of a loved one is a new low for these perpetrators of violence in our community. The violence has got to stop! Revenge is not the answer. Ending gun violence is the top priority of the police department and my administration," he said in a statement June 2. "This violence must end."

In and out

Online court records indicate Blair has spent most of the last few years in and out of incarceration. He spent nearly two years, from March 2020 to February 2022, at the Mendota Mental Health Youth Facility. He also spent time at Lincoln Hills — the troubled youth prison both Gov.

Tony Evers and former Gov. Scott Walker have said they will close, but it still remains open.

On June 2, it appears Blair was out of custody on bond amid a convoluted series of events.

According to online court records:

Blair missed a court date May 23 related to a case for charges filed against him in 2019 for being in possession of a firearm as an adjudicated delinquent. The criminal charges filed in December 2019 referred to Blair, then 17 years old, as a "serious juvenile offender." At the time, Blair was on probation for armed robbery and attempted armed robbery.

On May 23, a bench warrant for Blair was authorized by the court and a \$1,000 cash bond he had previously posted was considered forfeited.

On June 24, it was said in court that Blair had been in jail in Las Vegas since June 8. It does not appear police suspected him of being a cemetery shooter at the time.

A spokesperson for the Racine Police Department did not respond to a request for comment Friday afternoon regarding when or how Blair was developed as a suspect.

On June 28, back in custody in Racine County, the court record states: "Defense states that defendant was an inmate at another facility when court was missed back in May. Defense requests to reinstate bond and raise bond another \$500 as he currently is on a hold with DOC (Department of Corrections)."

At that time, the forfeiture of Blair's \$1,000 bond was reversed, but \$500 was added to the bond. On July 7, \$500 was posted to fulfill the rest of the raised cash bond.

A phone call to Blair's attorney's office was not answered Friday afternoon.

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Blair

Online court records indicate Blair has spent most of the last few years in and out of incarceration. He spent nearly two years, from March 2020 to February 2022, at the Mendota Mental Health Youth Facility. He also spent time at Lincoln Hills — the troubled youth prison both Gov.

Fire

From A1

Evidence in the initial investigation indicates the fire's area of origin is the kitchen's cooking area. The exact cause of the fire will be determined after a more thorough investigation is conducted, the RFD said.

The Racine Police Department assisted with traffic control and evidence collection. We Energies secured electric and gas utilities. Racine Water Utility responded to shut off the water supply to the building.

Inquiries regarding restaurant fire safety may be directed to Racine Fire Department Fire Prevention Bureau at 262-635-7915.