

U.S. CAPITOL

Police uncover 'possible plot' by militia

BY MICHAEL BALSAMO

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Capitol Police say they have uncovered intelligence of a "possible plot" by a militia group to breach the U.S. Capitol on Thursday, nearly two months after a mob of supporters of then-President Donald Trump stormed the iconic building to try to stop Congress from certifying now-President Joe Biden's victory.

The threat appears to be connected to a far-right conspiracy theory, mainly promoted by supporters of QAnon, that Trump will rise again to power on March 4. That was the original presidential inauguration day until 1933, when it was moved to Jan. 20.

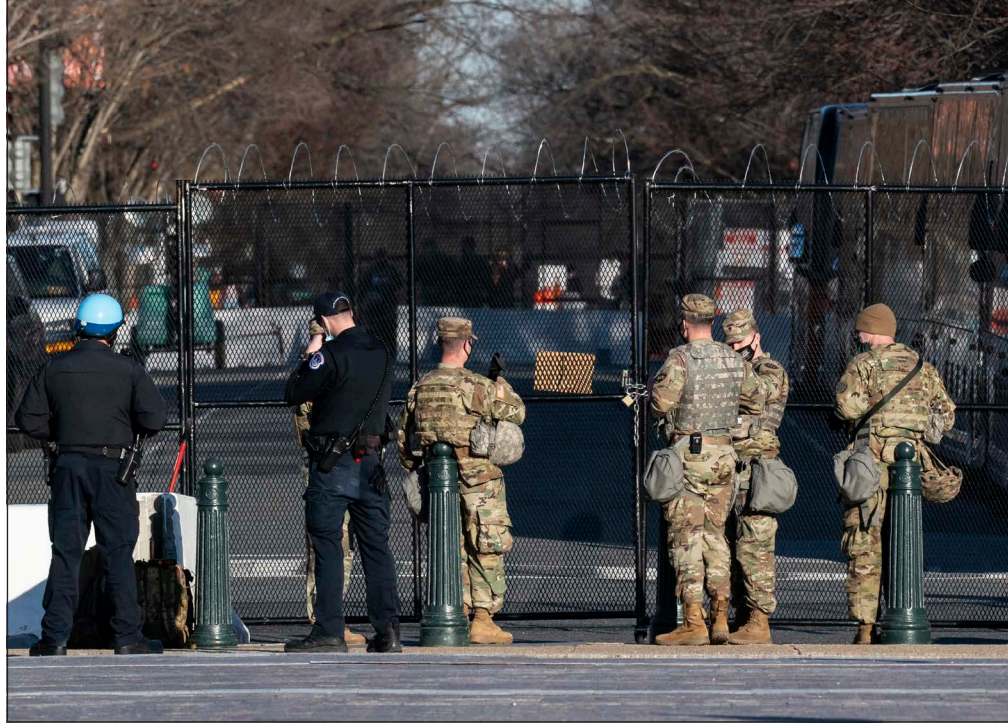
Online chatter identified by authorities included discussions among members of the Three Percenters, an anti-government militia group, concerning possible plots against the Capitol on Thursday, according to two law enforcement officials who were not authorized to speak publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity. Members of the Three Percenters were among the extremists who stormed the Capitol on Jan. 6.

The announcement comes as the Capitol police and other law enforcement agencies are taking heat from Congress in contentious hearings this week on their handling of the Jan. 6 riot. Police were ill-prepared for the mass of Trump supporters in tactical gear, some armed, and it took hours for National Guard reinforcements to come. By then, rioters had broken and smashed their way into the building and roamed the halls for hours, stalling Congress' certification effort temporarily and sending lawmakers into hiding.

"The United States Capitol Police Department is aware of and prepared for any potential threats towards members of Congress or towards the Capitol complex," the agency said in a statement. "We have obtained intelligence that shows a possible plot to breach the Capitol by an identified militia group on Thursday, March 4." Police did not identify the militia group in the statement.

The U.S. House was abruptly wrapping its work for the week Wednesday night given the threat of violence.

An advisory sent earlier this week to members of Congress by Timothy Blodgett, the acting House sergeant-at-arms, said that the Capitol Police had "no indication that groups will travel to Washington D.C. to protest or commit acts of violence."



J. Scott Applewhite/AP

Michigan National Guard troops stand watch Wednesday with U.S. Capitol Police as heightened security persists around the U.S. Capitol since the Jan. 6 attacks by a mob of supporters of then-President Donald Trump, in Washington, D.C. The U.S. Capitol Police say they have intelligence showing there is a "possible plot" by a militia group to breach the U.S. Capitol on Thursday.

But that advisory was updated in a note to lawmakers Wednesday morning. Blodgett wrote that the Capitol Police had received "new and concerning information and intelligence indicating additional interest in the Capitol for the dates of March 4th - 6th by a militia group."

In her testimony to the House panel, acting Capitol Police Chief Yogananda Pittman said her investigators had collected "some concerning intelligence," but declined to provide any details publicly, saying that it was "law enforcement sensitive" and that she would provide a private briefing for the subcommittee members.

Lawmakers, congressional staffers and law enforcement officials are still on edge after the attack last month, even as the security posture around the Capitol remains at an unprecedented level.

On Wednesday, federal agents were seeking to determine whether there was an increase in the number of hotel rooms being rented in Washington, as well as monitoring flights to the area, car rental reservations and any buses being chartered to bring groups into the capital, a person familiar with the matter told The Associated Press. The person could not publicly discuss de-

tails of the security planning and spoke on condition of anonymity.

The FBI and Department of Homeland Security also sent a joint intelligence bulletin to local law enforcement officials Tuesday warning that a group of militia extremists had discussed trying to take control of the Capitol on March 4 and encouraging thousands of people to come to D.C. to try to remove Democrats from power.

There has been a noticeable decline in online activity on some social media platforms surrounding efforts on March 4, and there was already considerably less online chatter than during the lead-up to Jan. 6, a day that Trump repeatedly had promoted for a his rally and encouraged thousands to come to the nation's capital.

Several QAnon groups still operating on the social media messaging platform Telegram warned followers to stay away from any events on March 4, claiming it was a setup for Trump supporters.

"If there are groups out there planning and advertising events on or around March 4 anywhere in the country (DC included) we strongly urge everyone to avoid them entirely," one Telegram user wrote late last month in a QAnon group

that has more than 65,000 followers.

There's also a very large fence in place around the U.S. Capitol that blocks off all avenues of entry including on the streets around the building, which was put in place after Jan. 6.

Also, thousands of accounts that promoted the Jan. 6 event that led to a violent storming of the U.S. Capitol have since been suspended by major tech companies like Facebook and Twitter, making it far more difficult for QAnon and far-right groups to organize a repeat of the mass gathering on Thursday.

Twitter banned more than 70,000 accounts after the riots, while Facebook and Instagram removed posts mentioning "stop the steal," a pro-Trump rallying cry used to mobilize his supporters in January. And the conservative social media platform Parler, which many of Trump's supporters joined to promote false election fraud conspiracy theories and encourage friends to "storm" the Capitol on Jan. 6, was booted off the internet following the siege.

Capitol Police say that they have stepped up security around the Capitol complex since January's insurrection, adding physical security measures such as the fencing topped with razor wire around the Capitol and members of the National Guard who remain at the complex. The statement said the agency was "taking the intelligence seriously" but provided no other specific details on the threat.

Strike

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"We simply don't have the resources to focus on bargaining a new contract while we are actively preparing for a strike of our technical workforce," Aaron Adams, St. Charles Bend president, said in a prepared statement. "Our top priority must be ensuring we have replacement workers here to care for our community."

What's left to negotiate are wage issues, Potter said.

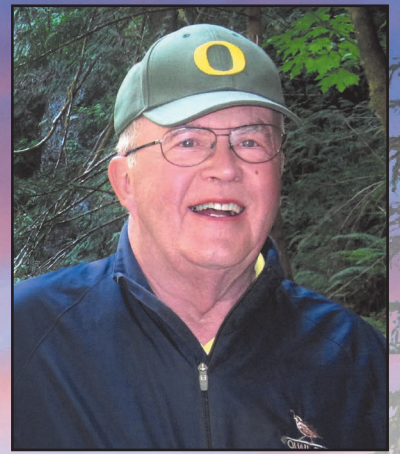
The hospital had tried to stop the strike on Tuesday by filing injunctions in both Deschutes County and in federal court in Eugene. The county filing was tossed out because of jurisdictional issues, and a federal judge ruled Tuesday that the National Labor Relations Board had jurisdiction over any labor disputes, including halting a strike.

"We think it's a real possibility that we can bargain today," Potter said. "We have no trust in this administration. It's eroded."

"We have told them that we'd come to the table if they don't ask us to give up our strike," he said. "It's a laughable offer. I truly wish it was a better one. Our folks are ready to negotiate."

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OBITUARY



Richard "Dick" Dale Johnson

1939 - 2021

On Wednesday February 17th, 2021, Richard Dale Johnson - loving husband and father of two children and one grandchild - passed away peacefully in sleep with his family at his side. The cause of death was a stroke and the complications of Parkinson's Disease.

Dick was born on March 29th, 1939 in Rockford, Illinois to Harriet Johnson and Erik "Swede" Johnson. Following graduation from East Rockford High School he entered the University of Illinois where he majored in geography. It was there he met and married his wife of 59 years Judith Anne (Potts) Johnson. Subsequently he earned a Masters of Science in community development at Southern Illinois University and concurrently worked as a Field Representative for the SIU Office of Community Development. Following his tenure at SIU Dick and family moved to Eugene, Oregon where he joined the staff of LCOG (Lane Council of Governments). Dick continued his career focused on community development and city planning. He served as planning director for the cities of Cottage Grove, Springfield and Hood River. Dick finished his planning career at Deschutes County Public Works Department in Bend.

Dick had a passion for American, world and military history - in addition to geography, environmental causes, politics and sports. He was a lifelong White Sox and Green Bay fan as well as a 51 year season ticket holder for University of Oregon football games.

He, along with his wife and family enjoyed travel, attending most of Oregon bowl games, and many away basketball games and tournaments. They traveled to almost all of the 50 US States, as well as Scandinavia - where Dick traced his Swedish roots. His hobbies included golf, fishing and bowling. He participated in several bowling leagues in Bend and was an active member of the Men's Golf Club at Quail Run.

Dick was outgoing and easily engaged others in conversation. He never knew a stranger. He was intelligent and knowledgeable across a wide range of topics. He had a soft and loving heart for others and a true love for wildlife and nature. His beloved canine companions Princess and White Socks were dear to his heart and the birth of his first grandchild in 2020 was a most joyous occasion.

Dick was preceded in death by his father Erik Johnson, his mother Harriet Johnson and his sister Judith Cunningham. He is survived by his wife Judy, his two children Matthew Johnson and Catherine Conkey, grandson Noah Carter Johnson, brother David Johnson, sisters-in-law Judith Edwards Johnson and Sue Potts Thomas, and numerous cousins and nieces.

A Celebration of Life will be held later this year when family and friends can safely gather. Please visit www.bairdfh.com to share condolences and sign Dick's online guest book. Contributions can be made in his name to Bend Partners in Care (partnersbend.org), Bend Humane Society (hsc.org) or Deschutes Land Trust (deschuteslandtrust.org)

Park

Continued from A1

"We try to build (a park) within a half-mile of every home," Endicott told The Bulletin Wednesday. "In this case, with all those new projects ... you're looking at 300 to 400 homes who could access it."

However, at Tuesday evening's Redmond City Council meeting, some city councilors expressed concern that adding funding for an expanded Quartz Park could take funding away from other, future park projects.

"Rather than just saying, 'just go ahead,' I'd like to see what it would affect if we do it," Councilor Jay Patrick said at the meeting.

The council decided to have McVay look into this and report back later.

On Wednesday, McVay told The Bulletin that the parks department has enough funds to pay for an expanded Quartz Park, and paying more for it wouldn't hurt any future projects.

At the meeting, some councilors also expressed concern about traffic safety nearby.

The master plan shows a second, smaller portion of the park south of Quartz Avenue, dedicated for more adult-oriented games like horseshoes, bocce and cornhole.

But Quartz Avenue is a busy street, and the city's transpor-

tation system plan will eventually extend Quartz all the way across U.S. Highway 97 to the airport, Endicott and Councilor Ed Fitch pointed out at the meeting. Crossing the street and interrupting traffic flow could be a concern, they said.

McVay said the park will have a crosswalk across Quartz Avenue, likely with flashing beacon lights. And at the meeting, City Engineer Mike Caccavano said the extension of Quartz Avenue likely won't make the street much busier at the future park's location.

"It's all surrounded by neighborhood, so putting a park here wouldn't impact its function as a collector," Caccavano said Tuesday night.

City Councilor Clifford Evelyn told The Bulletin that he needs more information about Quartz Park before he fully supports it. However, he likes the proposed new amenities.

"I think a parking lot for the park is important, and a restroom that actually flushes," Evelyn said Wednesday. "We're in modern times; we shouldn't have port-a-potties lying around."

If the park is built as planned, construction will start this summer and hopefully finish by late fall, McVay said.

If the City Council tells the parks department to scale

down Quartz Park to save funding, there would be a delay due to restarting the planning process, she said. That means

construction likely wouldn't start until 2022.

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OBITUARY



MONA LEE JUDSON

September 16, 1937 - February 26, 2021

Mona Lee Judson, age 83, passed away peacefully with her three children by her side on February 26, 2021. She was born, Mona Lee Kirchmeier, in House, New Mexico on September 16, 1937 and later moved to the Pacific Northwest. She lived in Redmond, Oregon for the past 23 years and was much loved by colleagues and patrons of the Fred Meyer Floral and Garden Center, where she worked for 14 years. Mona loved gardening, photography, crafting, and spending time with her children and her beloved grandchildren. She is survived by two brothers, three children, seven grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren. Her children would like to express their deep appreciation for the wonderful care she received from her hospice team through Partners In Care of Bend. If desired, memorial contributions can be made in her name to The Shepherd's House, PO Box 5484 Bend OR 97701, or to Partners In Care, Hospice Bend, at partnersbend.org