

Groton Daily Independent

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Monday, Sept. 25

Boys soccer hosts Dakota Valley, 4 p.m. (rescheduled from Sept. 30th).

Senior Menu: Chicken rice casserole, mixed vegetables, chocolate pudding with bananas, whole wheat bread.

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

The Pantry at Groton Community Center, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Senior Citizens meet at the Groton Community Center with potluck dinner starting at noon.

Region 1A Golf at Valley View Country Club, Siseton, 10 a.m.

Cross Country at Olive Grove Golf Course, 4 p.m.

Junior High Football hosts Aberdeen Roncalli, 4 p.m.

Junior Varsity Football hosts Aberdeen Roncalli after JH game.

Volleyball vs. Florence/Henry at Florence (7th at 4 p.m., 8th at 5 p.m., C at 5 p.m. followed by JV and Varsity)

Tuesday, Sept. 26

Senior: Baked pork chop, cream noodles, California blend, apple sauce, Whole wheat bread.

The Pantry at Groton Community Center, 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.

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



Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 209 N Main, open 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Volleyball hosts Great Plains Lutheran. C match at 5 p.m. followed by JV and Varsity.

Youth Football vs. Ellendale at NSU (3rd/4th at 5:30 p.m., 5th/6th at 6:30)

United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.

Wednesday, Sept. 27

9:30 a.m. Marching Band at Roncalli Marching Event

Senior Menu: Beef stew, biscuit, Waldorf salad, muffin, tomato juice.

St. John's Lutheran Bible Study, 2:45 pm.; Confirmation, 3:45 p.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Confirmation, 6 p.m.

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

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

CLOSED: Recycling Trailer in Groton

The recycling trailer is located west of the city shop. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.

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The Bulletin by Newsweek

World in Brief

troops will withdraw out of Niger following a military coup in the West African nation.

Tropical Storm Ophelia was downgraded to a tropical depression, but it still threatened parts of the Northeast with heavy rains, flooding, and dangerous waves. A new tropical storm called Philippe is brewing in the Atlantic.

The Pittsburgh Steelers held off the Las Vegas Raiders for a 23-18 victory during the Sunday Night Football at the Allegiant Stadium, earning their first road win against the Raiders since 1995.

Canada's House of Commons Speaker Anthony Rota apologized after recognizing 98-year-old Yaroslav Hunka, who served in a Nazi unit during World War II, as a "Ukrainian hero" at the parliament last week.

Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan will meet his Azerbaijan counterpart Ilham Aliyev as thousands of ethnic Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh began a mass exodus after Azerbaijan declared victory against the region's separatists last week.

In the ongoing war in Ukraine, Russia launched overnight missile strikes in the southern port of Odesa, the Ukrainian military said, causing damage to grain stores. At least one person has been killed and several others were injured in Russia's aerial strikes in Beryslav in the Kherson oblast.

TALKING POINTS

"I call upon all Americans, of every party and political persuasion, to face facts. President Biden's loose border policy has been a disaster. Under Biden, it's easier for migrants to enter illegally than legally. His policy is tantamount to 'narrow gate, no fence.'" Democratic presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy Jr. wrote on Joe Biden's border policies.

"Putin's chief trait is probably his outstanding hypocrisy. All people have some difference between what they have in store for themselves and what they have for others. But for a few of them, these two things have nothing in common at all. Putin is this kind of person. He is absolutely lenient towards himself. He believes that anything goes when he considers it necessary—there should be no rules, no limitations. He is quite archaic in this respect." Former speechwriter to Vladimir Putin Abbas Gallyamov detailed his experience working with the Russian president in a Newsweek essay.

What to Watch in the Day Ahead

The 19th edition of Asian Games kick start on Saturday at the Hangzhou Olympic Sports Center Stadium in China. The opening ceremony will begin at 8 a.m. ET. President Xi Jinping is set to attend alongside leaders of other nations that include Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, and Cambodian King Norodom Sihamoni.

Pope Francis will be in the southern French port city of Marseille, where he is expected to meet with French President Emmanuel Macron. Francis will attend the concluding session of the Mediterranean Meetings, a gathering of about 70 bishops, activists and representatives of various religions from the region.

Summer is reaching its end, and as fall begins there can be confusion over when clocks will "fall back" with the season change. Saturday marks the first day of fall, known as the autumnal equinox. That means September 23 will be the one day this year when day and night are approximately the same length across the world.

Las Vegas Raiders quarterback Jimmy Garoppolo hopes to bounce back from a rough outing in last week's beatdown by the Buffalo Bills when his squad hosts the Pittsburgh Steelers on Sunday Night Football. Both teams are 1-1 and oddsmakers believe it'll be a tight contest.

Film and television studios and Hollywood writers reached a tentative deal, the Writers Guild of America said, which is expected to end one of two strikes that have lasted months and cost the economy billions of dollars. The final agreement is being worked out and must be approved by the WGA.

A NASA space capsule carrying samples from 4.6 billion-year-old asteroid 'Bennu' has landed safely on Earth after a 7-year journey. It marks the first time NASA has returned an asteroid sample from space.

French President Emmanuel Macron announced 1,500

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Thats Life/Tony Bender

Name one thriving community without a newspaper

We sometimes get calls that start out accusatorially. "Why didn't I get my paper today!?" Pro tip: It helps to know who's calling. The pugnacious German approach is to yell first and shoot later. Last week, our papers got hung up a day in Bismarck (for the third time this year) so the phone started ringing at 10:30 a.m.

Our local post offices are excellent, but we send out thousands of papers each month and inevitably a few go MIA. Sometimes it's our mistake. Or the subscription's expired. Or an address changed. Sometimes, I swear, the subscription is cursed.

Sometimes we'll drop off a paper after work. It's funny, I started delivering "The Grit" as a kid, and I'm still delivering papers.

After an employee hangs up after having their competence impugned, I sometimes offer perspective: "Isn't that great that they want the paper that badly?" Conversely, the grocery store was out of smoked oysters last week, but I didn't want to fight anyone. I'm descendent from Germans and Russians, my ancestors spent their time invading or being invaded, yet I'm inexplicably a pacifist.

Even with the bumps, I love what I do.

We have 125 years of bound newspaper copies in our office, and regularly welcome visitors researching family history and even old sports records. When they find what they're looking for, I'm thrilled, disappointed when they don't. It's a reminder that we're recording history.

People research weather records, the minutes of local government to settle a legal question; they track expenditures, actions and proposed tax increases. Knowledge is power. Newspapers are an economic hub. They make and save YOU money.

Bloomberg News published results of a 2018 study showing that after becoming a "news desert," taxpayers, having lost their newspaper watchdog, paid 6.4% more for bonds necessary for infrastructure. Ashley alone recently signed on for \$20 million in projects.

Bloomberg explained, "When local newspapers shut their doors, communities lose out. People and their stories can't find coverage. Politicos take liberties when it's nobody's job to hold them accountable. What the public doesn't know winds up hurting them. The city feels poorer, politically and culturally."

Family achievements may appear online, but invariably they submit it to us. Somehow, it's not official until it's recorded in the newspaper. If it's not in the paper, it's just not that important.

Sadly, twelve North Dakota communities no longer have that option. Since April, we've lost 12 newspapers. Twelve core communities and neighboring towns have lost the glue that bind them together. Another newspaper may pick up some of the slack, but it's never the same. There were once 300 newspapers in North Dakota. Today, about 75.

The big game? No photos, no story. The obituaries? The history of a beloved city father? Evaporated. The fundraiser? Anniversaries? Church events? Posters will have to do.

Some attrition is natural. Like the communities that disappeared when railroads no longer needed a station every 10 miles, location is a major factor. When we purchased the Wishek Star and Ashley Tribune 25 years ago, the fact that the papers were 100 miles away from any major city meant that merchants had a good chance to thrive. For us, there was no major threat from a "shopper." Shoppers devour advertising, leaving the work and expense of reporting to newspapers. I resent them.

Fifteen years ago, the USPS "reorganized" and it became almost impossible to get a paper delivered to Arizona, California, or the East Coast. Newspapers lost many rightfully frustrated subscribers. Delivery issues continue with an understaffed postal service.

We've invested in online editions to better serve our distant readers and an iPhone generation. We gift graduates with online subscriptions to grow our base. It doesn't have to be in print—newspapers just need to keep doing what they've always done, remain the authoritative news hub of the community.

Some newspapers haven't kept up with the cost of doing business and an evolving environment. Small towns are getting smaller. Online sites decimated classifieds. Now, after COVID and inflation—higher labor, printing and mailing costs—stress has increased.

No publisher wants to be the one who goes down with the ship. Most are mindful of the obligation to maintain a strong business to pass on when the time comes. The community has a crucial role, too, and it's in their self interest as well.

Subscribe. Advertise. Be informed. It's an investment in your community, in democracy. Use it or lose it. Name one thriving community without a newspaper.

“Exercise for healthier aging”

We all know that exercise is great for our overall health. Exercise is important for our cardiovascular health of course, which is why the American Heart Association recommends 150 minutes of moderate intensity exercise every week. No less importantly, and especially as we get older, another huge benefit of exercise is in fall and injury prevention.

Starting an exercise routine, especially when starting from scratch, can be daunting. The simplest way to get started is to start a timed walking routine. Start with 15 minutes per day. If you can't walk outdoors or on a treadmill, find a long hallway or a large indoor space like a store or mall and just walk. If you are consistent, you will find that week by week you will be able to increase your time ideally up to 30 minutes a day or more. If you have a friend or family member who shares the same goal, a walking partner will increase your odds of success.

If you have a condition or disability that keeps you from walking, alternatives abound. Some people are much more able to use a stationary bike, or exercise in a pool. Chair exercise or upper body only routines can be found online; use the same principles, starting at 15 minutes and increasing the time gradually.

Already got walking or your alternative down? You can increase the intensity by exercising more briskly or adding some hills or resistance to your routine. And better yet, you can add some strength training to maintain and build muscle. No fancy equipment needed – start with some squats from a sturdy chair; try a 30 second plank. Adding some variety to your routine is great to keep things interesting and reduce any risk of overuse injury.

There are some great ways to work on exercise in a group if your community has access. Many communities have free group chair exercise or walking groups that you can try out. If able, try a yoga, pilates, or tai chi class. That pesky friend who keeps inviting you to play pickle ball – say “why not” and give it a go! Probably the most important thing to help you be consistent with exercise is to find activities that you actually enjoy doing, so don't be afraid to try something new!

Our exercise abilities and goals might change as we get older, but the benefits of moving our bodies are present at all ages. So get out there and move! You'll be glad you did.



Kelly Evans-Hullinger, M.D. is part of The Prairie Doc® team of physicians and currently practices internal medicine in Brookings, South Dakota. Follow The Prairie Doc® at www.prairiedoc.org and on Facebook featuring On Call with the Prairie Doc® a medical Q&A show providing health information based on science, built on trust, broadcast on SDPB and streaming live on Facebook most Thursdays at 7 p.m. central.

Weekly Vikings Recap - Vikings vs. Chargers

By Jack & Duane Kolsrud

The Vikings' ship is precariously perched upon a crumbling ledge that overlooks an abysmal season – and it's only week 3.

Coming into this game, both the Minnesota Vikings and the Los Angeles Chargers were seeking their first win of the season. The Vikings were at home, and had a great chance to get in the win column. Unfortunately, it was the same old story for the Vikings as the team gave up costly turnovers when it mattered the most. The question now for fans is whether to root for the Vikings to win, or root for a high draft pick in the quarterback-loaded 2024 NFL draft.

The game was a pass-heavy performance as both teams' quarterbacks, Justin Herbert and Kirk Cousins, combined for a total of 97 combined passes thrown Sunday. Despite that, the best throw of the game did not come from either Herbert or Cousins but rather from Chargers' wide receiver, Keenan Allen. Allen, who had a career performance with 18 catches and 215 receiving yards, also threw his first career touchdown pass on a 49-yard throw to a wide-open Mike Williams in the third quarter.

The Vikings, who were so situationally proficient last season, seem to have lost the ability to perform well in the key moments of games. At the end of the first half with the score tied 7-7, the Vikings again found themselves with the ball in their opponent's territory with a chance to take the lead into halftime. For the third straight week in a row, the Vikings turned the ball over near the goal line, this time on an Alexander Mattison fumble. However, luckily for the Vikings, Mattison's forward progress was ruled as stopped and the Vikings got the ball back. Even though the Vikings technically did not turn the ball over on that play, it is still becoming a glaring problem that this team cannot protect the ball at the end of the first half.

Surprisingly, the run defense for the Vikings was not the problem today as they managed to hold the Chargers to only 30 yards rushing. Granted, the Chargers were without their best running back in Austin Ekeler, but it was a nice performance from them in that aspect of the game. However, the pass defense was not sharp in any aspect today. Not only did they give up 454 yards passing to Justin Herbert and Keenan Allen, but they also managed to turn likely interceptions into Chargers' touchdowns thanks to an Akayleb Evans tipped pass into the hands of Chargers' wide receiver, Josh Palmer. Evans, who has had a solid year so far as one of the Vikings' starting cornerbacks, had what would have been an easy interception near the endzone that would have given the Vikings the ball back with a 24-21 lead and a chance to milk the clock for an eventual victory. However, the football gods thought otherwise as the ball hit off the face of Evans and into the hands of Palmer for a Chargers' touchdown and a 28-24 lead.

With 8:05 left in the fourth quarter, the Vikings managed to drive down the field to set up 1st and goal at the Chargers' three-yard line. After two failed rushing attempts and an incomplete pass, the Vikings found themselves with 4th and goal and only needing two yards to score. Unfortunately, the Vikings could not convert as Cousins threw an incomplete pass to Justin Jefferson short of the endzone.

However, the game was not over as the Vikings would find a way to stop the Chargers on a fourth down attempt at the Chargers' 24-yard line. With 1:47 remaining and no timeouts, the Vikings only needed 24 yards to score a touchdown and win this game. Instead, the team imploded. With 41 seconds left in the game and no timeouts, the Vikings picked up a first down and then immediately forgot how to manage the game clock. Instead of spiking the ball and stopping the clock, they took a lackadaisical approach getting a play call in, then had to rush to the line of scrimmage. The rushed play turned into a sloppy play and ended with Cousins throwing an interception. Game over.

Chargers 28 - Vikings 24

Next week, the Vikings will head to Carolina to face the Panthers. It will be interesting to see if Bryce Young will play in that game as he missed the Panthers' week 3 matchup against the Seattle Seahawks with an injury. The Panthers will be the easiest test so far for the Vikings and a perfect opportunity to get back in the win column.

Japan Leads in Global Innovation

The numbers of science papers published is not alone a full indication of the ability of a society to make advancements in technology or innovate. For instance, Japan is by far the leader in hybrid car technology while it is not outstanding in the basic pure research behind it. There are two international agencies that measure this ability to apply science. And they do it by research regions, not by countries.

The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) ranks clusters of science and research around the world based on numbers of researchers, papers published and patents filed. Their cluster ranking just released identifies the most science and technology intensive global clusters from 2000 through 2022.

And who were the winners? "Tokyo–Yokohama (Japan) is the top-performing cluster, followed by Shenzhen–Hong Kong–Guangzhou (China and Hong Kong), Beijing (China), Seoul (Republic of Korea) and San Jose–San Francisco (United States). This WIPO "Global Innovation Index (GII) annually detects the world's largest top 100 science and technology (S&T) clusters—that is, the local geographical regions around the world with the highest density of inventors and scientific authors.

The WIPO uses the number of patents filed under the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT), which offers patent protection for over 150 countries. The Shenzhen-Hong Kong-Guangzhou cluster accounted for 8.2% of global PCT applications in 2022, but only 1.9% of science publications. Beijing held the top world position in science papers at 3.7%. The first place Tokyo-Yokohama cluster produced nearly 11% of PCT applications but just 1.6% of science publications.

WIPO calculates the research/papers/patents to locate the top one hundred sites producing intellectual property. Of the top 100, "for the first time, China hosts as many clusters as the United States, with 21 each. Germany follows, with 10 clusters in the top 100, with Cologne and Munich as the two largest clusters." Japan has five clusters in the top 100, with first place Tokyo–Yokohama and Osaka–Kobe–Kyoto being its sole representative in the top 10 clusters overall.

However, a country with a large population has an advantage in producing innovation, so since 2020, the WIPO also calculates a Science & Technology Intensity Ranking by dividing the sum of their patent and scientific publication shares by their population. On this ranking, Cambridge in the U.K. and Eindhoven in the Netherlands/Belgium are the most S&T-intensive clusters, followed by Daejeon (S. Korea), San Jose–San Francisco (U.S.), Oxford (U.K.), Lund–Malmö, Stockholm and Göteborg (Sweden) and San Jose–San Francisco (U.S.).

WIPO is not the only agency tracking innovation centers. Clarivate PLC also tracks origins of innovation, identifying the 50 global research organizations most often cited by the Top 100 Global Innovators in 2023 "...whose intellect underpins the design of engineered solutions." These fields include electronics and computing equipment (26 companies), chemicals and materials sector (11), semiconductors (11) and automotive (10).

Clarivate identifies 12 countries, with 58 organizations in Asia, an increase of four compared to 2022. Japan again is first with 38 organizations, followed by Taiwan (11), South Korea (5), and mainland China (4). Beyond Asia, the United States has 19 and Germany and France both have seven.

Generally, inventors and technicians working in Japan are Japanese, in Germany are German, etc. But foreign-born students, professors and independent inventors generate a disproportionate share of the U.S. patents. They also make U.S.-born collaborators more productive.

The U.S. is nowhere near "Number One" in technological innovation. And this data is part of many indicators of four decades of inadequate K–12 science education in the United States.

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JIM CAVIEZEL



S O U N D O F

FREEDOM

A FILM BY ALEJANDRO MONTEVERDE

BASED ON THE INCREDIBLE TRUE STORY

ANGEL STUDIOS PRESENTS A SANTA FE FILMS PRODUCTION AN EDUARDO VERÁSTEGUI PRODUCTION "SOUND OF FREEDOM" JIM CAVIEZEL WITH MIRA SORVINO AND BILL CAMP
CASTING BY DEANNA BRIGIDI, CSA MUSIC BY JAVIER NAVARRETE EDITED BY F. BRIAN SCOFIELD DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY GORKA GÓMEZ ANDRÉU AEC PRODUCED BY EDUARDO VERÁSTEGUI
EXECUTIVE PRODUCED BY JAIME HERNÁNDEZ WRITTEN BY ROD BARR & ALEJANDRO MONTEVERDE DIRECTED BY ALEJANDRO MONTEVERDE angel.com/freedom

ANGEL
STUDIOS

Sunday, Oct. 1 - 6:30 p.m.
C & MA Church, 706 N. Main St., Groton
Tickets are \$5 at the door for Teens and Adults
A children's movie/activity will be provided
downstairs for ages 12 and under

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Groton Community Transit

P.O. Box 693
205 E. 2nd Ave.
Groton, SD 57445

Dear Groton family,

Thank you, Thank you, for your loyalty and support through all of these years! We appreciate everyone of you!!

Although we have tried our best to keep the expenses low, our operating costs have increased significantly due to global factors in recent times. After carefully reviewing the finances, we have made a tough decision of increasing our transportation prices.

The change will take effect on Oct. 1, 2023 our rides within the town of Groton will be \$2 per ride, \$4 roundtrip. And, medical rides to Aberdeen from Groton will be \$20 roundtrip. Until then, you can take benefit of the old prices. We will honor old prices till Sept. 30, 2023!

We also offer a discounted pass for \$30 which includes 22 one way rides within Groton area!

We are a non-profit transportation service for the needs of all age groups of people!

As always, thank you for your loyalty and we thank you for your understanding and continued support!

Sincerely,

Dam Hansen & Eugenia Strom

Groton Transit

Steve Smith, Sherry Koehler, Topper Tostad, Dick Kolker

EARTHTALK ™

Dear EarthTalk: Why do environmentalists hate fracking so much? -- Millie C., Pittsburgh, PA

Fracking, short for hydraulic fracturing, is a method of extracting natural gas. It was invented in the 1940s, but gained popularity in the past two decades, particularly in the U.S. This is because most conventional natural gas reservoirs that can be extracted using traditional methods have been depleted. In 2001, 25 percent of U.S. natural gas was extracted via fracking. By 2022, this grew to almost 80 percent.

Let's delve into the fracking process. Initially, a deep shaft is drilled into the ground, typically hundreds of meters, until it reaches shale rock formations where natural gas and petroleum are trapped in small pockets. Then, a horizontal hole is created throughout the shale. In an typical fracking operation, some four million gallons of fracking fluid—freshwater, sand and numerous chemicals—is driven through the hole using high-pressure pumps to fracture the rock and release the natural gas. After the natural gas is collected, the used fracking fluid, known as flowback, is removed and stored in an underground well.

Flowback fluid is extremely poisonous. It consists of hundreds of chemicals, including lubricants, acids and disinfectants, as well as numerous toxins and carcinogens, such as benzene, radium and heavy metals. The water used cannot be recycled, exacerbating water scarcity. The true toxicity remains unknown due to drilling regulations allowing the concealment of chemicals as Confidential Business Information.

Nonetheless, the impacts are evident. Livestock and pets die due to wastewater exposure; marine wildlife suffer when the fluid enters water bodies. A series of ProPublica reports showed a link between fracking and drinking water contamination in Pennsylvania, Colorado, Ohio and Wyoming. An experiment in West Virginia revealed severe harm to vegetation, killing most plants and half the trees in the tested area.

Fracking emissions, such as methane, nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxide and particulate matter, are linked to severe health issues like nausea, migraines, birth defects, low birth weights and weight gain. A study in Yale's Environmental Health Perspectives reported that young Pennsylvania children (ages two to seven) residing near fracking sites faced a two to threefold higher risk of being diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia compared to those living farther away.

Fracking is much more polluting than conventional drilling, which does not require the use of fluids to crack rock layers. "As much as eight percent of the methane in shale gas leaks into the air during the lifetime of a hydraulic shale gas well—up to twice what escapes from conventional gas production," Robert Howarth of Cornell University estimated. To put this into perspective, methane exhibits a greenhouse gas potency 105 times greater than that of carbon dioxide.

Let's hope scientists find new ways of making renewable energy more accessible so society can begin moving away from natural gas and other fossil fuels.



Environmentalists don't like fracking because it can pollute groundwater and perpetuates our addiction to fossil fuels. Credit: Daniel Foster, FlickrCC.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Q&A: Why Brendan Johnson chose courtrooms over politics

Ex-senator's son sees more impact as litigator and advocate

BY: JOHN HULT - SEPTEMBER 24, 2023 7:00 AM

Sioux Falls lawyer Brendan Johnson has a last name that carries a lot of weight in South Dakota political circles.

His father, Tim Johnson, was the last Democrat to serve in any statewide elected office from the now-solidly red state. The elder Johnson, who served in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1987 to 1997 and the Senate from 1997 to 2015, opted against another reelection bid about a decade ago.

When his father left office, the younger Johnson was serving as U.S. attorney for the District of South Dakota, a politically appointed role that had him overseeing all federal prosecutions in the state. Many of the state's Democrats saw Brendan Johnson as a political heir apparent.

But it was not to be.

Upon his departure from the U.S. Attorney's Office in 2015, Johnson took a position with Robins Kaplan, one of the top 200 law firms in the U.S. by revenue. Since then, the Vermillion native has stayed in the spotlight for work that sometimes mirrors the Democratic political ideals that characterized his father's service.

Brendan Johnson defended the voter-backed constitutional amendment legalizing recreational marijuana before the South Dakota Supreme Court. He lost that battle, but won plenty of others, including a case in which he took on the Indian Health Service on behalf of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe. More recently, he filed a lawsuit against the state of South Dakota that alleges the Department of Health violated the civil rights of The Transformation Project by canceling a state contract with the group, which advocates for transgender people.

This month, Johnson, who's 48 years old, was named head of his firm's business litigation group. In a Q&A with South Dakota Searchlight, Johnson explains why the life he's chosen is more fulfilling than the one so many of the state's Democrats wanted for him.

(Editor's note: This conversation has been edited for length and clarity)

First off, let me ask about Robins Kaplan, because I think to the average non-lawyer, there's little daylight between Robins Kaplan and Davenport Evans or Lynn Jackson (Sioux Falls law firms).

You bet. We have offices in New York, L.A., Silicon Valley, Boston, Minneapolis, which is the mothership, and then South Dakota and North Dakota. Nationally, we have about 200 attorneys. What makes us a little unique in the market is that our focus is really on litigation, as opposed to being a full service law firm for everyone.

So taking cases to a judge, taking cases to trial, that's what the bread and butter is there?

Yeah, exactly. For some of our biggest cases, we had the largest jury verdict in the history of Minnesota against BMO, the bank. That one, with pre- and post-judgment interest, is valued at over \$1.1 billion. We also represented the state of Minnesota against (e-cigarette maker) Juul, which settled after several weeks of trial. So we do a lot of real high-profile litigation.



Brendan Johnson, head of the business litigation group for Robins Kaplan and former U.S. attorney for South Dakota.

(Courtesy of Robins Kaplan)

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Can you tell me a little bit about this new role as chair of the National Business Litigation Group? What does that entail?

We have, at any given time, anywhere from 70 to 100 of our attorneys doing commercial litigation. So in the new role, I'll be leading that group.

What can you tell me about cases like The Transformation Project? Why do you or your firm take on cases like that, where there's no assurance of a payback, or in the case of The Transformation Project where you know that there won't be?

Let me just start off with a caveat. When we do civil rights cases like The Transformation Project, if we are successful, we petition the court for attorney fees. So there is a possibility that we could recover costs. Now, that being said, cases like The Transformation Project, the civil rights work that we're really passionate about, tends not to be our most profitable work.

Part of the reason it's important to the firm is that we were started 85 years ago by two Jewish lawyers in the Twin Cities. And at the time, none of the big law firms would hire them because they were Jewish. So what has always been in the firm's DNA is a commitment to civil rights and equal opportunity.

For me, when I feel like somebody is being bullied, when I feel like civil rights are being violated, those are cases that become a priority, even if they're not potentially lucrative. We have to say no all the time to cases that I would love to take, but we just can't. But we, I think, do more than our fair share when it comes to taking those cases.

Do you think South Dakota has enough lawyers or enough law firms willing to take on those sorts of risky contingency or pro bono cases?

Absolutely not. One hundred percent the answer is no. There is so much need in our state for civil rights work and folks who are willing to do this when the payday is questionable, or it's not there. I really hope that we see more lawyers in the next generation coming up, who feel a responsibility to get involved in these cases, because there is a dramatic need.

What is your sales pitch to a young lawyer, maybe somebody who just graduated from the law school at the University of South Dakota and passed the bar. Why would you want to pursue work in civil rights cases?

It gives meaning to your practice. I would not want to be a lawyer who comes to the office every day and doesn't like what I do. I get to walk down the hall and honestly say to my colleagues almost every day, "Do you realize how lucky we are, that we love coming to work every day?" It's because we get to fight in these battles.

A lot of people who aren't you foresaw a different career path for you, particularly after your stint as U.S. attorney. What was it that made you decide to go this way and not that? What do you feel you've been able to accomplish in your current role that you might not have in the political arena?

The most honest way to answer that question is first with the political realities. I'll tell you a story, and this is absolutely true. When my father first announced that he wasn't going to run again, people approached me and they said, "You need to run for political office in South Dakota." And I really considered it at the time. I remember after Senator Rounds won his race decisively (in 2014). I said to my son, who's now a senior in high school, "I think my ceiling would have been 42%." And my son, who loves politics and studies this stuff closely, said, "Dad, I've got to say: I think your ceiling is actually closer to 30%." He's right. The reality is there's not a statewide office I could run for in South Dakota and would win.

The second part of it, though, even if politics were different in South Dakota, is that I love what I'm doing. With my dad, there were a lot of great things that he was doing. There's also a lot of that stuff that, at this age, I would have no interest in doing — going to different places and shaking hands with strangers. I wouldn't have that fire in my belly for that. But also, when I look at politics today, our country is so polarized that even if you get elected, what are you actually going to do? And in my job now, if we're successful for our clients, we're going to be able to make a difference in their lives.

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When you look back, do you think, 'Gosh, I wish you would have tried that?' Is there any fire that's still there?

Zero. I have zero ambition to ever go into politics. That train has passed. And I love what I'm doing. Much more now, I think, than I would enjoy politics, for the reasons that we've discussed.

Where do you see the Democratic Party headed in South Dakota?

Part of what I see as key for the future in South Dakota is continuing to invest in some of these ballot initiatives. That's an opportunity for Democrats like myself to work together on issues with Republicans who are willing to work with us to try to get things done. Whether it's been Medicaid expansion, medical marijuana, the reality is, we've been able to accomplish more than most politicians have over the course of the last few years.

Your work at Robins Kaplan has intersected with your passion for Native American issues. What role does private litigation play in that? What can legal action offer that maybe the political process can't?

We successfully sued the Indian Health Service in a pro bono case on behalf of the Rosebud Indian Reservation, and the courts declared that Congress was violating its treaty responsibilities to provide adequate health care on the reservation. So that gives the tribes an opportunity to go to Washington to talk to the congressional delegation, to talk to other members of Congress, and to talk about how fully funding health care on the reservation is not only the right thing to do morally, but also the right thing to do under the law.

The second example that I would give is, we represent a number of tribes in South Dakota and across the country in our lawsuit against the opioid manufacturers and distributors. We successfully settled those cases. And for some of the larger reservations that we represented, including Pine Ridge and Rosebud, that's going to mean millions of dollars going to those tribes for new substance abuse prevention programs.

What's one thing you would tell folks about Indian Country?

People don't understand just how many good, decent people there are on the reservations fighting to improve their communities on a daily basis. When I would be going out to one of the reservations as U.S. attorney, the most common question people would ask me was, "Do you bring security with you?" And the answer was "hell no." I get treated exceptionally well on the reservations in South Dakota. The people there are just such good and decent people. I worry that sometimes that gets lost.

You spent the Obama years as U.S. attorney for the District of South Dakota. What are you proudest of during that time?

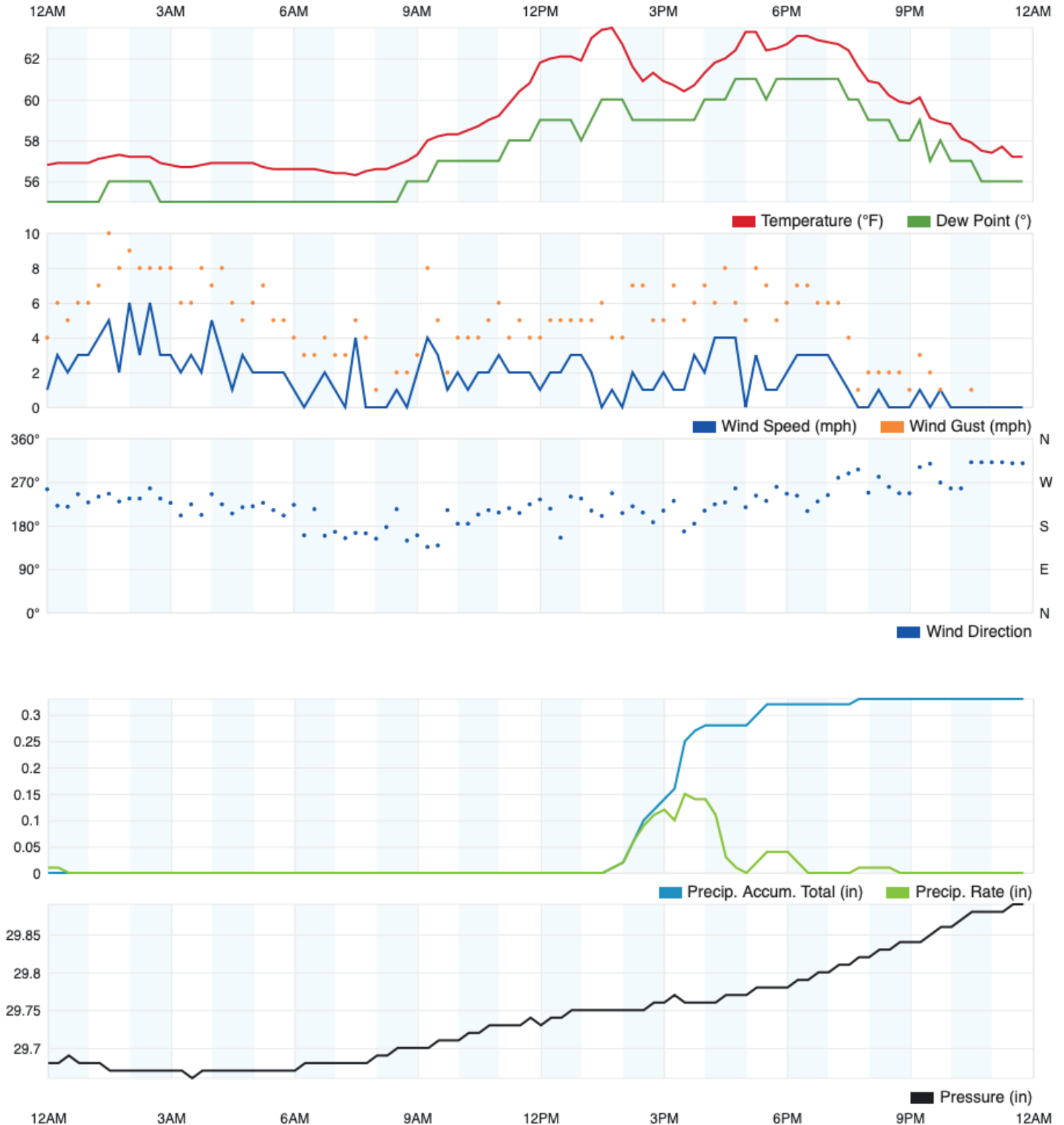
What I'm proudest of is two things. One, our work in Indian Country and the difference we made with the Department of Justice. We had an event where we brought out all of these national Department of Justice leaders to Pine Ridge. Looking back, some of the names people would recognize that came on that trip: (former Attorneys General) Eric Holder and Loretta Lynch, (former Deputy Attorney General) Sally Yates. And we were able to get a lot more resources from DOJ to Indian Country at that time. So I'm really proud of that. I'm also really proud that we were one of the first offices to get some of the largest convictions in the history of the country when it came to human trafficking.

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

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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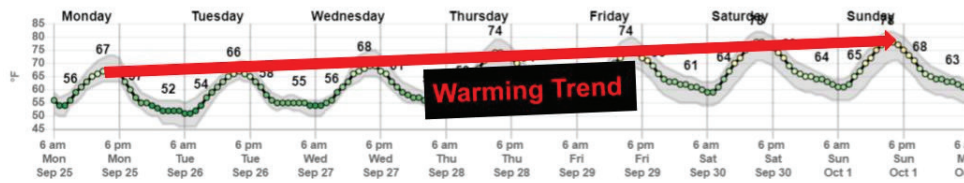
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Today	Tonight	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday
Patched Fog then Slight Chance Showers	Mostly Cloudy then Patchy Fog	Patched Fog then Partly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny
High: 66 °F	Low: 53 °F	High: 67 °F	Low: 51 °F	High: 70 °F	Low: 54 °F	High: 75 °F



Cooler Than Normal Temperatures Until Thursday

Regional Temperature Forecast



Maximum Temperature Forecast

	9/25 Mon	9/26 Tue	9/27 Wed	9/28 Thu	9/29 Fri	9/30 Sat	10/1 Sun
Aberdeen	67	68	70	76	75	80	80
Britton	65	67	69	74	74	78	78
Brookings	66	66	69	75	80	83	83
Chamberlain	73	69	73	80	82	85	84
Clark	65	65	68	74	76	80	80
Eagle Butte	70	67	73	74	73	77	76
Ellendale	65	66	68	73	72	76	76
Eureka	66	65	68	73	72	76	76
Gettysburg	67	66	71	75	74	79	78
Huron	69	69	73	79	80	85	84
Kennebec	72	69	74	80	79	83	83
McIntosh	68	65	70	70	69	72	72
Milbank	66	66	68	75	76	82	83
Miller	68	66	70	77	76	82	80
Mobridge	69	68	73	75	74	78	78
Murdo	73	70	77	78	78	79	82
Pierre	73	71	77	80	80	81	80
Redfield	68	68	70	77	77	82	81
Sisseton	64	66	67	74	74	80	81
Watertown	65	65	69	75	77	82	82
Webster	63	64	66	72	73	77	78
Wheaton	64	68	68	73	73	80	81

*Table values in °F

Monday



15-25% chance of showers

Tuesday



Dry

Wednesday



Dry

Rain chances are slowly evaporating out of the forecast, with dry conditions expected Tuesday through Thursday. Temperatures are also expected to transition from a little bit below normal today through Wednesday to above normal Thursday through Sunday.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 64 °F at 5:05 PM

Low Temp: 56 °F at 6:59 AM

Wind: 10 mph at 1:27 AM

Precip: : 0.33

Day length: 12 hours, 04 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 95 in 1938

Record Low: 19 in 1926

Average High: 71

Average Low: 43

Average Precip in Sept.: 1.66

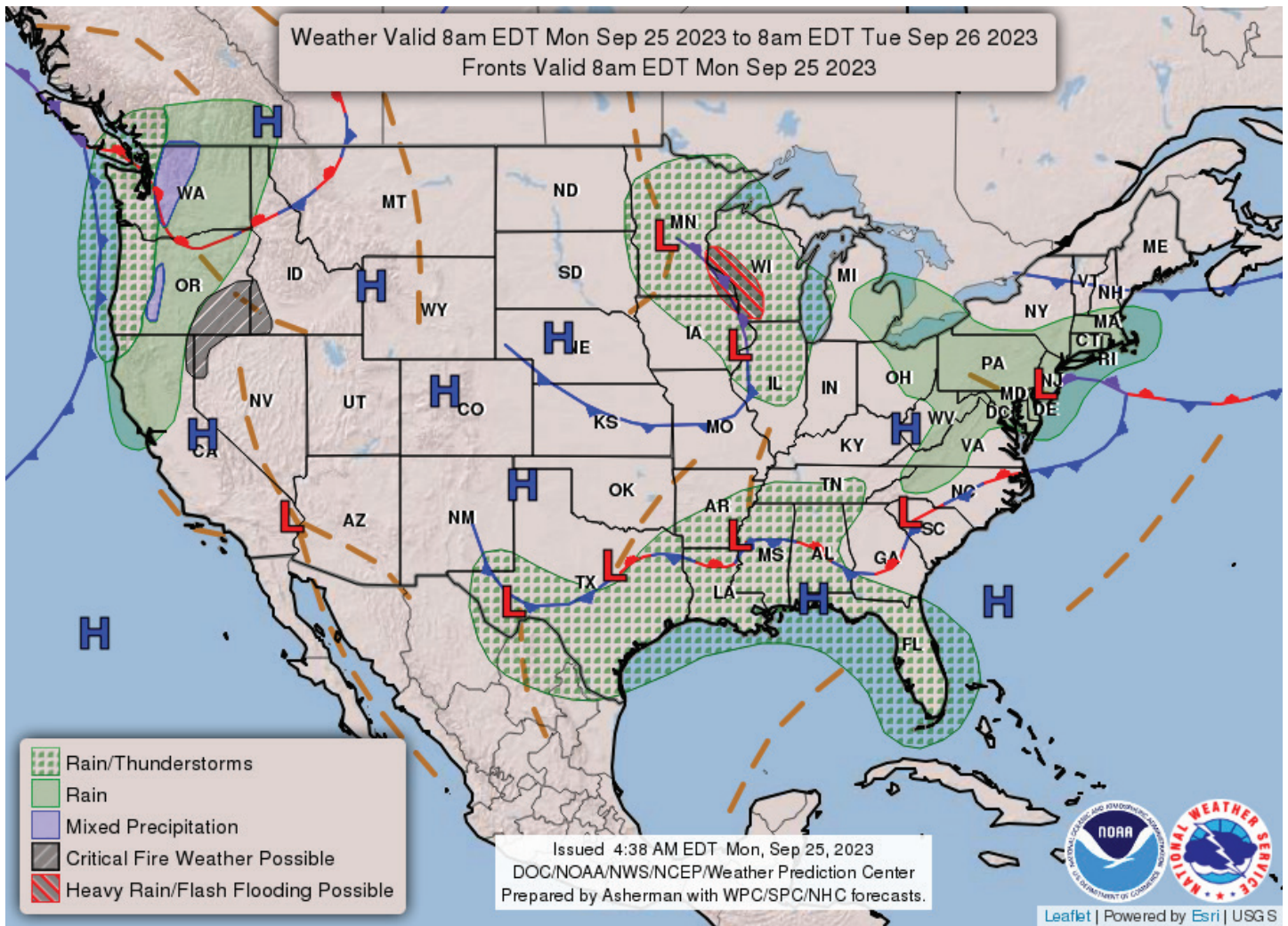
Precip to date in Sept.: 2.78

Average Precip to date: 18.00

Precip Year to Date: 21.37

Sunset Tonight: 7:26:22 PM

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:22:58 AM



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Today in Weather History

September 25, 1981: A late September tornado touched down briefly 14 miles west of Pierre during the early evening hours with no damage occurring.

September 25, 1996: An early fall storm over the Black Hills of northeast Wyoming and western South Dakota re-acquainted area residents with their winter driving techniques. Snow totals ranged from 4 to 8 inches. U.S. Highway 385, south of Deadwood South Dakota, was temporarily closed after a semi-truck jack-knifed on Strawberry Hill. Numerous minor accidents were reported in the Black Hills due to slick roads. Heavy wet snow closed the Needles Highway and Iron Mountain Road in the central/southern Black Hills until snowplows could clear the streets.

1848: The Great Gale of 1848 was the most severe hurricane to affect Tampa Bay, Florida and is one of two major hurricanes to make landfall in the area. This storm produced the highest storm tide ever experienced in Tampa Bay when the water rose 15 feet in six to eight hours.

1939 - A west coast hurricane moved onshore south of Los Angeles bringing unprecedented rains along the southern coast of California. Nearly five and a half inches of rain drenched Los Angeles during a 24 hour period. The hurricane caused two million dollars damage, mostly to structures along the coast and to crops, and claimed 45 lives at sea. "El Cordonazo" produced 5.66 inches of rain at Los Angeles and 11.6 inches of rain at Mount Wilson, both records for the month of September. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1942: From September 24th through the 26th, 1942, an early-season winter storm moved through the Northern Plains, Upper Mississippi River Valley, and Great Lakes, dropping measurable snow as it went. In many places across Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin, and northern Illinois, this was their earliest measurable snow on record.

1987 - Hurricane Emily crossed the island of Bermuda during the early morning. Emily, moving northeast at 45 mph, produced wind gusts to 115 mph at Kindley Field. The thirty-five million dollars damage inflicted by Emily made it the worst hurricane to strike Bermuda since 1948. Parts of Michigan and Wisconsin experienced their first freeze of the autumn. Snow and sleet were reported in the Sheffield and Sutton areas of northeastern Vermont at midday. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Low pressure off the Northern Pacific Coast brought rain and gale force winds to the coast of Washington State. Fair weather prevailed across most of the rest of the nation. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Twenty-three cities in the south central U.S. reported record low temperatures for the date, including Topeka KS with a reading of 33 degrees, and Binghamton NY with a low of 25 degrees. Showers and thunderstorms in the southeastern U.S. drenched Atlanta GA with 4.87 inches of rain, their sixth highest total of record for any given day. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1998: Four hurricanes were spinning simultaneously in the Atlantic basin: Georges, Ivan, Jeanne, and Karl. That was the first time this had happened since 1893.

2015: Fairbanks, Alaska received 4–9 inches of snow. Another storm on September 27-30 produced 14.2 inches, including 11.2 inches on the 29th. September 2015 would end up being Fairbanks's second snowiest September on record with 20.9 inches.

2015: An EF2 tornado tracked nearly seven miles across Johns Island in South Carolina.

2017: A large waterspout was seen over the Ionian Sea, off the coast of Gallipoli, Italy.

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Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

MAKE YOUR PLANS LARGE!

One of my most prized possessions is my mother's Bible. Its cover is well worn - the brown leather comes through the black dye. The pages are turned up at the corners and show wrinkles from tear stains. Verses are underlined and endless notes in the margins show her thoughts and insights about her insights. There are dates next to many promises of God where she claimed them on behalf of her husband and children, missionaries and friends.

But there is one verse that sums up her undying faith in God: Ephesians 3:20. In the column next to that verse, she wrote: "If God's your partner, make your plans large!"

Why would she write those words?

Ephesians 3:20 says, "God is able to do." Certainly, people can "do" too. But the verse continues...

"God is able to do abundantly." People are limited and often unable to do what needs to be done without including God in the equation.

"God is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask." Is that it, or what more, if anything, is there for us to ask, Paul? Is there anything beyond exceedingly and abundantly?

Yes! "God is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we can ask or think!"

We often limit our asking and thinking because we limit the power and might and Sovereignty of God. No wonder she wrote, "If God's your partner, make your plans large."

Prayer: How unfortunate, Father, that we limit You when we limit what we believe You can do for us and through us. Increase our faith to match Your power. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. Ephesians 3:20 Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. Ephesians 3:20



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

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2023 Community Events

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

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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:

09.22.23

10 13 14 57 66 3

MegaPlier: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$230,000,000

NEXT 1 Days 17 Hrs 38

DRAW: Mins 2 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:

09.23.23

15 32 34 39 50 10

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$2,300,000

NEXT 16 Hrs 53 Mins 2

DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:

09.24.23

6 25 26 28 31 17

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT 17 Hrs 8 Mins 2

DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:

09.23.23

2 5 9 14 23

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$20,000

NEXT 2 Days 17 Hrs 8

DRAW: Mins 2 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:

09.23.23

14 16 26 41 57 24

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT 17 Hrs 37 Mins 3

DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:

09.23.23

1 12 20 33 66 21

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$785,000,000

NEXT 17 Hrs 37 Mins 3

DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the Associated Press

Writers Guild and Hollywood studios reach tentative agreement to end strike. No deal yet for actors

By ANDREW DALTON AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Union leaders and Hollywood studios reached a tentative agreement Sunday to end a historic screenwriters strike after nearly five months, though no deal is yet in the works for striking actors.

The Writers Guild of America announced the deal in a joint statement with the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers, the group that represents studios, streaming services and production companies in negotiations.

“WGA has reached a tentative agreement with the AMPTP,” the guild said in an email to members. “This was made possible by the enduring solidarity of WGA members and extraordinary support of our union siblings who joined us on the picket lines for over 146 days.”

The three-year contract agreement — settled on after five marathon days of renewed talks by WGA and AMPTP negotiators that was joined at times by studio executives — must be approved by the guild’s board and members before the strike officially ends.

In a longer message from the guild shared by members on social media, the writers were told the strike is not over and no one was to return to work until hearing otherwise, but picketing is to be suspended immediately.

The terms of the deal were not immediately announced. The tentative deal to end the last writers strike, in 2008, was approved by more than 90% of members.

The agreement comes just five days before the strike would’ve become the longest in the guild’s history, and the longest Hollywood strike more than 70 years.

As a result of the agreement, nightly network shows including NBC’s “The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon” and ABC’s “Jimmy Kimmel Live!” could return to the air within days.

But as writers prepare to potentially crack open their laptops again, it’s far from back to business as usual in Hollywood, as talks have not yet resumed between studios and the Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists. Crew members left with no work by the stoppage will remain unemployed for now.

“SAG-AFTRA congratulates the WGA on reaching a tentative agreement with the AMPTP after 146 days of incredible strength, resiliency and solidarity on the picket lines,” the actors union said in a statement. “While we look forward to reviewing the WGA and AMPTP’s tentative agreement, we remain committed to achieving the necessary terms for our members.”

The statement said the guild continues “to urge the studio and streamer CEOs and the AMPTP to return to the table and make the fair deal that our members deserve and demand.”

The proposed solution to the writers strike came after talks resumed on Wednesday for the first time in a month. Chief executives including Bob Iger of Disney, Ted Sarandos of Netflix, David Zaslav of Warner Bros. Discovery and Donna Langley of NBCUniversal reportedly took part in the negotiations directly.

It was reached without the intervention of federal mediators or other government officials, which had been necessary in previous strikes.

Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass issued a statement congratulating the two sides on the deal and said she is hopeful the same can happen soon with actors.

California Gov. Gavin Newsom did the same, saying writers “went on strike over existential threats to their careers and livelihoods — expressing real concerns over the stress and anxiety workers are feeling. I am grateful that the two sides have come together.”

About 11,500 members of the Writers Guild of America walked off the job May 2 over issues of pay, the size of writing staffs on shows and the use of artificial intelligence in the creation of scripts. Actors,

who joined the writers on strike in July, have their own issues but there have been no discussions about resuming negotiations with their union yet.

The writers strike immediately sent late-night talk shows and "Saturday Night Live" into hiatus, and has since sent dozens of scripted shows and other productions into limbo, including forthcoming seasons of Netflix's "Stranger Things," HBO's "The Last of Us," and ABC's "Abbot Elementary," and films including "Deadpool 3" and "Superman: Legacy." The Emmy Awards were also pushed from September to January.

More recently, writers had been targeting talk shows that were working around strike rules to return to air, including "The Drew Barrymore Show," "Real Time With Bill Maher" and "The Talk." All reversed course in the face of picketing and pressure, and are likely to quickly return now.

The combined strikes made for a pivotal moment in Hollywood as creative labor faced off against executives in a business transformed and torn by technology, from the seismic shift to streaming in recent years to the potentially paradigm-shifting emergence of AI in the years to come.

Screenwriters had traditionally gone on strike more than any other segment of the industry, but had enjoyed a relatively long stretch of labor peace until spring negotiations for a new contract fell apart. The walkout was their first since 2007 and their longest since 1988.

On July 14, more than two months into the strike, the writers got a dose of solidarity and star power — along with a whole lot of new picketing partners — when they were joined by 65,000 striking film and television actors.

It was the first time the two groups had been on strike together since 1960. In that walkout, the writers strike started first and ended second. This time, studios opted to deal with the writers first.

The AMPTP first reached out to suggest renewing negotiations in August. The meetings were short, infrequent, and not productive, and talks went silent for another month.

Kosovo mourns a slain police officer, some Serb gunmen remain at large after a siege at a monastery

By FLORENT BAJRAMI and LLAZAR SEMINI Associated Press

PRISTINA, Kosovo (AP) — Kosovo on Monday observed a day of mourning for the Kosovar Albanian police officer killed by Serb gunmen who then barricaded themselves in an Orthodox monastery in a siege that further raised tensions as the two wartime foes seek to normalize ties.

Flags were at half-staff on all public buildings in the capital Pristina to mourn Afrim Bunjaku. In the north, where most of Kosovo's ethnic Serb minority lives in four municipalities around Mitrovica, police were patrolling in search of the armed assailants after they left the monastery.

About 30 gunmen dressed in combat uniforms were involved in the attack, but it is not clear who they are or who is supporting them. Pristina accuses Belgrade of backing the "terrorists," an accusation Serbia denies, saying they are Serbs from Kosovo protesting the government there.

On Sunday the masked gunmen opened fire on a police patrol at about 3 a.m. (01:00 GMT) in Banjska, a village located 55 kilometers (35 miles) north of Pristina, killing Bunjaku and injuring another officer.

They then used an armored vehicle to break down the gates to the monastery in the village, where they remained in a stand-off with Kosovo police until evening.

The two sides exchanged gunfire sporadically until darkness fell, when the assailants escaped from the monastery on foot.

Three of the attackers were killed and two injured. Another Kosovar police officer was injured in the confrontation near the monastery.

Two of the gunmen and four Serbs discovered nearby with communication equipment were arrested and are being investigated for terrorist acts.

Police seized vehicles used by the gunmen which contained an arsenal of firearms of different calibers, explosives, ammunition and logistics capable of equipping hundreds of persons, according to Kosovo Interior Minister Xhelal Svecla.

"It's a terrorist, criminal, professional unit that had planned and prepared what they did and who are

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not a smuggling band but a mercenary structure which is politically, financially and logistically supported by official Belgrade," said Prime Minister Albin Kurti.

Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic said the gunmen were local Kosovo Serbs "who no longer want to stand Kurti's terror."

Vucic condemned the killing of the Kosovo policeman, but said the clash was the result of "brutal" pressure on Kosovo Serbs by the government there. He denied any involvement by Belgrade.

Vucic also blasted the West and its "hypocrisy" over Kosovo.

"You can kill us all. Serbia will never recognize the independence of Kosovo, that monster creation that you made by bombing Serbia," Vucic said, referring to the 1999 NATO intervention which led to Kosovo separating from Serbia.

Serbia and Kosovo, its former province, have been at odds for decades. Their 1998-99 war left more than 10,000 people dead, mostly Kosovo Albanians. Kosovo unilaterally declared independence in 2008 but Belgrade has refused to recognize the move.

The international community condemned the "hideous attack." The European Union and the NATO-led international peacekeeping force in Kosovo are in close contact with Kosovar authorities.

Earlier this month, an EU-facilitated meeting between Kurti and Vucic to normalize ties ended in acrimony. The United States has supported the negotiations and the EU's position in trying to resolve the ongoing source of tension in the Balkans.

In February, the EU put forward a 10-point plan to end the latest escalation of tensions. Kurti and Vucic gave their approval at the time, but with some reservations that have still not been resolved.

The EU warned both countries that their commitments in February "are binding on them and play a role in the European path of the parties" — in other words, Serbia and Kosovo's chances of joining the 27-nation bloc.

Biden administration announces \$1.4 billion to improve rail safety and boost capacity in 35 states

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Biden administration announced Monday that it has awarded more than \$1.4 billion to projects that improve railway safety and boost capacity, with much of the money coming from the 2021 infrastructure law.

"These projects will make American rail safer, more reliable, and more resilient, delivering tangible benefits to dozens of communities where railroads are located, and strengthening supply chains for the entire country," Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg said in a statement.

The money is funding 70 projects in 35 states and Washington, D.C. Railroad safety has become a key concern nationwide ever since a train carrying hazardous chemicals derailed and caught fire in East Palestine, Ohio, in February. President Joe Biden has ordered federal agencies to hold the train's operator Norfolk Southern accountable for the crash, but a package of proposed rail safety reforms has stalled in the Senate where the bill is still awaiting a vote. The White House is also saying that a possible government shutdown because of House Republicans would undermine railway safety.

The projects include track upgrades and bridge repairs, in addition to improving the connectivity among railways and making routes less vulnerable to extreme weather.

Among the projects is \$178.4 million to restore passenger service in parts of Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi along the Gulf of Mexico for the first time since Hurricane Katrina struck in 2005.

"This is a significant milestone, representing years of dedicated efforts to reconnect our communities after the devastation of Hurricane Katrina," Sen. Roger Wicker, R-Miss., said in a statement. "Restoring passenger rail service will create jobs, improve quality of life, and offer a convenient travel option for tourists, contributing to our region's economic growth and vitality."

The grant should make it possible to restore passenger service to the Gulf Coast after Amtrak reached an agreement with CSX and Norfolk Southern railroads last year to clear the way for passenger trains to

resume operating on the tracks the freight railroads own.

"We've been fighting to return passenger trains to the Gulf Coast since it was knocked offline by Hurricane Katrina. That 17-year journey has been filled with obstacles and frustration — but also moments of joy, where local champions and national advocates were able to come together around the vision of a more connected Gulf Coast region," Rail Passengers Association President & CEO Jim Mathews said.

In one of the biggest other grants, the Palouse River & Coulee City Railroad in Washington state will get \$72.8 million to upgrade the track and related infrastructure to allow that rail line to handle modern 286,000-pound railcars.

A project in Kentucky will receive \$29.5 million to make improvements to 280 miles of track and other infrastructure along the Paducah and Louisville Railway.

And in Tennessee, \$23.7 million will go to helping upgrade about 42 bridges on 10 different short-line railroads.

After summer's extreme weather, more Americans see climate change as a culprit, AP-NORC poll shows

By TAMMY WEBBER and LINLEY SANDERS Associated Press

Kathleen Maxwell has lived in Phoenix for more than 20 years, but this summer was the first time she felt fear, as daily high temperatures soared to 110 degrees or hotter and kept it up for a record-shattering 31 consecutive days.

"It's always been really hot here, but nothing like this past summer," said Maxwell, 50, who last week opened her windows for the first time since March and walked her dog outdoors for the first time since May. "I was seriously scared. Like, what if this doesn't end and this is how it's going to be?"

Maxwell blames climate change, and she's not alone.

New polling from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research indicates that extreme weather, including a summer that brought dangerous heat for much of the United States, is bolstering Americans' belief that they've personally felt the impact of climate change.

About 9 in 10 Americans (87%) say they have experienced at least one extreme weather event in the past five years — including drought, extreme heat, severe storms, wildfires or flooding — up from 79% who said that just a few months ago in April. And about three-quarters of those believe climate change is at least partly to blame.

In total, 64% of U.S. adults say both that they've recently experienced extreme weather and that they believe it was caused at least partially by climate change, up from 54% in April. And about 65% say climate change will have or already has had a major impact in their lifetime.

This summer's heat might be a big factor: About three-quarters of Americans (74%) say they've been affected by extremely hot weather or extreme heat waves in the last five years, up from 55% in April — and of those, 92% said they've had that experience just in the past few months.

This summer was the hottest ever measured in the Northern Hemisphere, according to the World Meteorological Organization and the European climate service Copernicus.

Millions of Americans also were affected by the worst wildfire season in Canada's history, which sent choking smoke into parts of the U.S. About six in 10 U.S. adults say haze or smoke from the wildfires affected them "a lot" (15%) or "a little" (48%) in recent months.

And around the world, extreme heat, storms, flooding and wildfires have affected tens of millions of people this year, with scientists saying climate change has made such events more likely and intense.

Anthony Leiserowitz, director of the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication, said researchers there have conducted twice-yearly surveys of Americans for 15 years, but it wasn't until 2016 that they saw an indication that people's experience with extreme weather was affecting their views about climate change. "And the signal has been getting stronger and stronger year by year as these conditions continue to get worse and worse," he said.

But he also believes that media coverage of climate change has changed dramatically, and that the public

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is interpreting information in a more scientific way than they did even a decade ago.

Seventy-six-year-old Bruce Alvord, of Hagerstown, Maryland, said it wasn't unusual to experience days with a 112-degree heat index this summer, and health conditions mean that "heat really bothers me because it's restricted what I can do."

Even so, the retired government worker doesn't believe in human-caused climate change; he recalls stories from his grandparents about bad weather, and thinks the climate is fluctuating on its own.

"The way the way I look at it is I think it's a bunch of powerful politicians and lobbying groups that ... have their agenda," said Alvord, a Republican who sees no need to change his own habits or for the government to do more. "I drive a Chrysler 300 (with a V8 engine). I use premium gas. I get 15 miles a gallon. I don't give a damn."

The AP-NORC poll found significant differences between Democrats and Republicans. Among those who have experienced extreme weather, Democrats (93%) are more certain that climate change was a cause, compared to just half of Republicans (48%).

About 9 in 10 Democrats say climate change is happening, with nearly all of the remaining Democrats being unsure about whether climate change is happening (5%), rather than outright rejecting it. Republicans are split: 49% say climate change is happening, but 26% say it's not and an additional 25% are unsure. Overall, 74% of Americans say climate change is happening, largely unchanged from April.

Republican Ronald Livingston, 70, of Clute, Texas, said he's not sure if human activity is causing climate change, "but I know something is going on because we have been sweating our butts off."

The retired history teacher said it didn't rain for several months this year, killing his grass and drying up a slough on his property where he sometimes fishes. It was so hot — with 45 days of 100 degrees or more — that he could barely go outside, and he struggled to grow a garden. He also believes that hurricanes are getting stronger.

And after this summer, he's keeping an open mind about climate change.

"It worries me to the extent that I don't think we can go two or three more years of this," Livingston said.

Jeremiah Bohr, an associate professor of sociology at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh who studies climate change communication, said scientific evidence "is not going to change the minds that haven't already been changed." But people might be swayed if people or institutions they already trust become convinced and spread the word, Bohr said.

After a brutal summer, Maxwell, the Phoenix resident, said she hopes more Americans will accept that climate change is happening and that people are making it worse, and support measures to slow it.

"It seems very, very obvious to me, with all of the extreme weather and the hurricanes and flooding," said Maxwell. "I just can't imagine that people wouldn't."

More schools are adopting 4-day weeks. For parents, the challenge is day 5

By HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH Associated Press

INDEPENDENCE, Mo. (AP) — It's a Monday in September, but with schools closed, the three children in the Prunte household have nowhere to be. Callahan, 13, contorts herself into a backbend as 7-year-old Hudson fiddles with a balloon and 10-year-old Keegan plays the piano.

Like a growing number of students around the U.S., the Prunte children are on a four-day school schedule, a change instituted this fall by their district in Independence, Missouri.

To the kids, it's terrific. "I have a three-day break of school!" exclaimed Hudson.

But their mom, Brandi Prunte, who teaches French in a neighboring district in suburban Kansas City, is frustrated to find herself hunting for activities to keep her kids entertained and off electronics while she works five days a week.

"I feel like I'm back in the COVID shutdown," she said.

Hundreds of school systems around the country have adopted four-day weeks in recent years, mostly

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in rural and western parts of the U.S. Districts cite cost savings and advantages for teacher recruitment, although some have questioned the effects on students who already missed out on significant learning during the pandemic.

For parents, there also is the added complication, and cost, of arranging child care for that extra weekday. While surveys show parents approve overall, support wanes among those with younger children.

On this Monday, Brandi Prunte was home because Hudson had a mysterious rash on his arm. Most weeks, her oldest would be in charge, with occasional help from grandparents. She has no interest in paying for the child care option the district is offering for \$30 per day. Multiplied by several kids, it adds up.

"I want my kids in an educational environment," she said, "and I don't want to pay for somebody to babysit them."

Even then, the district-provided child care isn't as convenient because it's not in every school. And in other four-day districts, so many parents adjust their work schedule or enlist family to help that the day care has been discontinued because of low enrollment.

That is especially concerning for parents of younger kids and those whose disabilities can make finding child care an extra challenge.

In more than 13,000 school districts nationwide, nearly 900 operate on a truncated schedule, up from 662 in 2019 and a little more than 100 in 1999, said Paul Thompson, an associate professor of economics at Oregon State University.

The practice has taken off mostly in rural communities, where families often have a stay-at-home parent or nearby grandparent. But Independence, known best for its ties to President Harry Truman, is anything but rural, with 14,000 students, including around 70% who are eligible for government-subsidized meals.

The district offers meals on Mondays, but not at every school. Starting in October, struggling students will be able to attend school on Mondays for extra help. Superintendent Dale Herl said discussions with officials at other districts convinced him parents will figure out child care for the other students.

"You have to go back and look, you know, what do parents do during the summertime? What do they do over, you know, spring break or Christmas break?" he said, adding that schools already had weekdays off for occasions such as teacher conferences.

In Missouri, the number of districts routinely getting three-day weekends has more than doubled since the pandemic hit, from 12% to 30%. Some Missouri lawmakers have pushed back, arguing students need more time with teachers. One failed legislative proposal would have let students in four-day districts transfer or attend private schools, with their home districts picking up the tab.

Some turn to a shortened schedule to save money. An analysis by the Economic Commission of the States found such savings were modest, totaling 0.4% to 2.5% of their annual budgets.

For many school systems including Independence, which lengthened the other four school days, the hope is to boost teacher recruitment and retention. Some school systems making the switch are competing against districts that are able to pay up to \$15,000 more, with just 15 minutes added to the commute, said Jon Turner, a Missouri State University associate professor of education.

But when one district switches to a shortened school week, it gains a recruiting advantage over the others.

Other districts soon follow, making shortened schedules a "Band-Aid" solution with diminishing returns, Missouri Commissioner of Education Margie Vandeven said.

"If everybody becomes a four-day school week," she said, "that is no longer a recruitment strategy."

In some communities, a four-day week is better for families. In the Turner district in north-central Montana, taking Fridays off avoids situations such as basketball games played at districts three or more hours away that leave only a small number of students at school, Superintendent Tony Warren said.

The change also provides another day to work on family farms in the district with a little more than 50 students, Warren said, although he now also sees some larger districts adopting the schedule.

"They're making the shift to the four-day week because all the districts around them have adopted a four-day week," he said.

The effect on academics is murky, although some studies show the schedule doesn't hurt test scores if the other four school days are lengthened to make up the time, Thompson said.

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However, the Rand Corporation found achievement differences in four-day districts, while initially hard to spot, became apparent over multiple years.

That worries Karyn Lewis of the research organization NWEA, whose recent study found students are not making up all the academic ground they lost during the pandemic.

"Now is not the time to do anything that threatens the amount of instruction kids are receiving," she said.

In Independence, the shortened schedule created opportunities to help struggling students through an off-day program starting in October. Older students, meanwhile, can take classes at a community college.

Only a few large districts have adopted a four-day week. The 27J district north of Denver made the switch in 2018 after several failed efforts to increase taxes to boost teacher wages. With surrounding districts able to pay more, teacher turnover had become a problem.

Superintendent Will Pierce said the district's own surveys now show nearly 80% of parents and 85% of teachers support the schedule. "Quality of life is what they're reporting," he said.

Demand for day care hasn't been huge, with fewer than 300 kids using the off-day program in the district of 20,000 students, he said.

Still, a study published this year found test scores dipped slightly in the 27J district, and that home values also took a hit compared to those in neighboring districts.

"Voters need to think about trade offs," said Frank James Perrone, one of the study's authors and an Indiana University assistant professor of educational leadership.

Teacher retirements have dropped in Independence and job applications have increased since switching the schedule. And that's all good, Brandi Pruenete acknowledged.

"But," she added, "it can't be at the expense of the community or families of the district."

Jury selection set to open in terrorism trial of extended family stemming from 2018 New Mexico raid

By MORGAN LEE Associated Press

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP) — Jury selection is set to open Monday in federal court as members of an extended family face kidnapping and terrorism charges stemming from a raid of their squalid New Mexico encampment in 2018 by agents seeking a sickly, missing 3-year-old boy.

The boy's badly decomposed remains were eventually found in an underground tunnel at the compound on the outskirts of Amalia near the Colorado line. Authorities allege the family engaged in firearms and tactical training in preparation for attacks against government, tied to an apparent belief that the boy would be resurrected as Jesus Christ and provide instructions.

An exact cause of death was never determined amid accusations that the boy was deprived of crucial medication linked to disabilities. Federal prosecutors opted for kidnapping charges.

Two men and three women have pleaded not guilty to charges of conspiring to support planned attacks on U.S. law enforcement officers, military members and government employees. They also deny the kidnapping charges leveled against four of the defendants.

Albuquerque-based U.S. District Judge William P. Johnson has set aside four weeks for the trial, with dozens of witnesses scheduled to testify.

A grand jury indictment alleges Jany Leveille, a Haitian national, and partner Siraj Ibn Wahhaj instructed people at the compound to be prepared to engage in jihad and die as martyrs, and that another relative was invited to bring money and firearms.

Defense attorneys have said their clients would not be facing terrorism-related charges if they were not Muslim and that prosecutors are highlighting speculative and imagined theories about terrorist activities.

Potential jurors are being surveyed on their opinions about the Islamic religion, Muslims and alternatives to traditional medicine.

The grandfather of the missing boy is the Muslim cleric Siraj Wahhaj, who leads a well-known New York City mosque that has attracted radicals over the years, including a man who later helped bomb the World

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Trade Center in 1993.

Siraj Wahhaj could not be reached immediately by phone or email, but previously said his son and namesake is high-strung but not an extremist, and his two detained daughters are the "sweetest kinds of people."

Sheriff's deputies and state agents arrived in August 2018 to find the defendants with 11 hungry children living without running water or sanitation at the encampment encircled by berms of tires with an adjacent shooting range. They reported seizing an assortment of guns and ammunition, authorities said.

FBI interviews with the children led authorities to the boy's remains.

The boy, Abdul-Ghani Wahhaj, was reported missing by his mother in Georgia in December 2017. Around that time, authorities say, the boy's father, Siraj Ibn Wahhaj, set out with relatives and a cache of guns on a car journey to rural Alabama and then to New Mexico to start over on a parcel of high-desert scrubland near a tiny, crossroads town.

Prosecutors plan to present evidence that Siraj Ibn Wahhaj and Leveille performed daily prayer rituals over the boy, even as he cried and foamed at the mouth, while depriving him of crucial medication.

They say the boy's dead body was hidden and washed for months in the belief by Leveille that it could one day return as Jesus Christ, who would explain what corrupt government and private institutions must be eliminated. In the 2018 raid, authorities reported seizing handwritten journals, laptops, phones and video of tactical training from the compound.

The five defendants — including sisters Hujrah Wahhaj and Subhanah Wahhaj, and Subhanah's husband, Lucas Morton — were charged with conspiracy to commit an offense against the United States, providing material support to each other as potential terrorists amid tactical drills at the New Mexico compound. Morton, Leveille and Siraj Ibn Wahhaj additionally were charged with conspiracy to kill U.S. government personnel.

Kidnapping charges also were filed against four defendants but not Siraj Ibn Wahhaj because of his legal status as the deceased boy's father. Siraj Ibn Wahhaj and Morton have waived their right to legal counsel and will provide their own defense in court.

Defense attorneys have called the FBI's theories about terrorism activities at the Amalia compound speculative and unfounded. They also said there were no specific threats to the general public or individuals and that incriminating information was coerced from children in cooperation with child protective services.

The trial was delayed repeatedly over the course of five years during the COVID-19 pandemic and deliberations about the mental competency of the defendants.

It was unclear how Leveille would proceed as the trial opens. Earlier this year, she signed a tentative agreement with prosecutors to accept a reduced sentence on weapons charges that was not immediately authorized. In March, Leveille provided a notice of her intent to rely upon a defense of temporary insanity.

Leveille came to the U.S. in 1998 and stayed on a visa and work permit that later expired and immigration authorities denied an application for permanent residency.

We carry DNA from extinct cousins like Neanderthals. Science is now revealing their genetic legacy

By LAURA UNGAR and MADDIE BURAKOFF AP Science Writers

Neanderthals live on within us.

These ancient human cousins, and others called Denisovans, once lived alongside our early Homo sapiens ancestors. They mingled and had children. So some of who they were never went away — it's in our genes. And science is starting to reveal just how much that shapes us.

Using the new and rapidly improving ability to piece together fragments of ancient DNA, scientists are finding that traits inherited from our ancient cousins are still with us now, affecting our fertility, our immune systems, even how our bodies handled the COVID-19 virus.

"We're now carrying the genetic legacies and learning about what that means for our bodies and our health," said Mary Prendergast, a Rice University archeologist.

In the past few months alone, researchers have linked Neanderthal DNA to a serious hand disease, the

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shape of people's noses and various other human traits. They even inserted a gene carried by Neanderthals and Denisovans into mice to investigate its effects on biology, and found it gave them larger heads and an extra rib.

Much of the human journey remains a mystery. But Dr. Hugo Zeberg of the Karolinska Institute in Sweden said new technologies, research and collaborations are helping scientists begin to answer the basic but cosmic questions: "Who are we? Where did we come from?"

And the answers point to a profound reality: We have far more in common with our extinct cousins than we ever thought.

NEANDERTHALS WITHIN US

Until recently, the genetic legacy from ancient humans was invisible because scientists were limited to what they could glean from the shape and size of bones. But there has been a steady stream of discoveries from ancient DNA, an area of study pioneered by Nobel Prize winner Svante Paabo who first pieced together a Neanderthal genome.

Advances in finding and interpreting ancient DNA have allowed them to see things like genetic changes over time to better adapt to environments or through random chance.

It's even possible to figure out how much genetic material people from different regions carry from the ancient relatives our predecessors encountered.

Research shows some African populations have almost no Neanderthal DNA, while those from European or Asian backgrounds have 1% to 2%. Denisovan DNA is barely detectable in most parts of the world but makes up 4% to 6% of the DNA of people in Melanesia, which extends from New Guinea to the Fiji Islands.

That may not sound like much, but it adds up: Even though only 100,000 Neanderthals ever lived, "half of the Neanderthal genome is still around, in small pieces scattered around modern humans," said Zeberg, who collaborates closely with Paabo.

It's also enough to affect us in very real ways. Scientists don't yet know the full extent, but they're learning it can be both helpful and harmful.

For example, Neanderthal DNA has been linked to auto-immune diseases like Graves' disease and rheumatoid arthritis. When *Homo sapiens* came out of Africa, they had no immunity to diseases in Europe and Asia, but Neanderthals and Denisovans already living there did.

"By interbreeding with them, we got a quick fix to our immune systems, which was good news 50,000 years ago," said Chris Stringer, a human evolution researcher at the Natural History Museum in London. "The result today is, for some people, that our immune systems are oversensitive, and sometimes they turn on themselves."

Similarly, a gene associated with blood clotting believed to be passed down from Neanderthals in Eurasia may have been helpful in the "rough and tumble world of the Pleistocene," said Rick Potts, director of the human origins program at the Smithsonian Institution. But today it can raise the risk of stroke for older adults. "For every benefit," he said, "there are costs in evolution."

In 2020, research by Zeberg and Paabo found that a major genetic risk factor for severe COVID-19 is inherited from Neanderthals. "We compared it to the Neanderthal genome and it was a perfect match," Zeberg said. "I kind of fell off my chair."

The next year, they found a set of DNA variants along a single chromosome inherited from Neanderthals had the opposite effect: protecting people from severe COVID.

The list goes on: Research has linked Neanderthal genetic variants to skin and hair color, behavioral traits, skull shape and Type 2 diabetes. One study found that people who report feeling more pain than others are likely to carry a Neanderthal pain receptor. Another found that a third of women in Europe inherited a Neanderthal receptor for the hormone progesterone, which is associated with increased fertility and fewer miscarriages.

Much less is known about our genetic legacy from Denisovans – although some research has linked genes from them to fat metabolism and better adaptation to high altitudes. Maanasa Raghavan, a human genetics expert at the University of Chicago, said a stretch of Denisovan DNA has been found in Tibetans,

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who continue to live and thrive in low-oxygen environments today.

Scientists have even found evidence of “ghost populations” — groups whose fossils have yet to be discovered — within modern humans’ genetic code.

SO WHY DID WE SURVIVE?

In the past, the tale of modern humans’ survival “was always told as some success story, almost like a hero’s story,” in which Homo sapiens rose above the rest of the natural world and overcame the “insufficiencies” of their cousins, Potts said.

“Well, that simply is just not the correct story.”

Neanderthals and Denisovans had already existed for thousands of years by the time Homo sapiens left Africa. Scientists used to think we won out because we had more complex behavior and superior technology. But recent research shows that Neanderthals talked, cooked with fire, made art objects, had sophisticated tools and hunting behavior, and even wore makeup and jewelry.

Several theories now tie our survival to our ability to travel far and wide.

“We spread all over the world, much more than these other forms did,” Zeberg said.

While Neanderthals were specially adapted to cold climates, Potts said, Homo sapiens were able to disperse to all different kinds of climates after emerging in tropical Africa. “We are so adaptable, culturally adaptable, to so many places in the world,” he said.

Meanwhile, Neanderthals and Denisovans faced harsh conditions in the north, like repeated ice ages and ice sheets that likely trapped them in small areas, said Eleanor Scerri, an archeologist at Germany’s Max Planck Institute for Geoanthropology. They lived in smaller populations with a greater risk of genetic collapse.

Plus, we had nimble, efficient bodies, Prendergast said. It takes a lot more calories to feed stocky Neanderthals than comparatively skinny Homo sapiens, so Neanderthals had more trouble getting by, and moving around, especially when food got scarce.

Janet Young, curator of physical anthropology at the Canadian Museum of History, pointed to another intriguing hypothesis — which anthropologist Pat Shipman shared in one of her books — that dogs played a big part in our survival. Researchers found the skulls of domesticated dogs in Homo sapiens sites much further back in time than anyone had found before. Scientists believe dogs made hunting easier.

By around 30,000 years ago, all the other kinds of hominins on Earth had died off, leaving Homo sapiens as the last humans standing.

‘INTERACTION AND MIXTURE’

Still, every new scientific revelation points to how much we owe our ancient cousins.

Human evolution was not about “survival of the fittest and extinction,” said John Hawks, a paleoanthropologist at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. It’s about “interaction and mixture.”

Researchers expect to learn more as science continues to advance, allowing them to extract information from ever-tinier traces of ancient lives. Even when fossils aren’t available, scientists today can capture DNA from soil and sediment where archaic humans once lived.

And there are less-explored places in the world where they hope to learn more. Zeberg said “biobanks” that collect biological samples will likely be established in more countries.

As they delve deeper into humanity’s genetic legacy, scientists expect to find even more evidence of how much we mixed with our ancient cousins and all they left us.

“Perhaps,” Zeberg said, “we should not see them as so different.”

NASA's first asteroid samples land on Earth after release from spacecraft

By MARCIA DUNN AP Aerospace Writer

NASA's first asteroid samples fetched from deep space parachuted into the Utah desert Sunday to cap a seven-year journey.

In a flyby of Earth, the Osiris-Rex spacecraft released the sample capsule from 63,000 miles (100,000 kilometers) out. The small capsule landed four hours later on a remote expanse of military land, as the mothership set off after another asteroid.

"We have touchdown!" Mission Recovery Operations announced, immediately repeating the news since the landing occurred three minutes early. Officials later said the orange striped parachute opened four times higher than anticipated — around 20,000 feet (6,100 meters) — basing it on the deceleration rate.

To everyone's relief, the capsule was intact and not breached, keeping its 4.5 billion-year-old samples free of contamination. Within two hours of touchdown, the capsule was inside a temporary clean room at the Defense Department's Utah Test and Training Range, hoisted there by helicopter.

The sealed sample canister will be flown on Monday to NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston, where it will be opened in a new, specially designed lab. The building already houses the hundreds of pounds (kilograms) of moon rocks gathered by the Apollo astronauts.

"We can't wait to crack into it. For me, the real science is just beginning," said the mission's lead scientist, Dante Lauretta of the University of Arizona. He'll accompany the samples all the way to Texas.

Lori Glaze, NASA's planetary science division director, added: "Those are going to be a treasure for scientific analysis for years and years and years to come."

Scientists estimate the capsule holds at least a cup of rubble from the carbon-rich asteroid known as Benu, but won't know for sure until the container is opened in a day or two. Some spilled and floated away when the spacecraft scooped up too much material, which jammed the container's lid during collection three years ago.

Japan, the only other country to bring back samples, gathered about a teaspoon during a pair of asteroid missions.

The pebbles and dust delivered Sunday represent the biggest haul from beyond the moon. Preserved building blocks from the dawn of our solar system, the samples will help scientists better understand how Earth and life formed, providing "an extraordinary glimpse" of 4.5 billion years ago, said NASA Administrator Bill Nelson.

Osiris-Rex, the mothership, rocketed away on the \$1 billion mission in 2016. It reached Benu two years later and, using a long stick vacuum, grabbed rubble from the small roundish space rock in 2020. By the time it returned, the spacecraft had logged 4 billion miles (6.2 billion kilometers).

At a news conference several hours later, Lauretta said he broke into tears of joy upon hearing that the capsule's main parachute had opened.

"I knew we had made it home," he said, so overwhelmed with emotion when he arrived at the scene that he wanted to hug the capsule, sooty but undamaged and not even bent.

Flight controllers for spacecraft builder Lockheed Martin stood and applauded the touchdown from their base in Colorado. NASA camera views showed the charred capsule upside down on the sand with its parachute disconnected and strewn nearby, as the recovery team moved in via helicopters.

"Boy, did we stick that landing," Lauretta said. "It didn't move, it didn't roll, it didn't bounce. It just made a tiny little divot in the Utah soil."

British astronomer Daniel Brown, who was not involved in the mission, said he expects "great things" from NASA's largest sample return since the Apollo moon landings more than a half-century ago. With these asteroid samples, "we are edging closer to understanding its early chemical composition, the formation of water and the molecules life is based on," he added from Nottingham Trent University.

One Osiris-Rex team member was stuck in England, rehearsing for a concert tour. "My heart's there with

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you as this precious sample is recovered," Queen's lead guitarist Brian May, who's also an astrophysicist, said in a prerecorded message. "Happy Sample Return Day."

Engineers estimate the canister holds 250 grams (8.82 ounces) of material from Bennu, plus or minus 100 grams (3.53 ounces). Even at the low end, it will easily surpass the minimum requirement of the mission, Laurretta said.

It will take a few weeks to get a precise measurement, said NASA's lead curator Nicole Lunning.

NASA plans a public show-and-tell in October.

Currently orbiting the sun 50 million miles (81 million kilometers) from Earth, Bennu is about one-third of a mile (one-half of a kilometer) across, roughly the size of the Empire State Building but shaped like a spinning top. It's believed to be the broken fragment of a much larger asteroid.

During a two-year survey, Osiris-Rex found Bennu to be a chunky rubble pile full of boulders and craters. The surface was so loose that the spacecraft's vacuum arm sank a foot or two (0.5 meters) into the asteroid, sucking up more material than anticipated.

These close-up observations may come in handy late next century. Bennu is expected to come dangerously close to Earth in 2182 — possibly close enough to hit. The data gleaned by Osiris-Rex will help with any asteroid-deflection effort, according to Laurretta.

Osiris-Rex is already chasing after the asteroid Apophis, and will reach it in 2029.

This was NASA's third sample return from a deep-space robotic mission. The Genesis spacecraft dropped off bits of solar wind in 2004, but the samples were compromised when the parachute failed and the capsule slammed into the ground. The Stardust spacecraft successfully delivered comet dust in 2006.

NASA's plans to return samples from Mars are on hold after an independent review board criticized the cost and complexity. The Martian rover Perseverance has spent the past two years collecting core samples for eventual transport to Earth.

Residents prepare to return to sites of homes demolished in Lahaina wildfire 7 weeks ago

By JENNIFER SINCO KELLEHER Associated Press

HONOLULU (AP) — From just outside the burn zone in Lahaina, Jes Claydon can see the ruins of the rental home where she lived for 13 years and raised three children. Little remains recognizable beyond the jars of sea glass that stood outside the front door.

On Monday, officials are expected to begin lifting restrictions on entry to the area, and Claydon hopes to collect those jars and any other mementos she might find.

"I want the freedom to just be there and absorb what happened," Claydon said. "Whatever I might find, even if it's just those jars of sea glass, I'm looking forward to taking it. ... It's a piece of home."

Authorities will begin allowing the first residents and property owners to return to their properties in the burn zone, many for the first time since it was demolished nearly seven weeks ago, on Aug. 8, by the deadliest U.S. wildfire in more than a century.

The prospect of returning has stirred strong emotions in residents who fled in vehicles or on foot as the wind-whipped flames raced across Lahaina, the historic capital of the former Hawaiian kingdom, and overcame people stuck in traffic trying to escape.

Some survivors jumped over a sea wall and sheltered in the waves as hot black smoke blotted out the sun. The wildfire killed at least 97 people and destroyed more than 2,000 buildings, most of them homes.

Claydon's home was a single-story cinderblock house painted a reddish-tan, similar to the red dirt in Lahaina. She can see the property from a National Guard blockade that has kept unauthorized people out of the burn zone. A few of the walls are still standing, and some green lawn remains, she said.

Authorities have divided the burned area into 17 zones and dozens of sub-zones. Residents or property owners of the first to be cleared for reentry — known as Zone 1C, along Kaniau Road in the north part of Lahaina — will be allowed to return on supervised visits Monday and Tuesday between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m.

Those eligible could pick up passes from Friday to Sunday in advance.

Darryl Oliveira, interim administrator of the Maui Emergency Management Agency, said officials also want to ensure that they have the space and privacy to reflect or grieve as they see fit.

"They anticipate some people will only want to go for a very short period of time, a few minutes to say goodbye in a way to their property," Hawaii Gov. Josh Green said last week. "Others may want to stay several hours. They're going to be very accommodating."

Those returning will be provided water, shade, washing stations, portable toilets, medical and mental health care, and transportation assistance if needed. Nonprofit groups are also offering personal protective equipment, including masks and coveralls. Officials have warned ash could contain asbestos, lead, arsenic or other toxins.

While some residents, like Claydon, might be eager to find jewelry, photographs or other tokens of their life before the fire, officials are urging them not to sift through the ashes for fear of raising toxic dust that could endanger them or their neighbors downwind.

Ukraine is building an advanced army of drones. For now, pilots improvise with duct tape and bombs

By SAMYA KULLAB Associated Press

LUHANSK REGION, Ukraine (AP) — Flying above enemy lines, a Ukrainian reconnaissance drone sends a clear image back to soldiers hiding in a basement a few kilometers away: A Russian armored vehicle is idling along a key logistics route, looking like easy prey in the artillery-scarred green landscape.

Then, in a flash, the image disappears, and the drone operator's screen is replaced by a jumble of black and white pixels.

"Snow," says a calm commander known by the battlefield name Giocondo, who allowed The Associated Press to follow him and his unit of drone pilots on condition of anonymity to protect their identities. High-tech warfare cuts two ways, and the Russians use electronic beams to disable the drone's signals.

Seconds later, the drone pilot switches to a frequency the Russians cannot easily exploit. The bird's-eye image of the armored vehicle reappears, and a second drone — this one laden with explosives — is quickly launched. It zips toward the target.

Nineteen months into the Russian invasion, and as a grueling counteroffensive grinds on, the Ukrainian government wants to spend more than \$1 billion to upgrade its drone-fighting capabilities. Whether used for reconnaissance, dropping bombs or self-exploding on impact, drones save money, and soldiers' lives. They are also more precise than traditional artillery — which is in short supply — and can deliver outsized impacts, such as real-time mapping of the battlefield, destroying tanks and ships, and bringing Russian advances to a halt.

The advantages of drones can be fleeting, however. The Russian army, which relies on Iranian expertise for its own horde of deadly drones, quickly catches up each time Giocondo's unit gains an edge. Success, he says, lies in constant battlefield iteration and innovation.

Ukraine's minister for digital transformation, Mykhailo Federov, says the government is committed to building a state-of-the-art "army of drones" and that its value to the war effort will be evident by the end of this year. The country has already trained more than 10,000 new drone pilots this year.

"A new stage of the war will soon begin," Federov promises.

PERFECT TARGET

Giocondo's unit operates near the occupied town of Svatove, in northeastern Ukraine. It has spent months modifying drones to enable them to fly deeper behind enemy lines and to better evade Russian detection and sabotage.

His drone pilots are all volunteers, and many of them had no military experience prior to Russia's invasion.

Hiding in a barn house haloed in morning light, a pilot who goes by the battlefield name Bakeneko pops on a head-mounted display and is instantly transported, soaring above verdant fields bustling with Russian

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combat vehicles and infantrymen. He is flying a drone loaded with explosives toward a Soviet-made tank spotted moments earlier by a reconnaissance drone.

Bakeneko listens in one ear to the German heavy metal band Powerful, explaining that he “can’t fly in silence.”

A few feet away, another soldier — a sales manager before the war — prepares exploding bombs. Using plastic flex cuffs and duct tape, he secures artillery shells and bulky batteries, turning an inexpensive commercial drone into a killing machine.

As the sun rises, Russian troops to the east have the advantage of good light, peering into Ukrainian positions with their own drones. But that advantage flips in the afternoon, when Ukrainian drone pilots can sometimes spot the moving shadows of Russian infantrymen.

Combing through the vast landscape to find a target takes hours. Russian troops have gotten better at hiding and camouflaging themselves in the foliage.

When Bakeneko’s target is within view, he gives the remote control a jolt, and the drone plunges. His headset shows the bucolic countryside rushing at him, and then it goes blank.

“Super, we got it,” says Giocondo, who is watching on a separate screen, which shows a plume of smoke coming from the tank.

TRIAL AND ERROR

The growing reliance on short-range exploding drones on the front line has prompted the Russians to deploy more handheld jamming devices, Ukrainian officials say. That has forced Giocondo’s unit, and others, to devise creative countermeasures.

After three months of trial and error, Ukrainian soldiers operating in the eastern village of Andriivka, south of Bakhmut, figured out how to evade Russian jamming devices that had long stymied their drones.

The fix led to the village being recaptured in early September. A spokesman for the battalion that retook the village said exploding drones were key because they forced the Russians to pull back heavy weaponry by roughly 15 kilometers to stay out of range.

But Ukrainian drone pilots say the Russians will learn from what happened, and adapt again.

“This is an interactive, two-sided competition,” said Stephen Biddle, a senior fellow for defense policy at the Council on Foreign Relations.

Since the war’s early days, Russia has used long-range, military-grade drones to inflict devastating damage and psychological terror in Ukraine’s capital, Kyiv, and in other cities. Over time, the Ukrainian military has responded by launching its own military-grade drones deep behind enemy lines, targeting warships in the Black Sea, an airport in Western Russia and even buildings in Moscow, according to Russian officials and media.

The acceleration of short-range drone warfare by units like Giocondo’s is in direct response to the trouble Ukrainian forces experienced this summer using conventional weapons to try to punch through Russia’s fortified defenses. The counteroffensive that began in June has depleted money, artillery and soldiers — and hasn’t yielded as much momentum as Ukraine had hoped for.

Faced with these challenges, the leader of an elite drone squad called the Asgard Group, which oversees Giocondo’s unit, sensed an opportunity. The leader, a wealthy former businessman who goes by the name Pharmacist on the battlefield, directed his soldiers to begin targeting Russia’s large and expensive weaponry with small and inexpensive drones.

The logic was simple, Pharmacist says: Exploding drones cost roughly \$400 to make, while a conventional projectile can cost nearly 10 times as much. Even if it requires multiple drones to take out a tank — and sometimes it does — it is still worth it.

The strategy had the additional benefit of putting fewer soldiers’ lives at risk.

But first they had to modify commercial drones with hardware and software to suit the battlefield, enabling them to penetrate deeper behind enemy lines without being detected or jammed. A breakthrough came through the clever use of several drones in unison.

With his entrepreneurial spirit, Pharmacist helped turn a ragtag group of engineers, corporate manag-

ers and filmmakers into an elite fighting force. He estimates that his 12-man team, assembled with just \$700,000, has destroyed \$80 million worth of enemy equipment.

The Russian army — which faces its own economic and military challenges as the war in Ukraine drags on — is also looking to accelerate the use of drones. Russia had stepped up production before its full-scale invasion of Ukraine early in 2021, but officials have acknowledged that they didn't do enough. Now, as Ukraine catches up, Russian shopping centers are being repurposed into research labs and factories dedicated to drones, according to the Institute for the Study of War, a U.S.-based think tank.

"The enemy learns very quickly," said Pharmacist.

SCALING UP

The Ukrainian government has taken notice of the grassroots innovation carried out by people like Giocondo and the Pharmacist; now it wants to replicate those efforts with an infusion of cash.

The draft budget for 2024 includes an extra 48 billion hryvnias in defense spending earmarked for drone purchases.

One reason to prioritize enhancing Ukraine's domestic drone-making capabilities, experts say, is the increasing difficulty in sourcing parts from China, the world's leading drone maker.

"We are doing everything for businesses to invest in the production of various drones," said Federov, Ukraine's minister of digital transformation. He estimates that domestic production will grow one hundred times above last year's level. Since March, at least eight new Ukrainian companies building explosive drones have been formed as part of the initiative.

Looking out over the horizon, Federov said advances in artificial intelligence being employed by some brigades are only likely to sharpen the effectiveness — and cost-effectiveness — of drones.

Still, some drone operators take all of the enthusiasm with a grain of salt. They are skeptical that Ukraine's military culture, which has vestiges of rigidity from the Soviet era, can change quickly enough.

A successful drone operation doesn't hinge on just training and procuring drones, they say. The more critical piece of the puzzle is scaling up the ingenuity and real-time adaptability of units like Giocondo's.

"It's a complex interaction within the unit itself," said Pharmacist.

Facial recognition technology jailed a man for days. His lawsuit joins others from Black plaintiffs

By SUDHIN THANAWALA Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Randal Quran Reid was driving to his mother's home the day after Thanksgiving last year when police pulled him over and arrested him on the side of a busy Georgia interstate.

He was wanted for crimes in Louisiana, they told him, before taking him to jail. Reid, who prefers to be identified as Quran, would spend the next several days locked up, trying to figure out how he could be a suspect in a state he says he had never visited.

A lawsuit filed this month blames the misuse of facial recognition technology by a sheriff's detective in Jefferson Parish, Louisiana, for his ordeal.

"I was confused and I was angry because I didn't know what was going on," Quran told The Associated Press. "They couldn't give me any information outside of, 'You've got to wait for Louisiana to come take you,' and there was no timeline on that."

Quran, 29, is among at least five Black plaintiffs who have filed lawsuits against law enforcement in recent years, saying they were misidentified by facial recognition technology and then wrongly arrested. Three of those lawsuits, including one by a woman who was eight months pregnant and accused of a carjacking, are against Detroit police.

The technology allows law enforcement agencies to feed images from video surveillance into software that can search government databases or social media for a possible match.

Critics say it results in a higher rate of misidentification of people of color than of white people. Supporters say it has been vital in catching drug dealers, solving killings and missing persons cases and identifying

and rescuing human trafficking victims. They also contend the vast majority of images that are scoured are criminal mugshots, not driver's license photos or random pictures of individuals.

Still, some states and cities have limited its use.

"The use of this technology by law enforcement, even if standards and protocols are in place, has grave civil liberty and privacy concerns," said Sam Starks, a senior attorney with The Cochran Firm in Atlanta, which is representing Quran. "And that's to say nothing about the reliability of the technology itself."

Quran's lawsuit was filed Sept. 8 in federal court in Atlanta. It names Jefferson Parish Sheriff Joseph Lopinto and detective Andrew Bartholomew as defendants.

Bartholomew, using surveillance video, relied solely on a match generated by facial recognition technology to seek an arrest warrant for Reid after a stolen credit card was used to buy two purses for more than \$8,000 from a consignment store outside New Orleans in June 2022, the lawsuit said.

"Bartholomew did not conduct even a basic search into Mr. Reid, which would have revealed that Mr. Reid was in Georgia when the theft occurred," the lawsuit said.

Reached by phone, Bartholomew said he had no comment. A spokesman for the sheriff's office, Capt. Jason Rivarde, said the office does not comment on pending litigation.

In an affidavit seeking the warrant, Bartholomew cited still photographs from the surveillance footage, but did not mention the use of facial recognition technology, according to Quran's lawsuit.

The detective said he was advised by a "credible source" that one of the suspects in the video was Quran. A Department of Motor Vehicles photograph of Quran appeared to match the description of the suspect from the surveillance video, Bartholomew said.

Starks believes the source Bartholomew cited was facial recognition technology, making the affidavit "at best misleading," he said. A January email from Jefferson Parish Deputy Chief Dax Russo to the sheriff is further evidence of that, according to Starks.

The email explaining the events that led to Quran's arrest said members of the force were told again that they need additional evidence or leads when using facial recognition technology for an arrest warrant, according to the lawsuit.

The suit accuses Bartholomew of false arrest, malicious prosecution and negligence. Lopinto failed to implement adequate policies around the use of facial recognition technology, so he, too, should be liable, the lawsuit contends. It seeks unspecified damages.

As Quran sat in jail, his family hired an attorney in Louisiana who presented photos and videos of Quran to the sheriff's office. The person in the surveillance footage was considerably heavier and did not have a mole like Quran's, according to his lawsuit.

The sheriff's office asked a judge to withdraw the warrant. Six days after his arrest, sheriff's officials in Georgia's DeKalb County released Quran.

His car had been towed, and the food at the jail had made him sick, he said. Quran, who works in transportation logistics, also missed work.

Nearly a year later, the experience still haunts him. He wonders what would have happened had he not had money to hire an attorney. And he still thinks about that police stop on a Georgia interstate.

"Every time I see police in my rearview mirror, he said, "it just flashes back my mind to what could have happened even though I hadn't done anything."

Past high-profile trials suggest stress and potential pitfalls for Georgia judge handling Trump case

By SUDHIN THANAWALA Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Judge Peter Cahill hardly slept during the six weeks he presided over the murder trial of Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin for killing George Floyd.

Cameras in the courtroom broadcast the veteran Minnesota judge's every word to a global audience. Outside, the nation waited nervously for the outcome of a slaying that galvanized the movement for racial justice.

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"When you're in a high-profile trial, you feel the stress, you feel the pressure even if you're not reading the papers," he told an audience of judges last year at The National Judicial College in Reno, Nevada.

Cahill's experience provides a glimpse of the additional scrutiny and strain that await the four judges overseeing the criminal cases against former President Donald Trump.

But the challenge facing Fulton County Judge Scott McAfee in Georgia is unlike any of the others. For one, he is the only judge so far to allow television cameras in the courtroom to broadcast hearings and any trials. He is presiding over a sprawling indictment with 19 defendants, among them other prominent figures including former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani and Trump White House chief of staff Mark Meadows. And the trials will play out in a battleground state that Trump narrowly lost in 2020.

Attorneys who have worked alongside McAfee, who took the bench just this year, say his demeanor and years of work as a prosecutor have prepared him for heightened pressure. The judge's varied interests — he is an accomplished cellist and was a scuba diver at the Georgia Aquarium — should also provide relief from the stress of a long legal case.

But the experience of some judges who have been thrust into the public eye point to potential pitfalls and dangers ahead for the 34-year-old Georgia native. U.S. District Judge Aileen Cannon in Florida, who was nominated by Trump, has already faced sharp criticism for an early decision that favored the former president in his fight against charges he illegally hoarded classified documents.

High-profile cases lead to a "greater intrusion on your life," said U.S. Senior Judge Reggie Walton, who presided over the 2007 trial of I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby, a former top aide to Vice President Dick Cheney, and the 2012 trial of pitcher Roger Clemens.

"Sometimes there'll be articles that may be written that may be off base," he said in a phone interview with The Associated Press. "They can create a little heartburn sometimes."

Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Lance Ito was accused of self-promotion for giving an interview during the O.J. Simpson trial in 1994. Critics also said he appeared too sensitive to criticism in the press and failed to control the proceedings, allowing the case to drag on for months and turn into a spectacle. "The Tonight Show with Jay Leno" mocked the trial with a skit featuring dancers in beards and black robes: the Dancing Itos.

In Florida, a judicial commission found Circuit Judge Elizabeth Scherer violated several rules governing judicial conduct during the penalty trial last year of Parkland school shooter Nikolas Cruz. Among them, she "unduly" chastised the lead public defender and improperly embraced members of the prosecution in the courtroom after sentencing Cruz to life without parole, the commission said. Scherer, who has since retired, told the commission she also offered to hug the defense team.

Delaware Superior Court Judge Eric Davis, who presided over Dominion Voting Systems' defamation lawsuit against Fox News, said he found even a laugh can be misconstrued.

"Sarcasm doesn't come across well. I learned that," he said at an American Bar Association meeting in August.

The cases may also prompt safety concerns. Already some of the judges overseeing Trump's criminal cases have received threats. U.S. District Judge Tanya Chutkan, who is presiding over the federal election subversion case in Washington, has increased security after a woman was arrested for threatening to kill her.

McAfee did not respond to interview requests from The Associated Press. But in a sign that he understands the potential hazards ahead, he told The New Yorker he has no aspiration to become the next Ito or Judge Judy.

"The idea with my job, in general, is to keep your head down," he told the magazine. "Stay even-keeled and manage expectations."

Attorneys who know McAfee say he's ready for the challenge.

Although he's presided over few trials, McAfee's previous courtroom experience shows he has great confidence and poise, said Han Chung, an attorney who worked alongside McAfee at the Fulton County district attorney's office.

As a senior assistant district attorney, McAfee prosecuted hundreds of felony cases, including murder and

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armed robbery. He was unflappable under tough questioning from a judge or the gaze of a jury, Chung said.

Chung, who is now a prosecutor in nearby Gwinnett County, recalled coming runner-up to McAfee in 2016 for the best trial lawyer in their unit.

"In order to do our job, you can't be afraid of the courtroom," he said. "He was somebody who was especially not afraid."

In a hearing earlier this month for two of Trump's co-defendants, McAfee was polite, presaged a key potential stumbling block in the prosecution and ruled directly from the bench that the two would be tried together. When a prosecutor asked for two weeks to submit a brief, the judge gave him six days.

At a second hearing days later, a defense attorney accused a prosecutor of defaming the attorney's colleague. McAfee said the prosecutor's comment wasn't an issue for the court, but the attorney talked over him and pressed on. McAfee let him continue briefly before cutting him off.

"I said it's over," he told the attorney, who continued to protest as he left the lectern.

McAfee later listened patiently to the same attorney's suggestion for how to schedule the trial.

Retired Massachusetts Superior Court Judge E. Susan Garsh, who presided over the 2015 murder trial of New England Patriots star Aaron Hernandez, told the AP that "you want to be this very firm presence but not become part of the story."

Garsh recalled getting a weekly massage and listening to audio books during her commute to help ease the stress of the trial.

She also said she tried to anticipate as many issues as possible. That included making sure people did not wear Patriots jerseys in the courtroom, she said.

For McAfee, it may mean accounting for his prior work at the Fulton County district attorney's office. His supervisor for part of his tenure there was Fani Willis, who brought the indictment against Trump and the 18 other defendants.

Trump has attacked Willis, a Democrat, as a "rabid partisan," and his attorneys may make McAfee's work under her an issue. His legal team has already filed motions asking two of the judges overseeing indictments against him — Chutkan, who was nominated by President Barack Obama, and New York Judge Juan Manuel Merchan, who also oversaw the Trump Organization's tax fraud trial — to recuse themselves, citing bias. Merchan rejected the request. Chutkan has yet to rule.

But McAfee, who got his law degree in 2013 from the University of Georgia, also has conservative credentials.

He worked for the administration of Georgia's Republican governor, Brian Kemp, and in law school was a member of the Federalist Society, a group closely aligned with Republican priorities.

Kemp in 2021 appointed McAfee to lead Georgia's Office of Inspector General, which is tasked with exposing fraud and waste in state government. Before then, McAfee worked for the U.S. attorney's office, where he prosecuted drug trafficking groups.

In a press release announcing his appointment to the bench last year, Kemp's office noted McAfee, who is married with two children, was captain of a tennis team, received a scholarship to play the cello as an undergraduate at Emory University and volunteered as a scuba diver at the Georgia Aquarium.

Those activities may prove helpful for McAfee while he presides over the Georgia case.

"Hopefully, you have a life outside the law," Cahill said during his talk in Reno about handling high-profile cases. "Something where you can get away from the law itself and enjoy yourself."

AI is on the world's mind.

Is the UN the place to figure out what to do about it?

By JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Just a few years ago, artificial intelligence got barely a mention at the U.N. General Assembly's convocation of world leaders.

But after the release of ChatGPT last fall turbocharged both excitement and anxieties about AI, it's been a sizzling topic this year at diplomacy's biggest yearly gathering.

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Presidents, premiers, monarchs and cabinet ministers convened as governments at various levels are mulling or have already passed AI regulation. Industry heavy-hitters acknowledge guardrails are needed but want to protect the technology's envisioned benefits. Outsiders and even some insiders warn that there also are potentially catastrophic risks, and everyone says there's no time to lose.

And many eyes are on the United Nations as perhaps the only place to tackle the issue at scale.

The world body has some unique attributes to offer, including unmatched breadth and a track record of brokering pacts on global issues, and it's set to launch an AI advisory board this fall.

"Having a convergence, a common understanding of the risks, that would be a very important outcome," U.N. tech policy chief Amandeep Gill said in an interview. He added that it would be very valuable to reach a common understanding on what kind of governance works, or might, to minimize risks and maximize opportunities for good.

A CONVERSATION THAT IS GAINING MOMENTUM

As recently as 2017, only three speakers brought up AI at the assembly meeting's equivalent of a main stage, the "General Debate." This year, more than 20 speakers did so, representing countries from Namibia to North Macedonia, Argentina to East Timor.

Secretary-General António Guterres teased plans to appoint members this month to the advisory board, with preliminary recommendations due by year's end — warp speed, by U.N. standards.

Lesotho's premier, Sam Matekane, worried about threats to privacy and safety, Nepalese Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal about potential misuse of AI, and Icelandic Foreign Minister Thórdís Kolbrún R. Gylfadóttir about the technology "becoming a tool of destruction." Britain hyped its upcoming "AI Safety Summit," while Spain pitched itself as an eager host for a potential international agency for AI and Israel touted its technological chops as a prospective developer of helpful AI.

Days after U.S. senators discussed AI behind closed doors with tech bigwigs and skeptics, President Joe Biden said Washington is working "to make sure we govern this technology — not the other way around, having it govern us."

And with the General Assembly as a center of gravity, there were so many AI-policy panel discussions and get-togethers around New York last week that attendees sometimes raced from one to another.

"The most important meetings that we are having are the meetings at the U.N. — because it is the only body that is inclusive, that brings all of us here," Omar Al-Olama, the United Arab Emirates' minister for artificial intelligence, said at a U.N.-sponsored event featuring four high-ranking officials from various countries. It drew such interest that a half-dozen of their counterparts offered comments from the audience.

Tech industry players have made sure they're in the mix during the U.N.'s big week, too.

"What's really encouraging is that there's so much global interest in how to get this right — and the U.N. is in a position to help harmonize all the conversations" and work to ensure all voices get heard, says James Manyika, a senior vice president at Google. The tech giant helped develop a new, artificial intelligence-enabled U.N. site for searching data and tracking progress on the world body's key goals.

LOTS OF PEOPLE TALKING, BUT PERHAPS A SLOW PROCESS

But if the United Nations has advantages, it also has the challenges of a big-tent, consensus-seeking ethos that often moves slowly. Plus its members are governments, while AI is being driven by an array of private companies.

Still, a global issue needs a global forum, and "the U.N. is absolutely a place to have these conversations," says Ian Bremmer, president of the Eurasia Group, a political risk advisory firm.

Even if governments aren't developers, Gill notes that they can "influence the direction that AI takes."

"It's not only about regulating against misuse and harm, making sure that democracy is not undermined, the rule of law is not undermined, but it's also about promoting a diverse and inclusive innovation ecosystem" and fostering public investments in research and workforce training where there aren't a lot of deep-pocketed tech companies doing so, he said.

The United Nations will have to navigate territory that some national governments and blocs, including the European Union and the Group of 20 industrialized nations, already are staking out with summits, declarations and in some cases regulations of their own.

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Ideas differ about what a potential global AI body should be: perhaps an expert assessment and fact-establishing panel, akin to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, or a watchdog like the International Atomic Energy Agency? A standard-setting entity similar to the U.N.'s maritime and civil aviation agencies? Or something else?

There's also the question of how to engender innovation and hoped-for breakthroughs — in medicine, disaster prediction, energy efficiency and more — without exacerbating inequities and misinformation or, worse, enabling runaway-robot calamity. That sci-fi scenario started sounding a lot less far-fetched when hundreds of tech leaders and scientists, including the CEO of ChatGPT maker OpenAI, issued a warning in May about "the risk of extinction from AI."

An OpenAI exec-turned-competitor then told the U.N. Security Council in July that artificial intelligence poses "potential threats to international peace, security and global stability" because of its unpredictability and possible misuse.

Yet there are distinctly divergent vantage points on where the risks and opportunities lie.

"For countries like Nigeria and the Global South, the biggest issue is: What are we going to do with this amazing technology? Are we going to get the opportunity to use it to uplift our people and our economies equally and on the same pace as the West?" Nigeria's communications minister, Olatunbosun Tijani, asked at an AI discussion hosted by the New York Public Library. He suggested that "even the conversation on governance has been led from the West."

Chilean Science Minister Aisén Etcheverry believes AI could allow for a digital do-over, a chance to narrow gaps that earlier tech opened in access, inclusion and wealth.

AN INTRICATE PATH FORWARD, BUT WITH CLEAR UPSIDES

But it will take more than improving telecommunications infrastructure. Countries that got left behind before need to have "the language, culture, the different histories that we come from, represented in the development of artificial intelligence," Etcheverry said at the U.N.-sponsored side event.

Gill, who's from India, shares those concerns. Dialogue about AI needs to expand beyond a "promise and peril" dichotomy to "a more nuanced understanding where access to opportunity, the empowerment dimension of it ... is also front and center," he said.

Even before the U.N. advisory board sets a detailed agenda, plenty of suggestions were volunteered amid the curated conversations around the General Assembly. Work on global minimum standards for AI. Align the various regulatory and enforcement endeavors around the globe. Look at setting up AI registries, validation and certification. Focus on regulating uses rather than the technology itself. Craft a "rapid-response mechanism" in case dreaded possibilities come to pass.

From Dr. Rose Nakasi's vantage point, though, there was a clear view of the upsides of AI.

The Ugandan computer scientist and her colleagues at Makerere University's AI Lab are using the technology to streamline microscopic analysis of blood samples, the gold-standard method for diagnosing malaria.

Their work is aimed at countries without enough pathologists, especially in rural areas. A magnifying eyepiece, produced by 3D printing, fits cellphone cameras and takes photos of microscope slides; AI image analysis then picks out and identifies pathogens. Google's charitable arm recently gave the lab \$1.5 million.

AI is "an enabler" of human activity, Nakasi said between attending General Assembly-related events.

"We can't be able to just leave it to do each and every thing on its own," she said. "But once it is well regulated, where we have it as a support tool, I believe it can do a lot."

RNC's livestreaming partner for the GOP debate is a haven for disinformation and extremism

By ALI SWENSON Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The second Republican presidential debate will be broadcast Wednesday on Fox Business Network and Univision, but the exclusive online livestream will take place on Rumble, an alternative video-sharing platform that has been criticized for allowing— and at times promoting — far-right

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extremism, bigotry, election disinformation and conspiracy theories.

By bringing viewers to Rumble to watch the GOP debate, as it did with the first one last month, the Republican National Committee is driving potential voters to a site crawling with content that flouts the rules of more mainstream ones such as Facebook, Instagram and YouTube.

Earlier this year, RNC Chairwoman Ronna McDaniel said using Rumble instead of YouTube as its livestreaming partner was a decision aimed toward "getting away from Big Tech."

Asked about the criticism against the platform, the RNC said in an emailed statement that "hate, bigotry and violence is unfortunately prevalent on every social media platform, and the RNC condemns it entirely, but the RNC does not manage content or pages outside of our own."

Rumble, founded in 2013, prides itself on being "immune to cancel culture." Its website says "everyone benefits when we have access to more ideas, diverse opinions, and dialogue."

That approach has catapulted the site to popularity in recent years as many conservatives have sought alternative social media companies that won't remove their posts or suspend their accounts for false or inflammatory content. The company, which went public in 2022, has been backed by conservative donors such as venture capitalist Peter Thiel and Republican Sen. J.D. Vance of Ohio.

It has grown to average 44 million active users per month, according to its most recent quarterly filing. By comparison, its closest mainstream cousin, the Google-owned video service YouTube, has billions of monthly logged-in users, a spokesperson said.

It's hard to gauge to what extent the debates have affected Rumble's user base because the company hasn't released that data yet. But it's clear the company's reach is growing. Desktop and mobile web data from the research firm Similarweb, which doesn't include traffic from apps, shows the platform had about double the number of unique visitors in August 2023 as it did the year before.

Rumble's web traffic also is consistently much higher than that of other right-wing social media platforms, such as Truth Social, Gab, or Gettr, according to Similarweb's analysis.

Politicians have taken notice. Since the Republican presidential primary contest began, several candidates have started posting their campaign videos on the platform, including Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, biotech entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy and current GOP front-runner Donald Trump. Democratic challenger and anti-vaccine activist Robert F. Kennedy Jr. also has a profile on the site.

Yet as Rumble's influence has grown, the platform continues to be overwhelmed by content that denies the results of the 2020 election, pushes bigoted views about race and gender, and encourages harmful conspiracy theories.

In the weeks since the first debate, the site's leaderboard of top-performing content, which is featured prominently on Rumble's home page, has regularly included multiple accounts that promote QAnon, a baseless conspiracy theory that has led to violent incidents and deaths.

A search for "election" on the platform populates videos that falsely claim the so-called deep state cheated in the 2020 presidential election, and that the 2024 election already has been rigged.

An analysis from NewsGuard, a firm that monitors online misinformation, found last year that nearly half the videos suggested by Rumble in response to searches for common election-related terms came from untrustworthy sources.

Rumble's press team said the company is not responsible for the content in the leaderboard and search functions. In an emailed response, they said the leaderboard rankings are generated from the most liked recent videos on the site.

"Rumble is a platform and does not create content, just as other social media platforms host content without producing or endorsing it," the email said.

The company's response pointed out that even YouTube has announced it will no longer take action against claims of fraud in the 2020 election. However, YouTube, unlike Rumble, has said it will continue to remove content that tries to deceive voters in the 2024 elections.

Meta, which runs Facebook and Instagram, also has quietly rolled back some of its safeguards against election misinformation in recent years. But it has continued several other initiatives such as its third-party

fact-checking program, which enlists the help of news outlets to investigate the veracity of popular falsehoods spreading on Facebook or Instagram. The Associated Press is part of that effort.

Beyond election fraud claims and conspiracy theories, Rumble also has come under fire for being slow to respond to hate speech and calls for violence.

Ahead of the first GOP debate last month, the live feed for the GOP's official pre-show on Rumble was overridden with racial slurs and bigoted comments. The episode was then hidden from public view. The RNC said it was taken down to direct users to the debate livestream and avoid confusing viewers with multiple videos.

Trump's campaign videos on Rumble also have generated violent and hateful user responses, including a threatening comment on a recent video that asserted President Joe Biden should be hanged. Other comments on his recent videos told Trump to "execute" Democrats and suggested that someone should "build a lot of gallows."

Rumble said it removed those comments in response to AP's inquiry. It said the posts violated the platform's content policies that ban "the incitement of violence, illegal content, racism, antisemitism, promoting terrorist groups (designated by US and Canadian governments), and violating copyright, as well as many other restrictions."

Later, in a post on X, the platform formerly known as Twitter, Rumble founder Chris Pavlovski responded to the AP's inquiry by saying the posts were "a few comments out of millions."

It's difficult to say conclusively whether Rumble has more hateful, extreme or conspiracy theory content than competitors such as YouTube, said Jared Holt, senior research analyst at the Institute for Strategic Dialogue, a London-based think tank that tracks online hate, disinformation and extremism. But he said Rumble uniquely appeals to creators who make that sort of content.

"It's managed to strike a rare alt-platform sweet spot," he said. "It has loose enough content guidelines and a large enough potential audience size to make operating there worth a creator's effort."

The RNC hasn't yet announced whether it will work with Rumble for future debates. Holt said the partnership already is legitimizing the platform in the eyes of many viewers.

"This RNC streaming deal with Rumble will certainly direct more people to the platform, where they're likely to find extreme and misleading content — and perhaps more importantly, almost no content that would counteract it with different perspectives or corrections," he said.

Residents prepare to return to sites of homes demolished in Lahaina wildfire 7 weeks ago

By JENNIFER SINCO KELLEHER Associated Press

HONOLULU (AP) — From just outside the burn zone in Lahaina, Jes Claydon can see the ruins of the rental home where she lived for 13 years and raised three children. Little remains recognizable beyond the jars of sea glass that stood outside the front door.

On Monday, officials will begin lifting restrictions on entry to the area, and Claydon hopes to collect those jars and any other mementos she might find.

"I want the freedom to just be there and absorb what happened," Claydon said. "Whatever I might find, even if it's just those jars of sea glass, I'm looking forward to taking it. ... It's a piece of home."

Authorities will begin allowing the first residents and property owners to return to their properties in the burn zone, many for the first time since it was demolished nearly seven weeks ago, on Aug. 8, by the deadliest U.S. wildfire in more than a century.

The prospect of returning has stirred strong emotions in residents who fled in vehicles or on foot as the wind-whipped flames raced across Lahaina, the historic capital of the former Hawaiian kingdom, and overcame people stuck in traffic trying to escape. Some survivors jumped over a sea wall and sheltered in the waves as hot black smoke blotted out the sun. The wildfire killed at least 97 people and destroyed more than 2,000 buildings, most of them homes.

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Claydon's home was a single-story cinderblock house painted a reddish-tan, similar to the red dirt in Lahaina. She can see the property from a National Guard blockade that has kept unauthorized people out of the burn zone. A few of the walls are still standing, and some green lawn remains, she said.

Authorities have divided the burned area into 17 zones and dozens of sub-zones. Residents or property owners of the first to be cleared for reentry — known as Zone 1C, along Kaniau Road in the north part of Lahaina — will be allowed to return on supervised visits Monday and Tuesday between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. Those eligible could pick up passes from Friday to Sunday in advance.

Darryl Oliveira, interim administrator of the Maui Emergency Management Agency, said officials also want to ensure that they have the space and privacy to reflect or grieve as they see fit.

"They anticipate some people will only want to go for a very short period of time, a few minutes to say goodbye in a way to their property," Hawaii Gov. Josh Green said last week. "Others may want to stay several hours. They're going to be very accommodating."

Those returning will be provided water, shade, washing stations, portable toilets, medical and mental health care, and transportation assistance if needed. Nonprofit groups are also offering personal protective equipment, including masks and coveralls. Officials have warned that ash could contain asbestos, lead, arsenic or other toxins.

While some residents, like Claydon, might be eager to find jewelry, photographs or other tokens of their life before the fire, officials are urging them not to sift through the ashes for fear of raising toxic dust that could endanger them or their neighbors downwind.

Weakening Ophelia still poses a risk of coastal flooding and heavy rain in some parts of the US

By LAURA UNGAR and JONATHAN MATTISE Associated Press

Nearly a day after being downgraded from a tropical storm, Ophelia still threatened parts of the Northeast on Sunday with coastal flooding, life-threatening waves and heavy rain from Washington to New York City, the National Hurricane Center said.

As Ophelia weakened, a new tropical storm named Philippe brewed in the Atlantic.

Even though Ophelia was downgraded Saturday night, meteorologists warned that swells generated by the storm would affect the East Coast for the rest of the weekend, likely causing dangerous surf conditions and rip currents. Ophelia was also expected to drop 1 to 3 inches (2.5 to 7.6 centimeters) of additional rain over parts of the Mid-Atlantic and New England. Isolated river flooding was also possible.

Ophelia was south of Washington on Sunday morning and was expected to continue moving northeast before turning east and then weakening more over the next two days, according to the hurricane center. Meanwhile, Philippe was 1,175 miles (1,890 kilometers) west of the Cabo Verde Islands, which are off the west coast of Africa. That storm had maximum sustained winds of 50 mph (75 kph).

The National Weather Service said numerous New Jersey communities reported coastal flooding, including Sea Isle City and Brielle. Thousands of people in the state remained without power Sunday. NJ.com reported more than 6,000 customers were without electricity Sunday morning, down from a high of 13,000.

Flooding and road closures were also reported in coastal Delaware.

The storm came ashore Saturday near Emerald Isle, North Carolina, with near-hurricane-strength winds of 70 mph (113 kph), but the winds weakened as the system traveled north, the hurricane center said.

Videos from social media showed significant flooding in the state's riverfront communities such as New Bern, Belhaven and Washington. A few thousand North Carolina homes and businesses remained without electricity Sunday morning, according to poweroutage.us, which tracks utility reports.

Even before making landfall, Ophelia proved treacherous enough that five people, including three children, had to be rescued Friday night by the Coast Guard. They were aboard a 38-foot (12-meter) catamaran stuck in choppy water and strong winds while anchored off Cape Lookout, North Carolina.

On Saturday, Greenville police posted a video on Facebook of an officer rescuing a small pit bull from

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floodwaters. Police said the dog was tied to a fence and “just inches from drowning” when an officer responded after someone called authorities. Animal protection authorities opened an investigation.

Elsewhere, a rescue team helped the Beaufort County Sheriff’s Office evacuate 15 people from a campground between the Pamlico River and the Chocowinity Bay, according to Brian Haines, a spokesperson for the North Carolina Division of Emergency Management.

At the southern tip of North Carolina’s Outer Banks, organizers on Sunday were finally able to open the long-running Beaufort Pirate Invasion, a weekend event centered on the 1747 Spanish attack on the town. Winds tore down the big tent for a banquet planned for Saturday, and several other tents were damaged or shredded.

In other developments, high winds forced New York City officials to suspend ferry service to Rockaway. Other ferries were operating on schedule.

The governors of North Carolina, Virginia and Maryland each declared a state of emergency on Friday. Scientists say climate change could result in hurricanes expanding their reach into mid-latitude regions more often, making storms like this month’s Hurricane Lee more common.

One study simulated tropical cyclone tracks from pre-industrial times, modern times and a future with higher emissions. It found that hurricanes would track closer to the coasts, including around Boston, New York City and Virginia, and would be more likely to form along the Southeast coast.

In some areas where the storm struck Saturday, the effects were modest.

Aaron Montgomery, 38, said he noticed a leak in the roof of his family’s new home in Williamsburg, Virginia. They were still able to make the hour-long drive for his wife’s birthday to Virginia Beach, where he said the surf and wind were strong but the rain had stopped.

“No leak in a roof is insignificant, so it’s certainly something we have to deal with Monday morning,” he said.

Six young activists devote years to climate fight with 32 governments. Now comes their day in court

By BARRY HATTON and HELENA ALVES Associated Press

COSTA DA CAPARICA, Portugal (AP) — Sofia Oliveira was 12 years old when catastrophic wildfires in central Portugal killed more than 100 people in 2017. She “felt it was now or never to raise our voices” as her country appeared to be in the grip of deadly human-caused climate change.

Now a university student, Sofia and five other Portuguese young adults and children between 11 and 24 years of age are due on Wednesday at the European Court of Human Rights, where they are accusing 32 European governments of violating their human rights for what they say is a failure to adequately address climate change. It’s the first climate change case filed with the court and could compel action to significantly slash emissions and build cleaner infrastructure.

Victory for them in Strasbourg would be a powerful instance of young people taking a legal route to force their governments to adopt a radical recalibration of their climate measures.

The court’s rulings are legally binding on member countries, and failure to comply makes authorities liable for hefty fines decided by the court.

The courts are increasingly seen by activists as a way of sidestepping politics and holding governments to account. Last month, in a case brought by young environmental activists, a judge in the U.S. state of Montana ruled that state agencies were violating their constitutional right to a clean and healthful environment by allowing fossil fuel development.

When the Portuguese group decided in 2017 they would pursue legal action, Sofia wore braces on her teeth, stood taller than her younger brother André and was starting seventh grade at school. The braces are long gone and André, who is now 15, is taller than her by a few centimeters (an inch or so).

The past six years, André noted in an interview with The Associated Press, represent almost half of his life. What has kept them going through the piles of legal documents gathered by the nonprofit group support-

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ing them and through lockdowns during the COVID-19 pandemic is what they call the pressing evidence all around them that the climate crisis is getting worse.

The Praia do Norte beach at Costa da Caparica near where Sofia and André live, just south of the Portuguese capital Lisbon, was about 1 kilometer (3,000 feet) long when his father was his age, André says. Now, amid coastal erosion, it measures less than 300 meters (1,000 feet). Evidence like that led him to attend climate demonstrations even before he became a teen.

The other four members of the Portuguese group — Catarina, Cláudia, Martim and Mariana — are siblings and cousins who live in the region of Leiria in central Portugal where summer wildfires are common.

Scientists say the climate of the Sahara is jumping across the Mediterranean Sea to southern European countries like Portugal, where average temperatures are climbing and rainfall is declining. Portugal's hottest year on record was 1997, followed by 2017. The four driest years on record in the country of 10.3 million people have all occurred since 2003.

It's a similar story across Europe, and the legal arguments of the six Portuguese are backed by science. The Earth sweltered through its hottest Northern Hemisphere summer ever measured, with a record warm August capping a season of brutal and deadly temperatures, according to the World Meteorological Organization.

The world is far off its pledge to curb global warming, scientists say, by cutting emissions in line with the requirements of the 2015 Paris climate accord. Estimates say global average temperatures could rise by 2 to 4 degrees Celsius (2.6 to 7.2 Fahrenheit) since pre-industrial times by 2100 at current trajectories of warming and emissions reductions plans.

Among the specific impacts listed by the young Portuguese are being unable to sleep, concentrate, play outside or exercise during heat waves. One of their schools was closed temporarily when the air became unbreathable due to wildfire smoke. Some of the children have health conditions such as asthma that makes them more vulnerable to heat and air pollution.

They are being assisted by the Global Legal Action Network, an international nonprofit organization that challenges human rights violations. A crowdfunding campaign has drawn support from around the world, with messages of support coming from as far away as Japan, India and Brazil.

Gerry Liston, a GLAN legal officer, says the 32 governments have "trivialized" the case. "The governments have resisted every aspect of our case ... all our arguments," he said.

André describes the governments as "condescending." Sofia adds: "They don't see climate as a priority."

Portugal's government, for example, agrees the state of the environment and human rights are connected but insists the government's "actions seek to meet its international obligations in this area" and cannot be faulted.

At the same time, some governments in Europe are backsliding on commitments already made.

Poland last month filed legal challenges aimed at annulling three of the European Union's main climate change policies. Last week, the British government announced it is delaying by five years a ban on new gas and diesel cars that had been due to take effect in 2030. The Swedish government's state budget proposal last week, meanwhile, cut taxes on gas and diesel and reduced funding for climate and environmental measures.

Amid those developments, the courts are seen by activists as a recourse.

The London School of Economics says that globally, the cumulative number of climate change-related cases has more than doubled since 2015 to more than 2,000. Around one-fourth were launched between 2020 and 2022, it says.

The Portuguese activists, who are not seeking any financial compensation, will likely have to wait some more. The verdict in their case could take up to 18 months, though they see the court's decision in 2020 to fast-track the proceedings as an encouraging sign.

A precedent is also giving the activists heart. The Urgenda Foundation, a Dutch organization that promotes sustainability and innovation, brought against the Dutch Government the first case in the world in which citizens argued that their government has a legal obligation to prevent dangerous climate change.

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In 2019, the Dutch Supreme Court found in Urgenda's favor, ruling that the emissions reduction target set by the government was unlawfully low. It ordered authorities to further reduce emissions.

The government consequently decided to shut down coal-fired power plants by 2030 and adopted billion-euro packages to reduce energy use and develop renewable energy, among other measures.

Dennis van Berkel, Urgenda's legal counsel, accused governments of choosing climate change targets that are "politically convenient" instead of listening to climate scientists. Judges can compel them to justify that what they are doing on climate issues is enough, he said.

"Currently there is no such scrutiny at any level," he told the AP. "That is something incredibly important that the courts can contribute."

'Expend4bles' opens with epic flop while 'Nun 2' claims top spot again at the box office

By JONATHAN LANDRUM Jr. AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Sylvester Stallone and Jason Statham weren't enough to save "Expend4bles" from a debut box office flop. The fourth installment suffered the action-packed franchise's worst opening weekend while "The Nun 2" took home the top spot for a third straight week, data firm Comscore reported on Sunday.

The Lionsgate and Millennium's film, also known as "Expendables 4," pulled in a mediocre \$8.3 million for the big-budget project. It starred several popular names, including Stallone, Statham, Curtis "50 Cent" Jackson, Megan Fox and Dolph Lundgren. It's been nearly a decade since the franchise released a film, which opened with \$15.8 million and eventually grossed \$214 million globally.

But times have certainly changed, as the film barely placed second behind "The Nun 2," a horror movie that earned \$8.4 million in its first week. It's been a solid start for that Warner Bros. project — a spinoff from the lucrative "Conjuring" franchise. So far, the Michael Chaves-directed sequel has grossed more than \$69 million.

"It's a star-studded franchise, but horror is a different situation," said Paul Dergarabedian, the senior media analyst for Comscore. "It just seems no matter what if you're scared in the movie theater a couple times in an hour and a half or two, that's worth the price of admission."

In third, "A Haunting in Venice" earned \$6.3 million. Kenneth Branagh's third Agatha Christie adaptation, following 2017's "Murder on the Orient Express" and 2022's "Death on the Nile," has drawn in over \$25.3 million after two weeks.

"The Equalizer 3," starring Denzel Washington, only dropped to fourth place with \$4.725 million. In four weeks, it has grossed \$81.1 million domestically.

"Barbie," the biggest movie of 2023, is still carrying some momentum from the summer into the fall season. The Greta Gerwig box-office smash ranked in the top five, earning \$3.2 million this week and a domestic total of more than \$630 million after a 10-week period.

Sixth place went to "My Big Fat Greek Wedding 3," with \$3 million, while "It Lives Inside" opened its first week with \$2.6 million. The Sony film "Dumb Money," a dramatization of the GameStop stock frenzy, stayed put in the eighth position for a second week in a row with \$2.5 million.

"Blue Beetle" fell to ninth, with \$1.8 million, and "Oppenheimer" rounded out the top 10 with \$1.6 million. The Christopher Nolan film has garnered \$321 million domestically.

In all, it was another slow output for box office figures as many Hollywood projects are still on hold due to the ongoing Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists, and Writers Guild of America strikes.

This weekend grossed the lowest since Dec. 9, 2022, Dergarabedian said. It was also the first time since the weekend of Feb. 10, 2023 to not have a movie earn over \$10 million.

But Dergarabedian said a "spectacular October" could be on the way with the much-anticipated "Taylor Swift: The Eras Tour" concert film, "The Exorcist: Believer" and "Saw X."

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"Things are going to change next week or the weeks after when Taylor Swift hits the multiplex," he said. "This is the natural ebbs and flow of the box office. That means one thing: We'll be back to normal."

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to Comscore. Final domestic figures will be released Monday.

1. "The Nun II," \$8.4 million.
2. "Expendables," \$8.3 million.
3. "A Haunting in Venice," \$6.3 million.
4. "The Equalizer 3," \$4.7 million.
5. "Barbie," \$3.2 million.
6. "My Big Fat Greek Wedding 3," \$3 million.
7. "It Lives Inside," 2.6 million.
8. "Dumb Money," \$2.5 million.
9. "Blue Beetle," \$1.8 million.
10. "Oppenheimer," \$1.6 million.

AP Top 25: Colorado falls out of rankings after first loss and Ohio State moves up to No. 4

By RALPH D. RUSSO AP College Football Writer

Colorado and Deion Sanders fell out of The Associated Press college football poll on Sunday after a resounding loss in one of the weekend's showcase games, and the teams toward the top of the rankings were shuffled and tightened.

A season-high six teams received first-place votes, the most since the 2016 preseason poll. Georgia is still where it started at No. 1 in the AP Top 25, but it is down to 55 first-place votes out of a possible 63.

Michigan remained No. 2 and got a first-place vote. Texas stayed at No. 3 with two first-place votes. Ohio State moved up two spots to No. 4 and got a first-place vote after beating Notre Dame with a touchdown on its final offensive play.

The Fighting Irish slipped to two spots to No. 11.

Florida State dropped a spot to No. 5 after a victory at Clemson, but it nevertheless received three first-place votes.

No. 6 Penn State and No. 7 Washington each moved up a spot. The Huskies received a first-place vote.

Southern California fell three places to No. 8 while No. 9 Oregon and No. 10 Utah each moved up a spot to give the Pac-12 four teams in the top 10 for the first time in the history of the conference.

The Ducks' blowout of Sanders' Colorado team knocked the Buffaloes all the way out of the AP Top 25 from No. 19.

Colorado has been the story of the early season, starting 3-0 after winning just one game last season. The Buffs jumped into the rankings with an opening week upset of TCU, last season's national runner-up.

After the Buffaloes were dominated at Oregon, USC comes to Boulder next week to give Colorado a chance to either jump back in the rankings or become an afterthought for voters for the rest of the season.

Utah's victory over UCLA sent the Bruins falling out of the poll, leaving the Pac-12 with six ranked teams after two weeks with a conference-record eight.

Alabama, which fell out of the top 10 last week for the first time since 2015, inched up a spot to No. 12 after beating Mississippi.

The Rebels dropped five spots to No. 20.

POLL POINTS

Six teams receiving first-place votes is the most in a regular-season poll since Nov. 1, 2015.

In that poll, Ohio State was the No. 1 team, and like Georgia it had been that way since the preseason as the defending national champion. The Buckeyes received only 39 first-place votes.

No. 2 Baylor got six first-place votes as did No. 3 Clemson. No. 4 LSU got five. No. 5 TCU received four

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and No. 7 Alabama had one.

IN

Three teams entered the rankings this week, all for the first time this season:

- No. 23 Missouri is ranked for the first time since a brief stay in 2019.
- No. 24 Kansas is ranked for the second consecutive season. The Jayhawks have not had two straight years with poll appearances of any kind since 2008-09.
- No. 25 Fresno State, which has won 13 straight games, the second-longest streak in the country behind Georgia, finished last season at No. 24.

OUT

Joining Colorado and UCLA in falling out the poll was Iowa.

The Hawkeyes have yo-yoed in and out of the rankings and did not receive a single point this week after getting shut out at Penn State.

CONFERENCE CALL

The Southeastern Conference moves back into the top spot, though more than half are in the bottom batch.

SEC — 7 (Nos. 1, 12, 13, 20, 21, 22, 23).

Pac-12 — 6 (Nos. 7, 8, 9, 10, 16, 19).

Big Ten — 3 (Nos. 2, 4, 6).

ACC — 4 (Nos. 5, 15, 17, 18).

Big 12 — 3 (Nos. 3, 14, 24).

Mountain West — 1 (No. 25).

Independent — 1 (No. 11).

RANKED vs. RANKED

No. 10 Utah at No. 19 Oregon State. First ranked matchup between the two after 25 meetings.

No. 24 Kansas at No. 3 Texas. The first time the Jayhawks have played the Longhorns when they are ranked.

No. 13 LSU at No. 20 Mississippi. The 11th ranked matchup in the rivalry.

No. 11 Notre Dame at No. 17 Duke. Maybe the biggest home game in Duke history will be the first trip to Durham, North Carolina, for ESPN's "College GameDay." With Duke off the board, only six schools in Power Five conferences have not hosted the pregame show: California, Illinois, Maryland, Rutgers, Syracuse and Virginia.

US will establish diplomatic ties with the Cook Islands and Niue as Biden hosts Pacific leaders

By AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden is set to establish diplomatic relations Monday with two South Pacific nations, the Cook Islands and Niue, as his administration aims to show to Pacific Island leaders that it is committed to increasing American presence in the region.

The announcement comes as Biden prepares to welcome leaders to Washington for a two-day U.S.-Pacific Island Forum Summit expected to focus heavily on the impact of climate change.

Biden has put a premium on improving ties in the Pacific amid rising U.S. concern about China's growing military and economic influence. Plans for the diplomatic move were confirmed by two senior administration officials who briefed reporters on the condition of anonymity before the formal announcement.

White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said Biden would use the summit to strengthen "ties with the Pacific Islands and discuss how we address complex global challenges, like tackling the existential threat of climate change, advancing economic growth, and promoting sustainable development."

Some of the leaders attended an NFL game in Baltimore on Sunday and later planned to visit a U.S. Coast Guard cutter in the city's harbor for a briefing on combating illegal fishing and other maritime issues.

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Pacific Island leaders have been critical of rich countries for not doing enough to control climate change despite being responsible for much of the problem, and for profiting from loans provided to vulnerable nations to mitigate the effects.

At last year's summit, the White House unveiled its Pacific strategy, an outline of its plan to assist the region's leaders on pressing issues like climate change, maritime security and protecting the region from overfishing. The administration pledged the U.S. would add \$810 million in new aid for Pacific Island nations over the next decade, including \$130 million on efforts to stymie the impacts of climate change.

The forum includes Australia, the Cook Islands, Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

Biden will welcome the leaders to the White House on Monday morning for talks and a working lunch. They also will meet on Monday with Biden's special envoy on climate, John Kerry, for talks focused on climate change. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and U.N. Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield will host the leaders at the State Department for a dinner.

Kerry and Samantha Power, administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development, will host the leaders on Tuesday for climate talks with members of the philanthropic community. The leaders also plan to meet with members of Congress. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen will host a roundtable with the leaders and members of the business community.

Power last month travelled to Fiji to open a new USAID mission that will manage agency programs in nine Pacific Island countries: Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, and Palau. The U.S. this year has opened embassies in Solomon Islands and Tonga, and is on track to open an embassy in Vanuatu early next year.

The White House said most members of the 18-member forum were dispatching their top elected official or foreign minister to the summit.

But the administration was "very disappointed" that Solomon Islands Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare, who was in New York last week for the U.N. General Assembly, opted not to stick around for the White House summit, according to an administration official. The Solomon Islands last year signed a security pact with China.

Prime Minister Meltek Sato Kilman Livtuvanu of Vanuatu also is expected to miss the summit. He was elected by lawmakers earlier this month to replace Ishmael Kalsakau, who lost a no-confidence vote in parliament.

Biden earlier this year had to cut short a planned visit to the Indo-Pacific, scrapping what was to be a historic stop in Papua New Guinea, as well as a visit to Australia for a gathering with fellow leaders of the so-called Quad partnership so he could focus on debt limit talks in Washington. He would have been the first sitting U.S. president to visit Papua new Guinea.

The U.S. president is set to honor Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese with a state visit next month.

Israeli airstrikes hit Gaza for the 3rd day in a row as West Bank violence intensifies

By AREF TUFABA Associated Press

NOUR SHAMS REFUGEE CAMP, West Bank (AP) — Israeli airstrikes struck militant sites in Gaza on Sunday for the third straight day, the Israeli military said, after Palestinian militants near the border fence launched incendiary balloons into Israel and threw an explosive at soldiers. The strike came on the heels of an Israeli military raid in the northern West Bank that Palestinian health officials said killed two Palestinians.

It was the latest bloodshed in a surge of violence during a sensitive Jewish holiday period. A series of violent escalations on the border between Israel and Gaza over the past week has raised the specter of an escalation for the first time since a brief round of conflict last May between Israel and the Palestinian

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Islamic Jihad militant group.

It comes at a fraught time. Jews are set to mark Yom Kippur, the holiest day on their calendar, on Sunday night followed by the weeklong Sukkot festival later in the month.

There were no reported casualties from the strikes in Gaza. Earlier on Sunday, the Israeli military shot and wounded five Palestinians who were rallying at the separation fence along the Israeli frontier with the crowded enclave. It's a familiar tactic for Palestinians in Gaza protesting a 16-year blockade imposed by Israel with Egypt's help. Israel says the blockade is needed to prevent the ruling Hamas militant group from arming itself.

The Israeli army said Sunday it had targeted two posts belonging to Hamas, the militant group that rules Gaza, just east of the Bureij refugee camp and Jabaliya. The posts were close to the fence separating the territory from Israel, where dozens of Palestinians have been holding daily demonstrations for the past week.

For the third time in as many days, media outlets posted photos of militant protesters sending a barrage of balloons attached to incendiary devices over the eastern border. The Israeli army said the balloons set two fires in Israel.

Rising tensions were also palpable in the West Bank.

Earlier in the day, the Israeli military said it moved into the Nour Shams refugee camp, near the town of Tulkarem, to destroy what it described as a militant command center and bomb-storage facility in a building.

It said that engineering units detonated a number of bombs planted under roads and that militants opened fire and hurled explosives, as troops responded with live fire.

The Palestinian Health Ministry said two men — Asid Abu Ali, 21, and Abdulrahman Abu Daghash, 32 — were killed by Israeli fire. The raid caused heavy damage to the camp's main road, severing water pipes and flooding parts of the street. The ground floor of the targeted building was heavily damaged, while part of the exterior wall of the second floor collapsed.

The Hamas militant group claimed Abu Ali as a member.

Elsewhere in the West Bank, Birzeit University, a major Palestinian institution, said the Israeli army carried out a rare raid on its campus near the city of Ramallah and arrested nine students, including the head of the student council. It said the students were all supporters of the Hamas militant group. The university denounced the raid, which it said caused damage to university property.

The Israeli military claimed the suspects were plotting an attack on Israeli targets.

Israel has been carrying out stepped-up military raids, primarily in the northern West Bank, for the past year and a half in what it says is a campaign to root out Palestinian militants and thwart future attacks.

But Palestinians say the raids entrench Israel's 56-year occupation over the West Bank. The raids have shown little sign of slowing the fighting and contributed to the weakening of the Palestinian Authority, the self-rule government that administers parts of the Israeli-occupied West Bank.

Some 190 Palestinians have been killed in the West Bank since the start of the year, according to a tally by The Associated Press. Israel says most of those killed have been militants, but youths protesting the incursions and others not involved in the confrontations have also been killed.

At least 31 people have been killed in Palestinian attacks against Israelis this year.

On Saturday, Israeli airstrikes hit a militant site for the second time in two days, after Palestinians sent incendiary balloons into Israeli farmland and Palestinian protesters threw stones and explosives at soldiers at the separation fence

The spike in violence comes during the Jewish New Year holiday season. Jews are set to mark Yom Kippur, the holiest day on their calendar, on Sunday night followed by the weeklong Sukkot festival later in the month.

During Sukkot, large numbers of Jews are expected to visit Jerusalem's most sensitive holy site, revered by Jews as the Temple Mount and Muslims as the Noble Sanctuary. The compound, home to the Al-Aqsa Mosque, is often a focal point for violence.

Israel captured the West Bank, east Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip in the 1967 Mideast war. The Palestinians seek those territories for their hoped-for independent state.

Usher to headline the 2024 Super Bowl halftime show in Las Vegas

By JONATHAN LANDRUM Jr. AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Usher has a new confession: The Grammy winner will headline the Apple Music Super Bowl Halftime Show in Las Vegas.

The NFL, Apple Music and Roc Nation announced Sunday that Usher would lead the halftime festivities from Allegiant Stadium on Feb. 11. The music megastar, who has won eight Grammys, said he's looking forward to performing on the NFL's biggest stage.

"It's an honor of a lifetime to finally check a Super Bowl performance off my bucket list," Usher said in a statement. "I can't wait to bring the world a show unlike anything else they've seen from me before."

Usher spring boarded into superstardom with "Confessions," which sold more than 10 million units in the U.S. and earned him eight nominations at the 2005 Grammys, winning him three. He lost album of the year to Ray Charles' final album "Genius Loves Company," released two months after the legend died.

"Confessions" ranks among one of the best-selling music projects of all time and launched No. 1 hits such as "Yeah!" with Ludacris and Lil Jon, "Burn" and "Confessions Part II." His special edition version included the smooth hit "My Boo," a duet with Alicia Keys. Next year will mark the 20th anniversary of the epic album.

Usher, 44, is currently headlining his "Usher: My Way" residency in Las Vegas, which has drawn sold-out shows and rave reviews. He's also beginning an eight-night block of performances in Paris on Sunday. Usher is expected to wrap up his Las Vegas residency in early December before he makes his Super Bowl halftime appearance a couple months later.

The singer has served as a coach on NBC's "The Voice" and appeared in several films including "Hustlers" and "Light It Up."

Roc Nation founder Jay-Z called Usher the ultimate "artist and showman."

"Ever since his debut at the age of 15, he's been charting his own unique course," he said of Usher, who released his debut self-titled album in 1994. In total, he's released eight studio projects that were filled with hits including "U Got It Bad," "U Remind Me," "You Make Me Wanna," "Nice & Slow" and "Love In This Club" with Jeezy.

"Beyond his flawless singing and exceptional choreography, Usher bares his soul," Jay-Z continued. "His remarkable journey has propelled him to one of the grandest stages in the world. I can't wait to see the magic."

Roc Nation and Emmy-winning producer Jesse Collins will serve as co-executive producers of the halftime show. Hamish Hamilton returns as director. It's the second collaboration between the NFL, Apple Music and Roc Nation.

Last year, a pregnant Rihanna emerged suspended on a platform above the field for a spectacular halftime show — her first solo event in seven years.

"We are so proud of what we were able to accomplish together with the NFL and Roc Nation last year and now with the insanely talented Usher set to take the stage we're looking forward to another incredible Halftime Show from one of the world's all-time greatest performers," said Oliver Schusser, Apple's Vice President of Apple Music, Apple TV+, Sports, and Beats.

Usher will join a list of celebrated musicians who have played during Super Bowl halftime shows including Beyoncé, Madonna, Dr. Dre, Snoop Dogg, Coldplay, Kendrick Lamar, Eminem, U2, Lady Gaga, Michael Jackson and Katy Perry.

"Usher is an icon whose music has left an indelible mark on the cultural landscape throughout his career," said Seth Dudowsky, NFL Head of Music.

Government should pay compensation for secretive Cold War-era testing, St. Louis victims say

By JIM SALTER Associated Press

ST. LOUIS (AP) — Ben Phillips' childhood memories include basketball games with friends, and neighbors gathering in the summer shade at their St. Louis housing complex. He also remembers watching men in hazmat suits scurry on the roofs of high-rise buildings as a dense material poured into the air.

"I remember the mist," Phillips, now 73, said. "I remember what we thought was smoke rising out of the chimneys. Then there were machines on top of the buildings that were spewing this mist."

As Congress considers payments to victims of Cold War-era nuclear contamination in the St. Louis region, people who were targeted for secret government testing from that same time period believe they're due compensation, too.

In the 1950s and 1960s, the Army used blowers on top of buildings and in the backs of station wagons to spray a potential carcinogen into the air surrounding a St. Louis housing project where most residents were Black. The government contends the zinc cadmium sulfide sprayed to simulate what would happen in a biological weapons attack was harmless.

Phillips and Chester Deanes disagree. The men who grew up at the Pruitt-Igoe housing complex are now leading the charge seeking compensation and further health studies that could determine whether the secretive testing contributed to various illnesses or premature deaths that some Pruitt-Igoe residents later suffered.

"We were experimented on," Phillips said. "That was a plan. And it wasn't an accident."

The new push comes as federal lawmakers are weighing compensation for people claiming harm from other government actions — and inactions — during the Cold War.

The Associated Press reported in July that the government and companies responsible for nuclear bomb production and atomic waste storage sites in and near St. Louis were aware of health risks, spills and other problems, but often ignored them. Many believe the nuclear waste was responsible for the deaths of loved ones and ongoing health problems.

The AP report, part of a collaboration with The Missouri Independent and the nonprofit newsroom Muck-Rock, examined documents obtained by outside researchers through the Freedom of Information Act.

Republican U.S. Sen. Josh Hawley introduced legislation soon after the news reports calling for expansion of an existing compensation program for exposure victims. The Senate endorsed the amendment. While the House has yet to vote, Democratic President Joe Biden said last month that he was "prepared to help in terms of making sure that those folks are taken care of."

Former residents of Pruitt-Igoe say they should be taken care of, too.

Phillips and Deanes, 75, are co-founders of PHACTS, which stands for Pruitt-Igoe Historical Accounting, Compensation, and Truth Seeking. Their attorney, Elkin Kistner, said it would be "appropriate and necessary" for Hawley's proposal to be widened to include former Pruitt-Igoe residents.

The government released documents in 1994 revealing details about the spraying. And St. Louis wasn't alone in being subjected to secretive Cold War-era testing. Similar spraying occurred at nearly three dozen other locations.

There were other types of secret testing. In a 2017 book, St. Louis sociologist Lisa Martino-Taylor cited documents obtained through a FOIA request to detail how pregnant women in several cities were given doses of radioactive iron during prenatal visits to determine how much was absorbed into the blood of the mothers and babies. The government also created radiation fields inside buildings, including a California high school.

The area of the testing in St. Louis was described in Army documents as "a densely populated slum district." About three-quarters of the residents were Black.

"We were living in so-called poverty," Deanes said. "That's why they did it. They have been experimenting on those living on the edge since I've known America. And of course they could get away with it because

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they didn't tell anyone."

Pruitt-Igoe was built in the 1950s with the promise of a new and better life for lower income residents. The project failed and was demolished in the 1970s.

Despite the ultimate demise, Deanes and Phillips said that through their youth, Pruitt-Igoe was a welcoming place. Yet over the years, both men cited countless premature deaths and unusual illnesses among relatives and friends who once lived at Pruitt-Igoe.

Phillips' mother died of cancer and a sister suffered from convulsions that puzzled her doctors, he said. Phillips himself lost hearing in one ear due to a benign tumor. Deanes' brother battled health problems for years and died of heart failure.

Both men wonder if the spraying was responsible.

A government study found that in a worst-case scenario, "repeated exposures to zinc cadmium sulfide could cause kidney and bone toxicity and lung cancer." Yet the Army contends there is no evidence anyone in St. Louis was harmed.

A spokesperson for the Army said in a statement to the AP that health assessments performed by the Army "concluded that exposure would not pose a health risk," and follow-up independent studies also found no cause for alarm.

Phillips and Deane believe the previous health studies were half-hearted. In addition to a new health study, they'd like to see soil tested to see if any radioactive material was part of the spraying.

It's unclear if Hawley's bill might be expanded. Messages left with his office were not returned.

Democratic U.S. Rep. Cori Bush of St. Louis said in a statement that she and her staff "are currently looking into alternative pathways that the federal government can take to ensure those impacted by the spraying of radioactive compounds and biochemicals in Pruitt-Igoe are also addressed."

Deanes and Phillips say that in addition to compensation and more detailed studies, they want an apology. "This shouldn't go on," Deanes said. "How are we supposed to be the leader of the free world and this is the way we conduct ourselves with our own citizens?"

Today in History: September 25

Soldiers escort Black students into Little Rock high school

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Monday, Sept. 25, the 268th day of 2022. There are 97 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Sept. 25, 1957, nine Black students who'd been forced to withdraw from Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, because of unruly white crowds were escorted to class by members of the U.S. Army's 101st Airborne Division.

On this date:

In 1513, Spanish explorer Vasco Nunez de Balboa crossed the Isthmus of Panama and sighted the Pacific Ocean.

In 1789, the first United States Congress adopted 12 amendments to the Constitution and sent them to the states for ratification. (Ten of the amendments became the Bill of Rights.)

In 1919, President Woodrow Wilson collapsed after a speech in Pueblo, Colorado, during a national speaking tour in support of the Treaty of Versailles.

In 1956, the first trans-Atlantic telephone cable officially went into service with a three-way ceremonial call between New York, Ottawa and London.

In 1964, the sitcom "Gomer Pyle, U.S.M.C.," starring Jim Nabors, premiered on CBS.

In 1978, 144 people were killed when a Pacific Southwest Airlines Boeing 727 and a private plane collided over San Diego.

In 1981, Sandra Day O'Connor was sworn in as the first female justice on the Supreme Court.

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In 1992, NASA's Mars Observer blasted off on a \$980 million mission to the red planet (the probe disappeared just before entering Martian orbit in August 1993).

In 1994, Russian President Boris Yeltsin began a five-day swing through the United States, hoping to encourage American investment in his country's struggling economy.

In 2012, President Barack Obama, speaking to the U.N. General Assembly, pledged U.S. support for Syrians trying to oust President Bashar Assad, calling him "a dictator who massacres his own people."

In 2013, skipper Jimmy Spithill and Oracle Team USA won the America's Cup with one of the greatest comebacks in sports history, speeding past Dean Barker and Emirates Team New Zealand in the winner-take-all Race 19 on San Francisco Bay.

In 2016, golf legend Arnold Palmer died at age 87.

In 2017, former congressman Anthony Weiner was sentenced to 21 months behind bars for illicit online contact with a 15-year-old girl.

In 2018, Bill Cosby was sentenced to three-to-10 years in prison for drugging and molesting a woman at his suburban Philadelphia home. (After serving nearly three years, Cosby went free in June 2021 after the Pennsylvania Supreme Court overturned his conviction.)

In 2020, the late Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg lay in state at the U.S. Capitol, making history as the first woman so honored in the United States.

Today's Birthdays: Polka bandleader Jimmy Sturr is 82. Former Defense Secretary Robert Gates is 80. Actor Josh Taylor is 80. Actor Robert Walden is 80. Actor-producer Michael Douglas is 79. Model Cheryl Tiegs is 76. Actor Mimi Kennedy is 75. Movie director Pedro Almodovar is 74. Actor-director Anson Williams is 74. Actor Mark Hamill is 72. Basketball Hall of Famer Bob McAdoo is 72. Actor Colin Friels is 71. Actor Michael Madsen is 65. Actor Heather Locklear is 62. Actor Aida Turturro is 61. Actor Tate Donovan is 60. TV personality Keely Shaye Smith is 60. Actor Maria Doyle Kennedy is 59. Basketball Hall of Famer Scottie Pippen is 58. Actor Jason Flemyng is 57. Actor Will Smith is 55. Actor Hal Sparks is 54. Actor Catherine Zeta-Jones is 54. Rock musician Mike Luce (Drowning Pool) is 52. Actor Bridgette Wilson-Sampras is 50. Actor Clea DuVall is 46. Actor Robbie Jones is 46. Actor Joel David Moore is 46. Actor Chris Owen is 43. Rapper T. I. is 43. Actor Van Hansis is 42. Actor Lee Norris is 42. Actor/rapper Donald Glover is 40. Actor Zach Woods is 39. Actor Jordan Gavaris is 34. Olympic silver medal figure skater Mao Asada is 33. Actor Emmy Clarke is 32.

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