

Groton Daily Independent

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Sunday, June 9

U12 All at Sisseton Tourney
United Methodist: Worship at Conde at 8:30 a.m., at Groton at 10:30 a.m., coffee hour at 9:30 a.m.
Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship at 9 a.m.
Catholic: SEAS Confession, 7:45-8:15 a.m.; SEAS Mass, 8:30 a.m.; Turton Confession, 10:30-10:45 a.m.; Turton Mass, 11 a.m.
First Presbyterian Church: Bible Study, 9:30 a.m.; Worship, 11 a.m.
Groton CM&A: Sunday School, 9:15 a.m.; worship, 10:30 a.m.
St. John's Lutheran: Worship at St. John's, 9 a.m., and at Zion, 11 a.m.

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



Monday, June 10

Senior Menu: Baked cod, macaroni and cheese, spinach salad with tomato, fruit cocktail, whole wheat bread.
Junior Legion at Watertown, 5 p.m. (2)
Junior Teeners hosts Webster, 5:30 p.m. (2)
U10 R/W hosts Claremont, 5:30 p.m. (2)
U8 B hosts Claremont, 5:30 p.m. (2)
School Board Meeting, 7 p.m.
The Pantry at Community Center, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Senior Citizens meet at the Groton Community Center 1 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.
United Methodist: PEO meeting (outside group), 7 p.m.
Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.

OPEN: 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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Groton Jr Teeners 14U Claim Victory Over Redfield

By GameChanger Media

Groton Jr Teeners 14U were triumphant over Redfield 5-4 on Saturday.

Groton Jr Teeners 14U got on the board in the bottom of the first inning after Layne Johnson grounded out, and Jordan Schwan walked, each scoring one run.

Redfield took the lead, 4-3, in the top of the seventh thanks to singles by Neil Salmen, Zachary Bonin, and David Bixler.

Redfield committed an error, which helped Groton Jr Teeners 14U tie the game at four in the bottom of the seventh.

Kolton Antonsen earned the win for Groton Jr Teeners 14U. The reliever gave up seven hits and four runs (three earned) over two innings, striking out none and walking one. Jackson Rude took the loss for Redfield. The reliever went three and one-third innings, allowing three runs (zero earned) on four hits, striking out two and walking three. Braeden Flihs began the game for Groton Jr Teeners 14U. The right-handed pitcher gave up zero hits and zero runs over five innings, striking out seven and walking four. Salmen stepped on the hill first for Redfield. The starting pitcher allowed two hits and two runs (zero earned) over three innings, striking out seven and walking five.

Alex Abeln set the tone at the top of the lineup, leading Groton Jr Teeners 14U with two hits in three at bats. Johnson and Antonsen each drove in one run for Groton Jr Teeners 14U. Schwan paced Groton Jr Teeners 14U with two walks. Overall, the team had patience at the plate, accumulating eight walks for the game. Schwan and Abeln each stole multiple bases for Groton Jr Teeners 14U. Groton Jr Teeners 14U turned one double play in the game.

Bixler, Salmen, Bonin, and Derrick Bogart each drove in one run for Redfield. Bonin went 2-for-4 at the plate to lead Redfield in hits. Rude stole two bases. Redfield turned one double play in the game.

Groton Post 39 Win In Fashion, Walk It Off Over W.I.N.

By GameChanger Media

It came down to the wire on Saturday, as Groton Post 39 grabbed the victory in walk-off fashion, 5-4, over Warner-Ipswich-Northwestern Legion. Groton Post 39 were down 4-3 in the bottom of the seventh inning when Colby Dunker singled, scoring two runs.

Ryan Groeblichhoff struck out 11 batters on the day. They also gave up six hits and three runs over six innings while walking three.

Warner-Ipswich-Northwestern Legion opened the scoring in the first after an error scored one run.

An error gave Groton Post 39 the lead, 2-1, in the bottom of the second.

Quinton Fischbach lined out, which helped Warner-Ipswich-Northwestern Legion tie the game at two in the top of the fifth.

A ground out by Dillon Abeln gave Groton Post 39 the lead, 3-2, in the bottom of the fifth.

A single by Fischbach gave Warner-Ipswich-Northwestern Legion the lead, 4-3, in the top of the seventh.

Jarret Erdmann earned the win for Groton Post 39. The reliever allowed one hit and one run over one inning, striking out two and walking one. Samuel Vetter took the loss for Warner-Ipswich-Northwestern Legion. They went one inning, giving up two runs on two hits, striking out one and walking two. Devon Fischbach stepped on the bump first for Warner-Ipswich-Northwestern Legion. The right-handed pitcher surrendered four hits and three runs (one earned) over five innings, striking out three and walking six.

Dunker drove the middle of the lineup, leading Groton Post 39 with two runs batted in. The outfielder went 2-for-2 on the day. Dunker and Brevin Flihs each collected two hits for Groton Post 39. Groton Post 39 had patience at the plate, accumulating eight walks for the game. Abeln, Dunker, and Gavin Englund led the team with two walks each.

Fischbach and Vetter were a force together in the lineup, as they each collected two hits for Warner-Ipswich-Northwestern Legion while hitting back-to-back. Fischbach led Warner-Ipswich-Northwestern Legion with three runs batted in. The infielder went 2-for-4 on the day. Warner-Ipswich-Northwestern Legion turned one double play in the game.

Next up for Groton Post 39 is a game against Post 260 on Friday.

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Warner-Ipswich-Northwestern Legion 4 - 5 Groton Post 39

📍 Home 📅 Saturday June 08, 2024

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	R	H	E
WRNR	1	0	0	0	1	0	2	4	7	2
GRTN	0	2	0	0	1	0	2	5	6	1

BATTING

Warner-Ipswich-N	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
D Fischbach (P)	2	1	0	0	2	1
D Ward (LF)	0	0	0	0	0	0
X Kadlec (LF, CF)	3	2	1	0	0	1
A Remily (1B)	4	0	1	1	0	1
G Lane (2B)	3	1	0	0	1	2
S Vetter (3B, P)	3	0	2	0	0	1
Q Fischbach (SS,...)	4	0	2	3	0	0
N Fischbach (RF)	3	0	0	0	0	2
A Mikkelson (RF)	1	0	0	0	0	1
D Bakeberg (CF, S...)	3	0	0	0	1	2
L Fischbach (C)	3	0	1	0	0	2
Totals	29	4	7	4	4	13

TB: S Vetter 2, L Fischbach, Q Fischbach 2, A Remily, X Kadlec, **HBP:** S Vetter, X Kadlec, **LOB:** 10

PITCHING

Warner-Ipswi	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
D Fischbach	5.0	4	3	1	6	3	0
S Vetter	1.0	2	2	2	2	1	0
Totals	6.0	6	5	3	8	4	0

L: S Vetter, **P-S:** S Vetter 29-15, D Fischbach 97-51, **WP:** D Fischbach, **BF:** S Vetter 7, D Fischbach 24

Groton Post 39	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
B Flihs (SS)	4	2	2	1	0	0
D Abeln (2B)	2	1	0	1	2	0
B Althoff (1B)	3	0	1	0	1	1
C Dunker (LF)	2	0	2	2	2	0
G Englund (DH)	1	0	0	0	2	1
C Simon (3B)	3	0	0	0	0	0
K Flihs (C)	2	1	0	0	1	1
B Imrie (RF)	3	0	1	0	0	1
T Diegel (CF)	3	1	0	0	0	0
Totals	23	5	6	4	8	4

2B: B Althoff, **3B:** B Flihs, **TB:** C Dunker 2, B Flihs 4, B Althoff 2, B Imrie, **CS:** B Imrie, **SB:** K Flihs, B Flihs, **LOB:** 5

Groton Post 39	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
R Groebing...	6.0	6	3	2	3	11	0
J Erdmann	1.0	1	1	1	1	2	0
Totals	7.0	7	4	3	4	13	0

W: J Erdmann, **P-S:** J Erdmann 23-13, R Groeblinghoff 106-73, **HBP:** J Erdmann, R Groeblinghoff, **BF:** J Erdmann 6, R Groeblinghoff 29

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Groton Transit Fundraiser

Thursday, June 20th, 2024

5:00 pm - 7:00pm at

Groton Community Center

***109 N 3rd Street-One block East of Groton
Transit***

Let us do the cooking for you!!

Burgers, Brats, Beans,
Watermelon, Chips and the
Famous Mini Donuts!!

*Food*Fun*Door Prizes*

FREE WILL DONATION



Please join us & Help support Groton Transit!!

Impromptu March at Capitol Ends Without Incident

Pierre, S.D.- An unscheduled march at the state capitol Saturday afternoon ended without incident when a group of protesters were asked to leave by the South Dakota Highway Patrol. The group did not have a permit to protest on the premises.

In a Twitter/X post this evening, Governor Kristi Noem said, "Today, Nazis attempted to rally at the SD Capitol without a permit and were escorted away by Highway Patrol officers. Nazis are not welcome here in South Dakota. We stand on the shoulders of generations of Americans who have fought for the freedom of all- here and abroad. We stand for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. We reject all hatred and Nazis. Full stop."

The Highway Patrol is an agency of the South Dakota Department of Public Safety.

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Inaugural Groton Day of Baseball/Softball



Just like it takes a village to raise a child, it takes many working together to keep up a baseball complex. Groton City employees, Foundation board members, and volunteers put in many hours. Pictured here are Joel Kroll and his brother Mike Kroll working together to zip tie the field screen Saturday afternoon at the Inaugural Groton Day of Baseball/Softball. Overlooking is Groton Baseball/Softball Foundation Treasurer, Doug Hamilton. Joel's wife, Jess also serves on the board as the head of fundraising. (Photo by

April Abeln)



Jarod Fliehs assists announcer Mike Imrie outside the crow's nest. Both are members of the Groton Baseball/Softball Foundation.

(Photo by April Abeln)



Axel Abeln winds up to pitch during the 1st U12 baseball game against Britton. (Photo by April

Abeln)

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The U12 baseball team ready to play ball against Britton after being introduced by announcer, Mike Imrie. (Photo by April Abeln)

GROTON

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**Opening
June 12th
Hours Daily
10 a.m. to 8 p.m.**

**Under new ownership,
Beau and Chelsea Larson**



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Aaron Severson, known to many as "Sev", lives and breathes baseball. Here is pictured getting the fields ready for the U12 baseball games against Britton. Sev also coached his Jr. Legion team Saturday night, assisted other big-league coaches, and managed groundskeepers. (Photo by April Abeln)



Several fans take advantage of the shaded picnic shelters as they watch the U10 Groton Baseball team finish their 2nd game against Warner. (Photo by April Abeln)

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The Dacotah Bank tent shades spectators between Locke/Karst and Nelson Fields for Groton's Inaugural Day of Baseball/Softball. (Photo by April Abeln)



Volunteer Dad, Chris Ehresmann gives pep talk to the U12 Baseball Team prior to their games against Britton Saturday afternoon. (Photo by April Abeln)

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Groton Graham Rose up to bat in Groton U12 double header vs Britton. (Photo by Bruce Babcock)



Braden Flihs pitching in Groton Junior Teeners game vs Redfield. (Photo by Bruce Babcock)



Groton summer employee Dillon Abeln preps fields between games during the Groton Inaugural Baseball/Softball Day on Saturday. (Photo by Bruce Babcock)



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Name Released in Clay County Fatal Crash

What: Single vehicle fatal
crash

Where: SD Highway 19, mile
marker 0, five miles west of Ver-
million, SD

When: 12:31 a.m. Wednesday,
June 5, 2024

Driver 1: Maizie Lynn Ihnen, 22
year-old female from Vermillion,
SD, fatal injuries

Vehicle 1: 2018 Chevrolet Impala
Seatbelt Use: No

Clay County, S.D.- A 22-year-old
woman died Wednesday morn-
ing in a single-vehicle crash near
Vermillion, SD.

Preliminary crash information
indicates Maizie L. Ihnen, the
driver of a 2018 Chevrolet Impala
was northbound on SD Highway
19 near mile marker 0, having just
crossed over the Nebraska/South
Dakota bridge. Ihnen failed to
negotiate a curve in the roadway
and entered the east ditch where
the vehicle vaulted over a field ap-
proach and rolled. Ihnen was not
wearing a seatbelt and sustained
fatal injuries.

The South Dakota Highway Pa-
trol is investigating the crash. All
information released so far is only
preliminary.

The Highway Patrol is an agency
of the South Dakota Department
of Public Safety.

Beadle County Fatal Crash

What: Single vehicle fatal crash

Where: US Highway 281, mile marker 135, two miles north of Bonilla, SD

When: 8:16 p.m. Friday, June 7, 2024

Driver 1: Male, 66, fatal injuries

Vehicle 1: 2022 Indian Motorcycle

Helmet Use: Under investigation

Beadle County, S.D.- A 66-year-old man died Friday evening in a single-vehicle crash near Bonilla, SD.

The name of the person involved has not been released pending notification of family members.

Preliminary crash information indicates the driver of a 2022 Indian motorcycle was traveling south on US 218. The driver entered the southbound shoulder and lost control of the motorcycle and entered the west ditch. The driver was taken to a regional medical center where he was pronounced deceased.

The South Dakota Highway Patrol is investigating the crash. All information released so far is only preliminary.

The Highway Patrol is an agency of the South Dakota Department of Public Safety.

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THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

*Pure and undefiled
religion before God
and the Father is this:
to visit orphans and
widows in their trouble,
and to keep oneself
unspotted from the world.*

🌀 JAMES 1:27 🌀



Detail of "Mothers" by Kathe Kollwitz (1919)

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BIBLE

TRIVIA

by Wilson Casey

1. Is the book of 2 Samuel (KJV) in the Old or New Testament or neither?

2. From 1 Corinthians 16, on which day did Paul tell believers to put aside money for their offerings? *First, Third, Fifth, Sabbath*

3. Which book begins, “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly”? *Judges, Ruth, Ezra, Psalms*

4. What was Matthew’s occupation before becoming a disciple? *Tentmaker, Tax collector, Fisherman, Shepherd*

5. In Esther 2, who foiled a plot to assassinate King Ahasuerus? *Neco, Amaziah, Mordecai, Joshua*

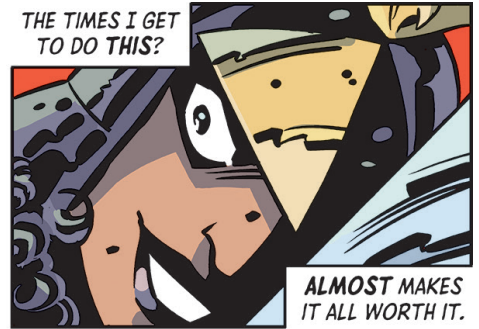
6. What did Ruth and Boaz name their son? *Obed, Hushai, Abner, Jehu*

ANSWERS: 1) Old, 2) First, 3) Psalms, 4) Tax collector, 5) Mordecai, 6) Obed

“*Test Your Bible Knowledge,*” a book with 1,206 multiple-choice questions by columnist Wilson Casey, is available in stores and online.

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THE DEATH PATROL PUTS UP A FIGHT, BUT THEY KNOW THEY'RE EASY PREY FOR US HAWKMEN.



NOTHING DOWN HERE CAN SAVE HER--



BLUE BOY ACTS LIKE HE'S NOT SCARED, BUT I CAN FEEL THE ACROPHOBIA IN HIS FOREARMS.



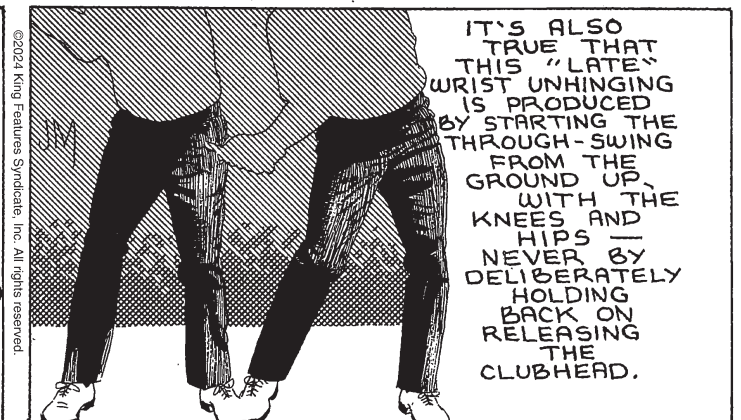
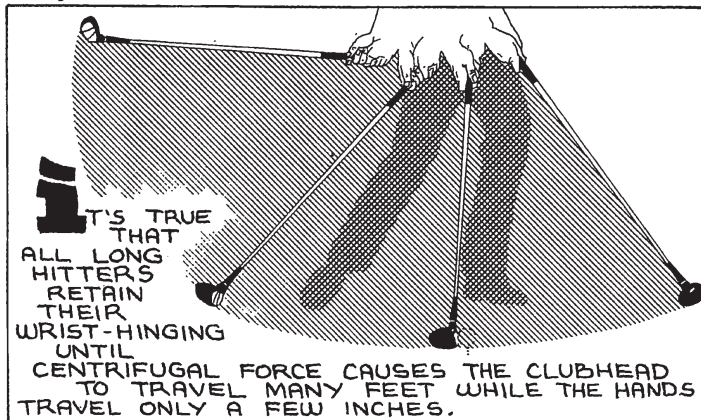
MOST ADVANCED SOCIETY IN ALL OF MONGO, HOVERING FIVE THOUSAND FEET ABOVE IT.



AND THE SCIENTIST GETS AN AUDIENCE...



Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS



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Does Intermittent Fasting Raise the Risk Of Heart Disease?

DEAR DR. ROACH: I read a recent headline that said people who fast intermittently have an increased risk of heart disease. Is there merit to this story? -- K.O.S.

ANSWER: Intermittent fasting is an increasingly common weight-loss strategy. The two most common approaches of intermittent fasting are alternate-day fasting (eating nothing one day, then whatever you want the next) and time-restricted feeding (eating at certain times throughout the day, usually during an eight-hour time frame).

The published data on the benefits of these diets show short-term weight loss (i.e., 12 weeks), but no long-term weight loss (1 year), compared to

the standard dietary advice.

There is evidence of potential harm from intermittent fasting. Studies have shown an increased risk of eating disorders (particularly binge eating). One study showed that disordered eating worsened in those assigned to an intermittent-fasting schedule. However, other studies do not show this.

The concern for disordered eating is highest among younger and female populations, who are at the most risk for eating disorders, and I advise against intermittent fasting for a person with a history of an eating disorder.

The study you read about was presented as an abstract in the March meeting of the American Heart Association; it is not yet published or peer-reviewed. But it did show that people who report an intermittent-fasting diet (specifically those who ate over an 8-hour time frame) were at a higher risk for death from heart disease than those who ate over a 12-16 hour time frame.

However, this wasn't a controlled study, and it is likely that people who chose a time-restricted eating pattern already had issues that put them at a higher risk for heart disease. Still, given the absence of long-term benefits, I don't generally recommend a time-restricted diet or intermittent fasting to my patients.

My colleagues in weight medicine consider intermittent fasting to be an option that helps a subset of people. There are some people who do benefit from this type of diet, and as long as they are eating well and are being monitored by their physician, they should continue to follow their diet if it is working for them.

DEAR DR. ROACH: As a person who has had vocal cord paralysis after a viral infection, I was fortunate not to need many of the outlined modes of care. However, there was one additional therapy that was utilized within my plan of care -- speech therapy. It took a while, but it worked well.

I suppose I may have some lingering weakness. When I experience a new viral upper respiratory infection, I often experience prolonged hoarseness. So, I pull out my exercise sheet once again, practice the techniques, and experience the same great results. -- B.A.

ANSWER: I thank B.A. for writing, as I should have recommended voice therapy for people with vocal cord paralysis or other voice issues.

Some ear, nose and throat physicians, speech-language pathologists, respiratory therapists, and voice coaches specialize in voice therapy.

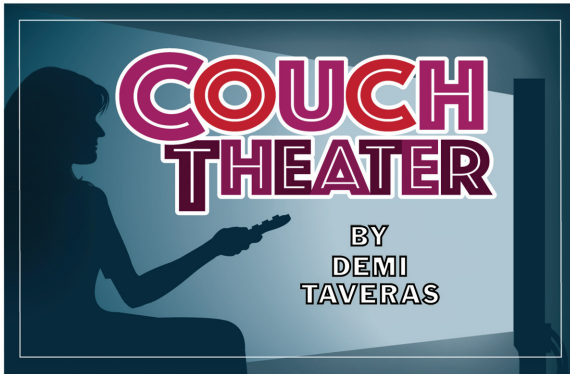
Dr. Roach regrets that he is unable to answer individual questions, but will incorporate them in the column whenever possible. Readers may email questions to ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu.

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Jake Gyllenhaal, center, stars in "Presumed Innocent."

Courtesy of AppleTV+

"Hit Man" (R) -- Glen Powell ("Anyone But You") leads this rom-com with an action twist, which seems to be right up the actor's alley. Powell plays a staffer named Gary in the New Orleans Police Department who goes undercover as a hitman with the intent of arresting the people who hire

him. But when his services are requested by a battered woman named Maddy (Adria Arjona) who begs him to help her kill her husband, the last thing he expects is to fall for her. Even though he denies her request, a steamy romance develops between the two of them. Then just when it seems like Gary has the woman of his dreams, Maddy's husband is found dead, and she becomes the main suspect. Out now! (Netflix)

"Presumed Innocent" (TV-MA) -- This legal thriller miniseries led by Jake Gyllenhaal ("Roadhouse") and Ruth Negga ("Good Grief") hits streaming on June 12. Gyllenhaal immerses himself in the role of Rusty Sabich, a prosecutor at the Chicago Prosecuting Attorneys' office. Although seemingly a family man and a respectable employee, Rusty hides a mountain of secrets that dare to be revealed when his colleague, Carolyn, ends up dead. As his co-workers and family learn that he was romantically involved with Carolyn and borderline obsessed with her, Rusty buckles up for a long battle of trying to prove himself innocent of murdering Carolyn. The first two episodes are out now, with more episodes coming every Wednesday. (Apple TV+)

"Brats" (NR) -- Andrew McCarthy ("Pretty in Pink") rallies his Brat Pack for this documentary film directed by McCarthy himself. The Brat Pack, a play on the Rat Pack from the 1950s, consisted of a group of young actors who appeared alongside each other in coming-of-age films during the 1980s. Some of these actors include Hollywood icons like Rob Lowe, Molly Ringwald, Demi Moore and Emilio Estevez. Featuring current interviews with Lowe, Moore and Estevez, among others, the documentary dives into the films that brought the Brat Pack to their special stardom -- and why, at the time, the young actors hated being known as "Brats." Premieres June 13. (Hulu)

"Nikki Glaser: Someday You'll Die" (TV-MA) -- Shortly after she gave a killer set during the recent Tom Brady roast, comedian Nikki Glaser smartly lined up her second HBO special to hit the small screen. In this one-hour special, Glaser takes on the reality of aging as a woman, why she doesn't want kids, and how she's planning her own death well ahead of time. Although she's known for her blunt delivery and quirky relatability, her jokes fall flatter in an hour-long setting than during the shorter sets she gives at roasts. Check it out now. (Max)

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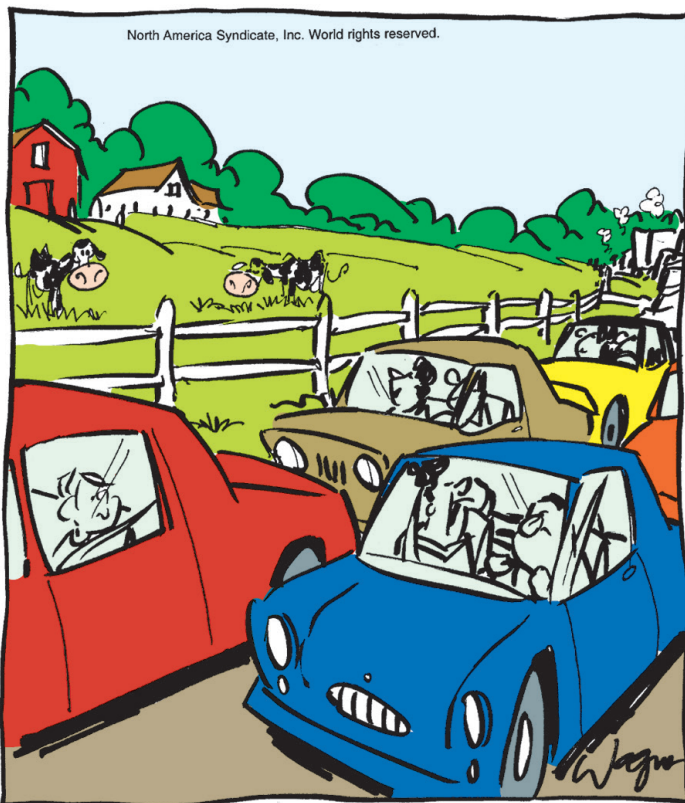
1. Name the only artist who made it to the top of the charts for both music and vocals.
2. Who wrote and released "Society's Child"?
3. Which trio released "Nowhere to Run" in 1965?
4. Name the artist who released an album titled "Couldn't Have Said It Better."
5. Name the song that contains this lyric: "Have you seen her? So fine and pretty, Fooled me with her style and ease, And I feel her from across the room."

Answers

1. Herb Alpert. His instrumental "Rise" (1979) and the song "This Guy's in Love With You" (1968) both topped the Billboard Hot 100 charts.
2. Janis Ian, in 1965. The song was written about interracial dating when Ian was 13 years old. It was inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame in 2002.
3. Martha and the Vandellas. The song ended up on The 500 Greatest Songs of All Time.
4. Meat Loaf, in 2003. The album includes "Did I say That?" and "Man of Steel."
5. "Dance the Night Away," by Van Halen, in 1979. One of the co-writers had wanted to call the song "Dance, Lolita, Dance," but the idea was nixed. The song appeared on the band's second album, "Van Halen II."

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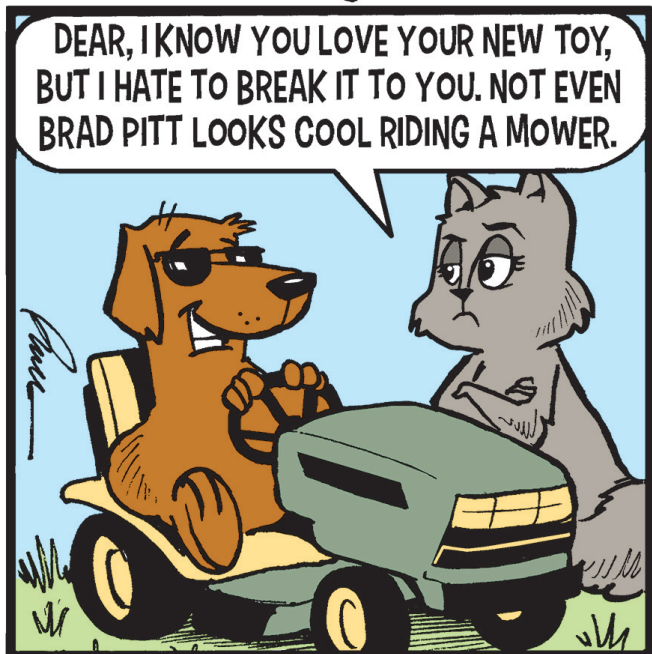
GRIN and BEAR IT ^{by Wagner}



"For the scenic drive, you have to be in the right lane."

Just Like Cats & Dogs

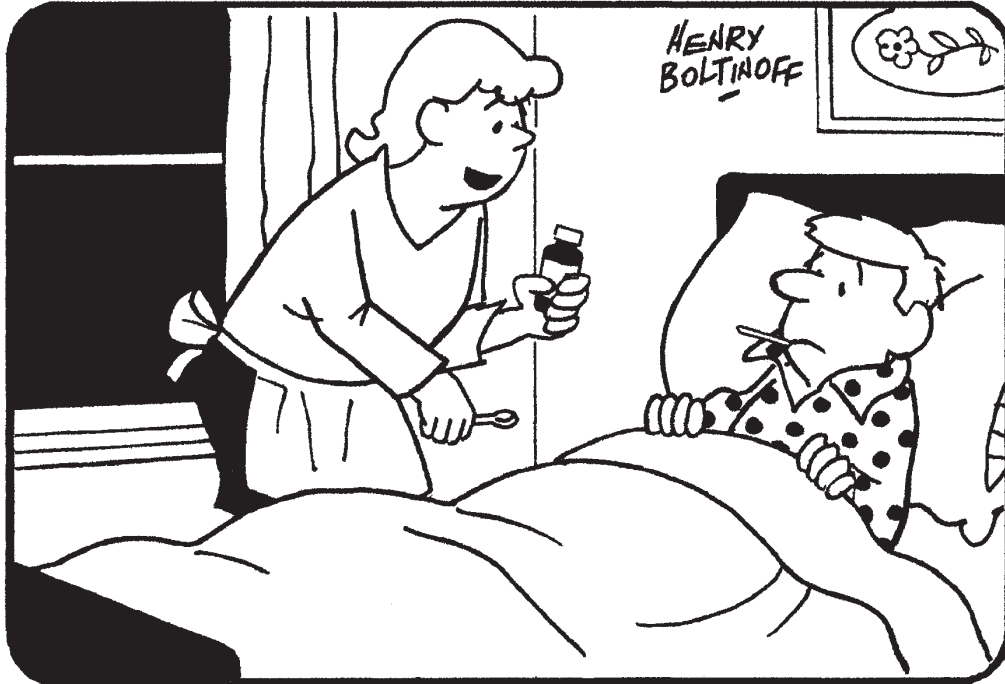
by Dave T. Phipps



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HOCUS-FOCUS

BY
HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Thermometer is missing. 2. Apron bow is different. 3. Cap is missing from bottle. 4. Headboard is taller. 5. Fingers are moved. 6. Leaf is missing from flower.

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* Family reunions are a fun and worthwhile investment. Being together with many generations is a wonderful experience. Often, these gatherings are highly scheduled, but remember to set aside time -- and a designated place -- to simply sit and talk. Here are some other great family reunion tips from our readers. -- JoAnn

* T-shirts are fun for reunion memorabilia, but we also did water bottle coozies this year, and they were a big hit. You can write your name in permanent marker on one side, and then you can keep track of your bottle. -- B.F. in Georgia

* We find that when planning our reunion, the young adults really like theme parties, so we always have a mixer theme night to start. We had a scavenger hunt for the children where we

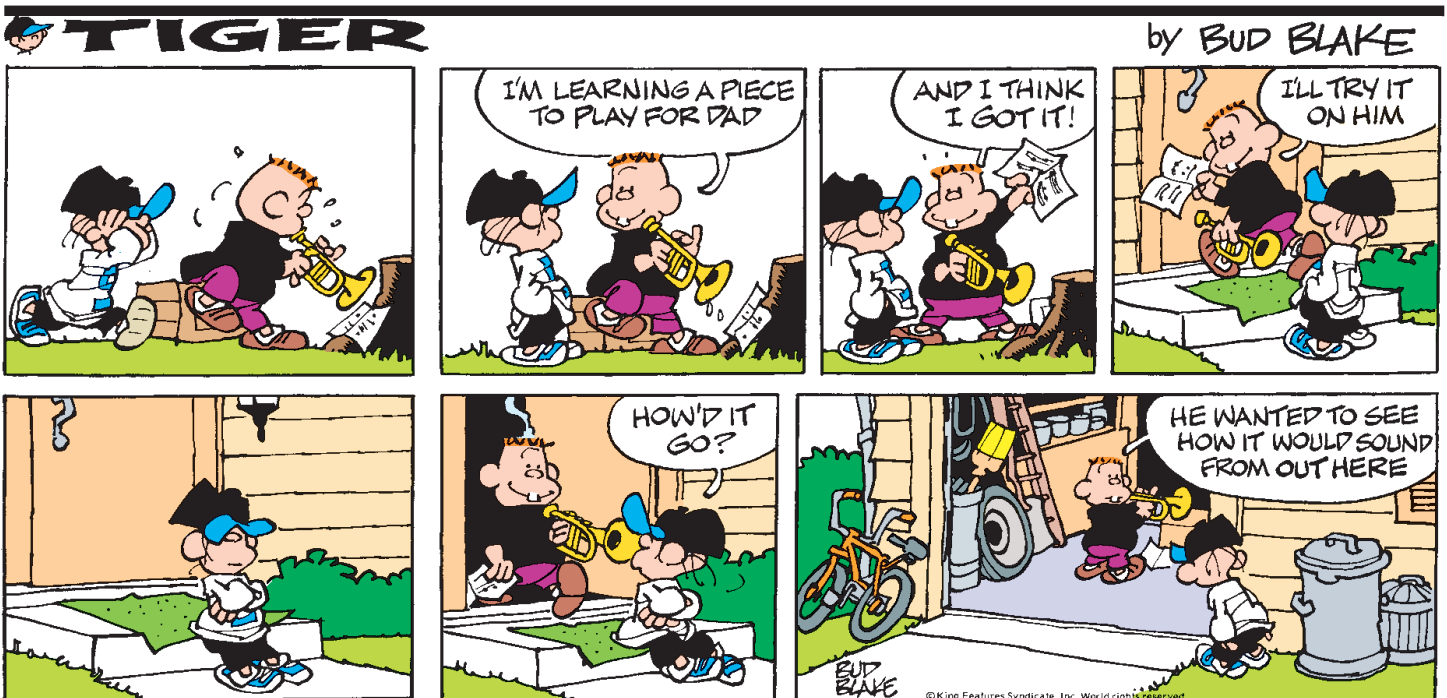
collected clues about some of our more senior family members. To figure out who it was, the kids would listen to them tell stories and ask questions. What a great time for all! -- T.E.

* Make sure that you schedule sitters for the little ones so the adults can relax and participate. Last year, each adult with kids (and some who just wanted to help out) took shifts to be official kid wranglers and entertainers. They did an outstanding job, and the unscheduled parents had time to reconnect with adults without divided attention, and felt good that someone was designated "in charge." -- P.G. in California

* Our family has several members with allergy restrictions and alternative food requirements. I made sure to make a list, which I made copies of and passed along to all our planned food venues. This way, there was advance notice for those who needed gluten-free and vegetarian options. -- M.S. in Florida

Send your tips to Now Here's a Tip, 628 Virginia Drive, Orlando, FL 32803.

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King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Tax pro
- 4 Gun the engine
- 7 Profound
- 11 Pet food brand
- 13 Enjoy Vail
- 14 Doctrines
- 15 Lotion ingredient
- 16 — Talks (online lecture series)
- 17 Iso-
- 18 Media titan Winfrey
- 20 Brief moments
- 22 Barbecue seasoning
- 24 Texas city
- 28 July 4th destinations
- 32 Santa —
- 33 Foot part
- 34 Sailor
- 36 Avenue liners
- 37 Ceremonies
- 39 New Jersey capital
- 41 Wee
- 43 URL ending
- 44 Bleak
- 46 Crazy Horse, for one
- 50 Japanese volcano
- 53 Peace, to Caesar
- 55 Handle
- 56 Unsigned (Abbr.)

1	2	3		4	5	6		7	8	9	10	
11			12		13			14				
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			44			45		46		47	48	49
50	51	52			53		54		55			
56					57				58			
59					60					61		

- 57 Before
- 58 "Baseball Tonight" channel
- 59 Curse
- 60 Melancholy
- 61 ID checker
- 8 Atty.'s title
- 9 Outback bird
- 10 Omega preceder
- 12 Google, for one
- 19 "Say what?"
- 21 Public health agcy.
- 23 Entreat
- 25 Bagel seasoning
- 26 Wrestling style
- 27 Grp.
- 28 Homer's son
- 29 New York canal
- 30 Part of a French play
- 31 Drunkard
- 35 Buddy
- 38 Old map letters
- 40 Hosp. sections
- 42 "Holy smokes!"
- 45 Kate of "The Martian"
- 47 Brewer's kiln
- 48 Diamond arbiters
- 49 TV's "Warrior Princess"
- 50 "Terrif!"
- 51 Italian article
- 52 TV bandleader Batiste
- 54 Deleted

DOWN

- 1 "Arrivederci!"
- 2 Insect organ
- 3 Cupid's specialty
- 4 Letters after Q
- 5 Squeezes (out)
- 6 YouTube offering
- 7 Feature of some trucks

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— King Crossword — Answers

Solution time: 22 mins.

C	P	A		R	E	V		D	E	E	P	
I	A	M	S		S	K	I		I	S	M	S
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			R	U	B		O	D	E	S	S	A
B	E	A	C	H	E	S		C	L	A	U	S
A	R	C	H		G	O	B		E	L	M	S
R	I	T	E	S		T	R	E	N	T	O	N
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			G	R	I	M		S	I	O	U	X
F	U	J	I		P	A	X		N	A	M	E
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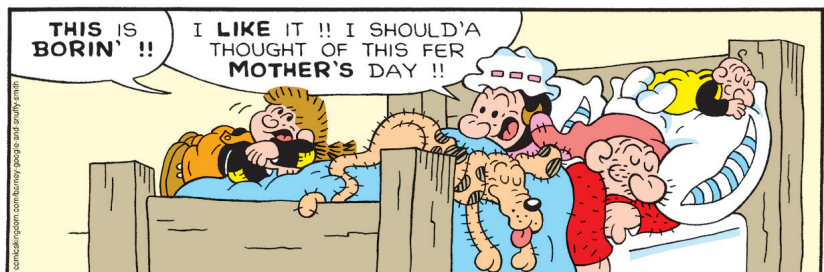
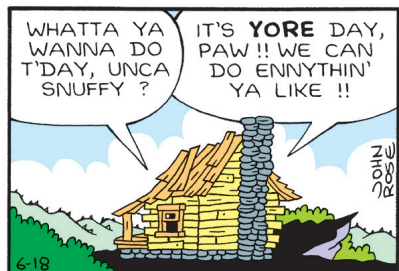
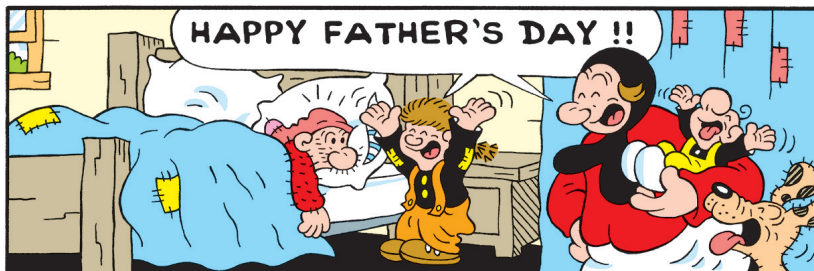
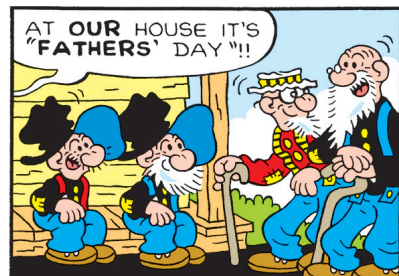
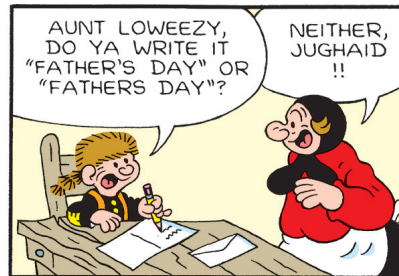
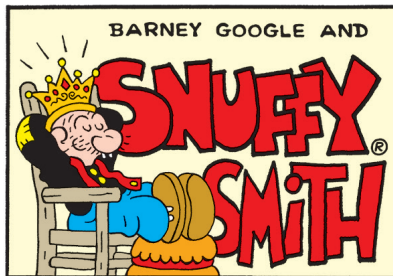
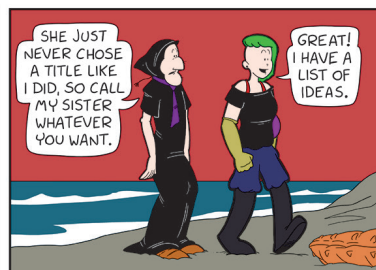
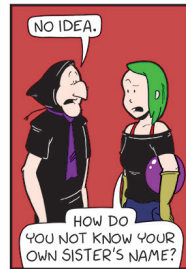
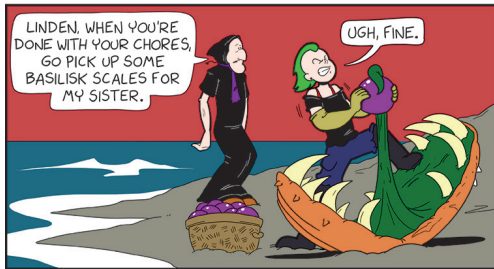
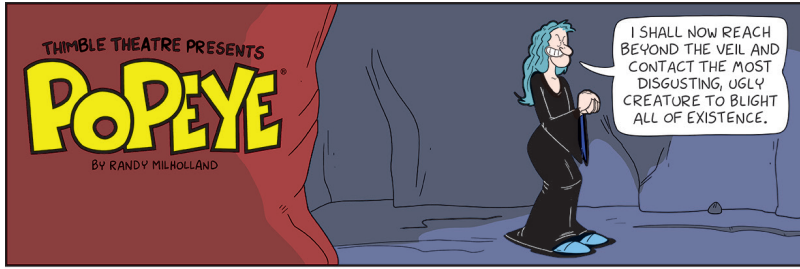
Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



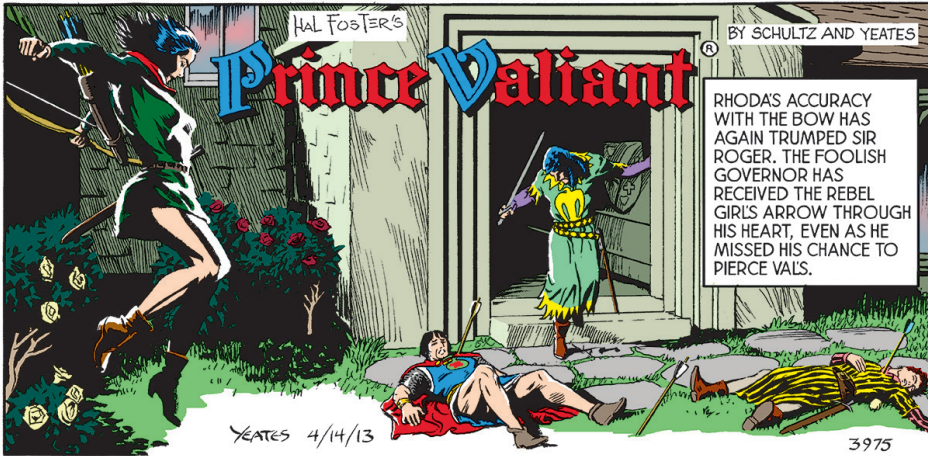
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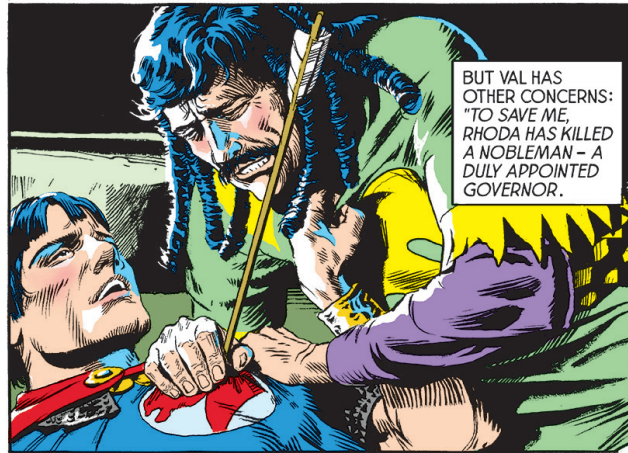
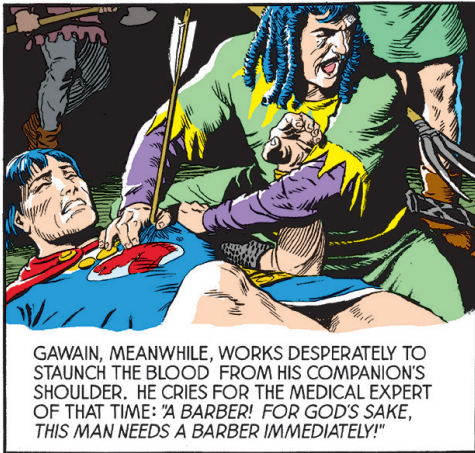
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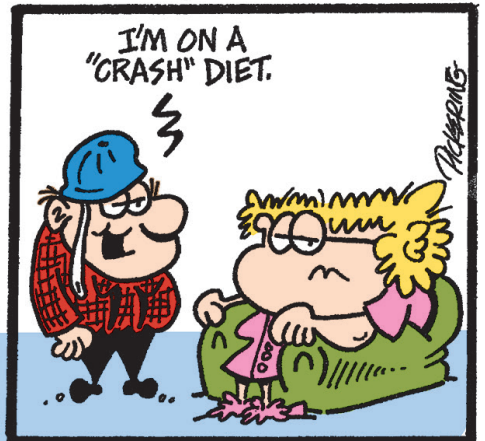
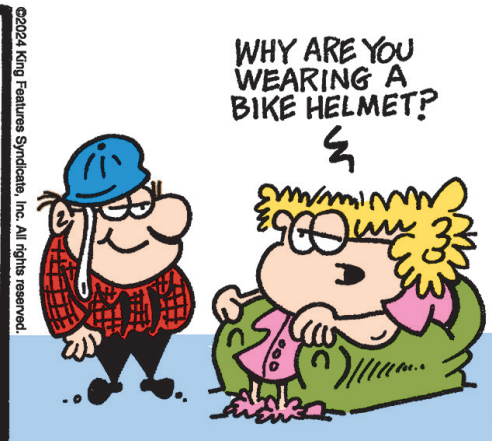
RHODA CAUTIOUSLY CONFIRMS ROGER'S DEMISE. "THUS EVER TO BULLIES WHO FORCE THEIR WAYS ON THE POWERLESS—AND TREAT WEAPONS AS TOYS," SHE MUTTERS SCORNFULLY.

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The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

Don't click that QR code!

Sometimes when we start seeing something nearly everywhere we go, we assume that "somebody" has checked it out and it's therefore safe to use. Not so, at least in the case of those QR codes we're seeing all over.

QR codes (short for quick-response codes) are those little squares with black squiggles in them, machine-readable codes buried in the lines of the little box. The idea is that you hold your phone over them and all the information hidden in the code will pop up for you to read. You'll spot these QR codes everywhere now: a menu posted on the door of a restaurant, a magazine ad, a factsheet with an item that you're considering purchasing, fliers put under windshield wipers in parking lots, a package delivered to your house ... even on TV ads!

How handy, you might think, to be able to instantly access that information.

Unless it's malicious code (spyware) that's been encoded into the black squiggles when it's created by scammers. If that's the case, you instantly put your phone (and all the data you have on it) in jeopardy.

That malicious code can send out emails that look like they came from you. Or it can steal all the names and numbers in your contact list. Or it can add you to a list of targets for spam phone calls. Or it can install software on your phone. The list of things that can go wrong is nearly endless if you click a malicious QR code with your phone.

Consider QR codes to be the phone equivalent of a link that you receive in an email from an unknown person or company. In other words, don't click it.

While it's possible that most of the QR codes you see wherever you go are perfectly safe, there's really no way to tell. Why take the chance?

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1. Wang Zhizhi became the first Chinese-born player in the NBA when he joined what team in 2001?

2. Name the Basketball Hall of Famer who was a six-time WNBA All-Star, a four-time Olympic gold medalist and a three-time (as of 2024) NCAA national champion as head coach of the South Carolina Gamecocks women's basketball team.

3. What golfer incredibly holed out a bunker shot for birdie to win the 1986 PGA Championship by two strokes over Greg Norman?

4. Of Hank Aaron's 755 career home runs, how many were pitched by fellow Hall of Famer Tom Seaver?

5. What two drivers are tied for all-time wins at the 24 Hours of Daytona sportscar endurance race with five apiece?

6. What boxer knocked out former heavyweight champion Ken Norton 54 seconds into the first round of a May 1981 fight at New York City's Madison Square Garden?

7. In ice hockey, what term describes when a player controlling the puck uses a fake move to elude a defender or goalie?



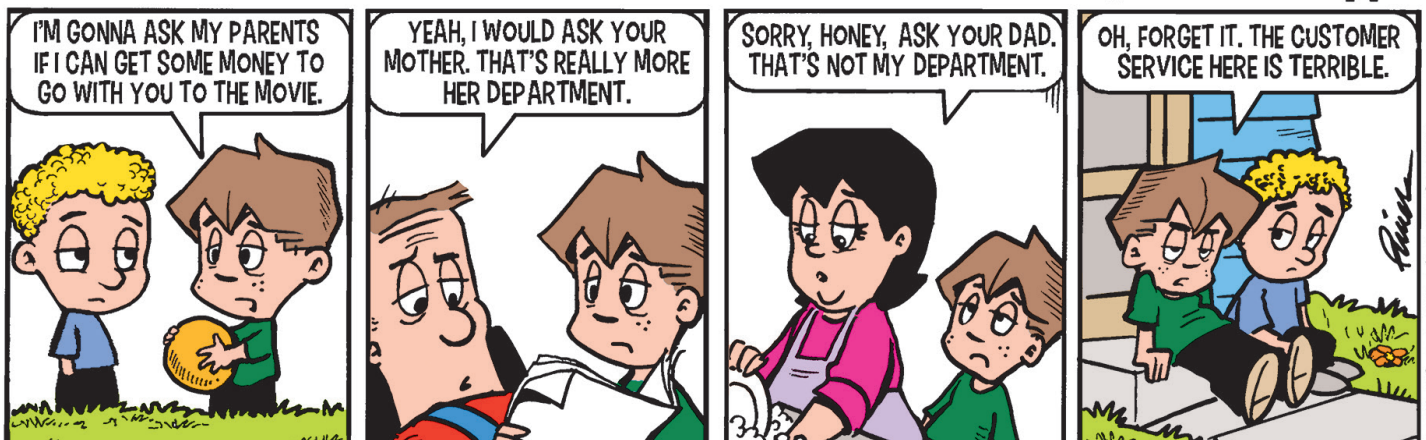
Answers

1. The Dallas Mavericks.
2. Dawn Staley.
3. Bob Tway.
4. Seven, the most Aaron hit off a single pitcher.
5. Hurley Haywood and Scott Pruett.
6. Gerry Cooney.
7. Deke (short for "decoy").

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Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps





Time for summer fun with your dog

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: My dad finally let us adopt a puppy a few months ago, and I can't wait for summer vacation, when I can spend all day with him! He's got lots of energy, but we've been training him to follow commands so he doesn't run off. What are some outside games that I can play with him? -- Kerry B., Winchester, Virginia

DEAR KERRY: You're going to have a wonderful summer! It sounds like you and your family have been diligent about training your dog in basic obedience so that he'll come back to you on command, sit and stay in place. And he'll be old enough -- and have his most important vaccinations out of the way -- to stay healthy

outside or when encountering other dogs.

Here's a few great off-leash games to play:

Fetch: The gold standard game for dogs remains a favorite. Just grab a tennis ball and toss it.

Frisbee: Energetic dogs can chase these flying discs all day.

Agility training: Start with simple tasks like going under or over obstacles.

Swimming: Fill a kiddie pool in the backyard and let your dog splash around on a hot day.

Tracking: Have your dog follow a line of treats to a "jackpot" (a toy or food). Extend the distance between treats each session.

Remember, only take your dog off leash in a safe area or approved off-leash location. A fenced-in backyard is ideal, but if you don't have one of those, go to a dog park or municipal, state or federal park that has an off-leash area. Some of these games, like agility and tracking, can be done on-leash. Most importantly, have fun!

Send your tips, comments or questions to ask@pawscorner.com.

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Strange BUT TRUE

* The Wright brothers' first flight was shorter than the wingspan of a B-52 bomber.

* Bai Fangli, a tricycle driver for 20 years, donated 350,000 yuan to support the education of 300 poor Chinese students. He announced his last payment at the age of 90, saying that he was no longer fit for work.

* There are tea bags made to look like a goldfish swimming in your mug.

* Are you annoyed by the sounds of wheezing, whistling,

chewing, drinking, crunching, slurping, finger tapping and the like? It's not just a quirk, but a psychiatric disorder called misophonia.

* A man spent five months in prison due to being unaware that his bail was just \$2.

* Kenya Railways requires that all trains stop for several minutes before crossing the Mwatate Dam in the southern part of the country. The practice was adopted on the advice of local residents after several mysterious derailments on the dam were blamed on evil spirits inhabiting the reservoir, which townsfolk claimed were angered by the trains not appeasing them by pausing in tribute.

* The world's shortest street, located in Scotland, is a mere 6 centimeters long.

* Jackie Robinson wasn't the first Black player to play Major League Baseball. That honor actually belonged to Moses Fleetwood Walker, a catcher for the Toledo Blue Stockings in 1884.

* The first volume of recipes was published in 62 A.D. by the Roman Apicius. Titled "De Re Coquinaria," it described the feasts enjoyed by the Emperor Claudius.

* India has a bill of rights for cows.

* Relics of saints were so valued in the Middle Ages that when Elizabeth of Hungary died in 1231, her body was quickly dismembered for holy mementos by a crowd.

Thought for the Day: "Forever is composed ofnows." -- Emily Dickinson

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The American toad can eat up to 100 insects in one night, reducing insect damage to your plants. To attract toads to your garden, provide water in which to breed (like a small pond or a ditch), plus a moist, dark place where they can wedge their body, and soil in which to burrow that is free of pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers. If they find a home they like, they might stay for years; observe their unique spot patterns on their back to identify them. When threatened, they can secrete a toxin from lumpy glands behind their eyes, so keep children and pets away and wash your hands after any contact.

- Brenda Weaver

Sources: www.washingtonpost.com, wikipedia

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by Freddy Groves

Don't fall for claims scams

While there's no doubt that the PACT Act did a lot of good, opening up an additional 20 health conditions for eligibility for presumptive benefits, the sheer number of veterans who applied created delays in processing new claims. It also brought out the scammers, thieves and conmen. Those crooks offer so-called assistance with claims ... for a fee.

Fact: You do not have to pay a fee to get help with an initial disability claim. Fact: It is illegal for someone to charge you money to give any assistance in filing that claim.

The only ones who can legally help file your initial claim are the reps that have been accredited by the VA -- and they cannot charge you a fee. Whether it's an attorney or a Veterans Service Organization (VSO) rep, they must be accredited by the VA.

It will be tempting, however, to try to jump the claims line and put your trust in someone who promises to get you fast action. Don't do it. Just wait. If you sign up with a scammer (who might call himself a coach or a consultant), you'll be signing away future money. You'll be asked to sign a contract that will give the thieves a percentage of your benefit money, forever.

You might sign away tens of thousands of dollars to have someone spend a few minutes filling out a form for you. If you renege on that deal, which is a legal contract, you could be haunted by debt collectors and sued, and the scammers will have all of your personal information, including Social Security number and banking details.

If you want to file an initial claim, hook up with an accredited person that you find on this site: www.va.gov/ogc/apps/accreditation/index.asp

If you want to file a subsequent claim, do that the right way as well, with an accredited person to help. While fees can be charged for subsequent or appeals claims, those fees must be reasonable.

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Wishing Well®



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C	Y	Y	S	F	E	S	E	A	L	N	R	O
2	5	3	2	7	8	3	7	5	7	8	7	8
S	F	D	E	H	A	S	O	F	M	I	E	M

HERE IS A PLEASANT LITTLE GAME that will give you a message every day. It's a numerical puzzle designed to spell out your fortune. Count the letters in your first name. If the number of letters is 6 or more, subtract 4. If the number is less than 6, add 3. The result is your key number. Start at the upper left-hand corner and check one of your key numbers, left to right. Then read the message the letters under the checked figures give you.

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1. HISTORY: Who was the first female chancellor of Germany?
2. GEOGRAPHY: Which European capital used to be called Christiania?
3. MOVIES: What are the names of the elderly couple in the animated movie "Up"?
4. ANATOMY: How much blood is in the average human body?
5. SCIENCE: What do ohms measure?
6. TELEVISION: Al Borland is a sidekick in which 1990s TV sitcom?
7. GENERAL KNOWLEDGE: What does an hCG test determine?
8. U.S. STATES: Which state is named after a French king?
9. LITERATURE: Who are Nancy Drew's best friends in the children's mystery novel series?
10. FOOD & DRINK: What fruit is used to make Worcestershire sauce?

Answers

1. Angela Merkel.
2. Oslo, Norway.
3. Carl and Ellie Fredricksen.
4. 1.2 to 1.5 gallons.
5. Electrical resistance.
6. "Home Improvement."
7. Pregnancy.
8. Louisiana (Louis).
9. Bess and George.
10. Tamarind.

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South Dakota Governor

Kristi Noem



South Dakota: *Under God, the People Rule*

How Quick We Are to Forget

The COVID-19 pandemic was a stark reminder about just how much it matters who our leaders are. Governors across the nation shut their states down. Without batting an eye, they took away their people's Freedom of Speech, Freedom of Religion, and Freedom of Assembly. Many Americans were understandably scared, but they were also bullied to give up their rights in the name of "science."

Too many have now tried to rewrite history and claim they weren't part of those attacks on us, our individual decisions, or our Freedoms.

Fortunately, that was never our story in South Dakota.

South Dakota was the only state in America that never shut down. As Governor, I never ordered a single business or church to close. I never tried to mandate anything. Instead, I prioritized providing our people with information. Then, I trusted them to make the best decisions for themselves and their families.

It seemed like the obvious decision to me because that was the constitutional one. It was very clear at the time that there was no constitutional authority to lock down my state. Yet, every single day the liberal media kicked me in the head for standing up for the rights of South Dakotans. They called me the "COVID Queen," they accused me of killing people, and they criticized me for being the only leader making these decisions.

Let me tell you something I've learned – if the media doesn't like what you're doing, it probably means you're doing the right thing.

We absolutely made the right decisions throughout the pandemic. Because we kept our state open, South Dakota is thriving today. We were the only state to say "no thanks" when the President offered extended unemployment benefits – because I knew they would come with massive strings attached. Our people, instead, kept working – and we broke the national record for the lowest statewide unemployment rate. But we still had thousands of open jobs, so we started recruiting Freedom-loving Americans to move to South Dakota. Our population has grown at three-times the national average. We've implemented common-sense conservative policies that allow families to keep more of their hard-earned dollars. We are one of only a few states in the country whose mental health challenges and suicide rates are going down. And we have the highest birth rate in America. People are happy here!

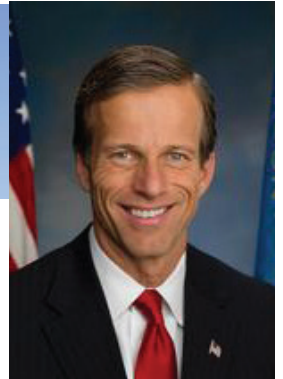
That, of course, is not the story the media will tell you. Even after all the facts have emerged, even with all the data, liberal so-called "journalists" are still trying to paint our decisions as the wrong ones. Just a few days ago I was on a television show where an individual lied about the results of the good decisions we made in our state. This person cited incorrect data, and I, of course, swiftly provided this individual with the accurate information. They apologized for their mistake.

But the larger problem here is not that I had a confrontational interview, or that the media doesn't believe what we did here actually worked to make us successful. The real issue is that these people are trying to rewrite history – even as we learn more and more about the lies Americans were told during the pandemic and how the "science" was actually fake, faulty, and inaccurate.

Those who forget history are doomed to repeat it – and it may be happening faster than we think.

We must remember how quickly many leaders trampled on our God-given rights. We can never allow that kind of unconstitutional authority to take place in what's supposed to be the Freest country in the history of the world. And we must tell our kids and our grandkids to do the same.

John Thune
U.S. SENATOR - SOUTH DAKOTA



Too Little, Too Late

From his first days in office, President Biden began dismantling the border security policies of his predecessor. Illegal immigration soon began to surge, and it hasn't stopped. Three years and more than 9 million illegal crossings later, the president doesn't regret his actions.

The border crisis is a national security crisis. Federal and local law enforcement have warned of threats emanating from the border. Among the millions of illegal border crossers are gang members, criminals, drug traffickers, and individuals on the terrorist watchlist. These are just the individuals we know about. Hundreds of thousands of others evade Border Patrol and enter the country – this is what the Border Patrol chief says keeps him up at night.

Many Americans are rightly concerned about the border crisis, and they know the president bears responsibility for it. President Biden has overseen three successive years of record-breaking illegal immigration, and he's on track for a fourth. For years, he's taken no meaningful action on border security as this crisis has grown worse. But now, he and Democrats in Congress are trying to convince the American people that they care about the border. What's changed? Well, it's an election year.

Democrats will find it difficult to cover up their abysmal record on border security, though. For much of his presidency, President Biden has paid little attention to the border except, again, to dismantle his predecessor's policies. In Congress, Democrats have blocked commonsense policies – things like making it easier to deport criminals, preventing taxpayer dollars from being used to fly illegal immigrants into the country, and barring illegal immigrants from being counted in the national census. But now with polls showing immigration as a top issue for voters, Democrats are making a slapdash effort to make it look like they care about securing the border.

Recently, the same week it was reported that the Biden administration has been offering amnesty to hundreds of thousands of individuals, President Biden signed an executive order that is supposed to stem the flow across the border. It likely won't, but even if it did, it is too little, too late. President Biden still refuses to reinstate many of the effective policies that he rescinded early in his term. It seems that President Biden's executive action is more about his own political security than our border security.

It's taken fear of losing an election to motivate the president to take minimal action on the border. He's betting that voters will forget his record and choose the arsonist to put out the fire. The American people know better. They know that President Biden has allowed this crisis to rage unmitigated for three-plus years and endanger our national security. And I think they are ready for real border security – it's long overdue.

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CONGRESSMAN
DUSTY JOHNSON
Representing **SOUTH DAKOTA** at large



BIG Update

80 years ago, U.S., British, and Canadian troops stormed the beaches of Normandy in a stunning display of bravery in the fight for liberty and freedom. The actions of these men changed the course of history. Every June 6, we remember and honor their legacy, courage, and sacrifice.

This week, I had the honor of meeting two brave World War II veterans who came to Washington, D.C. on the Midwest Honor Flight. Individuals like these men are part of the Greatest Generation and helped change the course of the war, stopping the Axis powers and shaping America and the world into what it is today. As we look at conflicts in the world today, I hope America can remain a shining beacon of hope and freedom for all.

BIG Idea

The U.S. Global Leadership Coalition seeks to define and strengthen America's role in worldwide governmental, economic, and diplomatic affairs. Some familiar faces who are members of the South Dakota advisory committee, which was established in March, came by to talk about how to improve our global relations.

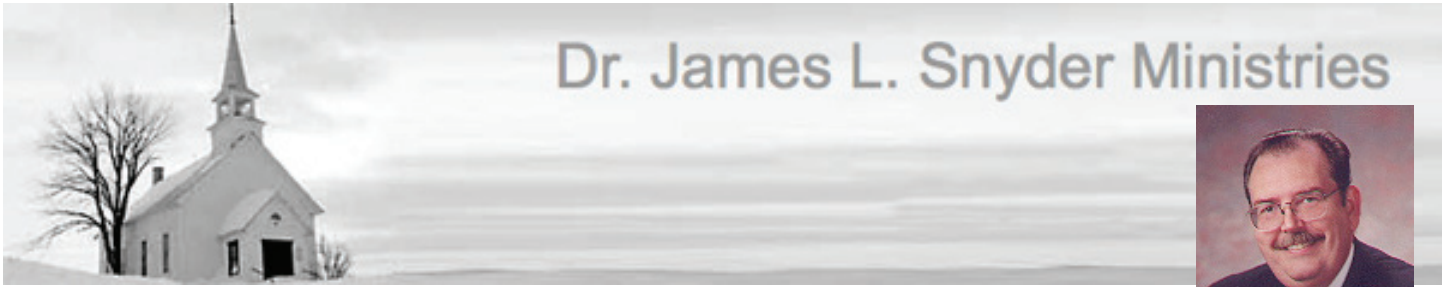
BIG News

In May 20, the International Criminal Court (ICC) filed applications for arrest warrants against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Yoav Gallant. However, the ICC doesn't have jurisdiction over the United States or Israel—the ICC isn't able to investigate an individual from a state that is willing and able to investigate that person.

The arrest warrant is a disgrace to Israel, America, and our allies everywhere. I voted to sanction ICC members who attempt to arrest or detain an American citizen or our allies. America needs to be unwavering in our commitment to Israel and protecting our citizens from illegitimate claims. Just like how Americans and our allies banded together in World War I and World War II to overcome the enemy, we must continue to stand with our ally Israel and their right to defend themselves against the terrorist group Hamas.

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Dr. James L. Snyder Ministries



I Sure Miss Being A Spoiled Brat

After my last doctor's visit, I went to the Publix pharmacy to pick up new medicine. Doctors have a pill for every problem in the world—if only they all worked.

I was early at the store, and my medicine wasn't quite ready. So, I decided to walk around Publix and get a little exercise.

Walking down one aisle, I noticed a little boy who seemed to be having some problems. He was arguing with his mother, stamping his feet and telling her, "I want that candy."

It was all his mother could do to keep him from getting out of control in the store.

I smiled and went down another aisle. About 15 minutes later, I was walking down another aisle, and there was another little boy who was angrily talking to his mother, stamping his feet and telling her, "I deserve those cookies. I want them now."

I tried to ignore that, walked past them, and headed for another aisle. I must confess I was chuckling and very glad I didn't have those boys in my home.

You won't believe it, but as I was walking down another aisle, there was another little boy doing the very same thing. I was unsure what he wanted because I couldn't understand him; he was Spanish. But he had the same characteristics as the other two boys.

I laughed as I went to the pharmacy to pick up my medicine and then headed for my car.

When I got home, I got a cup of coffee, sat on my easy chair, and began thinking. I couldn't get those three boys out of my head as they were acting like spoiled brats.

As I was reflecting on those boys, I had a terrible thought. I don't know where this thought came from, and I would like to chase it down the aisle. But when I was their age, I was also a spoiled brat.

I had forgotten about that stage in my life. I leaned back in my chair and remembered those days in my childhood. At the time, I didn't think of it, but as I look back, I, too, was a spoiled brat.

When I recall those spoiled brat days, I remember just how profitable they were. I was able to get most of the things I really wanted.

When my mother took me shopping, I remember that I put on my spoiled brat attitude and got what I wanted at the store. There were a lot of things, like candy, cookies, and even some ice cream. If I made a scene, my mother would do whatever she could to settle me down.

My grandmother was even better. I didn't have to go into too many temper tantrums before she got me what I wanted. All I had to do was stand up, look at her, and scowled very angrily, and she melted and gave me what I wanted.

Those were the golden days of being a spoiled brat. Whatever I wanted, I could get just by being a spoiled brat. At the time, I was very good at that, and I got much of what I wanted.

I'm not sure how long that spoiled brat era lasted, but I had the advantage of it all those times.

Sitting in my chair thinking about this, I had another thought.

Now that I'm married, how would The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage deal with me reinventing my spoiled brat attitude?

Could I get what I wanted just by acting like a spoiled brat? Would she cave to all of my desires just because I was acting like a spoiled brat? Maybe I could get an Apple Fritter.

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What would be a good place to reinvent my spoiled brat attitude, and how would The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage deal with it?

I spent the whole afternoon thinking about that. I had plenty of time because The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage was out thrift store shopping for the afternoon.

I had to try to think back on how I invented that spoiled brat attitude that got me whatever I wanted.

Just as I was thinking about where to start, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage came home.

She walked into the living room and said, "You will never believe what I saw at one of the thrift stores this afternoon. There was this little boy down one aisle that was going into some kind a temper tantrum to make sure his mother bought him what he wanted. He sure did make a scene there in that store."

She paused momentarily, and I wasn't quite sure what she would say next, but then she said it.

"If I was that boy's mother, and he ever did anything like that with me, I would take him home, spank him and ground him for a month. Nobody has any right to act like a spoiled brat."

My question for the afternoon was finally solved.

This got me thinking about what I read in the Bible. It was something Jesus said. "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets" (Matthew 7:12).

Thinking about this, would a spoiled brat like being treated the same way? I need to treat people the way I would like to be treated. Nice deserves nice.

EARTHTALK ™

Dear EarthTalk: What is the so-called "Internet of Animals" project all about and how does it aim to help the conservation cause? -- Beatrice U., Rampa, ID

In the early 2000s, animal behavior specialist Martin Wikelski was reflecting on the value of monitoring wildlife, which had already been the bulk of his work for decades. Be it through putting GPS chips on birds to understand their migration patterns, or placing radio collars on coyotes to follow their movements through urban areas, it was undeniable that using technology to monitor the movements and physiology of wildlife species was the best way to learn more about their behaviors and habitats.

However, Wikelski knew from experience that monitoring animals had limitations. Only the largest mammals and birds could be monitored due to the large size of GPS technology, and the energy needed to complete monitoring projects was monumental. In an effort to make monitoring more viable on larger scales, Wikelski came up with the idea for an "Internet of Animals": A satellite system that would continuously receive monitoring data from GPS chips placed on animals around the world.

Wikelski soon founded the International Cooperation for Animal Research Using Space (ICARUS) program to bolster his efforts in monitoring smaller creatures. The idea was to develop a chip that was small enough to be placed on more than half of the mammalian species living on Earth, around 40 percent of all birds, and hundreds of reptilian species. These chips would collect temperature, location and accelerometer data and promptly send the data up to a network of low orbit satellites in Earth's atmosphere called "CubeSats", which would in turn send the signals to "Movebank", an online public database. (Accelerometers are used to measure sedentary time, physical activity, physical activity energy expenditure, and sleep-related behaviors.) After decades of development and design, the technology has now been testing the project on smaller scales for more than half a decade.

If ICARUS succeeds in launching a sustainable, broad-scale version of the "internet of animals", the benefits the project would bring to environmental research are nearly infinite. For starters, getting more consistent insight into animals' behaviors and biology could help scientists understand the main threats to wildlife and their habitats to better conserve them.

Additionally, information on meteorology and climate could be provided by creatures that are especially sensitive to inclement weather and temperature changes; for example, elephant seals already provide more than 80 percent of our sea surface temperature data. And that's to say nothing of the potential discoveries that could be made in biology and zoology to further inform our understanding of the climate crisis and conservation.

There are still many challenges that must be overcome before the internet of animals goes online. The GPS chips need to be reliable enough to give accurate data for months or years without malfunctioning, or else the project will not be physically or financially sustainable. That's a lot of pressure to put on a device the size of a nickel. However, with the project already in testing, and financial backing being provided by NASA and several national governments, it may not be long before Wikelski's dream becomes a reality.



The ICARUS project — AKA the Internet of Animals — uses GPS tracking chips & satellites to track wildlife numbers & movements globally.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Fiegen wins Republican PUC nomination at state convention

BY: SEARCHLIGHT STAFF - JUNE 8, 2024 5:19 PM



Public Utilities Commissioner Kristie Fiegen participates in a hearing July 25, 2023, in Fort Pierre on a permit application for the proposed Heartland Greenway carbon dioxide pipeline.

(Joshua Haiar/South Dakota Searchlight)

Challenges mounted by a faction of the state Republican Party largely fizzled Saturday in Pierre as delegates to the state convention picked a nominee for the Public Utilities Commission and several party officers.

Kristie Fiegen, an incumbent member of the PUC, won the party's nomination for the office and will seek reelection in November. Republicans chose Fiegen over challenger Amber Christenson.

Meanwhile, Gideon Oakes has declared his intent to seek the Libertarian Party's nomination for PUC at that party's convention June 29 in Pierre, and Democrats may nominate a candidate at their state convention next weekend in Oacoma.

A challenger for the state Republican Party position of national committeeman, state Rep. Phil Jensen, of Rapid City, withdrew from that race, and convention delegates chose Watertown mayor and former legislator Ried Holien, who also won the position at a previous convention.

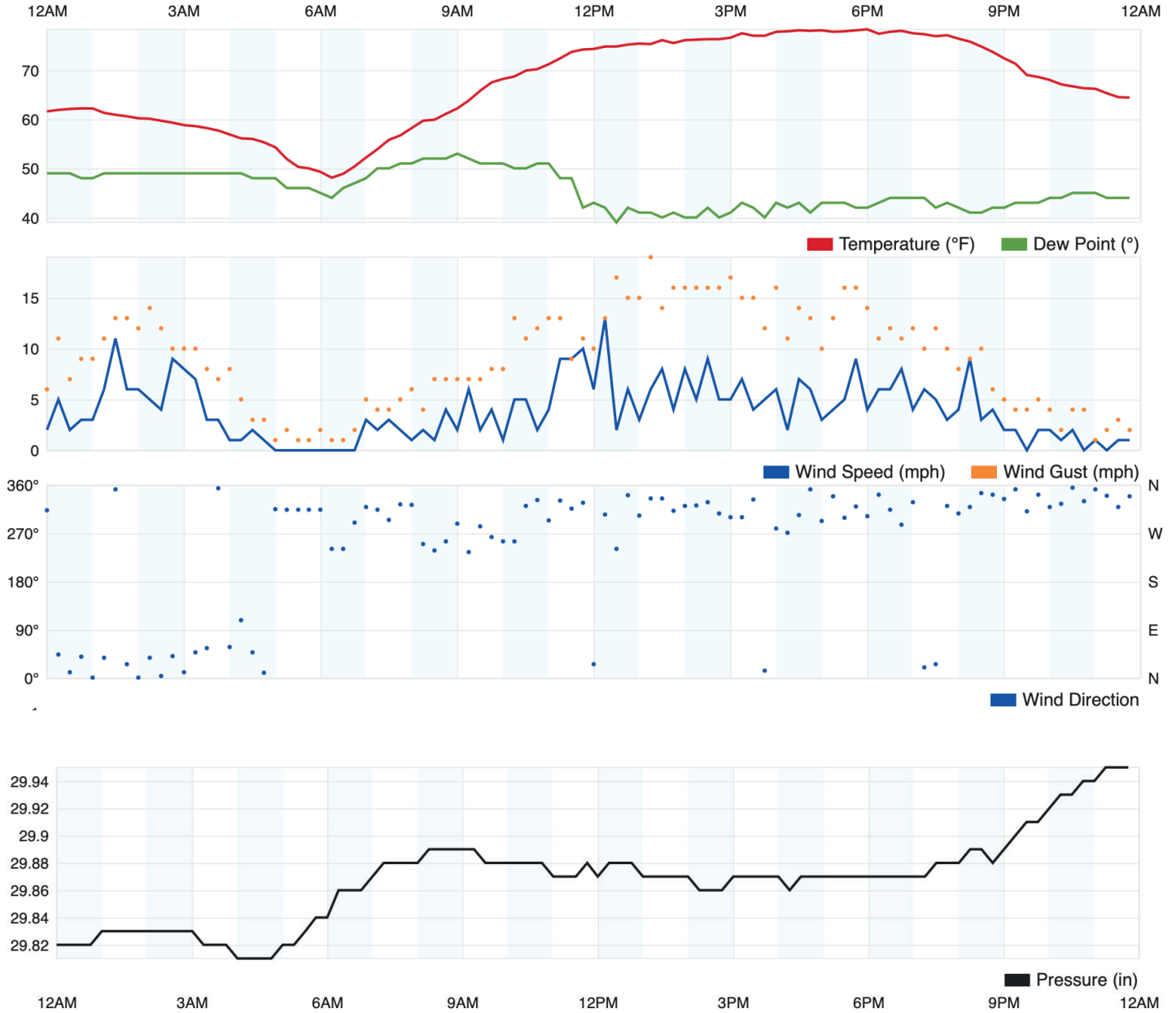
In the race for national committeewoman, delegates chose Heidi Engelhart of Aberdeen over Amber Hulse of Hot Springs. Hulse won the District 30 Republican nomination for state Senate on Tuesday, beating incumbent Julie Frye-Mueller.

Delegates nominated Gov. Kristi Noem, Lt. Gov. Larry Rhoden and Attorney General Marty Jackley as the party's three presidential electors.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today

Tonight

Monday

Monday Night

Tuesday



High: 77 °F

Sunny



Low: 47 °F

Mostly Clear



High: 79 °F

Mostly Sunny



Low: 58 °F

Showers



High: 81 °F

Sunny



Severe Weather Threat Overview

June 9, 2024
3:49 AM

Monday Afternoon - Early Tuesday Morning

Timing/Location

Storms will mainly affect locations along and west of the Missouri River Monday afternoon and evening.

The main threats for the area in **green**
Tornado Potential

Very Low Low Medium High

Max Hail Size

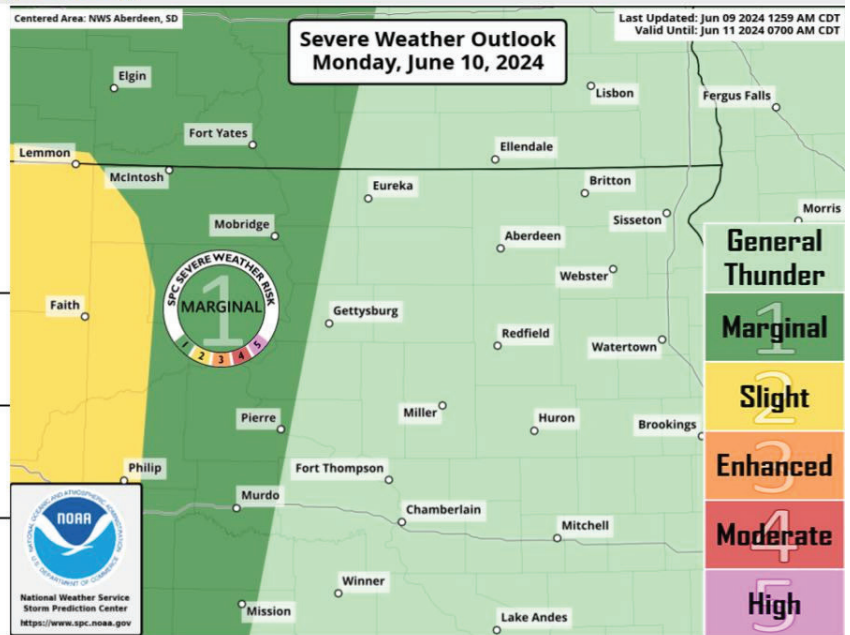
Dimes **Quarters** Golfball Baseball

Max Wind Speed

< 60 mph **60-70 mph** 70-80 mph > 80mph

Heavy Rain/Flooding Potential

Very Low **Low** Medium High



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Today will feature dry weather with high temperatures in the 70s. The weather pattern becomes active starting Monday afternoon through early Tuesday morning with a storm system crossing the area. Some storms may become severe Monday evening, mainly along and west of the Missouri River valley.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 79 °F at 5:52 PM

Low Temp: 48 °F at 6:19 AM

Wind: 19 mph at 1:10 PM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 15 hours, 39 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 100 in 2016

Record Low: 33 in 1915

Average High: 79

Average Low: 54

Average Precip in June.: 1.02

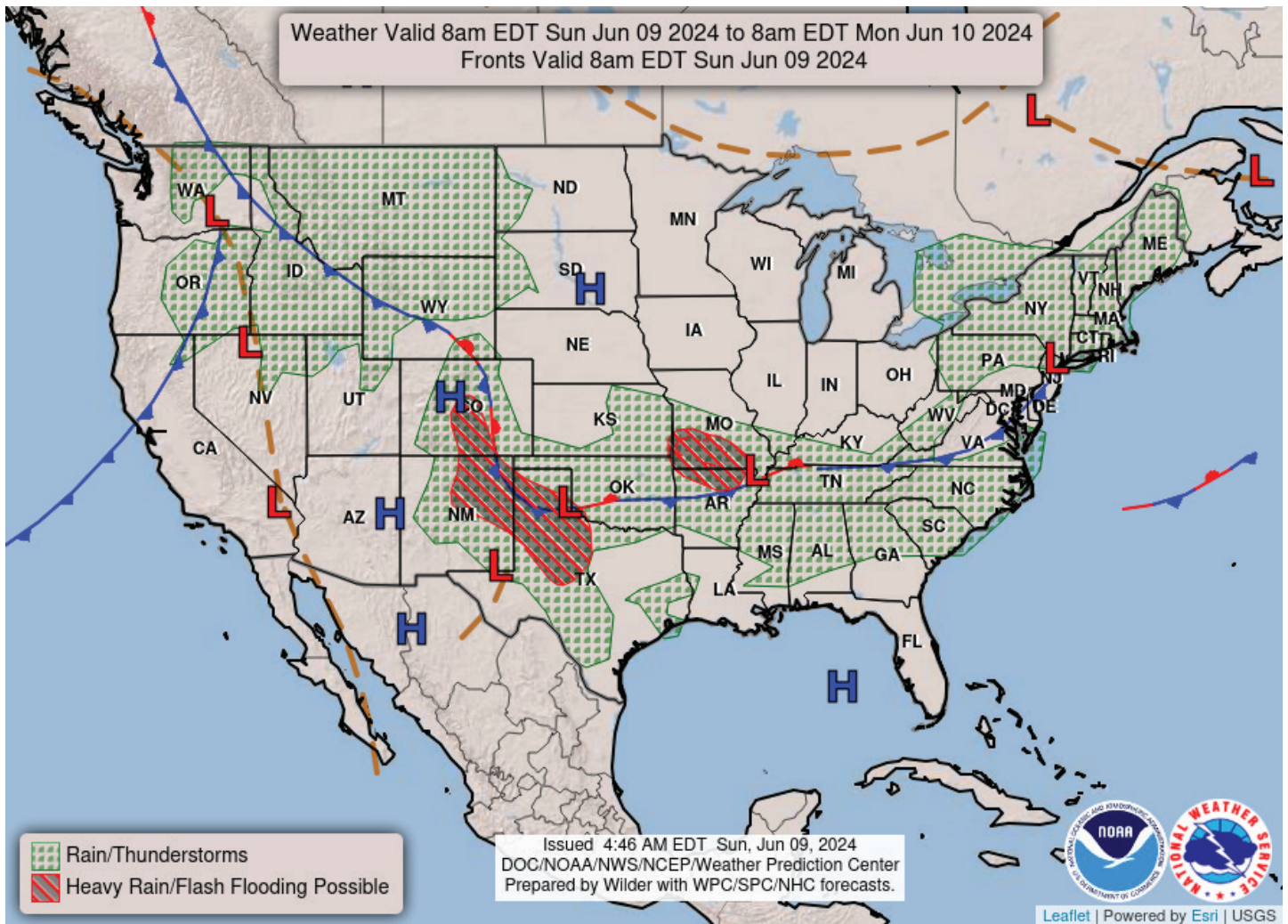
Precip to date in June: 0.08

Average Precip to date: 8.27

Precip Year to Date: 7.15

Sunset Tonight: 9:21:38 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:41:48 am



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Today in Weather History

June 9, 1957: Southwest of Faulkton, one of four funnel clouds finally touched down and cut an unusual path to the northeast. One home was reduced to "matchsticks and tidbits." The tornado strength was an F3.

June 9, 1968: A brief F2 tornado moved northeast from 6 miles northeast of Britton. Barns were destroyed, and trees were uprooted on three farms. Two cars were picked up and thrown into a ditch. One person in a car was hospitalized. Damage was estimated at \$150,000 to property and another \$80,000 to crops.

June 9, 1972: A steady flow of warm moist air near the surface fed storms and anchored them against the Black Hills for six to eight hours. A flash flood killed 238 people in the Rapid City area after as much as fifteen inches of rain fell over the eastern Black Hills.

1953 - A tornado hit the town of Worcester MA killing ninety persons. The northeastern states usually remain free of destructive tornadoes, however in this case a low pressure system, responsible for producing severe thunderstorms in Michigan and Ohio the previous day, brought severe weather to New Hampshire and central Massachusetts. The tornado, up to a mile in width at times, tracked 46 miles through Worcester County. It mangled steel towers built to withstand winds of 375 mph. Debris from the tornado fell in the Boston area, and adjacent Atlantic Ocea. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1966: Hurricane Alma made landfall over the eastern Florida panhandle becoming the earliest hurricane to make landfall on the United States mainland.

1972 - A cloudburst along the eastern slopes of the Black Hills of South Dakota produced as much as 14 inches of rain resulting in the Rapid City flash flood disaster. The rains, which fell in about four hours time, caused the Canyon Lake Dam to collapse. A wall of water swept through the city drowning 237 persons, and causing more than 100 million dollars property damage. (David Ludlum)

1987 - Lightning struck Tire Mountain near Denver CO, destroying two million tires out of a huge pile of six million tires. Thunderstorms spawned three tornadoes around Denver, and a man was killed at Conifer CO when strong thunderstorm winds lifted up a porch and dropped it on him. A thunderstorm near Compton MD produced two inch hail, and high winds which destroyed twenty barns and ten houses injuring five persons. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather from North Carolina to the Central Gulf Coast Region. Hail in North Carolina caused more than five million dollars damage to property, and more than sixty million dollars damage to crops. Hail three and a half inches in diameter was reported at New Bern NC. Thunderstorms in the Central High Plains produced eighteen inches of hail at Fountain CO. The temperature at Del Rio TX soared to an all-time record high of 112 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Severe weather abated for a date, however, showers and thunderstorms continued to drench the eastern U.S. with torrential rains. Milton, FL, was deluged with 15.47 inches in 24 hours. Record heat and prolonged drought in south central Texas left salt deposits on power lines and insulators near the coast, and when nighttime dew caused arcing, the city of Brownsville was plunged into darkness. (The National Weather Summary)

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Daily Devotionals

Seeds of Hope

COMMITMENT

One story of the Church in Russia has been relayed from one generation to the next. It occurred one Sunday as believers met in a house church. The small fellowship gathered together and began to sing their favorite hymns quietly but fervently. Suddenly, two soldiers walked into their midst with loaded weapons.

"If you wish to renounce your commitment to Christ," shouted one, "leave now!"
Two left. Then another. Finally, two more.

Closing the door the officer snapped with the voice of a commanding officer, "Keep your hands up - but this time in praise to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We too are Christians."

The other officer then added, "We've learned by our experiences that unless people are willing to die for their faith, they cannot be fully trusted."

Nearing the end of his life Paul often spoke of his loyalty and commitment to his Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Through shipwrecks and imprisonments, disappointments and being abandoned by his friends and followers - even when facing death - he remained focused. He had achieved great status in the world but one day realized that it offered nothing in comparison to what he discovered in Christ. He was willing to suffer and die for Christ because he knew what awaited him.

Prayer: Our Father, we may never be called upon to suffer for You, nor we may never be asked to sacrifice anything we value for You but help us to be willing. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: And now the prize awaits me—the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on the day of his return. And the prize is not just for me but for all who eagerly look forward to his appearing. 2 Timothy 4:5-8



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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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:
06.07.24

3 5 12 22 66 7

MegaPlier: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$30,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
06.08.24

5 7 23 37 45 3

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$2,950,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
06.08.24

3 17 29 31 33 11

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 31 Mins 5 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
06.08.24

11 16 17 19 26

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$20,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
06.08.24

11 21 57 58 68 5

TOP PRIZE:
\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
06.08.24

8 38 52 54 64 15

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
\$221,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the Associated Press

Shooting leaves 3 dead and 2 injured in South Dakota

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A shooting in a Sioux Falls neighborhood left three people dead and two others injured early Saturday, police said.

Police said they have a suspect in custody. They said there does not appear to be any further danger to the community. The investigation is ongoing.

Police said in a news release that they found the victims around 2:45 a.m. while responding to a call about a disturbance, the Argus Leader reported. The injured were taken to a hospital to be treated. Their wounds were not believed to be life-threatening.

Authorities did not release any additional details. Sioux Falls police did not respond to three phone messages left with dispatchers or to a social media message from The Associated Press.

Polls open in 20 EU countries as voting for the European Parliament enters its final day

By LORNE COOK Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — Polling stations opened across Europe on Sunday as voters from 20 countries cast ballots in elections that are expected to shift the European Union's parliament to the right and could redirect the future of the world's biggest trading bloc.

The war in Ukraine, migration, and the impact of climate policy on farmers are some of the issues weighing on voters' minds as they cast ballots to elect 720 members of the European Parliament.

Surveys suggest that mainstream and pro-European parties will retain their majority in parliament, but that the hard right, including parties led by politicians like the Netherlands' Geert Wilders and France's Marine Le Pen will eat into their share of seats.

That would make it harder for Europe to pass legislation and make decisions.

EU lawmakers have a say in issues from financial rules to climate and agriculture policy. They approve the EU budget, which bankrolls priorities including infrastructure projects, farm subsidies and aid delivered to Ukraine. And they hold a veto over the appointment of the powerful EU commission.

This elections come at a testing time for voter confidence in a bloc of some 450 million people. Over the last five years, the EU has been shaken by the coronavirus pandemic, an economic slump and an energy crisis fueled by the biggest land conflict in Europe since the Second World War. But political campaigning often focuses on issues of concern in individual countries rather than on broader European interests.

Sunday's voting marathon winds up a four-day election cycle that began in the Netherlands on Thursday.

An unofficial exit poll there suggested that Geert Wilders' anti-migrant hard right party would make important gains in the Netherlands, even though a coalition of pro-European parties has probably pushed it into second place.

Since the last EU election in 2019, populist or far-right parties now lead governments in three nations — Hungary, Slovakia and Italy — and are part of ruling coalitions in others including Sweden, Finland and, soon, the Netherlands. Polls give the populists an advantage in France, Belgium, Austria and Italy.

"Right is good," Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, who leads a stridently nationalist and anti-migrant government, told reporters after casting his ballot. "To go right is always good. Go right!"

After the election comes a period of horse-trading, as political parties reconsider in their places in the continent-wide political alliances that run the European legislature.

The biggest political group — the center-right European People's Party (EPP) — has moved right during the present elections on issues like security and migration.

Among the most watched questions is whether the Brothers of Italy — the governing party of populist far-right Prime Minister Georgia Meloni, which has neo-fascist roots — stays in the more hard-line European

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Conservatives and Reformists (ECR), or becomes part of a new hard right group that could be created in the wake of the elections. Meloni also has the option to work with the EPP.

A more worrying scenario for pro-European parties would be if the ECR joins forces with Le Pen's Identity and Democracy to consolidate hard-right influence.

The second biggest group — the center-left Socialists and Democrats — and the Greens refuse to align themselves with the ECR.

Questions also remain over what group Orbán's ruling Fidesz party might join. It was previously part of the EPP but was forced out in 2021 due to conflicts over its interests and values.

The election also ushers in a period of uncertainty as new leaders are chosen at the helm of the European project. While lawmakers are jostling over places in alliances, governments will be competing to secure top EU jobs for their national officials.

Chief among them is the presidency of the powerful executive branch, the European Commission, which proposes laws and watches to ensure they are respected. The commission also controls the EU's purse strings, manages trade and is Europe's competition watchdog.

Other plum posts are those of European Council president, who chairs summits of presidents and prime ministers, and EU foreign policy chief, the bloc's top diplomat.

Unofficial estimates are due to trickle in from 1615 GMT. Official results of the polls, which are held every five years, will begin to be published after the last polling stations in the 27 EU nations close in Italy at 11 p.m. (2100 GMT), but a clear picture of what the new assembly might look like will only emerge clear on Monday.

Cemetery visit will close out Biden trip to France that has served as a rebuke to Trump

By CHRIS MEGERIAN and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — President Joe Biden will close out his trip to France by paying his respects at an American military cemetery that Donald Trump notably skipped visiting when he was president, hoping his final stop on Sunday will lay draw the stakes of the November election in stark relief.

It's a fitting end to five days in which Trump was an unspoken yet unavoidable presence. On the surface, the trip marked the 80th anniversary of D-Day and celebrated the alliance between the United States and France. But during an election year when Trump has called into question fundamental understandings about America's global role, Biden has embraced his Republican predecessor — and would-be successor — as a latent foil.

Every ode to the transatlantic partnership was a reminder that Trump could upend those relationships. Each reference to democracy stood a counterpoint to his rival's efforts to overturn a presidential election. The myriad exhortations to help Ukraine defend itself against Russia created a contrast with Trump's skepticism about providing U.S. assistance.

Biden's paeans to the struggle between democracy and autocracy drew plaudits in Europe, where the prospect of a return to Trump's turbulent reign has sparked no shortage of anxiety. But it remains to be seen how the message will resonate with American voters, as Biden's campaign struggles to connect the dire warnings the Democratic president so often delivers about his rival with people's daily concerns.

Biden is to cap his visit to France by underscoring the contrast once more, as he honors America's war dead at Aisne-Marne American Cemetery. Located about an hour's drive northwest of Paris, the cemetery is the final resting place of more than 2,000 U.S. soldiers who fought in World War I.

During a 2018 trip to France, Trump skipped plans to go to the cemetery, a decision that the White House blamed on weather at the time. However, subsequent reports said that Trump told aides he didn't want to go because he viewed the dead soldiers as "suckers" and "losers." Trump has denied the comments, although they were later corroborated by his chief of staff at the time, John Kelly.

Trump's purported insults have become a regular feature of Biden's campaign speeches, including during an April rally in Scranton, Pennsylvania.

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"These soldiers were heroes, just as every American who has served this nation," Biden said. "Believing otherwise, that alone is disqualifying for someone to seek this office."

Maura Sullivan, a former Marine officer who served on the American Battle Monuments Commission under President Barack Obama, said Biden's visit would "set the example, and do what a president should do." Now an official with the New Hampshire Democratic Party, Sullivan said that "voters can draw their own conclusions" from that.

Biden's trip was full of emotional moments, and the president grew heavy-eyed after meeting with World War II veterans. A 21-gun salute cast eerie smoke over 9,388 white marble headstones at the Normandy American Cemetery.

"This has been the most remarkable trip that I've ever made," Biden said on Saturday night, his last in Paris before returning to the U.S.

His remarks over the last few days were also freighted with political overtones.

On Thursday at Normandy anniversary ceremonies, Biden said D-Day served a reminder that alliances make the United States stronger, calling it "a lesson that I pray we Americans never forget." He also highlighted how the war effort drew on immigrants, women and people of color who were too often overlooked by history.

Then on Friday, he went to Pointe du Hoc, a spot on the coast where Army Rangers scaled cliffs to overcome Nazi defenses on D-Day that was also the site in 1984 of one of President Ronald Reagan's most memorable speeches about the struggles between the West and the Soviet Union during the Cold War.

By following in an iconic Republican's footsteps, Biden honed his appeal to traditional conservatives who are often frustrated by Trump's isolationist vision. Biden issued a call for Americans to protect democracy like the Rangers who scaled the cliffs, a message that synced with campaign rhetoric that paints his election opponent as an existential threat to U.S. values.

While Biden was in France, his campaign announced that it had hired the onetime chief of staff to former Republican Rep. Adam Kinzinger to lead outreach to GOP voters. Kinzinger clashed with Trump's foreign policy and efforts to overturn the last presidential election.

At Pointe du Hoc, Biden said the Army Rangers "fought to vanquish a hateful ideology in the '30s and '40s. Does anyone doubt they wouldn't move heaven and earth to vanquish hateful ideologies of today?"

Trump, for his part, has argued that the U.S. needs to devote more attention to its own problems and less to foreign alliances and entanglements. He has also routinely played down the importance of American partnerships, suggesting the U.S. could abandon its treaty commitments to defend European allies if they don't pay enough for their own defenses.

Douglas Brinkley, a presidential historian who wrote a book about Pointe du Hoc and Reagan's speech, said Biden "had big shoes to step into" by choosing the same location.

Biden's speech "didn't equal Reagan's in grandeur, nor could it," Brinkley said. Still, he said Biden "said the right words about why democracy matters."

Paul Begala, a veteran Democratic strategist, said it could help Biden politically "to stand where Reagan stood."

He noted that Biden is struggling with younger voters but appears to be gaining strength among older ones who may be more receptive to reminders of Reagan's speech four decades ago.

"He needs a lot of Reagan Republicans to offset his challenges with younger voters," he said.

Biden's trip was also punctuated by the pomp of a state visit in Paris.

French President Emmanuel Macron arranged a ceremony at the Arc du Triomphe, where four fighter jets flew overhead, and hosted a banquet at the Elysee presidential palace.

"United we stand, divided we fall," Macron said in toasting Biden. "Allied we are, and allied we will stay."

Overall, Biden's visit had a slower pace than other foreign trips. The 81-year-old president had no public events on his first day in Paris after arriving on an overnight flight, and didn't hold a press conference with reporters, as is customary. John Kirby, a national security spokesman, said that was necessary to prepare "in advance of the weighty engagements" during subsequent days.

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"There's a lot on the calendar," he said.

Still, it was a contrast to Macron's tendency to offer prestigious guests an intense schedule with a mix of official meetings, business talks, cultural events and private dinners at fancy restaurants.

When the 46-year-old French leader hosted Chinese President Xi Jinping last month, the two-day agenda was crammed with activities including a trip to the Pyrenees Mountains near the border with Spain where Macron spent time as a child.

The Latest | Europeans go to the polls on the final day of voting for EU elections

By The Associated Press undefined

Voters across the European Union are going to the polls on the final day of voting for the European parliamentary elections to choose their representatives for the next five-year term.

Polls opened in 20 EU countries early Sunday for the June 6-9 elections for a new European Parliament, the legislative branch of the 27-member bloc.

Millions of Europeans have been casting their ballots this week in one of the world's biggest democratic elections. Far-right parties are looking to gain more power amid a rise in the cost of living and farmers' discontent, while the wars in Gaza and Ukraine are also key topics weighing on the minds of voters.

The economy, jobs, poverty and social exclusion, public health, climate change and the future of Europe are also prominent issues.

Official results are not expected before the last polling stations in all 27 EU nations close late Sunday.

Currently:

- An assault on the Danish prime minister is the latest in a recent surge in political violence in Europe
- Italy's far-right Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni tells the EU's traditional center parties their time is up
- What's at stake: AP's explainer on how it works and the main issues
- Overwhelmed by the elections? A guide to the key races to watch

Here's the latest:

HUNGARY'S PRIME MINISTER FACES FIRST ELECTORAL TEST SINCE NEW RIVAL APPEARSBUDAPEST, Hungary — Many Hungarians view the election as a referendum on the popularity of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, whose illiberal policies and his support for Russia have pushed him to the margins of the European Union.

While Fidesz has dominated Hungarian politics since 2010, many Hungarians are deeply dissatisfied with the direction the country is going, and hope to deal a blow to Orbán by supporting one of the most formidable challengers he's ever faced.

Péter Magyar, a 43-year-old lawyer and former insider within Orbán's party, has built up Hungary's strongest opposition party in a matter of months and hopes to use a good showing in Sunday's elections to propel himself and his movement toward defeating the prime minister in the next national ballot scheduled for 2026.

Orbán's governing Fidesz party is expected to win the largest share of the vote after campaigning heavily on fears that the war in neighboring Ukraine could escalate to involve Hungary directly.

Hungary is set to take over the EU's rotating six-month presidency next month.

POLAND VOTES WITH WAR IN UKRAINE AND MIGRATION ISSUES IN FOCUSWARSAW, Poland — Poles are voting at a time of great insecurity for the nation, which is located along the eastern flank of both the European Union and NATO.

The war just across the border in Ukraine has created fears that if Russia were to prevail, Poland and neighboring nations that were once under Moscow's control could be targeted next.

A migration crisis is also playing out along another stretch of the eastern border with Belarus. Poland accuses Belarus and Russia of luring large numbers of migrants to the border to create instability. The crisis has been deadly, with a migrant recently stabbing to death a Polish soldier. Dozens of migrants, if not more, have also died in the swampy forest area since 2021.

Prime Minister Donald Tusk has stressed national security, promising to strengthen border controls as he seeks a good showing for his centrist, pro-EU party.

On the minds of some Poles is the nature of the EU itself. In a nation under foreign rule for long spans in the past, some Poles fear that the 27-member bloc is taking away too much power from individual nations.

"We know that the European Union is in crisis, so maybe our elections will change something in the decision-making and efficiency of this body," said Anna Grzegorzczuk-Łuczak, a 60-year-old architect who voted early in Warsaw. She would not say which party she voted for.

BULGARIANS CAST BALLOTS FOR NEW PARLIAMENT AND IN EU ELECTIONS SOFIA, Bulgaria — Bulgarians are choosing a new parliament Sunday while also participating in European Union elections that have been overshadowed by domestic political instability and economic inequality as well as growing concern over the war in nearby Ukraine.

It was Bulgaria's sixth parliamentary election in three years. There were worries that voter fatigue and wide disillusionment with politicians who do not fulfill promises to fight corruption and introduce reforms could result in a low turnout and another fragmented parliament.

Preliminary results are expected Monday in the voting for the 240 seats in the National Assembly and for 17 members in the European Parliament.

The front-runners in the National Assembly elections were seen as the GERB center-right party led by three-time Prime Minister Boyko Borissov and the reformist coalition We Continue the Change—Democratic Bulgaria.

After running neck and neck in last July's election, the two rival groups sought to break the political stalemate by forming an uneasy governing coalition, but it survived only nine months.

Stranded migrants confront violence and despair as Tunisia partners to keep them from Europe

By SAM METZ Associated Press

EL AMRA, Tunisia (AP) — For many migrants who've long dreamed of Europe, one of the last stops is an expanse of olive trees on North Africa's Mediterranean coastline.

But in Tunisia, less than 100 miles (161 kilometers) from the Italian islands that form the European Union's outermost borders, for many that dream has become a nightmare.

Under black tarps covered with blankets and ropes, men, women and children seek shelter from sunlight and wait for their chance to board one of the iron boats that paid smugglers use to transport people to Italy. Having fled war, poverty, climate change or persecution, they find themselves trapped in Tunisia — unable to reach Europe but without money to fund a return home.

Based on unofficial estimates, the U.N.'s International Organization for Migration said it believes 15,000 to 20,000 migrants are stranded in rural olive groves near the central Tunisian coastline. Their presence is a byproduct of anti-migration policies being championed in both Tunisia and throughout Europe, particularly from right-wing politicians who are expected to gain ground in the European Union's parliamentary elections this week.

The encampments have grown in size since last year as police have pushed migrants out of cities and ramped up efforts to prevent Mediterranean crossings.

When police razed tents last summer in Sfax, Tunisia's second largest city, many migrants moved to the countryside near the stretch of coastline north of the city.

Among them is Mory Keita, a 16-year-old who left a flood-prone suburb outside of Abidjan, Ivory Coast, last September to link up with a friend already in Tunisia. Keita arrived at an encampment called Kilometer-19 earlier this year.

Named for a highway marker denoting its distance from Sfax, Kilometer-19 is notorious for clashes between migrant groups, he said. "Machete brawls" regularly break out between groups that self-sort by nationality — including Cameroonians, Ivorians, Guineans and Sudanese. When police come, it's not to

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ensure safety, but to disband encampments by force, Keita said.

"The truth is I'm afraid of where we are," he said. "Innocent people get hurt. The police don't intervene. It's not normal."

Passportless, Keita said he paid a smuggler an initial sum of 400,000 Central African Francs (\$661) to take him through Mali and Algeria last year. He dreams of resettling in France, finding work and sending earnings back to his family in Ivory Coast.

Keita made it onto a boat on the Mediterranean Sea in March, but Tunisia's coast guard intercepted it, arrested him and returned him to the nearby beach without any bureaucratic processing, he said.

With European funds and encouragement, the coast guard has successfully prevented more migrants like Keita than ever before from making dangerous journeys across the sea. From January to May, it stopped nearly 53,000 migrants from crossing its maritime border to Europe, Interior Minister Kamel Fekih said last month.

Less than 10,000 migrants successfully crossed from Tunisia to Italy this year, down from 23,000 in the same time period last year.

That fulfills objectives that European leaders outlined last summer when they brokered a 1 billion euro (\$1.1 billion) accord with Tunisia. Though the funds have not been completely disbursed, the deal included 105 million euros (\$114 million) for migration-related programs. NGOs such as the Catholic Committee Against Hunger and for Development have decried a lack of transparency and information about the programs.

While fewer people landing on the shores of Italy looks like a success, the resulting logjam on the Tunisian coastline is fomenting anger and despair among migrants and Tunisians. Civil society groups have demanded the government expel migrants. Politicians have urged residents to form "citizen militias" to police the area.

"You brought them here and it's your responsibility to send them back to their home countries," Moamen Salemi, a 63-year old retiree from nearby El Amra, said at one of several recent anti-migrant protests.

The U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights said last month it was "very concerned by the increased targeting in Tunisia of migrants, mostly from south of the Sahara, and individuals and organizations working to assist them."

"We are witnessing a rise in the use of dehumanizing and racist rhetoric against Black migrants and Black Tunisians," it said in a statement.

Though migrants from sub-Saharan Africa have been a political flashpoint, the majority of those who have made it from North Africa to Italy this year have been from either Syria, Bangladesh or Tunisia itself.

The government has for more than a year been accused of deporting migrants across its borders with Libya and Algeria, many who are later found dead. Tunisia has acknowledged bussing migrants to the remote borderlands near the two neighboring countries. Yet removing them from areas near the coast does little to answer the anti-migrant anger brewing among residents, many of whom have tried to emigrate to Europe themselves in search of more freedom and better economic opportunities.

The visibility of Black migrants at cafes, markets, money transfer offices and city streets periodically unleashes xenophobic backlash from locals troubled by their presence and farmers asking the government to remove encampments from their land.

Their animus echoes remarks made by President Kais Saied, who last year drummed up racist backlash after giving a speech claiming migrants were part of a conspiracy to erase Tunisian identity.

Police keep a heavy presence and the national guard roams the olive-growing towns of El Amra and Jebeniana, which journalists are increasingly barred from covering. Videos circulating on social media of encampments burning after law enforcement raids spurred by calls from local farmers, according to migrants who post them. "Disappeared" notices asking for help finding missing people are posted daily in Facebook groups popular with migrants.

"This situation cannot continue and Tunisia will not be a land for the settlement of migrants," Saied said at a National Security Council meeting in May, where without evidence he revived his questions about nefarious foreign actors pushing to keep migrants in Tunisia.

The EU hopes to limit migration with policies including development assistance, voluntary return and

repatriation for migrants and forging closer ties with neighboring governments that police their borders. Despite the plight of those trapped in Tunisia, European leaders like Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni have lauded the 2023 accord as a model agreement for managing migration. She visited four times over the past year.

The EU also expressed worry after a group of journalists, migration activists and attorneys were arrested last month — including one for making a remark about migration. It said that “freedoms of expression and association, as well as the independence of the judiciary, are guaranteed by the Tunisian Constitution and constitute the basis of our partnership.”

But even while noting the democratic backslide, at no point did officials threaten to cut off the assistance to Tunisia that many see as a life raft for Saied’s government.

Majdi Karbai, a former member of Tunisia’s parliament living in Italy, said the nature of the partnership with the EU had imperiled democracy in Tunisia and came at the expense of human rights for African migrants and Tunisians.

Migrants will likely continue to transit through Tunisia and Karbai said Saied uses them as fodder for populist rhetoric that positions him as a defender of struggling Tunisians and also to secure more assistance from Europe.

“Tunisia makes Europe believe it’s doing its job as it must,” Karbai said. “It’s good for Saied in terms of his supporters and for his speeches when he says Tunisia won’t be a country that resettles migrants.”

In secular France, chaplains prepare to provide Olympians with spiritual support during the Games

By GIOVANNA DELL’ORTO Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — As athletes rev up their training and organizers finalize everything from ceremonies to podiums before the Paris Olympics, more than 120 faith leaders are preparing for a different challenge — spiritually supporting some 10,000 Olympic athletes from around the world, especially those whose medal dreams will inevitably get crushed.

“We’ll need to bring them back to earth, because it can feel like the end of the world after working on this goal for four or five years,” said Jason Nioka, a former judo champion and deacon who’s in charge of the largest contingent of Olympic chaplains, about 40 Catholic priests, nuns and lay faithful.

Ordained and lay representatives from the five major global religions — Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism — have been working together for months to set up a shared hall in the Olympic village outside Paris.

There, they will provide some worship services, prayers and, above all, a non-judgmental listening ear to any athletes or staff in need, regardless of faith.

“We’re not there to have them win,” said Anne Schweitzer, who’s coordinating about three dozen Protestant chaplains, the second-largest group. “My goal is to have a Christian witness there, people who embody the love and care of Jesus, for the athletes who are under so much pressure.”

There’s a history of high demand for Olympic chaplains. Requests exceeded 8,000 in the pre-pandemic Games, organizers say, ranging from mental health concerns to a pre-competition blessing to coping with a sudden death in the family back home.

But this year’s chaplains are training for even more complex challenges, from complying with France’s secularism laws that strictly prescribe the role of religion in public spaces to preparing for any spillover from two major conflicts raging not far away, the Russia-Ukraine war and the Israel-Hamas war, especially in an era of increased activism by athletes.

“I see our mission as protecting them in their fragility,” said the Rev. Anton Gelyasov, archpriest of the Greek-Orthodox Metropolis of France, who’s leading more than two dozen Christian Orthodox chaplains for the Games. “Second, it’s to give witness that we are present, not only as ‘my church’ but as ‘religions,’ and that it’s good that we are together.”

Indeed, the behind-the-scenes dealmaking to accommodate different religions as well as different cultural,

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national and liturgical traditions within each faith reveals podium-worthy teamwork from the all-volunteer chaplain corps.

Each religion got 50 square meters (538 square feet) of the tent-like structure that's being constructed and furnished in the village by the Paris Games organizing committee, with a basic mandate to welcome athletes and provide worship information.

Then, the Jewish and Muslim leaders decided to set up their spaces next to each other, as "an image and example" — in the words of Rabbi Moshe Lewin — that they can coexist even at times of great geopolitical tensions.

Buddhists and Hindus, with the fewest expected adherents, donated half their spaces to the Christians, who will have about 100 chaplains in rotation to serve Catholics, Orthodox and Protestants.

Next comes the interdenominational diplomacy. The Muslim space will be divided by screens so that men and women can perform daily prayers separately, respecting diverging practices within Islam globally, said Najat Benali, president of the organization Coordination of Muslim associations of Paris, who is preparing the Muslim chaplaincy.

Christians compromised on the kinds of crucifixes and icons they'll bring to the hall — without images of Jesus on the cross, for instance, to respect Protestant sensitivities. Buddhists will have Buddha statues and cushions for meditation, but are striving to strike a balance between the utter simplicity of the Zen tradition and the bright colors of the Tibetan one, said Luc Charles, a Zen monk who's also a taekwondo instructor and the lead hospital chaplain of the Buddhist Union of France.

Little of that wealth of traditions will be visible from the outside — intentionally in a country where signs of faith are largely barred from public institutions. The hall itself won't be at the center of the village, and signs pointing to it will be discreet so as not to inconvenience non-believers, said Jeanne Le Comte du Colombier, the Paris Games committee's project manager for the multifaith center.

While the Olympics are no place for proselytism, several faith leaders said they wish they could do more outreach in the village, especially for athletes from countries without freedom of religion who might hesitate to come to the hall for counseling or a blessing.

Faith leaders are also forming a network of religious institutions from mosques to parishes outside the athletes' village and in the other French cities hosting competitions, like Marseille and Lyon. These will have special opening hours and multilingual services for athletes, though security won't be as tight as it will be in the village itself.

France's Catholic Bishops Conference has launched a nationwide "Holy Games" initiative. Since last September, it has set up the "Our Lady of Athletes" chapel in an iconic downtown Paris church, La Madeleine. The faithful can light candles with inspirational sports-related quotes or enter prayer petitions in a tablet with a direct link to a monastic community.

Holy Games is also working to bring disadvantaged communities like the homeless and migrants into the Olympics festivities that risk pushing them farther to the margins, said the project's director, Isabelle de Chatellus.

Some teams are also expected to bring their own chaplains. But faith leaders say athletes might still prefer going to the chaplains' hall for sensitive issues.

They're preparing for hearing about possible cases of abuse within athletes' team, by striving to have equal numbers of male and female chaplains present, for example. And while most denominations will offer some form of peace prayer and pledge to welcome all athletes who seek them, they're readying for possible flareups between those whose countries are at war.

"The geopolitical situation will have an impact on athletes, but the Olympic Games provide the incredible opportunity of meeting the other," said Lewin, special advisor to the chief Rabbi of France and vice president of the Conference of European Rabbis, who will serve as a Jewish chaplain.

"We do worship, not politics," Benali echoed him. "We will listen and explain we're there to accompany the athletes. We're not good resources to address geopolitics."

Part of that spiritual accompaniment will stem from how each denomination defines the role of health, the human body and thus sports. Many religious texts describe the body as a temple of the spirit, making

it a moral duty to take care of good health.

Many also see a parallel between pews and bleachers in spiritual values like dedication, perseverance and self-sacrifice.

"Sports give values that allow me to live a faith rooted in Christ," said Nioka, 28, who will be ordained a priest a month before the opening ceremony.

Before a race, athletes might especially benefit from Christian Orthodox tradition, given its emphasis on what Gelyasov called "spiritual combat," a daily fight against sin.

"If you don't advance, you go backwards. One has to always make progress," he explained.

After a race, a Buddhist meditation could help with detachment instead of focusing on the pressure of giving "an almost superhuman performance," in Charles' words.

"We have received this body, this life, but in the end it's a superior energy that decides," the Zen monk said.

Seoul to restart anti-Pyongyang loudspeaker broadcasts in retaliation to the North's trash balloons

By KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — South Korea announced Sunday it would resume anti-North Korean propaganda loudspeaker broadcasts in border areas in retaliation to the North sending over 1000 balloons filled with trash and manure over the last couple of weeks.

The move is certain to anger Pyongyang and potentially prompt it to take retaliatory military steps, and adds to tensions between the war-divided rivals amid a diplomatic stalemate over the North's nuclear ambitions.

Following an emergency security meeting led by South Korean national security director Chang Ho-jin on Sunday, officials decided to install and begin the loudspeaker broadcasts, Seoul's presidential office said in a statement.

Chang and other South Korean security officials berated Pyongyang for attempting to cause "anxiety and disruption" in South Korea and stressed that North Korea would be "solely responsible" for any future escalation of tensions between the Koreas.

The North said its campaign came after South Korean activists sent over balloons filled with anti-North Korean leaflets, as well as USB sticks filled with popular South Korean songs and dramas which Pyongyang is extremely sensitive to as it fears it could demoralize front-line troops and residents and eventually weaken leader Kim Jong Un's grip on power, analysts say.

With the loudspeakers, South Korea may blare anti-Pyongyang broadcasts, K-pop songs and outside news across the rivals' heavily armed border.

In 2015, when South Korea restarted loudspeaker broadcasts for the first time in 11 years, North Korea fired artillery rounds across the border, prompting South Korea to return fire, according to South Korean officials. No casualties were reported.

Last week, as tensions spiked over the trash-carrying balloons, South Korea also suspended a 2018 tension-easing agreement with North Korea, allowing it to resume propaganda campaigns and possibly restart live-fire military exercises in border areas.

South Korean Defense Minister Shin Won-sik in a meeting with top military commanders called for thorough preparation against the possibility that the North responds to the loudspeaker broadcasts with direct military action, the South Korean Defense Ministry said in a statement. However, the ministry didn't immediately confirm whether the loudspeaker broadcasts had started as of Sunday afternoon.

North Korea continued to fly hundreds of balloons into South Korea over the weekend, a third such campaign since late May, the South's military said.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said it detected the North launching around 330 balloons toward the South since Saturday night and about 80 were found in South Korean territory as of Sunday morning.

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The military said winds were blowing eastward on Saturday night, which possibly caused many balloons to float away from South Korean territory.

The South's military said the balloons that did land dropped trash, including plastic and paper waste, but no hazardous substances were discovered.

The military, which has mobilized chemical rapid response and explosive clearance units to retrieve the North Korean balloons and materials, alerted the public to beware of falling objects and not to touch balloons found on the ground but report them to police or military authorities.

In North Korea's previous two rounds of balloon activities, South Korean authorities discovered about 1,000 balloons that were tied to vinyl bags containing manure, cigarette butts, scraps of cloth, waste batteries and waste paper. Some were popped and scattered on roads, residential areas and schools. No highly dangerous materials were found and no major damage has been reported.

The North's vice defense minister, Kim Kang Il, later said his country would stop the balloon campaign but threatened to resume it if South Korean activists sent leaflets again.

In defiance of the warning, a South Korean civilian group led by North Korean defector Park Sang-hak, said it launched 10 balloons from a border town on Thursday carrying 200,000 anti-North Korean leaflets, USB sticks with K-pop songs and K-dramas, and \$1 U.S. bills. South Korean media reported another activist group also flew balloons with 200,000 propaganda leaflets toward North Korea on Friday.

Kim in recent years has waged an intensifying campaign to eliminate South Korean cultural and language influences. In January, Kim declared the North would abandon its longstanding goal of a peaceful unification with the South and rewrite its constitution to cement the South as a permanent enemy. Experts say Kim's efforts to reinforce the North's separate identity may be aimed at strengthening the Kim family's dynastic rule.

North Korea's balloon campaign is also possibly meant to cause a divide in South Korea over its conservative government's hard-line approach to North Korea.

Liberal lawmakers, some civic groups and front-line residents in South Korea have called on the government to urge leafleting activists to stop flying balloons to avoid unnecessary clashes with North Korea. But government officials haven't made such an appeal in line with last year's constitutional court ruling that struck down a law criminalizing an anti-North Korea leafleting as a violation of free speech.

Carlos Alcaraz and Alexander Zverev will meet in the French Open men's final

PARIS (AP) — Carlos Alcaraz and Alexander Zverev both will be seeking a first French Open championship when they play each other in the final at Court Philippe Chatrier.

Alcaraz heads into the match Sunday on the red clay with two Grand Slam trophies already. He won the U.S. Open on hard courts in 2022 and Wimbledon on grass last year.

The 21-year-old from Spain can become the youngest man to claim a major title on all three surfaces.

Zverev, a 27-year-old from Germany, is trying to win his first Slam title. He was the runner-up at the 2020 U.S. Open and bowed out in the semifinals in Paris each of the past three years.

Hours before he won his semifinal this time, on Friday, word emerged from a Berlin district court that an out-of-court settlement had ended a trial stemming from an former girlfriend's accusation of assault during a 2020 argument.

No. 3 seed Alcaraz vs. No. 4 seed Zverev marks the first French Open final since 2004 without at least one of (and occasionally two of) Nadal, Novak Djokovic or Roger Federer participating.

Zverev leads the head-to-head series against Alcaraz 5-4.

The match is scheduled to start a little after 2:30 p.m. local time (1230 GMT, 8:30 a.m. EDT).

Bobrovsky makes 32 saves as the Panthers shut out the Oilers 3-0 in Game 1 of Stanley Cup Final

By STEPHEN WHYNO AP Hockey Writer

SUNRISE, Fla. (AP) — Sergei Bobrovsky turned the puck over on the first shift and recovered. He lost his stick for 30 seconds at one point and still made saves. Connor McDavid put six shots on net, and none of them went in.

Bobrovsky put on a masterclass against McDavid and every other player who dared test him and his teammates pounced when given the chance. As a result, the Florida Panthers are off and rolling in the Stanley Cup Final.

With the goalie everyone simply calls "Bob" unbeatable in stopping all 32 shots he faced from every angle and in every situation in one of the most memorable playoff goaltending performances in recent history and thanks to goals from Carter Verhaeghe and Evan Rodrigues, the Panthers beat the Edmonton Oilers 3-0 on Saturday night in Game 1 of the NHL's best-of-seven championship series.

"It's fun to play those guys, those elite guys and it's a fun atmosphere," Bobrovsky said. "I am just alive for the opportunity, and I enjoy every second of it."

Chants of "Bobby! Bobby!" repeated themselves over and over as Bobrovsky turned aside multiple breakaways, stopped McDavid when the reigning and three-time MVP went into turbo mode and flew all around and outside the crease to make Florida's net an impenetrable fortress.

Bobrovsky, a two-time Vezina Trophy winner for his stellar regular-season play registered his second shutout of this run and third in the playoffs over his 14-year career. Thanks to him, the Panthers have a lead in the Cup final for the first time in franchise history and are now three wins away from hoisting hockey's hallowed trophy for the first time.

It didn't even matter that they were outshot 32-18. Back in the final for a second consecutive season and healthier and more prepared for the moment than in the five-game loss to Vegas a year ago, Florida showed experience on this stage does matter, handling pressure and tense moments throughout like most of its players have been here before.

"We kind of know what it takes this year," Verhaeghe said. "We know how challenging it is, the ups and downs of playoffs and the grind of it. I think that makes us more equipped this year."

The goals by Verhaeghe and Rodrigues came on the first five shots on net against Edmonton's Stuart Skinner, who was left out to dry by a slow backcheck and a lost race to the puck. Skinner, who has had his ups and downs this postseason and whose play looked like the biggest question in the series, was hardly to blame for either one.

"Lots to like," McDavid said. "We didn't give up too much, (but) what we did give up was dangerous."

Edmonton controlled much of the game 5 on 5, extended its streak of penalties killed to 30, and its power play did just about everything right except score. Despite all that, the Oilers find themselves trailing in this core group led by McDavid and Leon Draisaitl's first appearance in the final.

"We know that we're going to have to get even better," coach Kris Knoblauch said. "There are things we're going to have to look at and try to increase those chances."

It's a series featuring the furthest distance between teams meeting for the Cup, eclipsing the previous record set in 2011 by Boston and Vancouver. The trophy was brought out on to the ice prior to puck drop, similarly to what the league did by shining a spotlight on it in the empty stands in Edmonton four years ago when the playoffs went on in pandemic bubbles.

"Wasn't really expecting that," Rodrigues said of an NHL first of the Cup at ice level before the final for the first time since the 1960s. "That was a little bit of chills and a pretty cool moment. It was a pretty nice touch, I'm not going to lie."

This was the polar opposite of that more recent eerily quiet scene from 2020, with a sellout crowd of 19,543 screaming fans juiced up for a fifth consecutive final featuring a team from the Florida. While 20 playoff games have been played in Canada over the past 20 seasons, this was the 22nd in the Sunshine

State over that time.

Another is set for Monday when these teams return for Game 2.

"It's a long series," Bobrovsky said. "We're going to reset, refocus and get ready for the next fight."

In Mexico heat wave monkeys still dying, birds are getting air-conditioning, lions get popsicles

By MARK STEVENSON and MARÍA VERZA Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Amid Mexico's heat wave and drought, suffering birds are getting air-conditioning and monkeys with heatstroke are being rescued by non-governmental groups.

The government, meanwhile, has been more preoccupied with cooling down animals at state-run zoos, giving lions frozen meat popsicles. It's not the only frosty treat: One rescue group is feeding distressed owls with rat carcasses shipped in frozen from Mexico City.

A heat dome, an area of strong high pressure centered over the southern Gulf of Mexico and northern Central America, has blocked clouds from forming and caused extensive sunshine and hot temperatures all across Mexico, as well as in the United States.

Much of the impact on wildlife is being felt in central and southern Mexico, because while temperatures are also high in the north, it is mostly desert and the animals there have some coping mechanisms for extreme heat and drought.

On the steamy Gulf coast, an animal park has set up air-conditioned rooms for eagles, owls and other birds of prey.

In the south, howler monkeys continue to fall dead out of the trees with heatstroke. Deaths now probably number over 250.

In the southern state of Tabasco, the few monkeys that can be saved from dehydration and heat stroke are mostly being saved by NGOs like the Biodiversity Conservation of The Usumacinta group. Known by its initials as COBIUS, the group has saved and stabilized 18 of the monkeys.

Wildlife biologist Gilberto Pozo, the head of the group, has been accompanying teams of biologists and veterinarians out into the jungle to look for ailing monkeys.

Many times, they get there too late.

"Yesterday we lost three of the animals," Pozo said as he bounced in a truck along a rural road in the southern Gulf coast state of Tabasco, the worst-hit area. "We went out to rescue them. We couldn't stabilize them."

The monkeys — mid-sized primates known for their roaring calls — were too far gone with a kind of severe fluid loss as Mexico grapples with drought along with heat.

As of May 31, the Environment Department acknowledged that a total of 204 howler monkeys had died, 157 of them in Tabasco. Pozo said the number in Tabasco alone has since risen to 198, suggesting the nationwide toll is now near 250.

"The only rescue plan or program is the one our organization is doing," Pozo said. Amid budget cuts for many environmental agencies, the government now has to rely on NGOs.

In a statement, the Environment Department said, "Federal environmental authorities have attended to reports of these events, in a coordinated approach with civic groups and academics." It said the government has provided food, lodging and water for the NGO teams and sick animals.

The department says tests indicate the primates are dying of heat stroke, but adds that the drought has caused a "lack of water in the streams and springs in the areas where the monkeys live" and that appears to also play a role.

Some NGOs are struggling to pay for the care and are calling for donations, like the Selva Teenek, a non-profit wildlife park in the jungled region of La Huasteca, farther north.

On May 9, temperatures in that area soared to around 120 degrees (50 Celsius), and rescuers and staff brought in 15 birds of various species that were found lying on the ground.

"This had never happened before," said Laura Rodríguez, the park's veterinarian. "One hundred percent

of the animals ... they needed rehydration. Some were so dehydrated we couldn't give them water orally."

Ena Mildred Buenfil, leader of the animal rescue group Selva Teneek, said birds — like the howler monkeys — are simply dropping dead.

"The birds started having problems, and some of them literally started dropping dead in flight," Buenfil said. "Some of the most affected were the newborns ... people sent photos to us of dozens of dead parrots on the ground."

The birds were suffering from heat stress, dehydration and malnutrition, simultaneously. Rescuers had to get them out of the heat, give them water and feed them.

That included a shipment of frozen dead rats from Mexico City. "The adult (owls) need rats. Fortunately, we have rats," Buenfil said, but noted the staff has to thaw them a bit to skin them and remove their innards before they can be given to the birds.

Since then, dozens of more birds — and a few bats, lynxes and coyotes — have been found alive but suffering, and have also been brought in to the Teneek park.

The situation got so crowded in the three rooms that have air-conditioning at the park that the staff had to put up sheets or curtains to separate the birds of prey from other birds that are their prey.

Several birds died, but some species — like the kinkajous that roam the park - only need the air-conditioning during the day, and are let out at night. Others, like the ant eaters, can get by with the breeze from a fan.

The lions at Mexico City's Chapultepec zoo got a frozen treat of blood and animal bones mixed with water. Alberto Olascoaga, the head of the capital's zoo, said the animals like it — and it helps hydrate them.

"They play with the popsicle. They lick it, they break it up, they bite it, and they are getting refreshed and drinking this cold water as it melts," Olascoaga said.

Claudia Sheinbaum, the environmental scientist who won the June 2 presidential election to succeed Andrés Manuel López Obrador, offered some hope that testy relations over how to deal with the plight of wildlife might change when she takes office Oct. 1.

"I have spent my whole life studying the environment, it is part of my cause," she wrote in her Instagram account Wednesday.

Some nationalities escape Biden's sweeping asylum ban because deportation flights are scarce

By ELLIOT SPAGAT Associated Press

SAN DIEGO (AP) — The Border Patrol arrested Gerardo Henao 14 hours after President Joe Biden suspended asylum processing at the U.S. border with Mexico this week. But instead of being summarily deported, he was dropped off by agents the next day at a San Diego bus stop, where he caught a train to the airport for a flight to Newark, New Jersey.

Henao, who said he left his jewelry business in Medellin, Colombia, because of constant extortion attempts, had one thing working in his favor: a scarcity of deportation flights to that country. Lack of resources, diplomatic limitations and logistical hurdles make it difficult for the Biden administration to impose its sweeping measure on a large scale.

The policy, which took effect Wednesday, has an exception for "operational considerations," official language acknowledging the government lacks the money and authority to deport everyone subject to the measure, especially people from countries in South America, Asia, Africa and Europe who didn't start showing up at the border until recently.

The Homeland Security Department said in a detailed document outlining the ban that "demographics and nationalities encountered at the border significantly impact" its ability to deport people.

Thousands of migrants have been deported under the ban so far, according to two senior Homeland Security Department officials who briefed reporters Friday on condition that they not be named. There were 17 deportation flights, including one to Uzbekistan. Those deported include people from Colombia,

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Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Peru and Mexico.

Henao, 59, said a Border Patrol agent told him about the ban after he was picked up Wednesday on a dirt road near a high-voltage power line in the boulder-strewn mountains east of San Diego. The agent processed release papers ordering him to appear in immigration court Oct. 23 in New Jersey. He casually asked Henao why he fled Colombia but didn't pursue that line of questioning.

"It was nothing," Henao said at a San Diego transit center, where the Border Patrol dropped off four busloads of migrants in a four-hour span Thursday afternoon. "They took my photo, my fingerprints and that was it."

Many migrants released that day were from China, India, Colombia and Ecuador. One group included men from Mauritania, Sudan and Ethiopia.

"Hello, if you are arriving right now, you have been released from immigration custody and you can go to the airport," a volunteer with a bullhorn told the migrants, directing them to a light-rail platform across the parking lot. "You can go for free if you don't have money for a taxi or an Uber."

Under the measure, asylum is suspended when arrests for illegal crossings reach 2,500 a day. It ends when they average below 1,500 for a week straight.

Border officials were told to give the highest priority to detaining migrants who can be easily deported, followed by "hard to remove" nationalities requiring at least five days to issue travel documents and then "very hard to remove" nationalities whose governments don't accept U.S. flights.

The instructions are laid out in a memo to agents that was reported by the New York Post. The Associated Press confirmed its contents with a U.S. official who spoke on condition of anonymity because it has not been publicly released.

Homeland Security has been clear about the hurdles, said Theresa Cardinal Brown, senior adviser for immigration and border policy at the Bipartisan Policy Center, a Washington think tank.

"There's a limitation to the resources that the government has for detention and removal of people, and in particular to countries that we have a hard time removing people to because the (other) government is not cooperative," Brown said. "We can't detain them indefinitely."

U.S. Immigration and Customs and Enforcement did 679 deportation flights from January through May, nearly 60% of them to Guatemala and Honduras, according to Witness at the Border, an advocacy group that analyzes flight data. There were 46 flights to Colombia, 42 to Ecuador and 12 to Peru, a relatively small amount considering that tens of thousands enter illegally from those countries every month.

There were only 10 deportation flights during that period to Africa, which has emerged as a major source of migration to the United States. There was just one to China, despite the arrests of nearly 13,000 Chinese migrants.

Mexico is the easiest country for removals because it's only a matter of driving to the nearest border crossing, but Mexicans accounted for less than 3 of 10 border arrests in the government's last fiscal year, down from 9 of 10 in 2010. Mexico also takes up to 30,000 people a month from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua and Venezuela, countries that have limited capacity or willingness to take people back.

Some countries refuse to accept flights to avoid getting overwhelmed themselves, Corey Price, then-director of ICE enforcement and removal operations, said in an interview last year.

"We don't drive the bus on this," said Price, who retired last month. "We don't decide unilaterally, 'OK, we're sending your citizen back to you.' No, that country still has to agree to take them back."

A Christian group teaches public school students during the school day. Their footprint is growing

By ISABELLA VOLMERT Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — An Ohio nonprofit that provides off-site Bible instruction to public school students during classroom hours says it will triple its programs in Indiana this fall after new legislation forced school districts to comply.

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To participating families, nondenominational LifeWise Academy programs supplement religious instruction. But critics in Indiana worry the programs spend public school resources on religion, proselytize to students of other faiths and remove children from class in a state already struggling with literacy.

LifeWise founder and CEO Joel Penton told The Associated Press that many parents want religious instruction to be part of their children's education.

"Values of faith and the Bible are absolutely central to many families," Penton said. "And so they want to demonstrate to their children that it is central to their lives."

Public schools cannot promote any religion under the First Amendment, but a 1952 Supreme Court ruling centered on New York schools cleared the way for programs like LifeWise. Individual places of worship often work with schools to host programs off campus, and they are not regulated in some states.

LifeWise officials addressed the Oklahoma and Ohio legislatures in support of laws that would require schools to cooperate with off-site religious programs, Penton said, and Oklahoma's Republican governor signed one such bill into law Wednesday.

Similar bills have been introduced in Ohio, Nebraska, Georgia and Mississippi this year, according to an AP analysis of Plural, a legislative tracking database.

LifeWise programs will be available at over 520 locations in 23 states next school year, up from 331 in 13 states this year, and about 31,000 students attend LifeWise programs in the U.S., Penton said.

Penton wants LifeWise to be available to "50 million public school students nationwide," he said.

In Indiana, Republican state Rep. Kendell Culp introduced the legislation requiring principals to allow students to attend release-time religious education after a rural school stopped cooperating with LifeWise. The bill was signed into law in March and subsequently 45 Indiana schools will work with the company this fall, triple the number from last year.

LifeWise Academy, based in Hilliard, Ohio, is funded by donors, including more than \$13 million in contributions from July 2022 to June 2023, according to its latest federal report.

The curriculum was developed in conjunction with the Gospel Project, a Bible study plan produced by an entity of the Southern Baptist Convention, Penton said. Instructors are provided with guidance on how to respond to difficult questions, including about the afterlife and sex. LifeWise opposes same-sex marriage, as well as transgender and gender-fluid identities.

"Our guide helps classroom educators address these questions with compassion, humility and respect," Penton said in a statement.

Chris Paulsen, CEO of LGBTQ+ rights advocacy group Indiana Youth Group, voiced concern that children can receive Christian religious instruction during the school day "yet no one can talk about queer families." Indiana bans "human sexuality" instruction in schools through third grade.

LifeWise staff and volunteers either bus or drive students from school to the program sites, or use spaces near schools and supervise children walking there.

Indiana law and the 1952 Supreme Court ruling say no public funds can be spent on supplemental religious education, but critics worry schools expend public resources on scheduling and getting children to and from the programs.

"It just puts another burden on the teachers," said Michelle Carrera, a high school English teacher in Culp's district.

Democratic lawmakers derided the new law when literacy scores and attendance are down and said it violates the separation of church and state guaranteed in the First Amendment.

"Saying that a religious organization can mandate scheduling at a school strikes me as a fundamental violation of that important American principle," said Indiana House Education Committee member Ed DeLaney, a Democrat.

Jennifer Matthias, on Fort Wayne Community Schools' board of trustees, opposes a new program in her district, especially because recent Republican-led legislation establishes stronger literacy requirements for elementary students.

"How can removing students from the academic day benefit them?" she said.

Backers argue the LifeWise model allows low-income students who cannot afford after-school programs

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to receive supplemental religious instruction. Culp said the Indiana law gives parents a greater say in their children's education.

"This is really more about parental rights," he said.

Christa Sullinger, 46, began sending her 10-year-old son to LifeWise in Garrett, Indiana, last year. With baseball activities on Sundays, the family sometimes misses church and LifeWise fills in the gaps.

"What a great way to solidify our faith," Sullinger said.

LifeWise says it does not teach programs during classes such as math or reading, but rather during lunch, recess or electives including library, art or gym. Children can attend for up to two hours a week under Indiana law.

The West Central School Corporation in rural Pulaski County, about 100 miles (160 kilometers) north of Indianapolis, said 64% of its 345 elementary school students attended LifeWise during library this past school year.

West Central School Corporation Superintendent Cathy Rowe said there may be students who feel left out if they don't attend LifeWise, but that is up to the parents.

"It's been very well supported in our community," she said.

The district was often at the center of discussion during the passage of Indiana's bill. Opponents said if only a handful of children are left at school, they may feel pressure to join or alienated if they are not religiously affiliated or practice another faith.

Some children promote the program to their classmates of their own volition, Penton said.

"We're grateful when students find joy in our program and spread the word," he said.

Demrie Alonzo, a tutor of English as a second language in Fredericktown, Ohio, said she saw one LifeWise representative tell one of her third-grade students, who is Hindu, that they could teach her about Jesus. An investigation ensued, resulting in school superintendent Gary Chapman reminding Fredericktown Local School District and LifeWise officials to refrain from soliciting student participation during school hours.

Children from "a diverse array of backgrounds" participate, Penton said.

"I felt it was extremely inappropriate," Alonzo said.

Haiti's new prime minister hospitalized days after being selected to lead country

By EVENS SANON and DÁNICA COTO Associated Press

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP) — Haiti's newly selected prime minister, Garry Conille, was hospitalized late Saturday in the capital of Port-au-Prince just days after arriving in the country, the government said.

It wasn't immediately known why Conille was hospitalized.

The office of the prime minister said in a statement that Conille was feeling slightly unwell "following a week of intense activities." It did not provide further details except to say that Conille was stable and that he thanked those who visited him and wished him well.

Louis Gérald Gilles, a member of the transitional presidential council that recently chose Conille as leader of the troubled Caribbean country, told The Associated Press that he was at the hospital but unable to provide further information.

A person close to Conille, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to the media, told AP that he was with the prime minister when he noticed Conille, who he said is asthmatic and sometimes uses an inhaler, appeared to have trouble breathing. The person said he called high-ranking officials and told them Conille needed to be taken to the hospital.

A spokesman for Conille did not return messages for comment.

AP journalists observed high-ranking officials entering the hospital, including Frantz Elbé, director of Haiti's National Police. Also present was Bruno Maes, UNICEF's representative in Haiti.

A handful of curious onlookers gathered outside the hospital as authorities blocked the street with tinted-glass SUVs.

Conille was chosen as prime minister May 28 after a convoluted selection process. He faces an arduous

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task as Haiti's newest leader, including quelling widespread gang violence as the country prepares for the U.N.-backed deployment of a Kenyan police force, a move that was delayed in part because Haiti lacked a premier after former Prime Minister Ariel Henry stepped down April 25.

Henry was on an official visit to Kenya when gangs launched coordinated attacks Feb. 29, burning police stations, shooting at the country's main international airport and storming Haiti's two biggest prisons, releasing more than 4,000 inmates. The violence left Henry locked out of the country and eventually led to his resignation.

Conille arrived in Haiti on June 1, having worked outside the country until recently as UNICEF's regional director for Latin America and the Caribbean, a post he assumed in January 2023. He previously served as Haiti's prime minister from October 2011 to May 2012 under then President Michel Martelly.

Conille has been meeting with multiple officials and visiting various parts of Port-au-Prince since arriving, including climbing into an armored vehicle wearing a helmet and flak jacket to go along on a patrol with officers from Haiti's National Police.

Earlier Saturday, Conille toured Haiti's main international airport, which recently reopened after gang violence forced it to close for nearly three months. On Friday, he met with leaders of the private business sector as well as the country's two telecommunications companies.

Conille also had been meeting regularly with the transitional council as they debated who should be appointed to Haiti's new Cabinet.

Large chunk of Wyoming's Teton Pass road collapses; unclear how quickly it can be rebuilt

JACKSON, Wyo. (AP) — A large chunk of a twisting mountain pass road collapsed in Wyoming, authorities said Saturday, leaving a gaping chasm in the highway and severing a well-traveled commuter link between small towns in eastern Idaho and the tourist destination of Jackson.

Aerial photos and drone video of the collapse show the Teton Pass road riven with deep cracks, and a big section of the pavement disappeared altogether. Part of the guardrail dangled into the void, and orange traffic drums marked off the danger area. The road was closed at the time of the collapse.

The section that failed first drew attention Thursday when a crack and drop in the road contributed to the crash of a motorcycle.

Geologists and engineers who were sent to the area that day noticed "that crack and that drop started to move a lot," said Stephanie Harsha, a spokesperson for District 3 of the Wyoming Department of Transportation. A paving crew temporarily patched the road, and traffic began moving again that night.

But that was short-lived as maintenance crews were sent to respond to a mudslide a couple of miles away in the pre-dawn hours of Friday, prompting the road to be closed once again.

Crews then noticed that the damage to the pavement had become more pronounced. Workers trying to figure out a detour around that section left for the night, "and by 5 a.m., this morning, WYDOT had discovered that the road had completely failed," Harsha said Saturday.

"We were very, very lucky that no crews were harmed. No equipment was damaged," she said. "So now, engineers and geologists are doing geological assessments on the pass. They've been looking at it all day."

The transportation department said via social media that the road "catastrophically failed" at milepost 12.8.

It was not immediately clear how long it will take to reopen the road, a vital artery for people who live across the border in Idaho and work in pricey Jackson, which is also close to the popular Grand Teton National Park.

Harsha said an alternate route between Jackson and the area of Victor, Idaho, goes more than 60 miles (97 kilometers) out of the way and adds "quite a bit to any commute."

Gov. Mark Gordon signed an executive order declaring an emergency, which his office said would help the state access additional resources from the Federal Highway Administration to begin repair work.

In a statement, the governor said the transportation department is working on "a long-term solution to rebuild this critical roadway."

"I recognize the significant impacts this closure has to Teton County residents, regional commuters and the local economy," Gordon said.

Israel rescues 4 hostages taken in Hamas' Oct. 7 attack, and 210 Palestinians are reported killed

By WAFAA SHURAF, SAM MEDNICK and JACK JEFFERY Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — Israel on Saturday carried out its largest hostage rescue operation since the latest war with Hamas began, taking four to safety out of central Gaza in a heavy air and ground assault. At least 210 Palestinians, including children, were killed, a Gaza health official said.

Israelis were jubilant as the army said it freed Noa Argamani, 26; Almog Meir Jan, 22; Andrey Kozlov, 27; and Shlomi Ziv, 41, in a daytime operation in the heart of Nuseirat, raiding two locations at once while under fire. All were well, the military said. They were taken by helicopter for medical checks and tearful reunions with loved ones after 246 days held.

Argamani had been one of the most widely recognized hostages after being taken, like the three others, from a music festival. The video of her abduction showed her seated between two men on a motorcycle as she screamed, "Don't kill me!"

Her mother, Liora, has brain cancer and had released a video pleading to see her daughter. Israel's Channel 13 said Argamani was moved to the hospital where her mother is treated. In a message released by the government, Argamani told Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu she was "very excited," saying she hadn't heard Hebrew in so long.

Netanyahu in a statement vowed to continue the fighting until all hostages are freed. The operation was "daring in nature, planned brilliantly, and executed in an extraordinary fashion," Defense Minister Yoav Gallant said.

Israeli aircraft hummed overhead as the bodies of 109 Palestinians including 23 children and 11 women were taken to Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital, where spokesperson Khalil Degran told The Associated Press more than 100 wounded also arrived. He said that overall, 210 dead had been taken there and to Al-Awda Hospital, saying he had spoken to the director there. Al-Awda's numbers couldn't immediately be confirmed.

"The horrific massacre committed today by Netanyahu and his fascist government against the Palestinian people in Gaza, which led to slaughter of 210 and more than 400 wounded so far — under the pretext of liberating those detained by the resistance — confirms what the resistance has said repeatedly: that Netanyahu doesn't plan to reach an agreement to stop the war and free the captured Israelis peacefully," said Bassem Naim, a senior Hamas official now based in Lebanon.

AP reporters saw dozens of bodies brought to Al Aqsa hospital from the Nuseirat and Deir al-Balah areas, as smoke rose in the distance and armored vehicles rolled by.

A baby was among the dead. Small children wailed, covered in blood. Bodies were placed on the ground outside, their feet bare, as more wounded were rushed in.

"My two cousins were killed, and two other cousins were seriously injured. They did not commit any sin. They were sitting at home," one relative said in the chaos at Nuseirat refugee camp. As Palestinians explored the newly destroyed buildings, a small child sat on a collapsed metal door, overwhelmed.

Neighboring Egypt condemned "with the strongest terms" Israel's attacks on the Nuseirat refugee camp, with its foreign ministry calling it a "flagrant violation of all rules of international law." Neighboring Jordan also condemned it.

"The bloodbath must end immediately," the European Union's foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said on the social platform X, noting reports of civilian deaths.

Israel's military said it had attacked "threats to our forces in the area," adding that one commando died from his wounds.

Israel's military spokesman, Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, told reporters that military intelligence determined some time ago that the hostages were being held in two apartments, about 200 meters (219 yards) away from each other, in the heart of the Nuseirat camp. He said the forces had trained repeatedly on a model

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of the apartment buildings.

Hagari said the forces moved in simultaneously in broad daylight on both apartments, believing this ensured the best element of surprise. But he said the rescuers came under heavy fire as they moved out, including from gunmen firing rocket-propelled grenades from within the neighborhood.

"A lot of fire was around us," he said, adding that the military responded with heavy force, including from aircraft, to extract the rescuers and freed hostages.

A U.S. hostage cell provided advice and support throughout the process of locating and rescuing the hostages, according to a Biden administration official, who was not authorized to comment and requested anonymity. The hostage cells are multi-agency teams.

Pushing back against social media claims, the U.S. Central Command said in a tweet that neither the American-built pier in Gaza that brings in aid for Palestinians by sea nor any of its equipment, personnel or other assets were used in the Israeli operation. It said Israel used an area south of the pier "to safely return hostages."

Hamas took some 250 hostages during the Oct. 7 attack that killed about 1,200 people. About half were released in a weeklong cease-fire in November. About 120 hostages remain, with 43 pronounced dead. Survivors include about 15 women, two children under 5 and two men in their 80s.

Saturday's operation brought the total number of rescued hostages to seven. Two were freed in February and one was freed in the aftermath of the October attack. Israeli troops have recovered the bodies of at least 16 others, according to the government.

The latest rescue lifted some spirits in Israel as divisions deepen over the best way to bring hostages home. Many Israelis urge Netanyahu to embrace a cease-fire deal U.S. President Joe Biden announced last month, but far-right allies threaten to collapse his government if he does.

Netanyahu, whose support has fallen, rushed to the hospital to greet the freed hostages and his office released a stream of photos and videos of him meeting the families. But thousands of Israelis again gathered Saturday evening for the latest anti-government demonstration and calls for a cease-fire agreement.

"It's time to pay the price of a political deal. One deal that will bring them all back without risking soldiers," said Omri Shtivi, whose brother Idan marked his 29th birthday Saturday while in captivity.

It was unclear what effect the rescue might have on apparently stalled cease-fire efforts. U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken will return to the Middle East next week, seeking a breakthrough.

"The hostage release and cease-fire deal that is now on the table would secure the release of all the remaining hostages together with security assurances for Israel and relief for the innocent civilians in Gaza," national security adviser Jake Sullivan said in a statement.

International pressure is mounting on Israel to limit civilian bloodshed in its war in Gaza, which reached its eighth month on Friday with more than 36,700 Palestinians killed, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which does not distinguish between fighters and civilians.

Palestinians also face widespread hunger because fighting and Israeli restrictions have largely cut off the flow of aid.

Meanwhile, Benny Gantz, a popular centrist member of Israel's three-member War Cabinet who had threatened to resign from the government if it didn't adopt a new plan by Saturday for the war in Gaza, postponed an expected announcement. Netanyahu urged him not to step down.

Aid is delivered to Gaza from newly repaired US-built pier, US military says

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER and TARA COPP Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The first aid from an American-built pier arrived in Gaza on Saturday since storm damage required repairs to the project, the U.S. military said, relaunching an effort to bring supplies to Palestinians by sea that had been plagued with problems.

The pier constructed by the U.S. military was operational for only about a week before it was blown apart in high winds and heavy seas on May 25. A damaged section was reconnected to the beach in Gaza

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on Friday after being repaired at an Israeli port.

About 1.1 million pounds (492 metric tons) of humanitarian aid was delivered to Gaza through the pier on Saturday, U.S. Central Command said in a statement. It reiterated that no U.S. military personnel went ashore in Gaza. The U.S. Agency for International Development works with the U.N. World Food Program and their humanitarian partners in Gaza to distribute food and other aid coming from the U.S.-operated pier.

The deliveries came the same day that Israel mounted a heavy air and ground assault that rescued four hostages, who had been taken by Hamas during the Oct. 7 attack that launched the war in Gaza. At least 210 Palestinians, including children, were killed, a Gaza health official said.

Pushing back against social media claims, U.S. Central Command said in a tweet that neither the pier nor any of its equipment, personnel or other assets were used in the Israeli operation. It noted that Israel used an area south of the pier "to safely return hostages."

"The temporary pier on the coast of Gaza was put in place for one purpose only, to help move additional, urgently needed lifesaving assistance into Gaza," the U.S. military said.

USAID said in a separate statement that no humanitarian workers were involved in the Israeli operation.

"Humanitarian aid workers in Gaza are operating in extremely difficult and insecure conditions and must be protected," the agency said by email. "Aid workers operate under the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence."

The movement of aid through the pier brings back online one way to get desperately needed food and other emergency supplies to Palestinians trapped by the eight-month-old Israel-Hamas war. Israeli restrictions on land crossings, and fighting, have greatly limited the flow of food and other vital supplies into the territory.

The damage to the pier had been the latest stumbling block for the project and the persistent struggle to get food to starving Palestinians. Three U.S. service members were injured, one critically, and four vessels were beached due to heavy seas.

Early efforts to get aid from the pier into the Gaza Strip also were disrupted as crowds overran a convoy of trucks that aid agencies were using to transport the food, stripping the cargo from many of them before they could reach a U.N. warehouse. Officials responded by altering the travel routes, and aid began reaching those in need.

Vice Adm. Brad Cooper, deputy commander of U.S. Central Command, told reporters on Friday that the lessons learned from that initial week of operations made him confident greater amounts of aid could be delivered now.

He said the goal was to get to 1 million pounds of food and other supplies moving through the pier into Gaza every two days. To date, about 3.5 million pounds of humanitarian aid has been delivered through the maritime route, Central Command said Saturday.

Relief agencies have pressed Israel to reopen land routes that could bring in all the needed aid. Israel says it has allowed hundreds of trucks to enter through a southern checkpoint and pointed the finger at the U.N. for not distributing aid. The U.N. says it is often unable to retrieve the aid because of the security situation.

U.N. agencies have warned that over 1 million Palestinians in Gaza could experience the highest level of starvation by the middle of next month if hostilities continue.

President Joe Biden's administration has said from the start that the pier wasn't meant to be a total solution and that any amount of aid helps.

Biden, a Democrat, announced his plan for the U.S. military to build a pier during his State of the Union address in early March, and the military said it would take about 60 days to get it installed and operational. It took a bit longer than planned, with the first trucks carrying aid for the Gaza Strip rolling down the pier on May 17.

The initial cost was estimated at \$320 million, but the Pentagon said this past week that the price had dropped to \$230 million, due to contributions from Britain and because the cost of contracting trucks and other equipment was less than expected.

They're on the edge of glory, and the edge of an art museum, as cliff divers come to Boston

By RODRIQUE NGOWI and PATRICK WHITTLE Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — Rhiannan Iffland stepped to the edge of a platform nearly seven stories above Boston Harbor, thousands of cheering fans packed onto docks, roofs and sidewalks below, and soared through the air with the city's skyline disappearing behind her as she rocketed toward the tea-brown water.

All in a day's work for one of the world's elite participants in cliff diving — a sport in which sometimes the precipice isn't a cliff at all. Iffland, from Australia, said the competition among cliff divers jumping from the Institute of Contemporary Art during a Saturday contest in Boston was fierce.

"I know the pressure's coming — and the young girls are diving super well," Iffland said after winning the women's section.

Iffland's victory was part of cliff diving's marquee event, which came to the hub of New England as the Red Bull Cliff Diving World Series made the 100th stop in its history. Participants plunged from up to 90 feet (27 meters) in the air from the waterfront art museum into the chilly harbor below. British diver Aidan Heslop won the men's competition and said, "We've all got our work cut out for us" for the rest of the series.

Boston is the only U.S. stop this year. The series wraps up in Sydney, Australia, in November.

Cliff diving attracts a special kind of athlete, especially when winning means leaping from an art museum into potentially frigid waters below, organizers said.

"These epic athletes train super hard to make sure every leap, somersault, twist and entry is perfect," organizers said in a statement.

Practice and early competition rounds were held Friday. Judges scores Saturday's competitive round based on the divers' form and technique. Two dozen people competed.

It was the third straight year that the popular spectator event has come to Boston. Organizers said it drew 45,000 people for the weekend.

The art museum said in a statement that the event was a visually stunning opportunity for the public and a chance for the athletes to earn "crucial championship points along the way based on their final event positions."

Pop and power: Travis Kelce wins home run hitting contest as girlfriend Taylor Swift tours in Europe

By TOM WITHERS AP Sports Writer

EASTLAKE, Ohio (AP) — Travis Kelce's power extends beyond the football field or dating one of the world's most famous women.

Kansas City's talented tight end, who also happens to be pop superstar Taylor Swift's boyfriend, showed off his batting skills on Saturday by winning a home run contest at a charity softball event hosted by Browns tight end David Njoku.

Kelce, who grew up in Cleveland, arrived at Classic Park, home of the minor league Lake County Captains, just as the event was getting underway. As he made his way onto the field, Kelce shook hands with some fans before warmly greeting Browns defensive end Myles Garrett and quarterback Deshaun Watson.

Once in the batter's box, Kelce, who played high school baseball, put on an impressive performance. After connecting on his final swing and sending another ball over the fence to clinch the win, Kelce flipped his bat in celebration and took a victory lap around the bases.

He was awarded a trophy he'll be able to show to Swift, who is performing concerts in Scotland this weekend.

A three-time Super Bowl champion, Kelce has become close in recent years with Njoku, who has attended his offseason Tight End University.

"That's my guy, man," Njoku said. "He's one of the purest human beings I've met in my life honestly. Always means well. Just great overall dude."

Kelce has always backed Cleveland's baseball team and last year throw out an ill-fated ceremonial first pitch that he spiked like a football.

Kelce has stayed busy throughout the offseason. He recently took part in the Chiefs' organized team activities and visited the White House when the Super Bowl champions were hosted by President Joe Biden.

A World War II veteran just married his bride near Normandy's D-Day beaches. He's 100, she's 96

By JOHN LEICESTER Associated Press

CARENTAN-LES-MARAIS, France (AP) — Together, the collective age of the bride and groom was nearly 200. But World War II veteran Harold Terens and his sweetheart Jeanne Swerlin proved that love is eternal as they tied the knot Saturday inland of the D-Day beaches in Normandy, France.

Their respective ages — he's 100, she's a youngster of just 96 — made their nuptials an almost double-century celebration.

Terens called it "the best day of my life."

On her way into the nuptials, the bubbly bride-to-be said: "It's not just for young people, love, you know? We get butterflies. And we get a little action, also."

The location was the elegant stone-worked town hall of Carentan, a key initial D-Day objective that saw ferocious fighting after the June 6, 1944, Allied landings that helped rid Europe of Adolf Hitler's tyranny.

Like other towns and villages across the Normandy coast where nearly 160,000 Allied troops came ashore under fire on five code-named beaches, it's an effervescent hub of remembrance and celebration on the 80th anniversary of the deeds and sacrifices of young men and women that day, festooned with flags and bunting and with veterans feted like rockstars.

As the swing of Glenn Miller and other period tunes rang out on the streets, well-wishers — some in WWII-period clothes — were already lined up a good hour before the wedding, behind barriers outside the town hall, with a rousing pipe and drum band also on hand to serenade the happy couple.

After both declaring "oui" to vows read by Carentan's mayor in English, the couple exchanged rings.

"With this ring, I thee wed," Terens said.

She giggled and gasped, "Really?"

With Champagne flutes in hand, they waved through an open window to the adoring crowds outside.

"To everybody's good health. And to peace in the world and the preservation of democracy all over the world and the end of the war in Ukraine and Gaza," Terens said as he and his bride then clinked glasses and drank.

The crowd yelled "la mariée!" - the bride! — to Swerlin, who wore a long flowing dress of vibrant pink. Terens looked dapper in a light blue suit and matching pink kerchief in his breast pocket.

And they enjoyed a very special wedding-night party: They were invited to the state dinner at the Elysee Palace on Saturday night with President Emmanuel Macron and U.S. President Joe Biden.

"Congratulations to the newlyweds," Macron said, prompting cheers and a standing ovation from other guests during the toast praising French-American friendship. "(The town of) Carentan was happy to host your wedding, and us, your wedding dinner," he told the couple.

The wedding was symbolic, not binding in law. Mayor Jean-Pierre Lhonneur's office said he wasn't empowered to wed foreigners who aren't residents of Carentan, and that the couple, who are both American, hadn't requested legally binding vows. However, they could always complete those formalities back in Florida if they wished.

Lhonneur likes to say that Normandy is practically the 51st state of the USA, given its reverence and gratitude for Allied soldiers and the sacrifices of tens of thousands who never made it home from the Battle of Normandy.

"Love is eternal, yes, maybe," the mayor said, referring to the newlyweds, although his comments also fittingly describe the feelings of many Normans for veterans.

"I hope for them the best happiness together."

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Dressed in a 1940s dress that belonged to her mother, Louise, and a red beret, 73-year-old Jane Ollier was among spectators who waited for a glimpse of the lovebirds. The couple, both widowed, grew up in New York City: she in Brooklyn, he in the Bronx.

"It's so touching to get married at that age," Ollier said. "If it can bring them happiness in the last years of their lives, that's fantastic."

The WWII veteran first visited France as a 20-year-old U.S. Army Air Forces corporal shortly after D-Day. Terens enlisted in 1942 and, after shipping to Britain, was attached to a four-pilot P-47 Thunderbolt fighter unit as their radio repair technician.

On D-Day, Terens helped repair planes returning from France so they could rejoin the battle. He said half his company's pilots died that day. Terens himself went to France 12 days later, helping transport freshly captured Germans and just-freed American POWs to England. Following the Nazi surrender in May 1945, Terens again helped transport freed Allied prisoners to England before he shipped back to the U.S. a month later.

Swerlin made it abundantly clear that her new centenarian husband doesn't lack for rizz.

"He's the greatest kisser ever, you know?" she proudly declared before they embraced enthusiastically for TV cameras.

"All right ! That's it for now !" Terens said as he came up for air.

To which she quickly quipped: "You mean there's more later?"

Weeklong heat wave loosens grip slightly on US Southwest but forecasters still urge caution

By SUSAN MONTOYA BRYAN Associated Press

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP) — The weeklong heat wave that baked most of the U.S. Southwest in temperatures well into triple digits is on its last legs, but forecasters are still urging people to be cautious as there will be little relief from the warm weather until monsoon thunderstorms begin to kick in, likely in July.

A slight easing of temperatures is expected through the weekend, with Phoenix and Las Vegas falling short of besting any new records. Still, an excessive heat warning continues through Saturday in Las Vegas, where it's never been hotter this time of year. It was a record-high 110 degrees Fahrenheit (43.3 degrees Celsius) in Las Vegas on Friday, 113 F (45 C) in Phoenix and 100 F (37.8 C) in Albuquerque.

Even in Florida, forecasters with the National Weather Service on Saturday warned that heat indices would be well into the triple digits for Miami and other areas. That measurement reflects what the temperature feels like to the human body when relative humidity is combined with the air temperature.

Record high temperatures also were expected through the weekend for central Florida, where many communities just wrapped up their warmest May on record as temperatures for the month were between 3 and 4 degrees above normal.

Forecasters also issued heat advisories in far West Texas and along the U.S.-Mexico border, but they noted that the highs would be a bit cooler than the past couple days.

The heat arrived weeks earlier than usual even in places at higher elevations — areas typically a dozen degrees cooler. That includes Reno, Nevada, where the normal high of 81 F (27 C) for this time of year soared to a record 98 F (37 C) on Thursday and hit 98 F again Friday — but was short of the daily record 100 F (37.7 C).

John Adair, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Las Vegas, said it's not unusual for parts of the Southwest to heat up pretty quickly, especially in the second half of June.

"So this is a hot time of year before we start to get some moisture and cloud cover from the monsoon thunderstorms that come around," he said. "Even for next weekend, we're forecast to hover around 105, 106, which is just slightly above normal at that point."

In the Southwest, monsoon thunderstorms typically ramp up during the first week in July.

There have been no reports of any heat-related deaths or serious injuries in the region, but a 68-year-old man was hospitalized in stable condition in Phoenix on Friday after he was overcome with heat exhaustion

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while hiking on a mountain trail and rescued by fire crews.

In Nevada, the Clark County Fire Department reported Friday that it logged 20 calls classified as heat exposure over a three-day period, with 12 of those resulting in trips to local hospitals. Eight of the calls came on Friday.

Cooling centers, including community centers and libraries, remained open Saturday for people looking for relief from the heat, the fire department said.

With heat records already being broken in May and June, this year could end up being more deadly than last when it comes to heat-related deaths. The death certificates of more than 2,300 people who died in the United States last summer mention the effects of excessive heat, the highest number in 45 years of records, according to an Associated Press analysis of Centers for Disease Control and Prevention data.

Biden calls France 'our first friend' as host Macron says, 'Allied we are and allied we will stay'

By CHRIS MEGERIAN, ZEKE MILLER and SYLVIE CORBET Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — President Joe Biden said France was America's "first friend" at its founding and is one of its closest allies more than two centuries later as he was honored with a state visit Saturday by French President Emmanuel Macron aimed at showing off their partnership on global security issues and easing past trade tensions.

"United we stand, divided we fall," Macron said in toasting Biden at a state dinner. "Allied we are and allied we will stay."

Biden and Macron attended ceremonies marking the 80th anniversary of D-Day on Thursday and met separately the following day with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in Paris. The leaders both used those engagements used to underscore the urgent need to support Kyiv's fight against Russia's invasion.

But Macron and Biden have often chafed at the pace of support for Ukraine, especially as the United States, by far the largest contributor to Kyiv's defense, was forced to pause aid shipments for months while congressional Republicans held up an assistance package.

The state visit began Saturday with a ceremony at the Arc de Triomphe, including a wreath-laying at France's tomb of the unknown soldier, and a military parade along the Champs-Élysées leading to the Élysée Palace, where the two held official meetings and delivered public statements. Macron and his wife, Brigitte Macron, hosted state dinner at the palace for Biden and his wife, Jill.

The American president followed Macron's toast by saying the U.S. and France have been "unyielding as well as unwavering in our partnership," adding, "That's what democracies do."

Biden and Macron put the war in Ukraine at the top of Saturday's agenda, but it was the strength of the countries' long alliance, fortified at Normandy 80 years ago but with roots far deeper, that was the centerpiece of the weekend.

Calling himself a student of French history, Biden said the visit was a "great honor" and he noted that America's ties to France date to the Revolutionary War.

"France was our first friend," Biden said. "It remains one of our best friends."

Macron praised Biden as not just the leader of a world power but also for bringing the "clarity and loyalty of a partner that loves and respects the Europeans."

It appeared to be a subtle criticism of former President Donald Trump, whose "America First" foreign policy has shaken European leaders. They are now contending, gingerly, with the possibility of his return to power next year should the presumptive Republican nominee defeat the Democratic incumbent in November's election.

Later, in a statement of principles that the presidents called a road map, they cited the legacy of the U.S.-French relationship and "the price for peace and freedom" paid by past generations in reaffirming their commitment to "a Europe, whole, free and at peace."

Macron hosted Trump for Bastille Day in 2017, and the French president came to Washington for a state visit in 2018 before their relationship soured.

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Despite disagreements over whether to send allies trainers onto Ukrainian soil to support the country's defense against Russia's invasion, Macron insisted that, "I think we see eye to eye on this war raging in Ukraine. He tempered his previous concerns about U.S. commitment to Europe — which he has used to argue that the continent must do more to provide for its own defense — to praise Biden's leadership: "Thank you for being at Europe's side."

Macron expressed hope that when the Group of Seven leaders meet this coming week in Italy they will agree to a \$50 billion "solidarity fund" for Ukraine that will be backed by sanctioned Russian assets.

The two leaders also celebrated the rescue Saturday by Israeli forces of four hostages taken by Hamas. "We won't stop working until all the hostages come home and a cease-fire is reached," Biden said as Macron called out the Israeli government for not doing more to get humanitarian assistance into Gaza.

Macron said he supported a Biden-promoted cease-fire proposal that would allow a surge of humanitarian assistance into the territory and allow for the release of more hostages. The U.S. has said it is awaiting Hamas' formal response to the potential deal.

The French leader raised the issue of U.S. trade practices that he has often criticized, including the Inflation Reduction Act, which favors American-made climate technology such as electric vehicles. Macron said the U.S., like China, has "decided not to respect the rules of global trade" by shoring up protections and subsidies while Europe's industry remains open and is stuck in overregulation.

As the pair met outside the palace, Biden appeared to suggest to his host that that the U.S. and Europe could "coordinate together," and he was heard telling Macron about his most recent conversation with Chinese President Xi Jinping, who was objecting to steep U.S. tariffs on Chinese electric vehicles.

Biden hosted Macron in December 2022 at the White House for the first state visit of his presidency as the COVID-19 pandemic receded.

Among the attendees at Saturday's dinner was World War II veteran Harold Terens and his sweetheart Jeanne Swerlin, who were married Saturday inland of the D-Day beaches in Normandy, France.

"Congrats to newlyweds," Macron said, leading the crowd in cheers and applause.

As the president's trip draws to a close, the far right is likely to emerge as one of the biggest winners in Sunday's European Parliament election while Macron's pro-European Union movement is flagging.

Credit card delinquencies are rising. Here's what to do if you're at risk

By CORA LEWIS Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Seriously overdue credit card debt is at the highest level in more than a decade, and people 35 and under are struggling more than other age groups to pay their bills.

The share of credit card debt that's severely delinquent, defined as being more than 90 days overdue, rose to 10.7% during the first quarter of 2024, according to the Federal Reserve Bank of New York. A year ago, just 8.2% of credit card debt was severely delinquent.

If you're experiencing delinquency, or at risk of it, experts advise speaking with a nonprofit credit counselor and negotiating with your creditors directly. Here's what you should know:

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I'M AT RISK OF DELINQUENCY? Bruce McClary, senior vice president at the National Foundation for Credit Counseling, says that anyone at risk of delinquency should reach out as soon as possible for help from a nonprofit credit counselor, some of whom can be found through his organization. The consultation is free, and a non-judgmental counselor can give guidance towards a long-term solution.

Nonprofits can also help create debt management plans that have lower interest rates, no late fees, and a single payment each month, McClary said. These plans may come with maintenance fees, which vary, but the fees are offset by the overall savings on the debt. McClary urged borrowers to be careful of scammers and for-profit debt consolidation companies, which often charge much higher fees than nonprofit organizations. The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau has a helpful breakdown comparing the two.

Martin Lynch, president of the Financial Counseling Association of America, echoed this advice.

"Taking that first step and contacting a counselor is difficult for many people," Lynch said. He emphasized

that consumers in debt should do their best to “first, relax,” and then to be as forthcoming as possible about their circumstances with the counselor.

“You’ll be talking to someone for free, who will listen to you describe your situation,” he said. “You can share your concerns without being judged for falling into difficulty.”

WHAT ABOUT NEGOTIATING WITH CREDITORS? Both Lynch and McClary urge borrowers to reach out directly to credit card companies to negotiate interest rates, fees, and long-term payment plans, noting that it’s in the companies’ best interests if you pay before the debt goes into collections.

“The best thing to do is to reach out, give an honest assessment of your ability to pay over time, and ask what options are available to you both ‘on and off-the-menu,’” McClary said. This kind of phrasing can give creditors an opening to offer more flexibility, he said.

McClary and other experts stress that most credit card companies and other lenders have hardship programs available for cases like these. Such options gained visibility during the COVID-19 pandemic, when more companies publicly advertised that consumers facing difficulty may skip or defer payments without penalties.

WHY ARE DELINQUENCIES INCREASING? The average annual interest rate on a new credit card is 24.71%, according to LendingTree, the highest since the company began tracking in 2019. That’s in part because the Federal Reserve has raised its key interest rate to a 23-year high to combat the highest inflation in four decades, which peaked at 9.1% in June 2022.

Simultaneously, pandemic-era aid such as stimulus payments, the child tax credit, increased unemployment benefits, and a moratorium on student loan payments has ended. Wage gains haven’t all kept up with inflation, which hits lower-income consumers harder, and rent increases have eaten into savings some consumers may have built up during the early years of the pandemic.

Silvio Tavares, CEO of VantageScore, a credit score modeling and analytics company, said that delinquencies have now exceeded their pre-pandemic levels, and that renters are especially vulnerable to falling behind.

“Younger and less affluent people are experiencing challenges,” he said. “And high interest rates are having an effect.”

Tavares said the most important thing a borrower can do is to know their credit score and keep up with payments to avoid paying additional interest on revolving balances and debt. He cautioned consumers not to over-extend themselves with “buy now, pay later” loans, which are increasingly available “at every checkout.”

HOW WORRISOME IS THE INCREASE IN DELINQUENCIES? Credit cards only make up about 6.5% of consumer debt, according to a Bank of America Global Research report, but the increase in delinquencies appears to be outpacing income growth.

According to McClary, there’s also likely a large group of consumers paying minimum balances and staying out of delinquency for now but who are too financially stressed to pay their balances in full. A worsening of the economy could push those consumers into severe delinquency, he said.

On top of increasing credit card delinquencies, retail spending stalled in April. Walmart has said its customers are spending more on necessities and less on discretionary goods. Starbucks lowered its sales expectations, and McDonald’s is offering more deals as people cut back.

Attacks in Russian-occupied Ukrainian regions leave 28 dead, Moscow-appointed officials say

By SUSIE BLANN and ELISE MORTON undefined

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russia-installed officials in the partially-occupied Ukrainian regions of Kherson and Luhansk said Ukrainian attacks left at least 28 people dead as Russia and Ukraine continued to exchange drone attacks overnight into Saturday.

A Ukrainian attack Friday on the small town of Sadove in the Kherson region killed 22 and wounded 15 people, Moscow-appointed governor Vladimir Saldo said.

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Russian state news agency Tass cited Saldo as saying that Ukrainian forces first struck the town with a French-made guided bomb, then attacked again with a U.S.-supplied HIMARS missile. He said Ukrainian forces had "deliberately made a repeat strike to create greater numbers of casualties" when "residents of nearby houses ran out to help the injured."

Officials declared Saturday a day of mourning in Luhansk, and public events will be similarly cancelled Sunday and Monday in Kherson.

Further east, Leonid Pasechnik, the Russia-installed governor in Ukraine's partially occupied Luhansk region, said Saturday that two more bodies had been pulled from the rubble following Friday's Ukrainian missile attack on the regional capital, also called Luhansk. Russian state news agency Interfax cited regional authorities as saying this brought the death toll to six. Pasechnik also said 60 people were wounded in the attack.

Ukraine did not comment on either assault.

Meanwhile, drone attacks between Russia and Ukraine persisted.

Ukraine launched a barrage of drones across Russian territory overnight Friday, Russia's Defense Ministry said Saturday. Twenty-five drones were reportedly destroyed over Russia's southern Kuban and Astrakhan regions, the western Tula region, and the Moscow-annexed Crimean peninsula.

On Saturday morning, officials said air defenses for the first time shot down Ukrainian drones over the North Ossetia region in the North Caucasus, some 900 km (560 miles) east of the front line in Ukraine's partially occupied Zaporizhzhia region.

Russia's Ministry of Defense said that one drone had been destroyed, whereas regional Gov. Sergei Menyailo reported three downed drones over the region. Menyailo said that the target was a military airfield.

Ukrainian air defense overnight shot down nine out of 13 Russian drones over the central Poltava region, southeastern Zaporizhzhia and Dnipropetrovsk regions, and the Kharkiv region in the northeast, Ukraine's air force said Saturday.

Dnipropetrovsk regional Gov. Serhiy Lysak said the overnight drone attack damaged commercial and residential buildings.

Later on Saturday, a Ukrainian military spokesman said Ukraine now controlled more than half of the town of Vovchansk, a flashpoint for fighting since Russia launched a renewed offensive in Ukraine's north-eastern Kharkiv region last month.

"Most of the city is under the control of the defense forces," Nazar Voloshin, spokesman for the Khortytsia ground forces formation, said on Ukrainian state TV.

It wasn't immediately possible to independently confirm the claim.

Russia's Kharkiv push appears to be a coordinated new offensive that includes testing Ukrainian defenses in the Donetsk region further south, while also launching incursions in the northern Sumy and Chernihiv regions.

Also on Saturday, Ukrainian officials said there was an attempt on the life of the ex-mayor of Kupiansk, a city in Ukraine's northeastern Kharkiv region, on Friday.

The Main Intelligence Directorate of Ukraine's Ministry of Defense said Hennadiy Matsehora was in "critical condition" after he was attacked in Russia's Belgorod region, bordering Ukraine.

Officials said he "voluntarily agreed to full cooperation" when Russian troops invaded and in June 2022 "signed the so-called protocol for the creation of the occupation Kharkiv administration."

After the Ukrainian Armed Forces took back control of Kupiansk, Matsehora had "escaped with the Russians to the Belgorod region," Ukrainian intelligence said.

The statement by the directorate on social messaging app Telegram labeled the ex-mayor a "traitor."

Your time is up, Italy's hard-right leader tells EU center parties as she votes in European election

By GIADA ZAMPANO, KAREL JANICEK and RAF CASERT Associated Press

ROME (AP) — Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni joined voters in Italy and a half dozen European Union nations in casting a ballot during the penultimate day of European Union parliamentary elections on Saturday. The bloc's premier hard-right politician threw down the gauntlet to the traditional center parties, telling them their time to run the EU as they liked was up.

Populist and far-right parties were looking to make gains across the 27-member bloc in the wake of the strong showing by Geert Wilders in the Netherlands on Thursday.

And Meloni, the leading hard-right politician governing a key founding nation of the bloc, left no doubt about what was at stake when she went to vote in her suburban neighborhood in Rome on Saturday afternoon.

"This vote will decide our next five years," she said, echoing her campaign theme that time had come to pull back powers to national capitals and curtail the reach of the EU institutions that have been dominated by Christian Democrat, Socialist and pro-business Liberal politicians.

As the third most populous nation in the bloc, Italy wields considerable influence. It will send 76 legislators to the 720-seat parliament, which has extended its powers in recent years. Only Germany and France, which vote on Sunday, have more seats.

At the same time, the election campaign was tainted by violence.

In Slovakia, the election was overshadowed by an attempt to assassinate populist Prime Minister Robert Fico on May 15, sending shockwaves through the nation of 5.4 million and reverberating throughout Europe. Analysts say the attack could boost the chances of the premier's leftist Smer (Direction) party, the senior partner in the governing coalition, to win the vote.

And in Denmark it was Prime Minister Mette Fredriksen who called off her last day of campaigning across the country after suffering whiplash when she was assaulted in Copenhagen on Friday, the latest in a series of incidents over the past weeks, in which the assassination attempt on Fico stood out.

Fico, who took office last fall after campaigning on a pro-Russian and anti-American platform, has been recovering from multiple wounds after being shot in the abdomen as he greeted supporters in the town of Handlova.

He recovered in time to address the nation in a prerecorded video, his first public statement since the attack, just hours before the start of the preelection silence period on Wednesday. He attacked the European Union, suggesting he was a victim because of his views that differ sharply from the EU's mainstream.

Fico strongly opposes support for Ukraine in its war against Russia's full-scale invasion. He ended Slovakia's military aid for Ukraine after his coalition government was sworn in on Oct. 25. He also opposes EU sanctions on Russia and wants to block Ukraine from joining NATO.

Fico claimed mainstream media, non-governmental organizations and the liberal opposition were also to blame for the assassination attempt, an allegation repeated by politicians in his governing coalition.

Soňa Szomolányi, a political science professor at Comenius University in Bratislava, said Fico's message "only confirms that the ruling coalition has been using the assassination (attempt) expediently and apparently effectively," she said.

The whole EU campaign has been cast in the light of the center and left forces seeking to hold off a surge of the far right on Sunday and in a fight between those who seek closer EU unity with greater powers against those like Fico, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and Meloni who seek to swing the pendulum back to the member states themselves.

EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, who hopes to use Sunday's results as a launchpad for a second term at the head of the EU, has especially been stressing the respect for the rule of law as a quintessential requirement for those seeking power.

Meloni is expected to be the big winner in Italy, reflecting her far-right Brothers of Italy's growth, mostly at the expense of her coalition partners, the populist, anti-migrant League and the center-right Forza Italia.

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The result could expand Meloni's influence in the EU, as von der Leyen has not ruled out a coalition with her group.

Capitalizing on her popularity, Meloni is running as the preferential candidate, even though she has no intention of taking a European parliamentary seat.

Voters in Latvia, Malta, and the Czech Republic were also casting ballots Saturday. Final results will not be released until Sunday night, once every country has voted. The main voting day is Sunday, with citizens in 20 European countries, including Germany, France and Poland, casting their ballots for the 720-seat European Parliament.

Seats are allocated based on population, ranging from six in Malta or Luxembourg to 96 in Germany. In Malta, European Parliament President Roberta Metsola, von der Leyen's ally in the Christian Democrat center-right European People's Party, proudly proclaimed "Duty done" and urged EU citizens to go vote, "or others will decide for you." In 2019, barely half the eligible votes went out to the polling booths while predictions have shown turnout could exceed 70% this year.

In Slovakia, Fico's Smer party is in a close race against the main opposition Progressive Slovakia, a pro-Western liberal party.

Fico's government has made efforts to overhaul public broadcasting — a move critics said would give the government full control of public television and radio.

That, along with his plans to amend the penal code to eliminate a special anti-graft prosecutor, has led opponents to worry that he would lead Slovakia down a more autocratic path, following the direction of neighboring Hungary under populist Orbán.

Takeaways from Hunter Biden's gun trial: His family turns out as his own words are used against him

By CLAUDIA LAUER, MICHAEL KUNZELMAN, RANDALL CHASE and ALANNA DURKIN RICHER Associated Press

WILMINGTON, Del. (AP) — Pictures of President Joe Biden's son with drug paraphernalia and bare-chested in a bubble bath. Text messages between Hunter Biden and drug dealers. Testimony from Hunter's exes about relationships destroyed by his drug use.

Hunter Biden's trial on gun charges brought by his father's Justice Department has put on full display tawdry and embarrassing details about the president's son, all while first lady Jill Biden watches from the courtroom in Wilmington, Delaware.

Prosecutors on Friday rested their case accusing Hunter Biden of lying when he swore that he was not a drug user on a federal form to buy a gun in October 2018. The defense could call at least one more witness when the trial resumes on Monday before lawyers make their closing arguments.

Hunter Biden has pleaded not guilty and has accused the Justice Department of bending to political pressure from former President Donald Trump and other Republicans to bring the case and separate tax charges after a deal with prosecutors fell apart last year. Hunter Biden has said he has been sober since 2019.

Here are some key takeaways from the first week of the trial:

BIDEN FAMILY TURNS OUT IN COURTJill Biden sat through the proceedings at the federal courthouse almost every day since the trial began June 3. She missed Thursday's testimony because she was in France attending D-Day anniversary events with the president. She flew back to be in court on Friday.

She sat quietly in the first row of the courtroom behind Hunter Biden and listened intently without showing emotion as prosecutors painted him as deceptive and driven by addiction. During breaks in testimony, Jill Biden occasionally spoke briefly with Hunter, leaning over a railing in the courtroom to hug and kiss him on the cheek.

Other family members who showed up throughout the week to show support included Hunter Biden's sister Ashley, the president's sister Valerie Biden and Jill Biden's sister Bonny Jacobs.

HUNTER'S OWN WORDSHunter Biden hasn't taken the witness stand and it is not clear whether he

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will. Jurors have already heard his own words about the depths of his drug and alcohol addiction after his brother, Beau, died in 2015.

A central piece of the prosecution's case is Hunter Biden's memoir "Beautiful Things," in which the president's son opened up about his crack cocaine addiction, stints in rehab and struggles to get sober.

Jurors have heard Hunter Biden detail at length seeking out crack in different places and learning how to smoke it. In one long excerpt played in the courtroom, he described driving to a treatment center and seeing an enormous barn owl, which may have been a hallucination, swoop over his windshield.

In another excerpt played in court, Hunter Biden described at one point accidentally leaving in a rental car his wallet, which contained his late brother's Delaware attorney general badge and a Secret Service business card. A rental car employee found that, along with paraphernalia and white-powder residue on the armrest. A manager called police, who called the Secret Service, who called Joe Biden, Hunter wrote.

No charges were brought over that. In his book, Hunter Biden wrote: "Despite the speculation in the right-wing media to the contrary, the cops weren't strong-armed into dropping the case."

THREE EXESHunter Biden's ex-wife and two other former romantic partners, including his brother's widow, took the witness stand for prosecutors to detail their knowledge of his drug use.

His ex-wife, Kathleen Buhle, recounted learning that her husband was using drugs when she found a pipe used to smoke crack cocaine in an ashtray on their porch in July 2015, a day after their anniversary.

Beau's widow, Hallie, described beginning to use drugs herself during her short and troubled romantic relationship with Hunter Biden, telling jurors: "I regret that period of my life." Hallie Biden testified about finding the remnants of crack cocaine and drug paraphernalia in his car, along with the gun that is at the center of the case.

"I panicked and I wanted to get rid of them," she said of the gun and ammunition she found.

"Why did you panic?" the prosecutor asked.

"Because I didn't want him to hurt himself, and I didn't want my kids to find it and hurt themselves," Hallie Biden replied. She put the gun in a bag and tossed it in a garbage can at a nearby grocery store. A man collecting recyclables found it and eventually handed it over to police.

A third woman, Zoe Kestan, told jurors about meeting Hunter in December 2017 at a strip club in New York where she was working. She recounted Hunter Biden smoking crack perhaps every 20 minutes when she stayed with him at a hotel.

Kestan acknowledged that she had no contact with him in October 2018, the period when he bought the gun. But she told jurors that Hunter Biden was using drugs the next month. Prosecutors also showed jurors several highly personal photos from her phone of Hunter Biden sleeping, in a bubble bath and, in some, unclothed or censored with a black box.

DEFENSE STRATEGYThe defense argued in a court filing Friday that prosecutors have failed to present evidence that Hunter Biden was actually using drugs in the 11 days he owned the gun.

"It was only after the gun was thrown away and the ensuing stress ... that the government was able to then find the same type of evidence of his use (e.g., photos, use of drug lingo) that he relapsed with drugs," defense lawyer Abbe Lowell wrote.

Throughout the trial, the defense has tried to cast doubt on the memories of the prosecution's witnesses, pressing them about their recollection of events.

Lowell has raised other possible reasons for large cash withdrawals to counter the implication that his client was using the cash for drugs. Lowell asked investigators whether Hunter Biden could have been getting cash to pay for his children's tuition, for housing or alimony, pointing out that authorities had not done a forensic financial examination to trace the money.

The defense on Friday called to the witness stand Hunter Biden's daughter Naomi Biden, who testified about how she visited her father while he was at a rehab facility in August 2018, months before the gun purchase, and told him she was proud of him. The testimony detailing a lunch with her boyfriend, her father and his sober living companion appeared designed to show that Hunter Biden had turned a corner with his addiction during that period.

But prosecutors quickly pressed Naomi Biden on details she witnessed about his addiction and her father's

behavior when she saw him briefly in October after his gun purchase. Prosecutors read highly personal texts between the father and daughter, including a plea she made to see him and his response that he was being unfair, leaving them both emotional as she left the witness stand.

The defense had previously said they planned to call as a witness Joe Biden's brother, James. On Friday, Hunter's lawyer did not rule out calling one more witness, but it was unclear who that could be. Testimony from other family members could open the door for more highly personal messages to be introduced to the jury.

Demand for food delivery has skyrocketed. So have complaints about some drivers

By MICHAEL CASEY Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — A soaring demand for food delivered fast has spawned small armies of couriers — and increasing alarm — in big cities where scooters, motorcycles and mopeds zip in and out of traffic and hop onto pedestrian-filled sidewalks as their drivers race to drop off salads and sandwiches.

Officials in Boston, New York and Washington, D.C., have started cracking down on delivery companies by issuing warning letters, seizing illegally registered or driven vehicles, and launching special street patrols to enforce speed limits. The pushback is not limited to the U.S.: There have also been a series of crackdowns in London and other British cities.

For their part, the delivery companies have pledged to work with city officials to ensure that all of their drivers operate both legally and safely.

In a letter this week to food delivery companies DoorDash, Grubhub and Uber, Boston officials cited an "alarming increase in unlawful and dangerous operation of motorcycles, mopeds and motorized scooters" that they said put the drivers, other motorists and pedestrians "in imminent danger."

The letter alleged that some drivers were operating unregistered vehicles and breaking traffic laws, and warned of an imminent crackdown on the vehicles. It also demanded that the companies explain how they can ensure their drivers are operating safely. The Massachusetts State Police said they identified dozens of mopeds and scooters that were improperly registered or being operated by unlicensed drivers. Fourteen illegal mopeds and scooters were seized Wednesday in one Boston neighborhood alone.

In New York City, authorities have seized 13,000 scooters and mopeds so far this year; on Wednesday, they crushed more than 200 illegal mopeds and other delivery vehicles. Authorities in Washington, D.C., meanwhile, launched a program Wednesday called Operation Ride Right to ensure drivers of two-wheeled vehicles are complying with the law. Since it began, authorities have made five arrests and impounded 17 mopeds.

"They have terrorized many of our pedestrians, particularly our senior and older adults," New York City Mayor Eric Adams said Wednesday at an event in which motorized two-wheeled delivery vehicles were destroyed. "Riders who think the rules don't apply to them, they're going to see an aggressive enforcement policy that's in place."

When food delivery services had their major resurgence during the COVID-19 pandemic, most drivers used cars to deliver their fare. That led to increased traffic congestion, prompting a shift to motorcycles and other two-wheeled modes of transportation.

The drivers, many of them immigrants from Latin American countries but also from West Africa and South Asia, say they are just trying to earn a living and are providing a service that gets customers their food fast.

"We're not all bad," said Luis López, a delivery driver from the Dominican Republic who spoke to The Associated Press on Friday from his motorcycle in an area of multiple fast-food restaurants near the Boston Public Library. "We come to work, to earn a living, pay the rent and send something to our families."

López, who came to the U.S. about three years ago, acknowledged that some drivers are unlicensed or driving unregistered vehicles, and he's seen them running red lights and onto sidewalks, menacing pedestrians. Some people are so reckless that they're also putting other delivery drivers at risk, he said.

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He said he was among a group of 10 delivery drivers outside a Chick-fil-A on Thursday night when a police officer approached them with a flyer describing how to register their scooters and mopeds. The whole group agreed to do just that.

"We have to respect the law," he said, speaking in Spanish. "We are going to respect the law so that they let us work here."

Drivers of motorized two-wheeled vehicles are coming under much more scrutiny than was faced years ago by other gig workers in cars, such as Uber and Lyft drivers, because they can more easily violate traffic laws, said Hilary Robinson, an associate professor of law and sociology at Northeastern University.

The switch to the vehicles "is really an attempt to make low-wage, high-risk labor available so that all of us can have cheap goods and services," Robinson said. "It's perhaps one of the reasons why people are starting to realize that there really is no such thing as a free lunch."

William Medina, a delivery worker in New York who is also an organizing leader with the Los Deliveristas Unidos Campaign, blames the delivery companies.

"This is a problem that started because the companies force you to complete the deliveries from far distances," he said in a telephone interview Friday. Medina started out delivering food on a bicycle, switched to an electric bike, and now is using a moped to make the longer trips.

"If you have to complete the delivery 6 miles, 7 miles, you have to complete it," he said.

Among those advocating for tougher enforcement in Boston is City Councilor Edward Flynn, who said on Facebook that it "can no longer be the Wild West on the streets of Boston."

"Everyone using city roads needs to abide by the rules of the road. If you're able to go 25 mph like a car — you should be licensed, registered, and carry liability insurance in the event of an accident and injury," he wrote.

Some Boston residents are supportive of tougher action against the scooters.

"I get frustrated when they don't follow the traffic laws," said Anne Kirby, a 25-year-old student having lunch in a Boston neighborhood within a few hundred feet of several scooters. "I feel like I almost get hit every day when they go through the crosswalk when it's not their turn to go."

But Jaia Samuel, a 25-year-old hospital worker from Boston, was more conflicted. She said she agreed that delivery scooters can be dangerous, but she also acknowledged that she relies heavily on delivery services for her food.

"I do think it's unsafe to an extent, the weaving in between cars and the not stopping for red lights," she said. "But I feel like everybody should be able to make a living, so who am I to say anything? It would be unfortunate for me. I would be taking a hit with the crackdown on them. I order a lot of Uber Eats, DoorDash."

Three major food delivery services have pledged to work with officials and neighborhood advocates to address the problem.

"The overwhelming majority of Dashers do the right thing and like all drivers must follow the rules of the road. If they don't, then they face consequences — just like anyone else," DoorDash said in a statement Wednesday.

Grubhub said its employees already agree to obey all local traffic laws. "While enforcement of the law is best handled by the police, we take safety seriously and will take action to address any reports of unsafe driving," the company said in a statement Thursday.

How this Maryland pastor ended up leading one of the fastest-growing churches in the nation

By DARREN SANDS Associated Press

CALVERTON, Md. (AP) — The Rev. Matthew L. Watley says it's not happenstance his suburban Maryland congregation, part of the historically Black African Methodist Episcopal denomination, landed at the top of a list of the fastest-growing churches in America.

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From hearing his call to ministry while dancing with his Step Afrika troupe in South Africa to giving up his law school aspirations and enrolling at Howard School of Divinity, all paths led to the pulpit — and eventually Kingdom Fellowship AME Church — for this son and grandson of AME ministers.

"There's a phrase that says, 'In America we believe in God, but in Africa, they depend on God,'" said Watley, who also met his wife, a lawyer and federal lobbyist, at Howard. "I had never seen faith like that before."

In 2019, the year Kingdom Fellowship AME was founded, the church had about 3,000 members and an average weekly attendance of about 1,800 people, according to the church's figures. Today, membership has swelled to nearly 8,000, and its weekly services draw about 2,500 attendees altogether.

On a recent Sunday morning, Watley, 50, preached to a packed sanctuary from the Gospel of Luke about Zacchaeus' transformative meeting with Jesus. The short and corrupt tax collector changed his ways after climbing a tree to see Jesus over the crowd.

"When Zacchaeus climbed that tree, that was his way of doing what he needed to do to become whole — to become healed from the stuff he'd been carrying his whole life," Watley said.

Afterward more than 20 people, some with tears in their eyes, retreated to an intake room for new members. Kingdom Fellowship is averaging about 110 additions per month, according to the church's count.

Before Kingdom Fellowship, Watley built a robust following for years through a ministry called Power Lunch, the first of which drew about 300 people. These were midday worship hours held in the District of Columbia and the greater Washington metropolitan area that provided attendees with a to-go meal before they headed back to work.

Watley also brought a church to the people, taking note of the scores of Black Americans relocating from D.C. to the suburbs and in need of a place to worship. Although outside the district, Watley and Kingdom Fellowship have remained in the capital's political orbit, sharing his pulpit with Baptist pastor and U.S. Sen. Raphael Warnock, D-Georgia; and hosting Vice President Kamala Harris and Second Gentleman Doug Emhoff for the inaugural service in its new church building. They have also welcomed Angela Alsobrooks, the Democratic U.S. Senate nominee challenging former Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan, among other politicians.

But Kingdom Fellowship still wants to be identified with its homespun hospitality and a culture that puts its members on equal footing regardless of what they do outside the church.

"We appreciate that you're the CEO, whatever. We need some help on the parking lot. It's great you're ... the head of the ER medical unit. We need somebody to hold this door. And that's the culture," Watley said.

Kingdom Fellowship began as a satellite campus of the growing Reid Temple AME Church in nearby Montgomery County, which is where Watley served as executive pastor, overseeing the budget, local ministries and its 132,000 square-foot-facility featuring a sanctuary, credit union and bookstore that was completed in 2004. Watley also served as the de facto chief of staff for Reid Temple's senior pastor, the Rev. Lee Washington.

"He had a lot of ideas," said Washington, who recently retired. "I gave him the freedom and the flexibility to do what he thought was best."

With Washington's blessing, those ideas included launching Reid Temple North with a small contingent of volunteers. They held the first worship service in 2006 in the Montgomery Blair High School cafeteria, where they met until 2010. The growing congregation moved into a renovated building in Silver Spring, Maryland, where Watley added a second Sunday service in 2011 and a third in 2013. The campus eventually became financially self-sufficient.

Instead of naming Watley his successor, Washington with an eye on retirement opted to spin-off Reid Temple North as an independent church. It was renamed Kingdom Fellowship AME and Watley became its inaugural senior pastor in 2019.

"Our church was growing by leaps and bounds, and I did not believe in hoarding," Washington said. "I believe in sharing."

Watley, even as a young leader, was noticed within the denomination for his maturity and strong opinions, said Bishop James Levert Davis, the presiding prelate for the AME district that includes Kingdom

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Fellowship. Davis has selected Watley to be part of his district's delegation to the upcoming AME General Conference where the denomination's ban on same-sex marriage is expected to be debated — an issue Watley hopes won't cause a schism.

"I tease Matthew constantly telling him that he's the oldest young person that I know," Davis said. "Between his father and his grandfather, he has been anchored and nurtured by the best of who we are."

Watley's role as the first leader of Kingdom Fellowship also came with a nerve-wracking capital project — building a new worship center with sky-high ceilings and an amphitheater-style sanctuary. Not only was there a recent example of a similar project falling apart at another church in the region, but Kingdom Fellowship was preparing to break ground when the COVID-19 pandemic hit.

"I was very cognizant of that. Absolutely," Watley said.

But no one pulled out: neither the bank nor the contractor or the congregation. Instead, members of Kingdom Fellowship increased their giving, and the congregation celebrated their first service in the new worship center in 2022 for Easter. Recently, Outreach magazine named the church the fastest growing, a ranking based on a self-reported Lifeway Research survey that compared average weekly, in-person attendance for February and March 2023 to 2022 numbers.

In the U.S., Black Protestants' monthly church attendance declined 15% from 2019 to 2023, a larger drop than any other major religious group, according to a 2023 Pew Research study. They are also more likely than other groups to take in religious services online or on TV, with more than half (54%) saying they attend services virtually.

The pace of growth at Kingdom Fellowship AME has been rapid but seamless, said Sharon and Billy Watts, of Upper Marlboro, Maryland. What has remained constant is the kindness and care of church staff, they said.

The couple previously attended Reid Temple North where they got to regularly witness Watley's gift for preaching and reaching people. Watley inspires outside the church, too, said Sharon Watts, noting the speech the pastor gave at her husband's retirement party that had the crowd of soon-to-be retirees wondering how and where they could hear Watley again.

"It's something about that man and what he brings forth in his preaching," said Sharon Watts, who first noticed that Watley's knack for drawing crowds in the Power Lunch days. "To me it seems like we're called to bring the community together, to hear the word of God, to not just prepare them spiritually, but to prepare the whole person."

Today in History: June 9, Donald Trump is indicted

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Sunday, June 9, the 161st day of 2024. There are 205 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On June 9, 2023, a felony indictment said Donald Trump improperly stored in his Florida estate sensitive documents on nuclear capabilities, repeatedly enlisted aides and lawyers to help him hide records demanded by investigators and cavalierly showed off a Pentagon "plan of attack" and classified map.

On this date:

In 1732, James Oglethorpe received a charter from Britain's King George II to found the colony of Georgia.

In 1870, author Charles Dickens died in Gad's Hill Place, England.

In 1915, guitarist, songwriter and inventor Les Paul was born in Waukesha, Wisconsin.

In 1940, during World War II, Norway decided to surrender to the Nazis, effective at midnight.

In 1954, during the Senate Army-McCarthy hearings, Army special counsel Joseph N. Welch berated Sen. Joseph R. McCarthy, R-Wis., asking: "Have you no sense of decency, sir? At long last, have you left no sense of decency?"

In 1969, the Senate confirmed Warren Burger to be the new chief justice of the United States, succeeding Earl Warren.

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In 1972, heavy rains triggered record flooding in the Black Hills of South Dakota; the resulting disaster left at least 238 people dead and \$164 million in damage.

In 1978, leaders of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints struck down a 148-year-old policy of excluding Black men from the Mormon priesthood.

In 1983, Britain's Conservatives, led by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, won a decisive election victory.

In 1986, the Rogers Commission released its report on the Challenger disaster, criticizing NASA and rocket-builder Morton Thiokol for management problems leading to the explosion that claimed the lives of seven astronauts.

In 1993, the science-fiction film "Jurassic Park," directed by Steven Spielberg, had its world premiere in Washington, D.C.

In 2004, the body of Ronald Reagan arrived in Washington to lie in state in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda before the 40th president's funeral.

In 2013, Rafael Nadal became the first man to win eight titles at the same Grand Slam tournament after beating fellow Spaniard David Ferrer in the French Open final.

In 2017, actor Adam West, TV's "Batman," died in Los Angeles at age 88.

In 2018, Justify, ridden by Mike Smith and trained by Bob Baffert, won the Belmont Stakes to become horse racing's 13th Triple Crown winner and the second in four years.

In 2020, hundreds of mourners packed a Houston church for the funeral of George Floyd, a Black man whose death during a Minneapolis arrest inspired a worldwide reckoning over racial injustice.

In 2022, at its first public hearing on the matter, the House panel investigating the Jan. 6 insurrection at the U.S. Capitol laid the blame firmly on Donald Trump, saying the assault was not spontaneous but an "attempted coup" and a direct result of the defeated president's effort to overturn the 2020 election.

Today's Birthdays: Media analyst Marvin Kalb is 94. Sports commentator Dick Vitale is 85. Author Letty Cottin Pogrebin is 85. Rock musician Mick Box (Uriah Heep) is 77. Retired MLB All-Star Dave Parker is 73. Film composer James Newton Howard is 73. Mystery author Patricia Cornwell is 68. Actor Michael J. Fox is 63. Writer-producer Aaron Sorkin is 63. Actor Johnny Depp is 61. Actor Gloria Reuben is 60. Gospel singer-actor Tamela Mann is 58. Rock musician Dean Felber (Hootie & the Blowfish) is 57. Rock musician Dean Dinning is 57. Musician Ed Simons is 54. Actor Keesha Sharp is 51. Bluegrass singer-musician Jamie Dailey (Dailey & Vincent) is 49. Actor Michaela Conlin is 46. Actor Natalie Portman is 43. Actor Mae Whitman is 36. Actor Lucien Laviscount is 32.