

Groton Daily Independent

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Sunday, July 20

United Methodist: Worship at Conde, 8:15 a.m.; at Groton, 9:30 a.m.; at Britton, 11:15 a.m.; Coffee Hour, 10:30 a.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Worship at St. John's, 9 a.m.; at Zion 11 a.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship, 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.

Amateurs host Redfield, 4 p.m.

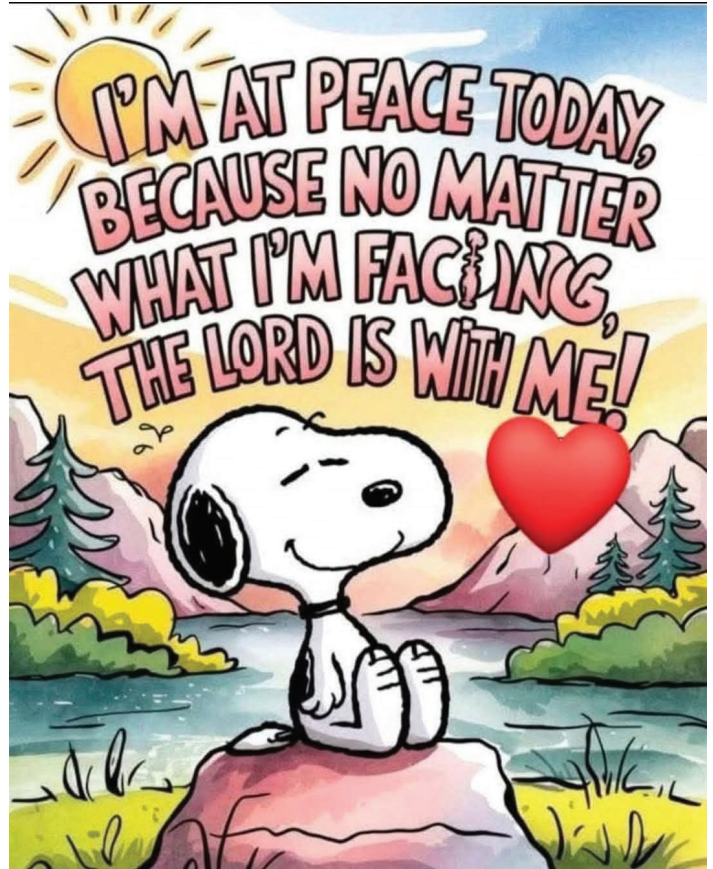
State U10 at Webster

U12 Softball Tourney in Groton

Groton Daily Independent

PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445

Paul's Cell/Text: 605-397-7460



Monday, July 21

Senior Menu: Breaded chicken sandwich, scalloped potato, mixed vegetables, oranges, whole wheat bread.

Senior Citizens meet at the Groton Community Center, 1 p.m.

Jr. Teeners at Faulkton, 5:30 p.m. (DH)

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

Tuesday, July 22

Senior Menu: Lasagna rotini bake, seven layer salad, tropical fruit, breadstick.

United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.

Region 6B Legion Tourney in Sisseton

Wednesday, July 23

Senior Menu: Roast beef, mashed potatoes with gravy, carrots, fruit, whole wheat bread.

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

Groton C&MA: Kid's Club, Youth Group, Adult Bible Study, 7 p.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: WELCA Guest Day, 6 p.m.

Region 6B Legion Tourney in Sisseton

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We the People

The South Dakota Humanities Council is making available a weekly column -- "We the People" -- that focuses on the U.S. Constitution. It is written by David Adler, who is president of The Alturas Institute, a non-profit organization created to promote the Constitution, gender equality, and civic education.



By David Adler

Judicial Expansion of Presidential Power Defies Hamilton's Reassurances

Constitutional conversations about the Supreme Court often begin with Alexander Hamilton's famous description of the judiciary in Federalist No. 78 as the "least dangerous branch," precisely because the judicial branch lacks both the legislative power of the purse and the executive power of the sword. An ardent revolutionary, Hamilton had denounced in 1778 the behavior of English judges and "the trackless imaginations of their minds," but in 1787, as a defender of the newly-minted Constitution and the newly-minted Supreme Court, he explained that there was little to fear from the Justices, who would not impose on the nation their views, values and prejudices, because they were but a mouthpiece for the Constitution.

Across the decades, however, the Supreme Court has demonstrated through its rulings on presidential power a penchant for expanding executive authority beyond the text of the Constitution and anything said, debated or defended in the Constitutional Convention. In short, through a series of decisions on presidential power that are altogether alien to our constitutional architecture, the Court has shown that it is anything but the least dangerous branch of government. Either Hamilton was naïve and simply wrong, or the Court has betrayed the Framers' expectations, transgressed its own boundaries and institutional norms, and morphed into a policy making branch that has disfigured constitutional prescriptions for presidential power. The Court's rulings on executive authority resemble more the decisions rendered by English judges whom Hamilton criticized for their arbitrary imaginations than the American judges whom he praised and argued worthy of constitutional protections to safeguard their independence.

The Court has introduced novel theories of presidential power that have inflicted considerable, indeed, lasting harm, on the republic. Readers are familiar with the pernicious ruling delivered by the Court in *Trump v. US* (2024), which clothed the presidency with immunity from criminal prosecution, a doctrine, to borrow from Justice Amy Coney Barrett's baseless and back-handed dismissal of Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson's biting dissent from Barrett's opinion in *Trump v. CASA*, that is "untethered from two centuries worth of precedent, not to mention the Constitution itself." Indeed, the Court's creation of presidential immunity from criminal prosecution is "untethered" from James Wilson's explanation in the Convention that the president enjoys no privilege not annexed to the character of all citizens. The decision essentially places the president above the law.

A century before the executive immunity decision, the Court, in 1936, in *U.S. v. Curtiss-Wright*, in a dicta-riddled opinion by Justice George Sutherland, introduced the novel, and dangerous, idea that the president is the "sole organ" of American foreign policy. This decision, though it is in conflict with the text of the Constitution, which makes Congress, not the president, the senior partner in the formulation and conduct of the nation's foreign relations, has been invoked ever since by presidents of both parties to justify presidential adventures in the international realm, including the initiation of war and lesser military hostilities. The "Curtiss Wright cite," as it is known among scholars, is cast into discussion to end discussion and to silence critics of the president's policies and usurpation of power. This act of judicial deference—the Ghost of Curtiss-Wright—represents a plague on the Framers' constitutional blueprint.

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In 1974, the Court in *US v. Nixon*—the Watergate Tapes Case—rightly won applause for rejecting President Richard Nixon’s assertion of an “absolute” executive privilege to withhold information from Congress, the courts and the Independent Counsel, but its ruling that the president enjoys a “limited” privilege was cut from whole cloth, utterly without foundation in the constitutional text and the Convention. The damage inflicted on our constitutional system by the invention of a limited privilege—define “limited” -- is also difficult to measure, for it has emboldened executive secrecy on information to which Congress is entitled in the exercise of its constitutional powers and responsibilities. Leaving Congress in the dark on matters of vital interest to the nation is unwise and dangerous.

The Court’s baffling deference to the executive requires further exploration, next week.

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Groton Legion Post 39 Defeat Rattlers 2025 Legion On Multiple Hit Performance By Alex Abeln

By GameChanger Media

Alex Abeln collected three hits in three at bats, as Groton Legion Post 39 defeated Rattlers 2025 Legion 18-4 on Saturday. Abeln singled in the third inning, singled in the second inning, and singled in the third inning.

Groton Legion Post 39 won thanks in part to 14 runs in the third inning. Abeln singled, scoring one run, Lincoln Krause singled, scoring one run, Teylor Diegel singled, scoring one run, Korbin Kucker doubled, scoring two runs, Brevin Fliehs singled, scoring two runs, Carter Simon singled, scoring one run, Braxton Imrie doubled, scoring two runs, Abeln singled, scoring two runs, Kucker drew a walk, scoring one run, and an error scored one run.

Rattlers 2025 Legion got on the board in the bottom of the first inning after Cole Nitschke singled to center field, and Colin Goettle walked, each scoring one run.

Groton Legion Post 39 took the lead, 4-2, in the top of the second thanks to singles by Nick Groebelinghoff, Abeln, and Diegel.

Rattlers 2025 Legion tied the game up in the bottom of the second thanks to two singles. Rattlers 2025 Legion tied the game at four on a single by Berkley Frantz.

Gavin Englund led things off on the bump for Groton Legion Post 39. The hurler gave up four hits and four runs over three innings, striking out four and walking four. Parker Salwei opened the game for Rattlers 2025 Legion. The pitcher allowed 15 hits and 18 runs (11 earned) over two and two-thirds innings, striking out two and walking four.

Groton Legion Post 39 collected 15 hits in the game. Krause and Abeln were a force together in the lineup, as they each collected three hits for Groton Legion Post 39 while hitting back-to-back. Diegel, Abeln, and Kucker each drove in three runs for Groton Legion Post 39. Englund collected two hits for Groton Legion Post 39 in two at bats.

Frantz went 2-for-2 at the plate to lead Rattlers 2025 Legion in hits. Justin Bosch, Frantz, and Nitschke each drove in one run for Rattlers 2025 Legion.

Next up for Groton Legion Post 39 is a game at Milbank on Tuesday.

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Big Sixth Inning Leads Circus Sports Bar Past Locke Electric

By GameChanger Media

Circus Sports Bar defeated Groton Locke Electric 15-1 on Saturday at Groton thanks in part to eight runs in the sixth inning.

A tag up by Jaiden Smith put Circus Sports Bar on the board in the top of the first.

Circus Sports Bar added to their early lead in the top of the second inning after Smith tripled to center field, and Michael Babcock singled to center field, each scoring one run.

Circus Sports Bar scored eight runs on four hits in the top of the sixth inning. Colton Cox scored after tagging up, Joshue Steinwandt singled, scoring two runs, Kelly Coates drew a walk, scoring one run, Rhett Florey singled, scoring one run, Cox singled, scoring two runs, and Florey scored after tagging up.

T Clapp earned the win for Circus Sports Bar. The pitcher surrendered four hits and one run over six innings, striking out 10 and walking two. Wyatt Locke took the loss for Groton Locke Electric. The hurler went four and one-third innings, giving up seven runs on 12 hits, striking out one and walking eight.

Ty Sieber, Brian Hansen, Nick Morris Legion, and Karsten Fliehs Legion each collected one hit for Groton Locke Electric. Morris Legion went 1-for-3 at the plate and led the team with one run batted in. Groton Locke Electric were sure-handed in the field and didn't commit a single error. Sieber had the most chances in the field with seven.

Circus Sports Bar amassed 16 hits in the game. Steinwandt drove the middle of the lineup, leading Circus Sports Bar with three runs batted in. The left-handed hitter went 1-for-3 on the day. Circus Sports Bar's Cox, the number nine hitter, led Circus Sports Bar with four hits in four at bats. Kris Kwak, Casey Vining, Babcock, and Florey each collected multiple hits for Circus Sports Bar. Circus Sports Bar had patience at the plate, accumulating 14 walks for the game. Smith and Kwak led the team with three bases on balls each. Circus Sports Bar were sure-handed and didn't commit a single error. Coates made the most plays with 10.

Groton Locke Electric play at home on Sunday against Redfield in their next game.

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Circus Sports Bar 15 - 1 Groton Locke Electric

📍 Home 📅 Saturday July 19, 2025

	1	2	3	4	5	6	R	H	E
CRCS	1	2	0	3	1	8	15	16	0
GRTN	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	4	0

BATTING

Circus Sports Bar	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
J Smith (2B)	3	3	1	1	3	1
M Babcock (SS)	3	3	2	2	2	0
C Vining (3B)	5	1	2	1	1	0
W Thorson (LF)	4	1	1	1	1	0
J Steinwandt (DH)	3	1	1	3	2	0
K Kwak (RF)	2	2	2	1	3	0
K Coates (C)	4	1	1	2	1	0
R Florey (1B)	4	1	2	1	0	0
C Cox (CF)	4	2	4	2	1	0
Totals	32	15	16	14	14	1

2B: C Vining, **3B:** J Smith, M Babcock, **TB:** W Thorson, K Coates, R Florey 2, J Smith 3, C Vining 3, M Babcock 4, C Cox 4, J Steinwandt, K Kwak 2, **HBP:** R Florey, M Babcock, **LOB:** 15

PITCHING

Circus Sports Bar	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
T Clapp	6.0	4	1	1	2	10	0
Totals	6.0	4	1	1	2	10	0

W: T Clapp, **P-S:** T Clapp 95-61, **WP:** T Clapp, **HBP:** T Clapp 2, **BF:** T Clapp 25

Groton Locke Electric	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
R Groebli... #0 (2B)	1	0	0	0	0	0
A Jones #7 (CF)	3	0	0	0	0	3
T Sieber #24 (SS)	3	1	1	0	0	0
B Hansen #18 (1B)	3	0	1	0	0	0
N Morris... #17 (3B)	3	0	1	1	0	0
W Locke #38 (P)	1	0	0	0	1	1
S Locke #15 (2B)	1	0	0	0	0	1
G Knebel #9 (RF)	3	0	0	0	0	3
J Erdma... #00 (LF)	2	0	0	0	0	2
K Fliehs L... #10 (C)	1	0	1	0	1	0
Totals	21	1	4	1	2	10

TB: N Morris Legion, K Fliehs Legion, T Sieber, B Hansen, **HBP:** R Groeblichhoff 2, **LOB:** 6

Groton Locke Electric	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
W Locke #38	4.1	12	7	7	8	1	0
T Sieber #24	1.0	2	7	7	5	0	0
S Locke #15	0.2	2	1	1	1	0	0
Totals	6.0	16	15	15	14	1	0

L: W Locke, **P-S:** S Locke 11-6, T Sieber 43-16, W Locke 127-60, **WP:** W Locke 2, **HBP:** W Locke 2, **BF:** S Locke 5, T Sieber 10, W Locke 33

Tristin McGannon's Clutch Hitting Propels Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion To Victory Over Clear Lake

By GameChanger Media

Tristin McGannon drove in four runs on three hits to lead Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion past Clear Lake 18-1 on Saturday. McGannon tripled in the third scoring two, singled in the first scoring one, and singled in the second scoring one.

Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion got on the board in the top of the first inning after T.C Schuster lined out, scoring two runs, McGannon singled, scoring one run, an error scored one run, Isaiah Scepaniak tripled, scoring one run, and John Bisbee drew a walk, scoring one run.

Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion scored six runs on four hits in the top of the second inning. Schuster doubled, scoring one run, McGannon singled, scoring one run, Kason Oswald singled, scoring two runs, Lincoln Krause drew a walk, scoring one run, and Alex Abeln was struck by a pitch, driving in a run.

Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion added to their early lead in the top of the third inning when McGannon tripled, scoring two runs, Bisbee was struck by a pitch, driving in a run, and Abeln drew a walk, scoring one run.

Schuster earned the win for Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion. The hurler gave up one hit and zero runs over two and one-third innings, striking out three and walking none. Gabe took the loss for Clear Lake. The starter went one and one-third innings, giving up 10 runs (six earned) on eight hits, striking out none and walking two. Xavior Ellenecker appeared in relief for Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion.

Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion tallied 12 hits in the game. Oswald and Ryder Schelle each collected multiple hits for Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion. Ellenecker led Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion with three walks. Overall, the team had a strong eye at the plate, amassing 10 walks for the game.

Gabe led Clear Lake with one hit in two at bats.

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Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion **18 - 1** Clear Lake

📍 Away 📅 Saturday July 19, 2025

	1	2	3	4	R	H	E
GRTN	6	6	4	2	18	12	2
CLRL	0	0	1	0	1	1	6

BATTING

Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
L Krause #2 (CF)	4	1	1	1	1	1
A Abeln #5 (SS)	2	2	1	2	1	0
B Fliehs #19 (C)	0	0	0	0	0	0
N Groebl... #13 (1B)	3	1	1	0	1	0
T Schuster #3 (P)	2	2	1	2	1	0
J Schwan #11 (CF)	1	1	0	0	0	0
R Schelle #8 (2B)	4	3	2	0	0	0
T McGan... #22 (LF)	4	3	3	4	0	0
K Oswald #12 (C)	4	1	2	3	0	0
I Scepan... #20 (3B)	3	3	1	2	1	0
X Ellene... #21 (RF)	0	1	0	0	3	0
J Bisbee #15 (2B)	1	0	0	1	2	1
Totals	28	18	12	15	10	2

2B: T Schuster, **3B:** T McGannon, I Scepaniak, **TB:** K Oswald 2, N Groeblinghoff, T Schuster 2, T McGannon 5, R Schelle 2, L Krause, A Abeln, I Scepaniak 3, **HBP:** J Bisbee, X Ellenecker, A Abeln, **SB:** T Schuster, T McGannon, R Schelle, L Krause, A Abeln, **LOB:** 11

Clear Lake	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
#5 (3B)	2	0	0	0	0	0
Gray #8 (C)	1	0	0	0	1	1
Gabe #4 (P)	2	0	1	0	0	0
Kyler #10 (CF)	2	0	0	0	0	1
Jayden #1 (LF)	2	0	0	0	0	0
Clark #7 (SS)	2	0	0	0	0	1
Riley #11 (2B)	1	0	0	0	0	0
#6 (1B)	1	0	0	0	0	1
Kenton #9	1	1	0	0	0	0
Kolton #27 (RF)	1	0	0	0	0	1
Totals	15	1	1	0	1	5

TB: Gabe, **SB:** #5, Kenton, **LOB:** 3

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Groton Jr. Teeners 14U Lose To Beresford Area 14U

By GameChanger Media

Groton Jr. Teeners 14U could not keep up with Beresford Area 14U 4-1 on Saturday.

Beresford Area 14U got on the board in the top of the first inning after Karzen Sommervold walked, and Max Kinney lined out, each scoring one run.

A ground out by Stetson Lounsbery extended the Beresford Area 14U lead to 3-0 in the top of the second inning.

John Savey earned the win for Beresford Area 14U. The starter gave up three hits and one run over six innings, striking out 11 and walking none.

Trayce Schelle went 1-for-3 at the plate and led the team with one run batted in. Asher Zimmerman, Schelle, and Kyson Kucker each collected one hit for Groton Jr. Teeners 14U.

Kinney drove the middle of the lineup, leading Beresford Area 14U with two runs batted in. The right-handed hitter went 1-for-3 on the day. Bentley Schurch, Kinney, Evan Rosheim, Lounsbery, Savey, and Garrison Zweifel each collected one hit for Beresford Area 14U. Savey stole two bases.

Groton Jr. Teeners 14U will travel to Clear Lake 14U for their next game on Saturday.

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Jordan Schwan Goes Cycling As Groton Jr. Teeners 14U Defeat Clear Lake 14U

By GameChanger Media

Jordan Schwan hit for the cycle to carry Groton Jr. Teeners 14U to an 18-3 victory over Clear Lake 14U on Saturday. Schwan hit an inside the park home run in the first inning, doubled in the fourth inning, tripled in the third inning, and singled in the third inning.

An inside the park home run by Schwan put Groton Jr. Teeners 14U on the board in the top of the first.

Groton Jr. Teeners 14U scored nine runs on eight hits in the top of the third inning. Lincoln Shilhanek singled, scoring one run, Sam Crank doubled, scoring two runs, Keegan Kucker singled, scoring three runs, Trayce Schelle doubled, scoring two runs, and Schwan singled, scoring one run.

Groton Jr. Teeners 14U scored six runs on five hits in the top of the fourth inning. Noah Scepaniak drew a walk, scoring one run, Asher Zimmerman singled, scoring one run, Schelle singled, scoring one run, Schwan doubled, scoring two runs, and Shilhanek doubled, scoring one run.

Kolton Antonsen earned the win for Groton Jr. Teeners 14U. The pitcher surrendered one hit and zero runs over two innings, striking out one and walking two. Asher Bauman took the loss for Clear Lake 14U. The pitcher went two and one-third innings, surrendering 12 runs (11 earned) on 10 hits, striking out two and walking three. Kyson Kucker appeared in relief for Groton Jr. Teeners 14U.

Groton Jr. Teeners 14U tallied 16 hits in the game. Zimmerman, Schelle, and Shilhanek each collected multiple hits for Groton Jr. Teeners 14U. Groton Jr. Teeners 14U turned one double play in the game. Groton Jr. Teeners 14U were sure-handed and didn't commit a single error. Shilhanek made the most plays with four.

Jace Warren and Kyler Marson each collected one hit for Clear Lake 14U. Warren went 1-for-2 at the plate and led the team with one run batted in. Kolton Fieber paced Clear Lake 14U with two walks. Overall, the team had patience at the plate, accumulating nine walks for the game.

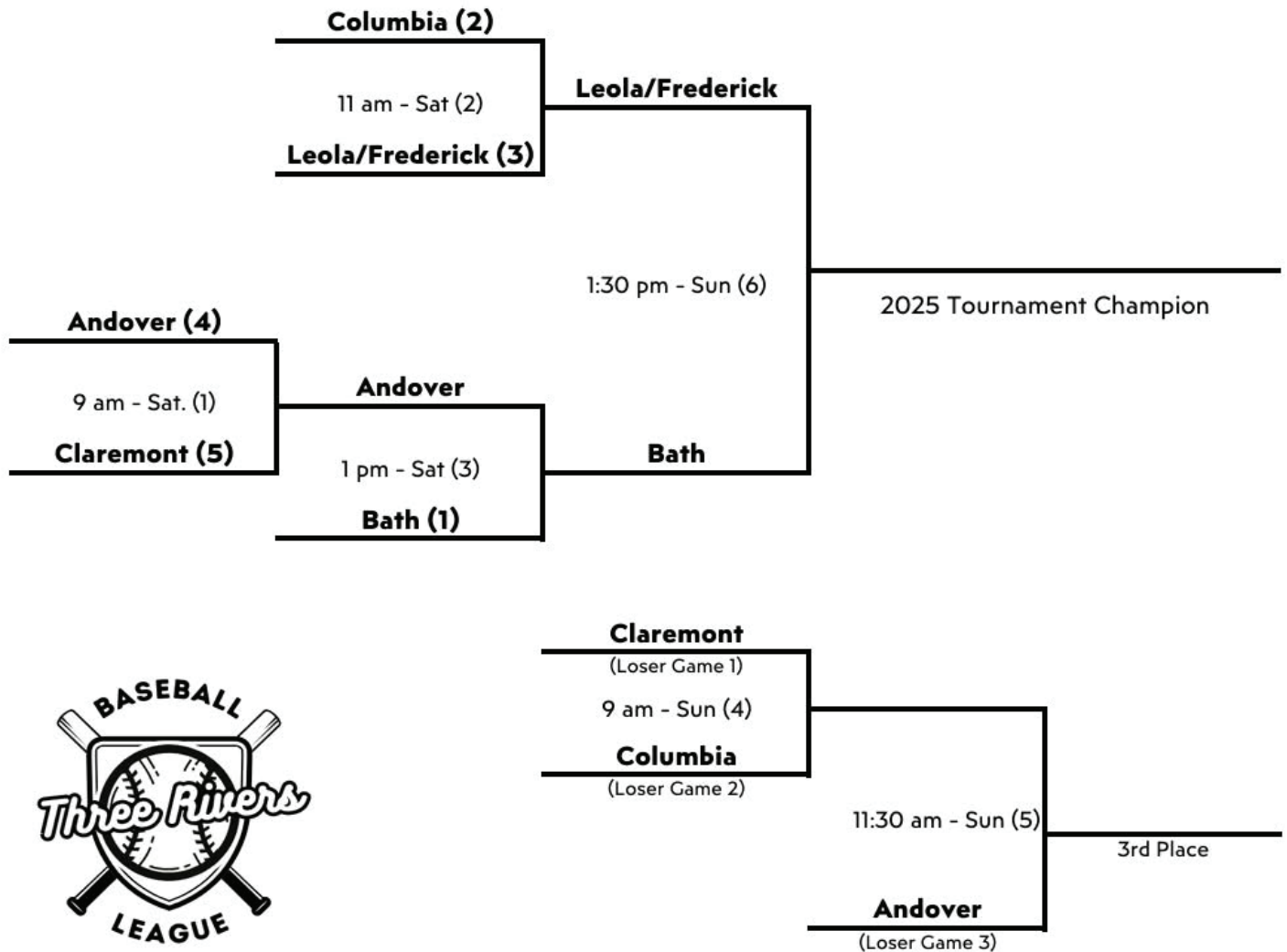
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THREE RIVERS LEAGUE MIDGET BASEBALL TOURNAMENT

Hosted by Bath -- July 19-20, 2025



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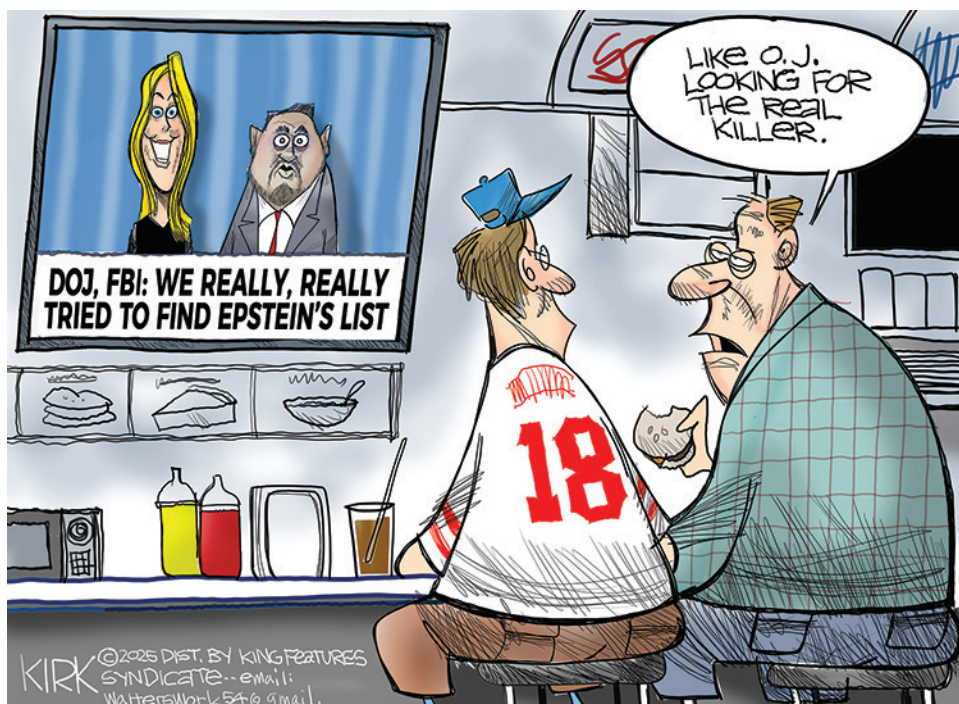
THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE



*Behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who
fear Him, on those who hope for His
lovingkindness, to deliver their
soul from death and to keep
them alive in famine. Our
soul waits for the Lord;
He is our help and
our shield.*

PSALM 33:18-20

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BIBLE

TRIVIA

by Wilson Casey

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

2. During biblical times, what was a rough, coarse cloth worn as a mourning symbol? *Sackcloth, Shadrach, Shiloh, Sling*

3. What Old Testament book's ninth chapter mentions the constellation Orion? *Joshua, Judges, Job, Jeremiah*

4. From Luke 13, which king was referred to by Jesus as "that fox"? *Herod, Solomon, Ahab, Caesar*

5. Who said, "Be sure your sin will find you out"? *Matthew, David, Noah, Moses*

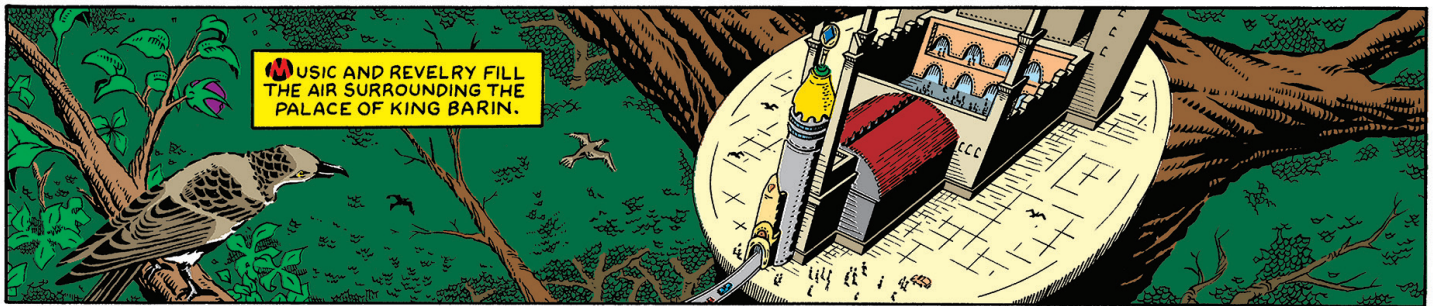
6. What is "Jebus" another name for? *Jericho, Jerusalem, Judah, Joshua*

ANSWERS: 1) New, 2) Sackcloth, 3) Job, 4) Herod, 5) Moses, 6) Jerusalem

More than 1,200 brand-new trivia questions in Wilson Casey's latest book "Quest for Bible Knowledge" available in bookstores and online.

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FLASH GORDON

FLASH AND DALE ATTEND A GALA BALL IN HONOR OF KING BARIN'S BIRTHDAY.

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WONDERFUL PARTY, BARIN!

YOU CAN THANK AURA FOR THAT, FLASH. SPEAK OF THE DEVIL...

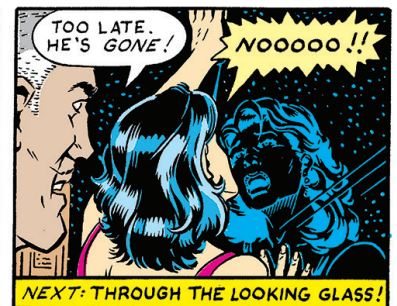
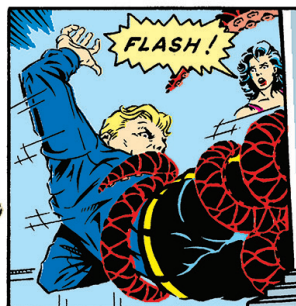
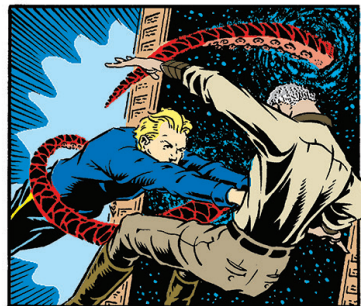
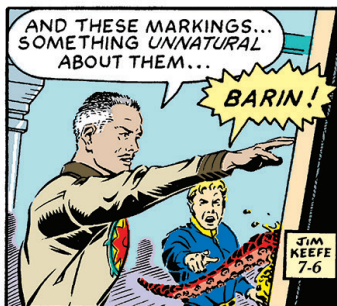
ANOTHER GIFT HAS ARRIVED, DARLING. COME SEE!

WHAT COULD IT BE?

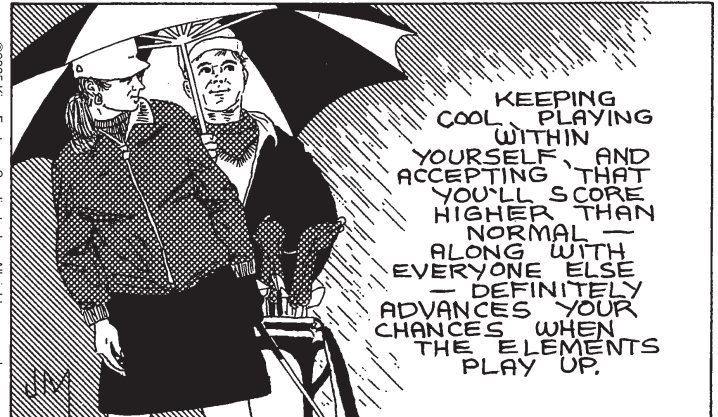
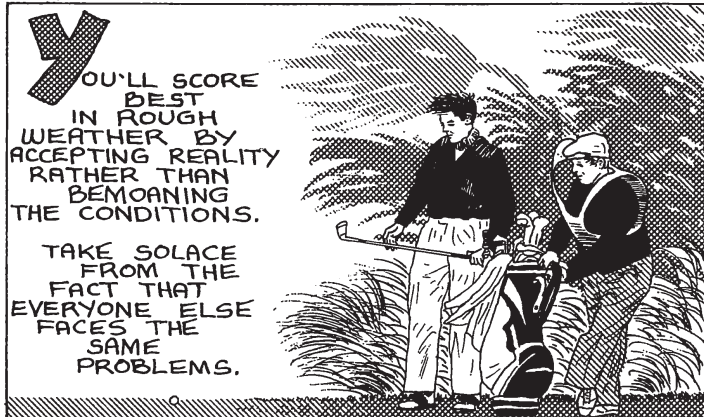
WELL, LET'S TAKE A LOOK!

IT'S BEAUTIFUL!

STRANGE, IT BARELY REFLECTS THE LIGHT.



Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS





Understanding How PSAs and DREs Help Identify CANCER

DEAR DR. ROACH: I am a 53-year-old healthy male, and I always request to check my PSA levels each year. My 57-year-old brother's new doctor denied his request for a routine PSA check on their initial visit. She said that the test now produces more false positives as well as unnecessary procedures and surgeries, so she said "no" and wouldn't order it.

Are primary care physicians discouraging the PSA test for older men now? I don't get any push back when I request to check it. Also, I heard the digital rectal exam (DRE) isn't as valid anymore for screening. His new doctor also did not do a DRE. I'm curious to know your thoughts on the current DRE and PSA screening guidelines for primary care physicians. -- C.C.

ANSWER: The prostate-specific antigen (PSA) test is a screening blood test for cancer, and the recommendation for its use has gone back and forth over decades since it's been introduced. Since screening and prevention are my areas of expertise, I have followed the literature on the use of PSAs and other screening tests very closely.

In my opinion, your brother's doctor was wrong to refuse to order the test. She was right that it does produce false positives, which could potentially lead to unnecessary surgeries; however, there are good ways to reduce unnecessary treatment while still ordering the test, which can save lives.

Most prostate cancer is so slow-growing that it is likely never to bother a man until he dies from something else. So, we don't want to operate on these relatively indolent cancers because there's a possibility of a serious side effect from surgery, such as urinary incontinence or erectile dysfunction (neither of which any man wants).

Before operating, careful testing is done on the prostate cancer, including imaging (ideally by an MRI scan), a biopsy with pathological examination, and often genetic testing of the tumor. Along with the PSA results, we can separate prostate cancer into categories of very low risk and low risk versus intermediate and high risk.

Once we have the diagnosis, we can make good recommendations so that we can identify the rare high-risk cancers while not unnecessarily treating the low-risk cancers. Without screenings, we can't keep rare, small and aggressive tumors from spreading until it's too late.

Now I have to tell you that 57 isn't so much "older" than 53, at least from the perspective of prostate cancer screening. The most important time for prostate cancer screening is ages 50-70. There are some men who benefit from starting screening at a younger age (those with a family history, Black men, and men with certain genetic risks), and there are some who benefit from starting screening when they're older than 70.

The DRE does not add much to the results of the blood test. Approximately 1% of men will get prostate cancer that is diagnosed by the DRE as part of combined screening. Many men will refuse screening if it includes a rectal exam, and it's estimated that 90% of abnormal rectal exams will be false positives. On the other hand, I've had instances where quite a few men don't feel like they have been adequately screened unless they get the DRE.

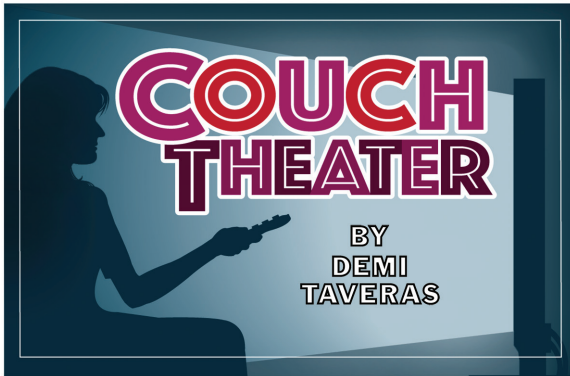
I have a discussion with every man about PSA testing, and I recommend it for most men in this age group. But I only rarely have had a man say that he doesn't want it once he understands that we won't recommend surgery unless the combination of all the studies show this is a high-risk situation.

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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"Materialists" (R) -- "Past Lives" director Celine Song, who scored a handful of nominations for her feature directorial debut, has released her second feature film, which is available to rent beginning July 22. Another romance-centered film, "Materialists" stars Dakota Johnson ("Madame Web"), Chris Evans ("Deadpool & Wolverine"), and Pedro Pascal ("Gladiator II"). Johnson leads the film as Lucy, a matchmaker in New York City who has successfully created nine marriages through her work. At the wedding of one of her clients, she's introduced to finance bro Harry (Pascal), a "unicorn" of a man who expresses romantic interest in her. But at the same time, she crosses paths with her ex-boyfriend John, who is Harry's opposite in every sense of the word, and now finds herself torn between two enticing love affairs. (Amazon Prime Video)



Christopher McDonald, left, and Adam Sandler star in "Happy Gilmore 2."

"Happy Gilmore 2" (PG-13) -- Here's a major event for Adam Sandler lovers! (I know there are a lot of them!) Almost 30 years after Sandler's cult classic "Happy Gilmore" was released in theaters, the sequel will be available to stream on July 25! Of course, Sandler reprises his role as golfer Happy, who's coming out of retirement to pay for his daughter's ballet school. Sandler's real-life daughter, Sunny, also plays his daughter in the film, while Julie Bowen ("Modern Family") reprises her role as Virginia. New names added to the cast include Ethan Cutkosky ("Shameless") as one of Happy's many sons, Puerto Rican singer Bad Bunny ("Bullet Train"), and Benny Safdie ("Oppenheimer"). You don't want to miss this one! (Netflix)

"Friendship" (R) -- Tim Robinson ("Saturday Night Live") stars opposite Paul Rudd ("Death of a Unicorn") in this A24 black-comedy film out now to rent! "Friendship" follows the socially awkward Craig (Robinson), who's missing a social connection that is often pointed out by his wife, Tami (Kate Mara). Tami takes it upon herself to accept an invitation from their neighbor, Austin (Rudd), to the reluctant Craig for a beer, and the result is the blossoming of the most precious friendship in Craig's life. This friendship, in all its chaos and shenanigans, is a turning point for Craig to reinvent his life and find purpose in himself again. "Heartwarming, yet hilarious" is a good description for this film. (Apple TV+)

"The Assessment" (R) -- Buckle up for a weird ride with this one. In this sci-fi thriller set in the "near future," regulations on parenthood are at an all-time high due to a lack of resources and a collapsing environment. So, aspiring parents must undergo a seven-day-long assessment that determines if they'd actually be suitable enough to have children. Mia (Elizabeth Olsen) and Aaryan (Himesh Patel) deeply wish to become parents, but when their government-appointed assessor, Virginia (Alicia Vikander), shows up at their door, the assessment she puts them under is no easy feat to overcome. Without giving too much away, Vikander gives an incredible performance, bringing her character to life in a way that transcends the screen. Out now! (Hulu)

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1. Which girl group released "Soldier Boy"?
2. Who wrote and released "People Get Ready"?
3. Name the Barry McGuire protest song that was released in a very rough version.
4. Who wrote and released "Taxi"?
5. Name the song that contains this lyric: "I've cried through many endless nights just holding my pillow tight, Then you came into my lonely days with your tender love and sweet ways."

Answers

1. The Shirelles, in 1962. It was originally titled "I'll Be True to You," and there was no mention of any soldier. The reference to "soldier boy" was added during the recording.
2. The Impressions, in 1965. The song was added to the Grammy Hall of Fame in 1998.
3. "Eve of Destruction," in 1965. McGuire's vocals weren't supposed to be on the final version, but they ran out of studio time and he did the song in one take. Within days the song was at No. 1.
4. Harry Chapin, in 1972.
5. "Heaven Must Have Sent You," by the Elgins in 1966. The song did well, reaching No. 9 on the R&B chart. Bonnie Pointer turned it into a disco song in 1978 and only topped the charts in Mexico.

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GRIN and BEAR IT *Wagner*



"It's not so bad. ... I've invaded worse homes than this!"

Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps



HOCUS-FOCUS

BY
HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



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Differences: 1. Cover is missing from waiter's tray. 2. Straw is missing. 3. Exit sign is lower. 4. Back of chair is different. 5. Apron is missing. 6. Stripe is added to sleeve.

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* Mix a quarter cup of salt in with two tablespoons of bath wash for a sudsy, refreshing, skin-soothing salt scrub.

* "Here is a fun game to play with a group of kids (and adults). Everyone gets a piece of paper and begins to draw something. The group leader (mom or dad, usually) says "Pass it left (or right)" and you pass your paper to the next person, who continues your drawing, and so on. We play this at the restaurant until the food gets there. The drawings are fun to look at later." -- T.T. in Ohio

* Here's a cheap trick to keep cut flowers fresh longer: Stir a tiny bit of sugar into the water in your vase. Then drop a penny in the vase.

* Long-sleeve shirts make great beach or lake coverups. They can be tied around your waist if you aren't using it, and they cover your whole arm.

* Need to put on a bracelet but have no one to help with the clasp? Head to your home office supplies. Grab a large paperclip and twist it open so it is in the shape of an "S." Thread one loop of the "S" into the jump ring (where the clasp attaches) and use your hand to hold the rest of the paper clip. Bring the bracelet around your wrist and it'll be easy to attach!

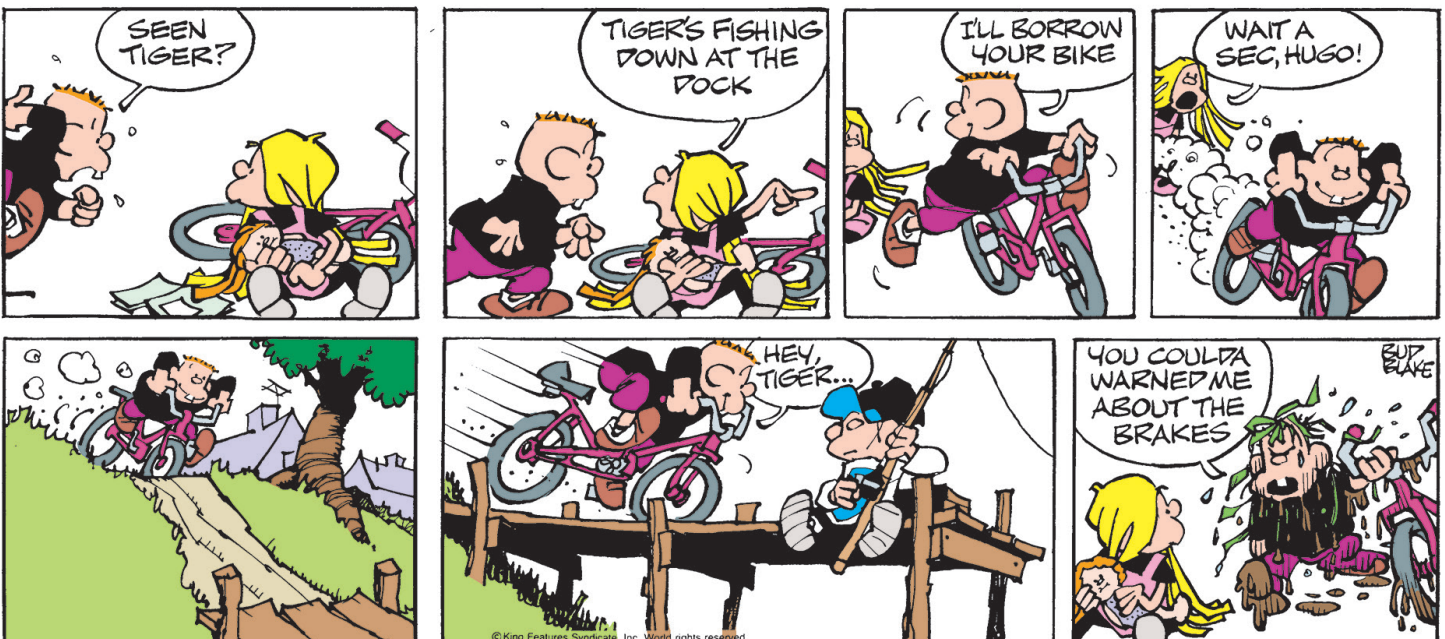
* "Do you have trouble keeping ants out of your hummingbird feeders? How about giving them their own cup of sugar water? Put 1/2 cup of sugar water on the ground near where you hang feeders. Then check it when you change the feeder." -- G.B. in Pavilion, NY

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

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TIGER

by **BUD BLAKE**



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King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 "Hold on ..."
5 Low voice
9 Pouch
12 Dog's bowlful
13 Fascinated by
14 FDR project
15 Leeway
16 Toe woe
17 Have the flu
18 Butte's kin
19 Econ. measure
20 Baby carriage
21 Water-testing digit
23 Equal (Pref.)
25 Hue and cry
28 Obligations
32 "Give it —!"
33 Report card data

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11
12					13					14		
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18					19				20			
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39	40	41			42	43			44	45	46	47
48				49					50			
51					52				53			
54					55				56			

- 34 Overhauls
36 Second childhood
37 Italian article
38 GI-entertaining gp.
39 Witticism
42 Arced tennis shot
44 Lab sci.
48 Coffee vessel
49 Bullets
50 Hawaiian city
51 Request
52 Gershwin's "The — Love"
53 Mid-month date
54 24 hours
55 Black birds
56 Chest muscles, briefly
8 Drunkard
9 Rating unit
10 Athletic shoe brand
11 Tranquil
20 Addictive snack
22 Like Cheerios
24 Japanese wrestlers
25 Former Mideast org.
26 Opposite of "post-"
27 Flushed
29 Roth svgs. plan
30 Heart chart (Abbr.)
31 Away from NNW
35 Author Rushdie
36 NAACP co-founder W.E.B.
39 Campus area
40 Celestial bear
41 Jet-black
43 Hotel chain
45 Conceal
46 Power co. supply
47 Spanish —
49 Docs' org.

DOWN

- 1 Friendly
2 Lotion additive
3 Wall St. debuts
4 Grilled cheese go-with
5 More imposing
6 Soon, poetically
7 Inane

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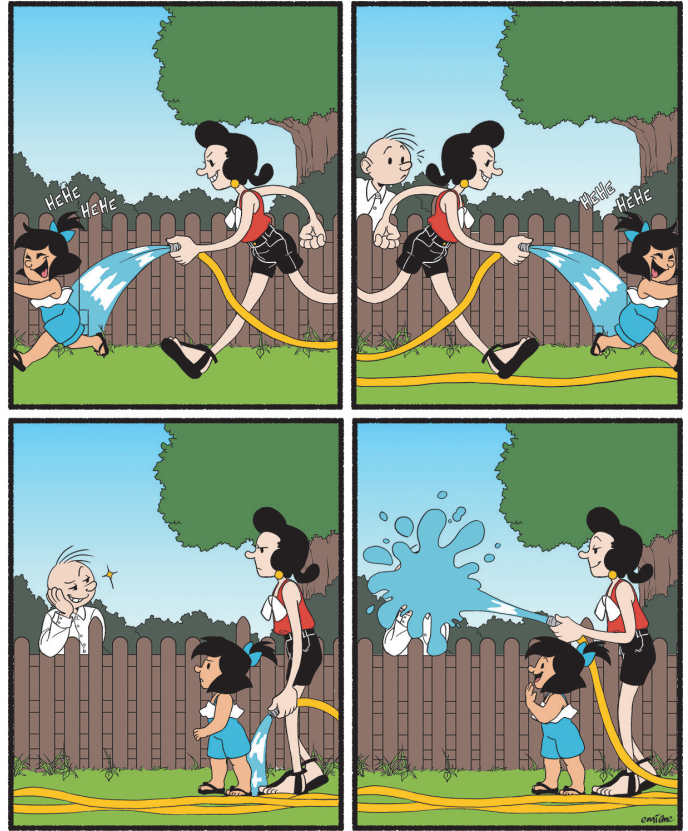
King Crossword —

Answers

Solution time: 21 mins.

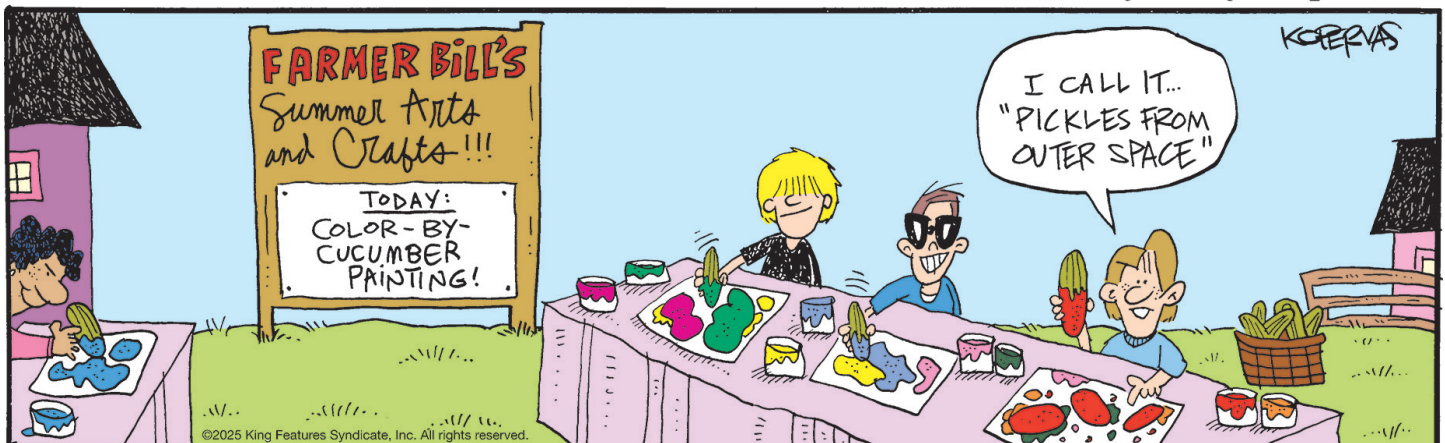
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R	O	O	M		G	O	U	T		A	I	L
M	E	S	A		G	N	P			P	R	A
				T	O	E		I	S	O		
U	P	R	O	A	R			D	U	T	I	E
A	R	E	S	T				M	A	R	K	S
R	E	D	O	E	S			D	O	T	A	G
				U	N	A		U	S	O		
Q	U	I	P		L	O	B			C	H	E
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Olive



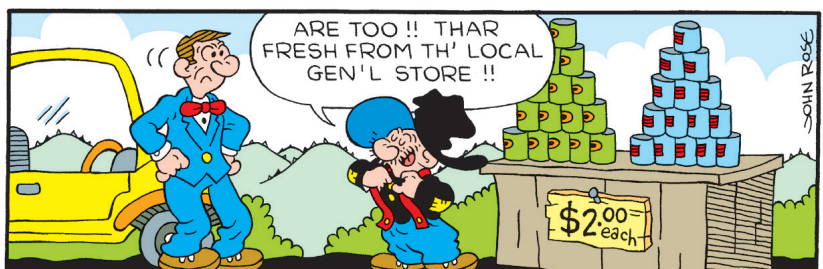
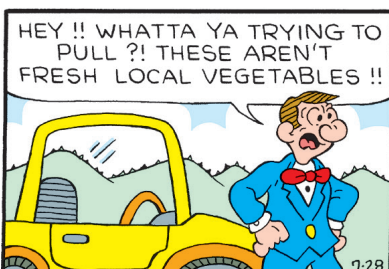
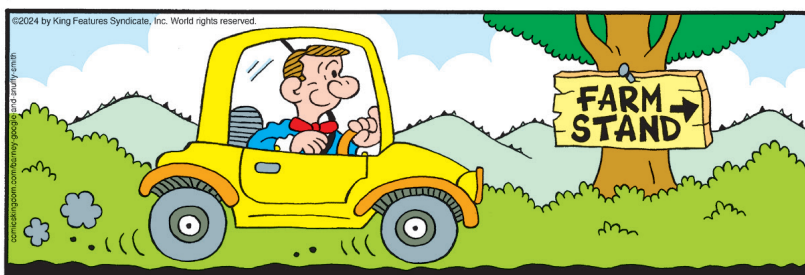
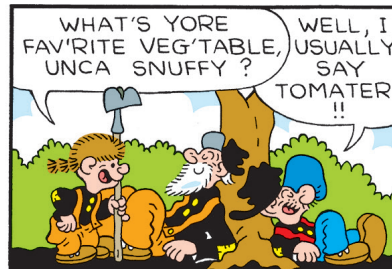
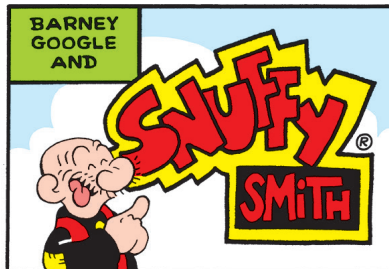
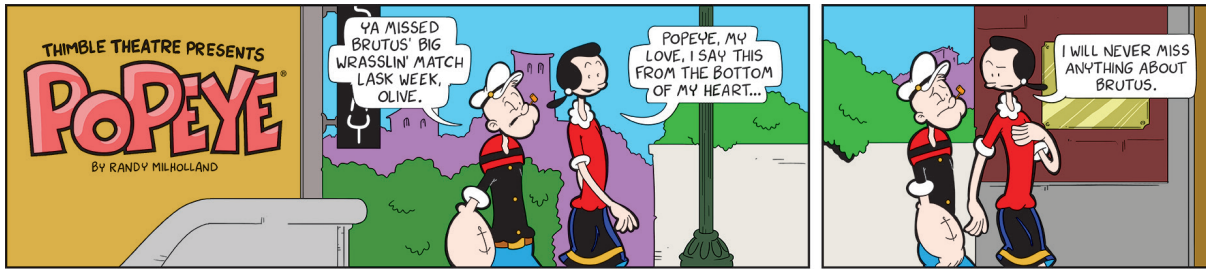
Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



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MEANWHILE, IN THE CAVERN REFUGE, THERE ARE OTHER CONCERNS: "GURYAN, MY SERVANT, REMAINS ON THE SHORE, REFUSING TO MOVE FAR FROM OUR SUNKEN SHIP," KAREN TELLS ALETA. "I MUST GO AND PULL AN EXPLANATION FROM HIM."



ALETA NODS: "THEN I WILL COME TOO." SHE GIVES CAREFUL INSTRUCTIONS TO NATHAN AND VALETA, TASKED WITH THE CARE OF THE INJURED GIANT POLYPHEMUS, BEFORE STARTING BACK DOWN FOR THE SHORE WITH KAREN.

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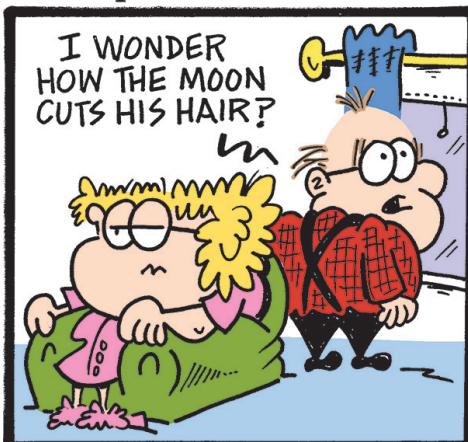


THEY EMERGE FROM THE CLIFF PATH TO FIND GURYAN HUDDLED MISERABLY ABOVE THE VIOLENT TIDE. "THE GUARDS YOUR HUSBAND ASSIGNED ARE A STRANGE LOT," NOTES ALETA. KAREN CONCURS: "AND APPARENTLY MORE INTERESTED IN SOMETHING ABOARD THE

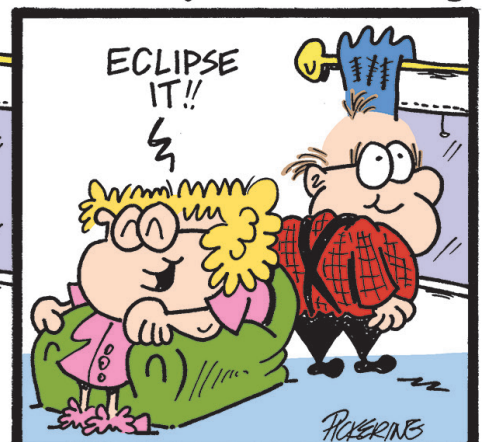
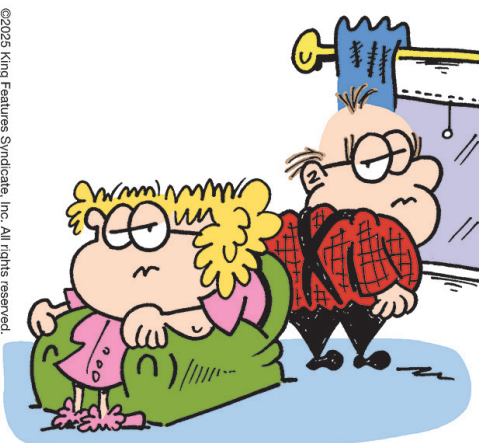
NEXT:
The dilemma

The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



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SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

Video games for seniors

A recent annual report by the Entertainment Software Association indicates that over 50 million seniors are playing video games. That's over one-quarter of the total number of people playing video games.

Color me shocked. The reason: I thought I was the only one, or at least one of a very few. Little did I know that so many other seniors are also playing video games -- and that more than half of those are females.

When asked why they play, 77% of seniors responded that they play video games to relax, 51% to have fun and 65% to keep minds sharp. There's social interaction, which helps combat isolation. We can improve memory, problem-solving skills and hand-eye coordination. We can slow cognitive decline, reduce the risk of Alzheimer's disease and improve mental flexibility. In other words, playing video games can be good for us.

How to get started if you don't already play? I started playing video games right after I got my first computer, back in 1994. While I've gone through several computers over the years, I still have some of the original games, and they're now classics. For several years I had a membership that sent me a new game every month as well.

To get started now, if you'd like to try playing video games, begin with something easy, either for your computer or tablet. You have so much to choose from. There are word games and puzzles. There are classic games where you can play chess against the computer. There are trivia games, community builders (you build an online town) and shooter games where you kill enemies or monsters. You can play by yourself or in groups online.

One place to start is the AARP Games Center (aarp.org/games), where you can play dozens of games for free and even more if you're a member.

Have fun!

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1. What International Boxing Hall of Famer from Cuba held the undisputed world welterweight championship titles from 1951-54?

2. Introduced internationally in 1998, what specialized defensive position in indoor volleyball wears a different color jersey, cannot attack above the net and is restricted from serving in some leagues?

3. He won two NCAA championships with the Florida Gators before being drafted third overall by the Atlanta Hawks in 2007. His father, Tito, was the first Dominican-born player in the NBA. Who is he?

4. Pitcher Steve Dalkowski, who spent nine seasons in the minor leagues and threw fastballs exceeding 100 miles per hour, was the inspiration for what character in the 1988 film "Bull Durham"?

5. What team, founded in 1961 by British basketball pioneer Betty Codona, was the first women's basketball team in England?

6. What St. Louis Rams wide receiver caught three touchdown passes and returned a punt for a score in a 38-10 rout of the Cincinnati Bengals in October 1999?

7. Name the World Golf Hall of Famer who won 18 LPGA Tour events -- including the 1991 and 2004 U.S. Women's Open championships - from 1987 to 2010.



by Ryan A. Berenz

Answers

1. Kid Gavilan.

2. A libero.

3. Al Horford.

4. Ebby Calvin "Nuke" LaLoosh (played by Tim Robbins).

5. The Sheffield Hatters.

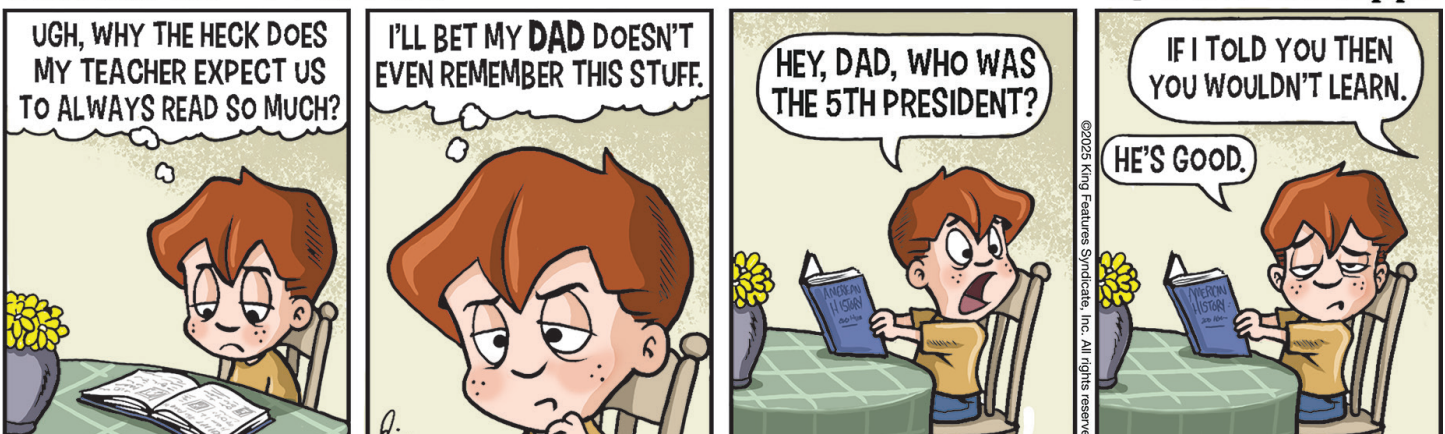
6. Az-Zahir Hakim.

7. Meg Mallon.

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Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps





Finding affordable pet care and pet products

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: I retired four years ago and thought I had enough to cover all my expenses, plus some. But the rise in prices for everything has really hit hard. I can't afford to take my two Dachshunds, "Kili" and "Fili," to the vet for their annual checkups and shots. And I'm terrified what will happen if one of them gets sick. Do you know of any way I can cut expenses for pet care? -- Dave M., Santa Monica, California

DEAR DAVE: I completely understand. These are difficult economic times, especially on a fixed income. But there are lower-cost pet care options available.

First, contact Kili and Fili's veterinarian and explain your situation. Ask if they offer any discounts or payment options for care, or if they have any recommendations for free or low-cost care. Vets will work with you to keep your dogs healthy.

Next, contact the local Humane Society or shelter and ask the same questions. Shelters want pets to stay with their owners and have resources and contacts to help make their care easier and more affordable.

Ask about low-cost or free pet vaccination events (often called shot clinics). These take place in many towns and cities at least once a year. For less than half the cost of a routine visit (and sometimes free), these clinics give pets their required vaccines and may offer additional services like physical exams and blood tests. These are frequently announced online, but you may be able to locate one by contacting your town office or the local shelter.

The most important advice I have for you is: Don't go it alone. Tell your vet, close friends and family members about your financial situation and the care your dogs need. People are there to help -- just reach out.

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

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Strange BUT TRUE

* The sun emits sound through pressure waves, but their wavelength makes it impossible to be heard by humans.

* In 1989, PepsiCo introduced a breakfast drink called Pepsi A.M., with a caffeine content that was 25% higher than a cup of coffee. Unfortunately for the beverage maker, most Pepsi consumers didn't really care for the idea of mixing soda with breakfast.

* A laser can get trapped in water.

* The 2007 film "Ratatouille," about the alliance between a garbage boy and a rat, spurred an uptick in adoption of the rodents. As rat expert Steve Fairburn noted, the film helped to promote the fact that "contrary to popular opinion, rats are one of the cleanest and least smelly pets you can own."

* The Hollywood sign used to say Hollywoodland.

* Want to be a little more creative? Try taking a hot shower. The warmth increases dopamine flow, which in turn helps increase creativity.

* There is no number before 1,000 that contains the letter "a."

* Penicillin's original name was "mold juice." Yes, we think the revised moniker has a much nicer ring, too.

* The average person is made up of around 56% bacteria.

* In Japanese, the word "kuchisabishii" refers to eating not when you're hungry, but when your mouth is lonely.

* It takes 90 days for one drop of water to travel the Mississippi River.

* In the village of Brockworth, England, folks gather on every spring bank holiday to chase wheels of Double Gloucester cheese down Cooper's Hill. First one over the finish line wins. The tradition was first recorded in 1826 but may actually be around 600 years old and is world famous.

* Popsicles were originally marketed as a health food.

Thought for the Day: "Weak people revenge. Strong people forgive. Intelligent people ignore." -- Albert Einstein

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A tree's root system keeps its trunk and canopy upright against the forces of wind and gravity. The strength of this system depends on soil type, soil moisture, tree species, root health and the depth and width of a tree's main structural roots. It has been found that in some trees, one root, or a suite of roots, supplies a specific branch or branches with nutrients, often on the same side of the tree as that root. Any damage to that root or roots manifest in damage to the corresponding branches.

Source: cmg.extension.colostate.edu

-- Brenda Weaver

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by Freddy Groves

A big thumbs-up to the VAOIG

A recent report says that during this year's multi-agency health care fraud takedown, they've nailed 324 criminals to the tune of \$14.6 billion.

That's "billion" with a "b." And that dollar amount is over double what they've seized before. This time they also seized cars and cryptocurrency. They stopped \$4 billion in fraudulent claims payments. They stopped millions from going overseas to foreign banks. And those weren't just street-thug-level criminals they nabbed. These were bigger guys, including 96 doctors, pharmacists, nurses and other medical professionals. Scammers included foreigners sent here to pull off schemes that used stolen identities of Americans.

Working with several other agencies, all the way from federal level (including the IRS, Homeland Security, the Department of Labor and more) down to local law enforcement, the OIG has brought charges to keep thieves from stealing money from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Here are a few examples of the lowlifes they corralled.

One group was shipping out medical equipment that wasn't really necessary and then billing for it. Working with a marketing company, they pressured recipients to receive and keep the equipment, even if it wasn't needed. Scammers even pressured doctors to sign the orders by repeatedly faxing them documents claiming that the patient had specifically requested the equipment. Eventually the doctor would sign the forms. This scam was good for a cool \$39 million.

And there was the wound care scam -- where wound patches were applied to vulnerable patients who should not have had them -- that netted \$600 million.

Then there was the massage therapist who billed over \$2 million for services never rendered. For example, they billed for aquatic therapy when they had no pool, for wheelchair therapy for veterans not in a wheelchair and for pacemaker monitoring for veterans who did not have a pacemaker.

Once again I'm hoping the VA's Office of Inspector General has seen their operating budget increased so they can do even more of what they've been doing.

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Wishing Well®

4	3	2	3	2	7	5	8	4	8	3	8	7
L	P	H	L	A	E	C	P	E	L	E	A	M
8	5	7	8	7	6	5	3	6	7	5	2	6
N	O	O	Y	T	D	N	A	O	I	T	N	C
2	5	8	3	4	2	3	2	6	3	2	6	7
G	R	O	S	A	I	A	N	U	N	T	M	O
8	5	6	5	7	6	2	4	5	8	3	5	3
U	O	E	L	N	N	H	P	B	R	T	U	M
7	6	3	7	4	5	6	7	8	7	6	2	6
A	T	E	L	F	D	I	T	F	A	D	E	E
5	4	7	2	5	8	6	5	8	3	8	3	4
G	O	L	R	E	U	A	T	T	M	U	O	R
6	3	2	4	8	7	3	8	4	3	4	3	4
S	R	E	W	R	K	I	E	A	E	R	S	D

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. MOVIES: How many dream levels does the crew enter in the film "Inception"?
2. U.S. STATES: Which state's nickname is "Treasure State"?
3. LITERATURE: Which 1969 novel begins with the line, "All this happened, more or less"?
4. ANIMAL KINGDOM: What is a baby horse called?
5. ACRONYMS: What does the acronym GIF stand for?
6. U.S. PRESIDENTS: Which president served the shortest term?
7. TELEVISION: In which fictional town is "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" set?
8. GEOGRAPHY: What international city's nickname is "The Eternal City"?
9. GENERAL KNOWLEDGE: How many time zones exist on Earth?
10. SCIENCE: Who is known as the father of medicine?

Answers

1. Five (four dream levels and limbo).
2. Montana.
3. "Slaughterhouse-Five" by Kurt Vonnegut.
4. A foal.
5. Graphics Interchange Format.
6. William Henry Harrison, who died 32 days after taking office.
7. Sunnydale.
8. Rome, Italy.
9. 24.
10. Greek physician Hippocrates.

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South Dakota Governor



Larry Rhoden



South Dakota: *Under God, the People Rule*

Fiscal Strength

South Dakota's pretty darn special. What other state has the lowest unemployment rate in America, the 2nd best overall tax system, the 2nd least regulations, no income tax, a AAA credit rating, a fully-funded pension, and 136 consecutive years of balanced budgets? Very few states can boast even one such accolade – and no other state can boast all of them together!

Our state is a model of fiscal strength, and I will keep it that way for as long as I am Governor.

We just ended another fiscal year when the calendar turned to July, and despite a tighter budget than usual, South Dakota ended the fiscal year in strong shape. All those accolades remain true, and we delivered a \$63 million operating surplus, to boot.

Since we announced our year end surplus, South Dakota has been criticized by some who say that we should have spent more money on this handout or that pet project. But I'm glad we didn't, and I'll explain why by digging a bit more into the particulars of the surplus.

Yes, we finished the year \$63 million up – and that was driven in part by state agencies spending \$22 million less than what they were budgeted. That's just good, commonsense decision making from the leaders of our agencies. They didn't spend more than what they were allocated, and they looked for opportunities to save. If every state and Washington, DC, did business that way, our country would be a lot better off.

Our revenues also came in \$41 million above what was budgeted, but that was driven by unexpected \$47 million in additional unclaimed property receipts this spring. Starting this new fiscal year, all such receipts in the future will be put into a new Unclaimed Property Trust Fund, which I signed into law this past session. That's a complicated way of saying this: we won't be able to depend on those dollars in the same way going forward.

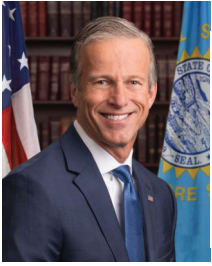
We came into this last legislative session knowing that we had a bit of a budget pinch. Then-Governor Noem recommended \$80 million in cuts, and I stood by those. The legislature passed \$70 million of those cuts but added none of their own. So, we did have to cut to get to where we're at today. That's how South Dakota families balance their budgets, and that's how our leaders do business in Pierre.

For those who wish that we would've spent more, I won't apologize for making fiscally conservative decisions as your Governor. South Dakota is a leader in disciplined financial management. No other state can boast of all the accolades that I listed earlier, so we shouldn't start doing business like other states.

As long as I am your Governor, we will continue to be careful stewards of taxpayer dollars by making wise long-term investments, maintaining conservative fiscal policies, and only spending within our means. I'll keep making financial decisions the same way going forward – after all, this approach has served South Dakota well for the last 136 years.

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JOHN THUNE
U.S. SENATOR FOR SOUTH DAKOTA

100 Years of Legion Baseball Started in South Dakota

In July 1925, retired Army major and commissioner of the collegiate Western Conference John Griffith came to the South Dakota American Legion convention in Milbank with a message. He urged the Legionnaires – many of them veterans of World War I – to take up a new mission: to shape the next generation of Americans through sports. Athletics, he said, “teach courage and respect, sportsmanship and citizenship.” Shortly thereafter, American Legion baseball was born.

Over the last century, American Legion baseball has been part of the formative years of more than 10 million Americans. More than just a summer sports league, Legion baseball instills the virtues of competition and patriotism. It connects young people to coaches, mentors, and lifelong friends. And it brings communities together – whether from next door or another state – to gather around the baseball diamond for our national pastime.

Legion baseball was born in South Dakota, and it has grown and thrived in our state over the course of its 100-year history. In the league’s first season, South Dakotans enthusiastically took part, forming 925 teams around the state. South Dakota also pioneered local sponsorship of teams, which became a national model for the league. Over the years, thousands of young South Dakotans have worn a Legion jersey and pledged to adhere to the Code of Sportsmanship, including this former ballplayer for Murdo Post 75.

Of all South Dakota’s storied Legion teams, Rapid City Post 22 stands out. Coach David Ploof is a legend in South Dakota sports, leading the Hardhats to 34 state championships, appearing in eight American Legion World Series, and winning the 1993 World Series. Over his nearly five-decade career, Coach Ploof’s 2,483 wins make him the winningest coach in Legion history. And his legacy lives on in the Firecracker Tournament he started 50 years ago, which remains a highly anticipated event each season for players and fans alike.

One hundred years on, American Legion baseball is doing all that John Griffith hoped that it would. It teaches sportsmanship and citizenship. It brings people together and instills in young athletes a respect for the past, pride in our country, and the integrity and courage that make a good athlete and a good citizen. I’m proud that South Dakota can claim to be the birthplace of such an enduring institution.

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Innovation is American

BIG Update

Public-private partnerships are a critical part of a strong national defense. The Department of Defense created the Accelerate the Procurement and Fielding of Innovative Technologies program which awards grants to small businesses that support our military readiness.

The Pentagon also hosts a Rapid Prototype Display to showcase prototypes that have been developed in coordination with the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering. South Dakota's own MMS Products participated in the display with its drone munitions. I had the honor of visiting the Pentagon to visit with MMS Products and see what modern and future warfighting looks like..

BIG Idea

A project that takes six months to get approved to build in Germany takes six years in the United States. Tedious regulations and an arcane permitting process have failed to ensure domestic projects are on time and on-task, slowing domestic development or losing it to other countries.

I introduced the ePermit Act to modernize the process by using digital technology rather than paper documents. Digitizing the system will speed up the process, save federal dollars, and cut down delays. The Trump Administration and Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy agree – it's time to modernize the permitting process and let America build again..

BIG News

Blockchain technology has the potential to transform every single industry in the same way the internet did. Unfortunately, America is falling behind other countries in digital asset development due to a lack of regulation and unclear rules of the road.

This week, I voted to pass my bill, the CLARITY Act, to establish a clear regulatory framework for digital assets. Normally, regulations complicate processes, but for digital assets, regulations will protect consumers, provide certainty to developers, and strengthen transparency for market participants. The CLARITY Act will unlock innovation so America can be the global leader in digital asset development.

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JULY 7-13, 2025

It was a busy week in DC, particularly for those of us who serve on the Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC). We passed our committee version of the Fiscal Year 2026 National Defense Authorization Act, or NDAA. This is our annual defense bill that authorizes funding for military programs, as well as military members and their

families. This year, I'm particularly pleased to have authorized additional funding for Ellsworth Air Force Base as well as the B-21 program. This legislation will now head to the full Senate for consideration. Read more about the NDAA and the rest of my week in my Weekly Round[s] Up:

South Dakota groups I met with: South Dakota United Way; Stuart Rice, Vice President of the Dakotas Chapter of Sons of the American Revolution; South Dakota members of the Great Plains Tribal Chairmen's Association; and South Dakota members of the National Association for the Deaf.

South Dakota towns represented: Eagle Butte, Lower Brule, Pierre, Pine Ridge, Rapid City, Sioux Falls and Yankton.

Other meetings: John Doyle, CEO of Cape; and Binalf Andualem, Ethiopia's Ambassador to the United States.

I spoke at an event with Punchbowl News to discuss financial services policy. I also attended our Senate Prayer Breakfast, where Senator Tim Scott of South Carolina was our speaker.

NDAA: As I mentioned, we were glad to secure many wins for South Dakota in this year's NDAA, including authorizing \$378 million for construction projects at Ellsworth Air Force Base to prepare for bed down of the B-21 Raider stealth bomber, \$28 million for the Watertown Army National Guard vehicle maintenance facility and \$3.4 billion for procurement of B-21 aircraft. The NDAA also authorizes funding to support a 3.8 percent raise for military members. Read more about this year's NDAA and a full list of my provisions [here](#).

Appropriations Markup: I also attended a markup in the Appropriations Committee to discuss and debate three of our twelve spending bills that we're working to get passed before the end of the Fiscal Year. A markup is an important part of the legislative process and the first step in passing our appropriations bills.

This is my first year serving on the Appropriations committee and as such, my first time working directly on Appropriations legislation before it hits the full Senate. I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues on the committee to get these bills passed before October 1.

Hearings and briefings: I attended one closed hearing and one closed briefing as part of my work on the Select Committee on Intelligence.

Legislation introduced: This past week, I introduced the Reducing Homelessness Through Program Reform Act, legislation to cut red tape and create local solutions for addressing homelessness. Despite record levels of federal funding, homelessness continues to rise. It's clear that a one-size-fits-all approach isn't working. The challenges we face in South Dakota are not the same as those in California or New York. This legislation takes a conservative approach by shifting power back to the states and communities closest to the problem. This commonsense bill cuts red tape and enables local leaders to deliver faster, more effective and more appropriate solutions for the people they serve. Read more [here](#).

Votes taken: 11 – all of these are on nominees to executive branch positions at the Departments of Energy and Transportation, as well as the Small Business Administration and the Office of Personnel Management. We also took a procedural vote to advance the nomination of a federal judge in Tennessee.

My staff in South Dakota visited: Aberdeen, Beresford, Brookings, De Smet, Faulkton, Garretson, Hartford, Huron and Watertown.

Steps taken: 44,083 steps or 20.12 miles.

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Dr. James L. Snyder Ministries

PO Box 831313 - Ocala, FL 34483

1-352-216-3025

One More Candle On Another Cake

The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage and I were finishing our supper. If anyone can put together a marvelous supper, it is she. If anybody can eat a marvelous supper, it is me.

As we were finishing, she looked over at me and said, "My dear, do you know what we will be celebrating next week?"

She caught me off guard because I had no idea what holiday was coming up. I'm not a holiday person. I don't mind celebrating holidays, but I can't keep up with them.

Rubbing my chin, I said, "Well, we just celebrated the 4th of July a week ago, so I'm not sure what that next holiday is."

"Oh, you silly boy," she said, laughing at me. "Just think for a while and maybe you'll come up with the right idea."

At my age, it's tough to think, even for a while. I had no idea what she was talking about, so I just inserted, "Is it one of our grandchildren's birthday?"

I couldn't think of anything else at the time. I know we have a bunch of children and grandchildren, and so I was suspecting that one of them was having a birthday. But, for the life of me, I couldn't tell her which one was having a birthday.

"No, no, no," she said, laughing at me. "None of our children or grandchildren are having birthdays rather, it is someone sitting here at our table."

"Oh," I said, "so you're having a birthday next week. How old are you going to be?"

"You're right about that," she said, "but somebody else is having a birthday next week. You have any idea who that might be?"

I thought for a moment, and then it finally hit me. "Do you mean I'm going to have a birthday next week?"

I looked at her and said, "But how is that possible? I just had a birthday not long ago."

"That was 12 months ago now you're facing another birthday." She looked at me and laughed.

I had a hard time coming to terms with the fact that I was having another birthday. Why is it that birthdays come so fast the older you get?

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When I was young, I could hardly wait for my birthday. When you're young, a birthday means a whole lot more than when you get older.

I remember my 16th birthday; I was thrilled because I could now get my driver's license.

I looked back and thought of all my birthdays and what they meant to me. It wasn't until a few years ago I realized that having a birthday meant you were one year older. Getting older has many positive aspects, but it also has some less desirable aspects.

Two days after my birthday The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage has her birthday. If my birthday was not two days before hers, I probably would never remember when her birthday was. Because she reminded me of my birthday by giving me a birthday card and gift, I remember her birthday was in two days.

I married the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage for many reasons. The best part of marrying her was that her birthday was two days after mine. That would enable me to keep up with my birthday.

One thing I have learned in my marriage is that women, especially wives, remember birthdays. She knows every birthday of every person on her side of the family, as well as all of our kids, grandkids, and great-grandkids. I don't know how she can remember all those birthdays, but she does, and that's a good thing.

With another candle on my birthday cake, I now celebrate the fact that I am older today than yesterday. That has some benefits associated with it. I just can't think of any.

The older I get, the less I can remember things. It's interesting; I can remember things that happened in my childhood, but who's to say they actually did? When you get old, you can do that sort of thing, and nobody is going to correct you. I make up my memories when I need to know them.

The best thing about my birthday being two days ahead of hers is that once my birthday is celebrated, I can then go out the next day and get a birthday card and present for The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage. If it were the other way around, she would never get a birthday present on time from me.

I have a hard time remembering my age.

I checked my driver's license to find out how old I am this year. I never thought I would reach 74 years of age. My father was 78 when he died. In September, my mother will turn 95. I may have inherited my father's age or my mother's age. Only time will tell.

Getting old is a blessing in many ways. One of the blessings is memory failure. There are some things that I don't want to remember, and at my age, I'm not able to.

At my age, I have discovered that the only important thing is today. Not yesterday or tomorrow, but today.

I was reminded of one of my favorite Bible verses. "This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it" (Psalm 118:24).

I can't change yesterday or predict tomorrow, but I can rejoice in Today.

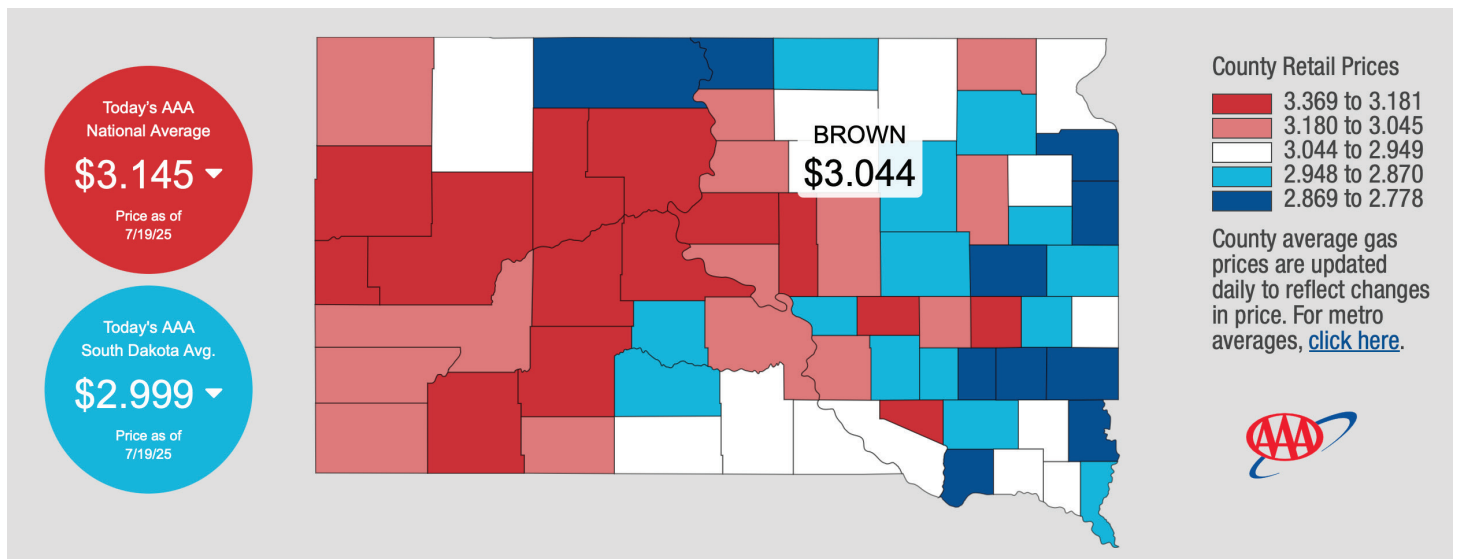
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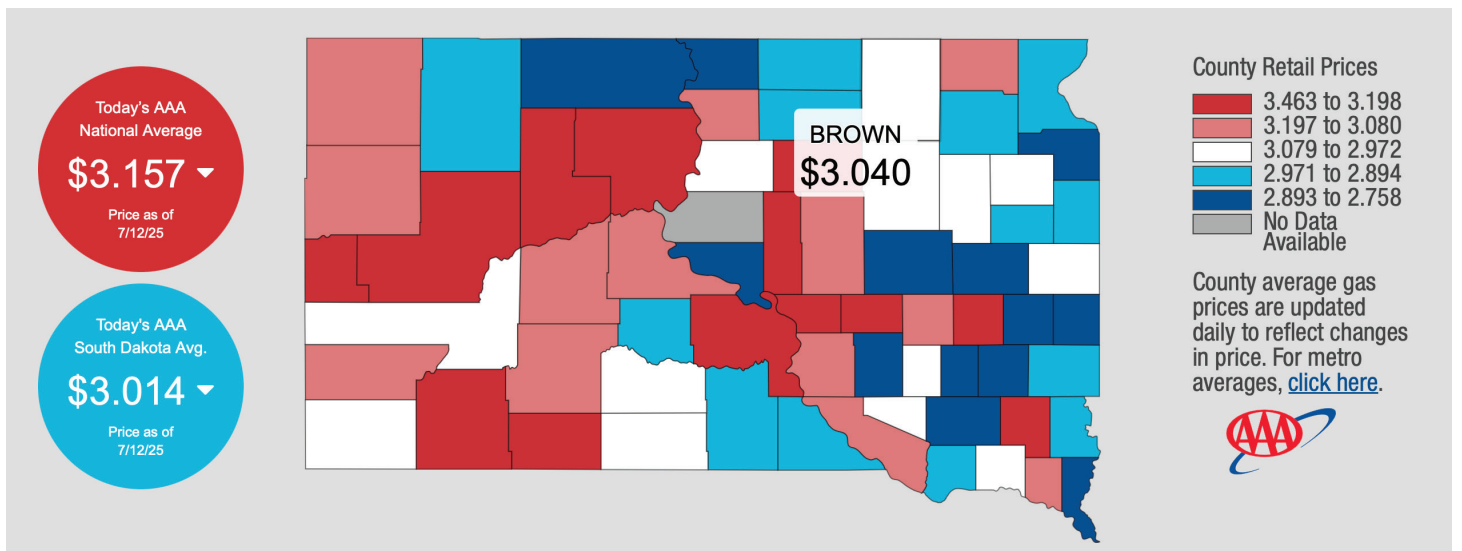
South Dakota Average Gas Prices

	Regular	Mid-Grade	Premium	Diesel
Current Avg.	\$2.999	\$3.189	\$3.656	\$3.363
Yesterday Avg.	\$3.006	\$3.201	\$3.657	\$3.359
Week Ago Avg.	\$3.014	\$3.186	\$3.638	\$3.369
Month Ago Avg.	\$3.023	\$3.210	\$3.674	\$3.338
Year Ago Avg.	\$3.254	\$3.476	\$3.885	\$3.464

This Week



Last Week



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Drought Classification

None

D0 (Abnormally Dry)

D1 (Moderate Drought)

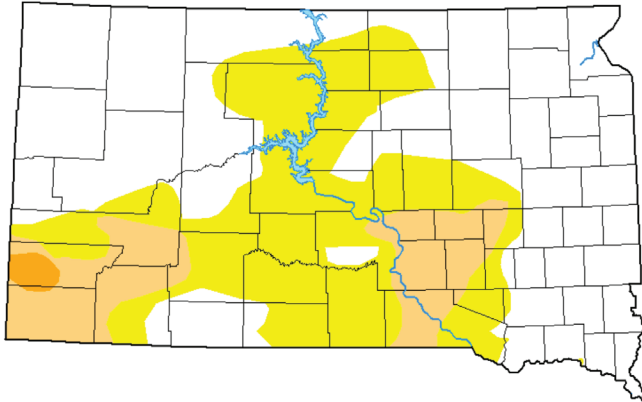
D2 (Severe Drought)

D3 (Extreme Drought)

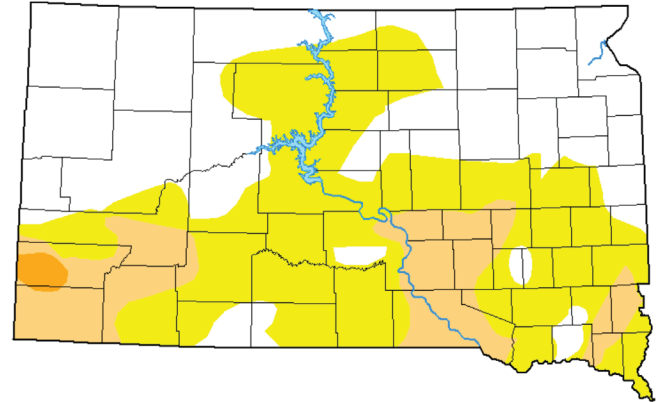
D4 (Exceptional Drought)

No Data

Drought Monitor



July 15



July 8

Temperatures were mixed over the region with the northern and western areas 2-4 degrees above normal while the southern and eastern areas were 2-4 degrees below normal for the week. The wettest areas this week were in southwest Kansas, northeast Nebraska and portions of northeast Colorado, where over 200% of normal rain was recorded. Dryness continued in eastern Wyoming and in areas of the Dakotas as well as in northeastern Kansas. The wetter pattern over Nebraska over the past several weeks has allowed continued improvement to drought in the state. A full category improvement was made over most of central and northeast Nebraska and into portions of southern South Dakota. Moderate drought and abnormally dry conditions were improved over northeast Colorado while abnormally dry conditions expanded over northeast Kansas.

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EARTHTALK

Dear EarthTalk: Does the recent birth of wooly mice and dire wolf pups mean that “de-extinction” is a real thing now? And why would we want to bring back dire wolves, wooly mammoths or saber-toothed cats anyway?

-- Paul Wilson, San Francisco, CA

In recent months, the Dallas-based biotech firm Colossal Biosciences announced the rebirth of the long-extinct dire wolf and woolly mammoth, species that had been extinct for thousands of years, pioneering the first successful de-extinctions in history. In response, some view this as a revolutionary breakthrough, whereas others express skepticism about the legitimacy of the de-extinction claim.

On its website, Colossal states that its mission is to “secure the health and biodiversity of our planet’s future”. The company claims that the restoration of extinct species would improve the ecosystem and combat biodiversity loss as they are reintroduced to their original habitats. Additionally, research on de-extinction can be used to protect endangered species; in fact, the company has leveraged its gene-editing technology to repopulate the critically endangered red wolf.

In principle, the process of de-extinction is relatively straightforward. The woolly mammoth, despite being extinct for over 4,000 years, has been preserved in permafrost, allowing Colossal to access and extract the genomes easily. Then, by using the gene-editing tool CRISPR, Colossal edited a mouse’s stem cell to exhibit the unique traits of the mammoth and introduced the cell into a mouse embryo. When the mouse pups were born, all of them expressed the woolly mammoth’s DNA through their “dramatically altered coat color, texture, and thickness reminiscent of the woolly mammoth’s core phenotypes.” Colossal applied a similar approach with the dire wolves by editing the genome of the gray wolf, the closest surviving relative to the dire wolf, to express dire wolf traits. As a result, three dire wolf puppies were successfully born.

Although Colossal Biosciences claims to have completely restored the extinct dire wolf, some scientists are skeptical. Hank Greely, director of Stanford University’s Center for Law and the Biosciences, told CBC News that “it is important for people to remember that these are not dire wolves. There are gray wolves that have some dire wolf characteristics.” Similarly, according to National Geographic, the dire wolf pups “are better understood as slightly-modified gray wolves rather than true dire wolves.”

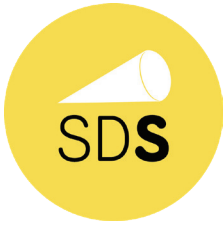
Amid controversies, Colossal revealed its plans to edit the genes of Asian elephants, the woolly mammoth’s closest living relative, to birth a life-sized recreation of the woolly mammoth by 2028. Furthermore, Colossal is also attempting to bring back the dodo bird and the Tasmanian tiger.

With the uncertainty surrounding de-extinction and gene-editing technology, it is crucial for the scientific community to use this tool with caution and utilize it to develop effective solutions to urgent global issues. Finally, rather than adopting the idea that we shouldn’t worry about extinction because we can always recreate those animals, we should shift our focus towards taking proactive measures aimed at protecting endangered species and slowing the rate of biodiversity loss.



Environmentalists have mixed feelings about the movement to bring back extinct wildlife species. Credit

Colossal Biosciences.



COMMENTARY

Effort continues to fix South Dakota elections that don't need fixing

by Dana Hess

In the past few years, a certain segment of South Dakota society has become adamant about making specific improvements in the way we live.

Is this a citizen quest for more education funding? No. Is it a movement to put often overlooked Native American issues at the front of the state agenda? No. Is it a grassroots effort to revamp the way South Dakotans pay taxes? No.

This effort is aimed at cleaning up the state's elections. "Hold on," you might say. "I didn't know there was a problem with our elections." Well, there isn't. But that isn't keeping the issue from being front and center at the Legislature and in county commission meetings across the state.

In the last legislative session there were more than 50 election-related bills introduced. About half of those had to deal with "election integrity" in the areas of voter qualification, technology and security. That's a great deal of attention being paid to a part of government that, in the past, has been noted for working just fine.

Some of these bills may be duplicates. It has become a practice in the Legislature to introduce similar bills in the Senate and in the House. That way, if cooler heads prevail in the Senate, there's still a similar bill in the House, where bad ideas go to flourish.

Spurring on the quest for election integrity is an entity called South Dakota Canvassing Group. The group's mission statement is on its website: "We are a volunteer organization working to restore free, fair, transparent and secure elections in South Dakota, now and for future generations."

Their work to "restore" elections in South Dakota implies that voting here has gone off the rails. If the Canvassing Group wants to ferret out corruption and illegalities in elections, they're best off moving to another state. South Dakota, with a history of fair elections, doesn't need their help.

According to a story by The Dakota Scout, many of the election integrity chasers in this state got their inspiration at a three-day event in Sioux Falls. It turns out that their North Star, their inspiration, their muse, is none other than Mike Lindell. He's not just the My Pillow guy; he's the My President's Election was Stolen guy.

Lindell was, and continues to be, one of the staunchest supporters of the idea that Donald Trump was somehow cheated out of victory in the 2020 election. At his 2021 "Cyber Symposium" in Sioux Falls, Lindell spent so much time offering false claims about Dominion Voting Systems throwing the election to Joe



Election workers count absentee ballots for Minnehaha County on Nov. 5, 2024, in the county administration building. (Makenzie

Huber/South Dakota Searchlight)

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Biden that he was recently sued for defaming one of the company's executives. The jury awarded the executive \$2.3 million in damages.

Some bills backed by the Canvassing Group were approved by the Legislature and signed by the governor: assigning a federal-only ballot to people who don't live permanently in the state, changing the definition of resident eligibility, designating county voter registration files as public records, changing the process for challenging someone's residency status, increasing the penalty for voting illegally, placing citizenship status on driver's licenses, and sending a constitutional amendment to voters clarifying that a person must be a U.S. citizen to vote in the state.

However, just as Lindell continues to spout his falsehoods about the 2020 election, look for the Canvassing Group to keep up the pressure on legislators for more election integrity laws that aren't needed. On its website, the top issue on the group's want list is an effort to make Election Day a holiday. In the last session, this came to the Legislature in a bill sponsored by Dell Rapids Republican Tom Pischke.

Pischke explained to the Senate State Affairs Committee that a holiday was needed because in some communities there are not enough poll workers nor enough polling places. He said he hoped to work on solutions to those problems without legislation, asking the committee to table the bill.

Creating a Tuesday Election Day holiday might free up more people to work on the elections, but it could just as easily cut down on voter participation. Instead of looking ahead to how they'll mark their ballots, citizens could just as easily be looking ahead to using a vacation day on Monday to create a long weekend.

South Dakota has a long history of running fair, accurate elections. For all their finger-pointing and hand-wringing, the Canvassing Group and the legislators who indulge them can't change that. Election integrity legislation amounts to nothing more than solutions in search of problems, trying to fix a system that doesn't need fixing.

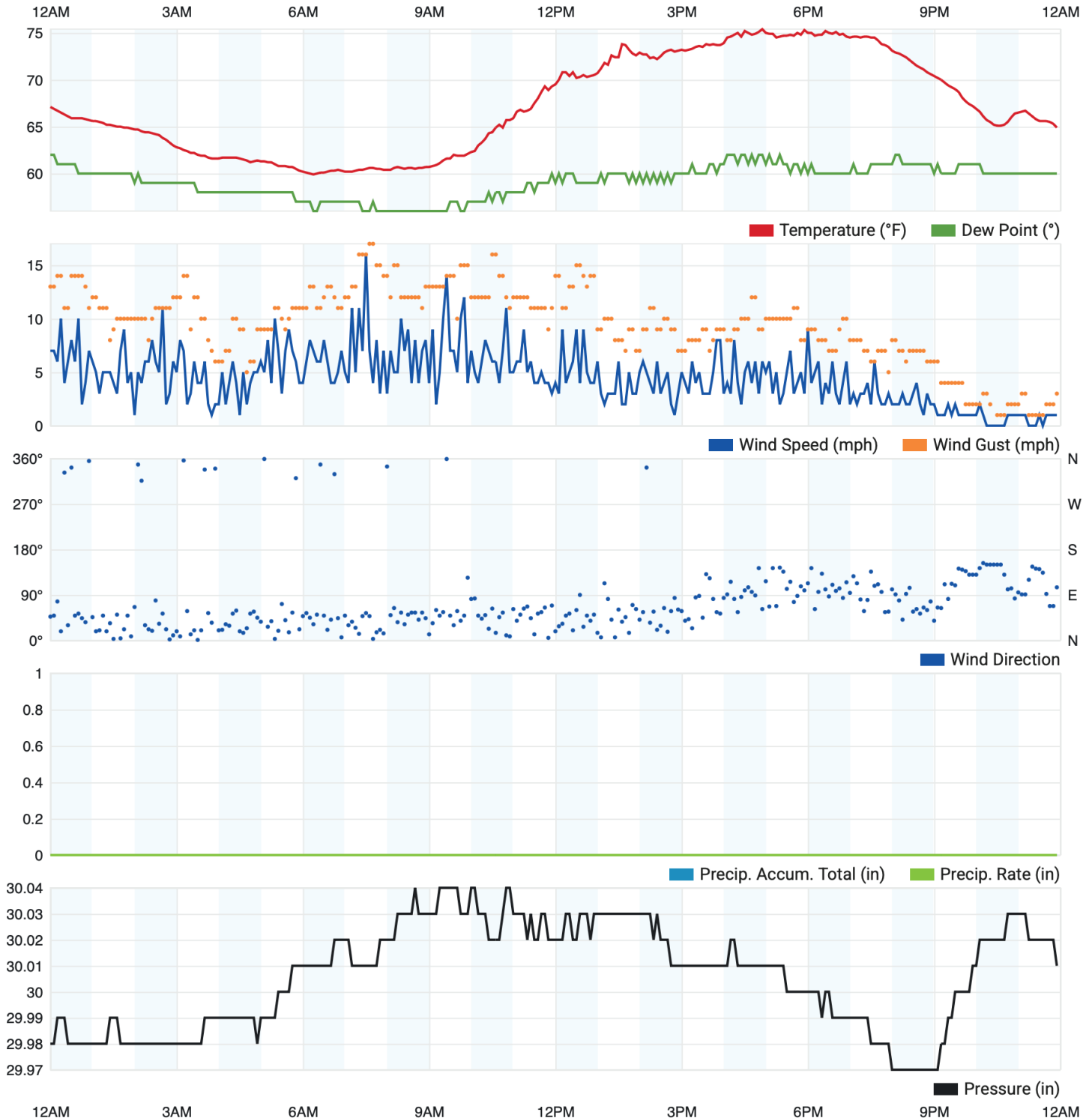
Dana Hess spent more than 25 years in South Dakota journalism, editing newspapers in Redfield, Milbank and Pierre. He's retired and lives in Brookings, working occasionally as a freelance writer.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

July 19, 2025



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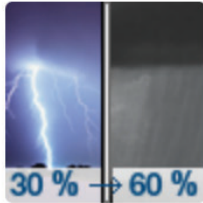
Today



High: 81 °F

Slight Chance
Showers then
Slight Chance
T-storms

Tonight



Low: 66 °F

Chance
T-storms then
Heavy Rain

Monday



High: 86 °F

Chance
T-storms

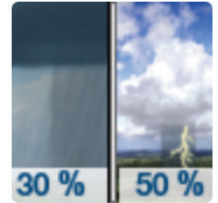
Monday Night



Low: 68 °F

Chance
T-storms

Tuesday



High: 89 °F

Chance
Showers then
Chance
T-storms



Today's Severe Weather Threat Overview

July 20, 2025
3:49 AM

Sunday Afternoon into Sunday Night

Timing/Location

While thunderstorm development is uncertain, if storms develop in central SD this afternoon and evening, they would quickly become severe.

Primary Threats for the **YELLOW** areas

Tornado Potential

Very Low **Low** Medium High

Max Hail Size (in dashed oval)

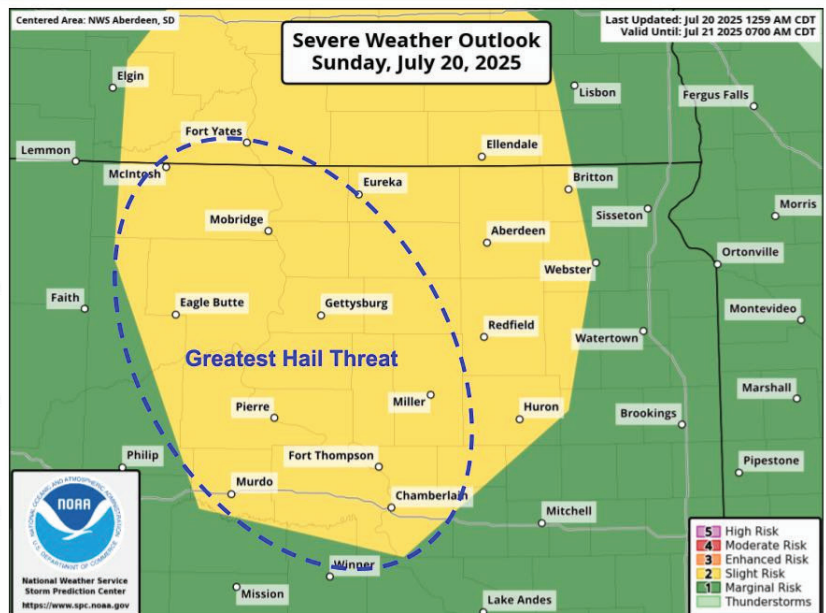
Dimes **Quarters** **Golfball** Baseball

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

There is a Slight Risk (level 2 out of 5) of severe weather this afternoon into tonight. While uncertainty remains on when and where storms will develop, the environment is favorable for severe storms if they develop. Hail to the size of golf balls is possible with storms in central SD, along with 60 mph winds and a tornado or two.

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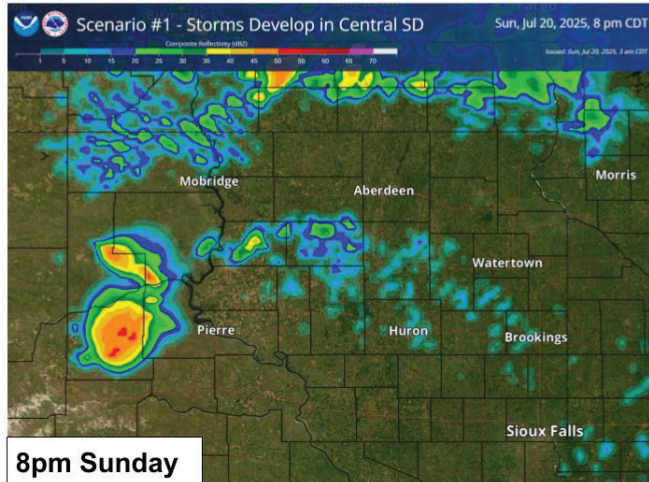
Scenarios for Today's Severe Weather Threat

July 20, 2025
3:58 AM

Two Possible Scenarios on How Thunderstorms Will Evolve This Afternoon and Evening

Scenario #1 - Supercells in Central SD

If storms develop in central SD late this afternoon and into the evening, they will quickly go severe. **Golf ball sized hail, winds to 60 mph, and a tornado or two would be possible in this scenario.**



Scenario #2 - Storms over Northern SD

In this scenario, storms develop closer to the ND border and drop to the southeast. **Hail to 1 inch in diameter and 60 mph would be the primary threat in this scenario.**



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

Make sure to monitor later forecasts for the latest updates on how the thunderstorms will evolve later today

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

There are two scenarios for the severe weather threat today, which depends on where storms develop. If storms develop in central SD, they will quickly go severe and could produce hail to the size of golf balls, along with 60 mph and a tornado. If storms develop farther to the north, they would still contain a severe threat (1" hail and 60 mph winds), but wouldn't be as strong as the other scenario.



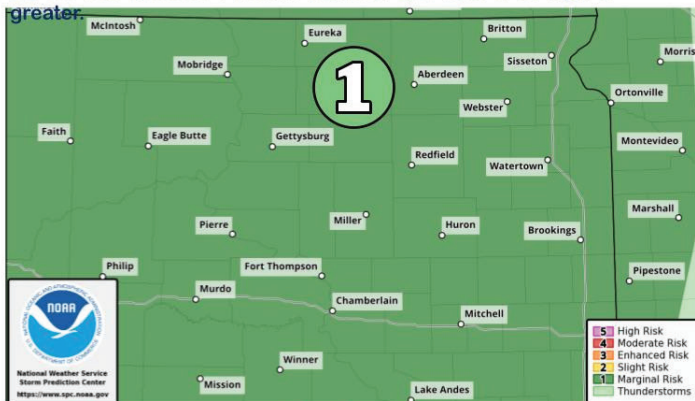
Monday and Tuesday's Severe Weather Threat

July 20, 2025
4:11 AM

The severe weather potential continues into Monday and Tuesday

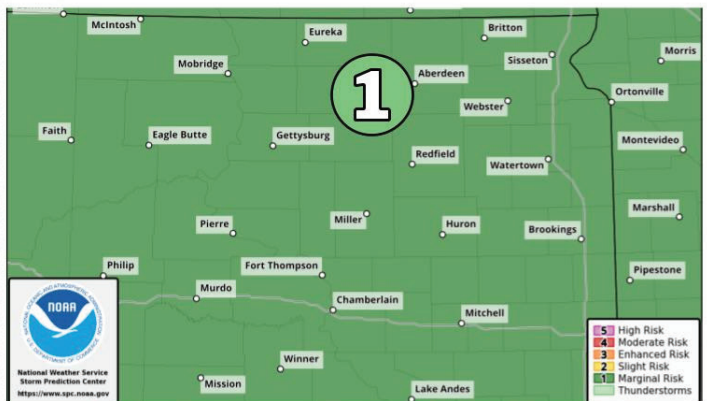
Monday - July 21, 2025

A **Marginal Risk (Level 1 out of 5)** for thunderstorms on Monday. There is still **significant uncertainty on when/if thunderstorms will develop on Monday afternoon and evening.** This is **due to very warm air above the surface, which may "cap" development or put a lid on any thunderstorm development.** If storms develop, they will likely become severe with hail over 1 inch in diameter and wind of 60 mph or greater.



Tuesday - July 22, 2025

A **Marginal Risk (Level 1 out of 5)** for thunderstorms on Tuesday too, with **uncertainty remaining on when or if thunderstorms will develop.** If storms develop, they will likely be severe with hail of 1 inch in diameter or greater and winds of 60 mph or stronger.



Make sure to monitor later forecasts for the latest updates on if thunderstorms will occur during this period



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

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

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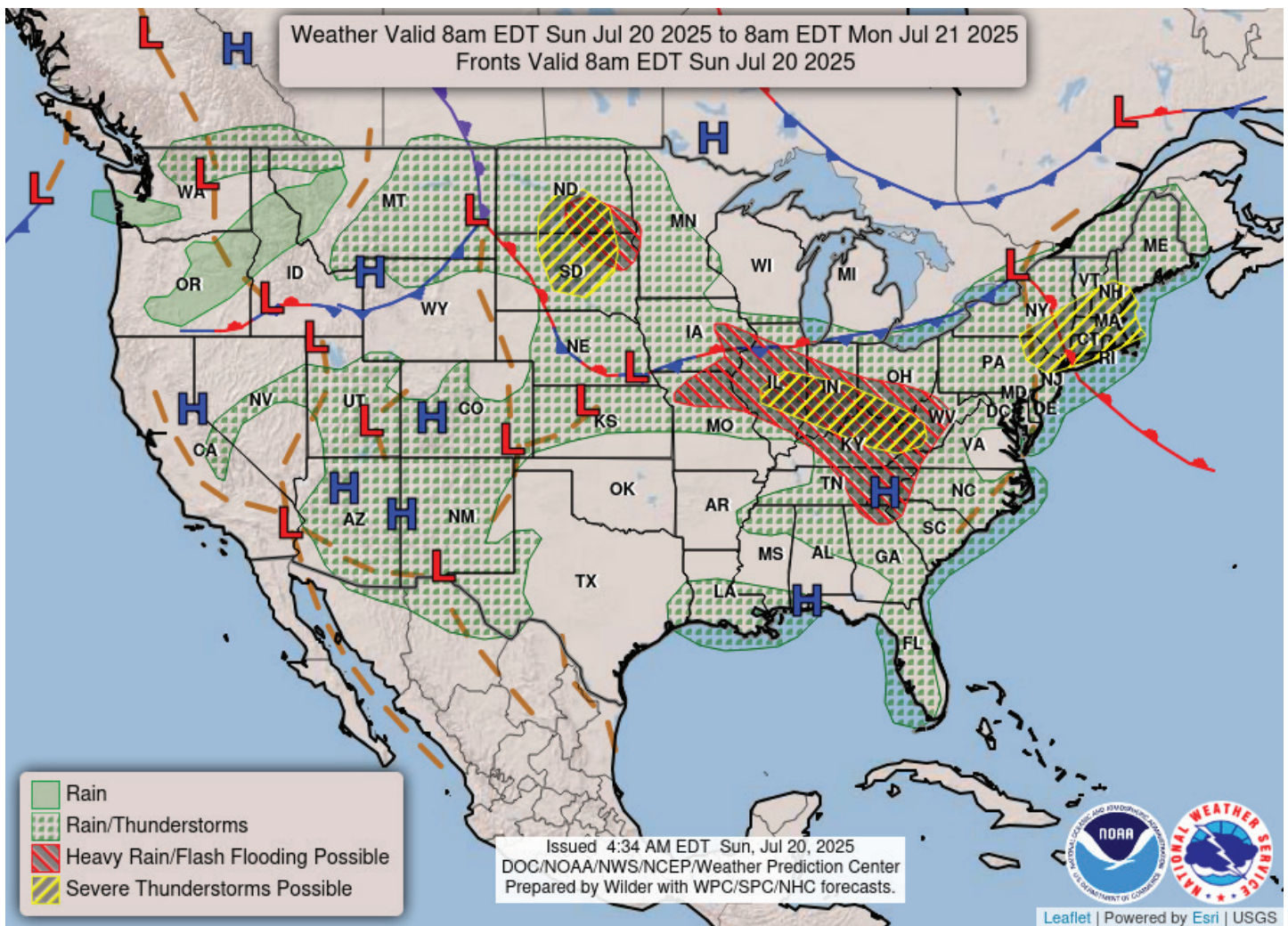
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 76 °F at 4:52 PM
Heat Index: 76 °F at 4:15 PM
Low Temp: 60 °F at 6:12 AM
Wind: 18 mph at 7:31 AM
Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 15 hours, 13 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 111 in 1934
Record Low: 43 in 1970
Average High: 85
Average Low: 60
Average Precip in July.: 2.18
Precip to date in July: 3.72
Average Precip to date: 13.19
Precip Year to Date: 13.84
Sunset Tonight: 9:15:21 pm
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:03:20 am



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Today in Weather History

July 20, 1951: From the southeast residential section of Watertown, an estimated F2 tornado moved east, passing near Kranzburg and Goodwin. The storms destroyed one home and several barns.

July 20, 2002: A powerful severe thunderstorm moved over Rapid City and across the adjacent plains east of town. Downburst winds and the associated gust front caused damage along a nearly 30-mile long path. Extensive tree damage occurred throughout the eastern half of the city with countless trees and branches more than 24-inch diameter fell. Two roofs were torn off by the winds. Flying debris damaged numerous cars and buildings. The NWS office in downtown Rapid City measured an 80 mph wind gust, with meteorologists noting winds were sustained at 60 to 70 mph for 5 minutes. Ellsworth AFB wind equipment measured a 106 mph wind gust from the thunderstorm as it passed.

1915: A record high temperature of 115 degrees occurred in Yosemite Valley at the National Park Headquarters, California (around 4,000 feet elevation). This reading was the warmest day in a streak of 7 consecutive days of 110 degrees or higher at Yosemite Valley from the 19th through the 25th.

1930 - The temperature at Washington D.C. soared to an all-time record of 106 degrees. The next day Millsboro reached 110 degrees to set a record for the state of Delaware. July 1930 was one of the hottest and driest summers in the U.S., particularly in the Missouri Valley where severe drought conditions developed. Toward the end of the month state records were set for Kentucky with 114 degrees, and Mississippi with 115 degrees. (David Ludlum)

1934 - The temperature at Keokuk, IA, soared to 118 degrees to establish a state record. (The Weather Channel)

1953 - Twenty-two inches of hail reportedly fell northeast of Dickinson, ND. (The Weather Channel)

1977: A flash flood hits Johnstown, Pennsylvania, on this day in 1977, killing 84 people and causing millions of dollars in damages. This flood came 88 years after the infamous Great Flood of 1889 that killed more than 2,000 people in Johnstown.

1986 - The temperature at Charleston, SC, hit 104 degrees for the second day in a row to tie their all-time record high. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather across Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan. Thunderstorms produced wind gusts to 87 mph at Mosinee, WI, and strong thunderstorm winds capsized twenty-six boats on Grand Traverse Bay drowning two women. Thunderstorms produced nine inches of rain at Shakopee, MN, with 7.83 inches reported in six hours at Chaska, MN. Thunderstorms in north central Nebraska produced hail as large as golf balls in southwestern Cherry County, which accumulated to a depth of 12 inches. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - The temperature at Redding, CA, soared to an all-time record high of 118 degrees. Showers and thunderstorms produced much needed rains from New England to southern Texas. Salem, IN, was deluged with 7.2 inches of rain resulting in flash flooding. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Showers and thunderstorms in the Middle Atlantic Coast Region soaked Wilmington, DE, with 2.28 inches of rain, pushing their total for the period May through July past the previous record of 22.43 inches. Heavy rain over that three month period virtually wiped out a 16.82 inch deficit which had been building since drought conditions began in 1985. Thunderstorms in central Indiana deluged Lebanon with 6.50 inches of rain in twelve hours, and thunderstorms over Florida produced wind gusts to 84 mph at Flagler Beach. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2005: Hurricane Emily made landfall in northern Mexico. When the central pressure fell to 29.43 inches of mercury, and its sustained winds reached 160 mph on the 16th, Emily became the strongest hurricane ever to form before August, breaking a record set by Hurricane Dennis just six days before. It was also the earliest Category 5 hurricane ever recorded in the Atlantic basin, beating Hurricane Allen's old record by nearly three weeks.

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THE SOURCE OF OUR SALVATION

An elderly man was sitting quietly in his rocking chair speaking softly to his beloved grandson. "It took me forty years," he said, "to learn three simple truths. I would like you to learn them this afternoon while you are young. One – I could do nothing by myself to get rid of my sins. Two – that God did not expect me to. And three – that Jesus did it all for me."

David taught those three simple truths centuries ago in one short, significant, simple verse: "Victory comes from You, oh Lord."

A story is told of a prisoner, who with the help of his friends, planned an escape. Through careful planning they smuggled a gun into the prison yard and hid it carefully from others. They informed him that a ladder would be set up against the wall where the searchlight would not expose it. And they told him that a vehicle would be awaiting him at a certain hour.

"But," he asked, "How do I get out of my cell?" "That's up to you," they said. Obviously, he did not escape. He remained in his cell because He could not take the first step.

Our Lord has taken the first step to release us from our sins through His one and only Son to be our Savior. Now, we must take the second step: toward Him or away from Him.

Our Lord is a seeking Lord who will save us from our sin through His salvation but we must take that second step is we want His salvation. His freedom is available if we take that step.

Prayer: We thank You, Heavenly Father, for Your freedom that is ours if we take "that step." Help us, in faith believing, to walk toward You so we can be with You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Victory comes from you, O Lord. May you bless your people. Psalm 3:8

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: 07.18.25

11 43 54 55 63 3

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$110,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

PREVIOUS RESULTS

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.19.25

4 25 32 42 51 10

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$2,980,000

NEXT DRAW:

PREVIOUS RESULTS

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.19.25

12 23 33 35 36 8

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 52 Mins 35 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.19.25

6 8 15 30 32

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$63,000

NEXT DRAW:

PREVIOUS RESULTS

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.19.25

6 29 38 43 67 16

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

PREVIOUS RESULTS

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.19.25

28 48 51 61 69 20

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$308,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

PREVIOUS RESULTS

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Upcoming Groton Events

007/25/2025 Ferney Open Scramble Golf at Olive Grove
08/01/2025 Wine on Nine Fundraiser at Olive Grove
08/09/2025 2nd Annual Celebration in the Park/Rib Cook-Off 1-9:30pm
08/14/2025 Family Fun Fest, Downtown Main Street 5:30-7:30pm (2nd Thursday)
08/23/2025 Glacial Tournament at Olive Grove
09/05/2025 Homecoming Parade 1pm
09/6-7/25 Fly in/Drive in at Groton Municipal Airport
09/06/2025 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm
09/07/2025 Sunflower Classic Couples Scramble at Olive Grove
10/10/2025 Lake Region Marching Band Festival 10am
10/11/2025 Pumpkin Fest 10am-3pm City Park
10/31/2025 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm
11/27/2025 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1:30pm
11/30/2025 Snow Queen Contest, 4 p.m.
12/06/2025 Olive Grove Holiday Party and Silent Live Auction Fundraiser

Jr. Legion Baseball Region Tournament

Locke/Karst Field, Groton

Monday, July 28 starting at Noon

Sisseton vs. Redfield

Groton vs. Redfield

Clark vs. Groton

Tuesday, July 29 starting at 2 p.m.

Sisseton vs. Groton

Sisseton vs. Clark

Redfield vs. Clark

If no one is undefeated, or there is no clear winner, a formula is used to determine who will advance to state tournament August 8-10 in Milbank.

Jr. Teener Region Tournament

July 28 and 30

Only two teams in the region (Groton and Mt. Vernon/Plankinton) so the best of three games will advance to state.

Monday, July 28, 6 p.m. in Plankinton

Wednesday, July 30, 5 p.m. in Groton

If a third game is required it will be played after the game in Groton.

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SOUTH DAKOTA AMERICAN LEGION REGION 1B SR BRACKET

JULY 22-24, 2025

BREWSTER/GUNDERSON FIELD, SISSETON, SOUTH DAKOTA

Big Stone City Post 229

7/22
Game 1
4:00 PM
Webster Post 40

Groton Post 39

7/22
Game 2
6:00 PM
Sisseton Post 50

Loser Game 1
7/23
Game 4
5:00 PM
Loser Game 2

Winner Game 1

Winner Game 2

Loser Game 3

Winner Game 4

Game 3
2:00 PM

Game 5
7:00 PM

Winner Game 3

Winner Game 5

7/24
Game 6
2:00 PM



Game 7 (If Necessary)
7/24 4:00 PM

Champion

Loser Game 6 (if first loss)

News from the **AP** Associated Press

Syria's armed Bedouins say they have withdrawn from Druze-majority city after weeklong fighting

By GHAITH ALSAYED and KAREEM CHEHAYEB Associated Press

MAZRAA, Syria (AP) — Syria's armed Bedouin clans on Sunday announced that they had withdrawn from the southern city of Sweida following over a week of clashes, as per a U.S.-brokered ceasefire agreement.

The clashes between militias of the Druze religious minority and the Sunni Muslim clans killed hundreds and threatened to unravel Syria's already fragile postwar transition. Israel also launched dozens of airstrikes in the Druze-majority Sweida province, targeting government forces who had effectively sided with the Bedouins.

A series of tit-for-tat kidnappings sparked the clashes in various towns and villages in the province, which later spread to the city.

Government forces were redeployed to halt renewed fighting that erupted Thursday, before withdrawing again.

Interim President Ahmad al-Sharaa, who was more sympathetic to the Bedouins, had tried to appeal to the Druze community while remaining critical of the militias. He later urged the Bedouins to leave the city, saying that they "cannot replace the role of the state in handling the country's affairs and restoring security."

"We thank the Bedouins for their heroic stances but demand they fully commit to the ceasefire and comply with the state's orders," he said in an address broadcast Saturday.

The Bedouins' withdrawal brought a cautious calm to the area, with humanitarian convoys reportedly on their way. The Syrian Red Crescent said Sunday they are sending 32 trucks to Sweida loaded with food, medicine, water, fuel and other aid, after the fighting left the province with power cuts and shortages. Syrian state media SANA said that the Health Ministry is also sending a convoy of trucks.

Washington's special envoy to Syria, Tom Barrack, said the clashes and atrocities "overshadowed" an initial cautious optimism about the country's post-war transition and the international community's lifting of sanctions.

"All factions must immediately lay down their arms, cease hostilities and abandon cycles of tribal vengeance," Barrack said on X. "Syria stands at a critical juncture — peace and dialogue must prevail — and prevail now."

Dozens of Druze civilians were killed in a series of targeted attacks in the city at the hands of Bedouin fighters and government forces. Videos also surfaced online of fighters destroying portraits of Druze religious officials and notables in homes, and shaving the mustaches of elderly Druze, seen as an insult to culture and tradition. Druze militiamen in return attacked Bedouin-majority areas in the outskirts of the province, forcing families to flee to the neighboring Daraa province.

More than half of the roughly 1 million Druze worldwide live in Syria. Most of the other Druze live in Lebanon and Israel, including in the Golan Heights, which Israel captured from Syria in the 1967 Mideast War and annexed in 1981.

Syria's Druze largely celebrated the downfall of the Assad family that ended decades of tyrannical rule. While they had concerns about Al-Sharaa's de facto Islamist rule, a large number wanted to approach matters diplomatically. However, the recent clashes have made a growing number of Druze in the area more skeptical about Damascus' new leadership and more doubtful of peaceful coexistence.

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A tsunami threat is over after several large quakes off Russia's Pacific coast

MOSCOW (AP) — The Pacific Tsunami Warning Center says there is no longer a danger of tsunami waves on Russia's Kamchatka Peninsula after five powerful quakes — the largest with a magnitude of 7.4 — struck in the sea nearby on Sunday.

The largest quake was at a depth of 20 kilometers (12 miles) and was 144 kilometers (89 miles) east of the city of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky, which has a population of 180,000, according to the U.S. Geological Survey.

Smaller — but still substantial — quakes were recorded before and after.

The PTWC initially said there was a danger of major tsunami waves but later downgraded its warning before finally saying the danger had passed.

Russia's Emergencies Ministry also issued a tsunami warning following the largest quake, urging residents of coastal settlements to stay away from the shore.

There were no immediate reports of casualties or damage, and the ministry said it had no immediate plans to evacuate residents.

On Nov. 4, 1952, a magnitude 9.0 quake in Kamchatka caused damage but no reported deaths despite setting off 9.1-meter (30-foot) waves in Hawaii.

Less selection, higher prices: How tariffs are shaping the holiday shopping season

By ANNE D'INNOCENZIO and MAE ANDERSON AP Business Writers

NEW YORK (AP) — With summer in full swing in the United States, retail executives are sweating a different season. It's less than 22 weeks before Christmas, a time when businesses that make and sell consumer goods usually nail down their holiday orders and prices.

But President Donald Trump's vacillating trade policies have complicated those end-of-year plans. Balsam Hill, which sells artificial trees and other decorations online, expects to publish fewer and thinner holiday catalogs because the featured products keep changing with the tariff rates the president sets, postpones and revises.

"The uncertainty has led us to spend all our time trying to rejigger what we're ordering, where we're bringing it in, when it's going to get here," Mac Harman, CEO of Balsam Hill parent company Balsam Brands, said. "We don't know which items we're going to have to put in the catalog or not."

Months of confusion over which foreign countries' goods may become more expensive to import has left a question mark over the holiday shopping season. U.S. retailers often begin planning for the winter holidays in January and typically finalize the bulk of their orders by the end of June. The seesawing tariffs already have factored into their calculations.

The consequences for consumers? Stores may not have the specific gift items customers want come November and December. Some retail suppliers and buyers scaled back their holiday lines rather than risking a hefty tax bill or expensive imports going unsold. Businesses still are setting prices but say shoppers can expect many things to cost more, though by how much depends partly on whether Trump's latest round of "reciprocal" tariffs kicks in next month.

The lack of clarity has been especially disruptive for the U.S. toy industry, which sources nearly 80% of its products from China. American toy makers usually ramp up production in April, a process delayed until late May this year after the president put a 145% tariff on Chinese goods, according to Greg Ahearn, president and CEO of the Toy Association, an industry trade group.

The U.S. tariff rate may have dropped significantly from its spring high — a truce in the U.S.-China trade war is set to expire on Aug. 12 — but continues to shape the forthcoming holiday period. Manufacturing activity is way down from a year ago for small- and medium-sized U.S. toy companies, Ahearn said.

The late start to factory work in China means holiday toys are only now arriving at U.S. warehouses,

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industry experts said. A big unknown is whether tariffs will keep stores from replenishing supplies of any breakout hit toys that emerge in September, said James Zahn, editor-in-chief of the trade publication Toy Book.

In the retail world, planning for Christmas in July usually involves mapping out seasonal marketing and promotion strategies. Dean Smith, who co-owns independent toy stores JaZams in Princeton, New Jersey, and Lahaska, Pennsylvania, said he recently spent an hour and a half running through pricing scenarios with a Canadian distributor because the wholesale cost of some products increased by 20%.

Increasing his own prices that much might turn off customers, Smith said, so he explored ways to "maintain a reasonable margin without raising prices beyond what consumers would accept." He ordered a lower cost Crazy Forts building set so he would have the toy on hand and left out the kids' edition of the Anomia card game because he didn't think customers would pay what he would have to charge.

"In the end, I had to eliminate half of the products that I normally buy," Smith said.

Hilary Key, owner of The Toy Chest in Nashville, Indiana, said she tries to get new games and toys in early most years to see which ones she should stock up on for the winter holidays. This year, she abandoned her product testing for fear any delayed orders would incur high import taxes.

Meanwhile, vendors of toys made in China and elsewhere bombarded Key with price increase notices. For example, Schylling, which makes Needoh, Care Bear collectibles and modern versions of nostalgic toys like My Little Pony, increased prices on orders by 20%, according to Key.

All the price hikes are subject to change if the tariff situation changes again. Key worries her store won't have as compelling a product assortment as she prides herself on carrying.

"My concern is not that I'll have nothing, because I can bring in more books. I can bring in more gifts, or I can bring in just things that are manufactured in other places," she said. "But that doesn't mean I'm going to have the best stock for every developmental age, for every special need."

The retail industry may have to keep taking a whack-a-mole approach to navigating the White House's latest tariff ultimatums and temporary reprieves. Last week, the president again reset the rates on imports from Brazil, the European Union, Mexico, and other major trading partners but said they would not take effect until Aug. 1.

The brief pause should extend the window importers have to bring in seasonal merchandise at the current baseline tariff of 10%. The Port of Los Angeles had the busiest June in its 117-year history after companies raced to secure holiday shipments, and July imports look strong so far, according to Gene Seroka, the port's executive director.

"In my view, we're seeing a peak season push right now to bring in goods ahead of potentially higher tariffs later this summer," Seroka said Monday.

The pace of port activity so far this year reflects a "tariff whipsaw effect" — imports slowing when tariffs kick in and rebounding when they're paused, he said. "For us consumers, lower inventory levels, fewer selections and higher prices are likely as we head into the holidays."

Smith, who co-owns the two JaZams stores with his partner, Joanne Farrugia, said they started placing holiday orders two months earlier than usual for "certain items that we felt were essential for us to have at particular pricing." They doubled their warehouse space to store the stockpile. But some shoppers are trying to get ahead of higher prices just like businesses are, he said.

He's noticed customers snapping up items that will likely be popular during the holidays, like Jellycat plush toys and large stuffed unicorns and dogs. Any sales are welcome, but Smith and Farrugia are wary of having to restock at a higher cost.

"We're just trying to be as friendly as we can to the consumer and still have a product portfolio or profile that is gonna meet the needs of all of our various customers, which is getting more and more challenging by the day," Smith said.

Balsam Brands' Harman said he's had to resign himself to not having as robust a selection of ornaments and frosted trees to sell as in years' past. Soon, it will be too late to import meaningful additions to his range of products.

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"Our purpose as a company is to create joy together, and we're going to do our very best to do that this year," Harman said. "We're just not going to have a bunch of the items that consumers want this year, and that's not a position we want to be in."

Typhoon Wipha topples trees and causes major flight disruptions in Hong Kong and southern China

HONG KONG (AP) — Typhoon Wipha toppled trees and caused major flight disruptions Sunday in Hong Kong and at some nearby airports in China as it moved west off the country's southern coast.

Airports in Hong Kong, Shenzhen, Zhuhai and Macao canceled or postponed daytime flights, their websites showed. Hong Kong grounded about 400 flights, affecting some 80,000 passengers, broadcaster RTHK said. Some high-speed train services were also suspended.

The Hong Kong Observatory issued a hurricane signal No. 10, its highest warning. The eye of the storm passed just south of the city around midday with maximum sustained winds of 140 kilometers (87 miles) per hour, the observatory said.

Vehicles weaved around branches strewn on the streets. The government said it had received more than 350 reports of fallen trees and that 21 people had sought medical treatment at public hospitals. A news release did not provide details on any injuries.

About 240 people had sought refuge in public shelters, the release said. Hong Kong Disneyland and other amusement parks were closed.

The storm, which reached typhoon strength overnight, later passed off Macao and was forecast to make landfall on China's coast late Sunday. It is expected to reach Vietnam later this week.

Wipha, which is a Thai name, passed over the Philippines at tropical storm strength and drenched parts of Taiwan on Saturday. Names for typhoons in the western Pacific are chosen by the countries in the region.

In the Philippines, the storm intensified seasonal monsoon rains, leaving at least one villager dead in floodwaters in northern Cagayan province.

More than 370,000 people were affected by days of stormy weather, including 43,000 who fled to government-run emergency shelters or homes of relatives due to flooding, landslides and fierce winds. More than 400 houses were damaged, officials said.

Elsewhere in Asia, heavy rains in South Korea left 14 people dead and 12 others missing, the government said Sunday.

Israel orders evacuations in central Gaza as ceasefire talks stall and military offensive widens

By WAFAA SHURAF and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — The Israeli military published new evacuation warnings for areas of central Gaza on Sunday, in one of the few areas the military has rarely operated with ground troops.

The evacuation cuts access between the city of Deir al-Balah and the southern cities of Rafah and Khan Younis in the narrow enclave.

The announcement comes as Israel and Hamas have been holding ceasefire talks in Qatar, but international mediators say there have been no breakthroughs. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has repeatedly stressed that expanding Israeli military operations in Gaza will pressure Hamas to negotiate, though negotiations have been stalled for months.

The area of Gaza under the evacuation order is also where many international organizations attempting to distribute aid are located. The organizations did not immediately comment on the evacuation warnings.

Military spokesman Avichay Adraee warned that the military will attack "with intensity" against militants. He called for residents, including those sheltering in tents, to head to the Muwasi area, a desolate tent camp on Gaza's southern shore that the Israeli military has designated a humanitarian zone.

Gaza's population of more than 2 million Palestinians are in a catastrophic humanitarian crisis.

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Hamas triggered the 21-month war when militants stormed into southern Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, killing around 1,200 people and taking 251 others hostage. Fifty remain, but fewer than half are thought to be alive.

Israel's military offensive that followed has killed more than 58,000 Palestinians, according to the Gaza Health Ministry, which doesn't say how many militants are among the dead but says more than half of the dead have been women and children. The ministry is part of the Hamas government but the U.N. and other international organizations see it as the most reliable source of data on casualties.

The Hostages Family Forum, a grassroots organization that represents many of the families of hostages, condemned the evacuation announcement and demanded that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the Israeli military explain what they hope to accomplish in the area of central Gaza, accusing Israel of operating without a clear war plan.

"Enough! The Israeli people overwhelmingly want an end to the fighting and a comprehensive agreement that will return all of the hostages," the forum said. On Saturday night, during the weekly protest, tens of thousands of protesters marched in Tel Aviv, demonstrating for an end to the war.

Vietnam tour boat survivor describes his escape

HA LONG BAY, Vietnam (AP) — A Vietnamese man who survived the capsizing of a tour boat in Ha Long Bay described his escape from the overturned vessel.

At least 35 people were killed in the accident and a search is continuing for four who are still missing, according to Vietnamese state media. Authorities said that an earlier report of 38 dead and five missing was incorrect.

The Wonder Sea embarked early Saturday afternoon for a three hour excursion in Ha Long Bay, a popular tourist destination, carrying 46 passengers and three crew.

But a storm quickly covered the sky, bringing high winds and pouring rain, survivor Dang Anh Tuan told The Associated Press.

Tuan said the passengers asked for the boat to turn back to shore, but the crew reassured them they were almost at their destination and kept the boat moving forward.

"It rained for about 15 minutes, and then the boat started to shake vigorously, tables and chairs were jostled around and seconds later the boat overturned," the 36-year-old fire extinguisher salesman said. "Water gushed in and I lost all orientation."

"I tried to breathe. But more water came in. I took a deep breath, got rid of my life vest and dove down. I saw a streak of light and followed it to swim out, escaping the boat, and then I climbed on the overturned boat to look for help," he said.

Tuan and several other people survived by clinging on to the capsized boat and its propellers, waiting another two hours before the rain stopped and rescuers arrived.

The Wonder Sea boat was later seen being towed to a shipyard for investigation, with most of its windows shattered, and damage to its roof and handrails. Police and other officials are seen on the boat working.

Rescue workers recovered 11 survivors, but one later died in hospital due to injuries, VNExpress newspaper said.

The boat turned upside down because of strong winds, the newspaper said. A 14-year-old boy was rescued after four hours trapped in the overturned hull.

The newspaper said that most of the passengers were tourists from Hanoi, including about 20 children.

Tuan was a holiday with 11 university friends, only three of whom survived. Tuan has only minor cuts, but one of his friends suffered multiple injuries in his head and the other's tendons were cut by broken glass as he escaped the boat through a window.

The other nine members of the group were killed, including one who was traveling with his wife and 3-year-old son. The wife and child were also drowned.

A tropical storm is also moving toward the area. A national weather forecast said that Storm Wipha is expected to hit Vietnam's northern region next week, including Ha Long Bay's coast.

Max Holloway retains UFC BMF title, spoils Dustin Poirier's retirement fight

By DAVID FOLSE II Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Max Holloway said he wanted to play spoiler and he did it Saturday night in the main event.

Holloway defeated Dustin Poirier in a unanimous decision to retain the UFC BMF Championship in UFC 318 at the Smoothie King Center.

The win for Holloway is the first in three fights against Poirier, who beat him in 2012 and 2019.

Holloway (28-8) retained his BMF title after landing 98 more strikes (201-109) and landing 53% of his significant strikes.

Fighting against a partisan Louisiana crowd for the native son Poirier in his retirement match, Holloway was the quicker fighter for the entire match, knocking Poirier off his feet early in the first round.

In the second, another flurry of combinations put Poirier on the mat again, followed by two minutes of dominant grappling.

"I'm pretty happy," Holloway said. Poirier can still hit hard, he said. "but he kept coming back and back. I came in and I knew I was going to try and be the spoiler and the villain."

Poirier's best chance came in the last 30 seconds of the second round, getting Holloway on the ground with a chokehold and several ground punches before the round ended.

The loss ends a brilliant career for Poirier, who finishes his career with a 30-10 record. Poirier, the UFC Lightweight Interim Champion in 2019, also defeated the likes of Connor McGregor twice in addition to victories over Justin Gaethje and Michael Chandler.

"Obviously I wanted to win, but being inside the eye of the storm I thought the fight was a lot closer," Poirier said. "I thought I had him out in the second round, we couldn't hear the bell. The fight just felt a lot closer. It is what it is though."

"Going into the fifth round I thought it was close. I feel like I could have maybe put myself in harm's way more. I could have taken more chances, but I didn't want to take too many risks. I thought I fought smart. I tried to win."

In the co-main event, Paulo Costa (15-4) snapped a three-match losing streak, defeating Roman Kopylov for a middleweight division win by a unanimous decision.

Daniel Rodriguez (20-5) won his third consecutive fight after a unanimous decision over Kevin Holland in welterweight action in a significant upset. Rodriguez was +425 to win the fight, but beat Holland (28-14), who lost his second fight of 2025.

In the featherweight division, Patricio Freire beat Dan Ige by a unanimous decision. Freire (37-8) dominated the three-round fight, taking down Ige five times.

The five-fight main card opened with a unanimous decision upset win by Michael Johnson over Daniel Zellhuber in the lightweight action. Johnson opened the fight +475 according to Bet MGM. Johnson (25-19) landed 81 strikes compared to only 52 from Zellhuber as he won his third consecutive fight.

Water tanks replace springs on a Serbian mountain as drought endangers some 1,000 cows and horses

By IVANA BZGANOVIC and JOVANA GEC Associated Press

SUVA PLANINA, Serbia (AP) — A severe drought this summer has left over 1,000 cows and horses without water on a mountain in southeast Serbia, forcing the authorities to bring up emergency supplies.

The early drought that started in May has affected people, animals and crops throughout the Western Balkans, causing water and power restrictions, disruptions in river traffic and problems in agriculture in this part of southeast Europe.

At Suva Planina, Serbian for Dry Mountain, cattle owners said they can't remember the springs ever drying up before mid-August. Lack of water has sent the cattle roaming down the mountain in panic, they said.

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"We haven't had any rain on the mountain since May 27," lamented Nikola Manojlovic, from the nearby village of Mali Krcimir.

Suva Planina is located about 250 kilometers (155 miles) from Serbia's capital, Belgrade.

The drought has left visible consequences on a plateau at the altitude of some 1,200 meters (nearly 4,000 feet) — cracked ground has replaced the main water spring, along with dry, yellow grass and dust.

"We tried to dig new wells but everything has dried up," he said. "It was horrible, our cattle had no water for three days, they were screaming."

Alarmed, authorities drove up water trucks on Thursday, and workers used hoses to fill up a pond from the tanks for the thirsty animals. The Ministry of Agriculture said it will keep sending supplies in the coming weeks.

"We are out of imminent danger," local municipal chief Milisav Filipovic said after the water trucks drove up the mountain. He warned that the situation remains just as bad down the mountain, in villages that have faced restrictions in water supplies for weeks now.

"Our farmers don't recall such a bad and hard year," Filipovic said. "People here mostly do farming and use products for own needs, for their existence. This year has brought unseen hardship for them."

While a spell of rainy weather in July brought some relief, farmers say that the land is too dry deep below the surface to recover easily. Scores of small rivers, lakes and creeks that are normally used in Serbia's rural areas have dried up.

In neighboring Bosnia, meteorologists have said that June this year could end up being the driest in recent history, causing huge damage in agriculture.

In eastern Croatia, authorities declared emergency measures in several municipalities along the border with Hungary to deal with the effects of the drought. The country's vegetable growers have warned many could go out of business.

Earlier in July, both Albania and Kosovo reported water shortages that affected also electricity production in Albania.

Serbia's farmers have asked for financial help from the government, fearing poor yield, which could spike prices. Irrigation systems in the country are underdeveloped, leaving many farmers dependent on the weather.

Jovica Jaksic, of the Independent Farmers' Association told the state RTS television that the damage to the corn is so big already that even if it rained for the rest of the summer, it wouldn't help.

Scientists warn that climate change is exacerbating the frequency and intensity of heat and dryness in parts of Europe, making the region more vulnerable to health impacts and wildfires.

The EU monitoring agency found that, in Europe and globally, 2024 was the hottest year on record and the continent experienced its second-highest number of "heat stress" days.

In Serbia's northern neighbor Hungary, weather-damaged crops have dealt significant blows to the country's overall GDP. This has prompted Prime Minister Viktor Orbán to announce the creation of a "drought task force" to deal with the problem.

Persistent droughts in the Great Hungarian Plain, in the country's southeast, have threatened desertification, a process where vegetation recedes due to high heat and low rainfall. The soil remains "critically dry," the country's meteorological service said on Thursday, warning of the negative effects on the crops.

A new heat wave is expected in the Western Balkans in the coming days.

Arctic birders combat impact of climate change and avian flu on delicate ecosystem

By HELI SIVUNEN and STEFANIE DAZIO Associated Press

VARDØ, Norway (AP) — In one of the top Arctic birding destinations in the world, environmental and health challenges are threatening some of the seabirds that are part of Norway's unique coastal ecosystem.

The population of kittiwakes has decreased by 80% since the 1990s along the Scandinavian country's coast. The small seagull species, among others, is under siege from climate change, predation, local fish-

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eries and the bird flu.

So the town of Vardø, on the remote Vardøya Island in the Barents Sea, has stepped up to help the migrating visitors.

Three years ago, local fisherman Jan Vidar Hansen built a "seagull hotel" out of crates for kittiwakes and other seabirds to nest in safely. The hotel has the added bonus of limiting the spread of unwelcome smells, dirty nests and droppings that have become a nuisance for the island's human population.

"The first year there was 55 nests. Last year it was 74, and this year we have 76," Vidar Hansen said. He hopes the local council will agree to build a bigger seagull hotel in the future.

Seabirds have long been an important part of the identity of Vardø — so much so that the local museum has an exhibition dedicated to them. The town is known for its birding tourism as much as its radar station, which provides critical data to the U.S. Strategic Command thanks to its location nearly 60 kilometers (37 miles) from Russia's military hub on the Kola Peninsula.

The Gulf Stream

Norway's northern coast is an ecologically diverse area due to its topography as well as the Gulf Stream, which brings warmer water up from the Gulf of Mexico and then mixes with the cold Arctic air and water. This warmer water keeps the Barents Sea free from ice even though it's north of the Arctic Circle, and brings tons of fish larvae and other biomass up the Norwegian coast.

But the Gulf Stream is affected by climate change and is now bringing water that is too warm into the Barents Sea, changing the rich composition of the species there. It affects congregations of seabirds, marine mammals and, of course, many fish species.

Fish that need colder water are being pushed further north, while others that require the mix of warmer and Arctic water — like the small schooling fish called capelin — are seeing their migration patterns disturbed.

Capelin, for instance, are a major part of the diet for surface-feeding seabirds like kittiwakes, according to Tone Kristin Reiertsen, a researcher with the Norwegian Institute for Nature Research.

When capelin either swim deeper into the sea to get to colder water, or migrate further north, seabirds cannot get to them, she said. That in turn impacts the success of seabirds' breeding because they depend on capelin to bring to their chicks.

Boris Belchev, a bird guide and ranger on the nearby Hornøya Island, says it's a frightening domino effect.

"I was seeing birds that usually eat fish on the tundra start eating berries because they don't have their normal food," he said.

With fewer seabirds surviving, those who remain are easy targets for predators like white-tailed eagles, Reiertsen said. Plus, fisheries situated close to the coastal cliff nesting sites can disturb the dynamics of the colonies.

And then there's the threat of bird flu. In 2023, a large outbreak killed some 25,000 kittiwakes alone along the northern Norwegian coast, Reiertsen said.

"It felt like an apocalypse," she said.

Empty nests

Vidar Hansen's seagull hotel in Vardø is one of seven such kittiwake hotels along the Norwegian coast, Reiertsen said.

"It's not an easy task to get the kittiwakes to move in to these hotels," she said with a laugh.

But it's working. The small seagulls in recent years have migrated deeper into Vardø's center in search of protection from predators. There were roughly 300 kittiwakes nesting in various buildings in the town and now the population there is roughly 1,300, she added.

Before the Vardø hotel, there were "many empty nests around the whole city," Vidar Hansen said.

Reiertsen said kittiwakes and other seabirds are crucial to the region's ecology. Their droppings bring important nutrients into the sea, and further decreases in their population could be dangerous to the entire ecosystem.

She said officials need to change their mindset from monitoring the problem to figuring out how to fix it. A potential idea, she added, could be limiting or prohibiting fisheries and boat traffic near nesting colonies.

"We don't have much time," she said. "We have to act quickly."

Economic drivers

The seabirds are also key to Vardø's economy.

Just a short boat ride away from Vardø lies Hornøya Island, a birdwatchers' paradise. Thousands of visitors flock to the uninhabited Hornøya, which is home to some 100,000 seabirds nesting there during breeding season, including much-loved Atlantic puffins, common guillemots and razorbills.

But the island's seabird population has also declined dramatically in recent years. There haven't been any recorded common guillemot chicks there since 2018, Belchev said.

"Last summer, I was shocked. 'What's going on here? Where are all the birds?'" he said.

If Norway's government closes the island to the public, or birds stop nesting there and the birdwatchers stop coming, it could have a huge impact on Vardøya Island.

"Every small business in the town, it's depending on the tourists to come and visit the island and stay in the town and shop and use the gas station and use the small restaurants," Belchev said. —

Dazio reported from Berlin. Tommi Ojala in Vardø, Norway, contributed to this report.

Pacquiao's comeback falls short as Barrios retains WBC welterweight title in majority draw

By MARK ANDERSON AP Sports Writer

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Manny Pacquiao pushed back against his doubters, the odds and even Father Time on Saturday night — and nearly made some history.

But Pacquiao, in the end, fell just short on the judges' scorecards as Mario Barrios escaped with a majority draw to retain the WBC welterweight championship. Two judges scored the bout a draw, and judge Max DeLuca awarded Barrios a 115-113 victory.

The Associated Press scored the fight 115-113 in favor of Pacquiao.

"I thought I won the fight," Pacquiao said.

Barrios landed more total punches (120-101), according to Compubox, but Pacquiao had the edge in power shots (81-75).

Pacquiao, enshrined into the International Boxing Hall of Fame last month, was trying to break his own record for oldest welterweight champion. He was 40 when he emerged in 2019 split decision over Keith Thurman. This also was his first appearance in the ring in nearly four years for the 46-year-old Filipino, a loss by unanimous decision to Yordenis Ugás.

Barrios, a 30-year-old from San Antonio, was a -275 favorite at BetMGM Sportsbook. He hoped to bounce back from a split-decision draw on Nov. 15 against Abel Ramos, but didn't exactly come away with an emphatic victory in improving to 29-2-2. The heavily pro-Pacquiao crowd loudly booed the decision.

"It was an honor to share the ring with him," Barrios said. "This is by far the biggest event I've had to date, and we came in here and left everything in the ring. I have nothing but respect for Manny.

"His stamina is crazy. He's still strong as hell and his timing is real. He's still a very awkward fighter to try to figure out."

Pacman (62-9-2) moved swiftly around the ring from the beginning, often looking more like the younger champion who captured 12 world titles in eight divisions. He began to take control in the seventh, landing several big left hands to win the following three rounds on two cards and two on the other.

But Barrios was the better fighter at the end, coming out more aggressive knowing he might be in trouble with the judges. All three, in fact, awarded Barrios each of the final three rounds.

"I didn't think the fight was getting away from me, but I knew I had to step it up to solidify a win," Barrios said.

Both sides they would be interested in a rematch.

"I hope this is an inspiration to boxers that if you have discipline and work hard you can still fight at this age," Pacquiao said.

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Sebastian Fundora (23-1-1, 15 KOs) retained his WBC super welterweight title when Tim Tszyu (25-3) didn't come out for the eighth round in the co-main event. Fundora floored Tszyu with a left hand in the first round and dominated the action with 118 power punches, according to Compubox, by repeatedly backing down the Australian.

"I'm the bigger guy," said Fundora, who led 69-63 on all three judges' cards. "Everyone says I'm a bully in the ring, so I thought I should start really bullying these guys. I just kept working on aggression my whole career and we've just been adding."

It was a big week for Fundora, who was accepted into Harvard and then won the rematch with Tszyu. The first fight on March 30, 2024 was much closer, with Fundora emerging with a split-decision victory.

The Coachella, California, resident also had been the WBO champion, but that organization stripped him of his belt for not fighting mandatory challenger Xander Zayas.

Napheesa Collier caps busy weekend with All-Star Game MVP Award in win over Team Clark

By MICHAEL MAROT AP Sports Writer

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Napheesa Collier played the role of All-Star captain perfectly.

First, she made all the right picks for her roster. Then she answered all the labor questions. And finally, she showed everyone, even the WNBA's young guns, how to stay focused on basketball.

The five-time All-Star scored a record 36 points, grabbed nine rebounds and led the aptly named Team Collier past Team Clark 151-131 in the highest scoring All-Star Game in WNBA history. Naturally, Collier was selected the MVP.

She made 13 of 16 shots, four from the specially designed AT&T logo 4-point-line that seemed perfectly aligned for Caitlin Clark, the other team captain who didn't play because of a right groin injury. And it was all by design.

"I tried to make my team not have that many new players," Collier said. "I've played with a lot of them and so it was good to get back with them, play with, like you said, some of those new players I haven't played with before."

But for Collier, this weekend in Indianapolis was about much more than a single game.

The vice president of the Women's National Basketball Players Association executive committee, co-founder of the Unrivaled basketball league and the league's first one-on-one tournament champion, never got distracted by a demanding schedule that forced her to prioritize the WNBA's future over adding another award to her trophy case.

Collier spent Thursday afternoon negotiating a new collective bargaining agreement and Friday answering questions from a throng of reporters detailing the meeting. On Saturday, she shared the pregame stage with Clark for a news conference between the captains. And after the game, there were even more questions about the CBA.

"I feel like I haven't been able to forget it (Thursday's meeting) because people won't let us, which is amazing," Collier said. "Just the awareness we've raised this weekend, you guys asking these questions, the fans doing the chants, that, like, gave me chills."

But Collier also helped fuel the effort.

She, like the other All-Stars, wore a T-shirt that read "Pay us what you owe us" during pregame warmups. Then she reinforced the message with a historic game.

Collier broke the All-Star Game's individual scoring record while her team scored a record 82 first-half points. Another of Collier's picks, Seattle guard Skylar Diggins, became the first player with an All-Star triple-double in the same venue she led Notre Dame to the national championship game more than a decade ago.

And Collier even connected with rookie Paige Bueckers, both former UConn stars, for a basket. The captain couldn't have scripted it any better.

"We set a lot of records," Collier said. "Skylar had a triple-double, which is insane. It was just so fun. We had a great time."

Car strikes crowd outside Los Angeles venue, injuring 30. Bystanders attack driver, who was shot

By DAMIAN DOVARGANES Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A vehicle rammed into a crowd of people waiting to enter a performance venue along a busy boulevard in Los Angeles early Saturday, injuring 30 people and leading bystanders to attack the driver, authorities said.

The driver was later found to have been shot, according to police, who were searching for a suspected gunman who fled the scene along Santa Monica Boulevard in East Hollywood.

It was not immediately clear if the driver was shot before or after the crash or why he drove into the crowd, a police spokesperson said.

Twenty-three victims were taken to hospitals and trauma centers, according to police. Seven were in critical condition, the Los Angeles Fire Department said in a statement.

Fire Capt. Adam VanGerpen said a line of people — mostly female — were waiting to enter Vermont Hollywood when they were struck by a Nissan Versa that also hit a food vending cart and valet stand. "This was a very chaotic scene," said VanGerpen, a public information officer.

People inside came out to help victims in the minutes before emergency crews arrived, he said.

The driver, whose gunshot wound was found by paramedics, was also taken to a hospital. Police did not identify him or disclose his condition.

The person suspected of shooting him was described as a man in a blue jersey with a silver revolver.

"This is under police investigation," VanGerpen said. "This will be a large investigation with the LAPD."

Vermont Hollywood was hosting a reggae-hop event from 10 p.m. to 2 a.m., according to its online calendar. There was no immediate response to a phone message left with the business.

A fight broke out outside the venue beforehand, according to Maria Medrano, who with her husband was there selling hot dogs. Shortly afterward, she said, the car hit the people, and the couple narrowly escaped when it crushed their stand.

"The car stopped once it hit the hot dog stand, it got stuck there," Medrano told The Associated Press from the hospital. "If not, I wouldn't be here to tell" the story.

After the crash she heard what sounded like gunshots.

"Everyone started running," Medrano said.

Tourist boat capsizes during a storm in Vietnam, leaving 37 dead. 5 remain missing

HA LONG BAY, Vietnam (AP) — A boat carrying tourists capsized during a sudden thunderstorm in Vietnam on Saturday afternoon during a sightseeing excursion, killing 37 people, state media reported. Five others remain missing.

The Wonder Sea boat was carrying 48 passengers and five crew members — all of them Vietnamese — on a tour of Ha Long Bay, a popular destination, according to the reports.

Rescue workers saved 11 people, and recovered the dead near the site of the capsizing, VNExpress newspaper said. Authorities revised the figure after earlier reporting that 12 people had been rescued.

The boat turned upside down because of strong winds, the newspaper said. A 14-year-old boy was rescued after four hours trapped in the overturned hull.

The newspaper said that most of the passengers were tourists, from Hanoi, including about 20 children.

A tropical storm is also moving toward the area. A national weather forecast said that Storm Wipha is expected to hit Vietnam's northern region next week, including Ha Long Bay's coast.

Two surrogates speak out about California couple under investigation

By JAIMIE DING and HALLIE GOLDEN Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A woman who almost served as a surrogate for a Southern California couple now under investigation by authorities said she backed out after the couple asked her if any of her friends would like to carry a child for them too.

The request as well as conflicting information she was getting left the woman, Esperanza, unnerved and she decided not to sign a surrogacy contract with Silvia Zhang, who offered her \$60,000. Esperanza spoke to The Associated Press on the condition that her last name not be used because she has not shared her surrogacy experience publicly.

Zhang, 38, and her husband, Guojun Xuan, 65, are now the target of an investigation by local and federal authorities after their infant child was taken to the hospital with a traumatic head injury in May. Authorities have since taken 21 children from the couple's custody, many of whom were born by surrogate, said Lt. Kollin Ceadlo of the Arcadia Police Department, near Los Angeles.

Surrogacy is an agreement between parties for a woman to become pregnant, typically through an embryo transfer, and deliver a baby for the intended person or couple to raise.

The children range in age from 2 months to 13 years, with most between 1 and 3.

Federal authorities' role in investigation

Esperanza is one of at least eight women who say they were aggressively pursued by the couple to serve as surrogates. The women, many of whom were first-time surrogates, say they were given misleading or incomplete information about the couple's family situation and intentions. Some, like Esperanza, did not move forward with carrying a child for the couple. Another who did, Kayla Elliott, is now trying to get custody of a baby she birthed in March for the couple.

Arcadia police say the FBI is involved in the investigation over whether the couple misled surrogates around the country. The FBI has not confirmed its investigation. Elliott said she was interviewed by the FBI at the end of May.

Elliott worked through a business called Mark Surrogacy, according to the contract she signed and shared with the AP. California state records show a company called Mark Surrogacy Investments LLC registered at the company's Arcadia home until this June. Elliot's contract listed an El Monte address for the company. An AP reporter visited that location Thursday and did not find anyone who recognized the names of the couple or Mark Surrogacy.

Zhang did not respond to phone calls and emails seeking comment. Lawyers for Mark Surrogacy did not respond to emails seeking comment, nor did a fertility clinic involved in the embryo transfer.

In social media posts, other women who say they served as surrogates for Zhang and Xuan outlined suspicious actions including the couple not fulfilling payment obligations and weren't present for the children's births. Many women contacted by the AP did not respond or said they would only speak after securing an attorney.

Injured infant draws concern

Zhang and Xuan were arrested in May after a hospital reported that their 2-month-old infant had a traumatic head injury, the result of a nanny at the home violently shaking the baby, according to Arcadia police.

Arcadia police did not file charges at the time, in order to finish a full investigation, Ceadlo said, and detectives were looking into possible child abuse charges and anticipated presenting a case in a few weeks.

The couple told police that they "wanted a large family" and produced what appeared to be legitimate birth certificates, including some from outside California, that list Zhang as the mother of the children, Ceadlo said. Xuan was listed as the father on at least some of the birth certificates, Ceadlo said.

Potential surrogate backs out

Esperanza's dealings with Zhang began in 2023. She had posted in a Facebook group for people interested in surrogacy and received a message from Zhang.

Zhang said she and her partner already had an 8-year-old daughter in China but were having fertility

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issues. Zhang said she was working with a surrogate who was already pregnant but that she wanted "twins," so she was pursuing a second surrogate. But Esperanza said things started to feel amiss after Zhang asked if she had any friends who also wanted to be surrogates.

"She said that she's a realtor in Arcadia and that's how she has a lot of money and was able to afford a lot of surrogates at the time," Esperanza said.

Esperanza backed out of the surrogacy after the lawyer for the couple abruptly hung up on her while discussing the contract. She said the document said the couple would implant two embryos instead of one and the section requiring background information on the couple was cut out. The couple became angry when she decided not to move forward.

Esperanza showed text messages to the AP that showed Zhang offering \$3,000 more if she agreed to keep going, and another \$2,000 bonus after a fetal heartbeat is detected.

Surrogate who wants custody of child

Elliott gave birth to a baby girl in March. She chose to be a surrogate because she "really wanted to give somebody a family."

The Texas woman began the process when Mark Surrogacy reached out to her directly on Facebook. She signed a contract listing Xuan and Zhang as the intended parents. The contract said Elliott would receive \$45,000.

Elliott became wary when early in the pregnancy she flew to California to meet the couple and only Xuan showed up. As the process went on, Elliott had almost no direct contact with the Xuan and Zhang, which is uncommon in surrogacy. Most of the messaging was through texts and emails with representatives from the agency, who discouraged her from reaching out to Zhang.

"The agency was always like, 'Oh, they're very busy people,'" she said.

When she learned that the couple had at least two other surrogates having babies for them, she was told by the agency "they just want a big family."

Elliott flew to California for the embryo transfer, which was done at Western Fertility Institute in Los Angeles. The clinic declined to comment on the investigation.

Neither parent were there for Elliott's labor or delivery, and only Zhang showed up a few hours after the baby was born. The woman "didn't seem very connected with the child ... she kind of barely looked at her," Elliott said.

After handing Elliott \$2,000 in cash and giving three of her family members in the room \$200 each, the woman left with the baby girl.

Now, Elliott wants custody of the girl and says she just hopes all the babies are safe. When the news first broke about the couple, she confronted Zhang on the phone and over text.

In text messages Elliott showed to the AP, Zhang wrote: "All the babies really important in our life."

Congo and Rwanda-backed rebels sign declaration of principles to end conflict in eastern Congo

By CHINEDU ASADU Associated Press

DAKAR, Senegal (AP) — Congo and Rwanda-backed rebels on Saturday signed a declaration of principles in Qatar to end decadeslong fighting and commit to a comprehensive peace agreement that would include the restoration of state authorities in key eastern cities controlled by the insurgents.

Congo and the M23 rebels committed to "building trust" through various measures, including an exchange of prisoners and detainees as well as restoring state authority in all parts of the country, including rebel-held areas, Mohammed bin Abdulaziz bin Saleh Al-Khulaifi, Qatar's minister of state, said at a briefing.

It was not immediately clear if the declaration involves M23's withdrawal from cities it controls, as the two parties seemed to interpret the agreement differently.

Bertrand Bisimwa, an M23 leader, said on X that the declaration is "not a question of withdrawal but of mechanisms for empowering the state, enabling it to assume its prerogatives and obligations." M23

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spokesman Lawrence Kanyuka told The Associated Press in a telephone call: "We are in Goma with the population and we are not going to get out."

However, Congolese government spokesman Patrick Muyaya said the declaration takes into account "the non-negotiable withdrawal" of the rebels, followed by the deployment of government forces and institutions.

Backed by neighboring Rwanda, the M23 is the most prominent of more than 100 armed groups fighting for control in Congo's mineral-rich east. With 7 million people displaced in Congo, the U.N. has called the conflict in eastern Congo "one of the most protracted, complex, serious humanitarian crises on Earth."

Saturday's signing is the first direct commitment by both sides since the rebels seized two key cities in eastern Congo in a major advance early this year. A final peace deal is to be signed no later than Aug. 18, and it "shall align with the Peace Agreement between Congo and Rwanda," facilitated by the U.S. in June, according to a copy of the declaration seen by AP.

M23 had been pushing for the release of its members held by Congo's military, many of them facing the death sentence. Congo had requested the withdrawal of the rebels from seized territories.

"The Declaration of Principles signed today paves the way for direct negotiations towards a comprehensive peace that addresses the deep-rooted causes of the conflict," the Qatari minister said.

Rwanda's Foreign Affairs Ministry called it "a significant step forward" in ending the conflict. The U.S. State Department said in a statement that America remains committed to supporting "a peace that results in the restoration of (Congolese) authority and inclusive governance" in the region.

In Goma, the city at the center of the conflict, locals received the news of the signing with mixed feelings, with most expressing doubts over the possibility of a lasting peace without a provision for victims of the decadeslong conflict.

"We cannot build peace without justice and reparation," said Amani Muisa, a resident of Goma.

The document touches on most of the highlights of the peace deal Congo and Rwanda signed on June 27, including the protection and safe return of millions who fled the conflict.

Massad Boulos, a senior adviser to U.S. President Donald Trump who attended the Doha-led talks, said on Saturday: "It is time to find a final solution" to the conflict, reiterating that the most important article of the agreement is the affirmation of state control in rebel-held territories.

"The issue requires dialogue, and following up on this dialogue and requires persistence," Boulos said.

Another key issue the two sides will have to face is whether Rwanda will stop supporting the rebels, including the thousands of troops that the United Nations experts said are in eastern Congo.

When Rwanda and Congo signed the peace deal in Washington, Rwandan Foreign Minister Olivier Nduhigirehe said Rwanda agreed to lift its "defensive measures" — suggesting a reference to its troops in eastern Congo — once Congo neutralizes an armed group whose members Kigali accuses of carrying out the 1994 genocide in Rwanda.

Analysts have said it is going to be difficult for the M23 rebels to withdraw from the eastern Congolese cities of Goma and Bukavu and that it would depend on concessions the Congolese authorities agree to make. There have also been doubts about long-lasting peace if justice for the victims of the war is not addressed.

32 Palestinians shot dead trying to reach US group's food distribution sites, Gaza authorities say

By WAFAA SHURAF and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

DEIR AL BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — Israeli troops opened fire Saturday toward crowds of Palestinians seeking food from distribution hubs run by a U.S.- and Israeli-backed group in southern Gaza, killing at least 32 people, according to witnesses and hospital officials.

The shootings occurred near hubs operated by the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, which launched operations in May. The U.S. and Israel seek to replace the traditional U.N.-led aid distribution system in Gaza, asserting that Hamas militants siphon off supplies. The U.N. denies the allegation.

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While GHF says it has distributed millions of meals to hungry Palestinians, local health officials and witnesses say Israeli army fire has killed hundreds of people as they try to reach the hubs. GHF's four sites are in military-controlled zones.

Israel's army, which isn't at the sites but secures them from a distance, said Saturday that it fired warning shots near Gaza's southernmost city of Rafah, after a group of suspects approached troops and ignored calls to keep their distance. It said the incident occurred overnight when the distribution site was closed.

GHF said that there were no incidents at or near its sites and added, "we have repeatedly warned aid seekers not to travel to our sites overnight and early morning hours."

Witnesses allege indiscriminate fire

Most of Saturday's deaths occurred as Palestinians massed around 3 kilometers (2 miles) from a GHF aid distribution center near the southern city of Khan Younis.

Mahmoud Mokeimar said that he was walking with masses of people, mostly young men, toward the hub. Troops fired warning shots, and then opened fire.

"The occupation opened fire at us indiscriminately," he said. He said that he saw at least three motionless bodies on the ground and many wounded people fleeing.

Akram Aker, another witness, said that troops fired machine guns mounted on tanks and drones between 5 a.m. and 6 a.m.

"They encircled us and started firing directly at us," Aker said. He said he saw many casualties on the ground.

Sanaa al-Jaberi said that there was shooting after the site opened as people seeking aid broke into a run.

"Is this food or death? Why? They don't talk with us, they only shoot us," she said, and showed off her empty bag.

Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis said that it received 25 bodies. Seven other people, including one woman, were killed in the Shakoush area, hundreds of meters or yards north of another GHF hub in Rafah, the hospital said.

Dr. Mohamed Saker, the head of Nasser's nursing department, said that it received 70 wounded people. He told The Associated Press that most people were shot in the head and chest.

"The situation is difficult and tragic," he said, adding that the facility lacks medical supplies. Some of the wounded, including a child, were treated on the floor. One boy stood patiently, holding up a blood bag for someone on a stretcher.

Meanwhile, Fares Awad, head of the Health Ministry's ambulance and emergency service in northern Gaza, said that two people were killed in Gaza City when an airstrike hit a tent in a camp sheltering displaced families.

In central Gaza, Al-Awda Hospital said that 12 people were killed in an airstrike including police official Omar Aqel. Two children, including an infant, and five women — all relatives of Aqel — were among the dead.

Al-Awda Hospital said that it also received two people killed by an Israeli strike on a group of people in Bureij, and that another strike on a group of people along Salah El Din street in central Gaza killed a child.

Another strike on a house in the Gaza City neighborhood of Sheikh Radwan killed at least four people, according to the Health Ministry's ambulance and emergency service. A strike on a cart in Tal al-Hawa in northern Gaza killed another four people, the service said.

Israel's army had no comment on specific strikes, but said that it had struck around 90 targets throughout Gaza over the past day.

Humanitarian crisis

Gaza's population of more than 2 million Palestinians are in a catastrophic humanitarian crisis. Distribution at GHF sites is often chaotic. Boxes of food are stacked on the ground and crowds surge in to grab whatever they can, according to witnesses and videos released by GHF.

Hamas triggered the 21-month war when militants stormed into southern Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, killing around 1,200 people and taking 251 others hostage. Fifty remain, but fewer than half are thought to be alive.

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Israel's military offensive has killed more than 58,000 Palestinians, according to the Gaza Health Ministry, which doesn't say how many militants are among the dead. The ministry, which says more than half of the dead have been women and children, is part of the Hamas government. But the U.N. and other international organizations see it as the most reliable source of data on casualties.

Israel and Hamas have been holding ceasefire talks in Qatar, but international mediators say there have been no breakthroughs.

"After 652 days, it is time to do what is right for Israel: Bring all 50 hostages home and end this war," Efrat Machikawa, a relative of released hostage Gadi Moses, told the weekly rally in Tel Aviv.

Thousands of people later marched to the local branch of the U.S. Embassy to demand a ceasefire deal. West Bank church attack

In the occupied West Bank, U.S. Ambassador to Israel Mike Huckabee visited the Palestinian Christian village, Taybeh, where residents say extremist Israeli settlers set fire to the Church of St. George on July 9.

Huckabee, an evangelical Christian who is normally strongly supportive of Israel, condemned the attack.

"To commit an act of sacrilege by desecrating a place that is supposed to be a place of worship — it's an act of terror and it's a crime," he said.

The West Bank has experienced a surge in settler violence since the start of the war in Gaza. Palestinians say Israeli security forces have done little to stop the violence, and few settlers have been punished.

Tech company CEO resigns after controversy over video captured at Coldplay concert

By ALEX VEIGA AP Business Writer

The IT company CEO captured in a widely circulated video showing him embracing an employee at a Coldplay concert has resigned.

Andy Byron resigned from his job as CEO of Cincinnati-based Astronomer Inc., according to a statement posted on LinkedIn by the company Saturday.

"Astronomer is committed to the values and culture that have guided us since our founding. Our leaders are expected to set the standard in both conduct and accountability, and recently, that standard was not met," the company said in its post on LinkedIn.

The move comes a day after the company said that Byron had been placed on leave and the board of directors had launched a formal investigation into the jumbotron incident, which went viral. A company spokesman later confirmed in a statement to AP that it was Byron and Astronomer chief people officer Kristin Cabot in the video.

The short video clip shows Byron and Cabot as captured on the jumbotron at Gillette Stadium in Foxborough, Massachusetts, during a Coldplay concert on Wednesday.

Lead singer Chris Martin asked the cameras to scan the crowd for his "Jumbotron Song," when he sings a few lines about the people the camera lands on.

"Either they're having an affair or they're just very shy," he joked.

Internet sleuths identified the man as the chief executive officer of a U.S.-based company and the woman as its chief people officer.

Pete DeJoy, Astronomer's cofounder and chief product officer, has been tapped as interim CEO while the company conducts a search for Byron's successor.

Most concert venues warn attendees that they can be filmed

It's easy to miss, but most concert venues have signs informing the audience that they could be filmed during the event. Look for them on the walls when you arrive and around the bar areas or toilets. It's common practice especially when bands like to use performances for music videos or concert films.

The venue in this case, Gillette Stadium in Foxborough, also has a privacy policy online which states: "When you visit our location or attend or participate in an event at our location, we may capture your image, voice and/or likeness, including through the use of CCTV cameras and/or when we film or photograph you in a public location."

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Once captured, a moment can be shared widely

"They probably would have got away with it if they hadn't reacted," said Alison Taylor, a clinical associate professor at New York University's Stern School of Business. And by the time the alleged identities emerged on social media, it hit a classic nerve around "leaders acting like the rules don't apply to them," she added.

Still, Taylor and others stress how quickly such a video lead to an internet search to find the people involved — and note that it's important to remember that such "doxing" isn't just reserved for famous people. Beyond someone simply spotting a familiar face and spreading the word, technological advances, such as the rising adoption of artificial intelligence, has made it easier and faster overall to find just about anyone in a viral video today.

"It's a little bit unsettling how easily we can be identified with biometrics, how our faces are online, how social media can track us — and how the internet has gone from being a place of interaction, to a gigantic surveillance system," said Mary Angela Bock, an associate professor in the University of Texas at Austin's School of Journalism and Media. "When you think about it, we are being surveilled by our social media. They're tracking us in exchange for entertaining us."

A look at recent vehicle-ramming incidents

Associated Press undefined

A car that was driven into a crowd outside a Los Angeles nightclub early Saturday and injured 30 people is the latest in a series of car-ramming tragedies across the globe. Authorities say bystanders then attacked the driver, who was later found to have been shot. Police say the suspect fled the scene.

Other vehicle-ramming incidents have claimed lives. This year, 11 people were killed in Vancouver, British Columbia, when an SUV sped down a closed street, hitting people attending a festival. Fifteen people died in an attack along Bourbon Street that took place just before New Orleans hosted the Super Bowl.

Here are some major vehicle-ramming incidents:

LONDON, May 26, 2025 — A 53-year-old British man plows his minivan into a crowd of Liverpool soccer fans who were celebrating the city team's Premier League soccer championship, as shouts of joy turned into shrieks of terror, injuring more than 45 people.

VANCOUVER, British Columbia, April 26, 2025 — A suspect is charged with multiple counts of murder after an Audi SUV speeds down a closed, food-truck-lined street and hits people attending a festival, killing 11. Officials say 32 people are hurt. Authorities say the suspect, a 30-year-old man, had a history of mental health issues.

NEW ORLEANS, Jan. 1, 2025 — At least 15 people are killed and dozens are injured after a U.S. citizen from Texas rams a vehicle into a crowd of pedestrians in New Orleans' bustling French Quarter district at 3:15 a.m. on New Year's Day. The FBI identifies the suspect as 42-year-old Shamsud-Din Jabbar. He is killed in a firefight with police.

MAGDEBURG, Germany, Dec. 20, 2024 — At least five people are killed and more than 200 are injured when a car slams into a Christmas market in eastern Germany. Police arrest a 50-year-old doctor from Saudi Arabia who supports Germany's far-right AfD party.

ZHUHAI, China, Nov. 11, 2024 — A 62-year-old driver rams his car into people exercising at a sports complex in southern China, killing 35. Authorities say the suspect is upset about his divorce. He pleads guilty to endangering public safety by dangerous means and is sentenced to death.

WAUKESHA, Wisconsin, Nov. 21, 2021 — Six people are killed and dozens injured when a man drove his SUV through a Christmas parade in suburban Milwaukee. Darrell Brooks Jr., who drove into the crowd after getting into a fight with his ex-girlfriend, was sentenced to life in prison with no chance of release.

LONDON, Ontario, June 6, 2021 — Four members of a Muslim family are killed when an attacker hits them with a pickup truck. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau calls it "a terrorist attack, motivated by hatred." White nationalist Nathaniel Veltman is sentenced to life in prison.

TORONTO, April 23, 2018 — Alek Minassian, 25, drives a rental van into mostly female pedestrians on Yonge Street, the main thoroughfare in Toronto, killing 10 people and injuring 16. Minassian tells police

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he belongs to an online "incel" community of sexually frustrated men. He is sentenced to life in prison.

NEW YORK, Oct. 31, 2017 — Sayfullo Saipov, an Islamic extremist from Uzbekistan, drives a pickup truck onto a popular New York City bike path, killing eight people. He is convicted of terrorism and sentenced to 10 life sentences plus 260 years in prison.

BARCELONA, Spain, Aug. 17, 2017 — A man rams a van into people on the Spanish city's crowded Las Ramblas boulevard, killing 14 and injuring others. The Islamic State group claims responsibility. Several members of the same extremist cell carry out a similar attack in the nearby resort town of Cambrils, killing one person.

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Virginia, Aug. 12, 2017 — During a "Unite the Right" rally, white supremacist James Alex Fields Jr. drives his car into a crowd of counterprotesters, killing one woman and injuring dozens of people. Fields is serving a life sentence for murder and hate crimes.

LONDON, June 19, 2017 — Darren Osborne, a man radicalized by far-right ideas, drives a van into worshippers outside a mosque in Finsbury Park, killing one man and injuring 15 people. Osborne is sentenced to life in prison.

LONDON, June 3, 2017 — Three attackers drive a van into pedestrians on London Bridge before stabbing people in nearby Borough Market. Eight people are killed, and the attackers are shot dead by police.

LONDON, March 22, 2017 — Khalid Masood rams an SUV into people on Westminster Bridge, killing four, then fatally stabs a police officer guarding the Houses of Parliament. Masood is shot dead.

MELBOURNE, Australia, Jan. 20, 2017 — Six people are killed and more than 30 injured when a car hits lunchtime crowds at a pedestrian mall. James Gargasoulas is found to have been in a state of drug-induced psychosis and is sentenced to life in prison.

BERLIN, Dec. 19, 2016 — Anis Amri, a rejected asylum-seeker from Tunisia, plows a hijacked truck into a Christmas market in the German capital, killing 13 people and injuring dozens. The attacker is killed days later in a shootout in Italy.

NICE, France, July 14, 2016 — Tunisian-born French resident Mohamed Lahouaiej-Bouhlel drives a rented truck along a packed seaside promenade in the French Riviera resort on the Bastille Day holiday, killing 86 people in the deadliest attack of its kind. He is killed by police, but eight other people are sentenced to prison for helping orchestrate the attack.

STILLWATER, Oklahoma, Oct. 24, 2015 — A woman plows a car into a crowd at an Oklahoma State University homecoming parade, killing four people, including a toddler, and injuring many others. Adacia Chambers, who pleaded no contest to more than 40 felony charges, is serving four concurrent life sentences for the deaths.

APELDOORN, Netherlands, April 28, 2009 — Former security guard Karst Tate drives a car into parade spectators in an attempt to hit an open-topped bus carrying members of the Dutch royal family. Six people are killed, and Tate dies of injuries the next day, leaving his full motive a mystery.

CHAPEL HILL, North Carolina, March 3, 2006 — University of North Carolina graduate Mohammed Taheri-Azar drives an SUV into a crowd at the university, slightly injuring nine people, in a self-professed bid to avenge Muslim deaths overseas. He is sentenced to up to 33 years in prison.

SANTA MONICA, California, July 16, 2003 — An 86-year-old man crashes into a farmers' market, killing 10 people and injuring dozens of others. He was sentenced to probation after being convicted of 10 counts of vehicular manslaughter with gross negligence.

Russia pounds Ukraine with over 300 drones, killing 1 in Odesa

By The Associated Press undefined

Russia launched a massive attack on Ukraine overnight into Saturday with hundreds of drones, killing at least one person, part of a stepped-up bombing campaign that has dashed hopes for a breakthrough in efforts to end the more than 3-year-old war.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy posted on X that Russia fired over 300 drones, along with more than 30 cruise missiles.

One person died in the Black Sea port city of Odesa, which was hit with more than 20 drones and a

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missile, Mayor Hennadii Trukhanov wrote on Telegram, while five people were rescued when a fire broke out in a residential high-rise building.

According to Zelenskyy, six other people were wounded in the attack on Odesa, including a child, and critical infrastructure was damaged in Ukraine's northeastern Sumy region.

The Ukrainian president also thanked international leaders "who understand how important it is to promptly implement our agreements" aimed at boosting Ukraine's defense capabilities, including joint weapons production, drone manufacturing and the supply of air defense systems.

Russia has been intensifying its long-range attacks on Ukrainian cities. It now often batters Ukraine with more drones in a single night than it did during some entire months in 2024, and analysts say the barrages are likely to escalate. On July 8, Russia unleashed more than 700 drones — a record.

Russia's Defense Ministry said it shot down 71 Ukrainian drones overnight into Saturday. Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyenin said that 13 drones were shot down as they approached the Russian capital.

In other developments, Ukraine's foreign minister accused Russia on Saturday of deporting Ukrainian citizens into Georgia and leaving them stranded without proper identification.

Andrii Sybiha said Moscow has escalated the practice of expelling Ukrainians — many of whom are former prisoners — across its southern border with Georgia, instead of returning them directly to Ukraine.

"Dozens of people, many of whom lack proper documentation, have been stuck in the transit zone," he wrote on X. There was no immediate response from Moscow.

Syria's leader urges Bedouin tribes to commit to a ceasefire ending clashes with the Druze

By SALLY ABOU ALJOUD and OMAR ALBAM Associated Press

DAMASCUS, Syria (AP) — Syria's interim President Ahmad al-Sharaa urged Sunni Muslim Bedouin tribes Saturday to "fully commit" to a ceasefire aimed at ending clashes with Druze-linked militias that left hundreds dead and threatened to unravel the country's postwar transition.

Despite the call, clashes continued in the southern province of Sweida.

Government forces that were initially sent to restore order but effectively sided with the Bedouins against the Druze were redeployed to halt renewed fighting that erupted Thursday in the southern province of Sweida. The violence also drew airstrikes against Syrian forces by neighboring Israel before a truce was reached.

In his second televised address since the fighting started, al-Sharaa blamed "armed groups from Sweida" for reigniting the conflict by "launching retaliatory attacks against the Bedouins and their families." He also said Israeli intervention "pushed the country into a dangerous phase."

Israel had launched dozens of airstrikes on convoys of government fighters and even struck the Syrian Defense Ministry headquarters in central Damascus, saying it was in support of the Druze, who form a substantial community in Israel and are seen as a loyal minority, often serving in the Israeli military.

Reports had surfaced of Syrian government-affiliated fighters executing Druze civilians and looting and burning homes over the four-day violence.

Ceasefire agreed to early Saturday

The U.S. envoy to Syria, Tom Barrack, announced that Israel and Syria had agreed to a ceasefire early Saturday. Al-Sharaa made no direct reference to the agreement in his speech, but said "American and Arab mediations stepped in" to restore calm.

Addressing the Bedouins, al-Sharaa said they "cannot replace the role of the state in handling the country's affairs and restoring security." He also said: "We thank the Bedouins for their heroic stances but demand they fully commit to the ceasefire and comply with the state's orders."

Meanwhile, a prominent Druze leader, Sheikh Hikmat Al-Hijri, who opposes the current government and has distanced himself from the two ceasefires announced on Tuesday and Wednesday, said that an agreement brokered under the sponsorship of guarantor states contained several measures aimed at de-escalating tensions in Sweida.

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They include the deployment of checkpoints outside the province's administrative borders to contain clashes and prevent infiltration, a 48-hour ban on entry by any party into border villages, and safe, guaranteed passage for remaining members of the Bedouin tribes still inside the province.

Sharaa reiterated that Sweida "remains an integral part of the Syrian state, and the Druze constitute a fundamental pillar of the Syrian national fabric," vowing to protect all minorities in Syria.

He also thanked the United States for its "significant role in affirming its support for Syria during these difficult times," as well as Arab countries and Turkey, which mediated Wednesday's truce.

More than half of the roughly 1 million Druze worldwide live in Syria. Most of the other Druze live in Lebanon and Israel, including in the Golan Heights, which Israel captured from Syria in the 1967 Mideast War and annexed in 1981.

Entire communities have fled the fighting

The U.N. estimates more than 87,000 people have been displaced in Sweida province since July 12 due to heavy shelling, sniper fire and abductions.

Entire communities have fled on foot, with many now crammed into overcrowded schools, churches and public buildings under dire conditions, the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said in a report. Infrastructure damage has cut electricity, water and telecommunications in much of the area, it said. The main hospital in Sweida was operating at just 15% capacity due to staff shortages and a lack of fuel.

The security situation is also endangering humanitarian workers. The White Helmets, also known as the Syrian Civil Defense, reported that one of its emergency team leaders went missing on July 16 while responding to a call for help from a U.N. team, OCHA said.

Shoring up the ceasefire agreement

Meanwhile, Jordan, Syria, and the U.S. agreed on a set of practical steps to bolster the ceasefire, including the deployment of Syrian security forces and the release of detainees from all sides, Jordan's Foreign Ministry said on Saturday. The announcement came after a meeting between Barrack, Syria's Foreign Minister Asaad al-Shibani and his Jordanian counterpart Ayman Safadi.

For his part, Syria's Minister of Information Hamza Al-Mostafa on Saturday said the first phase of the ceasefire, expected to take 48 hours, involves deploying internal security forces to key areas to prevent clashes. He acknowledged ongoing fighting in Sweida and said every ceasefire "begins fragile."

Subsequent phases will open humanitarian crossings and gradually restore state institutions and security to ensure a return to normalcy, al-Mostafa said in a press conference in Damascus.

Al-Mostafa acknowledged that some security personnel committed violations after deploying in Sweida. He rejected reports that the violence in Sweida was "premeditated operation" by the Syrian government.

"The armed groups present in Sweida insisted on a provocative approach, rejecting any solutions and relying on a closed-off model that disregards Syria's unity," Al-Mostafa said.

He accused Al-Hijri and his supporters of being "armed with Israeli support" and blamed them for "steering the situation toward its current state," despite previous government attempts to reach an agreement.

Al-Mostafa also denied that Syria and Israel are in direct peace talks. "All discussions that are happening with Israel are fixated on one issue related to the urgent Israeli withdrawal from the areas that it occupied and advanced in after Dec. 8 and its commitment to the 1974 agreement of disengagement," he said.

Signs of unrest in Damascus

But even as officials called for calm, signs of unrest spread to the capital. On Friday, men armed with sticks stormed a peaceful protest outside Syria's parliament in Damascus, beating demonstrators and tearing up a banner that read, "Syrian blood should not be shed by Syrians," according to one of the organizers.

The protest was held in response to the deadly clashes in Sweida, which journalist and filmmaker Zein Khuzam described as a grim echo of the 2011 Syrian civil war.

"We felt like we needed to do something," Khuzam told The Associated Press. "We started receiving help messages from our friends in Sweida, that they are trapped there."

The demonstration began Thursday as a spontaneous act by Khuzam and two others, who stood in

front of parliament holding signs, including slogans rejecting Israeli interference. Photos of the protest circulated online, drawing a larger crowd the next day.

Khuzam said the group noticed a man acting suspiciously on Friday. After making a phone call, he left, and shortly afterward, the attackers arrived in cars, some with women inside who cheered them on, she said.

She added that guards outside the parliament stood by as someone fired shotgun rounds to disperse the crowd.

"People are still carrying the traumas of Assad's actions during such peaceful protests," she said. "In that moment, it felt like history was repeating itself. It is very, very sad."

3 Democrat-led states have rolled back Medicaid access for people lacking permanent legal status

By TRÂN NGUYỄN and DEVI SHASTRI Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — For nearly 20 years, Maria would call her sister — a nurse in Mexico — for advice on how to manage her asthma and control her husband's diabetes instead of going to the doctor in California.

She didn't have legal status, so she couldn't get health insurance and skipped routine exams, relying instead on home remedies and, at times, getting inhalers from Mexico. She insisted on using only her first name for fear of deportation.

Things changed for Maria and many others in recent years when a handful of Democrat-led states opened up their health insurance programs to low-income immigrants regardless of their legal status. Maria and her husband signed up the day the program began last year.

"It changed immensely, like from Earth to the heavens," Maria said in Spanish of Medi-Cal, California's Medicaid program. "Having the peace of mind of getting insurance leads me to getting sick less."

At least seven states and the District of Columbia have offered coverage for immigrants since mostly 2020. But three of them have done an about-face, ending or limiting coverage for hundreds of thousands of immigrants who aren't in the U.S. legally in California, Illinois and Minnesota.

The programs cost way more than officials had projected at a time when the states are facing multi-billion-dollar deficits now and in the future. In Illinois, adult immigrants ages 42-64 without legal status have lost their health care to save an estimated \$404 million. All adult immigrants in Minnesota no longer have access to the state program, saving nearly \$57 million. In California, no one will automatically lose coverage, but new enrollments for adults will stop in 2026 to save more than \$3 billion over several years.

Cuts in all three states were backed by Democratic governors who once championed expanding health coverage to immigrants.

The Trump administration this week shared the home addresses, ethnicities and personal data of all Medicaid recipients with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials. Twenty states, including California, Illinois and Minnesota, have sued.

Health care providers told The Associated Press that everything, especially the fear of being arrested or deported, is having a chilling effect on people seeking care. And states may have to spend more money down the road because immigrants will avoid preventive health care and end up needing to go to safety-net hospitals.

"I feel like they continue to squeeze you more and more to the point where you'll burst," Maria said, referencing all the uncertainties for people who are in the U.S. without legal permission.

'People are going to die'

People who run free and community health clinics in California and Minnesota said patients who got on state Medicaid programs received knee replacements and heart procedures, and were diagnosed for serious conditions like late-stage cancer.

CommunityHealth is one of the nation's largest free clinics, serving many uninsured and underinsured immigrants in the Chicago area who have no other options for treatment. That includes the people who lost coverage July 1 when Illinois ended its Health Benefits for Immigrants Adults Program, which served

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about 31,500 people ages 42-64.

One of CommunityHealth's community outreach workers and care coordinator said Eastern European patients she works with started coming in with questions about what the change meant for them. She said many of the patients also don't speak English and don't have transportation to get to clinics that can treat them. The worker spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity to protect patients' privacy.

Health Finders Collective in Minnesota's rural Rice and Steele counties south of Minneapolis serves low-income and underinsured patients, including large populations of Latino immigrants and Somali refugees. Executive director Charlie Mandile said they're seeing patients rushing to squeeze in appointments and procedures before 19,000 people age 18 and older are kicked off of insurance at the end of the year.

Free and community health clinics in all three states say they will keep serving patients regardless of insurance coverage — but that might get harder after the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services decided this month to restrict federally qualified health centers from treating people without legal status.

CommunityHealth CEO Stephanie Willding said she always worried about the stability of the program because it was fully state funded, "but truthfully, we thought that day was much, much further away."

"People are going to die. Some people are going to go untreated," Alicia Hardy, chief executive officer of CommuniCARE+OLE clinics in California, said of the state's Medicaid changes. "It's hard to see the humanity in the decision-making that's happening right now."

A spokesperson for the Minnesota Department of Health said ending the state's program will decrease MinnesotaCare spending in the short term, but she acknowledged health care costs would rise elsewhere, including uncompensated care at hospitals.

Minnesota House Speaker Lisa Demuth, a Republican, said the state's program was not sustainable.

"It wasn't about trying to be non-compassionate or not caring about people," she said. "When we looked at the state budget, the dollars were not there to support what was passed and what was being spent."

Demuth also noted that children will still have coverage, and adults lacking permanent legal status can buy private health insurance.

Health care providers also are worried that preventable conditions will go unmanaged, and people will avoid care until they end up in emergency rooms — where care will be available under federal law.

One of those safety-net public hospitals, Cook County Health in Chicago, treated about 8,000 patients from Illinois' program last year. Dr. Erik Mikaitis, the health system's CEO, said doing so brought in \$111 million in revenue.

But he anticipated other providers who billed through the program could close, he said, adding: "Things can become unstable very quickly."

Monthly fees, federal policies create barriers

State lawmakers said California's Medi-Cal changes stem from budget issues — a \$12 billion deficit this year, with larger ones projected ahead. Democratic state leaders last month agreed to stop new enrollment starting in 2026 for all low-income adults without legal status. Those under 60 remaining on the program will have to pay a \$30 monthly fee in 2027.

States are also bracing for impact from federal policies. Cuts to Medicaid and other programs in the recently signed massive tax and spending bill include a 10% cut to the federal share of Medicaid expansion costs to states that offer health benefits to immigrants starting October 2027.

California health officials estimate roughly 200,000 people will lose coverage after the first full year of restricted enrollment, though Gov. Gavin Newsom maintains that even with the rollbacks, California provides the most expansive health care coverage for poor adults.

Every new bill requires a shift in Maria's monthly calculations to make ends meet. She believes many people won't be able to afford the \$30-a-month premiums and will instead go back to self-medication or skip treatment altogether.

"It was a total triumph," she said of Medi-Cal expansion. "But now that all of this is coming our way, we're going backwards to a worse place."

Fear and tension about immigration raids are changing patient behavior, too. Providers told the AP that,

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as immigration raids ramped up, their patients were requesting more virtual appointments, not showing up to routine doctor's visits and not picking up prescriptions for their chronic conditions.

Maria has the option to keep her coverage. But she is weighing the health of her family against risking what they've built in the U.S.

"It's going to be very difficult," Maria said of her decision to remain on the program. "If it comes to the point where my husband gets sick and his life is at risk, well then, obviously, we have to choose his life."

New airport scanners are better at spotting liquid explosives, but many airports lack them

By JOSH FUNK Associated Press

Travelers celebrated the suggestion that American airports might soon ease restrictions on liquids in carry-on bags that create endless hassles at security checkpoints, but more than a third of all airports around the country still haven't upgraded their screening systems to reliably detect liquid explosives that could bring down a plane.

It may be annoying to have to dump water and other drinks before going through security, but the challenge is to detect the difference between things like harmless hair gel and more sinister substances. The threat nearly materialized in an attack in 2006, when authorities in the United Kingdom arrested a group that was plotting to blow holes in airliners with a homemade mixture of chemicals in sports drink bottles.

Security experts remain concerned about the vulnerabilities that were exposed by that plot.

Comments this week by Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem got travelers excited about the prospect of one day being able to fly with more than 3 ounces of their shampoos and gels and not having to throw out the beverage they just bought.

"The liquids, I'm questioning. So that may be the next big announcement, is what size your liquids need to be," Noem said. "We have put in place in TSA a multilayered screening process that allows us to change some of how we do security and screening so it's still as safe."

A Transportation Security Administration spokesperson said Noem and the agency "are constantly looking for ways to enhance security, and improve the travel experience for the public."

New liquids rules aren't ready

Any changes will come through the same official channels that TSA used to announce this month that travelers can keep their shoes on at checkpoints. That change offers relief from a rule adopted after "shoe bomber" Richard Reid's failed attempt to take down a flight from Paris to Miami in late 2001 with a small explosive device hidden in his footwear.

The limits on liquids were triggered by the 2006 U.K. arrests. Three ringleaders were eventually convicted.

A massive surveillance operation

Prosecutors told the jury in that case that authorities uncovered the plot after secretly searching the luggage of a man who was on their radar for security concerns after he returned from Pakistan and found the unusual combination of the Tang powdered soft drink and a large number of batteries, according to the BBC. That triggered the surveillance operation that eventually grew to include more than 200 officers.

Agents discovered what appeared to be a bomb factory in a London apartment where odd devices were being constructed out of drink bottles. The plot didn't make sense until authorities discovered that the men were researching flight timetables and realized they were only trying to make an explosive big enough to rip a hole in a plane.

The meaning of coded emails to contacts in Pakistan only became clear after the arrests, when authorities realized that the quantities of Calvin Klein aftershave being discussed in messages matched the amount of hydrogen peroxide the conspirators had purchased.

Longstanding liquid restrictions

Ever since then, the TSA and authorities in other countries have limited carry-on liquids and gels to 3.4 ounces (100 milliliters) because officials believe that amount is too small to create an explosion capable of taking down a plane. The restriction covered all types of liquids, because X-ray machines at checkpoints

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couldn't differentiate between explosive and harmless ones.

The United Kingdom was planning to ease its restrictions last year to allow people to carry up to 2 liters (about half a gallon) of liquid, but that was delayed because several major airports still didn't have the new scanners that use computed tomography, commonly known as a CT scan, to produce clearer images.

Advanced new screening machines

The new machines allow screeners to switch between two-dimensional and three-dimensional images and turn them to see what may be lurking, said Johnny Jones, secretary treasurer of the chapter of the American Federation of Government Employees that represents TSA workers.

"It's just a totally life-changing situation," said Jones, who has worked as a screener since the agency was created. "It's a difference of being able to see something that would have been hidden by something that you can now see clear as day with the new technology. It eliminates the guesswork."

Many airports still use the old tech

The problem is that only 255 of the 432 airports across the United States have new CT scanners installed, the interim head of the TSA told Congress this spring. The biggest airports got them first, but they are not expected to be everywhere until 2043.

It's possible that a change in carry-on liquid policy could be implemented just at the biggest airports, but that could lead to confusion if travelers, are, say, allowed to bring full bottles on departure only to have them confiscated when they return.

The scanners cost more than \$2 million apiece, and they are so much bigger than the old X-ray machines that sometimes floors must be reinforced and checkpoints have to be redesigned.

"I think you need to hold off till we get more systems deployed. I think this one's a little too early," said Jeff Price, who teaches aviation security at Metropolitan State University of Denver and has co-authored books on the subject. "The keep your shoes on — I can get on board with that provided we continue to do random screenings. But the liquids, I think we're too early on that. There's other layers of security. Yeah, I know that. But not too many of them that prevent this type of attack."

Vulnerabilities in the TSA system

In the past the inspector general of the Department of Homeland Security has highlighted vulnerabilities in TSA screening that can allow things to slip through undetected.

A 2015 report found that TSA officers failed 95% of the time to detect weapons or explosive material carried by undercover inspectors.

But Jones defended the work of the screeners he represents, noting that since the agency's creation, no plane has failed to reach its destination because of something that was missed.

"Nothing large has been able to make it through our system since we've taken over screening. We've protected the skies for 22 years," Jones said. "Even if you have a slight miss, it doesn't necessarily mean anything is going to happen on the plane."

With gavel in hand, Trump chisels away at the power of a compliant Congress

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — "Mr. President, this is the gavel used to enact the 'big, beautiful bill,'" House Speaker Mike Johnson said at a White House signing ceremony on the Fourth of July.

"I want you to have it," he said.

Handing over the gavel delighted President Donald Trump who, seated behind a desk outdoors, immediately tested it out with a few quick thumps.

The moment left a memorable mark on a historic day. The gesture reflected a traditional nod of honor, from one leader to another, a milestone of the Republican Party's priority legislation becoming law. But the imagery also underscored a symbolic transfer of political power, from Capitol Hill to the White House as a compliant Congress is ceding more and more of its prerogative to the presidency.

Congress gives Trump what he wants

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Since Trump's return to the White House in January, and particularly in the past few weeks, Republicans in control of the House and Senate have shown an unusual willingness to give the president of their party what he wants, regardless of the potential risk to themselves, their constituents and Congress itself.

Republicans raced to put the big package of tax breaks and spending cuts on Trump's desk by his Independence Day deadline. Senators had quickly confirmed almost all of Trump's outsider Cabinet nominees despite grave reservations over Robert F. Kennedy Jr. as health secretary, Pete Hegseth as the Pentagon chief and others. House Republicans pursued Trump's interest in investigating his perceived foes, including investigating Democratic President Joe Biden's use of the autopsy.

But at the same time, Congress hit the brakes on one of its own priorities, legislation imposing steep sanctions on Russia over its war on Ukraine, after Trump announced he was allowing President Vladimir Putin an additional 50 days to negotiate a peace deal, dashing hopes for a swifter end to the conflict.

This past week, Congress was tested anew, delivering on Trump's request to rescind some \$9 billion that lawmakers had approved but that the administration wanted to eliminate, including money for public broadcasting and overseas aid. It was a rare presidential request, a challenge to the legislative branch's power of the purse, that has not been used in decades.

The pressure on Republicans is taking its toll

"We're lawmakers. We should be legislating," said a defiant Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, as she refused to support the White House's demand to rescind money for National Public Radio and others.

"What we're getting now is a direction from the White House and being told, 'This is the priority. We want you to execute on it. We'll be back with you with another round,'" she said. "I don't accept that."

Congress, the branch of government the Founding Fathers placed first in the Constitution, is at a familiar crossroads. During the first Trump administration, Republicans frightened by Trump's angry tweets of disapproval would keep their criticisms private. Those who did speak up — Liz Cheney of Wyoming in the House and Mitt Romney of Utah in the Senate, among others — are gone from Capitol Hill.

One former GOP senator, Jeff Flake of Arizona, who announced in 2017 during Trump's first term that he would not seek reelection the next year, is imploring Republicans to find a better way.

"The fever still hasn't broken," he wrote recently in The New York Times. "In today's Republican Party, voting your conscience is essentially disqualifying."

Seeking a 'normal' Congress

But this time, the halls of Congress are filled with many Republicans who came of political age with Trump's "Make America Great Again" movement and owe their ascent to the president himself. Many are emulating his brand and style as they shape their own.

A new generation of GOP leaders, Johnson in the House and Senate Majority Leader John Thune, have pulled closer to Trump. They are utilizing the power of the presidency in ways large and small — to broker deals, encourage wayward lawmakers to fall in line, even to set schedules.

Johnson, R-La., has openly pined for what he calls a "normal Congress." But short of that, the speaker relies on Trump to help stay on track. When Republicans hit an impasse on cryptocurrency legislation, a Trump priority, it was the president who met with holdouts in the Oval Office late Tuesday night as Johnson called in by phone.

The result is a perceptible imbalance of power as the executive exerts greater authority while the legislative branch dims. The judicial branch has been left to do the heavy lift of checks and balances with the courts processing hundreds of lawsuits over the administration's actions.

"The genius of our Constitution is the separation of power," said Democratic Rep. Nancy Pelosi of California, the former speaker, in an interview on SiriusXM's "Mornings with Zerlina."

"That the Republicans in Congress would be so ignoring of the institution that they represent, and that have just melted the power of the incredibly shrinking speakership" and Senate leadership positions, "to do all of these things, to cater to the executive branch," she said.

Confronting Trump comes with costs

Sen. Thom Tillis, R-N.C., endured Trump's criticism over his opposition to the tax and spending cuts

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bill. The senator raised concerns about steep cuts to hospitals, but the president threatened to campaign against him. Tillis announced he would not seek reelection in 2026.

Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, voted against that bill and the rescissions package despite Trump's threat to campaign against any dissenters.

One Republican, Rep. Thomas Massie of Kentucky, appears to be pressing on, unphased. He recently proposed legislation to force the administration to release the Jeffrey Epstein files, something the president had been reluctant to do.

"Nowhere in the Constitution does it say that if the president wants something, you must do it," said Sen. Brian Schatz, D-Hawaii, in a Senate speech. "We don't have to do this. We don't have to operate under the assumption that this man is uniquely so powerful."

Trump's pace of early travel largely mirrors Biden's, but with more sports events and golf

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Moving at the "speed of Trump" is one of the White House's favorite phrases, meant to convey the administration's attempts to bring big changes to government at breakneck speed. But when it comes to presidential travel, Donald Trump's pace in the opening months of his second term is comparable to Joe Biden's.

At his six-month mark in office through Saturday, Trump had made 49 trips to 14 states and seven foreign countries, with a heavy focus on weekend golf trips and sporting events.

That's not far off from Biden, who made 45 trips to 17 states and three foreign countries in his first six months in 2021, which overlapped with the COVID-19 pandemic. The Democrat made lots of weekend trips home to Delaware, where he went to church and usually did not golf. He also had more political and official trips than did his Republican successor.

Trump's second-term travel is also less prolific than his first so far, at least in terms of visiting different parts of the United States. In 2017, he made 48 trips to 21 states and eight foreign countries between Jan. 20 and July 20.

The White House has said Trump is most effective while in the Oval Office, working the phones, signing executive orders and meeting with foreign leaders and U.S. elected officials.

It says Trump has met with 25 foreign leaders at the White House, including multiple visits by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte, and signed 165 executive orders while holding six Cabinet meetings — totals that far outpace Biden's.

White House spokesperson Taylor Rogers said in a statement that Trump's "travel reflects his America First agenda — he is meeting the American people where they are and representing their best interests."

The president, Rogers said, "will continue working around the clock to deliver the best deals for the American people from the Oval Office, throughout the country, and around the world."

A look at where Trump has gone so far:

Weekend golf and sporting events

When Trump hits the road, it's most often to his properties for weekend trips built around golf in Palm Beach, Florida; Bedminster, New Jersey; or Sterling, Virginia, near Washington's Dulles International Airport and close enough to motorcade from the White House.

The president has logged 14 Florida trips, 13 to Virginia and eight to New Jersey. After summer arrived, he has favored Bedminster or day trips to Sterling over steamy Mar-a-Lago in Florida.

Biden headed to his home in Wilmington, Delaware, many weekends early in his term. He sometimes went to a golf club, but attended Mass nearly every weekend.

Biden also traveled often to showcase policy achievements or to promote his initiatives, such as his visit to Smith Flooring in Chester, Pennsylvania, a small business he described as benefiting from the \$1.9 trillion COVID-19 relief package.

Much of Trump's non-golf domestic travel has been built around sporting events. The president went to

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the Super Bowl in New Orleans and to Florida for the Daytona 500. He attended UFC fights in Miami and Newark, New Jersey, the NCAA wrestling championships in Philadelphia and the FIFA Club World Cup final in East Rutherford, New Jersey.

Political rallies and commencements

Trump has held only three major political rallies since returning to the White House.

He marked his first 100 days in office in suburban Detroit, went to Pittsburgh to trumpet an agreement between U.S. Steel and Japan's Nippon Steel and to Des Moines, Iowa, to kick off the start of America's 250th birthday celebration. The president gave an economy-focused speech at a Las Vegas casino during his second term's opening weekend, and was in to Oxon Hill, Maryland, just outside Washington, to address the Conservative Political Action Conference in February.

In addition to policy-focused travel, Biden did more early political trips. He participated in a CNN town hall in Wisconsin, marked the 11th anniversary of the Obama administration's signature health care law in Columbus, Ohio, and spotlighted his first 100 days in office by addressing a socially distanced, drive-in rally in Atlanta.

Trump gave more commencement addresses, speaking at the University of Alabama and the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, New York. Biden spoke at the Coast Guard commencement in Connecticut in his opening months of his term, when COVID-19 limited many such ceremonies.

One area where Trump has outpaced Biden is on travel overseas. He was to Rome for Pope Francis' funeral and had a swing through Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar, before going to Canada for the meeting of the Group of Seven leading industrialized nations and a NATO summit in the Netherlands.

Biden did not travel overseas in 2021 until the G7 that June, when he went to the United Kingdom, Belgium and Switzerland, again at a time when the pandemic was raging.

Traveling to natural disaster sites

Trump's second term started out with visits to western North Carolina and Southern California, both hit by natural disasters that occurred while Biden was president. Trump also visited Texas after recent devastating floods.

But Trump did not tour parts of Missouri and Kentucky that were ravaged by tornadoes. He did not travel to areas hit by strong storms that sparked deadly flooding from other parts of Texas and Oklahoma to Indiana and Pennsylvania. He did not see the widespread aftermath of spring tornadoes, including in Mississippi and Arkansas.

Biden made a February 2021 trip to tour storm damage in Houston. He did not travel to all natural disaster sites during his first six months, either, but went to Florida after a building collapse in Surfside killed 98 people.

Places Trump pledged to go but hasn't yet

When Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu became the first foreign leader to visit the White House during Trump's second term in early February, the president proclaimed, "I love Israel. I will visit there. And I'll visit Gaza." His Middle East swing in May omitted both places.

Trump also suggested that his government-slashing guru Elon Musk would be checking out Fort Knox in Kentucky to ensure that U.S. gold reserves were still there, and the president said he might join him. With Musk having left the Trump administration and engaging in a nasty public feud with Trump, that now seems highly unlikely.

The president said recently he would like to visit Africa "at some point." He was less committal about Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's invitation to visit a September summit of countries known as the Quad, made up of the U.S., India, Japan and Australia.

Trump is heading to Scotland next week and will visit two areas where he has golf properties. He will be in England for an official visit in the fall. British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, while at the White House in February, presented Trump with a letter from King Charles inviting the president to his country for an unprecedented second state visit.

"This has never happened before," Starmer said. Trump accepted the invitation right then.

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Today in History: July 20

Neil Armstrong and Edwin Aldrin walk on the moon

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Sunday, July 20, the 201st day of 2025. There are 164 days left in the year.

Today in History:

On July 20, 1969, astronauts Neil Armstrong and Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin became the first men to walk on the moon after reaching its surface in their Apollo 11 lunar module.

Also on this date:

In 1917, America's World War I draft lottery began as Secretary of War Newton Baker, wearing a blindfold, reached into a glass bowl and pulled out a capsule containing the number 258 during a ceremony inside the Senate office building.

In 1944, an attempt by a group of German officials to assassinate Adolf Hitler with a bomb failed as the explosion only wounded the Nazi leader.

In 1951, Jordan's King Abdullah I was assassinated in Jerusalem by a Palestinian gunman who was shot dead on the spot by security.

In 1976, America's Viking 1 robot spacecraft made a successful, first-ever landing on Mars.

In 1977, a flash flood hit Johnstown, Pennsylvania, killing more than 80 people and causing \$350 million worth of damage.

In 1990, Supreme Court Justice William J. Brennan, one of the court's most liberal voices, announced he was stepping down.

In 1993, White House deputy counsel Vincent Foster Jr., 48, was found shot to death in a park near Washington, D.C.; it was ruled a suicide.

In 2006, the Senate voted 98-0 to renew the landmark 1965 Voting Rights Act for another quarter-century.

In 2007, President George W. Bush signed an executive order prohibiting cruel and inhuman treatment, including humiliation or denigration of religious beliefs, in the detention and interrogation of terrorism suspects.

In 2012, gunman James Holmes opened fire inside a crowded movie theater in Aurora, Colorado, during a midnight showing of "The Dark Knight Rises," killing 12 people and wounding 70 others. (Holmes was later convicted of murder and attempted murder, and sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole.)

In 2015, the United States and Cuba restored full diplomatic relations after more than five decades of frosty relations rooted in the Cold War.

Today's Birthdays: Former Sen. Barbara A. Mikulski, D-Md., is 89. Baseball Hall of Famer Tony Oliva is 87. Artist Judy Chicago is 86. Country singer T.G. Sheppard is 81. Singer Kim Carnes is 80. Rock musician Carlos Santana is 78. Author and commentator Thomas Friedman is 72. Rock musician Paul Cook (Sex Pistols) is 69. Actor Frank Whaley is 62. Conservationist and TV personality Terri Irwin is 61. Rock musician Stone Gossard (Pearl Jam) is 59. Actor Josh Holloway (TV: "Lost") is 56. Singer Vitamin C is 56. Actor Sandra Oh is 54. Hockey Hall of Famer Peter Forsberg is 52. Actor Omar Epps is 52. Basketball Hall of Famer Ray Allen is 50. Hockey Hall of Famer Pavel Datsyuk is 47. Supermodel Gisele Bundchen is 45. Actor Percy Daggs III is 43. Actor John Francis Daley is 40. Dancer-singer-actor Julianne Hough is 37. Former MLB pitcher Stephen Strasburg is 37.