

Groton Daily Independent

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Monday, July 28

Senior Menu: Sloopy joe on bun, oven roasted potatoes, winter blend, apricots.

Senior Citizens meet at the Groton Community Center, with Potluck at noon.

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

Jr. Legion Baseball Tournament in Groton (See Schedule on Page 57)

Jr. Teeners Regional (See Schedule on Page 57)
Groton Soccer Camp

Tuesday, July 29

Senior Menu: Chicken cacciatore with noodles, Italian blend, 5 cup salad, whole wheat bread.

United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.

Jr. Legion Baseball Tournament in Groton (See Schedule on Page 57)

Jr. Teeners Regional (See Schedule on Page 57)
Groton Soccer Camp

Wednesday, July 30

Senior Menu: Cold turkey sub, lettuce, cheese and tomato, Macaroni salad, fruit.

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

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

Jr. Teeners Regional
Groton Soccer Camp

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Sunday, July 27

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.

Groton Daily Independent
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Paul's Cell/Text: 605-397-7460

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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 Policymaking, Rejected by the Framers, Enhances Presidential Power

It is an irony of American legal history that the U.S. Supreme Court, armed with the power of judicial review to police constitutional boundaries, has rendered decisions, grounded in the Justices' own policy preferences, that have increased presidential power to a degree that constitutes an extraordinary transformation. The framers could not have dreamed that the judiciary, which Alexander Hamilton called "the least dangerous branch," would perceive judicial power as a license to expand executive authority.

Judicial obeisance to the executive, first in matters of foreign relations, and more recently in domestic affairs, after 150 years of decisions that restrained rather than expanded presidential power, has distorted the text of the Constitution, what was said about it by the delegates who discussed and debated it in the Constitutional Convention, and which was approved by the people in the state ratifying conventions. In *Marbury v. Madison* (1803), Chief Justice John Marshall captured the essential purpose of written constitutions. If the Constitution "is alterable" whenever the government "shall please to alter it," then written constitutions are absurd attempts, on the part of the people, to limit a power, in its own nature illimitable."

The Court's rulings often have been far afield from the framers' determination to "confine and define" presidential authority, which, James Madison explained, reflected the founders' profound fear of a strong executive. Scholarly commentary on the failure of Court, in Hamilton's words in *Federalist* 78, to serve as a "bulwark of a limited constitution" against governmental encroachments, sheds light on the Court's penchant for an expansive executive, despite its conflict with the aims and purposes of the Convention. The Court's practice of adding to the stockpile of presidential powers defeats the Convention's painstaking efforts to fashion a government of limited powers.

The chief explanation lies in the Court's perception of itself as a policymaker—the imposition of judges' own views, values, ideologies, and preferences—which has formed the backdrop for its rationales advancing sweeping presidential powers and constituted a dramatic break from the first century and one-half of judicial rulings on executive authority. At the dawn of the republic, the Court restrained presidential power through decisions that hailed legislative, not executive, control of the constitutional authority to declare war and authorize lesser military hostilities, required the president to obey statutory limitations on the power of the commander in chief, and upheld congressional superiority in the conduct of American foreign policy.

The Court's opinions that have exalted presidential power in foreign affairs, starting with the path-breaking opinion in *U.S. v. Curtiss-Wright* (1936), as seen in the baseless assertion that the president is the "sole organ" of foreign affairs, have been larded with policy, not legal rationales. As Justice George Sutherland wrote, the president needed to be free to act with speed and dispatch, because he possessed greater expertise and experience in foreign affairs than that enjoyed by members of Congress. The president, moreover, possessed greater information and better judgment, which justified unilateral action, rather than the collective decision making envisioned by the Constitution. Sutherland's justifications were attributes of individual presidents, obviously, and not intrinsic to the presidency, and they rested on an ideology foreign to the framers.

The Court's policy arguments cannot withstand scrutiny. Acting with speed and dispatch might reflect hasty, premature, and ill-conceived acts. Not every president possesses knowledge and expertise in matters of foreign relations. Eisenhower and George H.W. Bush enjoyed a wealth of expertise and experience, but Reagan, Clinton, Obama, and Trump had little or no preparation to conduct foreign policy.

The Court's flimsy policy arguments, like those supporting its creation of a limited executive privilege in *U.S. v. Nixon* (1974), reflect the values of judges who had worked in, and were partial to, the executive branch prior to their ascendancy to the High Bench. When the Court asserted in *Nixon* that presidents require confidential advice from their aides, which formed the rationale for a privilege to withhold information from Congress, it ignored the reality, as emphasized by many advisers, that, if asked for candid advice, they would provide it, regardless of the availability of a formal claim of privilege. The Justices' policymaking preferences for unilateral executive control of foreign affairs, and for secrecy, like their belief that the president cannot perform the duties of the office without immunity from criminal prosecution, have turned the Constitution on its head and require correction.

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Columbia Daily Independent

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Columbia Fest Held Saturday



The Columbia Fest was held Saturday. This is a panoramic view of the venders, car show and the big tent. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



American Legion Post 58 carrying the flags starting out the Columbia Parade.



The Nettie Baldwin with Grand Marshall Mayor Dana Mohr. Driven by Ben Jeffrey 1940 John Deere BR.



Cole Kampa was the MC for most of the events during the day. He dressed up for the announcing of the parade entries.

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1966 Mustang owned by Eric Frohling and Lynn Frohling (Roettele) of Gwinner, N.D.



1954 Cockshutt tractor originally owned by Alvin Abeln, being driving by Mark Abeln.



Daly Corner is feeling the Disco this year.

The three Columbia fire and rescue trucks going through the parade.

**Columbia Fest Photos by
Paul Kosel**

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Brady Garrett is driving a tractor restored by Alf Larson. It's an original 1936 John Deere Model A.



Lloyd Dennert's 1941 Farmall-H. Driven by Great Grandson Blake Dennert. Tractor was purchased by Lloyd's dad, Harold Dennert, at the Rudy Buntrock Implement which used to be in Columbia.



Alan Jensen and Jodi. 2006 379 Pete. D& Trucking from Bath.



The 1950 Dennert Family Diner! 4 Generations of the Doris Dennert Family are celebrating The Gold Old Days of the 1950s!

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Sand Lake Campground. 1 mile north of Columbia. Featuring "Jack" from the Carl Hanson's Deer Farm.



Here are the Columbia Comets celebrating the "Good Ol' Days" and "These Days" with four teams and over 50 kids participating. They do not charge to have the kids play on the team.



Fire Safety First.



Farmall B Tractor. In memory of Robert (Murph) Zastrow. 30 years as mail carrier.

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Arlen and Rick Hanson. Arlen is 92 years told on Saturday.



Eric Cease B12 Wisconsin Modified.



Dave Hofer 2025 589 Peterbilt.



UCC Church driven by Wyatt Hagen.



Rock Around the Clock with the James Gang.

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This is the Patriotic Float. Happy 250th Anniversary to our U.S. Military. Thank You for all the service men and women who have served our country. Thank you to Legion Post #58 and the ladies who support them. On the float on the right side is GHS alumni Logan Ringgenberg.



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The three photos on top were promotional ones with the events for the day. The bottom photo features the crowd watching the parade.

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Landon Johnson dumps the tote full of ducks in the river. The boat was driving by Grant Gilchrist. (This photo lifted from the GDILIVE video. It was hard to focus into the sun)



The yellow duck took the lead and went on to win.



Dave Hofer and Tyler Hanson were busy collecting ducks after they crossed the finish line.

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A crowd was on hand to witness the duck race.



Grant Gilchrist puts the tote of ducks in the boat. There were 245 ducks.



Landon Johnson assists Grant Gilchrist in getting the boat into the river.



Emily Eichler was promoting the duck race under the big top.

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Katie Moser presented the first place award in the duck race to Barb Everson.



Cheryl Kampa (right) presented the second place award to Kelly Abeln in the duck race competition.



The firemen had a foam making machine for the kids to have fun in.

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There were 102 cars at the car show this year, which was the second annual event. That was up from 76 last year.

Ford Class

First Place: Mitch Truenbaen. 1970 Mach 1 Mustang Fastback

Runner Up: Bob Krueger. 1968 Mustang Fastback

Open Class:

First Place: William Fluke. 1936 Harley Davidson EZ Knuckle

Runner Up: Garrett Holler. 1964 Lincoln Continental

Oldsmobile/Buick/Pontiac

First Place: Ken Reinbold. 1964 Buick Rivera
Runner Up: Dawson Hepper. 1985 Oldsmobile Cutlass.

Best of Show: Dave Hoops. 1969 1/2 Dodge Super Bee

People's Choice: Garrett Holler. 1964 Lincoln Continental.

Ford Truck

First Place: Kelly Abeln. Second Place: Glen Enskop.

Tractor Class

First Place: Mark Abeln. 1954 Cockshutt 50

Runner Up: Caleb Furney. Farmall H 1940

MoPar Class

First Place: Mike Wiltfang. 1934 Plymouth Coupe
Runner Up: Dennis Moser. 1969 Dodge Coronet Wagon

Youth Class

First Place: Teagan Thorstenson. 1970 Dodge Charger 500

Runner Up: Colton Pullen. 1930 Ford Model A

Chevrolet Class

First Place: Miten Truenbach. 1970 C-10 Short Box
Runner Up: Cole Dunlavy. 1971 Chevelle

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Youth Class
First Place: Teagan Thorstenson. 1970 Dodge
Charger 500



Youth Class
Runner Up: Colton Pullen. 1930 Ford Model A



Tractor Class
First Place: Mark Abeln. 1954 Cockshutt 50



Tractor Class
Runner Up: Caleb Furney. Farmall H 1940

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Ford Truck
First Place: Kelly Abeln.



Ford Truck
Second Place: Glen Enskep.



MoPar Class
First Place: Mike Wiltfang. 1934 Plymouth Coupe



MoPar Class
Runner Up: Dennis Moser. 1969 Dodge Coronet Wagon

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Oldsmobile/Buick/Pontiac
First Place: Ken Reinbold. 1964 Buick Rivera



Oldsmobile/Buick/Pontiac
Runner Up: Dawson Hepper. 1985 Oldsmobile Cutlass.



Ford Class
Runner Up: Bob Krueger. 1968 Mustang Fastback

**Car Show Photos Courtesy
Kaden D. Kampa**

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Open Class:
First Place: William Fluke. 1936 Harley Davidson
EZ Knuckle



Open Class:
Runner Up: Garrett Holler. 1964 Lincoln Continental



Chevrolet Class
Runner Up: Cole Dunlavy. 1971 Chevelle

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Cheryl Kampa was giving instructions to blind folded Katie Moser during the cart race.



Kaden Kampa was putting the caution tape back up after the first driver went through it.



Patty Daly was giving instructions to blindfolded Emily Eichler during the cart race.



Zach and Chelsie Wermager took first place in the cart race. Their time was 2:05.



Taryn Thorstenson and Jayden Biegler took second place in the cart race.

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THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

*Therefore do not worry
about tomorrow,
for tomorrow will worry
about its own things.
Sufficient for the day
is its own trouble.*

❧ MATTHEW 6:34 ❧



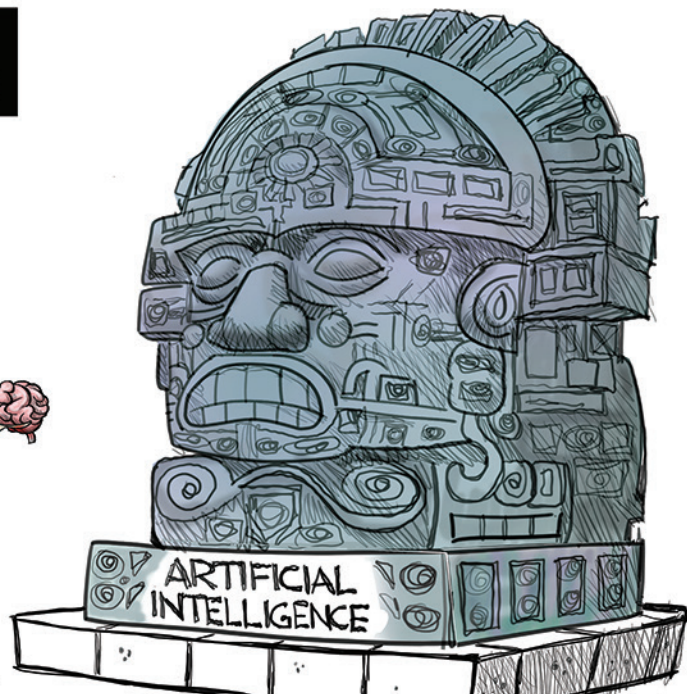
"Mädchenbildnis II" by Josef Scharl (1935)

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**HUMAN
SACRIFICE**



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BIBLE

TRIVIA

by Wilson Casey

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

2. Which book's first verse is, "The elder unto the well-beloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth"? *Ephesians, 3 John, Titus, 2 Peter*

3. From Exodus 25, what was the cover on the Ark of the Covenant called? *Mercy seat, Mordecai, Mina seat, Myrrhan*

4. Which prophet was famous for his vision of the dry bones? *Daniel, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Nathan*

5. From Judges 4:4, who was the first female Israelite leader? *Deborah, Esther, Ruth, Miriam*

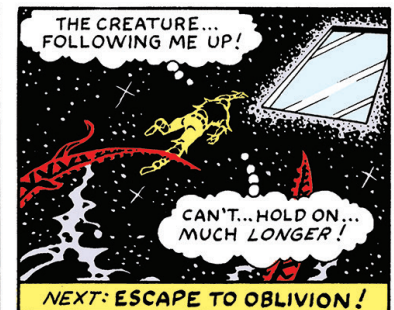
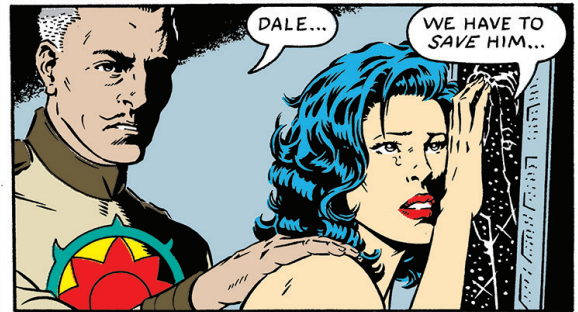
6. What is/was the first sin called? *The Exodus, Eucharist, The Fall, Ephah*

ANSWERS: 1) Old, 2) 3 John, 3) Mercy Seat, 4) Ezekiel, 5) Deborah, 6) The Fall

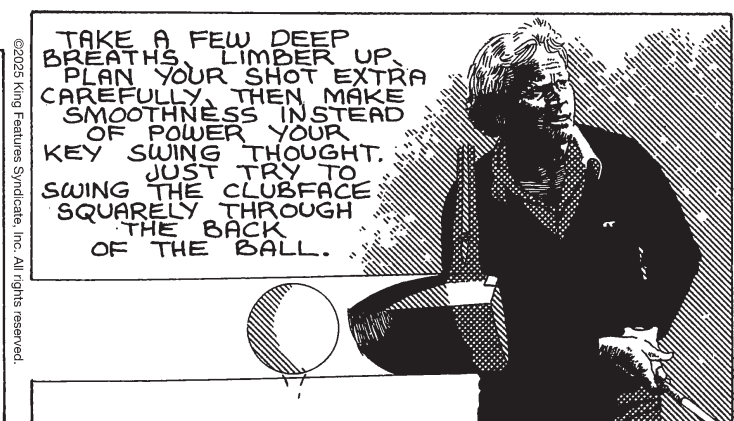
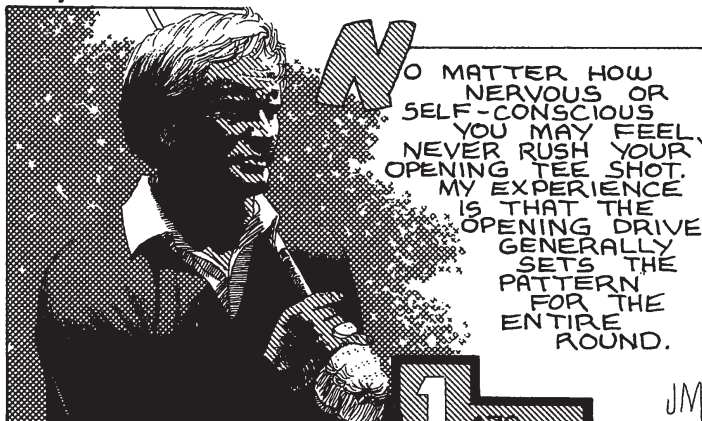
Sharpen your understanding of scripture with Wilson Casey's latest book, "Test Your Bible Knowledge," available in bookstores and online.

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Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS





Getting a COVID Booster Before a Cruise Is Prudent for Couple

DEAR DR. ROACH: My husband and I will be traveling to the United Kingdom in July and will be on a ship with about 700 passengers. We are wondering whether it would be smart (or unnecessary) to get a COVID booster before the trip. We are both in our late 60s and have had all the available COVID shots. (The last one we received was on Oct. 10, 2024.)

I have mild asthma, and we both have BMIs of about 30 with no other health issues. There is so much information and misinformation on these vaccinations, so I would appreciate your educated opinion. -- O.W.I.

ANSWER: In my opinion, it would be very smart to get a COVID shot before you go, ideally at least two weeks ahead but no more than three

months ahead. The vaccine takes about two weeks to work and gives its best protection for about three months.

At the time of this writing, a new strain (NB.1.8.1) is rapidly spreading in other countries and in North America. It would be very prudent for you both to get the vaccine, especially given your risk factors of being over 65, being a little overweight, and (in your case) having mild asthma. You may very well be exposed on a cruise ship, which is where some of the earliest COVID cases came from.

In the United States, the Food and Drug Administration has recently set new requirements on who can get the vaccine, and they have done so without the input of experts -- the basic scientists, clinicians and epidemiologists who should all be giving input on vaccine policies. In short, administrators have removed your doctor's ability to decide whether you are appropriate for the vaccine.

Since you are over 65, you and your husband should still be able to get the vaccine unless the FDA further restricts the ability to get vaccines. For others in similar situations, I recommend getting the vaccine while you still have this choice.

DR. ROACH WRITES: Quite a few readers asked me about a recent high-profile case of advanced prostate cancer -- President Joe Biden -- and how this could have happened.

I first answer with humility. I don't know what the screening was like for President Biden. Although I have read reports that he was not being screened, I am not confident that I know enough to have an opinion on the appropriateness of the screening strategy used in his case.

Second, I answer from my knowledge on the biology of prostate cancer, which is that not all prostate cancers can be caught through screening. A PSA level can be low even with advanced cancer. Also, some prostate cancers can grow very quickly in between screenings. Both of these would be uncommon, however.

Screening does reduce the risk of death from prostate cancer but does not eliminate it. Prostate cancer death rates have decreased by about half in the U.S., partly from screening and partly due to improvements in medical, radiological and surgical treatment.

Third and most importantly, I answer with compassion. Looking backward is not helpful to the person who is facing a difficult diagnosis. I wish the best for President Biden and his family, and I am confident that he will get the best care available.

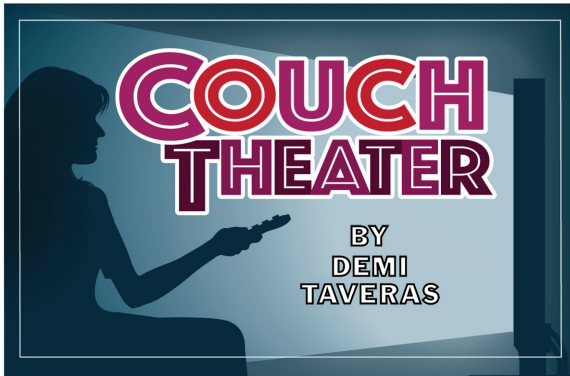
Dr. Roach regrets that he is unable to answer individual questions, but will incorporate them in the column whenever possible. Readers may email questions to ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu.

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"Lilo & Stitch" (PG) -- The 2002 animated film "Lilo & Stitch" was such a hit for Disney that it spawned several sequels and spin-off series. Now, 23 years later, Disney produced a live-action



Maia Kealoha, left, and Sydney Agudong, right, star in the live-action remake "Lilo & Stitch."

(Courtesy of MovieStillsDB)

remake of the original "Lilo & Stitch" story, with Chris Sanders reprising his role as Stitch and 8-year-old Hawaiian native Maia Kealoha playing Lilo. Forget about it just being a hit; this live-action film smashed box-office records for Memorial Day weekend and grossed more than \$1 billion! Of course, this means that a sequel for the film is already in development. But before we get too ahead of ourselves, make sure to check out this live-action film for yourself. Several changes from the original story were made, leading to some criticism from fans and critics. It's available now to stream at home! (Disney+)

"M3GAN 2.0" (PG-13) -- Another sequel is out now to rent for your viewing pleasure at home! (Though, I'm not quite sure this will be a very pleasurable experience for all.) Starring Allison Williams ("Get Out"), this sequel picks up two years after child-sized robot M3GAN went absolutely wild and tried to kill everyone in sight. Since her antics, Gemma has become an author and an AI regulation advocate, while M3GAN's original technology gets stolen to create a new android named AMELIA. Naturally, AMELIA also evades her creator's control and escapes to cause havoc. (Those pesky children, am I right?!) So, Gemma is left with no choice but to use a stored backup of M3GAN and allow her to return -- only to do the right thing and save the world from AMELIA taking over. Should be easy peasy! (Apple TV+)

"My Mom Jayne" (TV-MA) -- Even if you're not a fan of "Law & Order: Special Victims Unit," you've probably heard of Mariska Hargitay due to her prolific career in television. Besides being such a successful actress, she has an incredibly profound backstory. Being born to Hollywood legend Jayne Mansfield ("Will Success Spoil Rock Hunter?"), Hargitay only had three years with her mother before a tragic car accident took Mansfield's life. In this documentary film that Hargitay directed herself, she and her siblings break down Mansfield's life, career, and many talents that sadly went unnoticed. In addition, Hargitay goes public in the documentary about her biological father, Nelson Sardelli, with whom Mansfield had a wild affair that occurred sometime between her marriage to Mickey Hargitay. Fill your cup up with some Old Hollywood tea that will surely perk up your ears! (HBO Max)

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1. Who released "I Am Woman"?
2. Which group released "New Kid in Town"?
3. Who released "Let's Hear It For the Boy"?
4. Name the group that wrote and released "Abracadabra."
5. Name the song that contains this lyric: "Like a fool I went and stayed too long, Now I'm wondering if your love's still strong."

Answers

1. Helen Reddy, in 1972. The song became something of a feminist anthem after being used in the opening credits of the film "Stand Up and Be Counted."
2. The Eagles, in 1976. The theme is pain, when the singer realizes that his girlfriend likes someone else. The song rose to the top of the Billboard Hot 100 chart.
3. Deniece Williams, in 1984. The song was used on the soundtrack for the "Footloose" film and was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Original Song. It topped several charts in the U.S., including Dance Club, R&B and Adult Contemporary.
4. The Steve Miller Band, in 1982. The song topped the charts in six countries, including in Israel, Sweden and Portugal.
5. "Signed, Sealed, Delivered I'm Yours," by Stevie Wonder in 1970. The song received a Grammy nomination, the sixth for Wonder.

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GRIN and BEAR IT *Wagner*

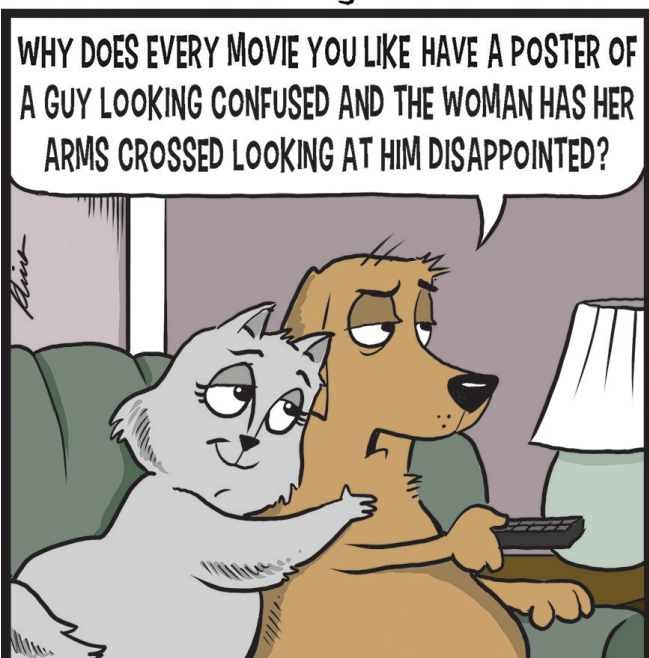
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"I'm not a rocket scientist, but
I AM a brain surgeon."

Just Like Cats & Dogs

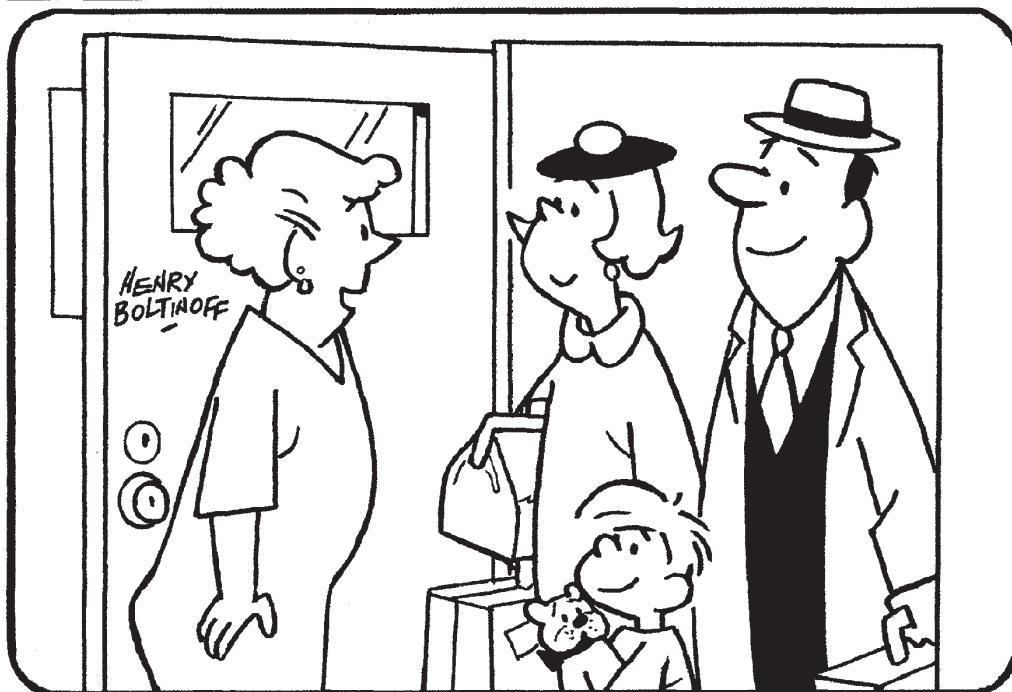
by Dave T. Phipps



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HOCUS-FOCUS

BY
HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



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Differences: 1. Collar is larger. 2. Hat is tilted back. 3. Arm is longer. 4. Nose is different. 5. Thumb is moved. 6. Boy's hair is different.

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* Keep a pretty basket by your front door for anything that needs to go out with you when you leave. This can be store returns, backpacks, exercise gear for the gym, your sunglasses, whatever. When you leave the house, check the basket!

* "I use small tension rods to hold wrapping paper in my laundry room. I have the birthday/general use ones upright under a desk (they fit and don't fall over, so I can store them close together) and the holiday ones are in the very top of a high shelf in the cabinet, out of the way." -- C.S. in Mississippi

* If you have a little bit of touchup paint left in your gallon can, transfer it to a mason jar. Write the exact color and brand on the lid, and it will be much easier to store.

* Fold and snip a coffee filter into a paper snowflake. Lay over an iced cookie or cake to sift a sugar design on top.

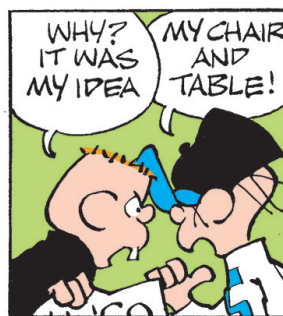
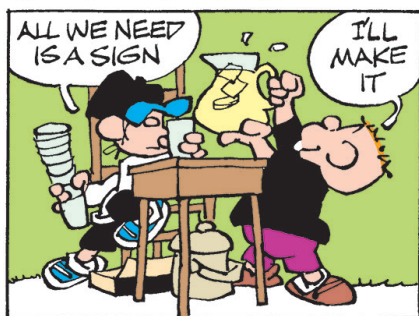
* "Our basement was dark and a little claustrophobic. My husband painted it a lovely sunny yellow and that helped, but it needed something else. I took a photo of the spectacular view at our son's house in Montana, and had the photo blown up. We mounted it on the wall with some dummy curtains! It's perfect, and it reminds me of him." -- R.W. in New York

* Need to chill a bottle of wine quickly? Wet a kitchen towel, then wrap it around the wine. Twist the ends to secure, and put the whole thing in the freezer for 30 minutes.

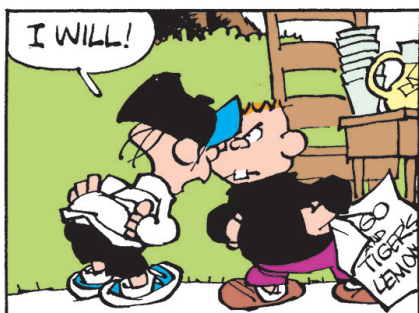
Send your tips to Now Here's a Tip, 628 Virginia Drive, Orlando, FL 32803.

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TIGER



by BUD BLAKE



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King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Two-way
5 Existed
8 Carton sealer
12 Lewd
14 Throat clearer
15 Baking dish
16 Male red deer
17 Sailor
18 Excuses
20 Leek's kin
23 Revue segment
24 Benefit
25 Goulash spice
28 Used a chair
29 Eyelashes
30 "The Voice" network
32 Cane-cutting knife

1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10	11
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41						42	43			44	45	46
47						48						
49						50			51			

- 34 Roman emperor
35 "CSI" settings
36 Classic Sinatra song
37 Actress Fanning
40 As well
41 Flair
42 Tart dessert
47 First-rate
48 Pulling along
49 Reply to "Shall we?"
50 — Juan
51 "Simpsons" bus driver

DOWN

- 1 Chips go-with
2 Half of bi-
3 Citric beverage
4 Physics particle
5 Sport
6 Busy insect
7 Hearty pub entree
8 Papeete's island
9 Melville captain
10 Prefix with "scope"
11 911 responders
13 Family
19 Turkish currency
20 Delivery docs
21 Linguist Chomsky
22 Tiny bit
23 Mariners
25 Patchy horses
26 Recognized
27 "East of Eden" girl
29 Converse
31 Coquettish
33 Genetic copies
34 "Us" actress Lupita
36 Synthesizer pioneer
37 Transaction
38 Medicinal plant
39 Philosopher Immanuel
40 IRS agent
43 Historic time
44 Trench
45 Bank acct. entry
46 Conceit

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King Crossword

Answers

Solution time: 22 mins.

D	U	A	L		W	A	S		T	A	P	E
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Olive



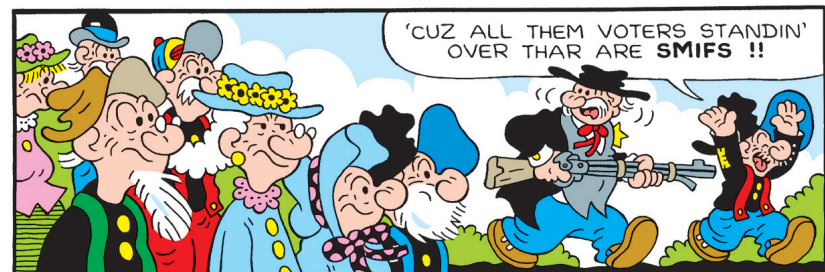
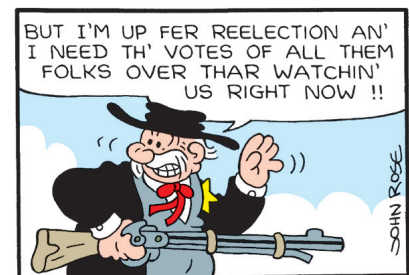
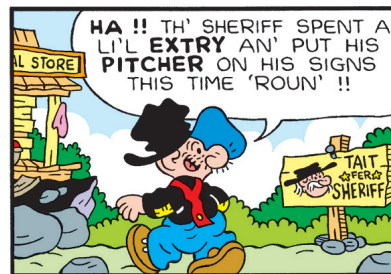
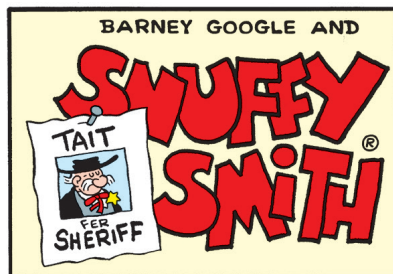
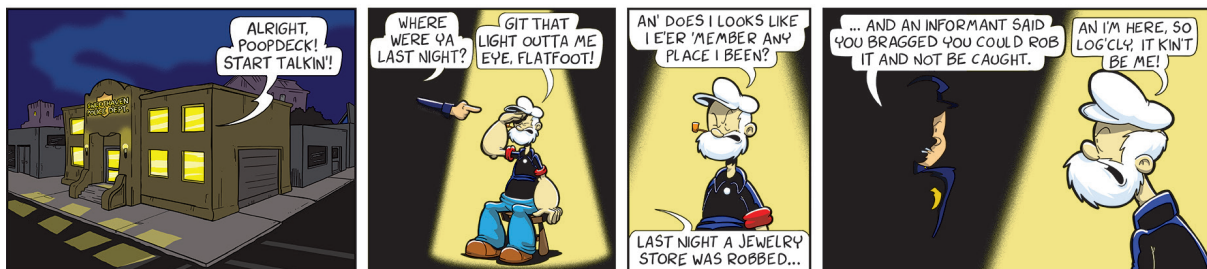
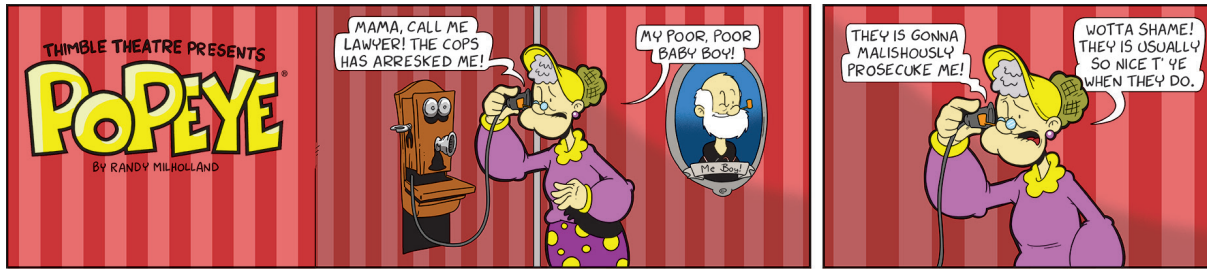
Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



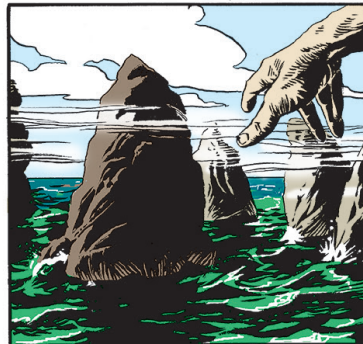
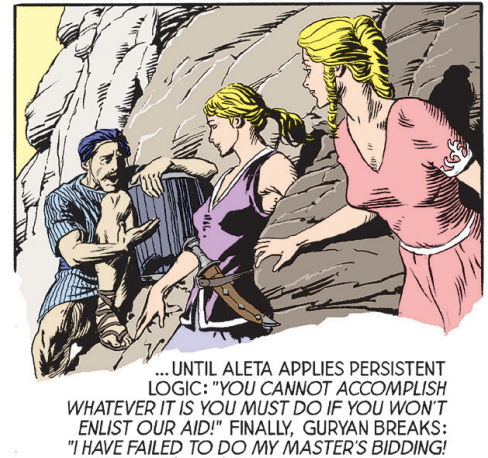
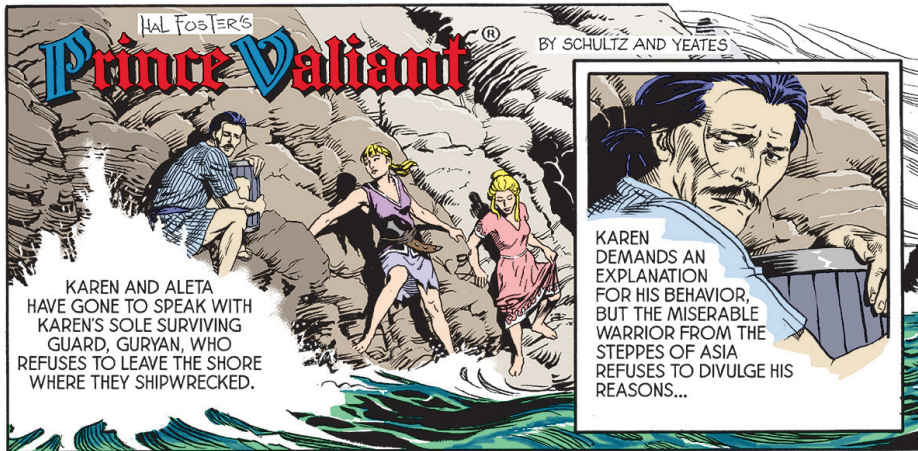
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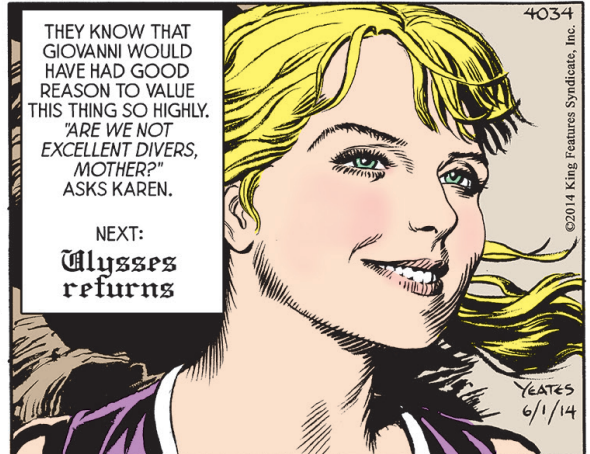


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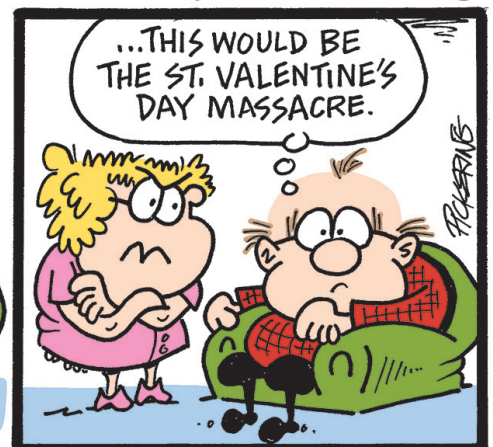
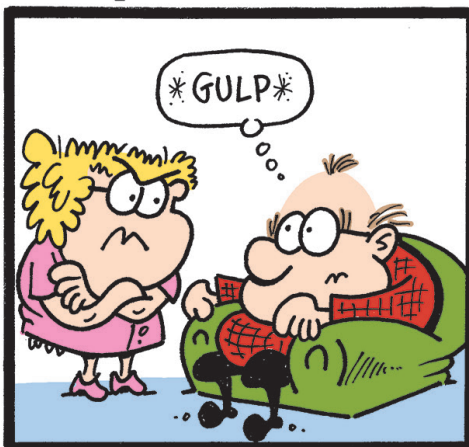
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"... BUT NOW IT LIES AT THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA. WE HAVE FAILED." KAREN AND ALETA REGARD THE TURBULENT WATERS IN SILENCE FOR A MOMENT.



The Spats



by Jeff Pickering

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SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

Exercise videos on AARP

Here's one more reason to keep checking back on the AARP website: the big selection of fitness offerings in the healthy living section. There are the articles, of course: complete guide to pickleball, link between sugar and cancer, ways to get an energy boost and others. But it's the workout videos that have caught my eye.

The site (aarp.org) has videos on cardio, walking, balance, stretching, core exercises and more. The knees get a lot of much-needed attention with videos on improving knee mobility and building stronger knees. Strength training has videos on building both the upper and lower body muscles.

What I appreciated in these videos is that many of them can be done while seated or holding a chair for balance, if necessary, and none require expensive equipment. A couple of light hand weights (or even soup cans), maybe a mat for the floor, and that's all you need.

The yoga section is comprehensive, with videos aimed at beginners who are ages 50 and 60 plus a video for those who are already 70.

But I think my favorite area is the 10-minute section for when I just don't have time for a full workout. If you can't make your way around the AARP site to get to the videos, do a search for "10-minute workout" to find a long list of short videos done by experts. Or search for "Denise Austin" and you'll find dozens of exercise videos she's created for seniors.

If you're only going to look at one exercise article, make it "10 Exercises to Do Today for a Healthier, Happier Tomorrow." These exercises are geared to helping us continue doing the daily things we need to accomplish: Strengthen your grocery-carrying muscles, keep your shoulder muscles limber and strong so you can put away dishes and (a favorite of many) strengthen your grip so you can open jars.

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1. What big, heavy trophy is awarded to the winner of the college football rivalry game between the UNLV Rebels and the University of Nevada Wolf Pack?

2. Name the pitcher who was the 1955 AL Rookie of the Year and went on to broadcast Cleveland Indians games on TV and radio from 1964 to 1997.

3. American Eddy Alvarez won silver medals at the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics and the 2020 Tokyo Summer Olympics competing in which sports?

4. Which Swedish caddie made history as the first woman to caddie a men's major golf championship victory when she guided Nick Faldo to his 1990 Masters title?

5. The Twin Cities Skippers, Detroit Thunderbirds, Dallas Broncos and Fresno Bombers were among the teams in what pro bowling league that played only one season from 1961-1962?

6. What Pro Football Hall of Fame defensive tackle has his No. 70 retired by the Indianapolis Colts?

7. In 2011, telecom entrepreneur Dan Borislow bought the Washington Freedom of the Women's Professional Soccer league and changed the team's name to what?

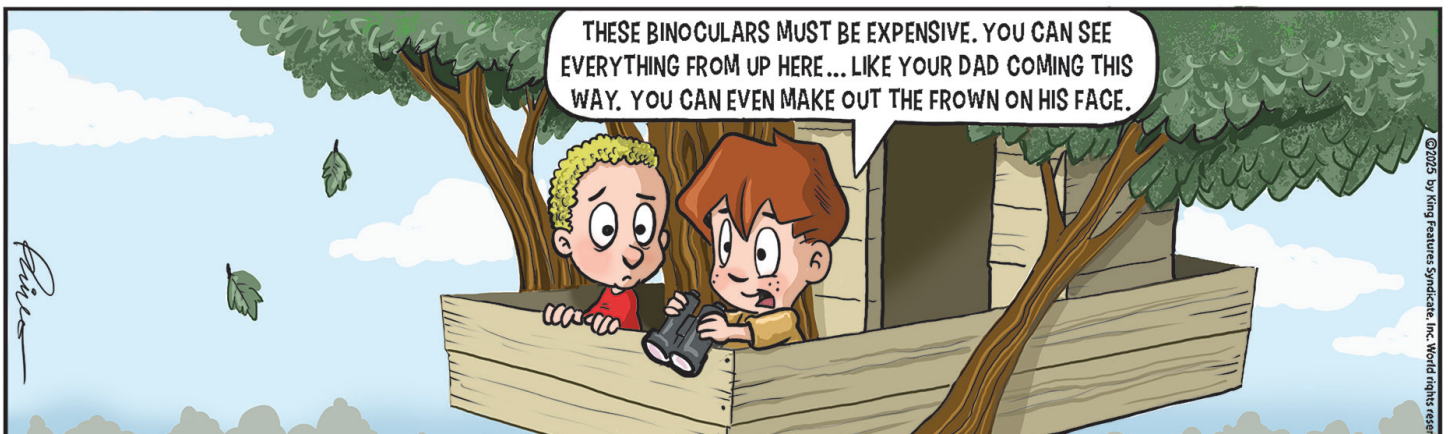


Answers

1. The Fremont Cannon.
 2. Herb Score.
 3. Short track speed skating and baseball.
 4. Fanny Sunesson.
 5. The National Bowling League (NBL).
 6. Art Donovan.
 7. magicJack.
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Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps





Leash training 101

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: I recently adopted a rambunctious dog who is really difficult to take for walks. "Sharpe" is just over a year old and is friendly, but big -- about 70 pounds already! How can I keep this big guy calm on the leash? -- Vance K. in Minneapolis

DEAR VANCE: Congratulations on your new dog! And kudos for prioritizing his behavior training.

The most important factor in your dog calming down on the leash is consistency, consistency, consistency. You need to work with him first thing in the morning -- during and after his morning walk -- and in the evening. Sessions can be just five minutes long.

Positive reinforcement is another factor. When Sharpe starts to associate good behavior with a positive stimulus -- a treat or extra affection -- he'll repeat that behavior more often, and willingly.

Start in an area free of exciting distractions (a dog park full of other dogs, for example, will pull Sharpe's attention away from you). Carry a pocket full of treats (chopped into tiny pieces so he never gets too much). Hold the leash correctly with Sharpe on your left side. If he's standing calmly, give him a single treat. If he's tugging and pulling away, stand still until he becomes calm -- and reward that with a treat.

Next, say "heel" calmly and step forward. The aim is to have Sharpe start walking beside you, at your pace -- not pulling ahead or diverting to sniff something. If Sharpe starts with you, treat. Then two steps forward, and if he starts with you, treat. Progress from here; most dogs start to get it after a few sessions, and you'll eventually walk around the area multiple times with Sharpe at your side.

You will need to reinforce Sharpe's training throughout his life, and you won't ever regret the time you spend with him.

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

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Strange BUT TRUE

* James Doohan, beloved by Star Trek fans as “Scotty,” was awarded an honorary doctorate by the Milwaukee School of Engineering after it was discovered that half of the school’s students had been inspired to pursue engineering careers by the fictional character he portrayed.

* A boy born with only 2% of his brain defied doctors’ expectations when the organ grew to 80% of the average size.

* The first written ice cream recipe was found in a 1665 recipe book.

* Rocking chairs were used in mental facilities and hospitals to soothe and comfort patients long before their widespread adoption in homes.

* Some asteroids get pulled into a planet’s gravity and become their moons.

* White-tailed jackrabbits are the greatest land jumpers, having been recorded leaping 21 feet vertically.

* In early 1949, Victor T. Hoeflich introduced the “Man-from-Mars Radio Hat,” featuring a portable radio built into a pith helmet. It retailed for \$7.95 and was sold across the country for a while, but lost popularity due to its technical limitations, which included losing its signal and making annoying squealing noises.

* A man was jailed for two years for cheating at poker. His method? Using infrared contact lenses to see cards pre-marked with invisible ink.

* The Finnish word “kalsarikännit” means to get drunk alone at home in your underwear.

* In Alaska, plants can grow exceptionally large due to receiving up to 20 hours of sunlight daily, which greatly enhances their photosynthesis process.

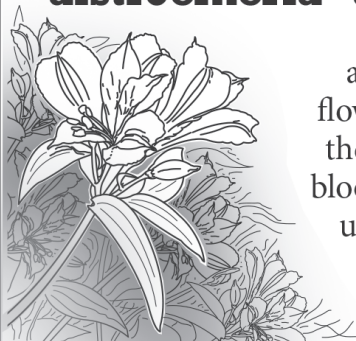
* When Nebraska implemented a law allowing parents to leave unwanted newborns at safe havens, no age limit was specified. Within just weeks, 36 kids had been dropped off, but not one was a newborn and the oldest was 17.

Thought for the Day: “A happy marriage is the union of two good forgivers.” -- Ruth Graham

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The Garden Bug

Growing alstroemeria



Handle the alstroemeria tubers gently, as they are brittle. Plant when all danger of frost is past, and be careful not to overwater initially. Feed your alstroemeria with a liquid fertilizer in late spring or early summer, then feed again in midsummer, after the first rush of blooms appear. Water well as summer progresses. Instead of cutting stems as you would other cut flowers, grasp the flowering stem near its base and pull it out, then trim the end; this will encourage new bloom spikes. Alstroemeria blooms can last up to 2 weeks when trimmed and reset in fresh water every few days. – Brenda Weaver

Sources: growveg.com, thespruce.com

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by Freddy Groves

Don't miss the benefits you've earned

Whether you're a veteran and aren't certain of all the VA benefits you might use, or if you're considering signing up with an eye to any benefits you might get now or down the road, here are a few of the typical VA benefits.

Eligibility for a VA-backed home loan: The question that often comes up is whether the Certificate of Eligibility (COE) can be used more than once. Answer: Yes, under certain circumstances.

If you either pay off the first loan and sell the house, or if another veteran (with their own eligibility) buys the house, you could qualify to renew your certificate and use it again. For more info call the VA Loan Guaranty Service at 877-827-3702.

Education benefits: There are multiple programs, the most common being the Post-9/11 GI Bill, and in certain cases the spouse and children can qualify for education benefits and career counseling as well. Call 888-442-4551 for more information.

And there are so many more benefits: Support for veteran-owned small business, disability compensation, several options for life insurance, disability housing grants, pre-need eligibility determination for burial in a VA national cemetery, aid and attendance or housebound allowance, health care and Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E).

Each benefit comes with its own set of eligibility criteria (minimum active duty service as well as qualifying dates). See www.va.gov/service-member-benefits as a place to start.

However, one of the best benefits resources is the "2025 VA Federal Benefits Guide for Veterans, Dependents, Survivors, and Caregivers." See <https://tinyurl.com/3epjn7vc> for the 120-page handbook. Last word was that only "a few" copies would actually be printed, so you'll likely need to access the book online, unless a veterans service organization near you managed to snag (or print out) a copy. Still, it's worth seeing, even if you have to view it online. The book is very well done and is very detailed.

If you've earned the benefits, use them!

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Wishing Well®

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

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: Who is Luke and Leia's mother in the "Star Wars" movies?
2. GEOGRAPHY: The country of Suriname is on which continent?
3. HISTORY: Which 5th-century conqueror was known as "the Scourge of God"?
4. TELEVISION: Who is the creator of the quirky sitcom "Community"?
5. ANATOMY: What kind of blood vessels carry blood away from the heart?
6. MYTHOLOGY: In Greek mythology, who turned everything he touched into gold?
7. U.S. STATES: Which state was the 50th and last to join the union?
8. LITERATURE: Who wrote the novel "A Clockwork Orange"?
9. FOOD & DRINK: Which vegetable is used to make baba ganoush?
10. CHEMISTRY: What is the common name for acetic acid?

Answers

1. Padme Amidala.
2. South America.
3. Attila the Hun.
4. Dan Harmon.
5. Arteries.
6. King Midas.
7. Hawaii.
8. Anthony Burgess.
9. Eggplant.
10. Vinegar.

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South Dakota Governor

Larry Rhoden



South Dakota: *Under God, the People Rule*

It's Time to Act on South Dakota's New State Penitentiary

By Lt. Governor Tony Venhuizen

For years, South Dakota has grappled with the fact that its 144-year-old State Penitentiary in Sioux Falls needs replacement, yet consensus on where and how to build it has remained elusive.

Governor Larry Rhoden created the Project Prison Reset task force earlier this year to achieve consensus to solve this problem. Governor Rhoden challenged us with a straightforward mission of answering three questions: 1) Determine if we need a new penitentiary; 2) Decide what kind of facility we should build; and 3) Recommend where it should be located.

The task force included legislators, law enforcement, and other stakeholders. Over the course of four public meetings, we toured facilities, studied data, heard more than eight hours of public testimony, and reviewed hundreds of written comments. Our work was conducted openly, and every voice, whether supportive or skeptical, was heard.

Our open and transparent process worked. Task force members who began on opposite sides came together to unanimously recommend a plan that South Dakota can and should support. In fact, we voted unanimously in our answers to each of Governor Rhoden's three questions.

The task force unanimously recommended that the aging penitentiary be replaced with a 1500-bed facility, built to last 100 years, at a cost not to exceed \$650 million. Our contractors are confident they can sharpen their pencils and reach this target.

This design includes a modern intake for new inmates. It also enhances rehabilitation by including the same programming spaces as the proposed Lincoln County design, including increased space for education, treatment, medical services, and re-entry programming. It is a massive improvement over the existing facility and will allow us to do a better job preparing inmates to reenter society, so they do not re-offend and return to incarceration.

More than a dozen potential sites were evaluated, and two locations in northeast Sioux Falls emerged as the best options. Both offer ready access to utilities and emergency services, an easy transition for staffing, and a location in the city and county that has already been home to the state penitentiary for more than a century. They rate just as well as the previously proposed Lincoln County site. Although there will be some transition costs in changing locations, the Sioux Falls sites also save us approximately \$18 million due to ready access to existing utility infrastructure.

South Dakota is fortunate that Governor Noem and legislators set aside the funds to pay for a new prison. We also do not need to cut corners. We have seen other states, in weaker financial positions, make difficult decisions to build cheaper, shorter-life structures, and to exclude programming spaces. Our strong financial position means we don't have to take those shortcuts. We can build high-quality facility now and avoid even higher costs in the future. And we will also avoid having to bond for this facility, which will save South Dakota taxpayers over a half-billion dollars in the long-term.

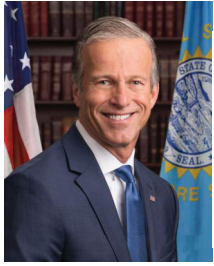
The task force's recommendation was unanimous. It represents a hard-won compromise by people who began with very different views. We listened, we adjusted, and we found common ground. Now, we must act.

Every month we delay, costs go up – due to inflation, rising material costs, and ongoing maintenance of our aging facility. South Dakota has the money to do this. We can pay for this project without new taxes or debt. It's time to move forward, put this issue behind us, and build the penitentiary our state needs for the next century. Let's get this done – for public safety, for fiscal responsibility, and for the future of South Dakota.

Tony Venhuizen serves as the 40th Lieutenant Governor of South Dakota. At Governor Larry Rhoden's direction, he served as Chairman of the Project Prison Reset task force.

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JOHN THUNE
U.S. SENATOR FOR SOUTH DAKOTA

Republicans Put Families First

Strong families make America stronger. That's why Republicans put families first in crafting the One Big Beautiful Bill Act. We set out to make a law that supports parents and families and creates a brighter future for the next generation. I'm proud to say we've delivered a number of pro-family wins in this bill.

That begins with giving families some breathing room in their budgets. In 2017, Republicans' Tax Cuts and Jobs Act lowered taxes for working families, but that tax relief was set to expire this year, meaning South Dakota families faced a \$2,500 tax hike next year. We were determined not to let that happen. So the One Big Beautiful Bill Act locks in lower tax rates permanently, meaning families won't have to worry about a bigger tax bill – not next year and not ever.

We went further than just making lower rates permanent. We made additional reforms that support working families, like increasing the child tax credit to \$2,200 and linking it to inflation, which means it will increase over time. We strengthened measures that encourage employers to offer paid family leave and child care. And we created new investment accounts for newborns – with an initial \$1,000 deposit – that can be used down the road for education, to start a business, or buy a first home and get a running start on the American Dream.

Raising a family is stressful (and expensive) enough, and this bill ensures that parents can keep more of their hard-earned money to spend, invest, and save how they see fit. Alongside lower taxes, this bill will also help generate growth in our economy, which will create jobs, expand opportunity, and lead to bigger paychecks. One estimate suggests a typical family will see take-home pay increase by as much as \$10,900 in the next four years. That will make a big difference for working families across America.

I'm proud that along with pro-family policies in this bill, we've also achieved a significant pro-life victory. With the signing of this bill, and beginning on July 4, 2025, the biggest abortion providers in the country will not receive federal Medicaid funding for an entire year. Many Americans don't want to see their tax dollars funding abortion, and this bill ensures they won't. This is the first pro-life legislation to be signed into law in a number of years, and we'll continue working on additional legislation to uphold the dignity of every human life.

This was a consequential bill, and I'm proud of what we accomplished to protect life, strengthen families, and create a brighter future for our children. The One Big Beautiful Bill Act is about stronger families, promoting a culture of life, and restoring the American Dream for our children. We have more work to do, and we're going to keep our focus on these priorities.

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Celebrating American Strength

BIG Update

Our founding fathers made history by declaring independence from Britain. On Friday—Independence Day—we proudly celebrate 249 years since the famous declaration that established a nation of freedom and strength.

In the heart of America, Mount Rushmore represents these core principles. I'm glad fireworks will return next year, lighting up the sky above the monument in celebration of 250 years of our great country.

As you spend time with family and friends this weekend, I wish you a safe and enjoyable 4th of July..

BIG Idea

I introduced the Protection of Women in Sports at Military Academies Act to prohibit biological men from competing in women's sports at our nation's military service academies. Riley Gaines agrees with me—the United States military service academies should set the example for fairness and integrity. Service academies should remain focused on military readiness—not radical gender policies..

BIG News

House and Senate Republicans worked hard to deliver real wins for the American people by getting the One Big Beautiful Bill to President Trump's desk. Our bill prevents the largest tax increase for American families in U.S. history, secures our southern border, and is a meaningful step in getting government spending under control.

House Republicans strengthened welfare programs like SNAP and Medicaid to ensure the most needy can receive these benefits for generations to come. One of the ways to preserve the integrity of the programs is by enforcing work requirements for able-bodied adults without dependents.

There are many parts of the One Big Beautiful Bill that haven't been making headlines. For example, it makes historic investments in our air traffic control system, boosts agricultural trade, supports American farmers, and unleashes domestic production of energy and critical minerals.

The One Big Beautiful Bill isn't perfect, but it helps everyday Americans by putting in place no tax on tips, no tax on overtime, and tax cuts for seniors, all while ensuring individuals and businesses don't see a near 25% tax hike at the end of the year.

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JULY 14-20, 2025



Welcome back to another edition of the Weekly Round[s] Up. The talk of the town this past week was the Senate's vote on the President's budget rescissions package. After our fourth vote-a-rama this year, we passed this package which claws back \$9 billion in unnecessary federal spending for non-lifesaving

foreign aid and taxpayer funded radio programs. I voted in favor of this legislation after working with the Trump administration to find unused climate change money to be reallocated to grants for tribal radio stations. These stations deliver critical emergency alerts and public safety information to some of the most rural areas in the country, and some stations could have seen up to 92% of their budget cut prior to this fix. I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues in the Senate and the administration to cut wasteful spending. More on the rest of my week in my Weekly Round[s] Up:

South Dakota groups I met with: South Dakota members of the American Physical Therapy Association; leaders from Daktronics, including Interim CEO Brad Wiemann; South Dakota members of the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives; Griffin Petersen, who was in town representing the South Dakota Board of Regents; South Dakota members of the Council for Exceptional Children; South Dakota Soybean; South Dakota FFA's state officer board; students from Howard Junior High School; leaders from MMS Products; Missouri River Energy Services; and South Dakota Corn.

South Dakota towns represented: Aberdeen, Alcester, Avon, Beresford, Box Elder, Brandon, Brookings, Chancellor, Crooks, Groton, Hamill, Howard, Huron, Iroquois, Lennox, Mitchell, Mount Vernon, North Sioux City, Pierpont, Pierre, Platte, Pukwana, Rapid City, Sioux Falls, Sisseton, Sturgis, Turton, Valley Springs and Whitewood.

Other meetings: Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins; the National Association of Mutual Insurance Companies Board of Directors; Lt. Gen. Dagvin Anderson, nominee to lead U.S. Africa Command; Vice Admiral Frank Bradley, nominee to lead U.S. Special Operations Command; leadership from the National Shooting Sports Foundation; Rizwan Saeed Sheikh, Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States; Dan Driscoll, Secretary of the Army; Robert Playter, CEO of Boston Dynamics and ADM Daryl Caudle, nominee for Chief of Naval Operations.

I attended our Senate Bible Study, where our verse of the week was 2 Corinthians 10:5, and our Senate Prayer Breakfast, where Senator Chris Coons of Delaware was our speaker.

Briefings and markups: I held one classified briefing this past week as part of my work as Chairman of the Subcommittee on Cybersecurity. I also attended another markup in the Senate Committee on Appropriations.

Votes taken: 34 – we voted on a few nominees to positions within the Departments of Commerce, Defense and Homeland Security. We also voted on judicial positions in Tennessee and Missouri.

Most of these votes, however, were on the rescissions package that I mentioned earlier. Because it can pass with a simple majority vote, the other party can offer as many amendments as they want before final passage as a way of delaying the process. This is why we call it a vote-a-rama! However, we still were able to pass the rescissions package just after 2:00 AM on Thursday morning. I was glad to support it following a fix for tribal radio funding. Read my full statement on my vote here.

My staff in South Dakota visited: Aberdeen, Box Elder, Highmore, Madison, Miller, Mitchell, Parker, Rapid City, Wakonda, Watertown, Woonsocket and Yankton.

Steps taken: 51,063 steps or 23.21 miles.

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Dr. James L. Snyder Ministries

PO Box 831313 - Ocala, FL 34483

1-352-216-3025

And then it's Monday... Again

I'm not sure if it's just me getting old or something altogether different. Time seems to go by fast.

My father used to say, "The older you get the faster time goes." I'm finally beginning to understand what he meant by that.

At the time, I laughed at him and didn't understand what he was saying. However, I now have a good idea of what he was talking about. Time has a way of passing quickly.

It seems that all of a sudden, it's a Monday morning and my week is starting all over again. And I need to focus on planning out my week and making the most of it. However, by the time I finished planning my week, it was already Thursday. Oh boy, where does that time go?

When I was young, there were seven days in the week. Now that I'm older, there are only seven days in the week. The first seven days took significantly more time to complete than the next seven days. I'm still trying to figure out what the difference is.

Even The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage has a little problem with this. By Thursday, she will say, "Where did all my time go?"

I think I know a lot of things, but when I think I know them, I find out that I don't know them at all. I don't know where time goes or why it passes so quickly.

How would my life change if I could figure out where time goes? There must be somewhere where time hides or goes on vacation or something. And if I find that, I think my life would change in an instant.

The one thing that bothers me is that I just celebrated my 74th birthday. I've had 74 years to figure this out, and I'm still at the same place I started. I don't know where time goes.

It seems that when I walk into my office on Monday morning to begin the week, I walk out shortly after, and it's Friday. What happens between Monday and Friday? I have my schedule, and I know when I'm supposed to do certain things, but that still does not explain how fast time goes.

When I was young, time seemed to slow down almost to a stop. Back then, it took me about four years to have a birthday. It took me about five years to catch up to Christmas. I'm not sure, but I think old Santa Claus had something to do with that. All his "hoe, hoe, hoeing" is his way of hiding this secret about time.

There are times when it seems to take forever to get from Monday to Friday. But at the end of Friday, I'm so excited my weekend is just about to begin. By the time I finish celebrating the weekend, it's Monday morning already. Oh boy.

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The other week, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage and I were going out for a nice dinner on a Saturday evening. We don't often do this, but occasionally, we treat ourselves to this kind of pleasure.

As we were going out the door to go to the diner, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage said, "Honey, do we have time to stop at Publix? I need to pick up something."

I never know how to answer that kind of question. I want to say, "Okay, but where do we find the time?"

What I want to figure out is why, when I have a schedule to meet, time seems to pass quickly. But when I don't have anything to do, time slows down to a snail's pace. I can never figure that out. Why is 60 minutes in one timeframe faster than 60 minutes in another timeframe? And is it all the same?

On Monday morning, I try to plan out my week's schedule so that I can complete everything on time. That is my plan, but it seems to me that "time" has a different agenda for me. Why can't time be on my side?

I wished I had control of my time like The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage.

Often, she will come to my office, look at me, and say, "Did you have enough time to finish that project?"

What do I say? Of course, I had the time to do it, but time was slipping away from me, wiggling to the left and then to the right, and I couldn't catch it. I had the time to do it, or at least I thought I did.

As I celebrated my birthday, I reflected on my past. How did I get to this point so quickly? Of all my expectations in life I never expected to get old.

I was reminded of what the Bible says along these lines.

"Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that," (James 4:13-15).

My life as a Christian boils down to God's will for my life. My time is in His hands.

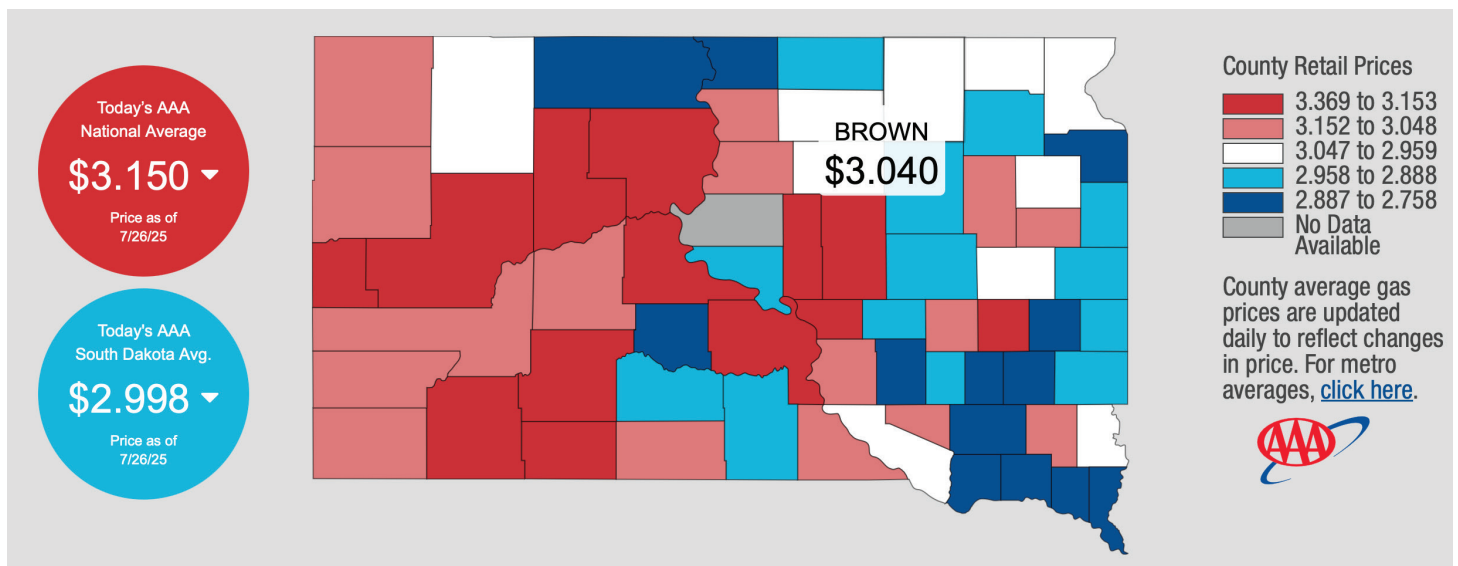
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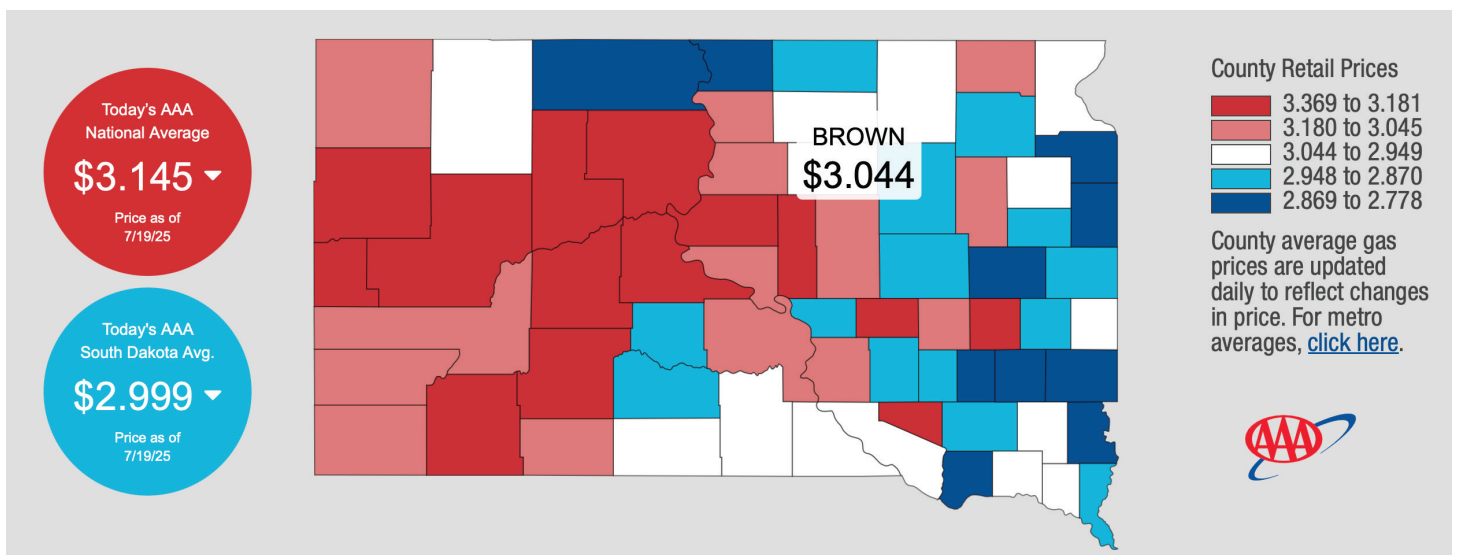
South Dakota Average Gas Prices

	Regular	Mid-Grade	Premium	Diesel
Current Avg.	\$2.998	\$3.162	\$3.650	\$3.388
Yesterday Avg.	\$3.012	\$3.179	\$3.653	\$3.398
Week Ago Avg.	\$2.999	\$3.189	\$3.656	\$3.363
Month Ago Avg.	\$3.033	\$3.215	\$3.685	\$3.388
Year Ago Avg.	\$3.270	\$3.471	\$3.880	\$3.456

This Week



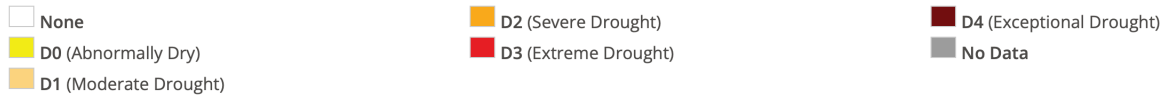
Last Week



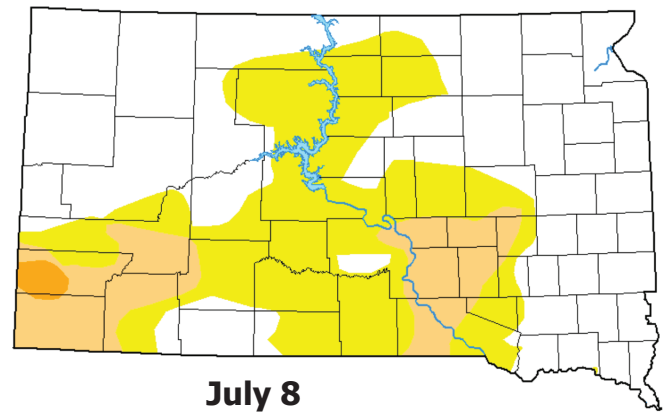
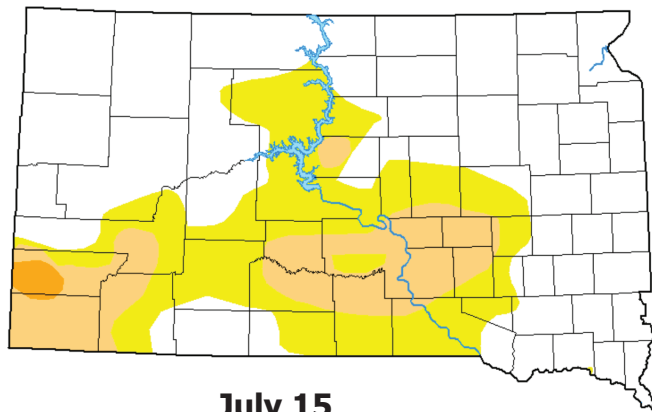
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Drought Classification



Drought Monitor



On this week's map, improvements were made in the region, namely in central northern Kansas, southeastern Nebraska, and South Dakota, where shorter-term precipitation (past 30-60 days) was normal to above normal. Additionally, these areas were showing improvements in other drought indicators including soil moisture, streamflow activity, and crop-related vegetation health indices. Conversely, conditions degraded on the map in areas of central South Dakota as well as in northern North Dakota, where dry conditions have prevailed during the past 30 to 60 days. For the week, light-to-heavy rainfall accumulations (ranging from 1 to 10 inches) were observed, with the heaviest amounts impacting northern Kansas and southeastern Nebraska. Below-normal average temperatures (ranging from 1 to 8 degrees F) were logged across most of the entire region.

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EARTHTALK

Dear EarthTalk: What is automated modular construction and how is it greener than conventional building methods?

-- Gordon G., New York, NY

Automated modular construction (AMC) is a process by which the majority of the desired structure is built off-site and later fully assembled on-site. Rather than constructing every part sequentially on-site, as in conventional construction, this more efficient procedure puts together already made elements to complete the finished product. The difference between modular and automated modular construction is that the latter integrates the use of robotic systems to increase production speed and further reduce waste.



Caption: Automated modular construction has become a popular way to build lots of homes efficiently and inexpensively, but is it really greener too? Credit: Pexels.

Recently, AMC has been rising in popularity among the construction industry for a few reasons. Because it is a more cost-effective alternative, many companies have turned to this method as an option to save money. Additionally, using AMC requires less building space since the structures can be made in factories. AMC is also a competitive option for construction companies since it presents clients with an opportunity to both spend and wait less.

There are many benefits associated with AMC. Aside from being efficient and cheaper, AMC also improves the quality of the end product. Built in a quality-controlled environment, structures are more likely to maintain consistently higher caliber. This means it is easier to control the materials and design, like creating surfaces with a certain cleanliness, or a certain ISO class rating. Furthermore, structural components developed off-site are easy to remodel or relocate; AMC offers flexibility of design.

Most important, AMC presents a much greener alternative to conventional building methods. Compared to the latter, AMC offers up to 90 percent less waste through the minimization of excess material usage. Since there is shorter construction on-site, AMC uses less energy and decreases site disturbances to the surrounding environment, reducing damage to ecosystems. Charlotte Weigel, a member of the non-profit Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnerships, reveals how AMC leads to a reduction in pollution through airtight buildings: "The better air sealing you get, the less heating and cooling losses you have, the less energy you use, the less emissions you have from operations of the building."

When building a home or starting a new construction project, turn to AMC as a cost-effective, environmentally friendly and speedy choice. Additionally, promote this process among family and friends looking to start construction! Raising awareness about eco-friendly options can help ensure that we reduce our impact on the environment.

• EarthTalk® is produced by Roddy Scheer & Doug Moss for the 501(c)3 nonprofit EarthTalk. See more at <https://emagazine.com>. To donate, visit <https://earthtalk.org>. Send questions to: question@earthtalk.org.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

COMMENTARY

Law journal article proves that citizen ballot questions are under attack

by Dana Hess

If you've ever suffered from that nagging feeling that the Legislature is systematically trying to undermine your right to petition something onto the ballot, you're not alone. I've had it, too.

We need to start trusting that gut feeling. It turns out we weren't wrong. That's exactly what the Republican majority in the Legislature has been trying to do. It has just been proven by three authors of a South Dakota Law Review article: "Have Recent Legislative Changes in South Dakota Made Using the Initiated Measure Process More Difficult?"

It seems the answer to the question in the title of the article is yes, and how.

You can find the article on the Law Review's website. Be warned: at 40-some pages, it's not an easy read. There are footnotes strewn about and readers may struggle with some of the world's ugliest charts. However it still tells a compelling tale of how, since 2017, the Republican super-majority in the Legislature has been whittling away at the rights of citizens to petition measures onto the ballot.

Republicans may scoff at the article as so much whining from the left as two of the authors are well-known Democrats: activist Cory Heidelberger and former State Sen. Reynold Nesiba. While a Republican byline would have been nice for the sake of balance, there's no disputing the truth of the facts they have compiled. These bills were filed and are there for anyone to look up.

Their paper gets particularly interesting when it goes about listing the Legislature's 14 worst bills designed to cut back the rights of citizens to petition an initiative onto the ballot. Those range from insisting on a larger font size on petitions to make them unwieldy, to allowing petition signers to later withdraw their names after the petition has been submitted, and a couple of attempts to raise the vote total needed for passage of the initiative beyond a simple majority.

Some of these attacks on our rights were defeated at the ballot box; some were challenged in court where they fell short of being entirely constitutional. Sadly, some were enacted into law. At least now, through the work of the article's authors, the grim history of the war on ballot initiatives in South Dakota is summed up in one place.

Unfortunately, while that history has been chronicled, the siege still continues. The authors go on to mention seven petition-related bills and five constitutional amendments submitted in the 2025 legislative session, 10 of which, they say, sought to curtail the rights of citizens to initiate ballot measures.

When legislators want to amend the state constitution themselves, they have to convince a majority of their colleagues to send the amendment to voters. This legislative quest to get on the 2026 ballot through constitutional amendments comes from the same party that tries to curtail voter access to the petition process by claiming that voters have ballot fatigue with so many issues to decide on Election Day. This ignores the fact that in each case, more than 17,000 South Dakotans applied their signatures to petitions, a sure sign that there are plenty of people who think the ballot issue is something that should go before voters.

This years-long attempt to curtail the initiative process is nothing more than a means for the Republican super-majority to solidify its power by cutting off people they don't agree with from access to the ballot.

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Republican efforts aren't trying to make the process better or more secure. They're just tired of beating back attempts to legalize marijuana and abortion.

The irony here is that in the Statehouse, no piece of legislation is ever blocked. Sure, there may be some arm-twisting that could lead to a bill being tabled or withdrawn, but each bill is handled in the light of day. These same Republicans who are so upright and transparent with legislation are working overtime to have darkness descend on the ballot box.

Their attempts to slow or stop citizen access to the ballot initiative process is a sign of the power that citizens wield. The recent law journal article has proven that this notion that our rights are under attack is more than just a gut feeling. We now have a historic record that spells out the way Republicans have been trying to take away the power of citizens to petition their government.

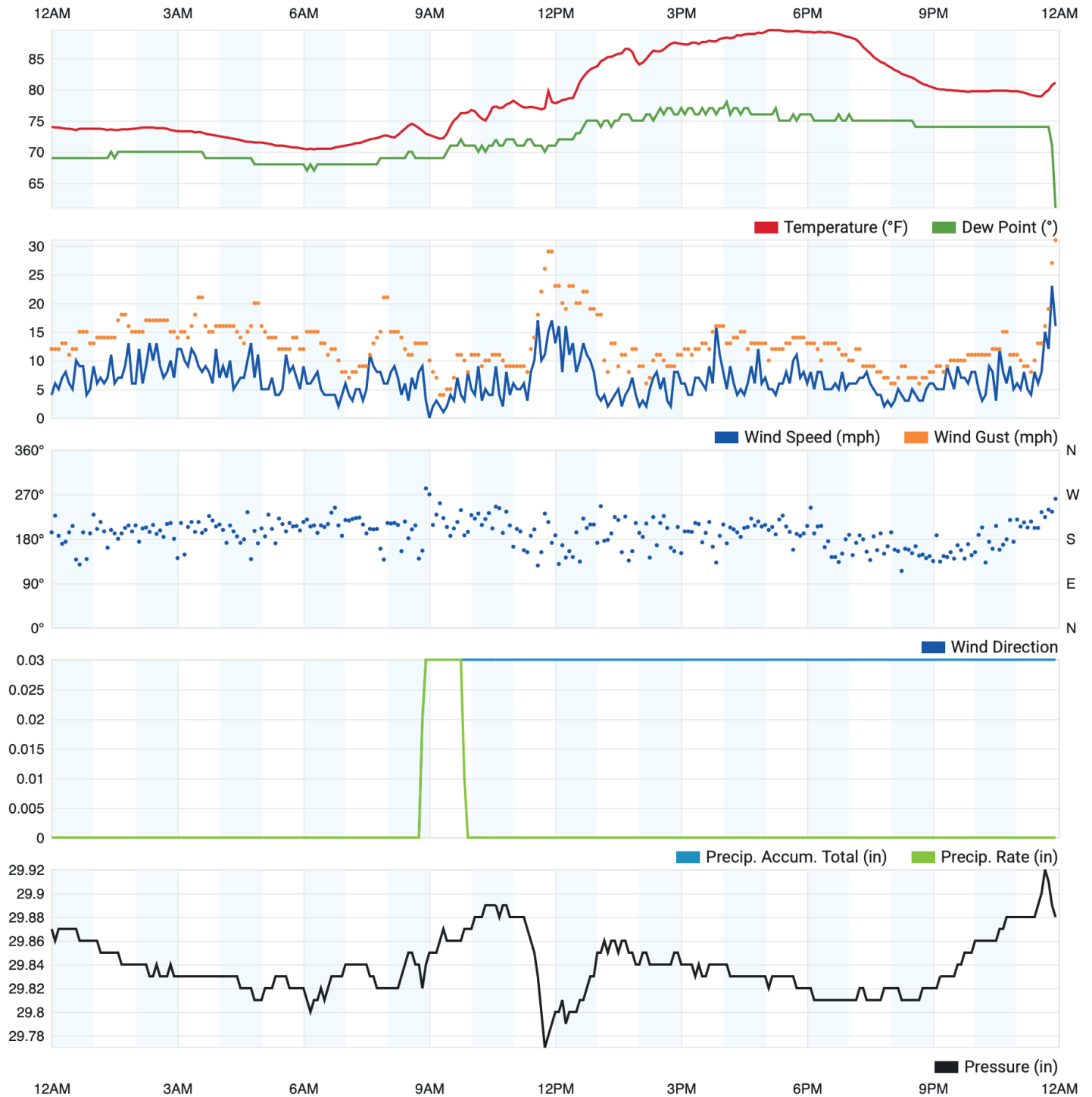
Dana Hess spent more than 25 years in South Dakota journalism, editing newspapers in Redfield, Milbank and Pierre. He's retired and lives in Brookings, working occasionally as a freelance writer.

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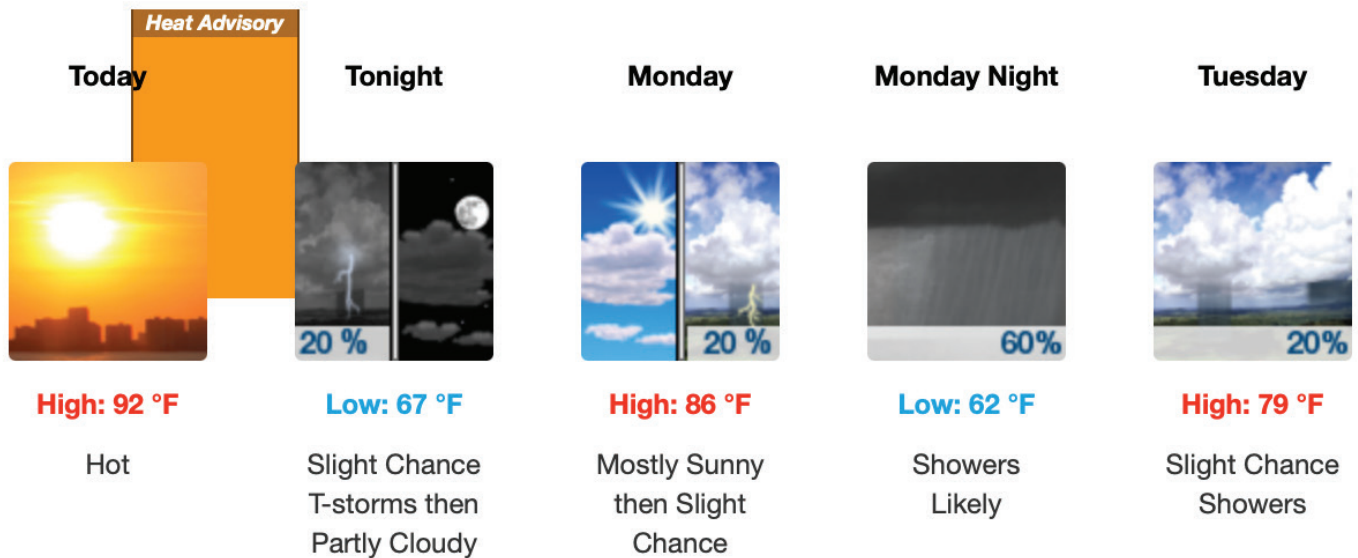
Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

July 26, 2025



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THREAT ASSESSMENT

HIGHEST LOCAL RISK

2

WHAT THIS MEANS:
SCATTERED severe storms
possible

TIMING

5pm through Midnight

PRIMARY THREATS



DAMAGING
WIND GUSTS to
70 mph



LARGE HAIL to
2 inches
diameter

SECONDARY THREATS

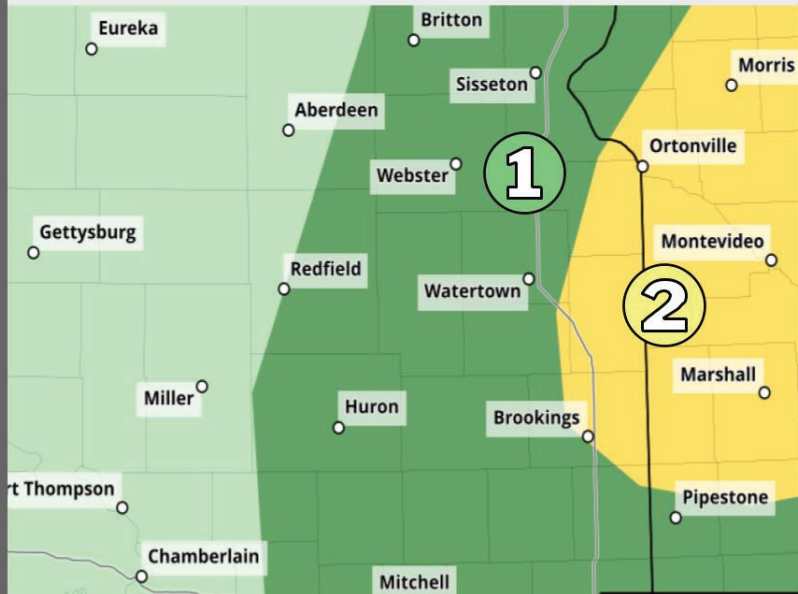


CANNOT RULE OUT A
TORNADO OR TWO



HEAVY
RAIN

Scattered SEVERE STORMS This Afternoon/Evening



What to Expect:

- Winds to 70 mph and hail up to 2 inches in diameter possible.

Timing:

- Storms will develop in eastern SD & western MN **LATE THIS AFTERNOON.**

How to be
Prepared:



INDOOR SHELTER



OUTDOOR PLANS?
STAY WEATHER
AWARE



MULTIPLE WAYS TO
RECEIVE WARNINGS



We anticipate storms to develop over far NE South Dakota and western Minnesota during the late afternoon hours. The main threats with these storms are large hail and damaging wind gusts as storms move to the southeast through the evening.

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THREAT ASSESSMENT

HIGHEST LOCAL RISK

2

WHAT THIS MEANS:
SCATTERED severe storms
possible

TIMING

Evening

PRIMARY THREATS



DAMAGING
WIND GUSTS to
70 mph



LARGE HAIL to
2 inches
diameter

SECONDARY THREATS

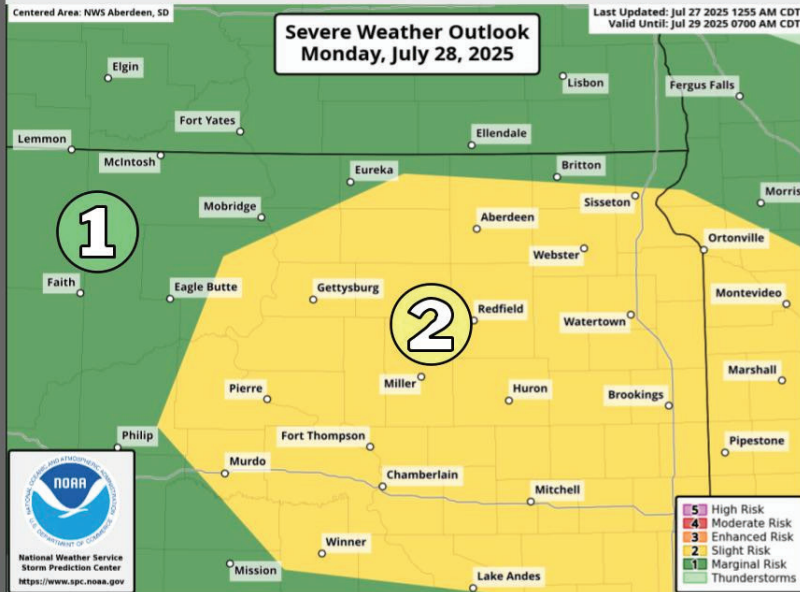


CANNOT RULE OUT A
TORNADO OR TWO



HEAVY
RAIN

Scattered SEVERE STORMS Monday



What to Expect:

- Winds to 70 mph and hail up to 2 inches in diameter possible.

Timing:

- Peak storm activity will occur during the evening and early overnight hours.

How to be
Prepared:



INDOOR SHELTER



OUTDOOR PLANS?
STAY WEATHER
AWARE



MULTIPLE WAYS TO
RECEIVE WARNINGS



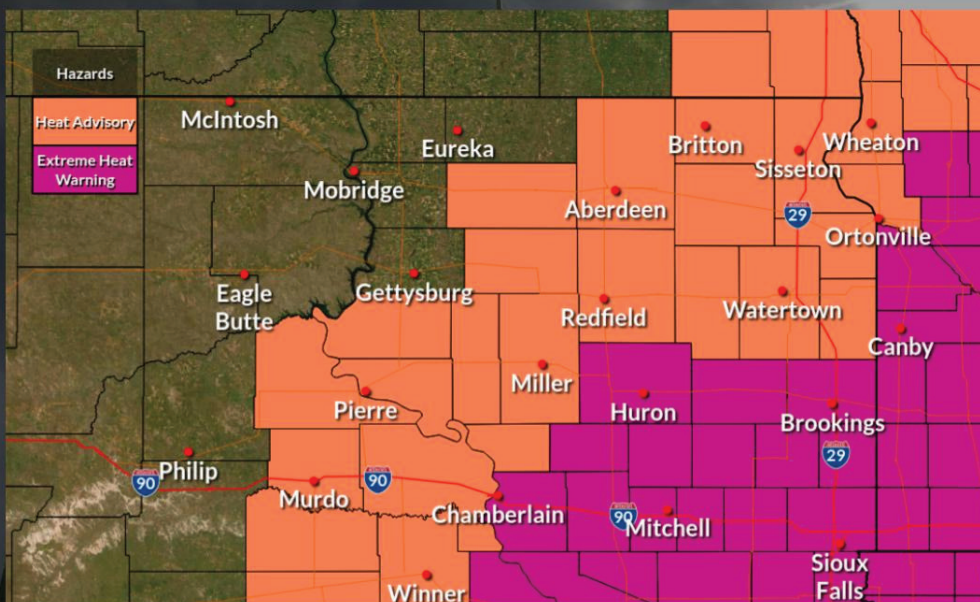
The severe weather threat continues into Monday. The focus area shifts to mainly central and eastern South Dakota during the evening and early overnight hours. Large hail and damaging thunderstorm wind gusts remain the primary concerns.



Max Heat Index:
95°F – 105°F



1 PM - 8 PM
CDT Today



Adjust Time of
Outdoor Activities



Wear Light
Clothing



Take Frequent
Breaks in A/C



Stay Hydrated
with Water



NEVER Leave Kids
or Pets in Vehicle



Recognize
Heat Illness

Sun Jul 27, 2025 2:56 AM



NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION
weather.gov/aberdeen

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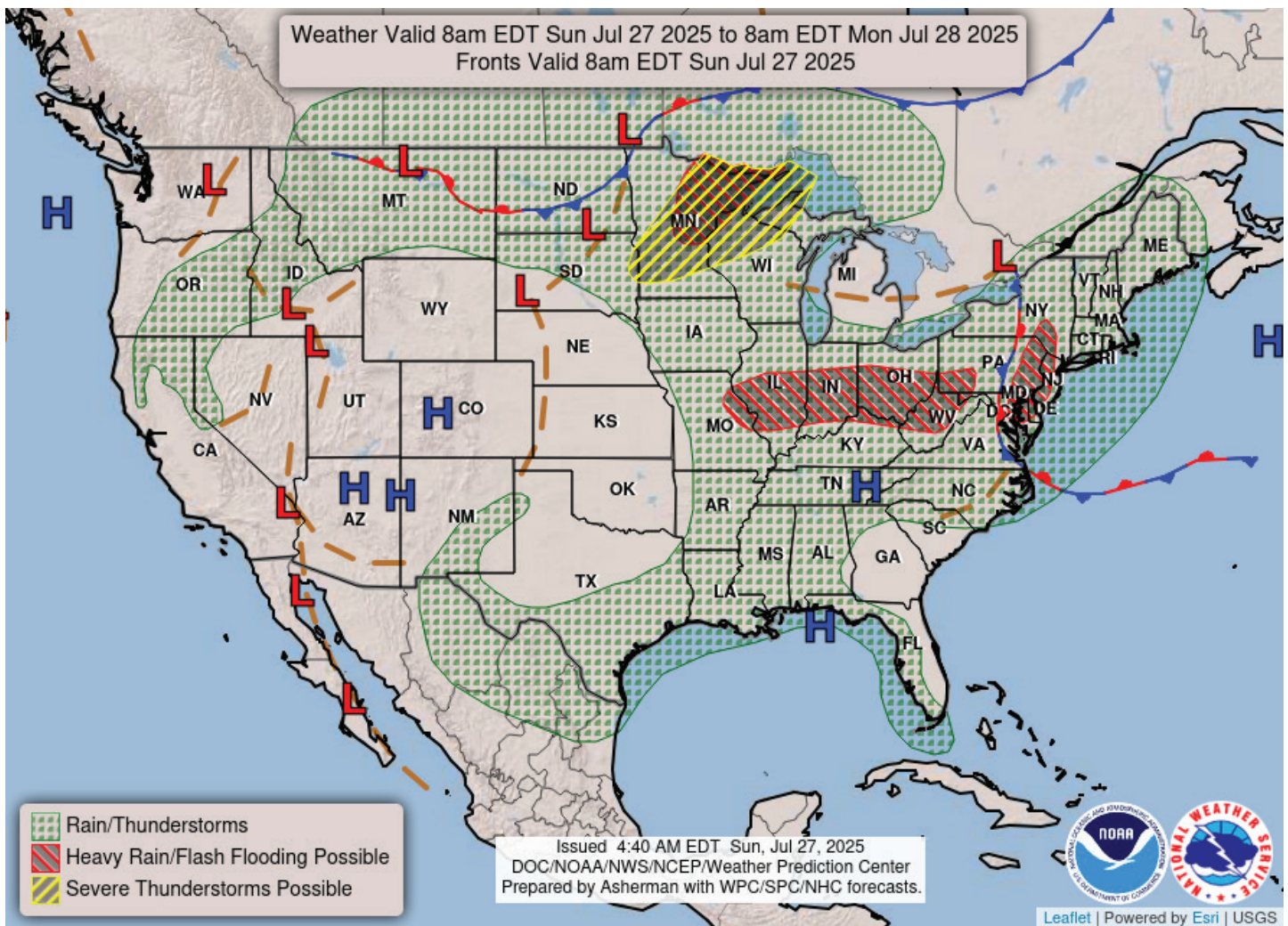
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 90 °F at 5:06 PM
Heat Index: 103 °F at 4:15 PM
Low Temp: 70 °F at 5:56 AM
Wind: 29 mph at 11:47 AM
Precip: : 0.03

Day length: 14 hours, 58 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 110 in 1931
Record Low: 41 in 2013
Average High: 85
Average Low: 60
Average Precip in July.: 2.76
Precip to date in July: 6.68
Average Precip to date: 13.77
Precip Year to Date: 14.84
Sunset Tonight: 9:08:00 pm
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:10:59 am



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Today in Weather History

July 27, 1999: Golf ball size hail and high winds destroyed hundreds of acres of crops on a farm southeast of Ipswich. Golf ball size hail and high winds caused extensive damage to the Richland Wesleyan Church and the pastor and associate pastor home. The hail poked numerous holes in the siding and shingles of the buildings and broke many windows. Several cars were damaged, and a large tree was also downed. An F1 tornado snapped large branches of an oak and drove them into the ground. The tornado knocked down approximately five headstones in a small cemetery and took a roof off a small outbuilding. It destroyed an empty grain bin, moved a grain auger 50 feet, and took off several large doors on a machine shed. The tornado also knocked down or snapped off numerous large trees in shelter belts and destroyed a barn and several outbuildings just north of Chelsea.

July 27, 2001: An F1 tornado damaged homes, public buildings, trees, and power lines in the town of Lennox, Lincoln County. The American Legion building had its entire front facade ripped off, and its windows shattered. Several vehicles near the building sustained significant damage from flying debris, and one was lifted and dropped partly onto another vehicle. Damage to homes included holes in permanent siding, several roofs heavily damaged, windows were broken, fences blew down, garages damaged including at least one destroyed. Damage to public buildings included the pump house at the water tower being destroyed, the roof at the water plant was damaged, flag poles next to the ambulance building were broken, and an overhead door at the fire station was torn off. A fire truck at the fire station was damaged, and the window air conditioner was blown out along with some ceiling tiles inside. Power was lost to much of the city for at least an hour and a half because of the downed power lines.

1819: A hurricane affected the coast from Louisiana to Alabama. New Orleans was on the fringe of the storm and suffered no severe damage. Ships at the Balize experienced a strong gale for 24 hours that only grounded three ships. Lakes Pontchartrain and Borgne rose five to six feet during the storm, with farms along the lakes flooded by the storm tide. Forty-one lives were lost on the U.S. Man of War schooner Firebrand, a 150-ton gunship, while it lay off the west end of Cat Island. At least 43 people died in all.

1926: A destructive Category 4 hurricane struck Nassau during the evening hours on the 25th. The hurricane passed just east of Cape Canaveral early on the 28th and made landfall near present-day Edgewater, Florida.

1930 - The temperature at Greensburg, KY, soared to 114 degrees to set a state record. (The Weather Channel)

1934 - The temperature at Grofino, ID, climbed to 118 degrees to establish a record for Idaho. (The Weather Channel)

1943: A "surprise," Category 2 Hurricane moved ashore near Galveston, Texas. Due to World War II, all news underwent censorship, including any weather reports making this the surprise storm. The hurricane killed 19 people and caused millions of dollars in damages. Of particular note, Lieutenant Colonel Joe Duckworth and Lieutenant Ralph O'Hair flew an AT-6 Texan into the eye of the hurricane, becoming the first flight into the eye of the storm. [Click HERE](#) for more information.

1952 - A severe storm with hail up to an inch and a half in diameter broke windows, ruined roofs, and stripped trees of leaves near Benson, AZ. The temperature dropped to 37 degrees, as hail was three to four inches deep, with drifts 46 inches high. (The Weather Channel)

1986 - Severe thunderstorms moving out of South Dakota across Iowa produce high winds which derailed eighteen piggyback trailer cars of a westbound freight train near Boone, IA. Sixteen of the cars fell 187 feet into the Des Moines River. The thunderstorms also spawned a number of tornadoes, including one which caused twenty-five to fifty million dollars damage at Sloan, near Sioux City, IA. (Storm Data)

1989: Thunderstorms produced locally heavy rains in the southwestern U.S. Yuma, Arizona experienced their most severe thunderstorm of record. Strong winds, with unofficial gusts as high as 95 mph, reduced visibilities to near zero in blowing dust and sand. Yuma got nearly as much rain in one hour as is typically received in an entire year. The storm total of 2.55 inches of rain was a record 24-hour total for July. Property damage due to flash flooding and high winds was in the millions.

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WE MUST NEVER FOOL OURSELVES BECAUSE
WE ARE HIS CHILDREN AND EXPECT FAVORS IF
WE ARE DISOBEDIENT TO HIS WORD.

**EVERYONE IS ACCOUNTABLE TO HIM
FOR EVERYTHING AND ANYTHING!**

Proverbs 15 contains fifteen references to the tongue.

Between two of the references, verses two and four, we come across another word that is important in the process of communication: eyes. Although we do not ordinarily think of the eyes as part of the communication process, but in this verse it is: "The eyes of the Lord are everywhere, keeping watch on the wicked and the good."

One of the words we use to describe the nature of God is omniscient. It means that God is all knowing,

all wise, and all seeing. Used in this verse, "the eyes of the Lord," implies that God sees what we say. Scripture, very clearly and frequently, teaches us that God knows everything. His Word emphasizes this fact. So, we need not wonder if He can actually see what we say.

It is almost frightening to reflect on keeping watch on the wicked and the good. Keeping watch made me think of the stories my brother and sisters often told me: "Be careful! Mom has eyes in the back of her head." In other words, her face may be looking in one direction, but that does not mean she cannot see what is going on when she is not looking.

The author of Hebrews reminds us that "Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of Him to whom we must give account." We must never fool ourselves because we are His children and expect favors if we are disobedient to His Word. Everyone is accountable to Him for everything and anything.

Today's Prayer: Lord, may we be mindful that You watch us closely and do our best to please You. Empower us to be obedient to Your Word and expectations.- In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Today's Scripture: "The eyes of the Lord are everywhere, keeping watch on the wicked and the good." Proverbs 15:3

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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Pay with Venmo: @paperpaul Phone Number to Confirm: 7460

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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.25.25

14 21 25 49 52 7

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$130,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.26.25

8 16 20 35 48 8

All Star Bonus: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$3,410,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.26.25

4 8 9 22 23 8

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 30 Mins 4 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.26.25

1 17 21 28 33

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$71,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.26.25

11 16 21 29 41 1

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.26.25

8 31 57 65 67 23

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$364,000,000

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.

News from the **AP** Associated Press

Thailand and Cambodia agree to ceasefire talks after Trump steps in, but border clashes persist

By JINTAMAS SAKSORNCHAI and SOPHENG CHEANG Associated Press

SURIN, Thailand (AP) — Thailand and Cambodia on Sunday signaled their readiness to negotiate an end to a deadly border dispute following mediation efforts by U.S. President Donald Trump. The fighting, now in its fourth day, has killed at least 34 people and displaced more than 168,000.

Trump posted on Truth Social on Saturday that he spoke to the leaders of Thailand and Cambodia and suggested he would not move forward with trade agreements with either country if the hostilities continued. He later said both sides agreed to meet to negotiate a ceasefire.

Both sides agree to discuss a ceasefire

Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet said Sunday his country agreed to pursue an “immediate and unconditional ceasefire.” He said Trump told him that Thailand had also agreed to halt attacks following Trump’s conversation with Acting Thai Prime Minister Phumtham Wechayachai.

“This is positive news for the soldiers and people of both countries,” Hun Manet said in a statement.

He said he tasked his deputy, Foreign Minister Prak Sokhonn, to coordinate next steps with U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio and to engage directly with Thailand’s foreign minister to implement the ceasefire.

Thailand expressed cautious support. Phumtham thanked Trump and said that Thailand agreed in principle to a ceasefire but stressed the need for “sincere intention” from Cambodia, the Thai Foreign Ministry said. Phumtham called for swift bilateral talks to discuss concrete steps toward a peaceful resolution, it said.

Both sides blame the other for the clashes

The fighting first flared Thursday after a land mine explosion along the border wounded five Thai soldiers. Both sides blamed each other for starting the clashes. Both countries recalled their ambassadors and Thailand closed its border crossings with Cambodia.

Despite the diplomatic efforts, fighting continued Sunday along parts of the contested border, with both sides refusing to budge and trading blame over renewed shelling and troop movements.

Col. Richa Saksowanont, a Thai army deputy spokesperson, said Cambodian forces fired heavy artillery into Surin province, including at civilian homes early Sunday. He said Cambodia also launched rocket attacks targeting the ancient Ta Muen Thom temple claimed by both countries, and other areas in a bid to reclaim territory secured by Thai troops. Thai forces responded with long-range artillery to strike Cambodian artillery and rocket launchers.

Richa said Trump’s efforts to mediate was a “separate matter.” The battlefield operations will continue and a ceasefire can only happen if Cambodia formally initiates negotiations, he added.

“Any cessation of hostilities cannot be reached while Cambodia is severely lacking in good faith and repeatedly violating the basic principles of human rights and humanitarian law,” Thailand’s Foreign Ministry said separately.

Cambodian Defense Ministry spokesperson Lt. Gen. Maly Socheata accused Thai forces of escalating the violence with bombardment of Cambodian territory early Sunday, followed by a “large-scale incursion” involving tanks and ground troops in multiple areas.

“Such actions undermine all efforts toward peaceful resolution and expose Thailand’s clear intent to escalate rather than de-escalate the conflict,” she said.

Thailand on Sunday reported a new death of a soldier, bringing the total number of fatalities to 21, mostly civilians. Cambodia said 13 people have been killed. More than 131,000 people in Thailand have evacuated to safe locations and over 37,000 people fled from three Cambodian provinces. Many border villages are mostly deserted, with many schools and hospitals shut.

Evacuees hope for a swift end to the fighting

Pichayut Surasit, an air-conditioning technician in Thailand, said the sudden outbreak of fighting meant

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leaving his work in Bangkok to return home to protect his family.

"I didn't have the heart to continue with my work when I heard the news. I wanted to come back as soon as possible but I had to wait until the evening," he said. Now at a shelter in Surin housing some 6,000 evacuees, Pichayut worries for his wife and twin daughters, hoping the conflict will end soon so they can return to their home in Kap Choeng district, one of the hardest hit by shelling.

Bualee Chanduang, a local vendor who moved to the same shelter Thursday with her family and pet rabbit, is counting on swift negotiations to end the violence. "I pray for God to help that both sides can agree to talk and end this war," she said.

The U.N. Security Council has called on the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, a regional bloc, to mediate peace between the two members. Human Rights Watch has condemned the reported use of cluster munitions, weapons banned by International law, in populated areas, and urged both governments to protect civilians.

The 800-kilometer (500-mile) frontier between Thailand and Cambodia has been disputed for decades, but past confrontations have been limited and brief. The latest tensions flared in May when a Cambodian soldier was killed in a confrontation that created a diplomatic rift and roiled Thailand's domestic politics.

In Syria's Sweida, the stench of death still lingers days after sectarian bloodshed

By OMAR SANADIKI and SALLY ABOU ALJOUD Associated Press

SWEIDA, Syria (AP) — The stench of decaying bodies hangs heavy in the streets of the provincial capital in Syria's southern province of Sweida, where fighting recently erupted. Once bustling roads now lie eerily silent, with only a few people passing by. In some areas, the destruction is overwhelming, with buildings and cars charred black.

At a bank branch, shattered glass covered the floor as an alarm blared nonstop. Walls are emblazoned with slogans graffitied by both sides in the recent conflict.

The devastation came after violent clashes broke out two weeks ago, sparked by tit-for-tat kidnappings between armed Bedouin clans and fighters from the Druze religious minority. The fighting killed hundreds of people and threatened to unravel Syria's fragile postwar transition.

Syrian government forces intervened, ostensibly to end the fighting, but effectively sided with the clans. Some government fighters reportedly robbed and executed Druze civilians.

Associated Press journalists from outside the city were able to enter Sweida on Friday for the first time since the violence started on July 13. With a ceasefire largely holding, residents of Sweida are trying to pick up the pieces of their lives.

'Snipers hit him'

At the main hospital, where bodies of those killed in the fighting were piled up for days, workers were scrubbing the floor, but the smell lingered.

Manal Harb was there with her wounded 19-year-old son, Safi Dargham, a first-year engineering student, who was shot while volunteering at the overwhelmed hospital.

"Snipers hit him in front of the hospital," she said. "We are civilians and have no weapons."

Safi sustained injuries to his elbow, behind his ear, and his leg. Harb says he may lose his arm if he doesn't receive urgent treatment.

Harb's husband, Khaled Dargham, was killed when armed men stormed their home, shot him, and set the house on fire. She said the armed men also stole their phones and other belongings.

An emergency room nurse who gave only her nickname, Em Hassib ("mother of Hassib"), said she had remained in the hospital with her children throughout the conflict. She alleged that at one point, government fighters who were brought to the hospital for treatment opened fire, killing a police officer guarding the hospital and wounding another. The AP could not independently verify her claim.

She said the bodies had piled up for days with no one to remove them, becoming a medical hazard.

Sectarian tensions simmer as Druze resist disarmament

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Disturbing videos and reports from Sweida surfaced showing Druze civilians being humiliated and executed during the conflict, sometimes accompanied by sectarian slurs. After a ceasefire took hold, some Druze groups launched revenge attacks on Bedouin communities. The U.N. has said more than 130,000 people were displaced by the violence.

Government officials, including interim President Ahmad al-Sharaa, have promised to hold accountable those who targeted civilians, but many residents of Sweida remain angry and suspicious.

The Druze religious sect is an offshoot of Ismailism, a branch of Shiite Islam. There are roughly a million Druze worldwide and more than half of them live in Syria. The others live in Lebanon and Israel, including in the Golan Heights — which Israel captured from Syria during the 1967 Mideast War and annexed in 1981.

The Druze largely welcomed the fall of former President Bashar Assad in December in a rebel offensive that ended decades of autocratic rule by the Assad dynasty.

However, the new government under al-Sharaa, a former Islamist commander who once had al-Qaida ties, drew mixed reactions from Druze leaders. Some clerics supported engaging with the new leadership, while others, including spiritual leader Sheikh Hikmat al-Hijri and his Sweida Military Council, opposed him.

Al-Sharaa has denied targeting the Druze and blamed the unrest on armed groups defying state authority, particularly those loyal to al-Hijri. He also accused Israel of deepening divisions by striking Syrian forces in Sweida, attacks that were carried out under the pretext of defending the Druze.

Talal Jaramany, a 30-year-old Druze resort owner, took up arms during the fighting.

"What pushed me to put on a military uniform and go to the front lines is that what happened was lawless," he told The Associated Press.

Jaramany insisted there was little distinction between the Bedouin clans and the government's General Security forces. "They used weapons, not dialogue," he said.

He rejects calls for disarmament, saying the Druze need their weapons for self-defense.

"We won't hand over our arms. Our weapon is sacred," he said. "It's not for attacking. We've never been supporters of war. We'll only give it up when the state provides real security that protects human rights."

Sweida's Christians also recount near-death escapes

Members of Sweida's Christian minority were also caught up in the violence.

At a church where a number of Christian families were sheltering, 36-year-old Walaa al-Shammas, a housewife with two children, said a rocket struck her home on July 16.

"Had we not been sheltering in the hallway, we would've been gone," she said. "My house lies in destruction and our cars are gone."

Gunmen came to the damaged house later, but moved on, apparently thinking it was empty as the family hid in the hallway, she said.

In recent days, hundreds of people — Bedouins as well as Druze and Christians — have evacuated Sweida in convoys of buses carrying them to other areas, organized by the Syrian Red Crescent. Others have found their own way out.

Micheline Jaber, a public employee in the provincial government in Sweida, was trying to flee the clashes last week with her husband, in-laws and extended family members when the two cars they were driving in came under shelling. She was wounded but survived, along with her mother-in-law and the young son of one of her husband's siblings.

Her husband and the rest of the family members who were fleeing with them were killed.

Someone, Jaber doesn't know who, loaded her and the other two survivors in a car and drove them to an ambulance crew, which evacuated them to a hospital outside of the city. She was then taken to another hospital in the southwestern city of Daraa, and finally transported to Damascus. She's now staying with friends in the Damascus suburb of Jaramana, her arms encased in bandages.

"When the shell hit the car, I came out alive — I was able to get out of the car and walk normally," Jaber said. "When you see all the people who died and I'm still here, I don't understand it. God has His reasons."

The one thing that comforts her is that her 15-year-old daughter was with her parents elsewhere at the time and was not harmed.

"My daughter is the most important thing and she is what gives me strength," Jaber said.

Cambodia-Thailand conflict: Monks, dancers and volunteers offer respite as violence escalates

By JINTAMAS SAKSORNCHAI, SOPHENG CHEANG, ANTON L. DELGADO and GRANT PECK Associated Press

SURIN, Thailand (AP) — Long-festering tensions over border territory have escalated into armed conflict between Cambodia and Thailand, leading to dozens of deaths on both sides and displacing tens of thousands of people.

Neither side is prepared to claim responsibility for the first volley on Thursday, and they each blame the other for the continuing skirmishes. While regional and international allies and organizations have called for a ceasefire, scant attempts at mediation had resulted in no peace talks as of early Sunday.

It's a grim situation, but there is some light amid the darkness. On both sides of the border, some people are working around the destruction, intent on creating a safe space or finding normalcy.

A Buddhist temple with a homemade bomb shelter

A temple in Thailand's northeastern province of Surin has something most of the country's 27,000 active Buddhist monasteries do not: a concrete bunker to shelter from bombs and shelling.

The temple, which asked not to be identified by name because of safety concerns, is about 10 kilometers (6 miles) from the border with Cambodia.

The temple's abbot, Phut Analayo, said the decision to build a bunker was made shortly after a brief armed clash between Thai and Cambodian soldiers in May inflamed cross-border relations, culminating in the current fighting.

Phut Analayo said donations paid for materials and equipment for the bunker, and the temple's monks and nearby villagers built it in four or five days. Construction was speedy because the bunker is made from large precast concrete drainage pipes a little over a meter (yard) in diameter, protected by mounds of earth, metal frames and sheeting.

It's divided into two tubular rooms, each about four meters (yards) long, and wired with electricity. There's a kitchen with a kettle, an electric rice cooker and basic cookware.

It's a tight fit, but because most of the nearby residents have fled to safer areas, there is enough space for the temple's six monks and the dozen or so villagers who sleep there every night.

"When we need to use the bathroom, we have to wait to make sure if things are quiet. If it's quiet out there, we will go out," Phut Analayo said.

He said his temple has ceased religious activities for now but that the remaining monks stayed out of concern for the monastery and the people it serves.

"If I leave, the people who rely on us will lose their spirit," he said. "I'm scared too, but I'll just stay here for now, when I can."

Thai monasteries frequently serve as sanctuaries for stray dogs, and the more than 10 living at the temple are seemingly unbothered by the crisis.

"If I leave them behind, how will they live? What will they eat? So I have to stay to take care of them. Every life loves their lives all the same," Phut Analayo said.

Ballroom dancers heed the call to help their countrymen

Learning ballroom dancing is how some senior citizens in northeastern Thailand usually spend their leisure hours, but the latest border conflict has motivated them to try to help some of the thousands of people displaced by the fighting.

About a dozen members of the Ballroom Dance for Health of the Elderly of Surin Province club went Saturday to a shelter housing about 1,000 evacuees, where they handed out clothes, toiletries, blankets and pillows.

Retired civil servant Chadaporn Duchanee, the ballroom teacher, initiated the project. On Friday, she gathered with friends at her home to fill small yellow plastic bowls with toiletries and other goods to give

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to the evacuees.

The 62-year-old posted on Facebook about the donation she made on Thursday, and her pupils proved happy to participate, too.

"We want to help, said Chadaporn. "Everyone left in a hurry, without bringing their belongings, just trying to escape the line of fire, so they fled empty handed,"

Prapha Sanpote, a 75-year-old member of Chadaporn's donation team, said she hopes the conflict is resolved quickly.

"Our people couldn't go home. They have to leave home, and it's not just the home they had to leave," he said. "It's their belongings, their cattle, or their pet dogs, because they left without anything. How will those animals live? Everything is affected."

A pop-up stall to feed those fleeing fighting and those headed into battle

It looks just like your typical roadside stall found commonly all over Southeast Asia, but this one seems exceptionally well-provisioned.

Also, it's not selling anything, even though there are boxes of bottled water, plastic bags filled with fruit and vegetables and the occasional packet of instant noodles. It is there to solicit donations of food and other essentials to give to evacuees escaping fighting along the border. It also gives handouts to members of the armed forces headed in the other direction, toward the front lines.

This pop-up operation is at the border of Siem Reap, home to Cambodia's Angkor Wat temple complex, and Oddar Meanchey province, which is an active combat zone. It's a one-stop shop on a key road that convoys of police and military vehicles roar along with sirens blaring.

Chhar Sin, a 28-year-old self-described youth volunteer, mans the stall, which is located in her home Srey Snam district.

"We're used to seeing people bustling around, we're not surprised by that," she said, between handing out parcels to eager hands.

But even here, 100 kilometers (60 miles) from the border with Thailand, she senses people don't feel safe, as the streets seem emptier than usual.

She and other volunteers, are spending the weekend collecting supplies from ordinary Cambodians to dole out to the less fortunate. Families drive by on tractors to donate vegetables, while others swing by on motorbikes carrying bananas, dragon fruit and rambutans.

"For today and tomorrow, we are standing here waiting to give gifts to the people who are displaced from war zones and are seeking safety," Chhar Sin said Saturday. "We will provide them with food because they have nothing, and some of them come with only a few clothes and a hat."

When she woke up Saturday morning, Kim Muny, made the decision not to open her convenience store, but instead cook rice for members of the Cambodian military and fleeing civilians.

"Cambodians have a kind heart. When we heard that soldiers and displaced people needed help, we decided to help with an open heart," said the 45-year-old after donating parcels of rice wrapped in banana leaves at the stall. "We know our soldiers don't have time to cook, so we will do it for them."

The city empties but its temple's top monk isn't moving

Alone in a mostly evacuated pagoda, Tho Thoross began a Buddhist chant to express gratitude for all that is good in life.

The 38-year-old Tho Thoross is one of the last monks in the city of Samrong, the provincial capital of Cambodia's Oddar Meanchey province, which is on the front line of the cross-border fighting. Most civilians have fled the town, spooked by the sounds of artillery and what they suspect was a Thai military drone hovering above them.

All but seven of the 40 monks at the monastery have left. As chief monk of Wat Prasat Samrong Thom, Tho Thoross ordered more than a dozen of the temple's novices — young monks in training — to evacuate to displacement camps farther from the border with Thailand, which is 40 kilometers (25 miles) away.

The temple is the largest in the town of Samrong, as well as the oldest, dating back over a century.

Its distance from the border does not keep it protected from artillery and aerial attacks, but it nonethe-

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less is considered a relatively safe place. Most Cambodians and Thais are Buddhists.

Nine monks from other temples that felt more insecure are also staying at Wat Prasat Samrong Thom.

In the Buddhist tradition, temples are community centers and almost always places of sanctuary, and on Thursday, several displaced villagers stopped by briefly on their way to a government-arranged safety zone. Tho Thoross provided them with food.

He said the latest fighting is "10 times bigger" than prolonged clashes over similar issues in 2008 and 2011, when the clashes were confined to certain areas.

"But today, the fighting is happening everywhere along the border," said Tho Thoross, who has lived in Oddar Meanchey for nearly three decades.

"As a Buddhist monk living in a province bordering Thailand, I would like to call on both sides to work together to find a solution that is a win-win solution for all," he declared Saturday.

Trump's meeting with a key European official comes as his tariff deadline nears

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

EDINBURGH, Scotland (AP) — Donald Trump is meeting Sunday with European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, taking a break from golfing in Scotland to discuss trade as both sides seek an agreement on tariff rates now that the White House's deadline to impose stiff tariff rates is looming.

Trump played golf Saturday at his course in Turnberry on the southwest coast of Scotland and is expected to hit the links again frequently during his five-day visit. On Tuesday, he'll be in Aberdeen, in northeast Scotland, where his family has another golf course and is opening a third next month.

Trump and his son Eric are planning to help cut the ribbon on the new course, where public tee times starting Aug. 13 are already on offer.

The visit with von der Leyen is expected to be behind closed doors and few further details have been released.

Leaving the White House on Friday, Trump said "we have a 50-50 chance, maybe less than that, but a 50-50 chance of making a deal with the EU." He said the deal would have to "buy down" the currently scheduled tariff rate of 30% on the bloc of 27 member states.

Later, von der Leyen posted on X that, "Following a good call" with Trump, the pair had "agreed to meet in Scotland on Sunday to discuss transatlantic trade relations, and how we can keep them strong."

The U.S. and EU seemed close to reaching a deal earlier this month, but Trump instead threatened a 30% tariff rate on the bloc of nations. Still, Trump's original deadline for beginning such tariffs has already passed, and is now delayed until at least Friday.

Flying to Scotland to enjoy his golf courses hasn't stopped the president from talking trade.

After going to Turnberry to play nine holes, have lunch, then play nine more, Trump posted that he'd block any trade deals between the U.S. and Cambodia and Thailand since the two southeast Asian countries remain locked in violent clashes in long-disputed border areas.

Trump wrote that he spoke with Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet and Phumtham Wechayachai, the acting prime minister of Thailand, to call for a ceasefire.

"I am trying to simplify a complex situation!" he wrote on Truth Social after disclosing his conversation with the Cambodian leader. After speaking with Wechayachai, Trump said both countries want peace and added: "Ceasefire, Peace, and Prosperity seems to be a natural."

The actual likelihood of a deal with the EU, meanwhile, remains to be seen.

Trump recently said he thought the odds of reaching a framework with Japan was 25% — but the U.S. and Japan subsequently announced an agreement this past week.

The president also bragged earlier in his term that he would leverage constant threats of steep U.S. tariffs around the globe to negotiate better rates and shrink trade deficits with some of Washington's key allies. But, so far, that effort has fallen well short of expectations, meaning the onus may be on Trump to be able to announce an agreement with a bloc as key to global commerce as the EU.

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Trump is also set to meet Monday in Scotland with British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, after the two announced a trade framework in May and a larger agreement last month during the G7 in Canada. Trump says that deal is concluded and that the pair will discuss other matters — though the White House has suggested it still needs some polishing.

Without an EU deal, the bloc said it was prepared to retaliate with tariffs on hundreds of American products, ranging from beef and auto parts to beer and Boeing airplanes.

If Trump follows through on his threat of tariffs against Europe, it could make everything from French cheese and Italian leather goods to German electronics and Spanish pharmaceuticals more expensive in the U.S.

A man accused of stabbing 11 people at a Walmart is in Michigan authorities' custody

TRAVERSE CITY, Mich. (AP) — Eleven people were stabbed at a Walmart in Traverse City on Saturday — with six in critical condition — in what a Michigan sheriff said appeared to be a random act. A suspect was in custody, authorities said.

Around 4:45 p.m., a 42-year-old man entered the store and used a folding knife to stab 11 people, the Grand Traverse County Sheriff's Office said in a statement on social media. A sheriff's deputy arrived within minutes and took the man into custody, and people in the store also helped apprehend the suspect and treat victims, the sheriff's office said.

The victims' ages weren't immediately released.

"Eleven is 11 too many, but thank God it wasn't more," Sheriff Michael Shea told reporters.

Emergency vehicles and uniformed first responders gathered in the parking lot of the shopping center that houses several other retail stores. Authorities also were seen interviewing employees, still wearing blue uniform vests and name tags, nearby as the response gave way to an investigation.

Tiffany DeFell, 36, who lives in Honor, about 25 miles (40 kilometers) from Traverse City, said she was in the store's parking lot when she saw chaos erupt around her.

"It was really scary. Me and my sister were just freaking out," she said. "This is something you see out of the movies. It's not what you expect to see where you're living."

Munson Healthcare said via social media that 11 people were being treated at the region's largest hospital in northern Michigan. Spokesperson Megan Brown said all were stabbing victims. Six people were critical and five were in serious condition late Saturday, she said.

Shea said the weapon involved appeared to be a folding-style knife. Shea said the suspect is believed to be a Michigan resident but declined to share further details. Michigan State Police had said earlier in the day that the suspect was in authorities' custody.

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer said: "Our thoughts are with the victims and the community reeling from this brutal act of violence."

Walmart said in a statement that it would continue to work closely with law enforcement in the investigation.

"Violence like this is unacceptable. Our thoughts are with those who were injured and we're thankful for the swift action of first responders," the statement said.

FBI Deputy Director Dan Bongino said in a social media post that bureau officials were responding to "provide any necessary support."

Traverse City is a popular vacation spot on the coast of Lake Michigan. It is known for its cherry festival, wineries and lighthouses and is about 25 miles (40 kilometers) east of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore.

China is suppressing coverage of deadly attacks.

Some people are complaining online

By KEN MORITSUGU Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — Late last month, a car struck children near an elementary school in an outlying district of Beijing, according to a Chinese news report.

A four-sentence police statement said a 35-year-old male driver hit pedestrians due to “improper operation” of the car. It didn’t mention the school or that the victims included children. Photos of the aftermath, which showed a half-dozen people lying in the street, were scrubbed from China’s closely controlled internet.

“We need the truth,” said one post on Weibo, a leading social media platform similar to X.

The ruling Communist Party has expanded information control since leader Xi Jinping came to power in 2012, seeing it as a way to prevent unrest. More and more topics, from negative news about the economy to LGBTQ+ identity, have become subject to some form of censorship. In the past half year, mass attacks — in which a person kills or injures multiple people with a vehicle or knife — appear to have been added to the list.

Some people in China are pushing back, complaining online in at least two cases in recent months after drivers hit pedestrians.

The government may be trying to prevent copycat crimes, experts have said. Another motivation could be local authorities wanting to cover up when they fail to do so.

A deadly case in November sparked a government reaction

There was a spate of attacks last fall, but it’s difficult to gauge whether they are increasing, given the dearth of information.

The attacks weren’t always a taboo topic. In the past, authorities released the basic details. Typically, the assailant was described as taking out their anger on society, often over financial losses.

That appears to have changed following a particularly horrific case in November that killed 35 people in Zhuhai in southern China. Authorities said the driver was upset about a divorce settlement. Orders came from the very top — from Xi — to take steps to prevent similar attacks.

Eight days later, an SUV hit students arriving at an elementary school in Hunan province. The number of injured — 30 children and adults — wasn’t made public until nearly a month later when the driver was sentenced.

The clampdown on information has tightened further since. In April, reports circulated online that a car had run into people outside a primary school in Jinhua city. At least three provincial state media outlets posted stories — but they were quickly taken down. To date, authorities haven’t released any information.

Censorship makes some people hungry for information

Twelve days later, a fast-moving car veered off a street and into people at a bus stop in the city of Tengzhou in eastern China.

Authorities said nothing. Videos of the May 4 crash were taken down from social media. The next day, online criticism of the silence began to appear. People said the police should release basic information such as the driver’s identity and the number of casualties. A few defended the police, saying it happened on a holiday.

“If a few such precedents are set, and more local governments follow this way in the future, the rules of information disclosure may not be upheld and may be compromised,” Hu Xijin, the former editor of a state-owned newspaper, warned in a social media post.

Local governments want to cover up news that reflects badly on them or their polices, said Jennifer Pan, a Stanford University professor who researches how political censorship and information manipulation work in the digital age. The central government sometimes has other priorities.

“When the issue gains attention despite local censorship efforts, the center has an incentive to preserve the legitimacy of the overall system through responsiveness and acknowledgement of the event and underlying issues,” she said in an email response.

The details came out 48 hours after the crash. Six people had died, and it had not been an intentional

attack: The driver was drunk, a state media report said.

Police respond with quick statements that are short on details

Since then, local authorities, at least in two cases in Beijing, seem to be taking a new approach: Issue a report quickly but with scant details.

Eleven days after the drunk driving case, a car hit people outside an elementary school in Beijing on May 15. The Beijing Traffic Police issued a report within a few hours but left out that the location was near a school. It said only that four people had been injured when a car sideswiped pedestrians on Jian'an West Road, and that the driver had been detained.

Authorities appeared to impose an information shutdown that evening. Police were stationed along the stretch of road and a person who appeared to be a neighborhood watch volunteer cautioned people in a nearby residential compound not to speak to strangers.

Six weeks later, posts appeared online on June 26 saying a car had hit children in Miyun, about 60 kilometers (40 miles) northwest of central Beijing. One well-reputed media outlet, Caixin, reached area shop owners who said that children had been hit, and a hospital that confirmed it was treating some child victims. Whether it was an intentional act remains unclear.

Trump plays golf in Scotland while protesters take to the streets and decry his visit

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

EDINBURGH, Scotland (AP) — President Donald Trump played golf Saturday at his course on Scotland's coast while protesters around the country took to the streets to decry his visit and accuse United Kingdom leaders of pandering to the American.

Trump and his son Eric played with the U.S. ambassador to Britain, Warren Stephens, near Turnberry, a historic course that the Trump family's company took over in 2014. Security was tight, and protesters kept at a distance went unseen by the group during Trump's round. He was dressed in black, with a white "USA" cap, and was spotted driving a golf cart.

The president appeared to play an opening nine holes, stop for lunch, then head out for nine more. By the middle of the afternoon, plainclothes security officials began leaving, suggesting Trump was done for the day.

Hundreds of demonstrators gathered on the cobblestone and tree-lined street in front of the U.S. Consulate about 100 miles (160 kilometers) away in Edinburgh, Scotland's capital. Speakers told the crowd that Trump was not welcome and criticized British Prime Minister Keir Starmer for striking a recent trade deal to avoid stiff U.S. tariffs on goods imported from the U.K.

Protests were planned in other cities as environmental activists, opponents of Israel's war with Hamas in Gaza and pro-Ukraine groups loosely formed a "Stop Trump Coalition." Anita Bhadani, an organizer, said the protests were "kind of like a carnival of resistance."

Trump's late mother, Mary Anne MacLeod, was born on the Isle of Lewis in Scotland and the president has suggested he feels at home in the country. But the protesters did their best to change that.

"I don't think I could just stand by and not do anything," said Amy White, 15, of Edinburgh, who attended with her parents. She held a cardboard sign that said "We don't negotiate with fascists." She said "so many people here loathe him. We're not divided. We're not divided by religion, or race or political allegiance, we're just here together because we hate him."

Other demonstrators held signs of pictures with Trump and Jeffrey Epstein as the fervor over files in the case has increasingly frustrated the president.

In the view of Mark Gorman, 63, of Edinburgh, "the vast majority of Scots have this sort of feeling about Trump that, even though he has Scottish roots, he's a disgrace." Gorman, who works in advertising, said he came out "because I have deep disdain for Donald Trump and everything that he stands for."

Saturday's protests were not nearly as large as the throngs that demonstrated across Scotland when

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Trump played at Turnberry during his first term in 2018.

But, as bagpipes played, people chanted "Trump Out!" and raised dozens of homemade signs that said things like "No red carpet for dictators," "We don't want you here" and "Stop Trump. Migrants welcome."

One dog had a sign that said "No treats for tyrants."

Some on the far right took to social media to call for gatherings supporting Trump in places such as Glasgow.

Trump also plans to talk trade with Starmer and Ursula von der Leyen, the European Commission president. But golf is a major focus.

The family will also visit another Trump course near Aberdeen in northeastern Scotland, before returning to Washington on Tuesday. The Trumps will cut the ribbon and play a new, second course in that area, which officially opens to the public next month.

Scottish First Minister John Swinney, who is also set to meet with Trump during the visit, announced that public money will go to staging the 2025 Nexo Championship, previously known as the Scottish Championship, at Trump's first course near Aberdeen next month.

"The Scottish Government recognizes the importance and benefits of golf and golf events, including boosting tourism and our economy," Swinney said.

At a protest Saturday in Aberdeen, Scottish Parliament member Maggie Chapman told the crowd of hundreds: "We stand in solidarity, not only against Trump but against everything he and his politics stand for."

The president has long lobbied for Turnberry to host the British Open, which it has not done since he took over ownership.

In a social media post Saturday, Trump quoted the retired golfer Gary Player as saying Turnberry was among the "Top Five Greatest Golf Courses" he had played in as a professional. The president, in the post, misspelled the city where his golf course is located.

Comic-Con salutes James Gunn and gets first looks at 'Coyote vs. Acme,' and new 'Star Trek' forays

SAN DIEGO (AP) — Director James Gunn got an ovation from thousands for "Superman" in the most fitting place of all — Comic-Con.

Among the highlights of day three of the San Diego pop culture spectacular was a sincere tribute to the director who's now helming Warner Bros.' DC Comics screen universe, even if John Cena played it for laughs.

It came at a panel on the forthcoming Season 2 of DC's HBO series "The Peacemaker," and Cena appeared in the title character's full comic costume and grand helmet, leading the legions in the kind of exaggerated drama he was perfect at provoking in his wrestling days.

It was Gunn's first time in front of a crowd in the weeks since "Superman" was released and has earned more than \$200 million in North America.

"Today has been the most fun day I've had in a year," Gunn told the crowd at the end of the session.

"Superman" was his first film as captain of the DC ship, but his first foray was in 2021's "The Suicide Squad," which spawned the "Peacemaker" TV series.

The crowd saw scenes from Season 2, which arrives in August and sees Cena entering another dimension where he gets to be a cool version of the hero instead of the often pained and pathetic version that's typical of the character. Some characters from "Superman" will make appearances.

That panel followed another rousing showcase in Hall H, where star Ryan Gosling and directors Phil Lord and Chris Miller showed scenes from their forthcoming science-comedy space adventure "Project Hail Mary."

The scenes from the film set for release in March included a look at Rocky, a faceless, stone-shaped alien who becomes Gosling's unlikely partner in an attempt to save the universe from ecological disaster.

Saturday morning cartoons in Hall H

Wile E. Coyote is getting his day in court — and theaters.

The stars of "Coyote vs. Acme" delivered a rousing presentation Saturday morning of a movie that at one point wasn't going to be released but is now bound for theaters in August 2026. The underdog story

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— both of the movie and Coyote — was a running theme of the panel. But rather than direct ire at Warner Bros., the real-world studio that shelved the project, the panel focused on the fictional Acme Corp.

"This is purely an Acme decision ... and I am saying this for legal purposes," moderator Paul Scheer said at the start of the panel.

The movie is a hybrid of animation and live action and is based on a 1990 New Yorker article that satirized a legal complaint filed by Coyote against Acme, the maker of the TNT, detonators, rocket shoes, catapults and other products that consistently backfire during the Coyote's fruitless attempts to catch the Roadrunner.

Laughter filled Hall H as some 6,000 watched a montage of Coyote being blown up, flattened and falling into chasms in a scene set to Johnny Cash's cover of "Hurt." Coyote is replaying the moments in his lair when an ad for a personal injury lawyer appears on TV.

They also played six minutes of the movie, including a scene of opening statements in the case in which Coyote's lawyer, Will Forte, accidentally unleashes a rocket skate into the courtroom, setting Coyote and the judge's robes on fire. Cena plays a slick Acme lawyer who wins over the jury, which includes a cartoon character, quickly.

Forte said he didn't think the movie would ever get to audiences.

"I'm pretty speechless. You think back to the journey that this movie has taken. I had kind of given up hope at a certain point," Forte said. At one point, his comments were interrupted by a man playing an Acme lawyer who stormed into Hall H with cease-and-desist letters.

Director Dave Green said the movie conforms to famed animator Chuck Jones' rules for the struggle between the Coyote and Roadrunner, which include the bird always staying on the road and the Coyote being ultimately more humiliated than hurt when he falls, is crushed or gets blown up by TNT.

The movie, which features cameos from numerous Looney Tunes characters like Foghorn Leghorn, Tweety and Bugs Bunny, will be released on Aug. 28, 2026. Ketchup Entertainment teamed up with Warner Bros. on the film and in the release of "The Day the Earth Blew Up: A Looney Tunes Movie."

Also on Saturday morning, the cast of "Bad Guys 2" teasing new footage from the movie and describing how they recorded their characters.

Marc Maron, who plays Snake, joked he asked to be tied up as he performed his lines on the floor. "The depth of the character should read a little more this time," he said.

The film, based on the graphic novel series by Aaron Blabey, introduces a new crew of animal criminals, the Bad Girls played by Danielle Brooks, Natasha Lyonne and Maria Bakalova.

'Star Trek' ventures to new places

Paramount showed off its first footage from a new series, "Starfleet Academy," which stars Holly Hunter and Paul Giamatti.

The show follows cadets as they go through training, with Hunter serving as chancellor of the academy. It will arrive in 2026, the 60th anniversary year of the original "Star Trek" series.

Paramount's other "Star Trek" series, "Strange New Worlds," also shared updates.

The crew of the USS Enterprise are being turned into puppets for an upcoming "Strange New Worlds" episode, Paramount announced Saturday. The puppets will be created by Jim Henson's Creature Shop.

Season 3, which follows the adventures of the Enterprise under the command of Capt. Christopher Pike, is being released on Paramount+.

What's happened at Comic-Con 2025 so far

An estimated 135,000 people — many in costumes — are expected to attend Comic-Con 2025, which runs through Sunday in downtown San Diego.

So far, fans have gotten previews of "Five Nights at Freddy's 2," the upcoming FX series "Alien: Earth" and "Predator: Badlands," which will be in theaters in November.

The latest child to starve to death in Gaza weighed less than when she was born

By SAMY MAGDY and MARIAM DAGGA Associated Press

KHAN YOUNIS, Gaza Strip (AP) — A mother pressed a final kiss to what remained of her 5-month-old daughter and wept. Esraa Abu Halib's baby now weighed less than when she was born.

On a sunny street in shattered Gaza, the bundle containing Zainab Abu Halib represented the latest death from starvation after 21 months of war and Israeli restrictions on aid.

The baby was brought to the pediatric department of Nasser Hospital on Friday. She was already dead. A worker at the morgue carefully removed her Mickey Mouse-printed shirt, pulling it over her sunken, open eyes. He pulled up the hems of her pants to show her knobby knees. His thumb was wider than her ankle. He could count the bones of her chest.

The girl had weighed over 3 kilograms (6.6 pounds) when she was born, her mother said. When she died, she weighed less than 2 kilograms (4.4 pounds).

A doctor said it was a case of "severe, severe starvation."

She was wrapped in a white sheet for burial and placed on the sandy ground for prayers. The bundle was barely wider than the imam's stance. He raised his open hands and invoked Allah once more.

She needed special formula

Zainab was one of 85 children to die of malnutrition-related causes in Gaza during the war, according to the latest toll released by the territory's Health Ministry on Saturday. It said 127 people had died of malnutrition-related causes overall, with the adult deaths counted in just the past few weeks.

"She needed a special baby formula which did not exist in Gaza," Zainab's father, Ahmed Abu Halib, told The Associated Press as he prepared for her funeral prayers in the hospital's courtyard in the southern city of Khan Younis.

Dr. Ahmed al-Farah, head of the pediatric department, said the girl had needed a special type of formula that helps with babies allergic to cow's milk.

He said she hadn't suffered from any diseases, but the lack of the formula led to chronic diarrhea and vomiting. She wasn't able to swallow as her weakened immune system led to a bacterial infection and sepsis, and quickly lost more weight.

'Many will follow'

The child's family, like many of Gaza's Palestinians, lives in a tent, displaced. Her mother, who also has suffered from malnutrition, said she breastfed the girl for only six weeks before trying to feed her formula.

"With my daughter's death, many will follow," she said. "Their names are on a list that no one looks at. They are just names and numbers. We are just numbers. Our children, whom we carried for nine months and then gave birth to, have become just numbers." Her loose robe hid her own weight loss.

The arrival of children suffering from malnutrition has surged in recent weeks, al-Farah said. His department, with a capacity of eight beds, has been treating about 60 cases of acute malnutrition. They have placed additional mattresses on the ground.

Another malnutrition clinic, affiliated with the hospital, receives an average of 40 cases weekly, he said.

"Unless the crossings are opened and food and baby formula are allowed in for this vulnerable segment of Palestinian society, we will witness unprecedented numbers of deaths," he warned.

Doctors and aid workers in Gaza blame Israel's restrictions on the entry of aid and medical supplies. Food security experts warn of famine in the territory of over 2 million people.

'Shortage of everything'

After ending the latest ceasefire in March, Israel cut off the entry of food, medicine, fuel and other supplies completely to Gaza for 2 ½ months, saying it aimed to pressure Hamas to release hostages.

Under international pressure, Israel slightly eased the blockade in May. Since then, it has allowed in around 4,500 trucks for the U.N. and other aid groups to distribute, including 2,500 tons of baby food and high-calorie special food for children, Israel's Foreign Ministry said last week. Israel says baby formula has been included, plus formula for special needs.

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The average of 69 trucks a day, however, is far below the 500 to 600 trucks a day the U.N. says are needed for Gaza. The U.N. says it has been unable to distribute much of the aid because hungry crowds and gangs take most of it from its arriving trucks.

Separately, Israel has backed the U.S.-registered Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, which in May opened four centers distributing boxes of food supplies. More than 1,000 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli forces since May while trying to get food, mostly near those new aid sites, the U.N. human rights office says.

Much of Gaza's population now relies on aid.

"There was a shortage of everything," the mother of Zainab said as she grieved. "How can a girl like her recover?"

Late Saturday, Israel's foreign ministry announced that a humanitarian pause would begin Sunday morning in parts of Gaza to allow for more aid delivery, and it added: "Israel rejects the false accusations of 'starvation' propaganda initiated by Hamas which manipulates pictures of children suffering from terminal diseases. It is shameful."

Israel's military says airdrops of aid will begin in Gaza as hunger grows

By WAFAA SHURAF and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — Israel's military announced that airdrops of aid would begin Saturday night in Gaza, and humanitarian corridors will be established for United Nations convoys, after increasing accounts of starvation-related deaths.

The statement late Saturday followed months of experts' warnings of famine amid Israeli restrictions on aid. International criticism, including by close allies, has grown as several hundred Palestinians have been killed in recent weeks while trying to reach food distribution sites.

The military statement did not say where the airdrops or humanitarian corridors would be. It also said the military is prepared to implement humanitarian pauses in densely populated areas. Israel's foreign ministry said late Saturday the humanitarian pauses would start Sunday in "civilian centers" along with humanitarian corridors.

The military "emphasizes that combat operations have not ceased" in Gaza against Hamas, and it asserted there is "no starvation" in the territory, where most of the population of over 2 million has been displaced into a shrinking area with little infrastructure. The majority of people rely on aid.

Later, the Israeli military released video footage of what it said were airdrops in coordination with international organizations and led by COGAT, the Israeli defense agency in charge of aid coordination in the Palestinian territory. It said the drop included seven packages of aid containing flour, sugar and canned food.

Witness accounts from Gaza have been grim. Some health workers are so weakened by hunger that they put themselves on IV drips to keep treating the badly malnourished. Parents have shown their limp and emaciated children. Wounded men have described desperate dashes for aid under gunfire.

The military statement said airdrops would be conducted in coordination with international aid organizations. It was not clear where they would be carried out. And it wasn't clear what role the recently created and Israeli-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation — meant as an alternate to the U.N. aid system — might play. GHF chair Johnnie Moore in a statement said the group stood ready to assist.

At least 53 killed

Israeli airstrikes and gunshots killed at least 53 people in Gaza overnight and into Saturday, most of them shot dead while seeking aid, according to Palestinian health officials and the local ambulance service.

Deadly Israeli gunfire was reported twice close to the Zikim crossing with Israel in the north. In the first incident, at least a dozen people waiting for aid trucks were killed, said staff at Shifa hospital, where bodies were taken. Israel's military said it fired warning shots to distance a crowd "in response to an immediate threat."

A witness, Sherif Abu Aisha, said people started running when they saw a light that they thought was

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from aid trucks, but as they got close, they realized it was Israel's tanks. That's when the army started firing, he told The Associated Press. He said his uncle was among those killed.

"We went because there is no food ... and nothing was distributed," he said.

On Saturday evening, Israeli forces killed at least 11 people and wounded 120 others when they fired toward crowds who tried to get food from an entering U.N. convoy, Dr. Mohamed Abu Selmiyah, director of Shifa hospital, told the AP.

"We are expecting the numbers to surge in the next few hours," he said. There was no immediate military comment.

AP video showed a group of weary Palestinian men carrying a body along with sacks of flour. They said he was hit by a truck but had no details. "You die to fetch some food for your children," said one man, Fayez Abu Riyala, thin and sweating.

In the southern city of Khan Younis, Israeli forces shot dead at least nine people trying to get aid entering through the Morag corridor, according to the hospital's morgue records. There was no immediate military comment.

Elsewhere, those killed in strikes included four people in an apartment building in Gaza City and at least eight, including four children, in the crowded tent camp of Muwasi in Khan Younis, hospitals said.

Turning to airdrops, with a warning

The airdrops were requested by neighboring Jordan, and a Jordanian official said they mainly will drop food and milk formula. The United Arab Emirates said airdrops would start "immediately." Britain said it plans to work with partners to airdrop aid and evacuate children requiring medical assistance.

But the head of the United Nations agency for Palestinian refugees, Philippe Lazzarini, warned that airdrops are "expensive, inefficient and can even kill starving civilians" and won't reverse the increasing starvation or prevent aid diversion.

While Israel's army has said it allows aid into the enclave with no limit on the trucks that can enter, the U.N. says it is hampered by military restrictions on its movements and criminal looting. The Hamas-run police had provided security for aid delivery, but it has been unable to operate after being targeted by airstrikes.

Israel on Saturday said over 250 trucks carrying aid from the U.N. and other organizations entered Gaza this week. About 600 trucks entered per day during the latest ceasefire that Israel ended in March.

Israel faces growing international pressure. More than two dozen Western-aligned countries and over 100 charity and human rights groups have called for an end to the war, harshly criticizing Israel's blockade and a new aid delivery model it has rolled out.

More than 1,000 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli forces since May while trying to get food, mostly near the new aid sites run by the GHF, an American contractor, the U.N. human rights office says.

The charities and rights groups said their own staff struggled to get enough food.

Inside Gaza, children with no preexisting conditions have begun to starve to death.

"We only want enough food to end our hunger," said Wael Shaaban at a charity kitchen in Gaza City as he tried to feed his family of six.

Meanwhile, an activist boat from the Freedom Flotilla Coalition trying to reach Gaza with aid, the Handala, livestreamed video showing Israeli forces boarding around midnight.

The Israeli Foreign Ministry said in a statement on X that the navy stopped a vessel it identified as the Navarn from entering Palestinian territorial waters off the Gaza coast. It said the vessel was safely making its way to Israeli shores and all the passengers were safe.

"Unauthorized attempts to breach the blockade are dangerous, unlawful, and undermine ongoing humanitarian efforts," the ministry said.

Stalled ceasefire talks

Ceasefire talks between Israel and Hamas were at a standstill after the U.S. and Israel recalled negotiating teams on Thursday.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Friday his government was considering "alternative

options" to talks. A Hamas official, however, said negotiations were expected to resume next week and called the delegations' recall a pressure tactic.

Egypt and Qatar, which mediate alongside the United States, said talks would resume but did not say when.

"Our loved ones do not have time for another round of negotiations, and they will not survive another partial deal," said Zahiro Shahar Mor, nephew of hostage Avraham Munder, one of 50 still in Gaza from Hamas' attack on Oct. 7, 2023, that sparked the war. Mor spoke at a weekly rally in Tel Aviv.

More than 59,700 Palestinians have been killed during the war, according to Gaza's Health Ministry. Its count doesn't distinguish between militants and civilians, but the ministry says that more than half of the dead are women and children. The ministry operates under the Hamas government. The U.N. and other international organizations see it as the most reliable source of data on casualties.

Thailand and Cambodia trade fresh attacks and accusations as allies call for a ceasefire

By JINTAMAS SAKSORNCHAI and SOPHENG CHEANG Associated Press

SURIN, Thailand (AP) — Thailand and Cambodia traded accusations of fresh attacks Saturday as deadly border clashes entered a third day and President Donald Trump joined a chorus of international voices calling for a ceasefire. The fighting has killed at least 33 people and displaced more than 168,000.

Artillery and small arms fire were reported near several border villages, expanding the area of the fighting that flared Thursday after a land mine explosion along the border wounded five Thai soldiers. Cambodian and Thai officials blamed each other for starting the clashes.

Both countries recalled their ambassadors and Thailand closed its border crossings with Cambodia.

Cambodian authorities reported 12 new deaths on Saturday, bringing its toll to 13, while the Thai military said a soldier was killed, raising the number of dead to 20, mostly civilians.

Cambodia's Information Minister Neth Pheaktra said Saturday that the clashes have forced 10,865 Cambodian families, or 37,635 people, in three border provinces to evacuate to safe locations. Thai officials said more than 131,000 people have fled their border villages.

The 800-kilometer (500-mile) frontier between Thailand and Cambodia has been disputed for decades, but past confrontations have been limited and brief. The latest tensions flared in May when a Cambodian soldier was killed in a confrontation that created a diplomatic rift and roiled Thailand's domestic politics.

International allies call for peace

On Saturday, President Donald Trump posted on Truth Social that he has talked with the leaders of Thailand and Cambodia and suggested he would not conclude a trade agreement with either country if the cross-border hostilities continued. He later said both sides have agreed to meet to negotiate a ceasefire.

Thailand's Foreign Ministry gave a politely hedged response to Trump's proposal, saying Acting Prime Minister Phumtham Wechayachai thanked him for his concern and said he agreed in principle that a ceasefire is needed.

"However, Thailand would like to see sincere intention from the Cambodian side," the ministry said, reiterating Bangkok's desire for bilateral talks with Cambodia. The statement said Phumtham asked Trump to convey that position to the Cambodian side.

Fresh News, an online news agency close to the Cambodian government, reported that Prime Minister Hun Manet posted on social media that Cambodia "agrees with the request for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire between the two armies."

However, as reported by Fresh News, Hun Manet appeared to misunderstand or misrepresent Thailand's position as Bangkok agreeing to an immediate ceasefire.

Trump's intervention followed increasing pressure on the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to defuse the tensions between its two members.

During an emergency meeting on Friday, members of the U.N. Security Council called for a de-escalation and urged ASEAN to mediate a peaceful solution. The council didn't issue a resolution on the crisis, but

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Thai Foreign Minister Maris Sangiampongsa said Saturday that the group's 15 members called for restraint, an end to hostilities and a peaceful resolution.

The leader of Malaysia, ASEAN's current chair, has said Thailand and Cambodia are open to a ceasefire proposal. Malaysian media said Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim has tasked the country's foreign minister with mediating peace talks, but no concrete plans have been announced.

Maris said earlier Saturday that his country has agreed in principle to ASEAN's ceasefire proposal, but insisted Cambodia must first cease hostilities. He said Thailand continues to engage with Malaysia on the matter.

"Thailand reaffirms its commitment to resolving the conflict peacefully and in accordance with international law," he said, urging Cambodia to "return to the negotiating table with sincerity and in good faith."

Sides trade accusations and deny responsibility

Cambodia's Defense Ministry condemned what it called an expanded Thai offensive early Saturday after five heavy artillery shells were fired into Pursat province. It said the attack was an "unprovoked and premeditated act of aggression."

Ministry spokesperson Lt. Gen. Maly Socheata said tensions flared in the coastal province of Koh Kong and expressed concern about the possibility of confrontations at sea.

Maly Socheata said seven Cambodian civilians and five soldiers have been killed in two days of fighting. Another man was reportedly killed when a pagoda he was hiding under was hit by Thai rockets.

The Thai army has denied targeting Cambodian civilians and accuses Phnom Penh of using "human shields" by positioning their weapons near residential areas.

In a statement Saturday, Thailand's navy accused Cambodian forces of initiating a new attack in the province of Trat, which shares a border with Koh Kong, saying Thai forces responded swiftly and "successfully pushed back the Cambodian incursion at three key points." The navy warned that "aggression will not be tolerated."

Thai authorities also alleged several Cambodian artillery shells damaged homes and property in neighboring Laos. Lao officials have not publicly responded to the claim.

Call to protect civilians amid claim of cluster bomb use

Human Rights Watch urged the U.N. Security Council and other nations to press Thailand and Cambodia to abide by international humanitarian law and take all steps to protect civilians. Children have been harmed and Thailand has closed at least 852 schools and seven hospitals for safety reasons, the rights group said in a statement Saturday.

Both sides have fired rockets and artillery, and after initially denying Cambodian claims that internationally prohibited cluster munitions were being used, a Thai military spokesperson said Friday that such weapons can be utilized "when necessary" to achieve military objectives. Human Rights Watch condemned the use of cluster munitions in populated areas.

Neither Thailand nor Cambodia is party to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, which bans the use of the weapon. Thai authorities used them during a border dispute with Cambodia in February 2011 that left 20 people dead.

"Neither Thailand nor Cambodia appears to be paying attention to international humanitarian law at great expense to civilians," John Sifton, Asia advocacy director at Human Rights Watch, said in a statement. "Diplomatic efforts underway need to prioritize protecting civilians and civilian infrastructure."

Thai officials acknowledged it has used F-16 jets and drones to launch airstrikes.

Shocking plunge by Southwest flight from Southern California was to avoid another aircraft

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Passengers aboard a Southwest Airline jet that took a dramatic plunge to avoid an oncoming aircraft were told by the pilot that they nearly struck another plane before landing safely in Las Vegas.

The Boeing 737 jet dropped hundreds of feet in a little over 30 seconds during a flight on Friday, ac-

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cording to a flight tracking website.

Caitlin Burdi, who was on the flight, said it took a short plunge and then a more drastic drop as passengers screamed in terror.

"We really thought we were plummeting to a plane crash," Burdi told Fox News Digital in an interview at the Las Vegas airport. She said the pilot told passengers they had nearly collided with another plane.

The Federal Aviation Administration said the flight, Southwest 1496, was responding to an on board alert about another aircraft in its vicinity. The FAA is investigating. Southwest said the crew responded to two alerts that required the pilot to climb then descend. The flight left Hollywood Burbank Airport just before noon.

Another passenger, comedian Stef Zamorano, said she saw a woman who wasn't wearing her seat belt shoot up and out of her seat, and a man next to her was clutching her arm. A woman across the aisle was panicking, she said.

"She was pretty much verbalizing how we all felt, saying, 'I want to get off this plane. I want to be on the ground,'" Zamorano told The Associated Press on Friday. Another woman was panicking and saying she wanted "to get off this plane."

The plane was in the same airspace near Burbank as a Hawker Hunter Mk. 58, according to the flight tracking site, FlightAware. Records show it is owned by Hawker Hunter Aviation, a British defense contracting company.

The company didn't respond to messages on Friday and Saturday seeking comment.

Southwest said the flight continued to Las Vegas, "where it landed uneventfully." The airline said that it is working with the FAA "to further understand the circumstances" of the event.

This close call is just the latest incident to raise questions about aviation safety in the wake of January's midair collision over Washington, D.C., that killed 67 people.

Ichiro Suzuki, CC Sabathia and Billy Wagner are set for Hall of Fame induction

By MARK FRANK Associated Press

COOPERSTOWN, N.Y. (AP) — Ichiro Suzuki was always known for his meticulous preparation during his 19-year Major League Baseball career.

For his induction into the Hall of Fame? Not so much.

"Of course, I'm nervous and I probably should be preparing more, but this morning I actually went to the field, long tossed and kind of ran and did my workout, so I guess for me that was more important," Suzuki said Saturday through an interpreter on the eve of his enshrinement.

Suzuki is the first Japanese player chosen for the Hall and fell one vote shy of becoming the second unanimous selection. He will be joined Sunday by CC Sabathia, a six-time All-Star who won the 2007 AL Cy Young Award, and relief pitcher Billy Wagner. Dave Parker, who died a month before he was to be inducted, and Dick Allen will be honored posthumously. They were voted in by the classic era committee.

MLB has been profoundly impacted by Japan since Suzuki's arrival in 2001. His induction coincided with the opening of an exhibit at the Hall on Thursday entitled Yakyu/Baseball: The Transpacific Exchange of the Game, which celebrates the ways Japanese and American baseball are interconnected. It honors not just Suzuki but also pitcher Hideo Nomo and current two-way star Shohei Otani.

As interconnected as the two countries are, Suzuki does not want Japanese baseball to become a carbon copy of MLB.

"I don't think Japan should copy what MLB does. I think Japanese baseball should be Japanese baseball and the way they do things, and MLB should be the way they are. I think they should be different and not the same," he said.

Suzuki received 393 of 394 votes (99.7%) from the Baseball Writers' Association of America. Sabathia was on 342 ballots (86.8%) and Wagner on 325 (82.5%), which was 29 votes more than the 296 needed for the required 75%.

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Suzuki was a two-time AL batting champion and 10-time All-Star and Gold Glove outfielder, hitting .311 with 117 homers, 780 RBIs and 509 stolen bases with Seattle, the New York Yankees and Miami.

He is perhaps the best contact hitter ever, with 1,278 hits in Nippon Professional Baseball and 3,089 in MLB, including a season-record 262 in 2004. His combined total of 4,367 exceeds Pete Rose's MLB record of 4,256.

Suzuki visited the Hall seven times during his career, but this time is different.

"I had a purpose. I would come to the basement and look at some of the artifacts. This time around, though, I didn't come to have one purpose to see something. I just wanted to experience Cooperstown, take it all in. That's the difference this time around.

"This is the place where I'd come (during the season) and kind of cleanse myself and get a great feeling again," he said.

For Sabathia, his induction represents a full-circle moment because his plaque will have him sporting a Yankees cap with the interlocking NY.

A native of Vallejo, California, Sabathia "thought I wanted to be close to home," but after "pretending" the Yankees didn't offer him a contract on the first day of free agency, his wife persuaded him to sign with the Bronx Bombers following an in-home meeting with general manager Brian Cashman.

"My wife was the one that said: 'You're trying to do all these different things, figure out all these contracts. You need to go where they want you. All you talk about is you want to win, be a winner and all these things. How can you not go to New York? That's the one place they try to win every single year.' When she put it that way, it was like I was born to be a Yankee," Sabathia said.

"And I think for the longest time I tried to run away from that because my father would always tell me I was going to play for the Yankees. He passed away when I was 23, so he wasn't there to tell me it was OK if I failed. I think I was scared to go there and fail. But it ended up being the best decision I ever made. I ran from that decision for a long time. I thought I wanted to play on the other coast, but I think I was born to play with the pinstripes."

Suzuki and Sabathia were teammates for more than two seasons, which makes their induction extra special.

"It feels like we're teammates. Obviously, Ichi and I were rookies together. I always say he stole my Rookie of the Year award (in 2001) so it's great to be able to go in the HOF with him and Billy," Sabathia said.

Sabathia went 251-161 with a 3.74 ERA and 3,093 strikeouts, third among left-handers behind Randy Johnson and Steve Carlton, during 19 seasons with Cleveland, Milwaukee and the Yankees.

While Sabathia and Suzuki were elected in their first appearance on the ballot, Wagner made it on his 10th and final try.

"Well, after seeing how a lot of guys like Lee Smith and Ted Simmons and (other) guys had to wait their turn to get to this point and go through the veterans committee, and how hard it is to get in here, you know, it's well worth the wait," Wagner said.

Wagner, a seven-time All-Star, became the ninth pitcher in the Hall who was primarily a reliever, after Hoyt Wilhelm, Rollie Fingers, Dennis Eckersley, Bruce Sutter, Goose Gossage, Trevor Hoffman, Lee Smith and Mariano Rivera. Wagner is the only left-hander.

Two others honored Saturday were longtime Cleveland Guardians broadcaster Tom Hamilton, winner of the Ford C. Frick Award for broadcasting, and retired Washington Post sports writer and columnist Tom Boswell, who received the BBWAA Career Excellence Award.

Heat advisories and warnings issued for Southeast and Midwest as temperatures and humidity soars

By STEVE KARNOWSKI Associated Press

It's always hot in the summer in the U.S. Southeast, but even by the standards of Florida and the Carolinas, the steamy heat wave on tap for the region Saturday into the coming week is a little extreme.

The National Weather Service issued heat advisories for a large swath of the East Coast from central

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Florida to Virginia through much of the weekend. Highs in the upper 90s F (mid 30s C) were forecast for central Florida, with heat indexes reaching 105 degrees F to 110 degrees F (40.6 C to 43 C). The outlook was similar up through Georgia and the Carolinas into Virginia.

Extreme heat warnings were out for much of eastern North Carolina, as far inland as Raleigh, and extending into a corner of South Carolina, including Myrtle Beach. Forecasters warned of dangerously hot conditions with temperatures approaching or exceeding 100 F (38 C) in some areas on Sunday and heat indexes up to 115 F through Sunday evening.

"Drink plenty of fluids, stay in an air-conditioned room, stay out of the sun, and check up on relatives and neighbors. the weather service advised. "Take extra precautions when outside. Wear lightweight and loose fitting clothing. Try to limit strenuous activities to early morning or evening. Take action when you see symptoms of heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Stay cool, stay hydrated, stay informed."

The weather service said several major metropolitan areas in the Southeast — including Raleigh and Charlotte in North Carolina, Greenville-Spartanburg in South Carolina, and Atlanta in Georgia — were expected to face an extreme heat risk for several days, with minimal overnight relief. It said over 30 million people would likely be affected at the peak of the heat wave through midweek.

A hot, humid weekend was also in store for the Midwest. Extreme heat watches were out for eastern Nebraska, western Iowa and southern Minnesota. Heat indexes were expected to reach 96 F (36 C) on Saturday and go even higher on Sunday in Minnesota.

And an extreme heat warning was out for the St. Louis, Missouri, area through Tuesday evening, with highs around 99 F (37 C) and heat indexes around 110 F forecast for Monday and Tuesday.

Parts of Iowa were hit by storms Saturday morning that dumped between 2 and 5 inches (5 to 13 centimeters) of rain in some areas and triggered flash flood warnings.

Women in legislatures across the US fight for 'potty parity'

By KIMBERLEE KRUESI and CLAIRE RUSH Associated Press

For female state lawmakers in Kentucky, choosing when to go to the bathroom has long required careful calculation.

There are only two bathroom stalls for women on the third floor of the Kentucky Statehouse, where the House and Senate chambers are located. Female legislators — 41 of the 138 member Legislature — needing a reprieve during a lengthy floor session have to weigh the risk of missing an important debate or a critical vote.

None of their male colleagues face the same dilemma because, of course, multiple men's bathrooms are available. The Legislature even installed speakers in the men's bathrooms to broadcast the chamber's events so they don't miss anything important.

In a pinch, House Speaker David Osborne allows women to use his single stall bathroom in the chamber, but even that attracts long lines.

"You get the message very quickly: This place was not really built for us," said Rep. Lisa Willner, a Democrat from Louisville, reflecting on the photos of former lawmakers, predominantly male, that line her office.

The issue of potty parity may seem comic, but its impact runs deeper than uncomfortably full bladders, said Kathryn Anthony, professor emerita at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign's School of Architecture.

"It's absolutely critical because the built environment reflects our culture and reflects our population," said Anthony, who has testified on the issue before Congress. "And if you have an environment that is designed for half the population but forgets about the other half, you have a group of disenfranchised people and disadvantaged people."

There is hope for Kentucky's lady legislators seeking more chamber potties.

A \$300 million renovation of the 155-year-old Capitol — scheduled for completion by 2028 at the soonest — aims to create more women's restrooms and end Kentucky's bathroom disparity.

The Bluegrass State is among the last to add bathrooms to aging statehouses that were built when female legislators were not a consideration.

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In the \$392 million renovation of the Georgia Capitol, expanding bathroom access is a priority, said Gerald Pilgrim, chief of staff with the state's Building Authority. It will introduce female facilities on the building's fourth floor, where the public galleries are located, and will add more bathrooms throughout to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

"We know there are not enough bathrooms," he said.

Evolving equality in statehouses

There's no federal law requiring bathroom access for all genders in public buildings. Some 20 states have statutes prescribing how many washrooms buildings must have, but historical buildings — such as statehouses — are often exempt.

Over the years, as the makeup of state governments has changed, statehouses have added bathrooms for women.

When Tennessee's Capitol opened in 1859, the architects designed only one restroom — for men only — situated on the ground floor. According to legislative librarian Eddie Weeks, the toilet could only be "flushed" when enough rainwater had been collected.

"The room was famously described as 'a stench in the nostrils of decency,'" Weeks said in an email.

Today, Tennessee's Capitol has a female bathroom located between the Senate and House chambers. It's in a cramped hall under a staircase, sparking comparisons to Harry Potter's cupboard bedroom, and it contains just two stalls. The men also just have one bathroom on the same floor, but it has three urinals and three stalls.

Democratic Rep. Aftyn Behn, who was elected in 2023, said she wasn't aware of the disparity in facilities until contacted by The Associated Press.

"I've apparently accepted that waiting in line for a two-stall closet under the Senate balcony is just part of the job," she said.

"I had to fight to get elected to a legislature that ranks dead last for female representation, and now I get to squeeze into a space that feels like it was designed by someone who thought women didn't exist -- or at least didn't have bladders," Behn said.

The Maryland State House is the country's oldest state capitol in continuous legislative use, operational since the late 1700s. Archivists say its bathroom facilities were initially intended for white men only because desegregation laws were still in place. Women's restrooms were added after 1922, but they were insufficient for the rising number of women elected to office.

Delegate Pauline Menes complained about the issue so much that House Speaker Thomas Lowe appointed her chair of the "Ladies Rest Room Committee," and presented her with a fur covered toilet seat in front of her colleagues in 1972. She launched the women's caucus the following year.

It wasn't until 2019 that House Speaker Adrienne A. Jones, the first woman to secure the top position, ordered the addition of more women's restrooms along with a gender-neutral bathroom and a nursing room for mothers in the Lowe House Office Building.

'No longer do we fret and squirm or cross our legs in panic'

As more women were elected nationwide in the 20th century, some found creative workarounds.

In Nebraska's unicameral Legislature, female senators didn't get a dedicated restroom until 1988, when a facility was added in the chamber's cloakroom. There had previously been a single restroom in the senate lounge, and Sen. Shirley Marsh, who served for some 16 years, would ask a State Patrol trooper to guard the door while she used it, said Brandon Metzler, the Legislature's clerk.

In Colorado, female House representatives and staff were so happy to have a restroom added in the chamber's hallway in 1987 that they hung a plaque to honor then-state Rep. Arie Taylor, the state's first Black woman legislator, who pushed for the facility.

The plaque, now inside a women's bathroom in the Capitol, reads: "Once here beneath the golden dome if nature made a call, we'd have to scramble from our seats and dash across the hall ... Then Arie took the mike once more to push an urge organic, no longer do we fret and squirm or cross our legs in panic."

The poem concludes: "In mem'ry of you, Arie (may you never be forgot), from this day forth we'll call

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that room the Taylor Chamber Pot.”

New Mexico Democratic state Rep. Liz Thomson recalled missing votes in the House during her first year in office in 2013 because there was no women’s restroom in the chamber’s lounge. An increase in female lawmakers — New Mexico elected the largest female majority Legislature in U.S. history in 2024 — helped raise awareness of the issue, she said.

“It seems kind of like fluff, but it really isn’t,” she said. “To me, it really talks about respect and inclusion.”

The issue is not exclusive to statehouses. In the U.S. Capitol, the first restroom for congresswomen didn’t open until 1962. While a facility was made available for female U.S. Senators in 1992, it wasn’t until 2011 that the House chamber opened a bathroom to women lawmakers.

Jeannette Rankin of Montana was the first woman elected to a congressional seat. That happened in 1916.

Willner insists that knowing the Kentucky Capitol wasn’t designed for women gives her extra impetus to stand up and make herself heard.

“This building was not designed for me,” she said. “Well, guess what? I’m here.”

As Beyoncé’s Cowboy Carter tour draws to a close, Blue Ivy emerges as a star

By SARAH JONES-SMITH Associated Press

“Who they came to see?” Beyoncé asks as she performs her 2023 single “My House” during the Cowboy Carter tour. For many, the answer has been Blue Ivy.

Blue Ivy Carter, the Grammy-winning artist’s 13-year-old daughter, is more present than ever on stage, and fans are impressed by the growth from her first performance years ago to now.

Isabella Kerr, 15, has admired Beyoncé for years, but said she attended the Cowboy Carter tour specifically to experience Blue Ivy’s moves in person.

“People are saying, “Oh, she’s a mini Beyoncé,” but no, I think she’s the first Blue. Everything about her when she’s on stage is electrifying,” said Kerr.

The Cowboy Carter tour concludes Saturday in Las Vegas. The tour’s 30 previous shows have had fans buzzing that Blue Ivy is well on her way to being a next generation powerhouse.

Blue Ivy’s stage presence grows on Cowboy Carter tour

Blue first graced the stage at 11 years old during her mother’s 2023 Renaissance tour, appearing during the legacy-celebrating anthems “My Power” and “Black Parade.” Supporters anticipated her performance at each stop.

She performed again during “Beyoncé Bowl,” the NFL Christmas Day Halftime Show that was just nominated for four Emmy Awards. She danced alongside the icon as she performed songs from the “Cowboy Carter” album for the first time.

“Even the difference between the Renaissance Tour and now, you can tell she’s really grown in her confidence,” said fan and artist Olivia Ellis. “You can tell she has a different vibe about her.”

On the Cowboy Carter tour, she can almost be mistaken for one of Beyoncé’s professional dancers. She is on stage for nearly every song and has a solo recreating her mother’s choreography from her 2006 “Déjà-vu” music video, a nod to the undeniable similarities between the two.

An inherited professionalism

Online videos of Blue display professionalism comparable to her mother’s during the Cowboy Carter tour. During a rainy New Jersey stop, she brought out towels to dry her area of the stage before nailing her “America Has a Problem” choreography.

In another unexpected moment during a Chicago show, her earring got caught on Beyoncé’s hair. Blue remained calm, removed the jewelry and motioned to the singer that it was safe in her hand as they both seamlessly continued.

“It’s the family business,” said Kinitra D. Brooks, an academic and author of “The Lemonade Reader,” a collection that explores the nuances of Beyoncé’s 2016 visual album, “Lemonade.” “She is literally studying under the best person doing it out there today. Why wouldn’t she take advantage of that opportunity?”

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Blue Ivy's fans dub themselves as the 'Ivy League'

In "Renaissance: A Film by Beyoncé," fans were given a behind-the-scenes look at the decision-making process the first time Blue was allowed to perform. Beyoncé expressed how nervous she was about her child being in front of thousands of people made her, revealing she initially said no.

"I did not think it was an appropriate place for an 11-year-old on a stadium stage," she said in the documentary. "I made a deal with her, and I said, 'If you practice and you show your commitment, I'll let you do one show.'" Blue Ivy fulfilled her end of the deal, and a fan base was formed: the "Ivy League."

Kerr says Blue's accomplishments inspire her to work harder to achieve her own dreams. "She worked to be on stage, and look at her now. If I work to what I want to be, I can be killing it like her."

At last month's Cowboy Carter Paris stop, members of the Beyhive and Ivy League finally got what they had been asking for — Blue Ivy merchandise. Shirts with the teen's face and the phrase "Déjà Blue" plastered on the front were available for purchase.

Prior to that, fans were creating their own custom pieces that highlighted Blue and Beyoncé's connection.

At the MetLife Stadium show, Ellis wore a custom corset top she painted, showcasing Blue Ivy and her 8-year-old sister, Rumi Carter, on stage with Beyoncé during "Protector," a track from the "Cowboy Carter" album that Rumi is featured on.

"I thought that would just be a really fun moment to highlight on a corset," she said. "It's just really cool to see her as a mom because we've all grown up with Beyoncé, and now it's like her show is kind of like a family affair."

Mother-daughter duos resonate with Beyoncé and Blue Ivy's bond

Blue Ivy's confidence and professionalism are not only a testament to her hard work, but Beyoncé's motherhood.

Mother-daughter duos around the globe filled stadium seats, excited to watch Beyoncé and her daughter display their strong bond for the world to see. In many cases, the mothers have been Beyoncé fans for years and are excited for their daughters to grow up with Blue Ivy, a high-flyer for their generation.

Tanazha Baylis took her now 11-year-old daughter, Aria Brown, to the Renaissance tour, where she did not miss a beat dancing along to Blue Ivy's "My Power" choreography.

Brown was so determined to attend the Cowboy Carter Tour that she started selling popular toys, such as slime and Squishmallows, and saving her money.

"She literally was like, 'Mom, I don't know what you're going to do, but I have to go to this concert,'" said Baylis. "I just had to make it happen after that."

Brown became a Beyoncé fan after participating in a dance recital with a theme centered around the superstar's career throughout the years. Baylis, who says she has always been a big fan, is happy to share these experiences with her daughter.

"It just showed her a cool mom and daughter, and it's just something that she can do as well. Beyoncé is a little older but, with seeing Blue there, it made it tangible for her."

Although there is no solid answer for what the future holds for Blue Ivy, it is widely recognized that the possibilities are limitless.

"We couldn't imagine that Beyoncé would do all of these things that she could do. All we saw were people trying to put limitations on her," said Brooks. "I think one of the things that Beyoncé wants us to do and what she wants for Blue is for us to not put those limitations on Blue."

The House is looking into the Epstein investigation.

Here's what could happen next

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A key House committee is looking into the investigation of the late Jeffrey Epstein for sex trafficking crimes, working to subpoena President Donald Trump's Department of Justice for files in the case as well as hold a deposition of Epstein's former girlfriend, Ghislaine Maxwell.

The Republican-led House Oversight and Government Reform Committee acted just before House Speaker

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Mike Johnson, R-La., sent lawmakers home early for a monthlong break from Washington. The committee's moves are evidence of the mounting pressure for disclosure in a case that Trump has unsuccessfully urged his supporters to move past. But they were also just the start of what can be a drawn out process.

Here's what could happen next in the House inquiry as lawmakers seek answers in a case that has sparked rampant speculation since Epstein's death in 2019 and more recently caused many in the Trump administration to renege on promises for a complete accounting.

Subpoena for the Epstein files

Democrats, joined by three Republicans, were able to successfully initiate the subpoena from a subcommittee just as the House was leaving Washington for its August recess. But it was just the start of negotiations over the subpoena.

The subcommittee agreed to redact the names and personal information of any victims, but besides that, their demand for information is quite broad, encompassing "un-redacted Epstein files."

As the parameters of the subpoena are drafted, Democrats are demanding that it be fulfilled within 30 days from when it is served to Attorney General Pam Bondi. They have also proposed a list of document demands, including the prosecutorial decisions surrounding Epstein, documents related to his death, and communication from any president or executive official regarding the matter.

Ultimately, Republicans who control the committee will have more power over the scope of the subpoena, but the fact that it was approved with a strong bipartisan vote gives it some heft.

The committee chairman, Rep. James Comer, R-Ky., said he told the speaker that "Republicans on the Oversight Committee were going to move to be more aggressive in trying to get transparency with the Epstein files. So, we did that, and I think that's what the American people want."

Will Congress depose Ghislaine Maxwell?

Comer has said that he is hoping that staff from the committee can interview Maxwell under oath on Aug. 11 at or near the federal prison in Florida where she is serving a lengthy sentence for child sex trafficking.

In a congressional deposition, the subject typically has an attorney present to help them answer — or not answer — questions while maintaining their civil rights. Subjects also have the ability to decline to answer questions if it could be used against them in a criminal case, though in this instance that might not matter because Maxwell has already been convicted of many of the things she will likely be asked about.

Maxwell has the ability to negotiate some of the terms of the deposition, and she already conducted 1 1/2 days of interviews with Justice Department officials this past week.

Democrats, however, warn that Maxwell is not to be trusted.

"We should understand that this is a very complex witness and someone that has caused great harm and not a good person to a lot of people," Rep. Robert Garcia, the top Democrat on the oversight committee, told reporters this week.

The House wants to subpoena others

Committee Republicans also initiated a motion to subpoena a host of other people, including former President Bill Clinton, former Sen. Hillary Clinton as well as the former attorneys general dating back to Alberto Gonzales, who served under George W. Bush.

It's not clear how this sweeping list of proposed subpoenas will actually play out, but Comer has said, "We're going to move quickly on that."

How will Pam Bondi comply?

Trump is no stranger to fighting against congressional investigations and subpoenas. And as with most subpoenas, the Justice Department can negotiate the terms of how it fulfills the subpoena. It can also make legal arguments against handing over certain information.

Joshua A. Levy, who teaches on congressional investigations at Georgetown Law School and is a partner at Levy Firestone Muse, said that the results of the subpoena "depend on whether the administration wants to work through the traditional accommodation process with the House and reach a resolution or if one or both sides becomes entrenched in its position."

If Congress is not satisfied with Bondi's response — or if she were to refuse to hand over any information — there are several ways lawmakers can try to enforce the subpoena. However, that would require

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a vote to hold Bondi in contempt of Congress.

It's practically unheard of for one political party to vote to hold one of its own members in contempt of Congress, but the Epstein saga has also cut across political lines and driven a wedge in the GOP.

Growing pressure on the Trump administration for disclosure

Ultimately, the bipartisan vote to subpoena the files showed how political pressure is mounting on the Trump administration to disclose the files. Politics, policy and the law are all bound up together in this case, and many in Congress want to see a full accounting of the sex trafficking investigation.

"We can't allow individuals, especially those at the highest level of our government, to protect child sex traffickers," said Rep. Summer Lee, D-Pa., a committee member.

The Trump administration is already facing the potential for even more political tension. When Congress comes back to Washington in September, a bipartisan group of House lawmakers is working to advance to a full House vote a bill that aims to force the public release of the Epstein files.

Trump says Japan will invest \$550 billion in US at his direction.

It may not be a sure thing

By JOSH BOAK and MARI YAMAGUCHI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump is bragging that Japan has given him, as part of a new trade framework, \$550 billion to invest in the United States. It's an astonishing figure, but still subject to negotiation and perhaps not the sure thing he's portraying.

"Japan is putting up \$550 billion in order to lower their tariffs a little bit," Trump said Thursday. "They put up, as you could call it, seed money. Let's call it seed money."

He said 90% of any profits from the money invested would go to the U.S. even if Japan had put up the funds. "It's not a loan or anything, it's a signing bonus," the Republican president said, on the trade framework that lowered his threatened tariff from 25% to 15%, including on autos.

A White House official said the terms are being negotiated and nothing has been formalized in writing. The official, who insisted on anonymity to detail the terms of the talks, suggested the goal was for the \$550 billion fund to make investments at Trump's direction.

The sum is significant: It would represent more than 10% of Japan's entire gross domestic product. The Japan External Trade Organization estimates that direct investment into the U.S. economy topped \$780 billion in 2023. It is unclear the degree to which the \$550 billion could represent new investment or flow into existing investment plans.

What the trade framework announced Tuesday has achieved is a major talking point for the Trump administration.

The president has claimed to have brought trillions of dollars in new investment into the U.S., though the impact of those commitments have yet to appear in the economic data for jobs, construction spending or manufacturing output. The framework also enabled Trump to say other countries are agreeing to have their goods taxed, even if some of the cost of those taxes are ultimately passed along to U.S. consumers.

On the \$550 billion, Japan's Cabinet Office said it involves the credit facility of state-affiliated financial institutions, such as Japan Bank for International Cooperation. Further details would be decided based on the progress of the investment deals.

Japanese trade negotiator Ryosei Akazawa, upon returning to Japan, did not discuss the terms of the \$550 billion investment. Akazawa said he believes a written joint statement is necessary, at least on working levels, to avoid differences. He is not thinking about a legally binding trade pact.

The U.S. apparently released its version of the deal while Japanese officials were on their return flight home.

"If we find differences of understanding, we may have to point them out and say 'that's not what we discussed,'" Akazawa said.

The U.S. administration said the fund would be invested in critical minerals, pharmaceuticals, computer chips and shipbuilding, among other industries. It has said Japan will also buy 100 airplanes from Boeing

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and rice from U.S. farmers as part of the framework, which Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said would be evaluated every three months.

"And if the president is unhappy, then they will boomerang back to the 25% tariff rates, both on cars and the rest of their products. And I can tell you that I think at 25, especially in cars, the Japanese economy doesn't work," Bessent told Fox News' "The Ingraham Angle."

Akazawa denied that Bessent's quarterly review was part of the negotiations.

"In my past eight trips to the United States during which I held talks with the president and the ministers," Akazawa said. "I have no recollection of discussing how we ensure the implementation of the latest agreement between Japan and the United States."

He said it would cause major disruptions to the economy and administrative processes if the rates first rise to 25% as scheduled on Aug. 1 and then drop to 15%. "We definitely want to avoid that and I believe that is the understanding shared by the U.S. side," he said.

On buying U.S. rice, Japanese officials have said they have no plans to raise the current 770,000-ton "minimum access" cap to import more from America. Agricultural Minister Shinjiro Koizumi said Japan will decide whether to increase U.S. rice imports and that Japan is not committed to a fixed quota.

Trump's commerce secretary, Howard Lutnick, has suggested that the Japanese agreement is putting pressure on other countries such as South Korea to strike deals with the U.S. Trump, who is traveling in Scotland, plans to meet on Sunday with European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen to discuss trade.

"Whatever Donald Trump wants to build, the Japanese will finance it for him," Lutnick said Thursday on CNBC. "Pretty amazing."

How redistricting in Texas and other states could change the game for US House elections

By LEAH ASKARINAM Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Redistricting usually happens after the once-a-decade population count by the U.S. Census Bureau or in response to a court ruling. Now, Texas Republicans want to break that tradition — and other states could follow suit.

President Trump has asked the Texas Legislature to create districts, in time for next year's midterm elections, that will send five more Republicans to Washington and make it harder for Democrats to regain the majority and blunt his agenda. The state has 38 seats in the House. Republicans now hold 25 and Democrats 12, with one seat vacant after the death of a Democrat.

"There's been a lot more efforts by the parties and political actors to push the boundaries — literally and figuratively — to reconfigure what the game is," said Doug Spencer, Rothgerber Jr. Chair in Constitutional Law at the University of Colorado.

Other states are waiting to see what Texas does and whether to follow suit.

The rules of redistricting can be vague and variable; each state has its own set of rules and procedures. Politicians are gauging what voters will tolerate when it comes to politically motivated mapmaking.

Here's what to know about the rules of congressional redistricting:

When does redistricting normally happen?

Every decade, the Census Bureau collects population data used to divide the 435 House seats among the 50 states based on the updated head count.

It's a process known as reapportionment. States that grew relative to others might gain a seat at the expense of those whose populations stagnated or declined.

States use their own procedures to draw lines for the assigned number of districts. The smallest states receive just one representative, which means the entire state is a single congressional district.

Some state constitutions require independent commissions to devise the political boundaries or to advise the legislature. When legislatures take the lead, lawmakers can risk drawing lines that end up challenged in court, usually for violating the Voting Rights Act. Mapmakers can get another chance to resubmit new

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maps. Sometimes, judges draw the maps on their own.

Is midcycle redistricting allowed?

By the first midterm elections after the latest population count, each state is ready with its maps, but those districts do not always stick. Courts can find that the political lines are unconstitutional.

There is no national impediment to a state trying to redraw districts in the middle of the decade and to do it for political reasons, such as increasing representation by the party in power.

"The laws about redistricting just say you have to redistrict after every census," Spencer said. "And then some state legislatures got a little clever and said, well it doesn't say we can't do it more."

Some states do have laws that would prevent midcycle redistricting or make it difficult to do so in a way that benefits one party.

Gov. Gavin Newsom, D-Calif., has threatened to retaliate against the GOP push in Texas by drawing more favorable Democratic seats in his state. That goal, however, is complicated by a constitutional amendment that requires an independent commission to lead the process.

Is Texas' effort unprecedented?

Texas has done it before.

When the Legislature failed to agree on a redistricting plan after the 2000 census, a federal court stepped in with its own map.

Republican Tom DeLay of Texas, who was then the U.S. House majority leader, thought his state should have five more districts friendly to his party. "I'm the majority leader and we want more seats," he said at the time.

Statehouse Democrats protested by fleeing to Oklahoma, depriving the Legislature of enough votes to officially conduct any business. But DeLay eventually got his way, and Republicans replaced Democrats in five seats in 2004.

What do the courts say about gerrymandering?

In 2019, the Supreme Court ruled that federal courts should not get involved in debates over political gerrymandering, the practice of drawing districts for partisan gain. In that decision, Chief Justice John Roberts said redistricting is "highly partisan by any measure."

But courts may demand new maps if they believe the congressional boundaries dilute the votes of a racial minority group, in violation of the Voting Rights Act.

Could other states follow suit?

Washington Rep. Suzan DelBene, who leads House Democrats' campaign arm, indicated at a Christian Science Monitor event that if Texas follows through on passing new maps, Democratic-led states would look at their own political lines.

"If they go down this path, absolutely folks are going to respond across the country," DelBene said. "We're not going to be sitting back with one hand tied behind our back while Republicans try to undermine voices of the American people."

In New York, Democratic Gov. Kathy Hochul recently joined Newsom in expressing openness to taking up mid-decade redistricting. But state laws mandating independent commissions or blunting the ability to gerrymander would come into play.

Among Republican-led states, Ohio could try to further expand the 10-5 edge that the GOP holds in the House delegation; a quirk in state law requires Ohio to redraw its maps before the 2026 midterms.

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis said he was considering early redistricting and "working through what that would look like."

Immigration judges fired by Trump administration say they will fight back

By SOPHIA TAREEN Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — Federal immigration judges fired by the Trump administration are filing appeals, pursuing legal action and speaking out in an unusually public campaign to fight back.

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More than 50 immigration judges — from senior leaders to new appointees — have been fired since Donald Trump assumed the presidency for the second time. Normally bound by courtroom decorum, many are now unrestrained in describing terminations they consider unlawful and why they believe they were targeted.

Their suspected reasons include gender discrimination, decisions on immigration cases played up by the Trump administration and a courthouse tour with the Senate's No. 2 Democrat.

"I cared about my job and was really good at it," Jennifer Peyton, a former supervising judge told The Associated Press this week. "That letter that I received, the three sentences, explained no reason why I was fired."

Peyton, who received the notice while on a July Fourth family vacation, was appointed judge in 2016. She considered it her dream job. Peyton was later named assistant chief immigration judge in Chicago, helping to train, mentor and oversee judges. She was a visible presence in the busy downtown court, greeting outside observers.

She cited top-notch performance reviews and said she faced no disciplinary action. Peyton said she'll appeal through the Merit Systems Protection Board, an independent government agency Trump has also targeted.

Peyton's theories about why she was fired include appearing on a "bureaucrat watchdog list" of people accused by a right-wing organization of working against the Trump agenda. She also questions a courthouse tour she gave to Sen. Dick Durbin of Illinois in June.

Durbin blasted Peyton's termination as an "abuse of power," saying he's visited before as part of his duties as a publicly-elected official.

The nation's immigration courts — with a backlog of about 3.5 million cases — have become a key focus of Trump's hard-line immigration enforcement efforts. The firings are on top of resignations, early retirements and transfers, adding up to 106 judges gone since January, according to the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers, which represents judges. There are currently about 600 immigration judges.

Several of those fired, including Peyton, have recently done a slew of interviews on local Chicago television stations and with national outlets, saying they now have a platform for their colleagues who remain on the bench.

"The ones that are left are feeling threatened and very uncertain about their future," said Matt Biggs, the union's president.

Carla Espinoza, a Chicago immigration judge since 2023, was fired as she was delivering a verdict this month. Her notice said she'd be dismissed at the end of her two-year probationary period with the Executive Office for Immigration Review.

"I am personally committed to my career. We're not political appointees," she told AP. "I'm entitled to a reason."

She believes the firings have disproportionately affected women and ethnic minorities, including people with Hispanic-sounding surnames like hers. She plans to take legal action before the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, which has also shifted focus under Trump.

"There's a very strong pattern of discriminatory factors," she said.

Espinoza thinks another reason could be her decision to release a Mexican immigrant falsely accused of threatening to assassinate Trump. Ramón Morales Reyes was accused of writing a threatening letter by Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem. But the claims quickly fell apart as Wisconsin authorities determined that Morales Reyes was actually framed by a man who had previously attacked him.

Espinoza said she felt pressure with public scrutiny, media coverage and Noem's statements about Morales Reyes, which weren't corrected or removed from social media.

"It's hard to silence the noise and just do your job fairly when there's so much distraction," she said. "I think I did. And I stand by my decision as having been a fair one to release an individual who I believe was twice victimized."

The Executive Office for Immigration Review, part of the Justice Department that oversees the immigration courts, declined to comment on the firings through an agency spokesperson.

Peyton said she isn't sure that working as an immigration judge is still her dream job.

"It's important that everyone in our country knows what's happening in our immigration courts," she said. "The Department of Justice that I joined in 2016 is not the same one now."

Continuous glucose monitors are in vogue. But do you really need to track your blood sugar?

By JONEL ALECCIA AP Health Writer

A quarter-size device that tracks the rise and fall of sugar in your blood is the latest source of hope — and hype — in the growing buzz around wearable health technology.

Continuous glucose monitors, small patches that provide 24-hour insight into concentrations of sugar in the blood, could be a tool for Americans to "take control over their own health," Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. recently told federal lawmakers.

"They can take responsibility," Kennedy said. "They can begin to make good judgments about their diet, about their physical activity, about the way they live their lives."

The devices have lifesaving benefits for people with diabetes, the disease caused when blood sugar remains high because their bodies don't make enough insulin or become resistant to it. The condition, which affects more than 38 million people in the U.S., raises the risk of serious health problems such as heart and kidney disease and vision loss.

But the devices have surged in popularity among people without diabetes. Sales have been driven by high-profile marketers such as Casey Means, the nominee for U.S. surgeon general.

There's scant evidence the monitors are useful for people with normal blood sugar levels, said Dr. Jody Dushay, an endocrine specialist at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center.

Healthy bodies can effectively regulate glucose after meals and provide the energy they need to function. Glucose monitors may lead people to misinterpret normal swings in blood sugar that happen after eating or activity. In addition, the devices can be "notoriously inaccurate," providing misleading readings, she said.

"The problem with wearing these is that you can just be zooming in on and creating pathology when it's not there," Dushay said.

Here's what you need to know about the devices:

Here's what a continuous glucose monitor does

The device is a small patch, about the size of two stacked quarters, usually placed on the upper arm or stomach. It uses a needle to painlessly pierce the skin for a tiny sensor.

The sensor measures the glucose in fluid under the skin, delivering a signal every few minutes to a phone app or a handheld display. The apps typically record blood sugar levels and help people track the foods they eat and how they impact those levels.

When healthy people eat a meal that contains carbohydrates, their blood sugar rises, peaks and falls in response to the food.

A healthy fasting blood glucose level for a person without diabetes is roughly 70 milligrams per deciliter to 99 milligrams per deciliter. A range from 100 to 126 milligrams per deciliter indicates prediabetes and above 126 milligrams per deciliter indicates diabetes, according to the American Diabetes Association.

In adults without diabetes, blood sugar levels can climb to 140 milligrams per deciliter or more within an hour of a meal, before falling back to baseline levels within two or three hours, according to the association. It's a sign the body is processing sugar normally.

Continuous glucose monitors have been available since the late 1990s

For decades, these devices were available only for people with diabetes. The monitors revolutionized care by allowing more precise adjustment of insulin used to treat diabetes and giving people the ability to modify meals and activity more accurately.

Last year, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved the first over-the-counter monitors. Since

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then, many companies have emerged to market them, claiming to provide intensive, individualized health monitoring. Cost is generally about \$100 a month.

They've really caught on with consumers curious about how food and activity affect their blood sugar levels. For instance, Noom, the weight-loss and fitness app, launched a blood glucose feature last year that has proven extremely popular, said Alexander Fabry, a company executive.

"Of the people who are using a CGM, the vast majority of them don't have a diabetes diagnosis," he said.

Who can use the monitors?

The devices have been lifesaving for people with diabetes. And they can be helpful for people with risk factors for the disease, including obesity, prediabetes, a history of gestational diabetes or a family history of the condition.

The devices can allow users to see how specific food and activity choices affect their blood sugar in near real-time, said Dr. Alaina Vidmar, a pediatric obesity specialist at Children's Hospital Los Angeles.

"After a large meal, you may watch your blood sugar go up and sort of learn something about yourself," Vidmar said. "For example, I drink a sugar-sweetened soda and my blood sugar goes up really high, really fast. And maybe I don't feel as good, right?"

What are the cautions?

People without risk factors for diabetes may turn to the monitors just because they're curious, said Dr. David Kessler. A former FDA commissioner, Kessler doesn't have diabetes, but he wore a monitor for a couple months during research for his recent book, "Diet, Drugs and Dopamine."

"I think it's a very interesting tool to experiment with if you're so inclined," Kessler said.

But, he noted, the devices can't be used to diagnose or treat disease. Even experts don't agree on how to interpret or provide health advice for people without diabetes based on blood sugar data.

"No one knows what's optimal in the nondiabetic state," he said.

Before using a monitor, Dushay asks patients to consider their motives.

"What do you think you're going to get from the data?" she said. "What is to be gained from wearing that monitor?"

Families of Americans slain in the West Bank lose hope for justice

By JULIA FRANKEL Associated Press

BIDDU, West Bank (AP) — When Sayfollah Musallet of Tampa, Florida, was beaten to death by Israeli settlers in the West Bank two weeks ago, he became the fourth Palestinian-American killed in the occupied territory since the war in Gaza began.

No one has been arrested or charged in Musallet's slaying — and if Israel's track record on the other three deaths is any guide, it seems unlikely to happen. Yet Musallet's father and a growing number of U.S. politicians want to flip the script.

"We demand justice," Kamel Musallet said at his 20-year-old son's funeral earlier this week. "We demand the U.S. government do something about it."

Still, Musallet and relatives of the other Palestinian-Americans say they doubt anyone will be held accountable, either by Israel or the U.S. They believe the first word in their hyphenated identity undercuts the power of the second. And they say Israel and its law enforcement have made them feel like culprits — by imposing travel bans and, in some cases, detaining and interrogating them.

Although the Trump administration has stopped short of promising investigations of its own, the U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem has urged Israel to investigate the circumstances of each American's death.

Writing on X on July 15, U.S. Ambassador to Israel Mike Huckabee said he'd asked Israel to "aggressively investigate the murder" of Musallet and that "there must be accountability for this criminal and terrorist act."

Senator Chris Van Hollen of Maryland and 28 other Democratic senators have also called for an investigation. In a letter this week to Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Attorney General Pam Bondi, they pointed to the "repeated lack of accountability" after the deaths of Musallet and other Americans killed in the West Bank.

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Israel's military, police and Shin Bet domestic security agency did not respond to requests for comment about the Palestinian-Americans' deaths.

Families have demanded independent investigations

American-born teenagers Tawfic Abdel Jabbar and Mohammad Khmour were killed in early 2024 by Israeli fire while driving in the West Bank. In April 2025, 14-year-old Amer Rabee, a New Jersey native, was shot in the head at least nine times by Israeli forces, according to his father, as he stood among a grove of green almond trees in his family's village.

In the immediate aftermath of both cases, Israeli authorities said that forces had fired on rock throwers, allegations disputed by the families and by testimony obtained by the AP. Israel pledged to investigate the cases further, but has released no new findings.

The teens' families told the AP they sought independent investigations by American authorities, expressing doubts that Israel would investigate in good faith. According to the Israeli watchdog group Yesh Din, killings of Palestinians in the West Bank rarely result in investigations — and when they do, indictments are uncommon.

The U.S. Justice Department has jurisdiction to investigate the deaths of its own citizens abroad, but does so after it gets permission from the host government and usually works with the host country's law enforcement. The U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem declined to say whether the U.S. has launched independent probes into the killings.

A spokesperson for the embassy said in a statement that investigations are "underway" in Israel over the deaths of the four Americans and that its staff is pressing the Israeli authorities to move quickly and transparently.

Sen. Van Hollen said that when the U.S. deals with Israel it "either doesn't pursue these cases with the vigor necessary, or we don't get any serious cooperation."

"And then instead of demanding cooperation and accountability, we sort of stop — and that's unacceptable. It's unacceptable to allow American citizens to be killed with impunity," the Maryland Democrat said.

Israel says it holds soldiers and settlers accountable

Israel says it holds soldiers and settlers to account under the bounds of the law, and that the lack of indictments does not mean a lack of effort.

A prominent recent case was the death of Shireen Abu Akleh, a Palestinian-American journalist for broadcaster Al Jazeera killed in the West Bank in 2022. An independent U.S. analysis of the circumstances of her death found that fire from an Israeli soldier was "likely responsible" for her killing but said it appeared to be an accident.

Despite an Israeli military investigation with similar conclusions, no one was ever disciplined.

Violence by Israeli forces and settlers has flared in the West Bank since the Hamas attack on Oct. 7, 2023. More than 950 Palestinians have been killed since the beginning of the war in Gaza, according to the United Nations. Some have been militants killed in fighting with Israel, though the dead have also included stone-throwers and bystanders uninvolved in violence.

Instead of justice, restrictions and detentions

Rather than a path toward justice, the families of Khmour, Rabee, and Abdel Jabbar say they've faced only challenges since the deaths.

Khmour, born in Miami, Florida, was shot and killed in April 2024 while driving in Biddu, a West Bank town near Jerusalem where he lived since age 2. U.S. investigators visited his family after the killing, his family said. Abdel Jabbar was killed while driving down a dirt road close to Al Mazra as-Sharqiya, his village in the northern West Bank.

Khmour's cousin, Malek Mansour, the sole witness, told the AP he was questioned by both Israeli and American investigators and repeated his testimony that shots came from a white pickup on Israeli territory. He believes the investigators did not push hard enough to figure out who killed his cousin.

"The matter ended like many of those who were martyred (killed)," said Hanan Khmour, Khmour's mother.

Two months after the death, Israeli forces raided the family's home and detained Mohammad's brother, Omar Khmour, 23, also an American citizen.

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Videos taken by family and shared with the AP show Omar Khmour blindfolded and handcuffed as Israeli soldiers in riot gear lead him out of the building and into a military jeep.

He said he was threatened during questioning, held from 4 a.m. to 3 p.m., and warned not to pursue the case.

'Here, being American means nothing'

Omar Khmour said Israeli soldiers at checkpoints have prevented him from leaving the West Bank to visit Israel or Jerusalem. Two other American fathers of Palestinian-Americans killed since Oct. 7, 2023 reported similar restrictions.

Hafeth Abdel Jabbar, Tawfic Abdel Jabbar's father, said he and his wife were blocked from leaving the West Bank for seven months. His son, Amir Abdel Jabbar, 22, remains restricted.

The father of Amer Rabee says he and his wife have also been stuck in the West Bank since their son's killing. He showed AP emails from the U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem in which a consular official told him that Israel had imposed a travel ban on him, though it was unclear why.

Israeli authorities did not respond to comment on the detentions or travel restrictions.

Rabee said that in a land where violence against Palestinians goes unchecked, his family's American passports amounted to nothing more than a blue book.

"We are all American citizens," Rabee said. "But here, for us, being American means nothing."

Today in History: July 27, Korean War hostilities end

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Sunday, July 27, the 208th day of 2025. There are 157 days left in the year.

Today in History:

On July 27, 1953, the Korean Armistice Agreement was signed at Panmunjom, ending three years of fighting on the Korean peninsula that killed an estimated 4 million people.

Also on this date:

In 1789, President George Washington signed a measure establishing the Department of Foreign Affairs, forerunner of the Department of State.

In 1866, Cyrus W. Field finished laying out the first successful underwater telegraph cable between North America and Europe.

In 1909, during the first official test of the U.S. Army's first airplane, Orville Wright flew himself and a passenger, Lt. Frank Lahm, above Fort Myer, Virginia, for one hour and 12 minutes.

In 1940, Billboard magazine published its first "music popularity chart" listing best-selling retail records. In first place was "I'll Never Smile Again" recorded by Tommy Dorsey and His Orchestra, with featured vocalist Frank Sinatra.

In 1974, the House Judiciary Committee voted 27-11 to adopt the first of three articles of impeachment against President Richard Nixon, charging he had personally engaged in a course of conduct designed to obstruct justice in the Watergate case.

In 1980, on day 267 of the Iranian hostage crisis, the deposed Shah of Iran died at a military hospital outside Cairo, Egypt, at age 60.

In 1981, 6-year-old Adam Walsh was abducted from a department store in Hollywood, Fla., and was later murdered (Adam's father, John Walsh, subsequently became a victims' rights activist and, in 1988, launched and hosted the television show "America's Most Wanted").

In 1996, terror struck the Atlanta Olympics as a pipe bomb exploded at Centennial Olympic Park, directly killing one person and injuring 111. (Anti-government extremist Eric Rudolph later pleaded guilty to the bombing, exonerating security guard Richard Jewell, who had been wrongly suspected.)

In 2012, Britain opened its Olympic Games in a celebration of Old England and new, even cheekily featuring stunt doubles for Queen Elizabeth II and fictional special agent James Bond parachuting into Olympic Stadium.

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In 2013, security forces and armed men clashed with supporters of Egypt's ousted president, Mohamed Morsi, killing at least 72 people.

In 2015, the Boy Scouts of America ended its blanket ban on gay adult leaders while allowing church-sponsored Scout units to maintain the exclusion for religious reasons.

In 2018, the White House announced that North Korea had returned the remains of what were believed to be U.S. servicemen killed during the Korean War, with a U.S. military plane making a rare trip into North Korea to retrieve 55 cases of remains.

In 2020, the world's biggest COVID-19 vaccine study began with the first of 30,000 planned volunteers helping to test shots created by the National Institutes of Health and Moderna Inc.

In 2021, American gymnast Simone Biles pulled out of the gymnastics team competition at the Tokyo Olympics to focus on her mental well-being, saying she realized following a shaky vault that she wasn't in the right headspace to compete.

Today's Birthdays: Singer-songwriter Bobbie Gentry is 83. Actor-director Betty Thomas is 78. Olympic gold medal figure skater Peggy Fleming is 77. Singer Maureen McGovern is 76. Comedian-actor-writer Carol Leifer is 69. Comedian Bill Engvall is 68. Actor-martial artist Donnie Yen is 62. Jazz singer Karrin Allyson is 62. Rock musician Juliana Hatfield is 58. Former professional wrestler Triple H is 56. Actor Nikolaj Coster-Waldau (NIH'-koh-lye KAH'-stur WAHL'-dah) is 55. Comedian Maya Rudolph is 53. Rock musician Abe Cunningham (Deftones) is 52. Singer-songwriter Pete Dinklage is 51. Former MLB All-Star Alex Rodriguez is 50. Actor Jonathan Rhys (rees) Meyers is 48. Actor/comedian Heidi Gardner (TV: "Saturday Night Live") is 42. Actor Taylor Schilling is 41. MLB All-Star pitcher Max Scherzer is 41. Golfer Jordan Spieth is 32.