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Sunday, June 28

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m.
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.

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.

U14 Legion at Vern Jark Tournament, Aberdeen
Sr. Legion at The ROCK Touranment, Madison
U12 Softball hosts Mobridge, DH, 2 p.m., (B&W)
U10 Softball hosts Mobridge, DH, 4 p.m., (G&W)
U8 Softball hosts Mobridge, DH, 2 p.m. (B&W)
U14 Softball hosts Mobridge, DH, 4 p.m.

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

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Monday, June 29

Senior Menu: Spanish rice with hamburger, broccoli, Mandrain oranges with vanilla pudding, whole wheat bread.

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

BBB Open Gym, 6-8 p.m., Arena

Jr. Legion hosts WIN, 5:30 p.m.

U12 Baseball at Clark, DH, 5:30 p.m.

U10 Baseball hosts Webster, DH, 5:30 p.m. (W&R)

U8 Baseball at Webster, DH, 5:30 p.m. (Red & Blue)

U18 Softball at Hub City, 6 p.m.

U12 Softball at Hub City, DH, 6 p.m. (B&W)

U10 Softball at Hub City, DH, 6 p.m. (B&W)

GROTON 1912 ★ HISTORICAL JAIL

★
315 1ST AVE. E, GROTON

Open House

**SUNDAY,
JULY 12,**

★
10 A.M. TO 3 P.M.
★



★ *Come see the
newly restored jail* ★

Effective Immediately

CITY OF GROTON WATER RESTRICTIONS

*We appreciate your immediate cooperation
to keep our water levels safe.*

If your house number is odd, you may only water
on odd days (& only before 11am or after 6pm).

If your house number is even, you may only water
on even days (& only before 11am or after 6pm).



**Absolutely NO WATERING
between 11am - 6pm.**

Failure to comply will result in fines.
After a warning is issued, fines will start
at \$50 and double with each offense.

Land for Sale

**800 Acres Spink
& northern
Clark County
646 tillable acres,
133 pasture**

**For more info, visit:
www.keminklandco.com**



**Rod Kemink, Broker
605-880-2112
Watertown, SD**

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Groton Sr. Legion splits pair at Rock Tournament in Madison

MADISON, S.D. — Groton Legion Post 39 opened play at the Rock Tournament in Madison by splitting a pair of games Saturday, earning a 4-2 victory over West Central before falling 15-2 to Beresford.

Groton relied on timely hitting and a strong pitching performance from Gavin Englund to open the tournament with a win over West Central.

Englund put Groton on the board in the third inning with a home run to left field. West Central answered with two runs in the bottom of the inning to tie the game, but Groton regained control and held on for the 4-2 victory.

Englund was dominant on the mound, allowing just four hits and two runs over six innings while striking out eight and walking six. He also drove in two runs offensively.

Groton pounded out 10 hits in the victory, with the bottom of the order playing a key role. Jarrett Erdmann, Tristin McGannon and Kason Oswald combined for five of the team's 10 hits. Erdmann and Oswald each collected two hits.

The defense also came through with a double play to help preserve the win.

In the second game, Beresford used a balanced offensive attack to hand Groton a 15-2 setback.

Beresford scored four runs in the first inning, added five more in the third and broke the game open with another five-run fifth inning while collecting 14 hits.

Groton's highlight came in the fourth inning when Englund blasted a two-run home run to center field, accounting for both Post 39 runs. Carter Simon also enjoyed a strong game at the plate, going 2-for-3 to lead Groton with two hits.

Oswald started on the mound for Groton, allowing 10 runs on nine hits over four innings. Beresford starter Ashton Oberle earned the win before Tommy Walth tossed two scoreless innings in relief.

Walth led Beresford with three hits, while Trey Vander Weerdt also collected three hits. Noah Schoenfelder drove in three runs for Beresford.

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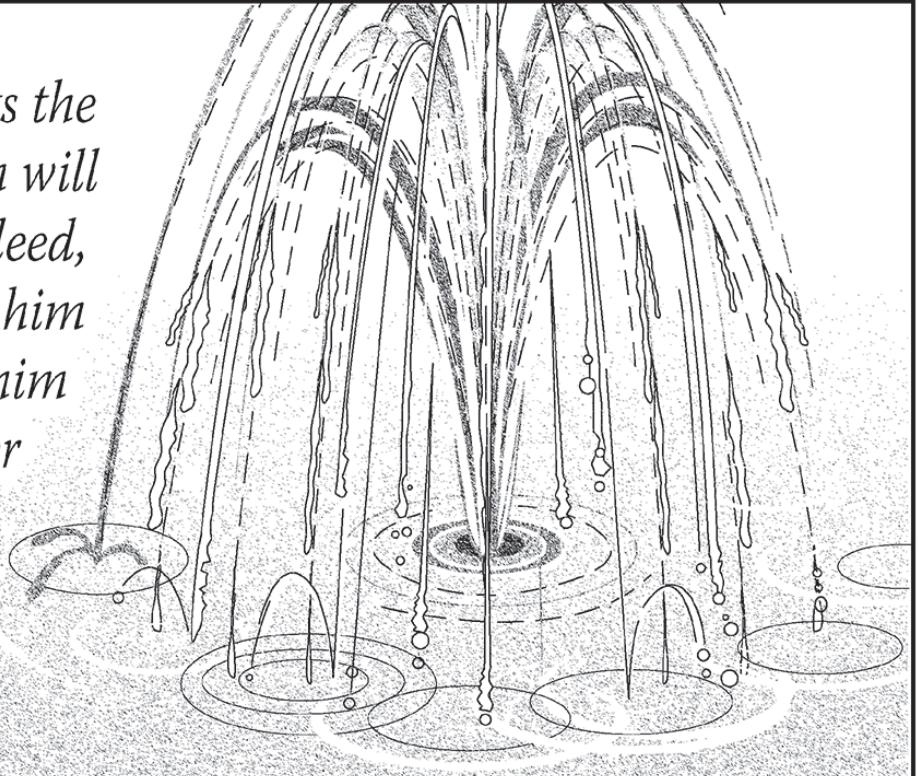
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THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

...whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.

JOHN 4:14



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TURNED GREEN AFTER DONALD TRUMP WORKED ON IT.



DITTO.

BIBLE

TRIVIA

by Wilson Casey

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

2. From Acts 17, in what city were Paul and his companions accused of turning the world upside down? *Antioch, Smyrna, Thessalonica, Galatia*

3. How many days did it take Nehemiah to get the wall around Jerusalem completed? *6, 52, 100, 1,000*

4. From Genesis 3:15, the snake is supposed to strike at what part of man? *Throat, Hand, Heel, Eyes*

5. In Christianity, what's the title given to the head of a diocese? *Arch, Cardinal, Bishop, Reverend*

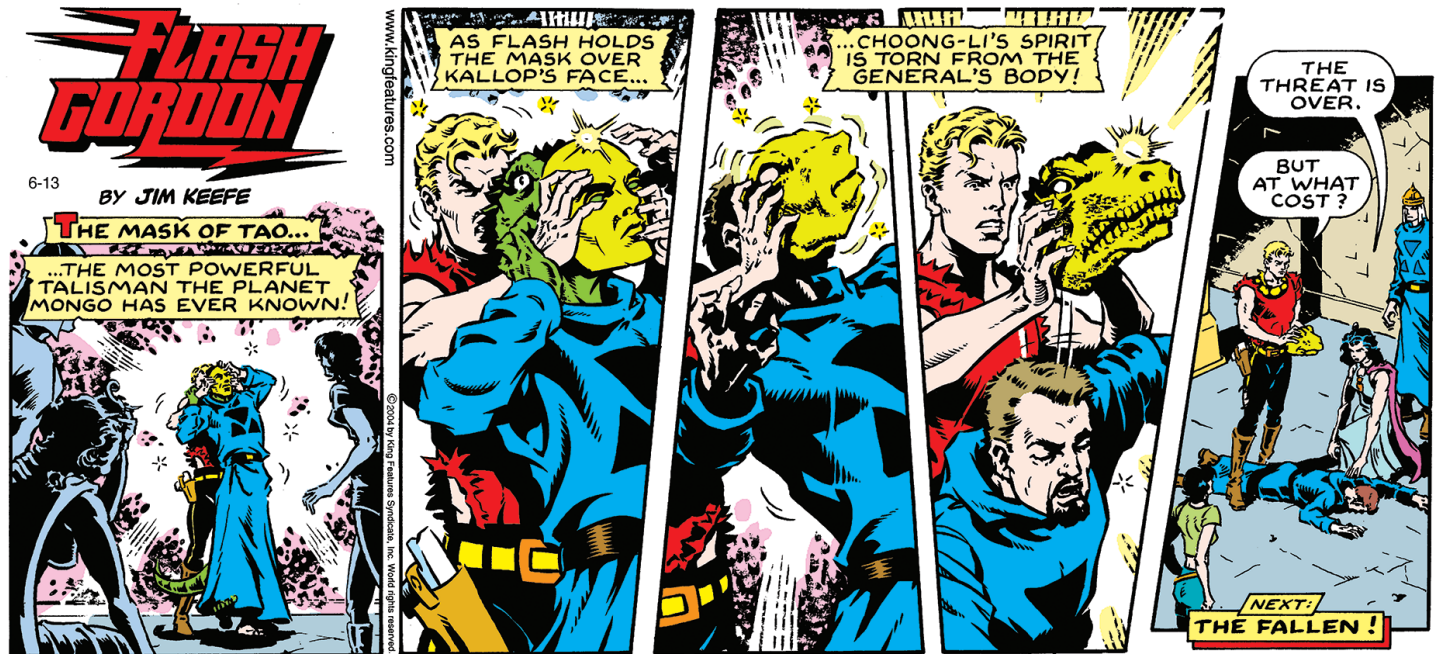
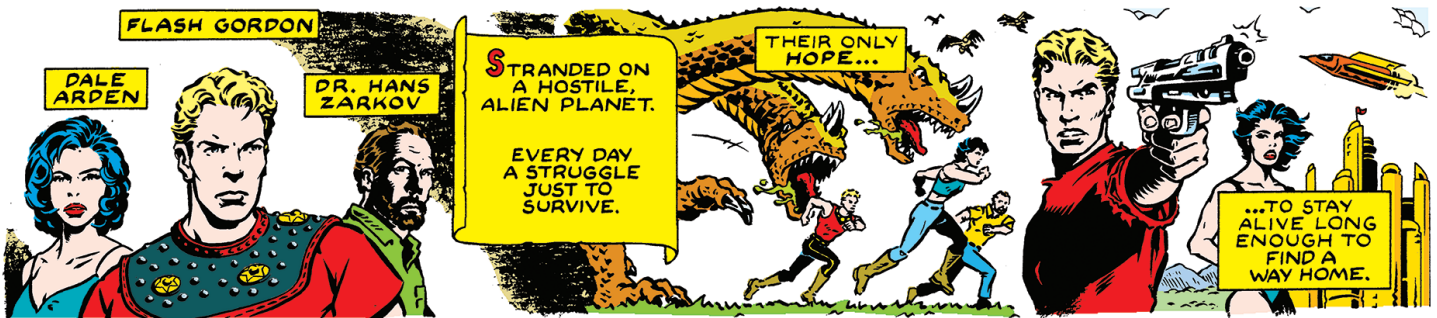
6. From Revelation 12, what angel fights against Satan? *Gabriel, Angel of the Lord, Cherubim, Michael*

ANSWERS: 1) New, 2) Thessalonica, 3) 52, 4) Heel, 5) Bishop, 6) Michael

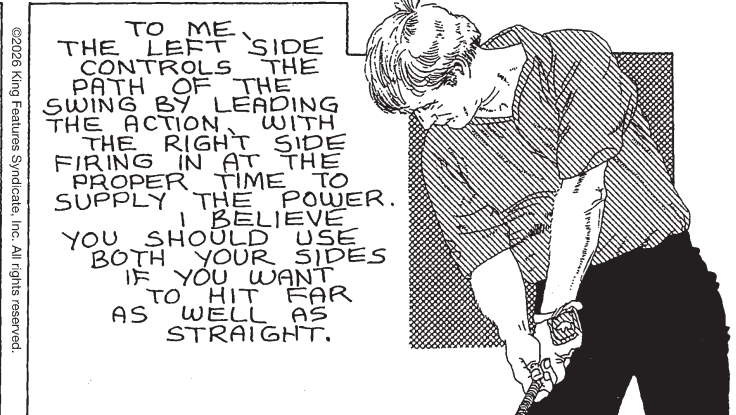
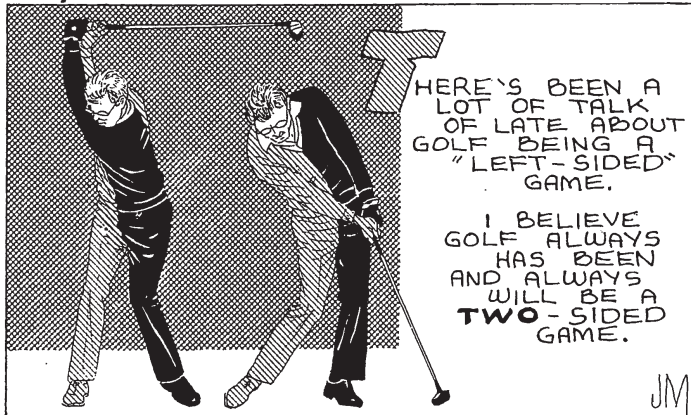
More than 1,200 brand-new trivia questions in Wilson Casey's latest book "Quest for Bible Knowledge" available in bookstores and online.

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Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS





Opiate Prescriptions for Pain Don't Provide Relief to Patient

DEAR DR. ROACH: I have horrible neck, shoulder, back and hip pain, which are all from different traumas. I've been seeing a pain doctor for the past 14 years. I started out by taking 5 mg of Vicodin and 4 mg of trazodone. Over the years, my prescriptions have been raised to 7.5 mg of oxycodone four times a day and 800 mg of ibuprofen three times a day. I see my doctor every two weeks, and during these visits, I normally get shots (different ones in different places).

My problem is that my pain medicine isn't working anymore. Will I have to keep raising the dosage? I can't take it easy as I'm my husband's sole caregiver. He's had multiple strokes, and his leg was just amputated. Is

there any other medication I can add to my current list that might help? Or is there a better pain medicine than oxycodone? -- A.S.

ANSWER: I'm very sorry to hear about your predicament. Being a full-time caregiver while trying to deal with your own medical problems is a very difficult situation that many of my patients (and their caregivers) have been in. The most important advice I have is that opiates like hydrocodone (Vicodin is a brand name for hydrocodone and acetaminophen) and oxycodone aren't good long-term options for most people. As you've found, the dose often needs to be increased just to maintain the same pain relief.

The body gets used to the dose of opiates -- a response that is called "tachyphylaxis," which is caused by decreasing the sensitivity of the receptors that opiates bind to in the brain. I've seen people get on exceedingly high doses of strong opiates without receiving adequate pain relief. Unfortunately, side effects of high-dose opiates can include severe constipation, to which the colon doesn't become accustomed to.

While I don't know the details of the traumas that led to your chronic pain, a pain medicine specialist will usually use a combination of different medications to help. This might include injections; low-dose or microdose opiates; antidepressant medicines that help with chronic pain, such as duloxetine or amitriptyline; antiseizure medicines that help with pain, such as gabapentin; and physical therapy.

Anti-inflammatory drugs like ibuprofen sometimes provide significant pain relief when used in combination with other medicines. However, very high doses (you are on the highest recommended dose) can cause toxicities.

I do want to make it clear that tachyphylaxis is the usual response to opiates, especially at a high dose, but it isn't universal. I have patients who do very well with moderate amounts of opiates and remain on a stable dose with adequate control of their pain. Physicians should always consider the risks of opiates before prescribing them for long-term use.

DEAR DR. ROACH: I'm an 82-year-old woman with sluggish gut issues. I recently heard a doctor say, "Don't take fiber supplements because they mess up your gut," and "Don't take laxatives. Take stool softeners, and it's OK to take them every day." I'm skeptical of both statements. What do you say? Thank you. -- E.G.

ANSWER: The only statement I wholeheartedly agree with is that it's OK to take stool softeners (such as docusate) daily. I disagree with the recommendation against fiber supplementation. Fiber is very helpful for both diarrhea and constipation, and it also has other benefits, including modestly lowering cholesterol.

However, when fiber supplementation isn't enough, then laxatives such as polyethylene glycol 3350 (MiraLAX) are a very reasonable choice. People who need laxatives every day should still discuss this with their physicians to be sure that there's not some other medical reason for the constipation.

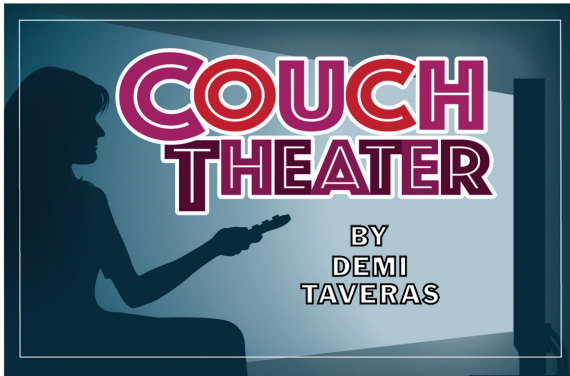
Dr. Roach regrets that he is unable to answer individual questions, but will incorporate them in the column whenever possible. Readers may email questions to ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu.

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Ralph Fiennes stars in "The Choral."

(Courtesy of MovieStillsDB)

"The Devil Wears Prada 2" (PG-13) -- Going to the theaters to catch the sequel to the 2006 film "The Devil Wears Prada" was quite euphoric, so a rewatch of "Prada 2" might be called for when it's available to rent on June 30! Pulling in \$682.2

million against a \$100 million budget, the sequel obviously had to bring back Meryl Streep ("Hoppers") to reprise her role as the cutthroat fashion editor-in-chief Miranda Priestly. Anne Hathaway ("Mother Mary") is also back as Andy Sachs, who clearly didn't get enough dirty looks from Miranda during her first go-round at Runway magazine that she's willing to work under her again. A fun standout in the film was Emily Blunt ("Disclosure Day"), who goes even further off the deep end to maintain her career in fashion. (Amazon Prime Video)

"I Love Boosters" (R) -- Boots Riley, please never stop making your weird movies! They're so much fun! Riley made his directorial debut with "Sorry to Bother You" in 2018, and he's enlisted an incredible group of actors to star in his sophomore film. Keke Palmer ("Good Fortune"), Taylour Paige ("IT: Welcome to Derry"), and Naomi Ackie ("Mickey 17") lead the film as the Velvet Gang, who've made a name for themselves by shoplifting from fashion designer Christie Smith's (Demi Moore) chain stores. When they hear mention of \$100,000 suits that Christie's designed, the Velvet Gang -- with the help of a few angry workers who are upset with Christie's working conditions -- plan to infiltrate a fashion show and take down the designer once and for all! Out now to rent. (Apple TV)

"Elle" (TV-14) -- The long-awaited prequel to "Legally Blonde," starring Reese Witherspoon, is finally premiering on July 1! As an executive producer of the series, Witherspoon was inspired by Jenna Ortega's "Wednesday" series on Netflix and wanted to see what her iconic character of Elle Woods would be like before she ever got to law school. So, the series follows a teenage Elle, played by breakout star Lexi Minnetree, during her high school years as her father relocates their family to Seattle. June Diane Raphael ("Freakier Friday") plays Elle's mother, while Tom Everett Scott ("The Summer I Turned Pretty") plays Elle's father. In addition, Chandler Kinney ("Pretty Little Liars") co-stars as mean girl Kimberly, who clashes with Elle at her new school. (Amazon Prime Video)

"The Choral" (R) -- This touching historical drama stars Oscar nominee Ralph Fiennes ("28 Years Later") as a choirmaster in the fictional town of Ramsden, Yorkshire, during World War I. Although heavily judged for his homosexuality, "Germanophilia" and atheism, Dr. Henry Guthrie (Fiennes) is appointed as a replacement choirmaster when the original one is forced to join the army under military conscription. Along with their original choirmaster, many of the male singers in the choir are also conscripted, leaving Guthrie to recruit teenagers from a local hospital. As time ticks onward and the new boys face their own impending conscriptions, they're able to find solace, joy and passion in their singing. Premieres July 2. (Netflix)

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1. Name the artist who had a solitary hit with "Sunshine."
2. Which song was Barry Sadler best known for?
3. Name the group that had hits in 1967 with "Happy Together" and "She'd Rather Be with Me."
4. Wham! consisted of which two artists?
5. Name the song that contains this lyric: "Don't know much about history, Don't know much biology, Don't know much about a science book, Don't know much about the French I took."

Answers

1. Jonathan Edwards, in 1971. The song, released on Edwards' debut album, lifted the mood of a lot of people during the Vietnam War. The song was later covered by Juice Newton and the Isley Brothers.
2. "The Ballad of the Green Berets," in 1966. The song stayed at No. 1 on the charts for five weeks.
3. The Turtles. Two of the members, Mark Volman and Howard Kaylan, started performing as Flo & Eddie while they were in the middle of contract problems.
4. George Michael and Andrew Ridgeley.
5. "Wonderful World," by Sam Cooke, in 1960. The song has been covered by several others over the years, including Herman's Hermits in 1965. In 1978, the song was used in "Animal House."

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Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps



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GRIN and BEAR IT



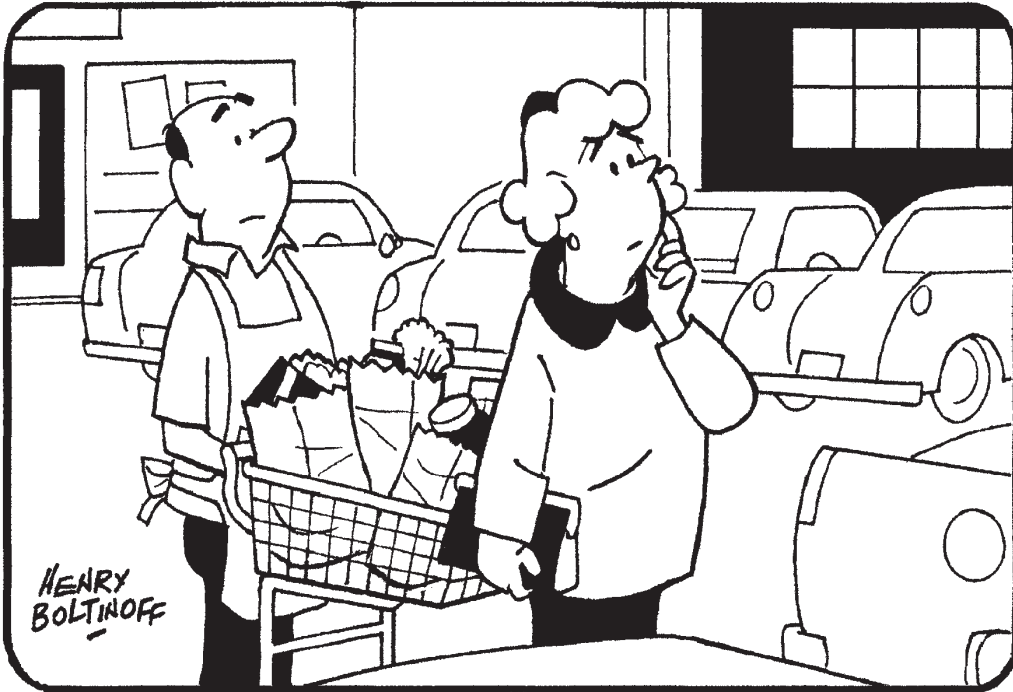
"I object! Counsel is leading the witness!"

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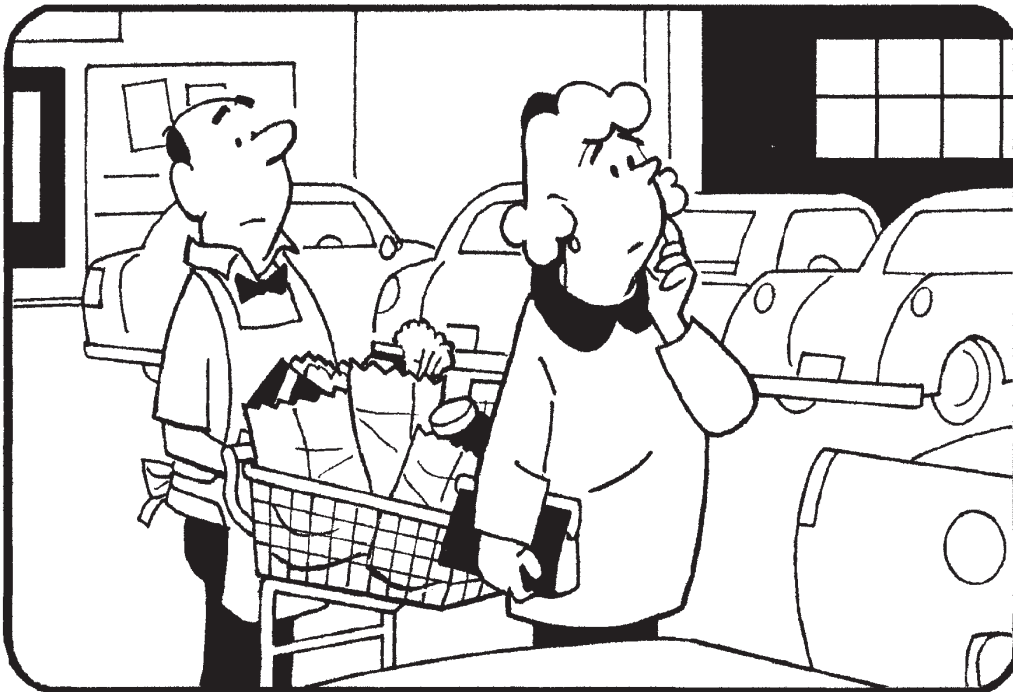
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HOCUS-FOCUS

BY
HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



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Differences: 1. Store windows are moved. 2. License plate is missing. 3. Bow tie is added. 4. Bumper is missing. 5. Coat is longer. 6. Hair is longer.

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* Use a carabiner clip to hold the handles of grocery bags together. They will roll about less in the trunk and are easier to carry into the house when you get home.

* "Many people keep some pet food outdoors. If you have problems with ants in your pet's food if feeding outside, you will like this trick: Place the bowl of food into a larger pan filled with water. The ants can't cross it, and it has the added bonus of being another source of water for the animals. Be sure to change it frequently, and put out plenty of fresh water sources for outdoor pets". -- P.Y. in Alabama

* "We unexpectedly had our friends visit with their granddaughter. Since it was unplanned, and we aren't used to little kids, we were unprepared. My quick-thinking husband split open a garbage bag to use as a protective liner on the bed in case of an accident." -- D.D. in Oregon

* Witch hazel is an old remedy for bruises and bumps. You can find it in the first aid aisle by the peroxide and rubbing alcohol. Simply moisten a folded paper towel, and park it right on the bump (never near the eyes or mouth). It prevents bruising and can lessen swelling in some cases.

* Need to cross out a note so nobody can read it? Take this tip to the scratch pad: Instead of scribbling over something to be crossed out, write random letters over your words until the whole thing is illegible.

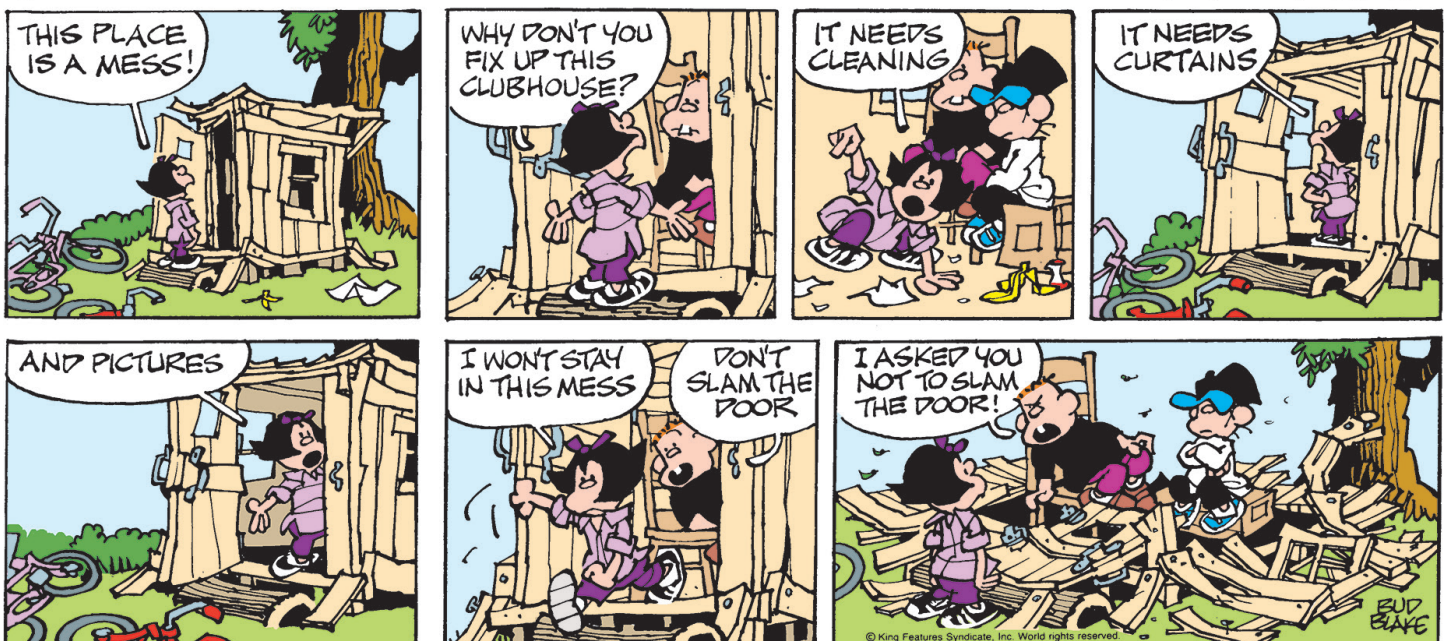
* "File this under you CAN teach an old dog new tricks: While watching videos on a cellphone with my daughter, I found out that a pair of folded sunglasses really works as a fantastic stand." -- C.E. in Maine

Send your tips to Now Here's a Tip, 1800 Pembroke Dr., Suite 300, Orlando, FL 32810.

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TIGER

by **BUD BLAKE**



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King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 "Chocolat"
actor
5 Audio giant
9 Prune
12 Antioxidant
berry
13 Egg
14 — budget
15 Plumbing
problem
16 Firsties
17 TiVo precursor
18 Foolproof
19 Sch. URL
ender
20 Borscht base
21 Sailing hazard
23 — Victor
25 Daughter of
Muhammad
28 Lynx
32 "West Side
Story" role
33 Prefix mean-
ing "water"
34 Ocean bot-
toms
36 Grapevine talk
37 Chow down
38 "— was say-
ing ..."
39 Scoff
42 Half of bi-
44 Sod
48 Napoleon's
title (Abbr.)
49 Mideast gulf
50 Verifiable
51 Brit. record
label

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51					52				53			
54					55				56			

- 52 Get up
53 Perimeter
54 Lobbyists'
org.
55 Pitch
56 Reddish
brown
7 Outlying area
8 Ambulance
letters
9 Zero, in tennis
10 Formerly
11 Section
20 Date night
hire
22 D-Day beach
24 Some Pacific
salmon
25 Passing craze
26 Chemical suf-
fix
27 Gratuity
29 LP succes-
sors
30 NPR's
Shapiro
31 Pinnacle
35 Recording site
36 Olympic
swimmer
Rowdy
39 "M*A*S*H"
vehicle
40 Tennis star
Raducanu
41 Grand tale
43 Legendary
loch
45 Language of
Pakistan
46 Carpets
47 Shoe fillers
49 Illustrations

DOWN

- 1 June honor-
ees
2 Beige
3 Two of a kind
4 Specialist in
the heating/
cooling indus-
try
5 Grocery store
6 Roman poet

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— King Crossword — Answers

Solution time: 21 mins.

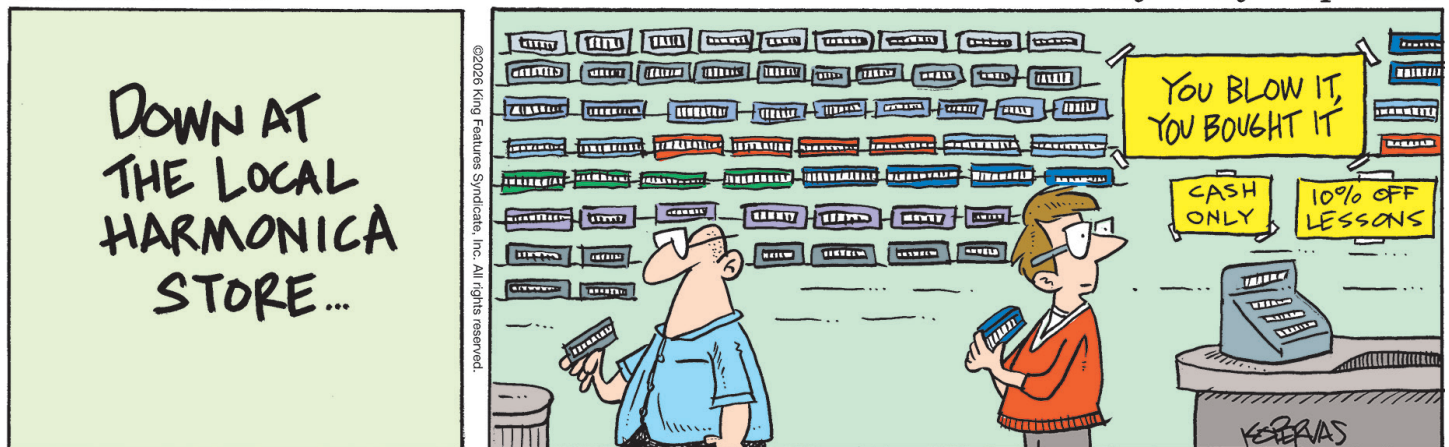
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P	A	C			T	O	S	S		R	U	S	T

Olive



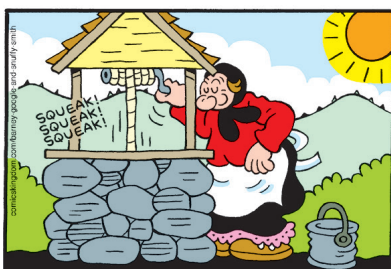
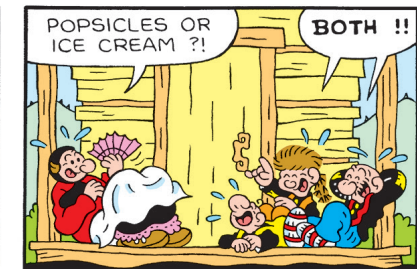
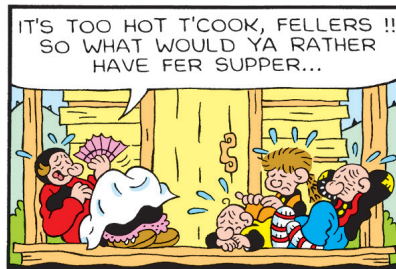
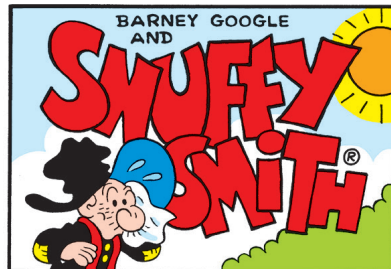
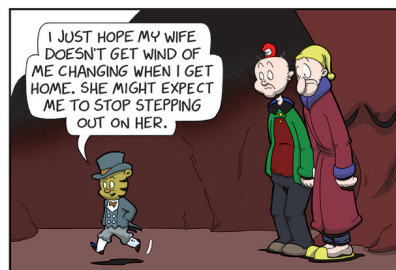
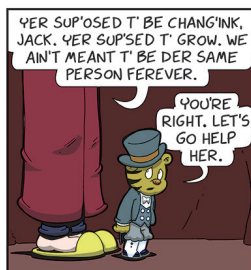
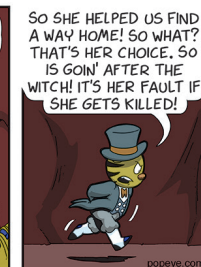
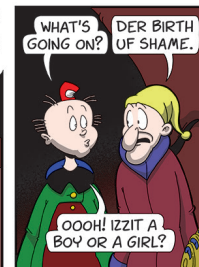
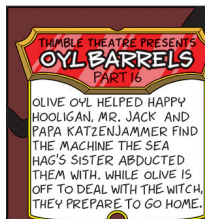
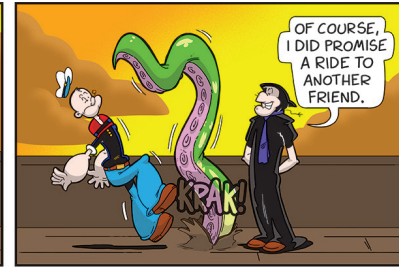
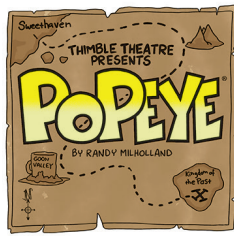
Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



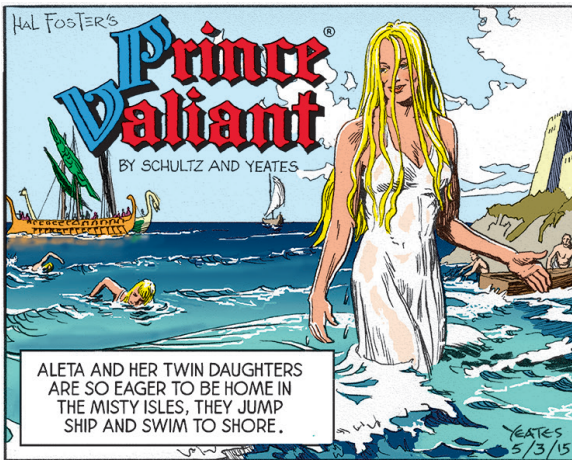
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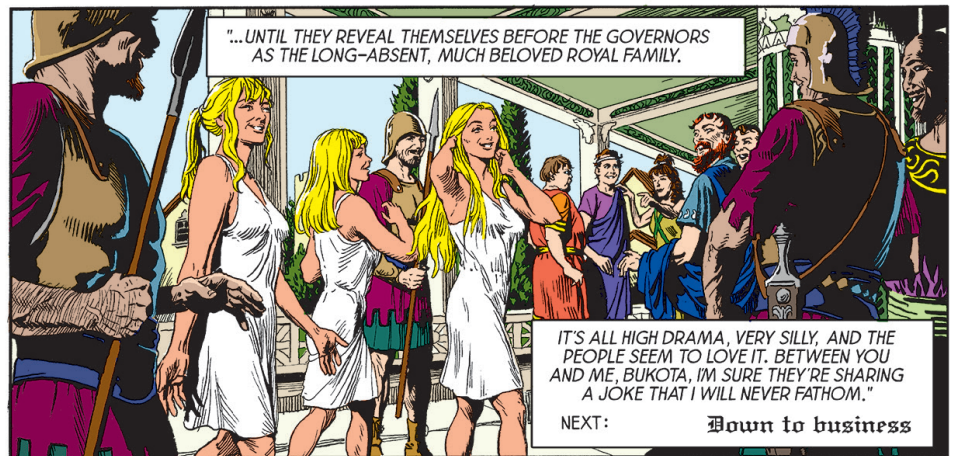
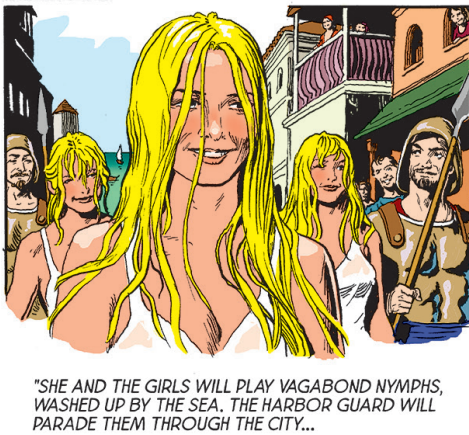
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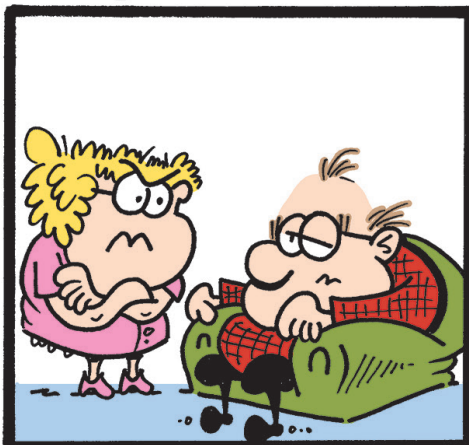
VAL SMILES. "I'VE SEEN THIS BEFORE. IT IS A RITUAL OF ALETA'S - A GAME SHE PLAYS WITH HER SUBJECTS EVERY TIME SHE RETURNS HOME."

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The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



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SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

Stay aware of recalls

Sometimes the list of recalls mentioned on the evening news makes us wonder what else we're not hearing about.

Here are a few current ones:

There is a recall on 25-milligram blood pressure medication chlorthalidone tablets due to what the FDA says is "failed dissolution specifications." Over 11,000 bottles across the country are affected.

And we have the 125,000 vehicles that are being recalled again because the repairs weren't completed correctly the first time the vehicles were recalled. While there are a few issues in those recalls, the problem with the clutch might be the most important -- it can leak fluid and cause a fire.

In some cases we really have to wonder how mistakes were allowed to get out the door. We have dark chocolate raisins that have undeclared peanuts in them. We have saline nasal spray with mold in it, ricotta cheese with listeria and vitamins with salmonella.

And the pancake mix we use for Sunday morning breakfasts? Undeclared soy and milk. How about the cheese bread and garlic croutons? Salmonella. How about the fruit ice pops we give to the grandkids? Milk, pecans, pistachios and both yellow and red dye.

Our pets aren't left out of the mistakes. One freeze-dried brand of cat and dog food has levels of vitamin B-1 that are too low.

Sometimes recalls don't immediately make it to the evening news, and it's up to us to stay on top of these things. Start a weekly habit of checking the various government recall websites. Go to www.foodsafety.gov and click on "Recalls." Or see the food safety website (www.fsis.usda.gov/recalls). Go online to www.recalls.gov and you have a choice of consumer products, vehicles, boats, food, medicine, cosmetics and environmental product recalls to review. You can click on recent recalls or do a search through the recalls.

Stay aware -- and stay safe.

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1. Which racetrack, site of the 1959 Formula 1 German Grand Prix, had a 43-degree banked turn known as the "Wall of Death"?

2. What large-scale video display, produced by Mitsubishi Electric, was first installed at Dodger Stadium in Los Angeles for the 1980 MLB All-Star Game?

3. In April 2001, 43 people were killed in an over-capacity crowd surge during a soccer match at Ellis Park Stadium, located in which country?

4. Who knocked out "Oklahoma Giant" Carl Morris 14 seconds into the first round of a December 1918 heavyweight boxing match in New Orleans?

5. The NFL's 1979 rule banning tear-away jerseys was inspired by and informally named after what Cleveland Browns running back?

6. In December 2021, which team defeated the Oklahoma City Thunder 152-79, making the 73-point win the biggest blowout in NBA history?

7. In 1974, Ted Giannoulas first donned the costume of which world-famous sports mascot?



by Ryan A. Berenz

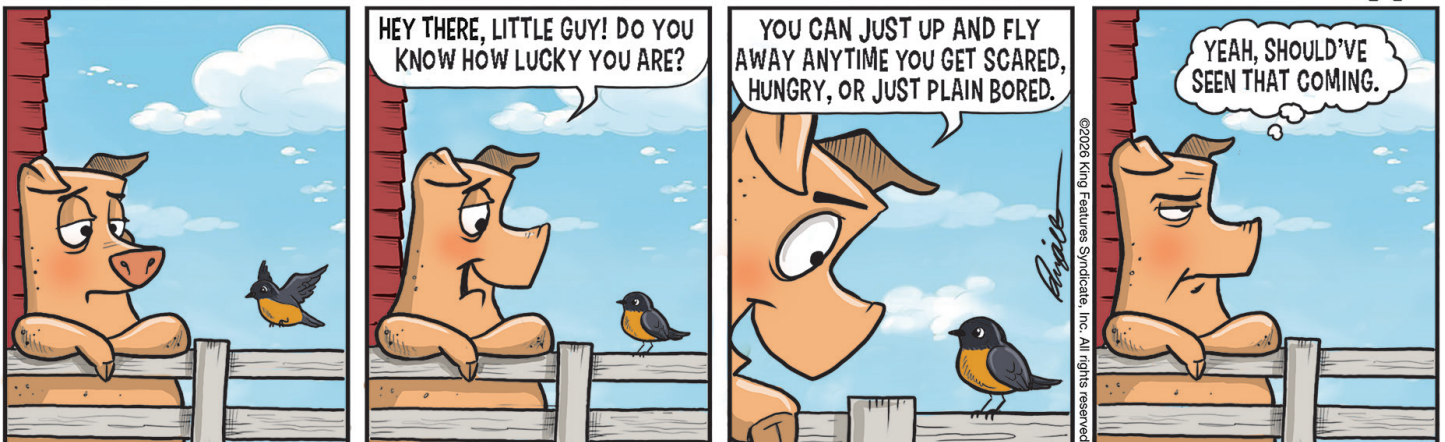
Answers

1. AVUS (Automobil-Verkehrs- und Übungsstrabe).
2. Diamond Vision.
3. South Africa.
4. Jack Dempsey.
5. Greg Pruitt.
6. The Memphis Grizzlies.
7. The San Diego Chicken.

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Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps





Fireworks and pets do not mix

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: I am so frustrated by the incredible amount of fireworks set off by neighbors on July Fourth. My two dogs, "Skip" and "Marbles," cower in the farthest corner of the house and are emotionally wrecked for days afterward. People need to be considerate of pets and not set off unregulated fireworks in neighborhoods. They should go and watch the professional fireworks displays instead; it'll be a better experience for everyone. -- Jill S. in Orlando, Florida

DEAR JILL: You're absolutely right, and thank you for telling them. There is no reason to set off loud fireworks in the driveway or backyard; it's a dangerous activity (14,700 injuries and 11 deaths occurred in 2024, according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission).

Loud fireworks stress out pets to the point that many need medical attention. Some dogs and cats react aggressively to the sudden loud noise, turning and snapping at anyone in reach.

You get the picture. Fireworks are not fun for pets, and they can injure themselves or others in a frenzy of fear.

Great, some of you are saying; how does that help my pet? I know that completely stopping neighborhood fireworks is difficult, perhaps impossible.

As a pet owner, you can take proactive steps to keep your pet comfortable. Talk to the veterinarian and create a strategy. For example, take your pet for a long walk or play session in the afternoon of the Fourth of July to tire them out. Before sunset, give your dog or cat anti-anxiety medication and set up a cozy nook -- or even their carrier crate -- with their favorite blankets, water and snacks. This can help them stay calmer during the hours after sunset as random fireworks go off.

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

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Strange BUT TRUE

* Time slows down so dramatically near a black hole that if you stood close enough to it, years could pass for the universe while just minutes passed for you.

* After trading \$3 billion worth of Pepsi-Cola to the U.S.S.R. in exchange for vodka, submarines and other military hardware, the Pepsi company briefly had the sixth largest military in the world.

* Iceland's parliament, the Icelandic Althingi, first formed in 930 A.D., is the oldest in the world.

* The tradition of carrying the bride across the threshold started in medieval Europe when many people believed that a bride was especially vulnerable to evil spirits through the soles of her feet. To guard her from such attacks, the chivalric groom would carry her into their new home.

* Los Angeles has the world's largest Korean population outside of Korea.

* In J.K. Rowling's "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone," dragon blood is revealed to be an effective oven cleaner.

* The Pyramids of Giza are the only Great Wonder of the ancient world still standing.

* During WWII, the Polish army adopted a brown bear named Wojtek into their ranks. The animal was fond of cigarettes and beer, and even received a promotion from private to corporal.

* A sloth can take up to two weeks to digest a single meal.

* Actress Roseanne Barr once attempted to run for president and got as far as filing with the Federal Election Commission, under the "Green Tea Party Ticket."

* Lightning isn't limited to thunderstorms, but can also occur in volcanic eruptions, wildfires and snowstorms.

* During certain periods in feudal Japan, executions of condemned criminals were used by some samurais to test their new swords.

Thought for the Day: "It's easy to make a buck. It's a lot tougher to make a difference." -- Tom Brokaw
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The Garden Bug



Indian shot is another name for *canna indica*, a wildflower of the Caribbean and tropical Americas.

Its spherical black seeds are hard and perfectly round, resembling oversized BBs or buckshot from a shotgun shell. They are also used as beads.



Sources: usf.edu, waynesword.palomar.edu



by Freddy Groves

Avoid foreclosure on a VA home loan

The VA Partial Claim Program begins now. The purpose? To help veterans avoid foreclosure on their homes.

The program was started last summer when the VA Home Loan Reform Act was signed into law. In this partial claim program, the VA can pay up to 25% of the unpaid principal.

Veterans in danger of losing their home to foreclosure should call the mortgage servicer to find out about eligibility to participate in the partial claim program.

To be eligible, you must have a VA loan, not FHA or conventional. The home has to be your primary residence; no vacation homes or investment properties can qualify. You have to be at risk of default on the loan. And, the biggie here, you have to prove you can make your payments.

It's not a handout, but it can be a hand up. One of the first steps is that the VA will advance funds to bring the mortgage current and then the veteran needs to prove he or she can stay current by making payments on a trial basis for three months.

If a trial repayment doesn't work, it's possible that a loan modification might (although those can be risky if the interest rate goes up on the new loan). There are a number of ways for veterans to keep their homes (it helped 173,000 veterans last year alone). Some of those include making modifications to traditional loans, disaster modifications, and 30- and 40-year loan modifications.

If you're having trouble dealing with your mortgage servicer, call the VA at 877-827-3702 and press 6 to get help.

Mortgage servicers have until November this year to get the program into their system.

For information on avoiding foreclosure, see www.va.gov/housing-assistance/home-loans/trouble-making-payments. Scroll down to see the seven ways to avoid foreclosure.

As always, beware the possibility of scams. If you suddenly receive calls about foreclosure help, don't give any information. Instead, call the VA or mortgage servicer yourself to be sure who you're talking to.

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Wishing Well®

8	4	3	5	7	5	6	3	7	3	4	3	4
S	N	S	H	M	A	L	I	O	N	E	G	W
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2	6	3	8	6	2	6	3	2	3	6	2	6
T	T	S	E	I	I	F	E	V	S	U	E	L

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 was the only actress to appear in the 1961 and 2021 film versions of "West Side Story"?
2. GENERAL KNOWLEDGE: Which month of the year has the most letters in its name?
3. SCIENCE: What protects the Earth from solar winds?
4. TELEVISION: What is the name of the bar in "It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia"?
5. U.S. STATES: Which state is home to the first Ben & Jerry's ice cream shop?
6. LITERATURE: What are the names of the two brothers in the "Hardy Boys" novel series?
7. LANGUAGE: What is a polyglot?
8. FOOD & DRINK: Which herb is most often used in traditional pesto?
9. ANATOMY: Membranes called pleurae cover the surface of which human organs?
10. GEOGRAPHY: What is the capital of South Korea?

Answers

1. Rita Moreno.
2. September.
3. The magnetosphere, an invisible magnetic bubble generated inside the Earth.
4. Paddy's Pub.
5. Vermont.
6. Frank and Joe.
7. A person who speaks several languages.
8. Basil.
9. The lungs.
10. Seoul.

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South Dakota Governor



Larry Rhoden



South Dakota: *Under God, the People Rule*

Forged in Fire

One of my favorite pastimes is welding. I've welded thousands of custom branding irons over the years. I've made them for hundreds of ranchers, but also as souvenirs for friends, family, and even charity auctions. As a lifelong West River Rancher, welding has always been a useful skill. When something breaks, you learn how to fix it yourself. And it's taught me an important lesson: the strongest things are often built by bringing different pieces together and forging them in fire.

Agriculture is much the same way. I recently hosted the Governor's Ag Summit, which brought together farmers, ranchers, producers, and ag business leaders from across the state. Just like a welder joins separate pieces of steel into something stronger, the Summit brings together different perspectives, experiences, and expertise. It gave us an opportunity to share ideas, address challenges, and seize new opportunities for the future. Agriculture is more than our number one industry – it's our way of life. And when people who care deeply about agriculture come together with a shared purpose, our entire state benefits. And we build something stronger than any one of us could build alone. As it says in Proverbs 27:17, "iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another."

I am proud of the work we are doing to double down on supporting value-added ag. A wise man once told me that we should never ship one bushel of corn or one critter out of our state without adding value to it. I couldn't agree more. This past year, I proudly supported several value-added ag opportunities, including Smithfield, CJ Schwans, Dakota BioWorx, Bel Brands, and High Plains Processing – to name a few! Those investments will benefit not only our farmers, but also our economy and state for generations to come.

Ag is king in South Dakota, but we certainly have our challenges. We've been blessed to receive some moisture the past few days, but drought continues to impact many areas. I activated the Drought Task Force to help exchange information among agencies and partners. Through this collaboration, the Task Force can more effectively monitor drought conditions, assess drought severity, evaluate impacts, and review available drought-response resources.

I'm encouraged by the optimism I continue to see across the state. Producers are constantly finding ways to overcome challenges, and that's the South Dakota way. We turn challenges into opportunities! We never take a good year for granted, and we don't let a difficult year define us.

In agriculture, there are seasons when everything seems to go right. And there are seasons when drought, markets, weather, or uncertainty test us. Those challenges are not easy, but they have a way of shaping people. They build resilience, they build character, and they build strength.

I've seen it time and time again in South Dakota agriculture. Our farmers, ranchers, and producers face adversity head-on. They adapt, innovate, and keep moving forward. Like steel coming out of the fire, our farmers and ranchers emerge stronger because of what they've been through.

I remain optimistic about the future of agriculture in South Dakota. Not because challenges don't exist, but because I know the people who are meeting those challenges every day. And there is nobody tougher, more resilient, or more determined than the farmers and ranchers of this great state. They've been forged in the fire, and South Dakota is stronger because of them.

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June 15-22

Another week in DC means another edition of the Weekly Round[s] Up! This past week, my schedule was packed with meetings with people from all over South Dakota. I enjoyed visiting with many middle school and high school students this past week who were on school

trips to see our nation's capital. We also took procedural votes to pass the 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act. This bicameral, bipartisan housing reform bill includes four of my provisions to modernize rural housing programs and cut red tape.

As usual, I was back in South Dakota over the weekend where I attended a couple of events in Deadwood and Aberdeen. I had a great time visiting with members from the Livestock Marketing Association in Deadwood and veterans at the South Dakota American Legion's 107th Annual State Convention held in Aberdeen. On Sunday, I spent time with my family celebrating Father's Day. Being a dad is the single greatest job in the world, and I am blessed to be a dad of 4 and grandfather of 11. More on this past week in the Weekly Round[s] Up:

South Dakota groups I visited with: South Dakotans with the American Academy of Family Physicians; Liz Olive, CEO of Vista Care South Dakota; 40 students on the South Dakota Rural Electric Association Youth Tour; South Dakota REALTORS; and President Barry Dunn of South Dakota State University (go Jacks!).

I was also able to visit with a bunch of South Dakota students who were in DC for a school trip, including: Deuel Middle School, Webster High School and students from all across the state here for National History Day.

In addition, on Friday, I attended the Livestock Marketing Association (LMA) Annual Convention in Deadwood. This was a great opportunity to speak with LMA leaders from across the state and country. On Saturday, I traveled to Aberdeen to attend the South Dakota American Legion 107th Annual State Convention. It was good to visit and thank our veterans for their service and incredible sacrifice for our country.

Met with South Dakotans from: Aberdeen, Brookings, Clear Lake, Deadwood, Hot Springs, Pierre, Rapid City, Sioux Falls, Spearfish, Vermillion, Watertown, Webster and Wentworth.

Other Meetings: Jay Clayton, Nominee for Director of National Intelligence; Lt. Gen. Douglas Scheiss, Nominee to be Chief of Space Operations for U.S. Space Force; John Doyle, CEO of Marsh; Erich Hernandez-Baquero, Assistant Secretary of the Air Force (Space Acquisition and Investment) nominee; Dr. Pradeep Khosla and Dr. Alexander Khalessi; Mark Cruz, Nominee for Director of Indian Health Service; Charlie Scharf, CEO of Wells Fargo; Ken Gleuck, Oracle's EVP of Global Government Affairs; Jay Hurst, Nominee to be Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller); Shane Smith, CEO of Smithfield Foods; Jeff Ledbetter, Nominee for Inspector General for the Department of Housing and Urban Development; Sarah Heck, Head of Policy for Anthropic; and Jack Hidary, CEO of SandboxAQ.

On Tuesday, I attended our weekly Senate Bible study, this time hosted by Senator Daines from Montana. And on Wednesday, I spoke at the USA Artificial Intelligence Summit.

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Briefings: I received one Senate Select Committee on Intelligence briefing and another classified briefing as part of my work on the Senate Armed Services Committee.

Votes taken: I took 10 votes this past week, including: Justin D. Smith, of Missouri, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Eighth Circuit; Michelle Steel, of California, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Korea; and George Holding, of North Carolina, to be United States Director of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

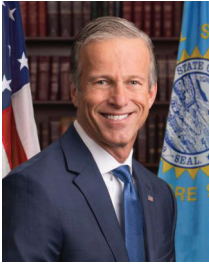
As mentioned above, I voted in favor of the 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act. I also voted Nay on a resolution to remove US Armed Forces from Iran, a resolution requesting information on Honduras's human rights practices, and I voted against a resolution preserving Biden-Harris Immigration Court Backlogs CRA. [Click here to read in more detail about these votes.](#)

Steps taken: 61,241 steps or 28.68 miles.

My Staff in South Dakota Visited: Aberdeen, Corsica, Deadwood, Mitchell, Mobridge, Newell and Rapid City.

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JOHN THUNE
U.S. SENATOR FOR SOUTH DAKOTA

Freedom Rings for 250 Years

Two hundred and fifty years ago, on July 4, 1776, the Continental Congress formally adopted the Declaration of Independence. Like the first shot at the Battle of Lexington, the Declaration was heard around the world. It laid out the causes which impelled the colonists' separation and the principles that would govern our new nation: That there are unalienable rights given by God, existing before government and which are government's duty to protect.

Many of these ideas were not new; it was a document built on the wisdom of the ages – including the inheritance of Christian faith, the tradition of British common law, and the colonists' own experience in self-government. But the Declaration was revolutionary because it founded an entirely new nation on these ideas. Nowhere in the world before 1776 can we find a nation built on the principles that all men are created equal, that their rights come from God not government, and that government's first duty is to protect those rights. It's uniquely American.

What started in Philadelphia set the country ablaze. Its lasting impact is visible in our own state, long after the battles of the Revolutionary War. It was the same thirst for freedom that brought pioneers west to the prairies and hills of the Dakota Territory. And our state's motto reflects the same principles found in the Declaration: "Under God the People Rule."

There is no place I'd rather celebrate America's 250th birthday than in South Dakota. Fireworks are back at Mount Rushmore, and you can't beat our state's iconic monument, the Black Hills, and a clear South Dakota sky as a backdrop for a celebration like this. I'm looking forward to joining President Trump there to celebrate our great country.

There has been another, perhaps unexpected, celebration of America in recent weeks. With World Cup games occurring in cities across the country, the media has been filled with stories of visitors to our country discovering America (and ranch dressing). Most of all they're encountering the American character – our generous, optimistic, and big-hearted people – and embracing it. Those elements of our national character, I believe, are the natural consequence of the principles on which our country was founded and that still shape us.

There are a lot of things that draw people to the United States – the sheer vastness of this land and the equally limitless possibilities to make a better life for yourself. But we remain the envy of the world for one reason: Ours is a nation "conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal." I pray we always will be and that God will continue to bless our country and keep us faithful to the principles for which it stands.

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Dr. James L. Snyder Ministries

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1-352-216-3025

How to Get Out Of A Pickle

Throughout my time on this planet, I have gotten into many pickle situations that I could not escape. Each pickle was different from the last, which made dealing with them quite a problem for me.

In reviewing my life, I must confess that the biggest pickle situations started upon my marriage to The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage. I do not see a connection, but I won't rule it out.

It was the latest pickle I got into that I am most concerned about.

Last week The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage was ready to go to Publix for grocery shopping. As she went out the door, she looked back at me and said, "Is there anything you want me to get at Publix?"

Immediately, I responded by saying, "Yes, my dear. I sure would like an Apple Fritter."

Stopping in her tracks, she looked back at me and said, "Just keep dreaming, that will never happen in a million years."

I knew how she would respond, but I could not help but respond anyway. Her questions always put me in a playful pickle, and I could not resist the fun of it.

As she closed the front door, I could hear her laughing hysterically, and I kinda knew why she was laughing.

I certainly was not going to hope for an Apple Fritter that day. I enjoy an Apple Fritter every once in a while when I can get it behind The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage's back. She does not like it, but I love it. On the other hand, she loves broccoli, and I hate broccoli.

That is the only difference we have between ourselves.

Getting back to work in my office, I forgot about the Apple Fritter incident. Yes, every once in a while, I would think about an Apple Fritter, but I knew that was beyond me. The only way I can get an Apple Fritter is to sneak behind her back and not let her see me.

Don't let her know this, but every year she, her daughter, and her granddaughter go to St. Augustine for a week. They have been doing that for at least 20 years. It is during that week that I find myself enjoying an Apple Fritter. The last time I did it, I forgot to throw away the receipt, and it was on the counter. When she got back, the first thing she found was the receipt for my Apple Fritters. I need to learn my lesson from that.

I let that go to the back of my mind and focused on the project I was working on.

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In a few hours, I heard the front door open and remembered that The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage was out shopping. She had returned and was coming into the kitchen with all her grocery bags.

Then I heard something I had never dreamed of hearing in my life. As she was putting the groceries away in the kitchen, she yelled back to me, "Honey, I got your Apple Fritter."

When I heard that, I laughed to myself and said, "I'm not falling for this trick this time."

Then she walked into my office, and in her hand was the Apple Fritter. "Here's the Apple Fritter you wanted. I'll put it out in the kitchen for you to have later." Then she went back to the kitchen.

I was in a pickle and did not quite know what to do. I knew this was a trick, but I did not quite understand its dimensions. No way would she buy me an Apple Fritter. There had to be something attached to it, and I had to find out what it was.

Being in a pickle like this is not something I yearn for at any time of year. What I had to do was figure out what to do at this point. Why did she get me an Apple Fritter? There is something behind this, and I have been working to figure it out.

Later on, I went out to the kitchen to get a cup of coffee, and there was the Apple Fritter. The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage said, "You can have your Apple Fritter now with your coffee." Then she smiled at me, a very suspicious smile that I could not quite explain.

Of course, I am going to eat the Apple Fritter. But I'm also going to keep in mind that this Apple Fritter has me in a coil I can't explain. Do not get me wrong, I enjoyed eating every bite of that Apple Fritter.

I do not know when I will figure it out, but my eyes and my ears are open. Every day, I am going to keep a lookout for what is behind this Apple Fritter pickle.

As I reflected on this recent pickle, I was reminded of a verse in the Bible.

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (James 1:5).

It is not easy for me to acknowledge my "lack of wisdom," but when I do, I begin the path to finding the wisdom I need at that time. Whether I can fix the pickle I'm in now is worth trying. It might also help me get ready for the next pickle I have to face.

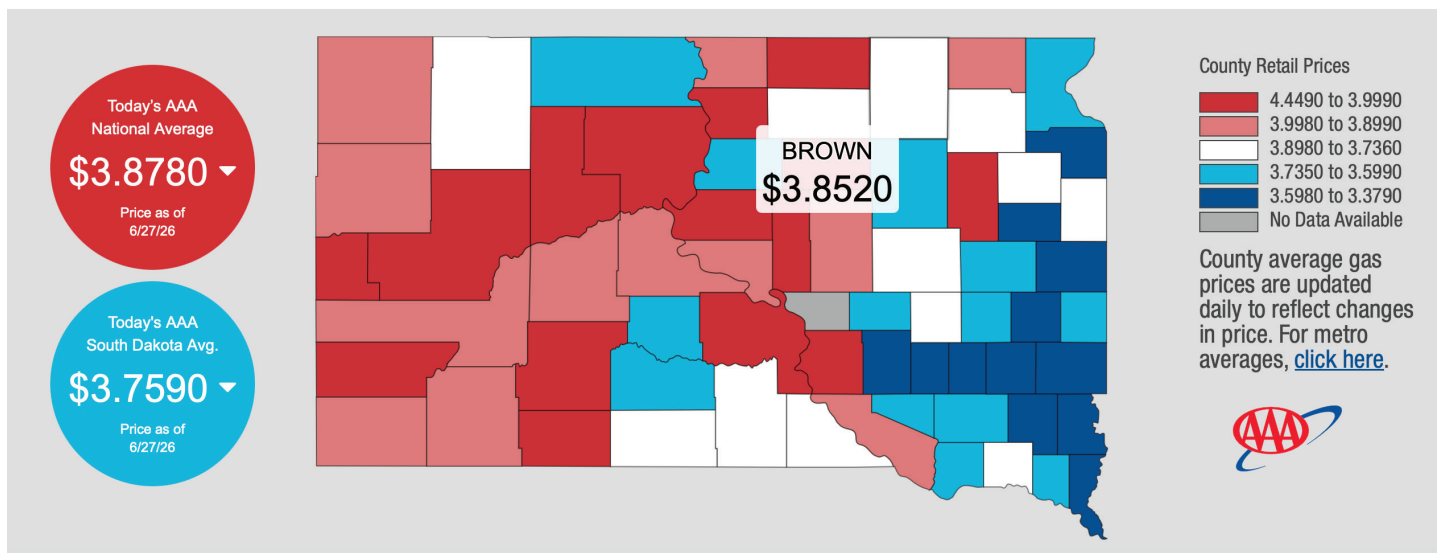
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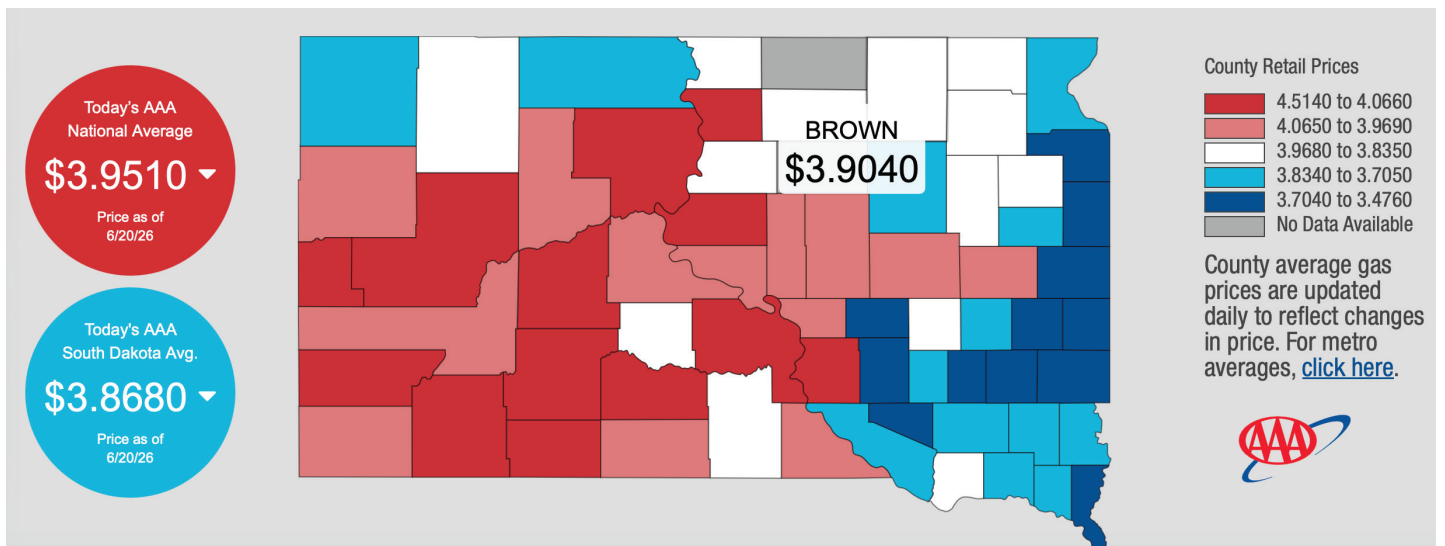
South Dakota Average Gas Prices

	Regular	Mid-Grade	Premium	Diesel
Current Avg.	\$3.7590	\$3.9880	\$4.4450	\$4.3490
Yesterday Avg.	\$3.7810	\$4.0110	\$4.4620	\$4.3720
Week Ago Avg.	\$3.8680	\$4.0970	\$4.5510	\$4.5540
Month Ago Avg.	\$4.2650	\$4.4770	\$4.9640	\$5.0930
Year Ago Avg.	\$3.0210	\$3.2060	\$3.6620	\$3.3860

This Week



Last Week



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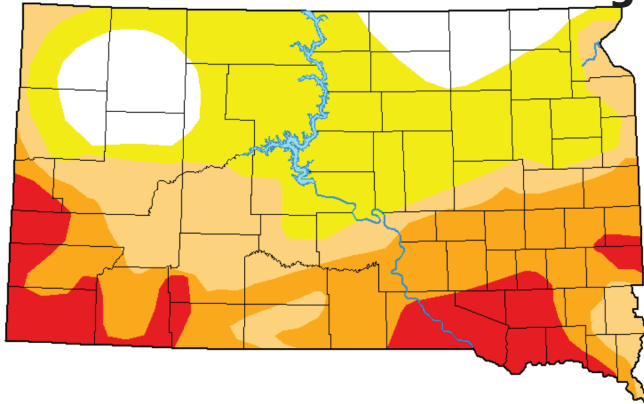
Drought Classification

None
D0 (Abnormally Dry)
D1 (Moderate Drought)

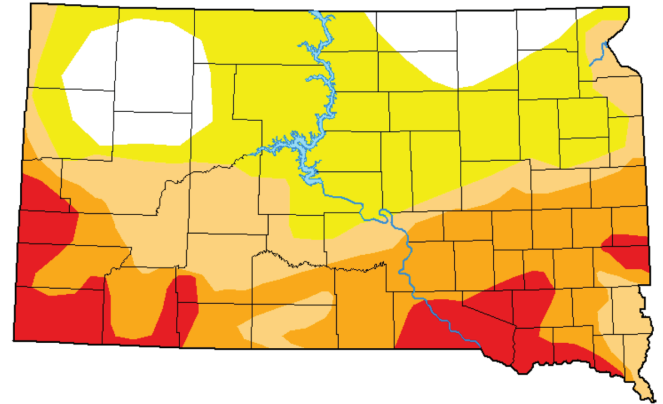
D2 (Severe Drought)
D3 (Extreme Drought)

D4 (Exceptional Drought)
No Data

Drought Monitor



June 23



June 16

The region's eastern states reported drought improvement or unchanged conditions, with a few exceptions. Streaks of heavy rain led to one-category improvement in a swath across central Nebraska and western and central Kansas. However, the rain arrived too late to help winter wheat and has only recently begun to revive drought-stricken rangeland and pastures. With the winter wheat harvest well underway (40% complete, nationally, on June 21), 46% of the crop was rated in very poor to poor condition. More than one-half of the crop was rated very poor to poor in Nebraska (83%), Colorado (63%), and Kansas (55%). On June 21, statewide rangeland and pastures were rated at least one-half very poor to poor in Nebraska (73%), Colorado (63%), and Wyoming (60%). In contrast to areas farther east, drought deterioration was observed in parts of Colorado and Wyoming.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

State's top election official loses nomination to challenger who supports hand-counting

South Dakota Republicans choose nominees for six state offices during final day of convention

BY: SETH TUPPER

RAPID CITY — Delegates at the South Dakota Republican Convention denied the state's top election official an opportunity to seek reelection, choosing a nominee Saturday for secretary of state who advocates for hand-counted election results.

Heather Baxter received 59% support in the convention hall at The Monument events center to beat incumbent Monae Johnson. The nomination was one of six decided by about 700 delegates from across the state during the convention's third and final day.

Baxter's campaign website says she wants to "ensure every vote is counted accurately via paper ballots that are hand counted." She received some of the day's loudest applause when she finished her speech to the convention.

"I know you guys are not looking for someone to impress you. You're looking for someone you can trust," Baxter said. "I will not make promises I cannot keep, and I will not flinch when the right answer is the hard one."

The loss was a turnabout for Johnson, who was a challenger when she beat an incumbent, Steve Barnett, at the 2022 convention.

Johnson won that earlier nomination with the support of activists who denied the legitimacy of President Joe Biden's victory in the 2020 election and called for changes in election procedures, such as switching from electronic tabulating machines to hand-counting. Since Johnson's election, some of those activists have grown dissatisfied with her for not delivering changes they sought.

One new procedure Johnson did implement with the support of the Legislature is mandatory post-election audits in all of the state's counties. She said during her speech that the audits have proven tabulating machines to be accurate.

"I trust the county auditors to do their jobs," Johnson said, "and I fully support the use of secure, tested ballot tabulators."

Johnson, of Pierre, will continue serving as secretary of state until her term ends in January.

Baxter, of Rapid City, will advance to face two opponents in the Nov. 3 general election: Democratic nominee Terrence Davis and Libertarian nominee Tamara Lesnar.

Baxter has been serving as a state representative for the past two years, but lost a primary race on June 2 and shifted her focus to the secretary of state race. She is a small-business owner from a well-known family in the Black Hills, where her late grandfather Korczak Ziolkowski started the Crazy Horse mountain carving.

Attorney general

Lance Russell, the state's attorney of Fall River and Oglala Lakota counties, won a three-way contest for the attorney general nomination that took two rounds of voting to decide. Russell will be unopposed in the general election, because Democrats failed to field a candidate and there are no third-party or independent candidates.

None of the three Republican hopefuls topped 50% in the first round of voting. Russell then reached

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57% in the second round to beat Austin Hoffman's 31% and John Fitzgerald's 12%.

Hoffman is the McPherson County state's attorney, and Fitzgerald is a former judge and former state's attorney of Butte and Lawrence counties.

The state's top law enforcement job is opening up because Republican Attorney General Marty Jackley won the party's nomination in the June 2 primary election to run for U.S. House. The U.S. House seat is open because Republican Rep. Dusty Johnson unsuccessfully sought the party's nomination for governor in the June 2 primary.

Commissioner of school and public lands

Incumbent Brock Greenfield, of Pierre, won his nomination with 81% support and will seek reelection as commissioner of school and public lands. He was challenged by James Bialota, a veteran and business owner from Piedmont.

Greenfield will face Democratic nominee Raeann Mettler in the general election.

The Office of School and Public Lands generates revenue for public education by leasing state-owned land for livestock grazing and leasing state-owned mineral rights for mining.

State auditor

Catherine Barranco won the auditor nomination with 53% support in the first round of voting against opponents Tamara Grove and Renae Randall.

Grove is a state senator from Lower Brule who lost her primary race on June 2. Randall is a former employee of the South Dakota Investment Council.

Barranco, of Sioux Falls, formerly worked for the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission investigating financial fraud.

The duties of the Auditor's Office include auditing state accounts, administering the state payroll, monitoring fund balances and transfers, and filing financial reports. Incumbent Republican Auditor Rich Sattgast is term-limited and has endorsed Barranco.

In the general election, Barranco will face Democratic nominee Tom Cool, of Sioux Falls.

State treasurer

Melissa Hull, an employee of the Treasurer's Office, won 81% of the votes to win the treasurer nomination over Heath Shields, a businessman from Custer.

The current state treasurer, Republican Josh Haeder, is term-limited and has endorsed Hull.

The Treasurer's Office is the receiver and custodian of state fund transfers and deposits, and manages banking for the state. It also receives unclaimed private property, such as abandoned bank accounts, and works to return the property to its owners.

Hull will face Democratic nominee Margaret Kuipers of Sioux Falls in the general election.

Public Utilities Commission

Peri Pourier, who's been a Republican less than a year after leaving the Democratic Party in September, received 45% support but came up short against longtime Republican Don Haggar, who received 55% to win the nomination for a seat on the Public Utilities Commission.

Pourier is a term-limited state representative from Pine Ridge. Haggar, of Sioux Falls, is a former legislator and former state director of Americans for Prosperity. He has a background in real estate, banking and insurance.

Haggar will face Democratic nominee Frank Kloucek in the general election. They are seeking the Public Utilities Commission seat being vacated by Republican Commissioner Gary Hanson, who is not seeking reelection.

The commission's duties include regulating electric, gas and telephone utilities, and considering permits for power plants, pipelines and related projects.

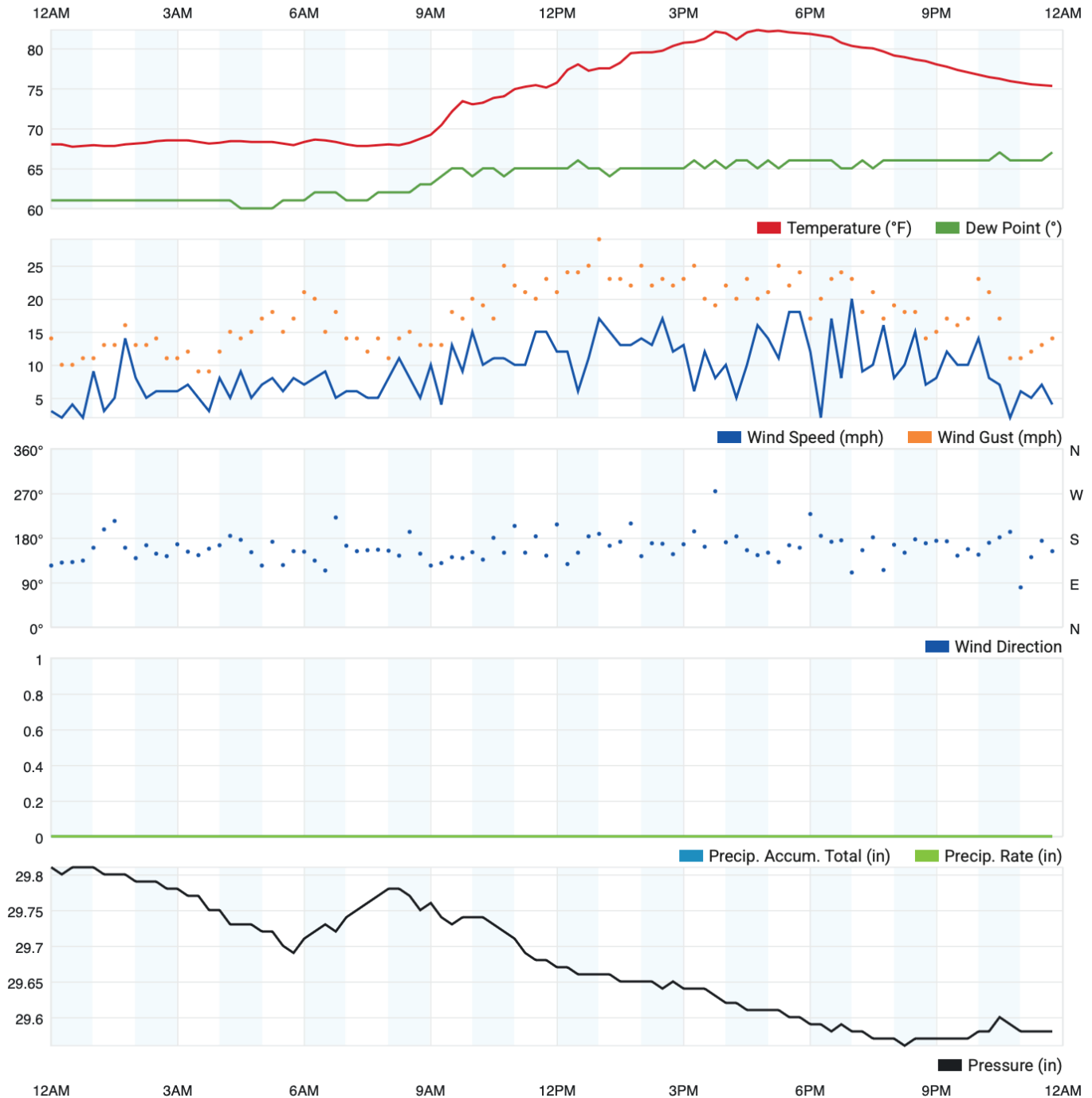
Seth is editor-in-chief of South Dakota Searchlight. He was previously a supervising senior producer for South Dakota Public Broadcasting and a newspaper journalist in Rapid City and Mitchell.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

June 27, 2026



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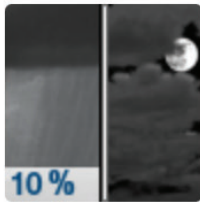
Today



High: 73 °F

Slight Chance
Showers

Tonight



Low: 50 °F

Slight Chance
Showers then
Mostly Cloudy

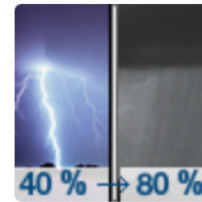
Monday



High: 76 °F

Partly Sunny

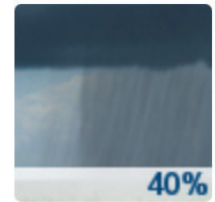
Monday Night



Low: 54 °F

Chance
T-storms then
Showers

Tuesday



High: 77 °F

Chance
Showers

THREAT ASSESSMENT

HIGHEST LOCAL RISK

2

WHAT THIS MEANS:
Isolated to Scattered Severe
Storms Possible

11 PM this evening
through the overnight
hours

PRIMARY THREATS

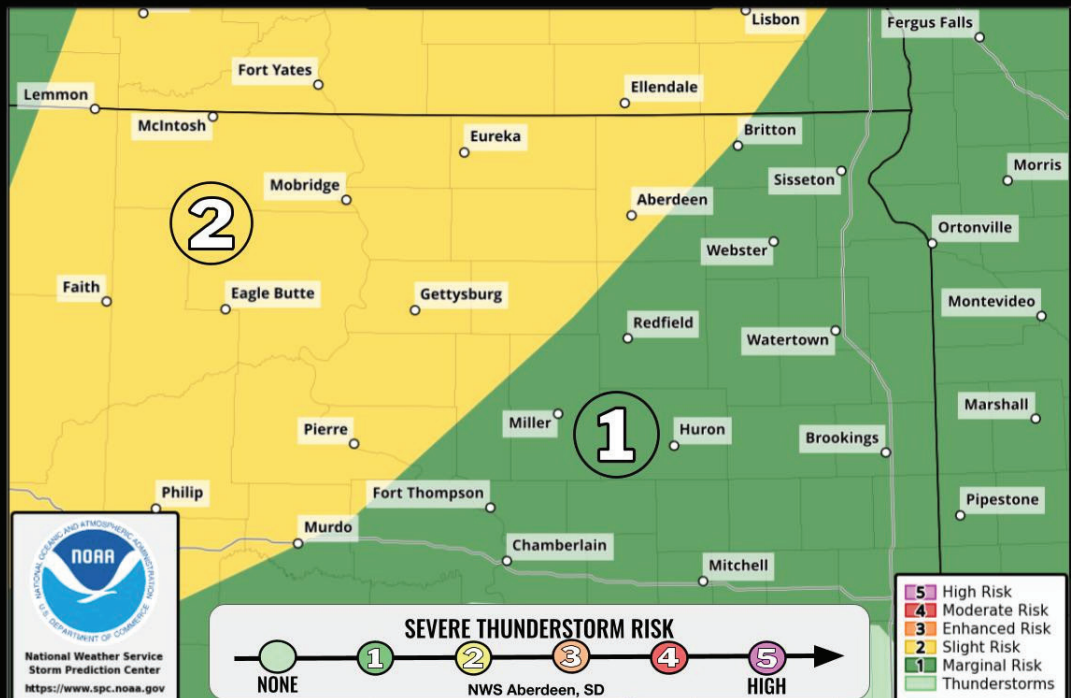


DAMAGING
WIND GUSTS
To 60+ mph



LARGE HAIL
over 2" in
diameter

Slight Risk For Severe Storms Late this Evening & Overnight



Storms are expected to develop west river during the late evening and overnight. Farther east, a strong cap is more likely to inhibit storm development. Storms are expected to move from southwest to northeast with a slow eastward progression of activity through the overnight and into Monday morning, with most of the activity west of Highway 281.

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Severe Weather Threats - Hail

June 28, 2026
4:12 AM CDT

Hail Threat Highlights:

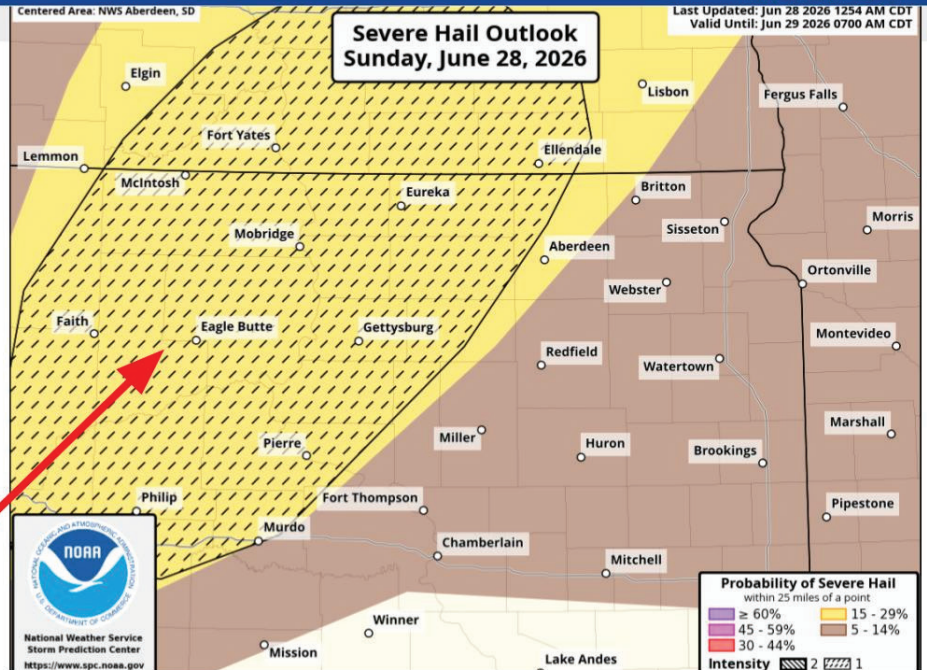
The largest storms, in the form of supercells, will be capable of producing hail stones with 2+ inches diameter over north central South Dakota.

Cities At Highest Risk:

McIntosh, Mobridge, Pierre, Eureka, and Faulkton

Intensity Levels:

2	Largest Hail >3.5"
1	Largest Hail >2"



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

The main severe weather threat for this evening/overnight is large hail. The storm environment suggests storms may be capable of producing hail in excess of 2" diameter.

Severe Weather Threats - High Winds

June 28, 2026
4:16 AM CDT

Wind Threat Highlights:

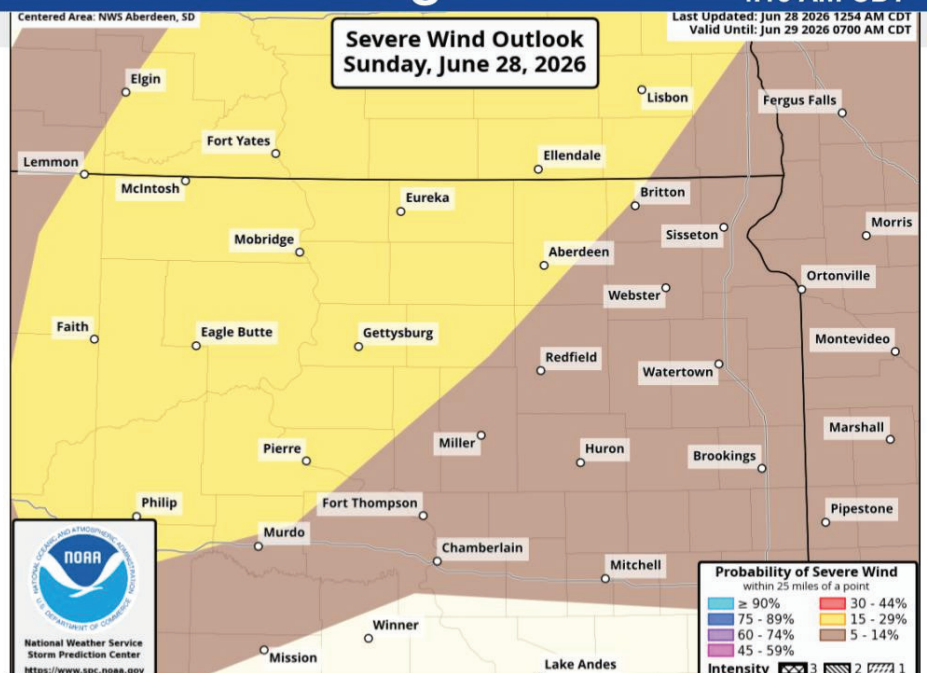
Strongest wind gusting 60+ mph.

Cities At Highest Risk:

West of a line from Murdo to Britton

Intensity Levels:

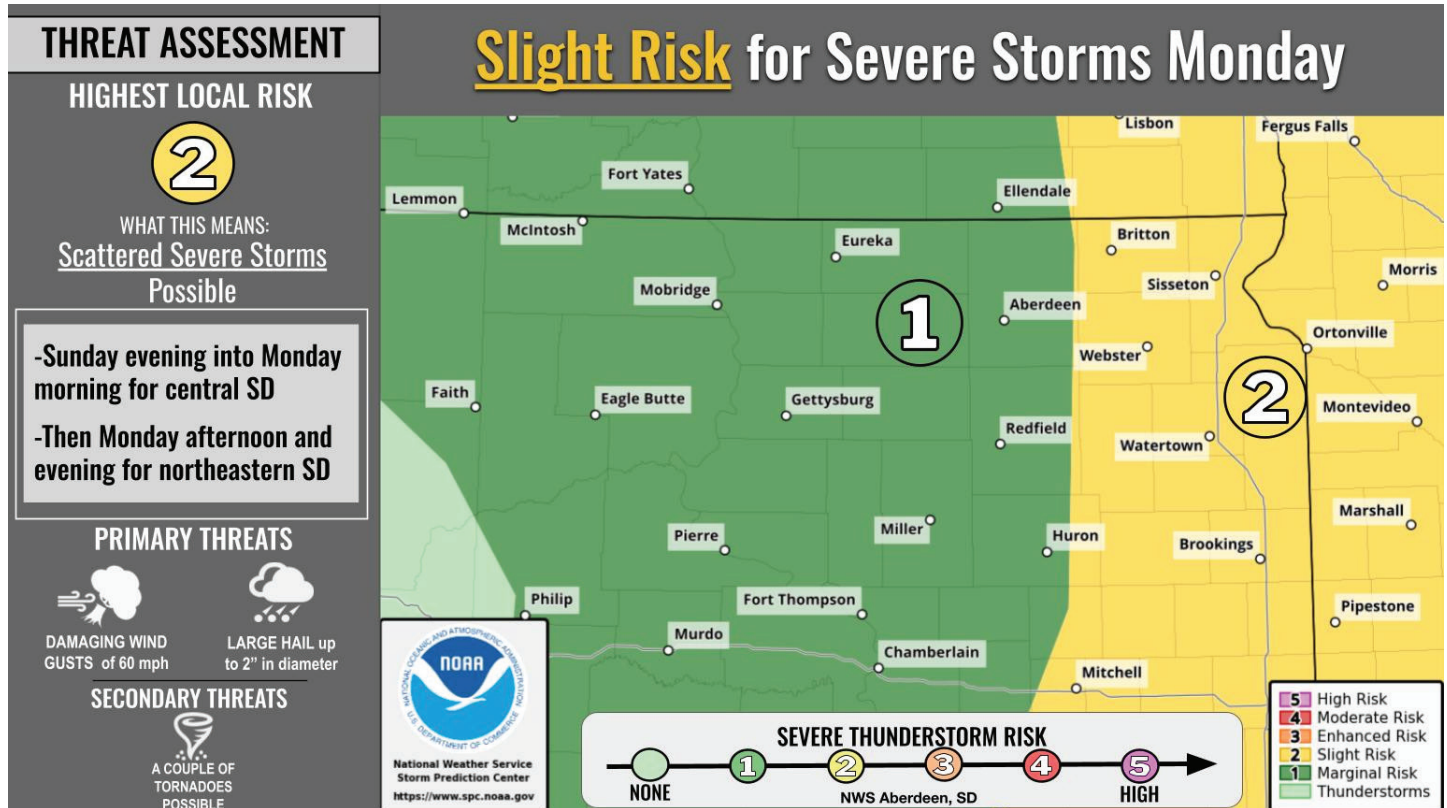
3	High-end ongoing derecho
2	Bow echo/derecho possible
1	Peak gusts 74 mph+



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

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The severe weather threat lingers into Monday, with a focus across mostly eastern South Dakota where re-development is possible in the afternoon.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 83 °F at 5:03 PM

Low Temp: 68 °F at 12:32 AM

Wind: 29 mph at 12:51 PM

Precip: 0.38

Today's Info

Record High: 112 in 1931

Record Low: 40 in 1951

Average High: 83

Average Low: 58

Average Precip in June.: 3.51

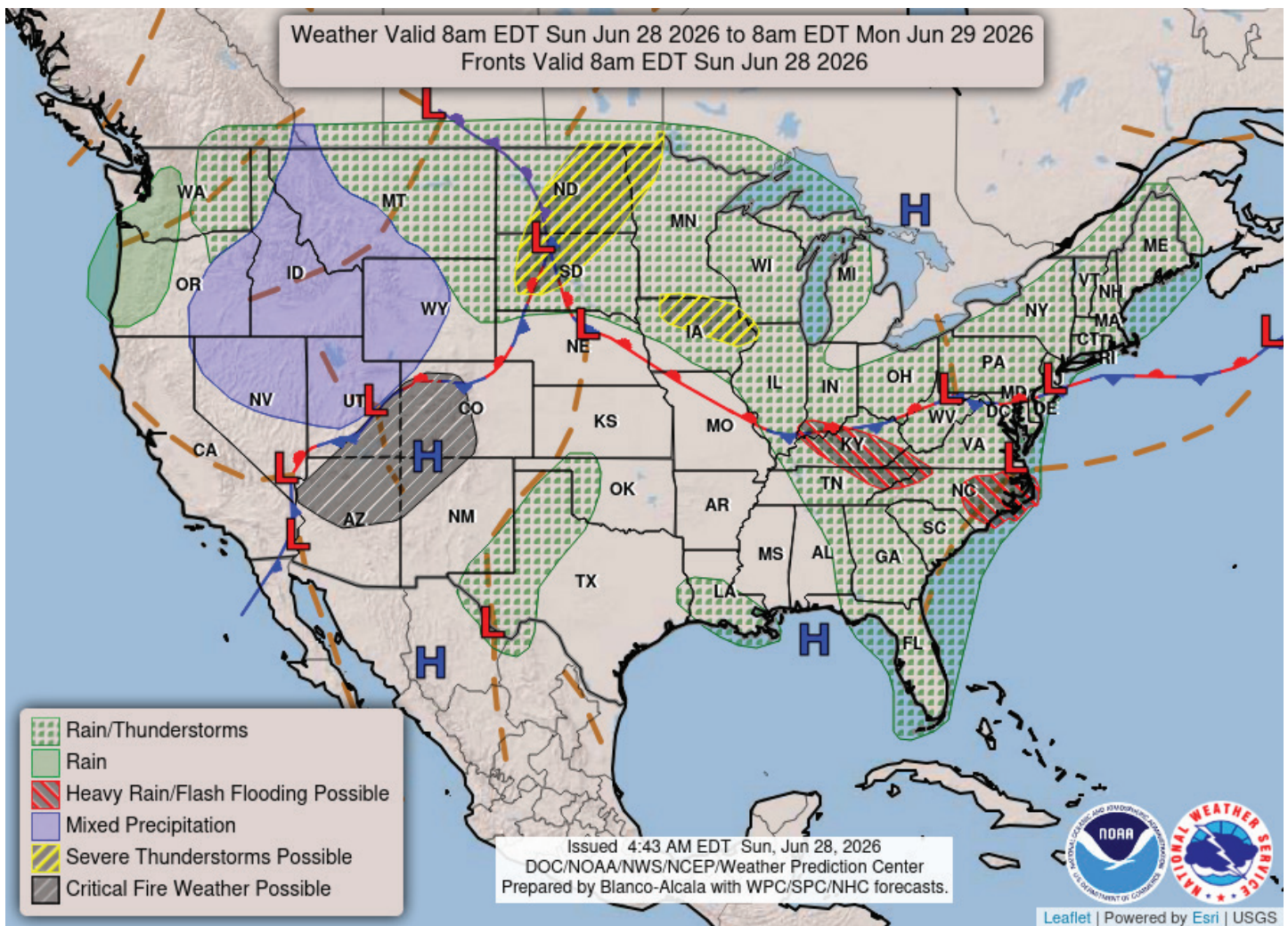
Precip to date in June.: 1.75

Average Precip to date: 10.76

Precip Year to Date: 8.51

Sunset Tonight: 9:24 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:46 am



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Today in Weather History

June 28, 1961: An F2 tornado skipped ESE from about 5 miles south of Eureka to Lake Mina. About twelve farm buildings were destroyed. A house was damaged when a small shed was smashed against it in Hillsview. The storm struck north of Roscoe where a barn was unroofed. A second F2 tornado hit west of Hoven. On one farm, a barn, and five small buildings were destroyed, although grain bin nearby was untouched. Another farm, across the road, lost four buildings including a house. The Langford area of Marshall County was struck by an EF2 tornado shortly after 8:00 pm. An estimated 15 to 20 farm buildings were demolished or heavily damaged, and a store in town was partially unroofed.

June 28, 1982: An estimated thunderstorm wind gust up to 94 mph knocked down trees and caused minor structural damage to several homes just west of Wheaton, Minnesota.

June 28, 1990: KDIO radio in Ortonville, Minnesota, clocked winds of 80 to 85 mph for several minutes as a thunderstorm passed. There were reports of numerous trees downed and scattered power outages in Ortonville.

1788: The Battle of Monmouth in central New Jersey was fought in sweltering heat. The temperature was 96 degrees in the shade, and there were more casualties from the heat than from bullets.

1892 — The temperature at Orogrande UT soared to 116 degrees to establish a record for the state. (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders)

1923 — A massive tornado hit Sandusky, OH, then swept across Lake Erie to strike the town of Lorain. The tornado killed 86 persons and caused twelve million dollars damage. The tornado outbreak that day was the worst of record for the state of Ohio up til that time. (David Ludlum)

1924: An estimated F4 tornado struck the towns of Sandusky and Lorain, killing 85 people and injuring over 300. This tornado is the deadliest ever in Ohio history. Click [HERE](#) for some images from Ohio Historical Society.

1975 — Lee Trevino and two other golfers are struck by lightning at the Western Open golf tournament in Oak Brook, IL. (The Weather Channel)

1980 — The temperature at Wichita Falls, TX, soared to 117 degrees, their hottest reading of record. Daily highs were 110 degrees or above between the 24th of June and the 3rd of July. (The Weather Channel)

1987 — Thunderstorms developing along a cold front produced severe weather in the north central U.S. Thunderstorms in Nebraska produced wind gusts to 70 mph and baseball size hail at Arapahoe, and wind gusts to 80 mph along with baseball size hail at Wolback and Belgrade. Six cities in the Ohio Valley reported record low temperatures for the date, including Cincinnati, OH, with a reading of 50 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 — Showers and thunderstorms brought much needed rains to parts of the central U.S. Madison, WI, received 1.67 inches of rain, a record for the date, and their first measurable rain since the Mother's Day tornado outbreak on the 8th of May. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 — Evening thunderstorms deluged Winnfield LA with eleven inches of rain in four hours and fifteen minutes, and Baton Rouge LA reported 11 inches of rain in two days. Totals in west central Louisiana ranged up to 17 inches. Thunderstorms produced severe weather in the Northern High Plains. Two inch hail broke windows in nearly every building at Comstock, NE. Thunderstorms in North Dakota produced two inch hail at Killdeer, and golf ball size hail at Zap. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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Daily Devotion

What We're Searching For

You were made for God, and nothing else will ever truly satisfy.

Romans 1:21-32: 21 For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

22 Professing to be wise, they became fools,

23 and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.

24 Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them.

25 For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

26 For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural,

27 and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.

28 And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper,

29 being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips,

30 slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents,

31 without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful;

32 and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.

God has revealed Himself to mankind and wants us to have a relationship with Him. Yet not everyone accepts His invitation.

Without God at the center of our life, we can find ourselves drifting. We hunger for something to fill the emptiness inside but may not recognize that only the Lord can truly satisfy that longing. In our search for meaning, we often turn to other things—money, success, relationships, achievements—hoping they'll provide the fulfillment we seek. We pour our passion, time, and energy into these pursuits. Yet nothing this world offers can fully satisfy our soul.

The beautiful truth is that our heavenly Father desires a relationship with us. He loved us so much that He gave His own Son to make this possible (John 3:16). The door stands open.

Look around at the evidence of God's presence—in creation's beauty, in moments of unexpected kindness, in the persistent sense that there's something more. He's inviting you into intimate friendship with Him.

If you've put off responding to His invitation, consider what you might be missing. A relationship with God offers peace, purpose, and joy beyond anything we can imagine (Ephesians 3:20). And better still, He's waiting with open arms.

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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The Groton Independent

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WINNING NUMBERS

MILLIONAIRE FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:

06.27.26

26 32 38 51 52 5

TOP PRIZE:

\$1,000,000/year

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 56 Mins 17 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:

06.26.26

5 13 30 33 52 6

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$511,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:

06.27.26

3 8 18 22 39 6

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$30,900,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:

06.27.26

2 21 25 30 32

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$157,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:

06.27.26

2 26 34 43 45 15

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:

06.27.26

3 16 28 30 59 11

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$360,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the **AP** Associated Press

Iran attacks Bahrain and Kuwait following US strikes and threatens to halt talks to end the war

By JON GAMBRELL and MELANIE LIDMAN Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Iran launched drone and missile attacks Sunday targeting Bahrain and Kuwait in response to U.S. airstrikes that hit the Islamic Republic, and threatened a “complete halt” in negotiations to end the war if Washington continues its attacks.

Efforts to reopen the Strait of Hormuz without Iran’s direct oversight sparked the crossfire now gripping the region and have imperiled negotiations for a lasting ceasefire. A multinational maritime body overseen by the U.S. Navy said Saturday that it would expand a route near Oman for both inbound and outbound traffic, setting up a new flashpoint with Tehran.

The global community has long considered the strait an international passageway, despite its sitting in Iran and Oman’s territorial waters. In recent days, Iran has twice attacked vessels going through a route on the Omani side of the strait backed by a United Nations agency.

Iran insists that it alone must govern the strait, the narrow mouth of the Persian Gulf that once carried a fifth of the world’s oil and natural gas. Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi reiterated the claim during a state visit to Iraq on Sunday.

“Any interference in this matter, any attempt to establish new or separate arrangements from those currently being carried out by the Islamic Republic of Iran, will only lead to further complications, delay the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, and increase the level of tension, just as over the past two nights we witnessed incidents in the Strait of Hormuz that led to an increase in tension and confrontation,” he said in Baghdad.

The United States and Iran are still debating the terms of an interim peace deal, including shipping arrangements through the strait, removing a U.S. blockade and sanctions and addressing the future of Iran’s stockpile of highly enriched uranium. Under the memorandum of understanding signed earlier this month, the U.S. and Iran have 60 days to iron out the details.

The strikes threaten to torpedo the deal before it can be finalized. Continued fighting in Lebanon, where an Israeli soldier was killed by Hezbollah fire early Sunday, has also threatened the agreement.

Strikes target Gulf states hosting US military

The Kuwaiti military said air defenses intercepted incoming Iranian drones and missiles Sunday morning, just after the U.S. strikes.

Kuwait, which hosts a major U.S. Army base, said it had detected and intercepted two ballistic missiles and there were no reports of injuries or damage.

Bahrain’s Interior Ministry said the Iranian strikes damaged a residential building near the international airport and no one was killed. The ministry released photos of an 8-story building, with the top floor destroyed, filled with rubble and its windows blown out.

Bahrain is home to the U.S. Navy’s 5th Fleet, whose base there came under repeated attack during the war. The damaged building on Sunday was not near the fleet’s headquarters, in downtown Manama.

Bahrain’s Foreign Ministry denounced what it called “a dangerous escalation that reveals that what Tehran is doing is not a passing act, nor an isolated incident, but rather a deliberate approach and a systematic pattern of repeated aggression.”

Iran’s paramilitary Revolutionary Guard claimed responsibility for both attacks.

Trump accuses Iran of violating ceasefire with ship attack

The latest U.S. strikes came after the U.S. and Iran traded attacks earlier in the weekend.

The U.S. military’s Central Command said it struck Iranian military “surveillance infrastructure, communication systems, air defense sites, drone storage facilities and minelayer capabilities” on Sunday, following an attack on a ship at sea early Saturday morning. That ship, the Panamanian-flagged tanker Kiku, carried

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crude oil for the state-run energy company of Qatar, a key mediator between Iran and the U.S.

In a social media post, Trump said the U.S. had “struck Iranian missile and drone storage locations, and coastal radar sites, for violating the Cease Fire Agreement, AGAIN!” He warned of a point where the U.S. may no longer be able to be reasonable “and will be forced to militarily complete the job.”

“If that happens, the Islamic Republic of Iran will no longer exist!” Trump wrote on Truth Social.

The incident follows a similar back-and-forth that occurred just days prior, when an Iranian drone struck a merchant vessel off the coast of Oman on Thursday, and the U.S. military retaliated with strikes.

Conflict continues in Lebanon

Iran has consistently said the ceasefire must include a halt to fighting in Lebanon, where Israel has been battling the Iranian-backed Hezbollah militant group. Days after the U.S. and Israel launched the war against Iran in February, Hezbollah began firing at Israel in solidarity with its Iranian allies. Israel responded with an invasion that has occupied large swaths of southern Lebanon and displaced hundreds of thousands of people. Israel has said it will not withdraw its troops until Hezbollah is disarmed.

Last week, Israel and the Lebanese government signed a framework agreement to end the conflict. But their deal did not include Hezbollah or Iran. Hezbollah has criticized the deal and rejected calls to disarm.

On Sunday, Araghchi again said during a visit to Iraq that the U.S. must force Israel to halt attacks and withdraw. Israel occupies around 600 square kilometers (231 square miles) in southern Lebanon, which it says it needs as a security buffer to halt attacks from Hezbollah.

But sporadic clashes have continued between Israel and Hezbollah.

The leader of the Iran-backed group said Saturday that Hezbollah would continue fighting until Israel withdraws from Lebanon, adding that the group considers the Israeli-Lebanese agreement signed on Friday to be “nonexistent.”

The frequency of Israeli strikes in Lebanon has decreased significantly since the Iran-U.S. deal was signed in mid-June, but strikes have continued, killing at least one person Saturday, according to the Lebanese Health Ministry. Two separate Israeli strikes hit southern Lebanon on Sunday morning — one in the town of Taybeh and another in the Nabatiyeh area, according to Lebanon’s National News Agency. There was no immediate word on casualties.

Overnight, Hezbollah militants killed an Israeli soldier in the village of Deir Siryan in southern Lebanon, according to the Israeli military. Hezbollah did not comment on the incident.

Ukrainian strike sets fire to an oil refinery in southern Russia

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukraine kept up its heavy drone assault on Russia, setting fire to a major oil refinery in the south and killing at least two people, Russian authorities said Sunday.

Kyiv’s campaign of massive long-range strikes has choked Russian fuel supplies and military deliveries, in what authorities call an attempt to bring the Kremlin to the negotiating table.

Debris from downed Ukrainian drones sparked a blaze at the refinery in Slavyansk-na-Kubani, a town in Russia’s Krasnodar region, east of occupied Crimea, according to Gov. Veniamin Kondratyev. The falling debris killed one person in Slavyansk and injured another in a nearby village, according to regional authorities.

Photos and videos circulating on Russian social media showed a thick cloud of smoke over what users said was the Slavyansk refinery. The Associated Press was not immediately able to verify the images.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy confirmed that Ukraine was behind the strike on Slavyansk. He also claimed that a second Russian refinery, in the Yaroslavl region around 700 kilometers (435 miles) from the Ukrainian border, was hit during the nighttime strikes.

“Tonight, our ‘long-range sanctions’ reached two oil refineries in Russia,” Zelenskyy wrote on the Telegram messaging app. “Each (strike) means a reduction in the resources that fuel the Russian war machine, and another step toward peace.”

Ukraine has markedly stepped up its long-range attacks on Russian military industries and energy facilities in recent months, aiming to cut Moscow’s revenue for its invasion — now in its fifth year — and make

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Russians feel the consequences. The campaign has helped stall Moscow's efforts on the battlefield and heap pressure on the Kremlin, according to Western officials.

The Slavyansk site is one of southern Russia's major refineries, processing close to 4 million tons of crude per year, according to its operator's website. It is also a key source of petroleum products intended for export through Russia's Black Sea ports, including fuel oil, naphtha and marine fuel.

There were no immediate reports from Russian authorities about the Ukrainian strike on the refinery in the Yaroslavl region. Local Gov. Mikhail Evraev reported on Sunday morning that some roads between Moscow and the region's capital, Yaroslavl, were temporarily closed due to "an enemy attack by Ukrainian drones".

Yaroslavl's airport also briefly closed overnight, along with others in southern and western Russia, according to the country's civil aviation agency.

Elsewhere, Ukrainian drone strikes killed one person and injured another in Russia's border region of Belgorod, its acting Gov. Alexander Shuvayev reported on Sunday.

Russia's Defense Ministry said its forces shot down 213 Ukrainian drones during the night, including over Russia, occupied Crimea and the Black and Azov seas.

Meanwhile, Russia attacked Ukraine with 142 long-range strike drones and eight missiles overnight, according to the Ukrainian air force. Of those, 125 drones and seven missiles were struck down, the air force said.

Ugandan army chief orders the closure of a major news platform

By RODNEY MUHUMUZA Associated Press

KAMPALA, Uganda (AP) — The offices of a major news organization in Uganda were shut down on the orders of the military chief, who warned Sunday that all media "will follow the rules" while asserting his authority as the East African country's de facto ruler.

Gen. Muhoozi Kainerugaba, the eldest son of President Yoweri Museveni, has served as the top military commander since 2024. In recent days, after Museveni was sworn in for a seventh consecutive term, Kainerugaba has strengthened his grip with a series of directives and orders usually reserved for the head of state.

Soldiers were deployed outside the Kampala offices of the Daily Monitor newspaper early Sunday. The paper is part of the Nation Media Group of companies whose headquarters is in Nairobi, the Kenyan capital.

"I have the power in Uganda to shut down ANY media house I want to," Kainerugaba wrote on X, his preferred channel of communication. "I have had this power since 2017. This power was given to me by my great father."

He added: "From now on ALL media in Uganda will follow the rules!"

The army chief said that in addition to Daily Monitor, his closure directive also targeted local broadcaster NTV, part of Nation Media Group.

The National Association of Broadcasters said in a statement that at least six publishing and broadcasting outlets — all under Nation Media Group — were closed. "We are deeply concerned about this action and its impact on the media ecosystem," the statement said.

Kainerugaba asserts that he will succeed his father in the presidency, an increasingly likely possibility as the 81-year-old leader now relies heavily on his son's military authority.

Earlier this month, Kainerugaba retaliated against a prominent attorney who sought to hold him accountable for his alleged role in the violation of the rights of opposition leader Kizza Besigye. He was seized in Nairobi in 2024, and has since been imprisoned on treason charges he says are politically motivated. Besigye's attorney, Erias Lukwago, was taken from his house and later charged with an offense related to the concealment of treason.

Museveni, who has ruled Uganda since 1986, has not said when he will retire. He has no rivals within the ruling party, the reason many believe the military will have a say in choosing his successor.

Kainerugaba's associates describe him as a dedicated military officer who often eschews ostentatious

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displays of wealth. They say he opposes official corruption and would punish it heavily as president.

He attended military schools in the U.S. and Britain before taking charge of a presidential guard unit that has since been expanded into an elite group of special forces. In addition to his military duties, he is the founder of a political activist group known as the Patriotic League of Uganda. Its members and well-wishers range from the parliamentary speaker to government ministers.

Trump presses Syria to take on Hezbollah, raising alarm in Lebanon and Israel

By ABBY SEWELL Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — As the White House has soured on Israel's war with Hezbollah in Lebanon, U.S. President Donald Trump has shocked many in the region by pushing an alternative: Let Syria fight the Iran-backed militant group instead.

He has suggested that the battle-hardened and Islamist-led insurgents who overthrew Syria's autocratic President Bashar Assad a year and a half ago and formed a new government would do a better job of rooting out Hezbollah than the Israeli army.

Syrian President Ahmad al-Sharaa has said he has no interest in doing so, and has asserted that Trump's comments were misconstrued. But Trump has doubled down on the idea.

Although it remains unclear how serious the White House is about the proposal, the prospect of a Syrian invasion has raised alarms in Lebanon — and also in Israel, which regards al-Sharaa's Islamist-led government with suspicion and has seized control of a strip of southern Syria since he took power.

Syria has also become the site of rising tensions between Israel and Turkey — a main backer of al-Sharaa's government — with each seeking to limit the other's influence in the neighboring country.

Top Israeli security officials convened a meeting on the subject on Wednesday, according to an official who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to the media.

Trump says Syria would 'do a better job' against Hezbollah

On the sidelines of the G7 summit earlier this month, Trump complained that Israel's war with Hezbollah is dragging on too long and "too many people are being killed."

More than 4,000 people have been killed by Israeli strikes in Lebanon since Hezbollah joined the wider Iran war with a March 2 attack on Israel, including hundreds of women and children. Israel says its strikes target Hezbollah and that it takes measures to protect civilians.

"You don't have to knock down an apartment house every time you're looking for somebody, because there are a lot of people in those apartment houses and they're not all Hezbollah," Trump said.

"I suggested to Israel to let Syria take care of Hezbollah. 'Cause to be honest with you, I think they'd do a better job."

Days later, on the first day of U.S.-Iran talks in Switzerland, Fox News' Trey Yingst said that, during an interview, Trump had expressed disappointment that Israel can't "put Hezbollah away" and said that he is "close to giving it to Syria" because he thinks al-Sharaa would be more precise.

The White House declined to comment and referred to Trump's previous statements.

Syria denies plans to intervene in Lebanon

Syrian officials scrambled to do damage control.

In a speech in Damascus on June 13, al-Sharaa said, "There are people spreading rumors that Syria will intervene in Lebanon. This is not true. We are calling for a permanent end to the war and the strengthening of institutions and for there to be economic ties and a calming of the situation in Lebanon."

In a June 21 interview with the Emirati network Al Mashhad, al-Sharaa said Trump's remarks had been misunderstood.

Trump "spoke about Syria's role in finding a safe and peaceful solution, but the statement was misinterpreted as if Syria were going to invade Lebanon tomorrow morning," al-Sharaa said.

He said Syria had "presented our vision for a solution to the United States, which is to stop the war and address the negative effects on Lebanon and Syria, and to find different economic, political and social

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solutions.”

Syria’s leaders say they don’t want to settle scores with Hezbollah

Hezbollah, along with Iran, intervened on the side of Assad during Syria’s 14-year civil war, while al-Sharaa was the leader of an insurgent group seeking to overthrow him.

But the new leaders in Damascus have said since taking power in December 2024 that they are focused on rebuilding the country, are not seeking to settle scores, and want to remain outside of any regional conflict.

After Israel and the U.S. launched their war against Iran — which triggered a wider regional conflict — Syria made a point of remaining on the sidelines.

In the first weeks of the war, the Syrian military sent reinforcements to the border with Lebanon, which officials said aimed to stop cross-border weapons smuggling or any spillover of the conflict. At one point in March, Syria accused Hezbollah of launching artillery shells across the border toward Syrian army positions, which Hezbollah denied. The escalation stopped there.

Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan told The Associated Press in March that Turkey had interceded to defuse the tensions.

Al-Sharaa told Al Mashhad that “the decision of (Hezbollah) to enter into the Syrian conflict was wrong,” but that he was willing to hold a “dialogue” with the militant group and even to mediate between different Lebanese factions as they debate the future of Hezbollah’s weapons.

Trump’s proposal dredges up sectarian fears and memory of occupation

In March, U.S. envoy to Syria Tom Barrack denied reports that Washington had floated the idea of Syria intervening against Hezbollah.

But since then, Trump has begun to make the call openly.

Randa Slim, director of the Middle East Program at the Washington-based Stimson Center, said Trump’s proposal is, “at best, driven by a profound ignorance of the dynamics on the ground.”

“Syria needs to focus on a myriad of complex and daunting challenges — not least rebuilding a shattered country and repatriating millions of refugees,” she said. “Syrian forces are far from a coherent military institution; they include thousands of foreign jihadi fighters of uncertain loyalty and discipline.”

In the months after Assad’s fall in Syria, there were several eruptions of violence between groups loyal and opposed to al-Sharaa that spiraled into sectarian revenge attacks, in which Sunni Islamist fighters affiliated with the new government carried out attacks on Alawite and Druze civilians. The attacks triggered fears of cross-border violence among Lebanon’s Shiite, Christian and Druze populations.

Many Lebanese also have bitter memories of the decades of Syrian occupation of Lebanon, which began during the Lebanese civil war, initially at the request of Lebanese authorities and with the backing of Arab states, ending in 2005.

The official who spoke anonymously said that Israel is also concerned about some signs that Syria could assume its old role in Lebanese politics. But the official said while Israel is closely watching developments between Syria and Lebanon, its main concern is Hezbollah.

3 firefighters killed, 2 injured while tackling wildfires on the Colorado-Utah border

By TY ONEIL and SUSAN MONTTOYA BRYAN Associated Press

BEAVER, Utah (AP) — Three firefighters died and two were injured while tackling fires on the Colorado-Utah border, the U.S. Wildland Fire Service reported Sunday.

The agency — created earlier this year to streamline firefighting and fire reduction across public lands — said the firefighters had been part of an interagency response to the Knowles and Gore fires on Saturday.

“The U.S. Wildland Fire Service stands united with the USDA Forest Service in grief and in our unwavering support for the loved ones left behind. Their bravery, dedication, and sacrifice will never be forgotten,” it said in a statement on Facebook.

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Wildfire activity has intensified across the western United States, as consecutive days of hot, dry and windy weather have fueled flames in Utah, Arizona and elsewhere as new fires popped up across the region.

The largest blaze, the Cottonwood Fire, was burning in rugged terrain in southwest Utah. It ballooned Saturday to more than 144 square miles (373 square kilometers) after marching through canyons and mountainsides, destroying part of a ski resort and other summer cabins along the way.

Authorities in Beaver County began working with fire teams on Saturday to assess the extent of the damage, but no estimates were immediately available. Gov. Spencer Cox in a post on social media called it bleak, but he thanked crews for what he called "several miraculous stops and saves."

The cliffs and steep slopes have made the job even harder, said Alyssa Mason, a spokesperson assigned to the fire.

"It's hard to get dozers and other heavy equipment into that. It's hard to get engines into that," she said. "It doesn't make it impossible to firefight, but it does just kind of slow things down."

Hundreds of firefighters have been arriving in the arid state to battle new starts as well as those that have been growing because of what forecasters called critical fire weather — dangerously low humidity levels, warm temperatures and gusty winds.

The danger is even higher this year because of Utah's record-low snowpack and its warmest winter on record. Much of the West is grappling with similar conditions, according to the National Interagency Fire Center.

From Alaska to Florida, crews worked Saturday to corral dozens of fires, including three dozen that were classified as large and uncontained.

Nationally, nearly 3 million acres (1.2 million hectares) have burned since the start of the year. That is more than the 10-year average.

The conditions in Utah were critical enough for Gov. Spencer Cox to declare an emergency earlier this week and clear the way for the state to ban fireworks ahead of the July Fourth holiday. The order comes as Utah is experiencing one of the most severe wildfire seasons in recent history, fueled by historic drought conditions.

State officials said that over the past week, Utah has seen an increase in wildfire starts, with each fire showing unprecedented behavior. These starts have stretched the state's wildland firefighting capabilities, State Forester Jamie Barnes said.

Colorado Gov. Jared Polis also declared an emergency on Saturday, and authorized the use of the National Guard to tackle the fires.

Forecasters with the National Weather Service over recent days have been issuing red flag warnings for a wide swath of the West, from California to Arizona and New Mexico.

South of Grand Canyon National Park, authorities said the flames of a new wildfire were moving away from Grand Canyon Village and the nearby community of Tusayan on Saturday. But about 50 miles (80 kilometers) away, another fire prompted Coconino County officials to issue evacuation orders for those near Kendrick Mountain.

Parts of northern Arizona were without power Saturday as the utility serving the area initiated a safety shut-off in hopes of lessening the wildfire risk.

Power shutoffs have become more common in the West as wildfire risk has expanded. It is usually a last resort after utility forecasters weigh factors like sustained wind and gust speeds, available fuels and topography.

With extreme fire conditions persisting in Utah, Rocky Mountain Power also shut off power lines serving Beaver County and other areas.

Meet 3 members of Albania's 'Flamingo Revolution' trying to torpedo a Kushner-linked development

By ZANA CIMILI Associated Press

TIRANA, Albania (AP) — Albania's rallies against a coastal development project have garnered global attention, both for their connection to Donald Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner and because of their curious mascot.

The luxury project has two components: a small resort on the uninhabited island of Sazan and a coastal development in the nearby Narta Lagoon area, which is a wildlife reserve frequented by wetland species including flamingos.

Every evening for weeks, protesters have marched by the thousands in the capital Tirana, holding up cut-outs of flamingos. The result has been a nickname for their fledgling movement: "The Flamingo Revolution."

Here are some of its members.

The artist who makes flamingos

Fatma Paja, 28, lives in Tirana and runs a creative studio with her two sisters. She's part of a group of artists who created the cut-out flamingos that have become a fixture at the nightly rallies.

"I have long used art as a means to express the injustices and dissatisfaction associated with everyday civilian life in Albania," Paja told The Associated Press on Friday while painting a foam flamingo pink for that evening's protest.

Paja's group also organizes drawing and coloring activities for children during the protest, so that willing parents are able to join.

At the demonstrations, she leads chants through a loudspeaker. "Albania is not for sale!" she shouts, and "Don't touch Narta!"

The project has sparked outrage because of the location's pristine nature and unique habitat that would be irreversibly devastated, according to environmentalists.

Citizens are demanding the project's halt, citing a lack of transparency and concerns that in many similar projects environmental standards were not met.

"I am against a pro-elitist project that is blocking a fully protected area and destroying it," Paja said. "It is a project that has no legal basis and has not been supported by any study on the damage it would cause to the environment and nature."

She said she is optimistic, believing the protest has already produced results.

"This protest has motivated people to speak up and react," she said, adding that, because it was not affiliated with political parties, it fostered trust and solidarity.

Although unaffiliated with a specific party, protesters are almost universally calling for the resignation of Prime Minister Edi Rama.

From tour guide to protest leader

Arben Kola, one of the first protesters in the "Flamingo Revolution," has worked as a tour guide for more than a decade. He takes visitors to historic and nature sites around Albania — including the area around the prospective development.

Tourism in Albania has seen a sharp increase in recent years, with people relishing the nation's vast, undeveloped coastline. Among those who have been impressed were Kushner and Trump's daughter, Ivanka Trump. She explained on a podcast last month that they discovered the site of the planned development while on a friend's boat and stopping for a swim.

It was yet another example, for Kola, of the government abusing its power, and he couldn't stomach it any longer. He joined the nascent protest movement when it was just getting started.

"Albania is facing a high level of corruption, with the privatization and giveaway of land, beaches, valleys and rivers," the 46-year-old said in an interview while leading a tour group through Tirana.

Albania's anti-corruption agency has opened an investigation related to the project. The government says the land is privately owned, but rival claims over its privatization have emerged.

In an interview with the AP this month, Rama dismissed environmental objections as the result of mis-

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information and said the development was turning Albania from a country once ignored by investors into one "where the big capital wants to come and the big investors want to come."

It is unclear exactly what Kushner's investment role is in the project's development, but Rama confirmed his involvement.

The prime minister said a formal environmental impact assessment has not started because the plan for the development has not been finalized. He said international architects and environmental specialists are still shaping the proposal.

Kola says it looks to him like the project is already moving full steam ahead. He is furious that work has already begun to clear land inside a nature reserve with excavators and other heavy machinery.

Today, Kola is one of the people who organizes the crowds by speaking to them on a loudspeaker. He's still floored by just how much the demonstrations have grown.

"We didn't believe the protest would reach this size," Kola said, adding that people repeatedly ask him whether the movement will continue.

"It depends on the people," he says.

The protest's matriarch

Unlike most of Albania's protests in over three decades of democracy, the young people on the streets this time are joined by an increasing number of retirees. Bujare Ishmi, 70, is one of them.

The former engineer attends the protest almost every night, wearing a placard that reads: "You have the power of crime, we have the power of truth."

"Nona! Nona!" protesters chant when she arrives, welcoming her. The word is an Albanian term of endearment for an elderly female family member, and signals that she is the protest's matriarch.

Ishmi said she has long dreamed of seeing a protest like this, describing Albania's political system as a "half-hearted democracy."

Her husband is a former political prisoner under Enver Hoxha's four-decade rule, and she says neither of them is opposed to foreign investment. Their main concern is the lack of transparency.

Investment brings progress, "but the location must be known and the proper parameters must be maintained," she said.

Inside country legend Alan Jackson's triumphant finale concert

By MARIA SHERMAN AP Music Writer

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — The time has come for country music superstar Alan Jackson to hang up his signature Stetson hat.

The genre traditionalist from Newnan, Georgia, whose career kicked off in the 1980s and exploded shortly thereafter in the oft-cited '90s country wave with heartfelt songs for the working man who'd rather be drinking, or fishing, or ideally both, has sold over 60 million records across his storied career. And on Saturday night at Nissan Stadium in Nashville, he brought his touring career to an end.

The event titled "Last Call: One More for the Road — The Finale" was a triumphant swan song for the performer, a celebration of his life and career with some help from the artists he directly inspired.

Nashville's all-stars came out in droves

It was a concert in two movements.

The first two hours were made up of a marathon run of Jackson covers from some of the biggest names in contemporary country. And each performer had a personal story to share. Carrie Underwood sang "Everything I Love" after revealing that Jackson was her first ever concert, in 1994 at the Tulsa State Fair. Thomas Rhett warmed up the crowd with "Small Town Southern Man," an appropriate choice for a singer currently living the song's lyrics — he's a father to four girls.

The Texas-born and bred Miranda Lambert performed "Dallas." Lainey Wilson got the crowd moving with "Tall, Tall Trees."

"It's almost impossible to pick a favorite Alan Jackson song ... but I had to try," said Luke Combs before launching into "Hard Hat and a Hammer."

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Each performer played with Jackson's backing band, save for Eric Church, who opted to cover "Someday" with just his voice and an acoustic guitar.

It was an All-Star night for one of country music's most colossal voices. Other guest performers included Luke Bryan, Riley Green, Cody Johnson, Little Big Town, Jake Owen, Jon Pardi, Lee Ann Womack and a slew of super talented members of Jackson's own family: Adam Wright, Big City Brian Wright and Carlisle Wright.

Five years ago, the 67-year-old music giant Jackson shared that he has a degenerative nerve condition that affects his balance called Charcot-Marie-Tooth disease, which he was first diagnosed with a decade prior. He said it was a genetic condition, and its effects on his ability to walk and perform had become more noticeable. One dollar of every ticket sold on Saturday night the CMT Research Foundation, an organization that funds research to find a cure for Charcot-Marie-Tooth.

When it was time for Jackson to hit the stage after 9:35 p.m. — after a storm delay of about an hour — he was met with ear-piercing cheers. The singer appeared stiff as he walked to his microphone, but once he picked up his guitar for the opener "Gone Country," he was immediately back in action with that smoky baritone and timeless songs, though strumming was kept to a minimum.

"It's overwhelming," he addressed the crowd before assuring them he would not spend too much time on "that last show stuff ... I'm not dead!"

A night to remember

The Country Music Hall of Famer ran through his best-known hits with real ferocity: "I Don't Even Know Your Name" arrived quickly, as did "Livin' on Love," "Summertime Blues" and the moody "Midnight in Montgomery," as the music videos for each played on a giant screen behind them.

He made it a point to walk from side to side of the stage, greeting each section while championing his band and the power of "real country music."

"If anyone has lived the American dream," he said later, while seated on a stool, "It's me."

Anecdotes flowed from there. He talked about writing "I'd Love You All Over Again" for his wife on their 10th wedding anniversary and how the radio from "Chasin' that Neon Rainbow" is currently in the Country Music Hall of Fame museum. And he mentioned that "Drive (For Daddy Gene)" was written after his father died.

An hour into his set, Jackson teased the audience by saying he needed some help for the next song. Out emerged George Strait for their collaborations "Designated Drink" and "Murder on Music Row."

Then came an incredible run of hits: "Little Bitty," "Country Boy," "Good Time" and "Where Were You (When the World Stopped Turning)" among them, the latter written and recorded following the Sept. 11 terror attacks.

Blockbuster singles followed: "Don't Rock the Jukebox," "Remember When," and "It's Five O'Clock Somewhere," the latter recording famously featuring the late "Margaritaville" singer Jimmy Buffett.

Fireworks were launched into the sky for "Chattahoochee."

Alan Jackson's story continues

Just because this is the end of Jackson's touring career doesn't mean it is the end of his music career. On Thursday, two days before the final concert blowout, Jackson released a country cover of Orleans' "Still the One," to celebrate his 50-year relationship with wife and high school sweetheart Denise Jackson. She was a cheerleader practicing a dance routine to the soft rock classic; he was instantly smitten.

For those who missed Jackson's final bow, the show will be released later in the year as an NBC concert special. But for those who were in the stadium — in the middle of a huge storm — it was an unrepeatable and unmistakable night.

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Iran narrowly knocked out of tumultuous World Cup on Austria's last-second goal

By JIM VERTUNO AP Sports Writer

Iran has been eliminated from the World Cup, narrowly failing to advance past the group stage in a politically charged tournament where the team played its matches amid tight restrictions imposed by the United States.

Iran missed the round of 32 by one spot in heartbreaking fashion.

It finished third in Group G with three points earned with draws against Belgium, New Zealand and Egypt. Iran appeared to have advanced via tiebreakers when Algeria scored a stunning stoppage-time goal to go ahead of Austria 3-2 Saturday night, but Austria tied it back up seconds later on the game's final play. Their draw ensured Iran's elimination.

It was one last painful moment for Iran in a World Cup that's been tumultuous, on and off the pitch.

The Iranians have been playing while Tehran negotiates with Washington on terms of a deal meant to permanently end the war that began earlier this year. Tensions continued Saturday when Iran launched a drone assault targeting Bahrain, home to the U.S. Navy's 5th Fleet, in a likely response to overnight airstrikes by the U.S. Hours later, the U.S. said it struck multiple Iranian military targets after it said Iran attacked a ship near the Strait of Hormuz.

During the World Cup, Iran coach Amir Ghalenoei and players complained about numerous complications, including travel restrictions, visa denials for support staff and quick departures from the U.S. after matches.

U.S. officials have said all restrictions were known before the tournament.

The U.S. and Israel began the war on Feb. 28 by attacking Iran, which retaliated with attacks in the region and by asserting control over the Strait of Hormuz.

In March, Iran sought to move its group-stage matches to Mexico, with which it has diplomatic ties. Its request to move its base camp from Tucson, Arizona, to Tijuana was granted two weeks before the team's arrival.

After Iran was eliminated Saturday night, the team sent a statement expressing "heartfelt appreciation to the wonderful people of Mexico, especially the beautiful city of Tijuana."

"Leaving Tijuana is truly difficult for all of us," the statement said.

At its first match, several hundred Iranian Americans protested outside the stadium, calling for change in Tehran and waving the pre-revolutionary lion-and-sun flag. Thousands more poured into the stadium to watch them play, and the pre-game national anthem was met with a mix of cheers and boos.

For the first two matches, near Los Angeles, the team was not permitted to travel until the day before and had to return to Mexico immediately after each game. The U.S. then eased its restrictions, allowing the squad to travel to Seattle two days before Friday's match against Egypt. If Iran had advanced, it would have played its next match in Vancouver, British Columbia.

"We were treated very, very badly," Ghalenoei said after Friday's draw with Egypt left the Iranians clinging to hope they would get to the next round. "I hope the world becomes aware of these issues."

"What these young Iranian national team players have done should be recorded in history," Ghalenoei said. "Why? Because the host treated us in the worst possible way."

Final day of group play at the World Cup sets the field for the round of 32

By The Associated Press undefined

The round of 32 at the World Cup is set, with the knockout stage getting underway Sunday as Canada plays South Africa in Southern California.

The U.S. will face Bosnia-Herzegovina on Wednesday in Santa Clara, California, while third co-host Mexico returns to its capital city to take on Ecuador on Tuesday. Tournament favorite France goes back to the New York area to play Sweden on Tuesday, with the winner of that game going up against Germany or

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Paraguay in the round of 16.

Here are the games in the round of 32:

US vs. Bosnia-Herzegovina, July 1

The Americans had their powerful momentum from two consecutive victories stalled in the loss to Turkey. But in the knockout round, they'll face Bosnia-Herzegovina, which is 62nd in the FIFA rankings. Bosnia finished third in Group B with four points. U.S. star Christian Pulisic entered as a substitute in the second half against Turkey. He had not played since leaving the opening win over Paraguay at halftime with a calf injury. "We play every game like a knockout game," said U.S. midfielder Sebastian Berhalter, who scored against Turkey. "You saw that in our intensity and the way we worked. For us, it's keep doing what we've been doing."

Belgium vs. Senegal, July 1

Belgium scored five times in its group play finale against New Zealand to not only advance but finish first. Up next is no easy task: a matchup against Senegal, which played France and Norway tough and routed Iraq to move on. The U.S.-Bosnia-Herzegovina winner faces the winner of this match.

Germany vs. Paraguay, June 29

Germany comes into the knockout stage off a similarly low-key late defeat as the U.S., having already clinched its group with little to play for. Germany is a significant favorite against Paraguay, which lost to the U.S. 4-1 in its opener but steadied itself enough to move on.

France vs. Sweden, June 30

France came in as the tournament favorite and remains it after winning all three of its group games to set up a matchup against Sweden, which had a 5-1 win, a 5-1 loss and a draw.

South Africa vs. Canada, June 28

These nations have already made history. It'll be the first time both are in the knockout stage of the World Cup. Canada advanced as runner-up in Group B with four points — one win, one draw and one loss. South Africa was runner-up in Group A, also with four points, including a surprising win over South Korea.

Netherlands vs. Morocco, June 29

The Netherlands won Group F after a draw with Japan and outscoring Sweden and Tunisia by a combined 8-2. Morocco went unbeaten to finish second in Group C in pursuit of becoming the first African winner of the World Cup. Morocco reached the semifinals four years ago in Qatar.

Portugal vs. Croatia, July 2

Playing Colombia to a 0-0 tie Saturday night meant a second-place finish in the group for Cristiano Ronaldo and Portugal and a tougher path, which could include facing neighbor Spain for a spot in the quarterfinals. Croatia moved into this spot by defeating Ghana hours earlier.

Spain vs. Austria, July 2

Spain bounced back from a surprising 0-0 draw against Cape Verde in its first game to win its group, in the process sending two-time champion Uruguay home. Austria tied it in the final minutes after falling behind earlier in stoppage time to play Algeria to a 3-3 draw Saturday night and set up this matchup.

Brazil vs. Japan, June 29

Japan advanced as Group F runner-up with a hard fought 1-1 draw against Sweden and the Samurai Blue's reward is a knockout match against five-time World Cup champion Brazil. It'll be a full-circle moment for Japan, which brought in Brazilian great Zico in 1991 to professionalize the country's new domestic league and support Japan's successful bid to co-host the World Cup in 2002. Now, the Japanese have a chance to show how far they've come against a country that has set the standard.

Norway vs. Ivory Coast, June 30

It would have taken beating favored France for Norway to win Group I. Instead, coach Ståle Solbakken

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opted to rest Erling Haaland and all but one starter. That sets up a matchup against the Ivory Coast at the Dallas Cowboys' stadium in Arlington, Texas, on Tuesday.

Mexico vs. Ecuador, June 30

Winning all three of its group stage matches for the first time at the World Cup, Mexico goes into the round of 32 also having now allowed a single goal. It has outscored opponents 6-0 and now has the distinct home-field advantage at altitude back at Estadio Azteca in Mexico City against Ecuador, which rallied to beat Germany and advance.

England vs. Congo, July 1

It took Jude Bellingham scoring and setting up Harry Kane's goal to break a tie with Panama, but England got the job done Saturday to finish first in its group. Injuries are a question now, going into a matchup with Congo, which rallied to defeat Uzbekistan and advance.

Argentina vs. Cape Verde, July 3

Defending champion Argentina faces the smallest country to qualify for the knockout stage at a World Cup. Unsurprisingly, Cape Verde goes in as a massive underdog.

Australia vs. Egypt, July 3

This may be one of the most evenly matched round of 32 games, after Australia beat Turkey, lost to the U.S and drew with Paraguay. Egypt got through as the second-place team in Group G after a late goal by Iran on Friday night was called back for offside.

Switzerland vs. Algeria, July 2

This was supposed to be Canada's spot in Vancouver, but Switzerland winning the teams' head-to-head matchup there and finishing ahead in the group gave the Swiss a plum spot. Algeria took a late lead on Austria before allowing the tying goal in the final minutes leading to a 3-3 draw and getting both teams in and eliminating Iran.

Colombia vs. Ghana, July 3

Passing Portugal for first in the group allows Colombia to open the knockout stage against Ghana, which entered with the lowest FIFA ranking at No. 74 but also played England to a scoreless tie.

LGBTQ+ Pride parades set for Sunday in NYC and San Francisco

The Associated Press undefined

Pride Month celebrations peak Sunday with big parades in New York, San Francisco and some other cities on the anniversary of the 1969 Stonewall uprising, which accelerated and transformed the modern LGBTQ+ rights movement.

Pride events often mix celebration and calls to action, reflecting the political winds, cultural climate and news around LGBTQ+ rights.

This month's parades and festivals around the U.S. have unfolded as President Donald Trump works to roll back transgender rights and diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives. Among other moves, the Republican's administration removed a rainbow Pride flag from the Stonewall National Monument earlier this year, then ultimately relented amid a lawsuit.

"As LGBTQIA+ events and symbols are being erased, it's vital that our community have safe spaces to show up and march to make clear: We are here," Chris Piedmont, a spokesperson for New York parade organizers Heritage of Pride, said in a statement Friday. "We will not be erased."

Meanwhile, multiple Republican governors have promulgated conservative-friendly designations for June, such as "Nuclear Family Month," sometimes openly describing them as a counter to Pride. Other prominent Republican politicians, including Vice President JD Vance, criticized Major League Baseball's response to some San Francisco Giants players who added Bible verses to the rainbow-themed Pride Night caps they were issued.

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Against that backdrop, the NYC Pride March and the San Francisco Pride Parade are setting out to further their legacies as some of the world's largest and oldest such celebrations.

Both trace their roots to events held in 1970 to commemorate the Stonewall rebellion on June 28, 1969, when patrons of a New York gay bar called the Stonewall Inn resisted a police raid and ended up kindling a wave of activism.

The Stonewall Inn still is a bar; the Stonewall monument centers on a small park across the street, about half a mile (about 0.8 km) from the Pride March route at its closest point.

Also set for Sunday in Manhattan is the newer Queer Liberation March, founded by activists who saw the Pride March as too corporate and official.

This year, some transgender rights activists also pressured Pride organizers to bar some New York City hospitals' contingents from marching because the institutions announced in recent months that they would stop providing transgender youth treatments. The cutoff came amid funding threats from the Trump administration, and at least some of the hospitals also got federal Justice Department subpoenas for transgender patients' medical records. A judge has temporarily blocked the document demand.

Heritage of Pride said it has been talking with the hospitals about the issue. The group also noted the parade contingents are organized by LGBTQ+ employee groups, not by the top administrators responsible for decisions about care.

A message was sent to San Francisco Pride organizers about whether they faced similar questions.

Other cities with Pride parades Sunday include Seattle, where a World Cup soccer match Friday took on a Pride dimension after the countries whose teams involved — Iran and Egypt — tried unsuccessfully to get the celebrations canceled.

The US lags other countries in social media restrictions for kids, but a reform push is growing

By KAITLYN HUAMANI and BARBARA ORTUTAY AP Technology Writers

Amy Neville describes Kristin Bride as her "soulmate." But the day that forged their bond — June 23, 2020 — was the worst of each of their lives.

Both Bride and Neville lost their teen sons that day. Their kids lived a thousand miles apart and never met, but they both died from harms related to their social media use.

When the two mothers met, early in their advocacy work to protect other kids, Bride said she had felt "totally alone." But they have since seen the online child safety movement blossom, with scores of other parents who lost kids pursuing stronger social media safeguards and legislation to protect children online.

With that momentum, advocates say the tide seems to be turning. A pair of landmark jury verdicts this year showed a way forward for holding tech companies accountable. And while the U.S. is nowhere near embracing social media bans for children like those seen from Australia to Indonesia, a push for regulation is simmering again in Congress.

"Moving forward for me, it's this groundswell. We now have the court of public opinion on our side, and that is powerful. That has brought things to the next level," Neville said in an interview.

Her son Alexander Neville was "brilliant and intense," Neville said, with an entrepreneurial spirit and "the best laugh in the world." When he was 14, a drug dealer connected with him on Snapchat and sold him the pill that killed him. Carson Bride was the "bright light" of his family, a funny and caring kid who loved connecting with people, his mother said. He died by suicide at age 16 after severe cyberbullying.

The teenagers were honored in Washington, D.C., on Tuesday alongside 270 other children and young people who died because of online harms. It was the sixth anniversary of the boys' deaths, a date their families have worked to establish as Social Media Victims Remembrance Day.

Jury verdicts hold social media companies responsible for harms

Growing awareness of the dangers social media poses for young, developing brains has shown up in a wave of new restrictions globally. Australia, the U.K., Turkey, Indonesia and others have passed bans on

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kids under 16 or 15 from using platforms like TikTok, YouTube and Instagram.

In the U.S., the movement turned a corner with two jury verdicts against Meta and one against Google that galvanized proponents for kids' online safety. Evidence in the court cases revealed some of the tech companies' inner workings, including communications of employees who likened their products to drugs and casinos.

That the Los Angeles trial accusing social media platforms of causing deliberate harm to children was allowed to move forward was itself a watershed movement, said Matthew Bergman, head of the Social Media Victims Law Center, which represents more than 1,000 plaintiffs in lawsuits against social media companies.

Section 230 of the 1996 Communications Decency Act shields tech companies from legal responsibility for posted content. It has been a barrier to accountability but lawsuits are side-stepping its protections by focusing on the companies' deliberate design choices rather than content.

"It is still a hurdle, but it is no longer a barrier," Bergman said.

Advocates say there's a long road ahead

In the U.S., federal legislation of social media has moved at a glacial pace. The Children's Online Privacy Protection Act, which took effect in 2000, requires kid-oriented apps and websites to get parents' consent before collecting personal information of children under 13.

This week, lawmakers in the House unveiled a bipartisan deal called the Kids Internet and Digital Safety Act. It includes portions of the the Kids Online Safety Act, or KOSA, which passed the Senate in 2024, but critics say it's been stripped of its most important part — a provision called "duty of care," a legal term that requires companies to take reasonable steps to prevent harm.

"Without a duty of care, Big Tech companies will maintain the status quo of putting profit before the safety of our children," Sen. Marsha Blackburn, R-Tenn., said in a statement.

Bride said advocates have to employ a three-prong approach, utilizing legislation, litigation and education. That way, "when one stalls, like legislation," Bride said, "then we have the trials and we have litigation. So we keep pressing forward. We're not going to give up."

Representatives from Meta, YouTube and TikTok did not immediately respond to messages for comment. Snap said in a written statement that it works continuously to strengthen safety protections across its platform.

Over the years, social media platforms have introduced some safety features including separating minors into teen accounts and providing even tighter restrictions for younger teenagers. Instagram, for instance, now restricts teen accounts to viewing content that aligns with "PG-13" ratings and accounts are set to private and can't be messaged by strangers. YouTube has a separate kids app and parental controls on its regular platform that allow for "supervised kid accounts" for preteens who have aged out of YouTube kids.

But child advocates say there's still a long way to go.

"Their fundamental incentive to design products that maximize engagement has not changed," Bergman said. "Yes, there have been some improvements. A 13-year-old child is not by default provided with an open account for adult predators to prey upon. So, you know, there are baby steps, but there are steps in the right direction. We just need more of them."

Senators say social media concerns are reaching a tipping point

Since 2024, the Senate has passed a resolution annually to recognize June 23 as Social Media Harms Victim Remembrance Day, which honors the lives of those who died because of online harms including suicide, drug poisoning, cyberbullying and dangerous social media challenges.

Alongside several parents and advocates who spoke at the event Tuesday evening — including Bride and Neville — senators called for urgent action.

Sen. Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn., advocated for the repeal of Section 230. Sen. Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., said advocates and lawmakers need to "fight like hell for the living." Sen. Josh Hawley, R-Mo., assailed his fellow Congress members for not doing more, saying "we all know why" they haven't acted.

"It's the same reason that the companies want the kids online, want their privacy destroyed, want all

their information — it's money," Hawley said, noting the technology industry provides campaign contributions to lawmakers and spends millions on lobbying annually.

The Senate Judiciary Committee has invited the CEOs of Meta, Alphabet, TikTok and Snap to testify at an upcoming hearing about children's safety on their platforms. The committee has suggested the U.S. is reaching a tipping point for awareness of the risks of social media, asking in the hearing title, "Is This Social Media's Big Tobacco Moment?"

Bride and Neville will attentively listen to what the tech CEOs say under oath — as they did during a similar hearing in 2024 and many other events related to kids online safety — and they remain optimistic.

Neville said she feels that "every morning I wake up, lives are on the line. If we're not talking about these things, if we're not doing something about it, lives are on line," she said. "And that's probably not good for my nervous system, but that's the state that I'll live in until I'll probably die on this hill."

A new law could create a list of immigrants illegally living in Mississippi. Advocates are alarmed

By DAVID A. LIEB Associated Press

A new Mississippi law will authorize the state's top law enforcement agency to compile a list of all immigrants illegally living in the state.

What's to be done with that information is a bit open-ended. But the law set to take effect Wednesday is sparking alarm among immigrant advocates, who fear it could become a new tactic to target immigrants in conjunction with President Donald Trump's plan to deport millions of people lacking legal approval to live in the U.S.

The law says the state Department of Public Safety "may use all reasonable lawful investigative means available" to determine the number and identities of all "illegal aliens" in Mississippi. That includes collecting their names, addresses, country of origin and whether they are an adult or minor. It also includes noting any criminal history and the date, location and status of deportation proceedings.

The department is directed to share information on those suspected of violating laws with state and local authorities. The measure neither requires nor prohibits the database from being shared with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Republican state Sen. Angela Hill, who sponsored the measure, said states have a right and obligation to assist the U.S. government in discouraging illegal immigration, which she said facilitates crimes such as human and drug trafficking.

The new law "seems like commonsense to me," Hill said. "In order to address the problems caused by illegal immigration, we need to understand the magnitude of the problem. Identifying the number and identity of illegal aliens in Mississippi is a concrete way to better understand the problem."

Immigration laws are proliferating in states

Nationwide, states already have enacted more than 100 immigration-related laws this year, according to an Associated Press tally.

In Republican-led states, those measures generally have aligned with Trump's agenda by requiring local sheriffs to sign cooperative agreements with ICE, reinforcing eligibility restrictions for public benefits and directing election clerks to check voter rolls against the federal Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements system in an attempt to flag noncitizens.

Democratic-led states generally have pushed back against Trump with new laws banning cooperative pacts with ICE, forbidding ICE tactics like wearing masks and restricting immigration enforcement actions in schools, hospitals and other sensitive locations without judicial warrants.

The closest thing to Mississippi's new law appears to be a 2021 executive order by Republican Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis. That measure directed the Florida Department of Law Enforcement to "use all lawful investigative means available" to determine the number and identities of all "illegal aliens" who had been transported from the nation's southwest border to Florida.

The Florida agency did not respond to an AP request for information about the results of the executive

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order.

Trump's administration, meanwhile, has stepped up enforcement of a decades-old federal law that requires noncitizens to register with the U.S. government.

Some question how the Mississippi law will work

The Mississippi law envisions more than a one-time count. It prescribes an ongoing effort to keep track of immigrants illegally in the state for the next two years. That could get complicated as people overstay visas, apply for new forms of legal status and move into and out the state.

"You can be undocumented today, and then have status tomorrow, and then lose it again next month, and then regain it three months from now," said Efrén Olivares, vice president of litigation and legal strategy at the National Immigration Law Center, a nonprofit that advocates for low-income immigrants.

"It's practically unworkable, but it's also very worrisome, because it's eerily reminiscent of other countries that have created lists of certain groups of people," Olivares said.

State officials will need to come up with "a credible and fairly foolproof way of correctly determining someone's immigration status," said Jessica Vaughan, director of policy studies at the Center for Immigration Studies, a nonprofit think tank that supports restrictions on immigration.

But Vaughan said the law "makes a lot of sense," adding that it "raises the likelihood that someone's illegal presence is going to come to the attention of federal authorities."

Advocates say the law could break trust with police

Mississippi has one of the country's smallest percentages of immigrants illegally residing in the state — fewer than 28,000 people, amounting to less than 1% of its population — according to a report by the American Immigration Council, which used 2023 Census Bureau data.

The new law "is very concerning for a bunch of different reasons," including the potential to redirect law enforcement resources away from protecting the public to investigating people from foreign countries who may be contributing to the economy, said Victoria Francis, deputy director of state and local initiatives for the American Immigration Council, a nonprofit that advocates on behalf of immigrants.

"A mandate like this invites profiling and turning entire communities into targets," Francis said.

The law could undermine trust between police and residents, said Lydia Grizzell, policy and advocacy manager for the American Civil Liberties Union of Mississippi.

"That increases the likelihood of individuals not reaching out to law enforcement when it's needed — and that is opposite of the mission," she said.

US airstrikes again hit Iran as Tehran strikes Bahrain and Kuwait, further imperiling interim deal

By JON GAMBRELL and KONSTANTIN TOROPIN Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — The U.S. military launched a second round of airstrikes Saturday targeting Iran at President Donald Trump's direction as Tehran hit both Bahrain and Kuwait, underscoring rising tensions that threaten the interim deal between the two nations to stop the war.

The attack on Kuwait early Sunday was the first since the two sides signed a deal that aimed to halt fighting, and came as a multinational maritime body overseen by the U.S. Navy said Saturday that it would expand a route near Oman in the strait to allow for both inbound and outbound traffic — likely setting up a new flashpoint with Tehran.

The U.S. military's Central Command said it struck Iranian military "surveillance infrastructure, communication systems, air defense sites, drone storage facilities and minelayer capabilities" following an attack on a ship at sea early Saturday morning. That ship, the Panamanian-flagged tanker Kiku, carried crude oil for the state-run energy company of Qatar, a key negotiator between Iran and the U.S.

In a social media post, Trump said the U.S. had "struck Iranian missile and drone storage locations, and coastal radar sites, for violating the Cease Fire Agreement, AGAIN!" He warned of a point where the U.S. may no longer be able to be reasonable "and will be forced to militarily complete the job."

"If that happens, the Islamic Republic of Iran will no longer exist!" Trump wrote on Truth Social.

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The incident follows a similar back and forth that occurred just days prior when an Iranian drone struck a merchant vessel off the coast of Oman on Thursday and the U.S. military retaliated with strikes.

US says strikes were a response to Iranian attack on oil tanker

According to ship tracking websites, the Kiku left a Qatari oil field in the middle of the Persian Gulf earlier in the week and was bound for a port in the United Arab Emirates that sits on the Gulf of Oman, just on the other side of the Strait of Hormuz.

It appeared to be attempting to use a route that was established near the coast of Oman that is serving as an alternative to the route sanctioned by Iran that runs through its own waters.

The U.S. military said that "Iran had a chance to honor the ceasefire agreement" but "elected not to" when its forces attacked the Kiku.

Iran state TV reported explosions in an area just north of the Strait of Hormuz.

After the U.S. strikes early Sunday, Kuwait's military said air defenses intercepted incoming Iranian drones and missiles. It offered no immediate information on any damage. Kuwait is home to a major U.S. Army base.

Bahrain condemns Iran's drone attack

Earlier on Saturday, a statement from Bahrain's Foreign Ministry said a "number of Iranian drones" targeted the country. It called the attack "a flagrant threat to the security of citizens and residents." There were no immediate reports of damage.

Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard earlier issued a statement carried by the state-run IRNA news agency saying it had targeted several locations "of the U.S. terrorist army in the region." It did not name what areas were targeted.

Bahrain has been one of the strongest critics of Iran and is home to the U.S. Navy's 5th Fleet. It just hosted U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio for a meeting of the Gulf Cooperation Council's foreign ministers, which ended with a call for an end to Iran's attacks and for the strait to be completely open.

Overnight into Saturday, the U.S. military's Central Command said it had struck Iranian missile and drone locations and coastal radar sites.

U.S. Vice President JD Vance, who has led the negotiations with Iran, said on social media Friday night that Iran should "pick up the phone" if there are disagreements about the ceasefire agreement, "but violence will be met with violence."

The U.S. and Iran are negotiating terms of the deal including issues such as getting ships through the strait that's vital to global supplies of oil and natural gas and addressing the future of Iran's nuclear program and stockpile of highly enriched uranium.

Under the interim deal, the two sides have 60 days to work out the details. Ending the fighting in Lebanon between Israel and the Iranian-backed Hezbollah militant group is a key part of the deal.

Ship comes under attack as strait route expands

The British military's United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations center said that a tanker was attacked Saturday in the strait, with the crew safe and no environmental damage reported. No one immediately claimed the strike, but suspicion fell on Iran.

Just after that report, the Joint Maritime Information Center, overseen by the U.S. Navy, said the route near Oman's shore is expanding to allow for inbound and outbound traffic.

Iran has insisted that ships must obey its orders and warned it will start charging fees for transit through the strait. However, ships have been increasingly trying to leave the Gulf in recent days.

Ebrahim Azizi, who heads the Iranian parliament's national security commission, wrote Friday that "the Strait of Hormuz is governed by Iran, so: Respect the rules."

The U.S. and Gulf Arab states have rejected Iran's demands. The strait is considered as an international waterway, despite being the territorial waters of Iran and Oman.

The Joint Maritime Information Center warned that the threat to ships was "substantial," adding that "mariners are advised of the existence of mines and should expect a naval presence as clearance operations continue."

The International Maritime Organization on Friday halted a new effort to evacuate ships said it won't resume until there are guarantees that the other ships won't be attacked. It said about 115 ships have been able to move out of the strait in recent days.

Frustration grows in Venezuela as earthquake death toll reaches 1,430

By REGINA GARCIA CANO, ANDRY RINCÓN and MEGAN JANETSKY Associated Press

LA GUAIRA, Venezuela (AP) — Tensions flared Saturday as desperation grew in Venezuela's state of La Guaira as rescuers and civilians searched for earthquake survivors and the death toll rose sharply to 1,430. Families reported at least 68,900 people missing Saturday, three days after the one-two punch of 7.2 and 7.5 magnitude earthquakes devastated the South American nation.

Venezuelans looking for loved ones and neighbors used shovels, heavy equipment, ropes and bare hands atop mounds of toppled concrete throughout La Guaira, one of the hardest-hit states. They were joined by a growing number of international rescue teams who began to climb through the rubble, offering a small glint of hope to anguished families.

Tensions peaked over what many Venezuelans viewed as an inadequate response by the government, whose soldiers, firefighters, police and military cadets were evidently underprepared to respond to the scope of the tragedy. Frustration was amplified by efforts to project the image of a robust state response.

Aid agencies consider the first 48 to 72 hours as crucial for retrieving people alive, though that can be extended if they have access to food and water. Venezuelan officials said 17 flights carrying more than 1,600 rescue team members had touched down by Saturday.

As 72 hours passed since the earthquakes struck, many felt every minute ticking away as they ran out of time to rescue people alive.

"There's a pile of bodies over there from last night. Newborn babies," said Mileidy Romero, who was among those searching in the seaside town of Caraballeada. "At 8 p.m. (yesterday) there were people alive down there, and they haven't bothered to rescue them. We've located several bodies, and they haven't helped us recover them either. What are they waiting for?"

Tension mounts during rescue efforts

Acting President Delcy Rodríguez said on state television that more than 14,000 members of the military and police are patrolling the area, where access is now blocked and special permits are required to enter. But many in disaster zones said they had seen little of their government.

Some people climbed the remnants of buildings and cried out names, hoping for any proof of life. Dust coated coastal communities. In punishing heat, more people wore masks as the stench of decomposition spread. In other parts of La Guaira, teams loaded stacks of bodies — some in white bags, other naked — onto white trucks from the ground of a dirt hospital parking lot, where they were being identified.

Without hard hats or other gear, rescuers and civilians instead wore motorcycle helmets as they searched piles of debris that were once people's belongings: Eddie Murphy and Nemo DVDs, a kitchen sink, mattresses and shoes.

Some, frustrated by the government's response, blocked an excavator from leaving the site of a collapse and pulled the operator from its cabin shortly after state workers took selfies in front of flattened buildings and left without helping. The ruling party's officials often take selfies to show participation in government-related events.

A few feet away, at least five bodies wrapped in blankets.

A member of the crowd, Yeison Marcano, said those searching had received some assistance from an investigations unit but neither police nor the National Guard helped.

"They came to eat arepas and take pictures to make it look like they were working," Marcano said. "They didn't even get their uniforms dirty like we have. We've been here for three days."

A minute later, a man tried to grab a firefighter, shouting and cursing. "Silence! Silence!" rescuers shouted as they tried to confirm whether someone was trapped alive.

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Meanwhile, an older man was pulled from the rubble of a public housing building. Visibly disoriented, he begged a nurse for water. He fought with personnel who put him into a pickup truck, screaming, "My family! My family!"

Searches mix with uncertainty

The International Organization for Migration said over 6 million people could be affected, some 2 million in the capital, Caracas, alone.

Experts said the destruction was amplified by the quick succession of shallow quakes. For days, smaller aftershocks occasionally shook the capital, Caracas and areas hit by the quakes, including one measuring 4.8 on Saturday.

The disaster poses a huge challenge for Rodríguez, the former vice president who took office in January after the U.S. capture and removal of then-President Nicolás Maduro. Venezuela has been facing economic disarray for more than a decade, and many people reject the legitimacy of the political movement Rodríguez represents.

Search teams and foreign aid continued to arrive from Mexico, the U.S., Brazil, El Salvador, France and elsewhere.

On Saturday, Mexican rescue teams climbed over collapsed buildings and pushed their heads into holes in the pancaked concrete to search for signs of life, occasionally hearing movement.

"We're rescuers from the Mexican military, if there's anyone down there still alive, make noise or scream. Now!" one man shouted.

A glimmer of hope

For many, the images of international aid teams arriving and climbing through the rubble alongside them offered a glimmer of hope. Yonahí Regalado has been calling out the names of her sister and 1-year-old nephew and godson since 1 a.m. the day after the earthquakes until aid workers began to arrive.

"It doesn't matter who it is, whoever, whether it's family or somebody else. If there is anyone alive, let's get them out," she said, as helicopters circled overhead.

Small moments of humanity mixed with grief and terror.

Rescue teams carefully handed down a 18-day-old swaddled in pink blankets from a building after 12 hours of searching for the baby boy and his mother, Telemundo reported. One 69-year-old woman, saved by Salvadoran teams, asked for a Coca-Cola upon being pulled out of the rubble, Salvadoran authorities said.

One video showed a Venezuelan rescuer comforting an elderly woman trapped beneath the rubble, scared that the structure would cave in if she moved.

"The roof won't cave in. If it falls, I'll be here with you," he said.

Simón Bolívar International Airport, which serves Caracas, was badly damaged. One runway was operational as U.S. teams worked to repair the crucial thoroughway, Jeremy Lewin, a senior State Department official in charge of foreign assistance, told reporters.

Lewin said a U.S. Navy transport ship was docked off the coast, ready to receive airlifted survivors in need of medical attention. Lewin said it is a "race against the clock" to find people injured in the quakes.

Winds hamper crews as fast-moving fire in Utah, the largest in the US, burns through forests

By TY ONEIL and SUSAN MONTOYA BRYAN Associated Press

MARYSVALE, Utah (AP) — The largest wildfire in the United States marched through canyons and over mountainsides Saturday, blackening an already parched landscape in Utah as residents on the flanks of the blaze watched smoke billowing when the winds picked up.

The Cottonwood Fire, burning in rugged terrain in southwest Utah, severely damaged the Eagle Point ski resort and destroyed summer cabins in sparsely populated Beaver County. Authorities conducted damage assessments but did not yet have estimates of how many homes burned.

Gov. Spencer Cox, in a social media post, asked for prayers for firefighters and "the rains we desperately need."

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"It's as bleak as it's ever been ... and yet there were several miraculous stops and saves," Cox said, referring to the work of the hundreds of firefighters assigned to the blaze.

They were among the crews that have poured into Utah as more wildfires in the arid state gained steam thanks to consecutive days of what forecasters called critical fire weather, or dangerously low humidity levels, warm temperatures and gusty winds.

There was little relief from the strong winds Saturday, but crews fighting the Cottonwood Fire were treated to higher humidity levels than the single digits that were expected, said Alyssa Mason, a spokesperson assigned to the blaze.

"That was good news for us today," Mason said.

Utah is coming off a record-low snowpack and the warmest winter on record, which has elevated fire danger. Much of the West is grappling with similar conditions, according to the National Interagency Fire Center.

From Alaska to Florida, crews worked to corral dozens of fires, including three dozen that were classified as large and uncontained.

Nationally, nearly 3 million acres (1.2 million hectares) have burned since the start of the year, pushing the U.S. ahead of the 10-year average.

Firefighters grapple with more wind

Helicopters took to the skies hoping to put a dent in the Cottonwood Fire before afternoon winds kicked up again and grounded them. Air support also was grounded the previous afternoon as conditions deteriorated.

The fire ballooned to more than 144 square miles (373 square kilometers), and roughly 1,300 residents in the towns of Marysville, Junction and Circleville remained on notice that they should be prepared to leave if conditions worsened.

Cox declared an emergency, and the state has restricted fireworks citing one of the most severe wildfire seasons in recent history and saying the blazes were stretching wildland firefighting capabilities.

"These fires are starting closer to homes and communities," State Forester Jamie Barnes said. "One human-caused fire is one too many."

The cause of the Cottonwood Fire has not been determined, but officials said the majority of those sparked so far this year have been human-caused. Forecasters also noted that lightning strikes around the West have resulted in fires.

Elsewhere in Utah, evacuations were in place for several small communities southwest of Salt Lake City, including Eureka, with a population under 1,000, and the Vernon Reservoir area. Highways running through the area were closed.

Two wildfires in that area — the Iron and the Cherry — covered a combined 112 square miles (290 square kilometers), fire officials said.

Visitors undeterred by wildfires

The towering column of smoke from the Cottonwood Fire was visible Friday from miles away, even from Bryce Canyon National Park to the south and Colorado to the east. It was hazy Saturday as the smoke drifted to the northeast, leaving air quality unaffected in places like Bryce and other popular vacation spots to the south.

Bob Miller of Yucaipa, California, who was staying at an RV park in Marysville, was prepared to evacuate if needed. The evenings especially have been smoky, Miller said, but he and his family have still been able to enjoy the area, where they have vacationed for almost two decades.

"It's still gorgeous," Miller said.

"Fires happen around here. When you come every year, you kind of get used to that," he added.

"After you've been through burned areas a few times, you look at it and you understand what nature can do."

Red flag warnings issued around the West

The warnings stretched from California to Arizona to New Mexico, where firefighters battled several

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blazes amid windy conditions. That included a new one reported south of Grand Canyon National Park.

Authorities said the flames were moving away from Grand Canyon Village and the nearby community of Tusayan. The area was without power as the utility serving the area initiated a safety shut-off earlier in hopes of lessening the wildfire risk.

Park visitors could still purchase park passes at entrance stations as long as backup power systems remained operational, but officials said people should come prepared. That meant downloading maps before arriving and ensuring that phones and other devices are fully charged.

Power shut-offs have become more common in the West as wildfire risk has expanded. It is usually a last resort after utility forecasters weigh factors like sustained wind and gust speeds, available fuels and topography.

With extreme fire conditions persisting in Utah, Rocky Mountain Power also shut off power lines serving Beaver County and other areas.

Blues get Brandon Carlo; Hurricanes trade for John Carlson's rights at NHL draft

By STEPHEN WHYNO AP Hockey Writer

The St. Louis Blues acquired Brandon Carlo from the Toronto Maple Leafs during the NHL draft on Saturday, those teams' latest steps to remake their rosters during an offseason of upheaval.

St. Louis sent the Nos. 73 and 76 picks to Toronto for the 29-year-old defenseman.

Carlo lasted just 88 games with the Leafs after they sent a first-round pick, a fourth-rounder and highly regarded forward prospect Fraser Minten to Boston for him at the deadline in March 2025. That was with the previous regime in charge, and general manager Brad Treliving was fired two months ago and replaced weeks later by John Chayka, and they only got to keep the pick this year because they won the lottery for the No. 1 overall pick.

This is the third trade of the week for the Blues, who are also in transition as GM-in-waiting Alexander Steen is set to take over for seasoned executive Doug Armstrong next week. Armstrong in his final days at the helm has been plenty busy.

On Tuesday, he traded Jordan Kyrou to Washington for fellow forward Connor McMichael, prospect Milton Gastirin and the No. 16 pick, accumulating a league-high four in the first round. On Friday night, he sent two of them to Anaheim for 23-year-old Mason McTavish, who is signed through 2031.

Carlo provides some dependable veteran stability on the right side on defense, especially if the Blues decide to trade Colton Parayko or Justin Faulk as part of their summer overhaul. He is going into the final year of his contract at a salary cap hit of just under \$3.5 million.

"We're excited (Carlo has) got his size and length, his ability to kill plays, his experience," Armstrong told reporters in Centene, Missouri. "Getting stronger up front and having strong goaltending, we think we're going to be more competitive than we were last year."

Toronto used the third-round picks on Canadian winger Zach Olsen and Swedish defenseman Mans Gudmundsson.

Hurricanes get John Carlson's rights

The reigning Stanley Cup champion Carolina Hurricanes jumped the queue to talk to John Carlson before the 36-year-old defenseman can become an unrestricted free agent on Wednesday. They sent the 192nd pick and the rights to pending restricted free agent forward Kyle Masters to Anaheim to get an exclusive negotiating window with Carlson.

Traded to the Ducks by the Capitals less than 13 hours before the deadline in March, Carlson is believed to want to get back on the East Coast for family reasons. He spent his first 16-plus NHL seasons with Washington and helped the team win the Cup in 2018.

More trades at the NHL draft

New Nashville president of hockey operations and GM Chris MacFarland spent his first few weeks on the job largely adding players he was familiar with from his time in Colorado. On Saturday, he added fresh

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blood from the East by acquiring big, Swedish winger Adam Edstrom in a trade with the New York Rangers.

The Predators sent the 148th pick in the draft (a fifth-rounder) and the rights to minor leaguer Massimo Rizzo to New York. The Rangers, who also traded Brett Berard to Montreal on Friday, are not expected to tender Rizzo a qualifying offer and would make him an unrestricted free agent.

The Avalanche traded Ivan Ivan to the Bruins for Fabian Lysell in a swap of young forwards.

Central Europe sizzles as heat records are smashed in Switzerland, Denmark and Czech Republic

By KIRSTEN GRIESHABER, SYLVIA HUI and JOHN LEICESTER Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — Temperatures soared to record highs from Switzerland to the Czech Republic and Denmark on Saturday, as a heat wave that baked western European countries this week moved to central and eastern parts of the continent.

Unusually high temperatures were recorded even in the Nordic countries not known for sweltering summers. Denmark's Meteorological Institute reported a record 37 degrees Celsius (98.6 degrees Fahrenheit) in Ørum north of Aarhus — the warmest day since records there began in 1874.

In Switzerland, a record 38.8 C (101.8 F) was set in the city of Basel.

Germany's famous Autobahn was overwhelmed, too, as temperatures were expected to hit 40 C (104 F). In two places outside Berlin, the concrete of the A2 burst due to the high temperatures and the highway had to be closed. Other highway damage was reported across the country, according to the German daily Bild.

Train operator Deutsche Bahn and other rail companies advised against all nonessential train travel this weekend.

"Germany's transportation infrastructure is being severely affected by the record-breaking heat this weekend," Deutsche Bahn said in a statement.

The Czech Republic also saw its hottest day on record, with 40.8 C (105.4 F) in the northern town of Doksy. Forecasters said it may still rise.

Residents evacuated from German nursing home

In the western German city of Dormagen, dozens of residents of a nursing home were evacuated for medical care due to dangerous heat conditions in the building.

The local fire department reported that temperatures inside the home had reached 35 C (95 F). Air conditioning is not widespread in Germany and many countries in Europe because the continent is largely unused to such oppressive heat.

A resident at the home died overnight, but it was not yet clear whether the heat was the cause, a city spokesperson told German news agency dpa.

Hospitals under intense pressure in France

In France, multiple towns in the east of the country saw their highest-ever temperatures Saturday, with some above 40 C (104 F) even though the worst of the heat wave was starting to pass in some regions.

Paris and 36 other regions, stretching from the center to the east and northeast, remained in the extreme-heat red zone on Saturday, down from a peak on Thursday of 72 regions that were under such warnings. The capital continued to see unrelenting pressure on its hospitals, with a second consecutive day of nearly 3,000 people seeking care in public hospital emergency rooms, about a third more than normal.

The Paris public hospital authority, AP-HP, said it activated its emergency response plan across all 38 hospitals to cope. Phone calls to its medical dispatch centers were up nearly 80% compared with the same period in 2025, it said.

Concerns that hospitals could be overwhelmed prompted the postponement of the Paris Pride march for LGBTQ+ rights on Saturday, and a three-day music festival was canceled.

The temperatures this week have been higher than those during a historic 2003 heat wave that was blamed for 15,000 heat-related deaths, many of them older people. The AP-HP's director, Nicolas Revel, said he doesn't expect as many deaths this time, at least in Paris hospitals, in part because treatment for

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overheating has since improved.

During another exceptionally hot summer last year, more than 5,700 deaths were attributed to heat, according to France's public health authority.

"I think we'll be situated, clearly, between 2025 and without necessarily reaching the catastrophic level of 2003. But we have to expect that there will still be many deaths," he said.

UK temperatures easing after 3 record heat days

In the U.K., sweltering conditions are expected to gradually ease this weekend though an amber warning — one step down from red — remained in place until Saturday night.

Britons struggled to cope this week as the record June temperature was smashed three days in a row. Friday was confirmed as the country's hottest June day on record, with a provisional temperature of 37.3 C (99 F) recorded in eastern England.

It was more than 1 C hotter than the long-standing record for June heat in the U.K., set in the summer of 1976.

On Saturday, police said the bodies of a 22-year-old man and a 15-year-old boy were recovered from a lake and a river. The deaths bring the total number of U.K. heat-related fatalities this week to four.

Authorities in the U.K. have warned people to take extra care when swimming in unsupervised areas following the deaths of around 40 people in France over the past week.

Tourists wilting in Rome as red heat alert remains active

In Italy's capital, which remains under a red heat alert, tourists tried to cool off seeking shade near buildings and dunking their heads under public fountains. Street vendors were doing a brisk business selling bottled water, hats and sun umbrellas.

Some turned to Italian classics for relief.

"Gelato, pasta, because it's tradition, but also fresh fruit, and ice cold drinks, that's the best for this temperature," said Isabella Dold, a tourist from Kempten, Germany.

On Saturday, Italy's health ministry said 18 cities — including the most popular tourism hubs like Venice, Florence, Bologna and Milan — were on red alert due to danger posed by the high temperatures.

Record heat focuses attention on climate change

A new study from the World Weather Attribution, a Europe-based collaboration of scientists, reported Friday that the record-breaking heat and humidity in Europe this week would not have been possible without climate change.

The rapid study found that the heat would have been virtually impossible just five decades ago, and is 200 times more likely today than it would have been 20 years ago.

André Corrêa do Lago, the president of the U.N. climate talks known as COP30, said the heat wave has "helped strengthen the perception of urgency of fighting climate change."

"The fact that we are living with this amazing heat in London is a strong argument, we need to agree, that we have to take action as soon as possible," do Lago told The Associated Press.

2 tropical storms pound Japan with floods and landslides, killing 1

TOKYO (AP) — Two major storm systems pounded Japan on Saturday, causing landslides and floods and leaving one dead and several injured, media and officials said.

The storms, Mekkhala and Higos, have dumped heavy rain and damaged roads as Japan experiences its annual rainy season.

A man in his 70s died and three others were injured after a house collapsed in a landslide in Yamaguchi prefecture on Friday, Japan's Kyodo News agency reported.

Footage from Kyoto showed the Kamo River swollen with churning, muddy water. A flooding alert was issued in parts of Kyoto, Osaka and other areas in western Japan.

The Fire and Disaster Management Agency said more than 30 homes were flooded in Nara and Hiroshima on Friday. Heavy rain also disrupted some train operations and flights in the area.

Some paid the ultimate price to enact voting rights. Their survivors see America turning backward

By GARY FIELDS Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Holiday gatherings and major life events have come with an empty seat. Certain dates on the calendar meant time at a cemetery, standing before granite stones.

They are a relatively small group of people, scattered across different states, but they share a common bond that stretches back decades: Each had a family member die violently in the struggle for voting and civil rights, victims on a long and difficult path marked by blood that ended when the country seemed to mature into the nation of its creed.

But 61 years later, and as the country approaches its 250th anniversary, those sacrifices are in question. In a series of decisions over the past dozen years, including one in April, the Supreme Court has effectively dismantled the law that their family members died to see enacted, the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

"My mother's blood is on that bill. We were always proud of that, and now it's gone," said Anthony Liuzzo, whose mother, Viola Liuzzo, died on an Alabama highway between Selma and Montgomery while driving marchers in 1965.

Critics of the law argue that times have changed, a point Chief Justice John Roberts made in a 2013 decision that was the first major step in rolling back the law.

Survivors of lost loved ones disagree, pointing to the speed with which Republican-led state legislature-eliminated majority-Black congressional districts after the court's April ruling, which severely weakened a section of the law that had protected voting rights for minority communities. They feel anger and sadness that a milestone political victory decades ago has been reversed, but they are committed to keep fighting.

A church bombing and a chunk of concrete

Lisa McNair was born Sept. 19, 1964. Her older sister, Denise, died in the Sept 15, 1963, bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama. The church had been a central organizing point for civil rights protest.

The explosion killed Denise McNair, 11, Addie Mae Collins, 14, Carole Robertson, 14, and Cynthia Morris Wesley, 14. Nearly two dozen others were injured. Three Klansmen were convicted years later.

One of Lisa McNair's early memories of her sister was of the box that their grandmother kept from the funeral home. It included Denise McNair's shoes, a purse and a rock-sized piece of concrete that had been embedded in her skull.

The crime brought the civil rights struggle onto the national stage and outraged Democratic President John F. Kennedy.

The times were tumultuous, McNair said, but it seemed the nation was heading in the right direction. Most of her life, "I've seen advances" on television, in commercials, with interracial marriages, civil rights and voting rights, "a plethora of rights that we got over the greater part of my lifetime." But that has changed, she said.

McNair, 61, said she is "physically sick" about the Supreme Court decision and subsequent actions by lower courts and legislatures.

"I am constantly working to pray my way through it, so I can get up and go to work in the morning and do what I need to do. But I just want to ask every white person I see, What more do you want?" she said. "Why do you hate us so?"

They left for Freedom Summer and never came home

Michael Schwerner, known as Mickey, came from a family in which human rights activism and challenging social norms were expected. He was in Mississippi in 1964 as part of Freedom Summer when he, Andrew Goodman and James Chaney vanished one day in June while investigating a bombing at a Black church.

Their bodies were found weeks later, buried in an earthen dam in a rural area of Neshoba County. Schwerner, 24, and Goodman, 20, were white; Chaney, 21, was Black.

Stephen Schwerner, who died earlier this year and was a social activist in his own right, told The Associated Press in a 2023 interview that as soon as the family heard his younger brother and the other men

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were missing, they knew they were dead.

"Our family was very out front in the media that the only reason there was international attention was two of the young men were white," said Stephen's daughter, Cassie Schwerner. "Had all three of those young men been Black, they would have ended up absent from our history and our narrative."

The executive director of Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility, Cassie Schwerner, said her family has followed voting rights through their ups and downs. That includes the 2013 Supreme Court decision that allowed states and counties with a history of discriminatory voting rules to make changes without prior approval from the Department of Justice.

The court's April decision, she said, brought rage "and a good deal of sadness — not for me and my family, but for this country." There is, she said, work to be done on multiple fronts.

Rights paid for in blood turned out to be fragile

Tamara Orange said among her many thoughts when she heard of the Supreme Court decision in this year's Voting Rights Act case, there was relief — "relief that my dad is not here to see that; that Jimmie Lee Jackson is not here to see it; that Viola Liuzzo is not here to see it," she said. "I'm relieved for them because to me, it's as though the sacrifices that were made were done in vain."

Her father, James Orange, was working with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference to organize voting rights protests in Marion and Perry County, Alabama, in 1965. When juveniles joined the effort, he was arrested for contributing to the delinquency of minors. Concern arose that Orange was going to be taken out of the jail and lynched.

A protest to intervene ended with Jackson, a 26-year-old Black church deacon, being shot in the stomach by a state trooper while Jackson tried to shield his mother and grandfather.

His death was the catalyst for what became the Selma to Montgomery march and "Bloody Sunday."

Orange stayed in the movement all his life and died in 2008, Tamara Orange said. But even after the Voting Rights Act passed, "He would say, be careful or we're going to lose it."

'We got bad news for you'

Anthony Liuzzo had just turned 10 when his mother, 39, left their middle-class neighborhood in Michigan and headed for Selma, Alabama. She had cried as she watched scenes from "Bloody Sunday" on television.

Viola Liuzzo participated in a portion of the second march and then helped drive other civil rights protesters around the Black Belt region of the state. On March 25, 1965, she was driving one protester between Selma and Montgomery when a vehicle pulled alongside and fired into the car.

The phone call came around midnight. Anthony Liuzzo remembers the caller asking his dad, "Is your wife Viola? We got bad news for you. She's been shot." When his father asked whether she was all right, the caller said "No, she's dead," and then hung up.

An informant for the FBI quickly identified members of the Ku Klux Klan as her killers. The three men charged would escape conviction on state charges but be convicted in federal court.

Anthony Liuzzo and his siblings lived with the lost birthdays and other missed milestones. His comfort was that the voting rights she had died for had become a reality. But the April ruling by the Supreme Court and the subsequent rush by Republican-led legislatures in several Southern states to eliminate congressional districts represented by Black lawmakers left him angry and distraught.

Even so, he said he is still proud his mother had the courage to go to Selma "when others sat in their pretty little houses."

One morning, the Klan returned

The inscription at the bottom of Vernon Dahmer Sr.'s tombstone reads simply: "If you don't vote, you don't count."

It is a message that embodies his life's work and the story behind his death.

Even after Democratic President Lyndon Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act, not every state was eager to implement the new law. In Mississippi, it came with a "poll tax." The amount was \$2, but in a world where a farmworker's wages might only be \$5 a day, that was substantial, said Dahmer's son, Dennis Dahmer Sr.

The elder Dahmer, 57 at the time of his death, was a successful businessman who owned a store, saw-

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mill and farm near Hattiesburg. He also was a civil rights leader and NAACP president in Ford County. He offered to pay the \$2 for Black residents who wanted to register to vote.

He had already been under scrutiny by the local Ku Klux Klan. There was harassment and there were threatening phone calls. The windows were shot out of his store, but no one challenged him directly because his sons were always present and armed.

That seemed to trail off after Johnson signed the law.

"The Klan quit calling," Dennis Dahmer said. "They quit shooting out the windows, so my family thought that all of this was behind us."

That changed in the early hours of Jan. 10, 1966, when two carloads of Klansmen showed up. They firebombed the house and adjacent grocery store and began shooting at the house. The elder Dahmer shot back, using his ample arsenal to fight off the attack.

His wife and the three children who were home survived, but he suffered severe injuries from inhaling the smoke and fumes from the flames. He died later that day.

Dennis Dahmer was 12 as he stood next to his dad's hospital bed. He wondered why some people wanted his father dead just for trying to help Black people vote.

A former Imperial Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan, Sam Bowers, was convicted in 1998 for the attack and sentenced to life.

Like the families of other survivors, Dennis Dahmer's family has witnessed the methodical dismantling of the Voting Rights Act.

"Finally, they basically turned it into a relic," he said.

His plan now is activism, to speak out and promote the need for a massive voter turnout. He also wants to remind people of the price that certain families paid for everyone to have the right to vote and be represented by someone of their choosing.

"We're living in a time when America has a lot of the same characteristics of the 1960s that I grew up in," he said. "People say, are we going back? Hell, we're already there."

Are Taylor Swift and Travis Kelce getting married at Madison Square Garden? What we know

By KIMBERLEE KRUESI Associated Press

Are Taylor Swift and Travis Kelce really getting married at Madison Square Garden?

Frenzied speculation surrounding the superstar singer and football player's upcoming wedding has spiked over the past few days as reports swirl that the two are getting married the first week in July at one of New York's iconic landmarks.

Yet nearly a year after Kelce and Swift announced their engagement with the caption "Your English teacher and your gym teacher are getting married," they have disclosed little about their plans.

Here's what we know and don't know.

The wedding date is unconfirmed, but reports say early July

Nothing has been publicly confirmed by the couple, despite The Associated Press' multiple requests to Swift's representative for comment.

Citing an entertainment industry executive and another person with knowledge of the matter, The New York Times reported that the couple were planning a gathering of 100 people at Madison Square Garden — an arena that seats up to 19,500 people — on July 2 followed by a second event at the arena for about 1,000 guests on July 3.

The Associated Press has been unable to independently confirm those details, but there are no public events planned at the Garden from June 29 until a Bon Jovi concert on July 7.

Public records show that the city issued a permit for loading and unloading theatrical materials at the arena from June 29 to July 4. Winick Productions, a company that has produced red carpet events for the Grammy and Tony award shows and movie premieres, also applied for a permit to set up a canopy or tent outside the Garden for an event involving up to 999 people.

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Meanwhile, just a few weeks prior, New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani jokingly referenced the reports of Swift and Kelce's wedding during a press conference. Mamdani was answering questions about safety during the World Cup when he said, "We know it coincides with July Fourth, America 250, Taylor Swift's wedding all happening at the same time, and we are so excited to welcome the world here."

Mamdani, however, said he was not invited to the wedding.

"I wish them a lovely wedding. I'll listen to 'Only the Young' at home on my own," he said, referencing one of Swift's songs.

MSG is a fortress, but has hosted weddings before

Madison Square Garden may not scream "bridal," but the venue is available for private rentals, advertising a banquet capacity for 1,250 — or 2,000 if you are only serving cocktails. And it has hosted weddings before. Sly Stone got married to Kathy Silva there in 1974 before thousands of fans. And more than 2,000 couples were wed in a mass ceremony at the Garden officiated by the Rev. Sun Myung Moon in 1982.

Located above Penn Station, the busiest rail hub in the U.S., the Garden doesn't scream "privacy" either.

But it does have guarded entrances, a secure garage and a lack of windows, which would allow Kelce, Swift and celebrity guests to stay out of sight of photographers or camera-equipped drones.

That need for privacy popped up earlier in June when a large tent appeared next door to Swift's Watch Hill estate in Rhode Island. Despite organizers denying the event was for Swift, a wave of speculation bubbled up online as photographers and some Swifties headed to the town to see if they could catch a glimpse of a possible wedding.

Yet others have theorized that the MSG buzz could be an elaborate smoke screen to throw off attention to the couple's real wedding plans. Swift did once write, "No, you can't come to the wedding," in her song "But Daddy I Love Him," which some fans have been reupping lately as a reminder that the wedding isn't supposed to be a public spectacle.

Friends, family, and plenty of celebrities expected to attend

Swift joked in October that "anyone I've ever talked to" would be invited to the wedding, telling Graham Norton that she believed "the only stressful weddings" are those that are small and force people to make aggressive cuts to the guest list.

Yet just who exactly will show up is to be determined. Aside from family, Kelce's Kansas City Chiefs teammate Patrick Mahomes and his wife, Brittany Mahomes, will likely be in attendance. For Swift, close friends like Selena Gomez, Abigail Anderson Berard, the Haim sisters, Emma Stone and Gigi Hadid will all likely attend.

Chiefs coach Andy Reid said he couldn't talk about it when asked by The Associated Press if he was going to the wedding.

"If it's like when I got married, my wife did everything, so I just kind of followed her lead on it, showed up, right? Maybe he's doing more but he looks like he's pretty focused in on this job here, too," Reid said in early June.

Swift has a history of Fourth of July parties

Perhaps another clue why the week of the Fourth of July makes sense for Swift and Kelce's wedding is that the popstar has long been known for throwing elaborate parties over the American holiday.

It wasn't too long ago that fans dubbed her Fourth of July events as "Taymerica," where celebrities showed up at her Rhode Island estate wearing red, white and blue swimsuits, waving American flags and eventually shared some social media photos with the public.

The timing also works with Kelce's football schedule, given the tight end once joked on his "New Heights" podcast, "Don't make my friends have to choose whether or not they have to sell their tickets that week."

Scratching that bug bite might feel good at first but science explains why it's a bad idea

By LAURAN NEERGAARD AP Medical Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — You've likely heard it since childhood: Don't scratch that bug bite or rash, you'll make it worse. But why would something that feels so good be bad?

A lot of things can cause itchiness, sometimes serious diseases. Whatever the cause, doctors have long warned that scratching too much can damage the skin. Now researchers better understand why even a mildly annoying itch could put you on an itch-and-scratch cycle if you give in.

How did they find out? In part by putting tiny "cones of shame" onto mice to uncover what happens on a cellular level when an itch gets scratched — or left alone.

They also gained insight into why a good scratch at least at first brings a sigh of relief. After all, not just people and other mammals scratch, even fish do. The commonality suggests there must be some evolutionary reason and the mouse experiment hints at a little germ protection — but still not a reason to scratch.

Expect a more swollen, itchier spot if you can't ignore that bug bite

Dr. Daniel Kaplan, a University of Pittsburgh dermatologist whose lab studies immune reactions in skin, was exploring a run-of-the-mill type of itch called allergic contact dermatitis, caused by irritants such as poison ivy or nickel in jewelry.

Kaplan's research team put a rash-inducing irritant on the ears of mice. Normal mice scratched and inflammatory immune cells rushed to the site, increasing swelling. The rash was much milder in mice bred with defective itch-sensing nerve cells. But was the difference really the scratching?

Normal mice put into collars like those veterinary "cones of shame" so they itched but couldn't scratch gave the answer: They, too, had much less swelling and fewer inflammatory cells.

Kaplan said that evidence matches people's everyday experiences that scratching really can make things worse.

Ignore a mosquito bite and the itch is "gone in five or 10 minutes for most people," he said. "But if you start scratching it, it's your friend for a week," getting itchier and more inflamed.

The immune system's first responders can help — and hurt

To understand what was happening in the skin, Kaplan's team took a deeper look at mast cells, among the immune system's first responders. When called into action, they release compounds that can help fight germs or toxins — or, through a compound called histamine, trigger itchy allergic reactions.

Scientists have long known that allergens can activate mast cells. But other signals can summon mast cells, too, including pain. And when we scratch, "we tend to scratch until it starts to hurt," Kaplan noted.

Pain-sensing nerve cells release a chemical messenger called substance P. In findings published last year, Kaplan's team reported that substance P can activate mast cells through a different molecular pathway than allergens do — a double whammy that explains why scratching further inflames itchy rashes or bites.

Then why does a little scratching feel good?

If we experience pain like touching a hot stove, we'll learn not to do that again. Yet relief from a good scratch, in evolutionary terms, is positive feedback. Why?

One long-held theory is that it may help creatures slough off parasites like fleas or mites. But Kaplan also was intrigued by other labs' findings that mast cells could fend off a common type of skin bacteria called *Staphylococcus aureus*. So his team infected mice and then repeated the cone-of-shame itch experiment. Sure enough, those that scratched had lower levels of that germ on their ears, maybe because of the extra inflammation or some other mast cell-related compound.

But that's not enough of an upside to change the health advice.

"Ultimately, scratching is deleterious," Kaplan stressed. "You should avoid scratching," he said, although acknowledging that it's "easier said than done."

Here's how to handle a minor itch

What fights an itch depends on its cause and there's a need for better treatments. For now, antihistamines and certain other drugs for hives can tamp down some itchiness triggered by mast cells. Drug

companies are experimenting with other approaches called MRGPRX2 blockers that target the pathway Kaplan's team linked to scratching. Kaplan hopes better understanding of that pathway eventually could help skin diseases such as chronic eczema.

For the summer itchiness of bug bites, poison ivy and other types of contact dermatitis, dermatologists recommend anti-itch balms such as hydrocortisone cream, calamine lotion or oatmeal baths.

Another trick from Kaplan: Menthol-containing creams can temporarily fool the skin into sensing cold instead of itch, just long enough that "if you don't scratch, then you break that itch-scratch cycle," he said. "It's like a cheat code."

Andy Burnham distanced himself from UK Prime Minister Starmer, but may be stuck with his policies

By BRIAN MELLEY and JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Britain looks set to get a change of tone at the top, replacing stolid, unpopular Prime Minister Keir Starmer with popular, affable Andy Burnham.

But the charismatic Burnham may have difficulty — at least initially — distancing himself from policies set in motion by his predecessor.

Burnham, the former mayor of Greater Manchester who was sworn into Parliament hours after Starmer announced his resignation on Monday, will be constrained by the platform the center-left Labour Party was elected on that decisively ended 14 years of Conservative rule in 2024.

It's not entirely clear how he'll navigate those limits and bring his unique brand of politics to the revolving-door post that would make him the 7th prime minister in a decade. He'll lay out his economic vision in a speech next week.

"At the moment, Andy Burnham is being almost hailed and held up as a folk hero that will save British politics," said Matthew Flinders, politics professor at University of Sheffield. "The tide is changing and the big issue for Andy Burnham is that when the world suddenly moves against him and he becomes a folk devil, will he sustain the pressure?"

Next PM will seek to boost a sluggish economy and ease cost of living

Burnham is currently the only contestant for the job of leading the Labour Party and the country, and will likely take over July 17 if no one else enters the race. His return to the House of Commons follows a decade leading the region around the U.K.'s third-largest city, birthplace of the Industrial Revolution, which has enjoyed an economic revival during his tenure.

His main challenge will be to overcome Starmer's inability to deliver promised economic growth, repair tattered public services and ease the cost of living.

Burnham highlighted those issues — along with housing and creating opportunities for young people — in a post on social media after Starmer said he was quitting.

"The country expects stability, seriousness and a continued focus on the issues that matter most and that is what it will get," he said on X.

Burnham, who is widely regarded as sitting to the left of Starmer in the party, has said he'll revive a sluggish economy without going beyond the current government's spending and borrowing plans. That pledge has helped reassure markets traumatized in 2022 after Prime Minister Liz Truss announced unfunded tax cuts and then withdrew them, leading to her 49-day record as Britain's shortest-serving leader.

"If you are a Labour prime minister from the soft left of the party, the markets don't need that much invitation to panic," said Mark Goodwin, a politics lecturer at Coventry University. "They will start from a position of skepticism. So he'd have to be very, very careful."

He said Burnham will face a challenge "to convince people that this is something different, without the markets reading that as 'This is too different.'"

Burnham faces big questions over budget priorities

Burnham promotes what has been called "Manchesterism," a business-friendly socialist approach that involves harnessing private investment for major projects and decentralizing government to give com-

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munities more control of housing, utilities, transportation and education.

In a possible preview of how he would move power from the capital, he is reportedly planning to move some of the prime minister's operation closer to home, about 200 miles north of 10 Downing St., the London office and home of the U.K.'s leader.

He has said he would not raise taxes on workers — sticking to a Starmer pledge — and suggested policies that include easing the tax burden on businesses, and possibly reversing an increase in a tax employers pay to fund pensions, public health care and welfare.

The big question is how he will fund programs, if he'll scrap existing priorities, and how he'll meet demands for higher defense spending, said Jill Rutter, senior fellow at the Institute for Government think tank.

Starmer's government pledged to meet a NATO target of spending 3.5% of GDP on the military by 2035. But John Healey stepped down as defense secretary this month after complaining that Starmer was not moving fast enough to meet the target.

Burnham more comfortable with domestic issues

Burnham's lack of experience on the world stage could present a challenge improving the so-called special relationship with the U.S. after President Donald Trump turned on Starmer.

Trump described Burnham this week as a "town" mayor and said he heard he was "extremely liberal" and probably wouldn't expand North Sea oil drilling — one of his frequent gripes about Starmer.

Starmer made a priority of forging cordial ties with Trump despite their political differences, and was rewarded with a U.S.-U.K. trade deal. But it came at the cost of angering some in Labour's liberal voter base, and the president soured on Starmer after the British leader criticized his designs on Greenland and declined to enter the Iran war.

Burnham has not always said nice things about Trump. After Trump's followers stormed the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, Burnham posted on X that "any politician who gave Trump the time of day should be ashamed right now."

Starmer won praise from many for his international role, especially in bolstering European support for Ukraine. But he was criticized by some for being distracted by foreign affairs, Rutter said. She doesn't expect the same from Burnham and he could farm out some of those duties by choosing an experienced hand as foreign secretary, the U.K.'s top diplomat.

"I don't think Andy Burnham will want to be 'never-here Andy' in succession to 'never-here Keir,'" Rutter said in reference to Starmer's globetrotting moniker.

Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper said on Wednesday that she spoke with Burnham about policy issues and said "he's 100% behind our unwavering support for Ukraine" and "is a fundamental believer in NATO and in our shared deterrence and in the multilateral partnerships that we have."

Playing it safe at first could allow radical reshaping

An early priority for Burnham will be something Starmer struggled with: crafting a clear and convincing narrative that people understand about the direction he wants to take the country, Flinders said.

That plays to Burnham's communications skills and the popularity he has achieved by presenting himself as an amiable northern everyman who favors T-shirts over suits and ties, plays soccer for kicks and is known for spinning 1990s tunes during DJ battles.

So far, he has played it safe and tried not to raise public expectations too high. But if he can prove himself to be a competent leader and win public support to survive the remaining three years before a general election must be held, he can lay out a bolder vision for another term in his own manifesto.

Burnham has spoken of reshaping the political system, such as replacing the House of Lords with an elected senate and introducing proportional representation in voting. He also said he'd like to see the U.K. rejoin the European Union in his lifetime, though he backed away from that during his campaign in a constituency that voted 2-to-1 in favor of Brexit.

"My sense is that he will take some time, sensibly, to build up his team, his narrative, his story and his connections in order to then try to secure a public mandate and the next general election to then approach the more radical phase that he wants to deliver, which is exactly what Margaret Thatcher did in the '80s," Flinders said.

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Today in History: June 28, Franz Ferdinand assassinated

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Sunday, June 28, the 179th day of 2026. There are 186 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On June 28, 1914, in an act that helped trigger World War I, Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria and his wife, Sophie, were shot to death in Sarajevo by Serb nationalist Gavrilo Princip.

Also on this date:

In 1863, during the Civil War, U.S. President Abraham Lincoln appointed Maj. Gen. George G. Meade as the new commander of the Army of the Potomac, following the resignation of Maj. Gen. Joseph Hooker.

In 1919, the Treaty of Versailles was signed in France, formally ending the First World War.

In 1940, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Alien Registration Act, also known as the Smith Act, which required all noncitizens ages 14 and older residing in the U.S. to be registered and fingerprinted.

In 1969, riots broke out following a police raid at the Stonewall Inn, an LGBTQ+ bar in New York's Greenwich Village neighborhood, leading to six days of violent protests that served as a watershed moment in the LGBTQ+ rights movement.

In 1997, boxer Mike Tyson was disqualified in his rematch with WBA heavyweight titleholder Evander Holyfield after Tyson bit Holyfield twice in the third round, including biting off a portion of Holyfield's right ear.

In 2000, seven months after he was found adrift in the Straits of Florida, Elian Gonzalez was returned to his native Cuba.

In 2017, a man armed with a shotgun attacked the offices of The Capital newspaper in Annapolis, Maryland, killing four journalists and a staffer before police stormed the building and arrested him; authorities said Jarrod Ramos had a long-running grudge against the newspaper for its reporting of a harassment case against him. (Ramos would be convicted and sentenced to six life sentences plus 345 years in prison.)

In 2019, avowed white supremacist James Alex Fields, who deliberately drove his car into a crowd of counterprotesters during a "Unite the Right" rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, killing a young woman and injuring dozens, apologized for his actions before being sentenced to life in prison on federal hate crime charges.

In 2022, British socialite Ghislaine Maxwell was sentenced to 20 years in prison for helping lure teenage girls to be sexually abused by the late American financier Jeffrey Epstein.

Today's Birthdays: Filmmaker-comedian Mel Brooks is 100. Diplomat and politician Hans Blix is 98. Actor Bruce Davison is 80. Actor Kathy Bates is 78. Football Hall of Famer John Elway is 66. Actor John Cusack is 60. Actor Mary Stuart Masterson is 60. Actor Tichina Arnold is 57. Filmmaker-actor Mike White is 56. Billionaire entrepreneur Elon Musk is 55. Actor Alessandro Nivola is 54. Country singer-TV personality Kellie Pickler is 39. Olympic track gold medalist Elaine Thompson-Herah is 34.