Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 19, 2026 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 044 ~ 1 of 78

1- Upcoming Events
2- We the People: Citizen Alert: What is America, Where Is It and How Shall It Live?
3- Land for Sale
4- NVC Open House
4- Gov. Rhoden Mourns Loss of Denny Sanford
5- Charles Mix County Fatal Crash
6- Jordan Schwan Puts On Strong Contact Performance As Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion Take The Win Over Smittys B
8- Sunday Extras
26- Gov. Rhoden's Weekly Column
27- Sen. Thune's Weekly Column
28- Rev. Snyder's Column
30- South Dakota Average Gas Prices
31- Drought Monitor
32- SD SearchLight: More inmates denied early release as more parolees return through crackdown
35- SD SearchLight: Put down the bratwurst. The Legislature says you're supposed to be fasting.
37- Weather Pages
42- Daily Devotional
43- Subscription Form
44- Lottery Numbers
45- News from the Associated Press

Sunday, July 19

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m.

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

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.

U12 Baseball State Tournament at Elkton/Salem/Beresford

Jr. Legion at Clark: vs. Garretson at 4 p.m. and Clark at 6 p.m.

Groton Daily Independent
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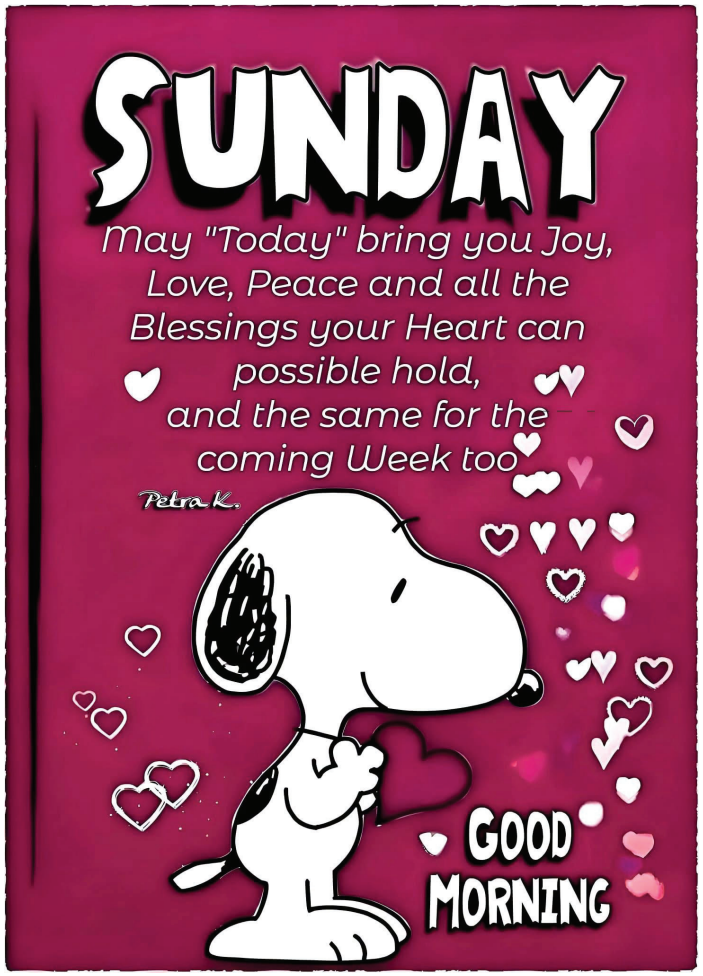

Monday, July 20

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

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

St. John's Lutheran: Vacation Bible School, 5:30 p.m.

Tuesday, July 21

Senior Legion Region at Milbank

City Council Meeting, 7 p.m.

Tiger Skills Workouts, GHS Arena, 7:30 a.m.

JVT Practice, 6 p.m., Arena.

St. John's Lutheran: Quilting, 9 a.m.; Vacation Bible School, 5:30 p.m.

Wednesday, July 22

Senior Legion Region at Milbank

JVT Practice, 6 p.m., Arena.

St. John's Lutheran: Vacation Bible School, 5:30 p.m.

Groton Daily Independent
Sunday, July 19, 2026 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 044 ~ 2 of 78

We the People

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

By David Adler

Citizen Alert: What is America, Where Is It and How Shall It Live?

Since Socrates first asked, some 2,500 years ago, the searching question, "how shall I live?," philosophers and others exploring the great ethical choices we humans must make across the years, those advocating self-awareness have encouraged consideration of our values and beliefs to determine the essential, defining answers to profound questions including "who am I" and, more broadly, "where am I," those that keep college coffee shops open into the wee hours of the morning as students engage in deep dive conversations that begin to shape their lives.

These wonderfully absorbing questions, contemplated, initially, by over-caffeinated, agile young minds, but certainly worthy of life-long exploration, are also ones that the citizenry should be asking of America. Because the premise and promise of republican self-governance, beautifully summed up in Thomas Paine's history-making pamphlet, "Common Sense," in a memorable phrase, "We have the power to begin the world over again," We the People should ask, similarly, "what is America," "where is America," and "how shall America live?"

The power of citizenship-- the right of citizenship-- is an invitation, indeed, to state it more strongly, the duty, to raise these defining questions about our nation, knowing that the right answers about the nature, state and future of America, must involve a democratically engaged citizenry eager to preserve that which is worth preserving about America, taking stock of where America stands at this juncture in our nation's history—its strengths and weaknesses, merits and demerits—and asking the most nation-defining question, how shall America live?

These are questions, questions for all seasons, central to Benjamin Franklin's declaration that delegates to the Constitutional Convention had given us "a republic" if we the people "can keep it." Let us briefly consider these categories of questions, with full acknowledgment that this effort is but a sketch in an evolving sketchbook.

To ask, what is America? is to examine the core beliefs and values of our nation, beginning with our foundational documents-- the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. The Declaration of Independence set forth the majestic principles of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, and trumpeted the doctrines of natural rights and popular sovereignty. These values defined America at the beginning. They stated to the world who we are, what we stand for and, as Lincoln explained, what we aspire to become. In important ways, the Constitution, over time, has fulfilled some of the premises, that is, the aspirations, of the Declaration and, through various mechanisms such as voting rights and inclusion of women, Black Americans and Native Americans, embodied the values, beliefs and principles that have made America more democratic that it was at the beginning.

The fact that America has evolved since the founding period invites consideration and scrutiny of the question, where is America, now? This solemn question invites reflection on the state of our union and must address matters such as compliance with constitutional commands and limitations, the health of the doctrines of separation of powers and checks and balances, the rule of law and judicial independence. An

appraisal of the nation requires candid consideration of the relative success and failure of policies, laws, programs and practices that govern the lives of Americans. Critical examination must encompass evaluation of our elected representatives, including their motivations, ambitions, virtues and integrity, as well as an exercise in measuring their devotion to their constituents and, perhaps, their self-serving behavior. This honest, to-the-bone assessment of the nation includes policies, foreign and domestic. Create an extensive scorecard and examine and grade such policies as tariffs, trade agreements and war-making, and those that affect affordability, energy and food prices, as well as health care. Does America seem committed to the grand principles of the Declaration of Independence? Are we a nation the lives up to the principle of equal justice for all or do we have a two-tiered justice system, one for ordinary citizens and another for the rich and powerful?

In the end, the question of how America should live invites consideration of the question of the values, beliefs and principles that should govern the life of the nation. The 250th anniversary of the founding of our country represents an opportunity for an ongoing conversation of what America stands for, at home and abroad. Fundamentally, let's ask ourselves if we continue to believe in government of, by and for the people?

David Adler is president of The Alturas Institute, a non-profit organization created to promote the Constitution, gender equality and civic education. This column is made possible with the support of the South Dakota Humanities Council, South Dakota NewsMedia Association and this newspaper.

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Groton Daily Independent
Sunday, July 19, 2026 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 044 ~ 4 of 78

Gov. Rhoden Mourns Loss of Denny Sanford

PIERRE, S.D. – Today, Governor Larry Rhoden mourned the loss of businessman and philanthropist T. Denny Sanford.

"It is with great sadness that Sandy and I mourn the loss of T. Denny – a man who has so generously and intentionally invested in the great state of South Dakota," said Governor Larry Rhoden. "His contributions will not be forgotten, and South Dakota will forever be impacted by his legacy. Put simply, he was the greatest philanthropist in South Dakota history."

Sanford gave billions to charitable causes in South Dakota, including:

Sanford Health, with donations exceeding $1 billion that transformed healthcare delivery throughout the state;

Sanford Underground Laboratory in Lead, a major state asset in science and education that would not have been possible without Sanford's support;

The Build Dakota Scholarships and the Premier/Freedom Scholarship, two significant scholarship programs that have transformed the lives of thousands of young people;

Sioux Falls Development Corporation, which will make possible the relocation of Smithfield and the redevelopment of the former site; and

Children's Home Society of South Dakota, to which Sanford is the largest donor.

"Denny Sanford was a significant donor to practically every charitable campaign in Sioux Falls, and many others throughout the state," said Lt. Governor Tony Venhuizen. "Beyond his high-profile gifts, Denny was a key reason that Sioux Falls has such a strong culture of philanthropy, and many important community improvements benefited from his support."

Charles Mix County Fatal Crash

What: Single-vehicle fatal crash
Where: US 18 at mile marker 336, 3 miles south of Lake Andes, South Dakota
When: 12:40 p.m., Friday, July 17, 2026

Driver 1: 56-year-old male from Kennebec, South Dakota, fatal injuries
Vehicle 1: 2000 Freightliner Conventional FLD120 semi-truck
Seat Belt Used: No

Charles Mix County, S.D.- A Kennebec, South Dakota man died Friday in a single-vehicle crash near Lake Andes, South Dakota.

Names of the those involved have not been released pending notification of family members.

Preliminary crash information indicates the driver of a 2000 Freightliner Conventional FLD120 was traveling southbound on US 18 when his brakes locked up. The truck swerved into the ditch and rolled. The driver sustained fatal injuries.

The investigation is ongoing. All information released is preliminary.

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

Groton Daily Independent
Sunday, July 19, 2026 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 044 ~ 6 of 78

Jordan Schwan Puts On Strong Contact Performance As Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion Take The Win Over Smittys B

By GameChanger Media

Jordan Schwan collected three hits in three at bats, as Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion defeated Smittys B 13-2 on Friday. Schwan tripled in the first inning, tripled in the fourth inning, and singled in the sixth inning.

Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion scored seven runs in the sixth inning on the way to victory. Braden Fliehs was struck by a pitch, driving in a run, Xavior Ellenbecker drew a walk, scoring one run, T Joosten induced Lincoln Shilhanek to hit into a fielder's choice, but one run scored, John Bisbee hit a sacrifice fly, scoring one run, and Alex Abeln singled, scoring three runs.

Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion got on the board in the top of the first inning after Schwan tripled to right field, T.C Schuster singled to center field, and Ryder Schelle grounded into a fielder's choice, each scoring one run.

Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion added one run in the second. Smittys B committed an error, making the score 4-0.

Schelle earned the win for Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion. The righty surrendered three hits and one run over three innings, striking out one and walking two. A. Hericks took the loss for Smittys B. The hurler went four innings, allowing five runs (two earned) on six hits, striking out three and walking one. Bisbee collected the save.

Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion accumulated 11 hits in the game. Schuster went 4-for-5 at the plate to lead Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion in hits.

D Backous went 2-for-3 at the plate and led the team with one run batted in.

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Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, July 19, 2026 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 044 ~ 7 of 78

Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion 13 - 2 Smittys B

Away Friday July 17, 2026

	1	2	3	4	5	6	R	H	E
GRTN	3	1	0	1	1	7	**13**	**11**	**1**
SMTT	0	0	1	0	1	0	**2**	**5**	**5**

BATTING

Groton Post 39...	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
A Abeln #5 (C)	5	2	2	2	0	0
J Schwan #11 (CF)	3	4	3	1	1	0
T Schuster #3 (SS)	5	1	4	2	0	0
B Fliehs #19 (3B)	4	1	1	1	0	0
R Schelle #6 (P)	2	0	0	1	0	1
X Ellenb... #8 (LF)	1	1	0	1	1	0
L Shilhan... #17 (1B)	3	2	0	0	1	1
J Bisbee #15 (LF)	3	0	1	1	0	0
Z Fliehs #23 (RF)	3	1	0	1	1	0
W Borg #1 (2B)	3	1	0	0	1	2
Totals	**32**	**13**	**11**	**10**	**5**	**4**

2B: T Schuster, **3B:** J Schwan 2, J Bisbee, **TB:** B Fliehs, J Schwan 7, A Abeln 2, J Bisbee 3, T Schuster 5, **SF:** J Bisbee, **HBP:** B Fliehs, J Schwan, **SB:** J Schwan, **LOB:** 9

Smittys B	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
A Hericks #10 (P)	4	1	1	0	0	0
D Pederson #4 (CF)	4	1	1	0	0	1
D Backous #18 (LF)	3	0	2	1	0	0
L Shoultz #18 (1B)	1	0	0	0	1	0
T Joosten #3 (SS)	2	0	0	0	1	0
M Arnott #8 (3B)	2	0	1	0	1	0
D Stahl #5 (2B)	3	0	0	0	0	0
B Kludt #11 (RF)	3	0	0	0	0	0
L Hannigan #12 (C)	2	0	0	0	1	1
Totals	**24**	**2**	**5**	**1**	**4**	**2**

2B: D Pederson, **TB:** M Arnott, A Hericks, D Backous 2, D Pederson 2, **HBP:** L Shoultz, **SB:** L Hannigan, **LOB:** 9

PITCHING

Groton Pos...	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
R Schelle #6	3.0	3	1	1	2	1	0
J Bisbee #15	3.0	2	1	1	2	1	0
Totals	6.0	5	2	2	4	2	0

W: R Schelle, **P-S:** J Bisbee 50-28, R Schelle 42-29, **HBP:** R Schelle, **BF:** J Bisbee 13, R Schelle 16, **E:** Z Fliehs

Smittys B	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
A Hericks #10	4.0	6	5	2	1	3	0
D Stahl #5	1.0	2	6	6	2	1	0
T Joosten #3	0.2	3	2	2	2	0	0
B Kludt #11	0.1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	**6.0**	**11**	**13**	**10**	**5**	**4**	**0**

L: A Hericks, **P-S:** T Joosten 25-13, B Kludt 2-2, D Stahl 33-15, A Hericks 76-55, **WP:** T Joosten, D Stahl, **HBP:** D Stahl 2, **BF:** T Joosten 7, B Kludt, D Stahl 9, A Hericks 23, **E:** B Kludt, D Stahl 2, L Shoultz, D Pederson

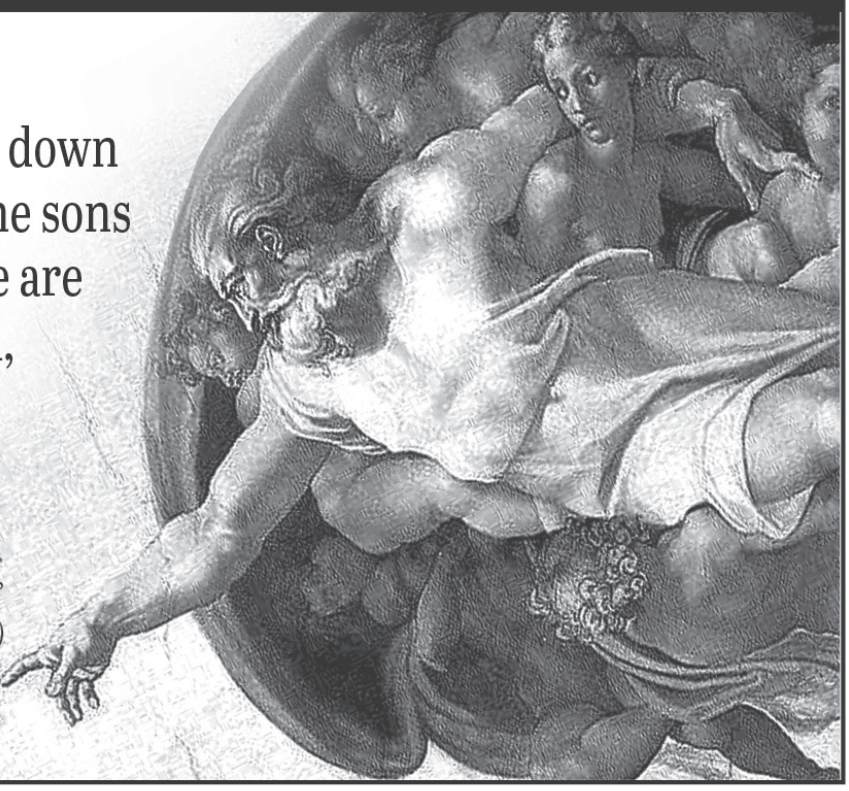
Groton Daily Independent
Sunday, July 19, 2026 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 044 ~ 8 of 78

THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

The Lord has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God.

PSALM 14:2

Detail of "Creation of Adam" by Michelangelo (1508-1512)



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Groton Daily Independent
Sunday, July 19, 2026 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 044 ~ 9 of 78

BIBLE TRIVIA

by Wilson Casey

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

2. From Song of Solomon 1:15, what kind of eyes does the beloved say the Shulamite has? *Kind, Red of the demon, Doves, Blue of the sea*

3. Used as both a greeting and farewell, what's the Hebrew word for "peace"? *Shass, Simcha, Shabbat, Shalom*

4. In Matthew 6, what did Jesus say not to use when we pray? *Loud curses, Impure thoughts, Vain repetitions, Wandering shifts*

5. From Esther 1, King Ahasuerus lived in what city? *Ur, Shushan, Antioch, Tarsus*

6. Who was the first son of Moses and Zipporah? *Haggai, Gershom, Mark, Zebudah*

ANSWERS: 1) Old, 2) Doves, 3) Shalom, 4) Vain repetitions, 5) Shushan, 6) Gershom

Hardcore trivia fan? Visit Wilson Casey's subscriber site at www.patreon.com/triviaguy.

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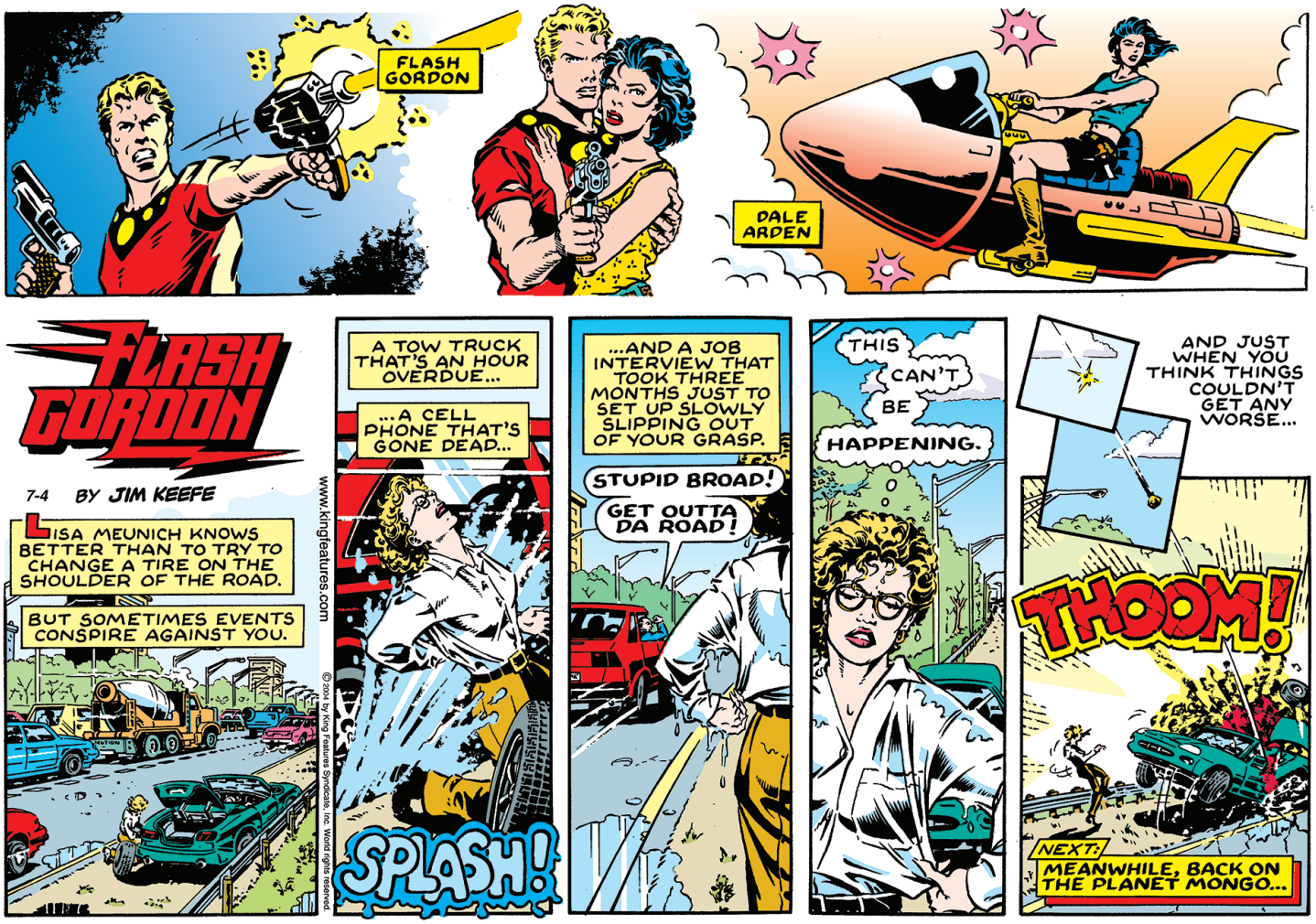
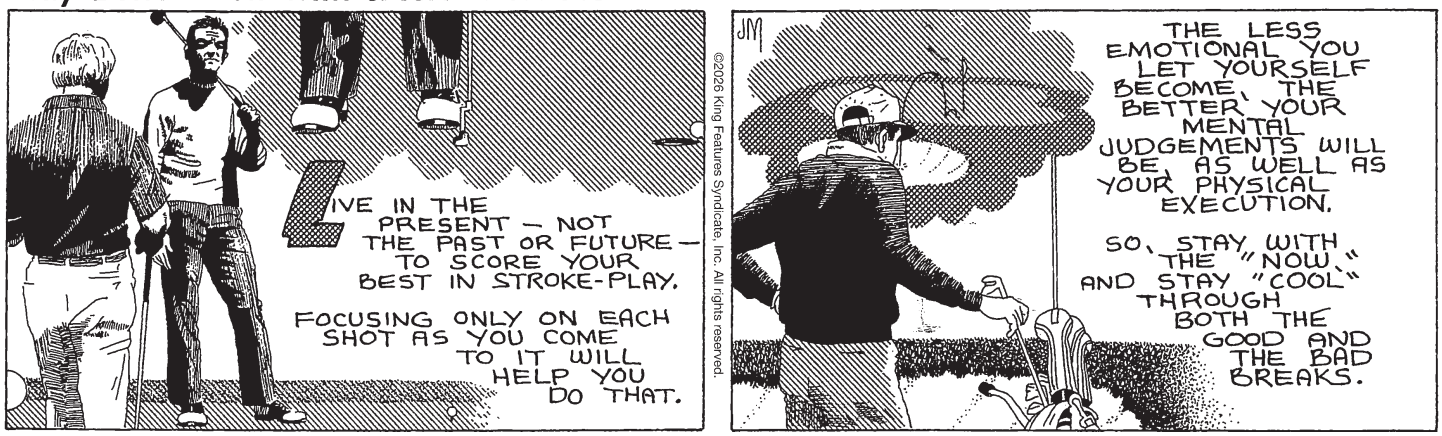
Groton Daily Independent
Sunday, July 19, 2026 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 044 ~ 10 of 78



Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS



Groton Daily Independent
Sunday, July 19, 2026 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 044 ~ 11 of 78

Daily Productive Cough Causes Patient To Wonder About COPD

DEAR DR. ROACH: I decided to practice using an inhalation spirometer, partly because I have a daily productive cough (small amounts three to four times a day). I smoked a pack of filtered cigarettes a day from ages 17-29. I smoke marijuana now.

My scoliosis is quite complex and has taken over 4 inches off my height. But at age 75, I volunteer as a stable hand for 6-8 hours a week, and they say that I'm the hardest-working volunteer! I'm lean and fit.

I do three inhalation tests in a row, and it's always 2,400 mL. Do I have chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), and should I report this to my primary care physician? He doesn't know about my current marijuana consumption. -- C.R.

ANSWER: The diagnosis of COPD is made based on symptoms (usually shortness of breath, cough, and sputum production); frequent exacerbations of breathing troubles; and abnormalities on breathing tests (or if there's no other explanation). Your history of smoking tobacco and cannabis are compatible with a diagnosis of COPD, but you'd need pulmonary function testing in a lab.

The device that you have (which I think is an incentive spirometer) is very helpful for expanding the lungs, and it's especially used after surgery. But the number doesn't tell me a lot about your lung function.

The problem with COPD is that breathing gets obstructed, and although obstruction occurs with both inspiration and exhalation, it's mostly when a person breathes out that symptoms occur. Some people have cough or sputum production without having any trouble breathing. This is most compatible with chronic bronchitis, which is one of the most common presentations of COPD; the other is emphysema.

Scoliosis, which is curvature of the spine, can cause a completely different lung disease called restrictive disease. With restrictive diseases, it's not airflow that's the primary problem; it's the lung volume. With severe chest-wall deformities like scoliosis and kyphosis (when the spine is bent forward, sometimes called a "dowager's hump"), the lungs can't expand fully.

I'd discuss your lung symptoms with your physician, who'll consider sending you in for pulmonary function tests. These tests will tell you whether you have an obstructive disease, like COPD, or a restrictive disease. You should tell your doctor about your cannabis use; he should know and be professional about it.

If you do have COPD, I recommend against smoking cannabis. Although the evidence isn't as strong that smoking cannabis causes COPD the way that smoking tobacco does, I still recommend against it in people with lung disease. If you want to use cannabis, take a gummy, since this doesn't potentially harm your lungs the way that smoking does.

***

DEAR DR. ROACH: I've noticed that when I wipe the cap of my glass water bottle, there's a dark gray or black material inside the cap after I've refilled it. Is this mold? Should I stop refilling the water bottle? -- D.D.

ANSWER: The cap of your glass water bottle is made from aluminum. When you open and close the cap, the aluminum metal is exposed to air, where it reacts with oxygen to form aluminum oxide. This is the black material that you're wiping off the cap. Aluminum oxide is inert and passes through the body, so you don't need to worry about it.

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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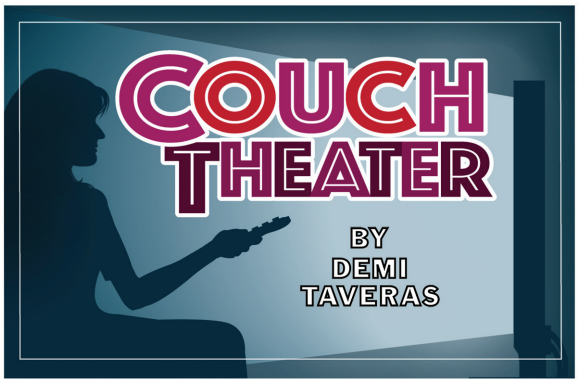
Groton Daily Independent
Sunday, July 19, 2026 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 044 ~ 12 of 78



Anya Taylor-Joy, left, and Drew Starkey star in "Lucky." (Courtesy of Apple TV)

"72 Hours" (R) -- Comedian/actor Kevin Hart ("Jumanji: Open World") leads this comedy film releasing on July 24, and he's got a handful of fellow comedians who round out the rest of the cast, including Marcello Hernandez, Ben Marshall and Kam Patterson (all of whom you might recognize from "Saturday Night Live"). Hart plays Joe, a 40-year-old business executive who's feeling desperate to cling to his remaining youth. So, when Joe gets added to a group chat for a three-day bachelor party with twenty-somethings, he's overjoyed that he gets a chance to reconnect with his inner rager. But it doesn't take long for poor Joe to realize in those mere 72 hours that he's in way over his head. (Netflix)

"The Sheep Detectives" (PG) -- This family-friendly film, out now, isn't just a fun blend of a mystery and comedy movie that's appropriate for all ages; it features a stacked ensemble cast that is full of familiar faces and voices. Taking place in a small English village, a shepherd named George (Hugh Jackman) reads murder-mystery novels to his flock of sheep each night. When George suddenly passes away and is found outside his trailer, the sheep overhear the local police's hunch that it was a murder. With an extensive background in mystery-novel sleuthing, George's sheep are convinced that they can track down the murderer themselves. The live-action cast features names like Nicholas Braun ("Succession"), Emma Thompson ("Dead of Winter"), and Hong Chau ("Wuthering Heights"), while the voice cast includes Bryan Craston ("Chili Finger"), Julia Louis-Dreyfus ("Thunderbolts") and Regina Hall ("The Five-Star Weekend"). (Amazon Prime Video)

"Lucky" (TV-MA) -- Under her production company Hello Sunshine, Reese Witherspoon ("You're Cordially Invited") serves as an executive producer for this new crime-thriller miniseries, which just premiered the first two episodes out of its seven-episode season. Starring Anya Taylor-Joy ("The Super Mario Galaxy Movie") as the titular character, this series follows Lucky Armstrong -- a con artist who pulls off a multi-million-dollar heist with her husband/partner-in-crime, Carey (Drew Starkey). When Carey goes missing with the money the very next day, Lucky is forced to live on the run from her boss, Priscilla (Annette Bening), who's also her mother-in-law and was expecting the money. Oh, and the FBI's hot on her heels as well. Sounds like Ms. Armstrong is not-so-lucky! (Apple TV)

"Marc by Sofia" (PG-13) -- Director Sofia Coppola ("Priscilla") just released her first feature-length non-fiction film! The topic? TITLE: None other than American fashion designer Marc Jacobs. With footage that leads up to his 2024 paper doll runway show, Coppola interviews her close friend about his early life, his creative process, and the details of how he produces a show. Jacob also speaks about his time at Parsons School of Design in New York and working for Perry Ellis. Other faces who appear in the doc include actress Chloe Sevigny ("The Five-Star Weekend"), musician Kim Gordon, filmmaker Spike Jonze ("Her"), and former model/creative director Grace Coddington. Out now! (HBO Max)

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Groton Daily Independent
Sunday, July 19, 2026 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 044 ~ 13 of 78

1. "Easy To Be Hard" was used in which rock musical?
2. Where did the Beatles go to record "Get Back"?
3. Who are Alvin, Simon and Theodore?
4. Which group released "Tighten Up"?
5. Name the song that contains this lyric: "I still see her standing by the water, Standing there lookin' out to sea, And is she waiting there for me?"

Answers

1. "Hair," in 1967. It was sung by Lynn Kellogg who was playing Sheila. Three Dog Night had a hit with the song a few years later.

2. They went to the roof of Apple Records in London and played for 40 minutes before the police showed up and they had to turn down the volume. The song was credited to "The Beatles with Billy Preston."

3. The Chipmunks, a fictional cartoon group that released "Christmas Don't Be Late" in 1958. Creator Ross Bagdasarian sang all three parts by speeding up his recording. Over the years, the Chipmunks have had a TV series, a film and a video game.

4. Archie Bell & the Drells, in 1968.

5. "Galveston." It was a hit for Glen Campbell in 1969. Don Ho, however, had released the song the previous year.

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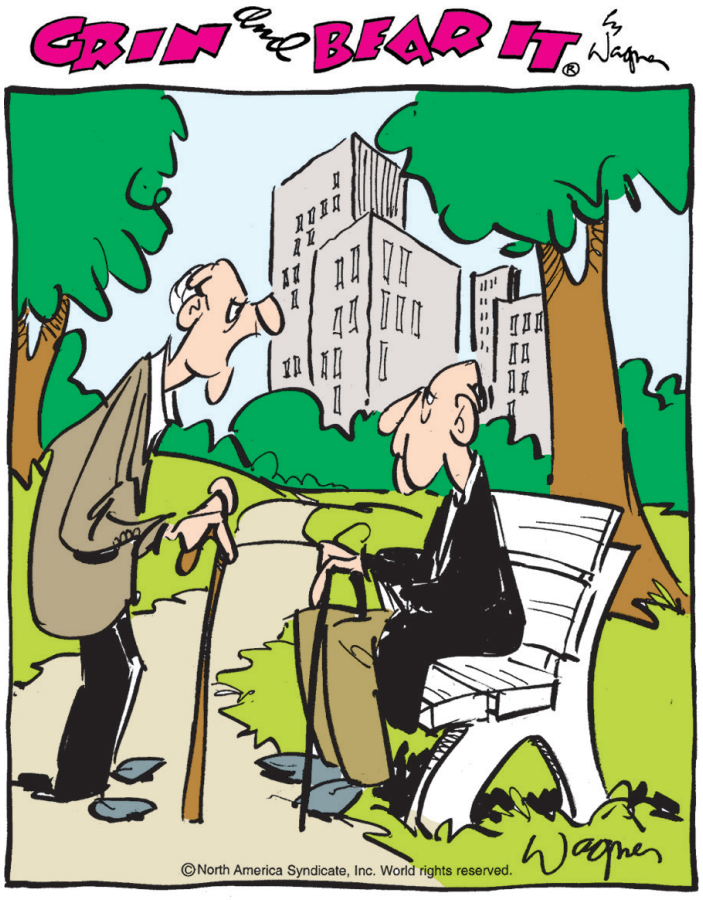
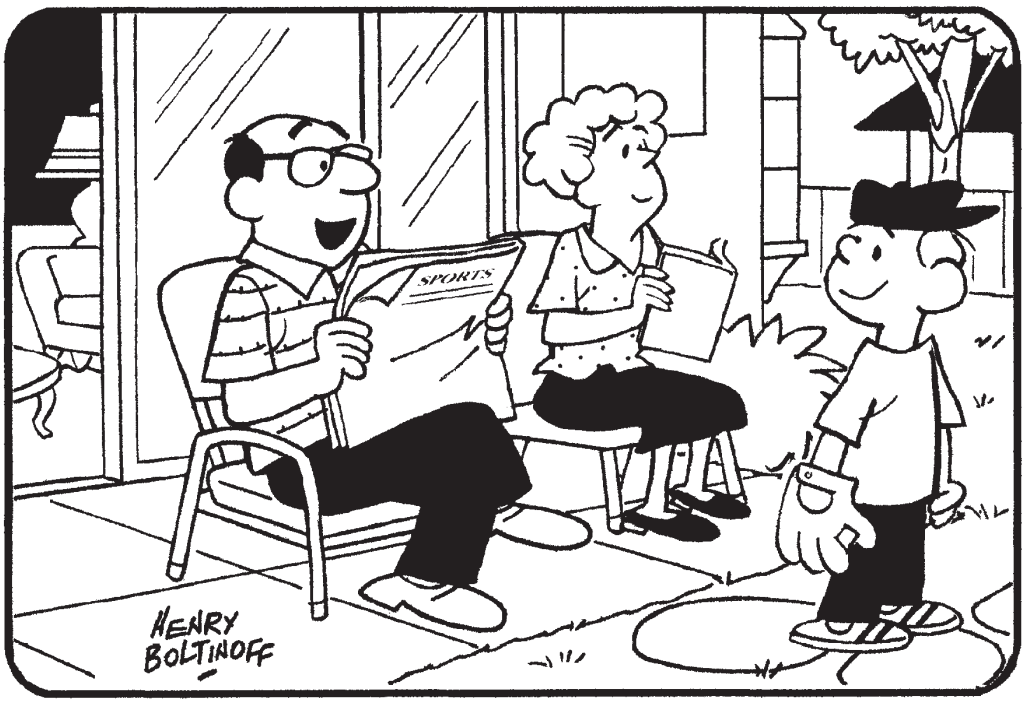


"I could have been a bigger success than you could have been!"

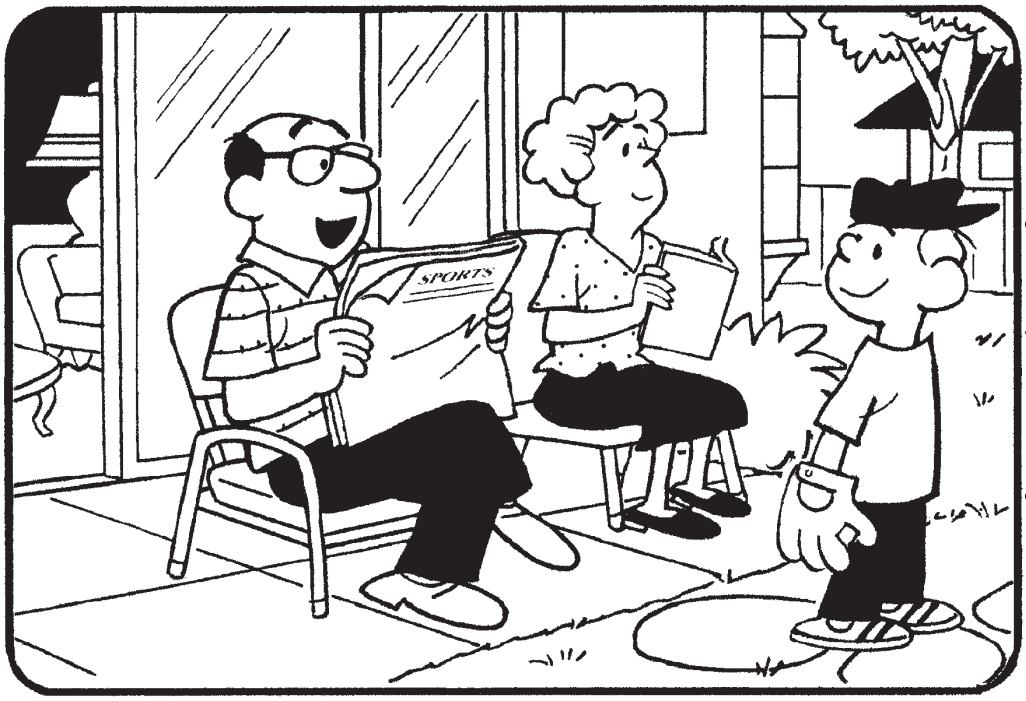
Groton Daily Independent
Sunday, July 19, 2026 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 044 ~ 14 of 78

HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



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Differences: 1. Foot is moved. 2. Collar is missing. 3. Arm is not showing. 4. Lamp is larger. 5. Window is added to house. 6. Back of chair is smaller.

Groton Daily Independent
Sunday, July 19, 2026 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 044 ~ 15 of 78

* "I have stained coffee cups. My hands have arthritis, and it's hard to wash them by hand. A young woman at church suggested I purchase a small bottle of dishwasher soap. The kind you put in a dishwasher, even though I don't have one. I squirt a little in the cup and add hot water. It sits while I wash up the other dishes and then swishes right out." -- T.T. in Missouri

* "Check your area to see if vocational schools offer low-cost or free auto repairs. Sometimes you can have work done for the cost of parts so that students can be trained on your issue." -- R.E. in North Carolina

* "For the summer I fill a gym-size duffel bag with "spontaneity supplies" and keep it in the trunk of my car. It includes swimsuits for all family members, a blanket and cups, plates and silverware for a picnic. Now, if we find we have some unexpected free time, we can go to the beach or pool, or have a picnic by just picking up some sandwich supplies from the closest grocery store!" -- via e-mail

* You can use a clean paper milk carton to pour batter for pancakes. The spout makes it easy to pour and reduces splatter.

* "I got tired of always looking for the dustpan, and so I put a magnet on the back of it. It sticks right on the side of the fridge, right next to the broom." -- L.M. in Kentucky

* Avoid eye strain by making sure your computer monitor is in the correct position. It should be placed directly in front of you, at least an arm's length away. If you have trouble seeing the screen, you can adjust the resolution to make the screen items bigger.

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

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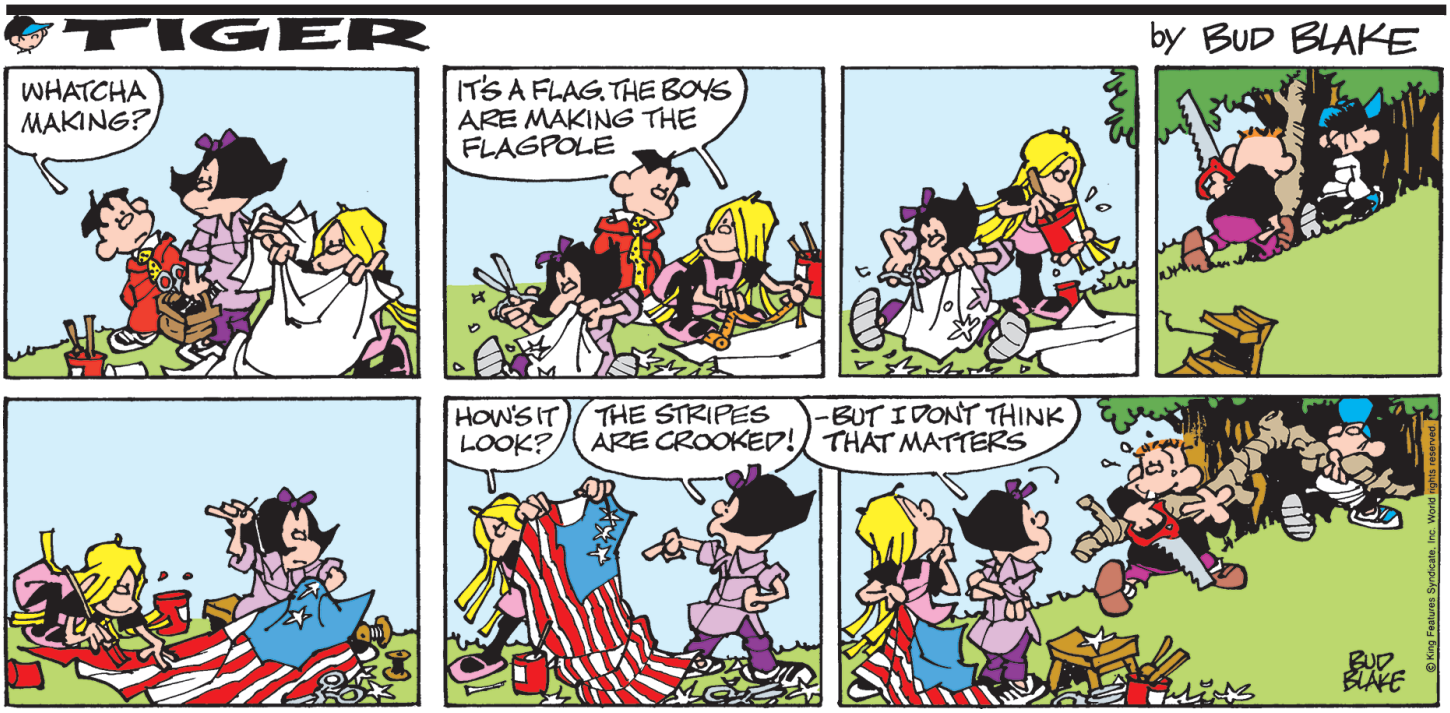
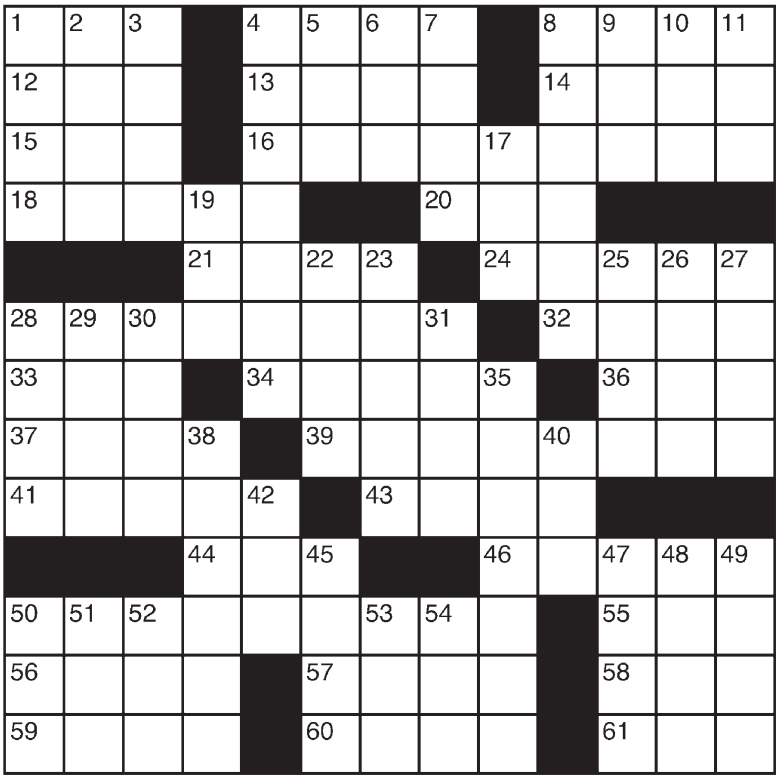


Groton Daily Independent
Sunday, July 19, 2026 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 044 ~ 16 of 78

King Crossword



ACROSS

1 Efron of "Parkland"
4 "For — the Bell Tolls"
8 Maui's — Highway
12 Rock's Brian
13 Continental coin
14 Petri dish gel
15 Scrape (out)
16 Shakable paperweight
18 Egypt's Anwar
20 Quibble
21 Composer Bartok
24 Informative
28 Hall & Oates ballad of 1976
32 Scarce
33 Galley item
34 Must, casually
36 Plant seeds
37 Radar dot
39 "Gems" found on a beach
41 "Bye!"
43 Poetry contest
44 Vat
46 Foolish
50 Scott Evil actor in the Austin Powers films
55 Blue bird
56 Saab model
57 Nest egg choices
58 Broad st.
59 Wee songbird
60 Lacking slack
61 Wine choice

DOWN

1 Dazzling duo?
2 "Diana" singer
3 Not single-sex
4 Locale in "The Great Gatsby"
5 Attila, e.g.
6 Acapulco gold
7 Cut, as a lawn
8 Summer top
9 Previously
10 Collar
11 Common verb
17 Tonic's mixer
19 Six-pack muscles
22 Novelist Anita
23 Poker pot starters
25 "That — close one!"
26 "No seats" signs
27 Evergreens
28 Weeps
29 Robust
30 Buffalo's lake
31 List-ending abbr.
35 Not for
38 Large constrictor
40 Run after K
42 Summer mo.
45 Telly watcher
47 Slightly open
48 Cathedral area
49 Kept tabs on
50 Cutting tool
51 Chariot trailer
52 Three, in Rome
53 Notable time
54 Vichy water

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Groton Daily Independent
Sunday, July 19, 2026 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 044 ~ 17 of 78

— King Crossword —

Answers

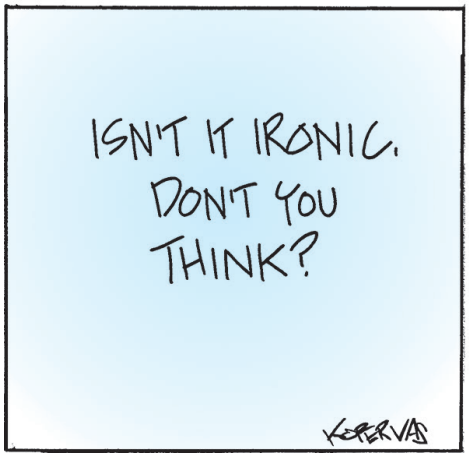
Solution time: 24 mins.

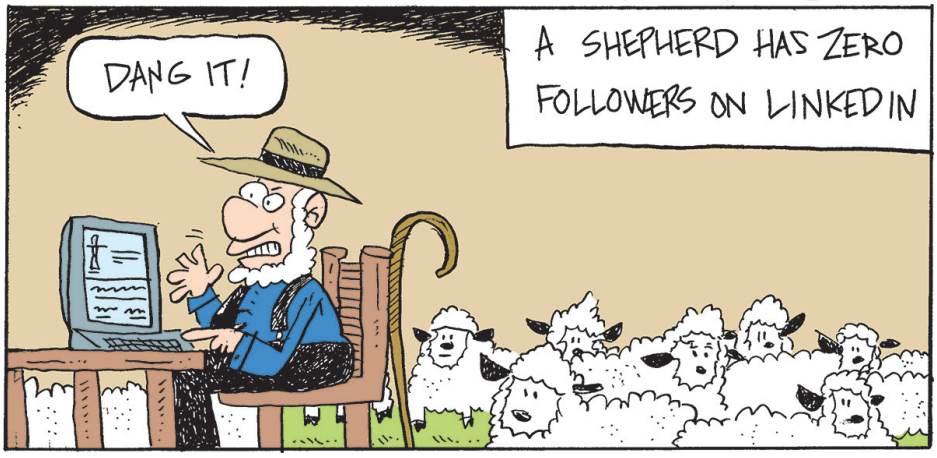
Z	A	C	■	W	H	O	M	■	H	A	N	A
E	N	O	■	E	U	R	O	■	A	G	A	R
E	K	E	■	S	N	O	W	G	L	O	B	E
S	A	D	A	T	■	■	■	N	I	T	■	■
■	■	■	B	E	L	A	■	N	E	W	S	Y
S	H	E	S	G	O	N	E	■	R	A	R	E
O	A	R	■	G	O	T	T	A	■	S	O	W
B	L	I	P	■	S	E	A	G	L	A	S	S
S	E	E	Y	A	■	S	L	A	M	■	■	■
■	■	■	T	U	B	■	■	I	N	A	N	E
S	E	T	H	G	R	E	E	N	■	J	A	Y
A	E	R	O	■	I	R	A	S	■	A	V	E
W	R	E	N	■	T	A	U	T	■	R	E	D

Olive

Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas





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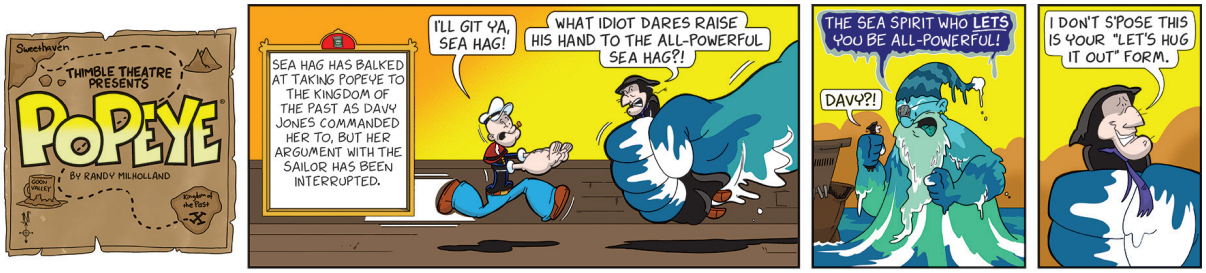
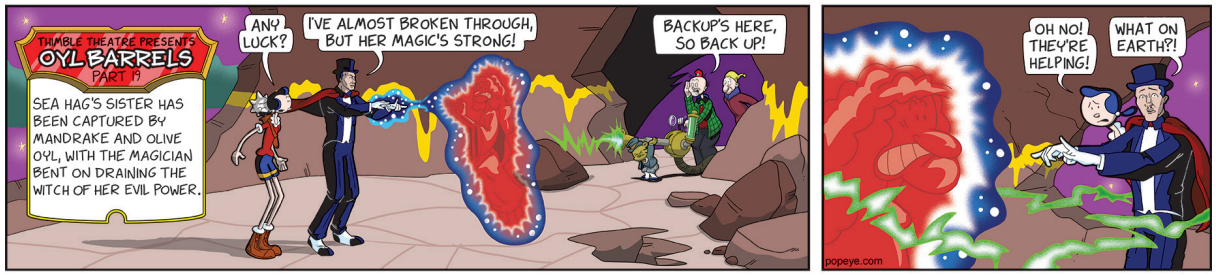
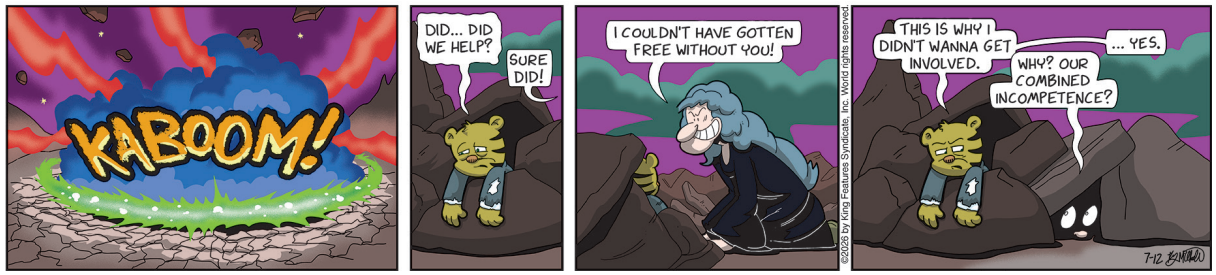
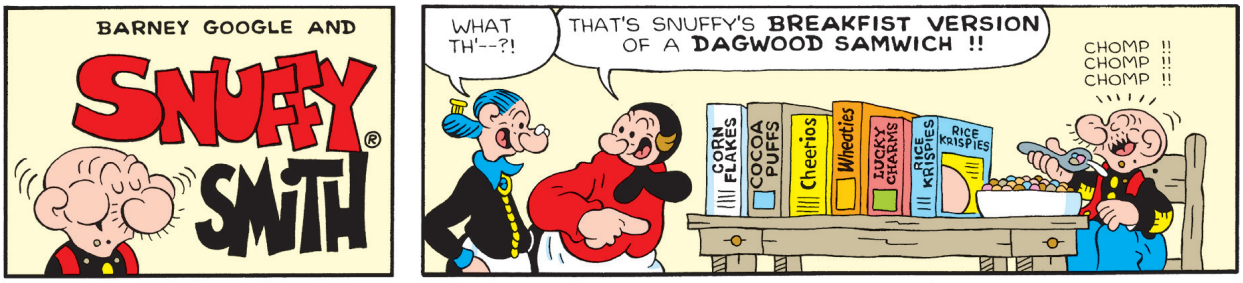
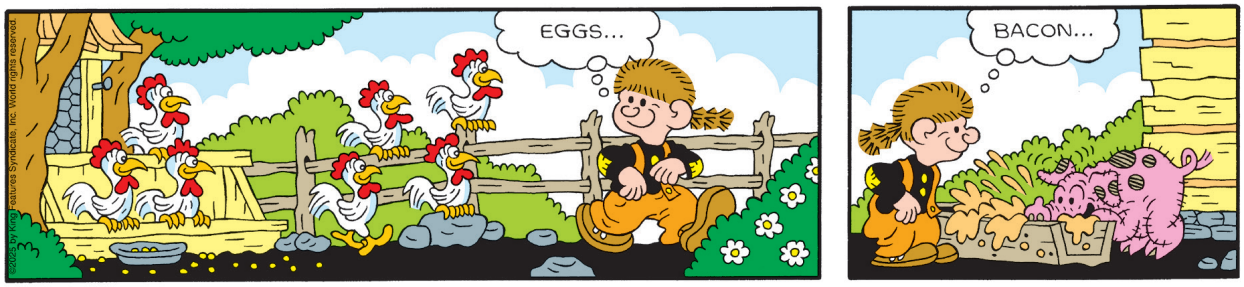
Groton Daily Independent
Sunday, July 19, 2026 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 044 ~ 18 of 78

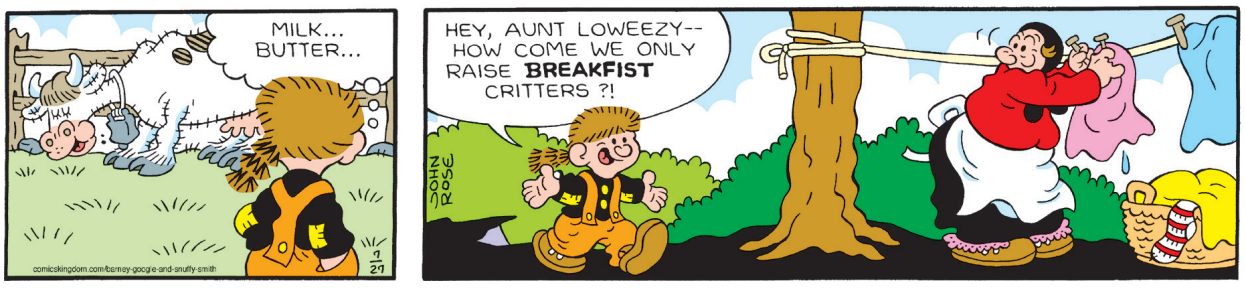




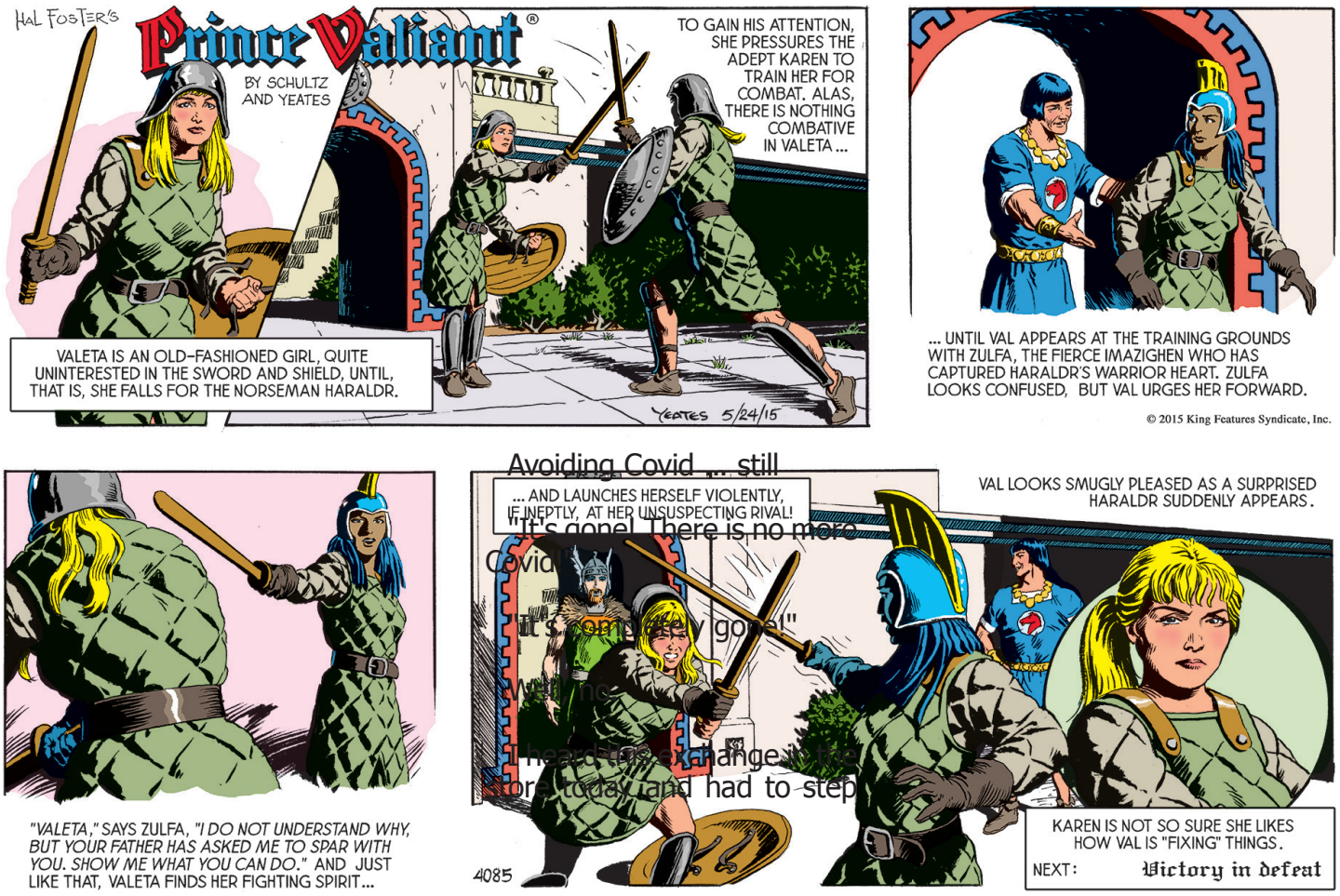








Groton Daily Independent
Sunday, July 19, 2026 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 044 ~ 19 of 78



Avoiding Covid ... still
"It's gone! There is no more Covid
It's completely gone!"
With the
I heard the exchange in the store today and had to step

The Spats

by Jeff Pickering

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Groton Daily Independent
Sunday, July 19, 2026 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 044 ~ 20 of 78

SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

Calculating our 2027 Social Security

There is talk among the experts who track these things that the Social Security Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) will rise 3.8% for 2027. This is down slightly from their guess of 3.9% just two months ago.

In other words, we can't take that estimated increase in our Social Security benefit to the bank just yet. There is room for change between now and October, when the official 2027 figures come out based on July, August and September numbers.

One thing that's not likely to change, however, is that seniors are struggling, especially the over 24 million of us who have only Social Security for income.

One thing that many of us object to is the method used to calculate Social Security increases each year. Those increases are based on the CPI-W, or Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers. That index measures the spending habits of people who receive more than half of their income from clerical or hourly jobs. According to the Department of Labor, the average person in that group is 40 years old -- much younger than the typical Social Security recipient.

That's not us. Consumers in that age group spend in different ways, more on transportation and clothing, while we spend a bigger chunk of our income on health care and prescription drugs.

Many of us, therefore, keep asking why the alternative CPI-E (Consumer Price Index for the Elderly) isn't used to calculate Social Security increases. The answer: The Bureau of Labor Statistics considers the CPI-E to be experimental. After all these years, with so many millions of us on Social Security, we're an experiment?

Take a look at the Senior Citizens League website (seniorsleague.org) and scroll through the articles, especially their recent survey of seniors and income. Their goal is to protect our benefits, whether it's Social Security, Medicare or for veterans. Their numbers are solid and can be trusted.

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Groton Daily Independent
Sunday, July 19, 2026 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 044 ~ 21 of 78

1. Name the legendary jockey who rode Ferdinand to victory at the 1986 Kentucky Derby and 1987 Breeders' Cup Classic.

2. The IX Cup is the championship game of which football league that began play in 2019?

3. Which businessman purchased the NFL's Miami Dolphins, and founded Major League Baseball's Florida Marlins and the NHL's Florida Panthers in the early 1990s?

4. Who edged David Malukas by 0.0233 seconds to win the 2026 Indianapolis 500 in the closest finish in race history?

5. Which team selected Tennessee Volunteers wide receiver Peerless Price in the second round of the 1999 NFL Draft?

6. Name the Dutch footballer who decided to miss the 1978 FIFA World Cup and retire from international competition after a 1977 kidnapping attempt against him and his family.

7. In 1989, who did the Associated Press name as its 1980s Athletes of the Decade?

Answers

1. Bill Shoemaker.

2. The Women's National Football Conference.

3. Wayne Huizenga.

4. Felix Rosenqvist.

5. The Buffalo Bills.

6. Johan Cruyff.

7. Wayne Gretzky and Martina Navratilova.

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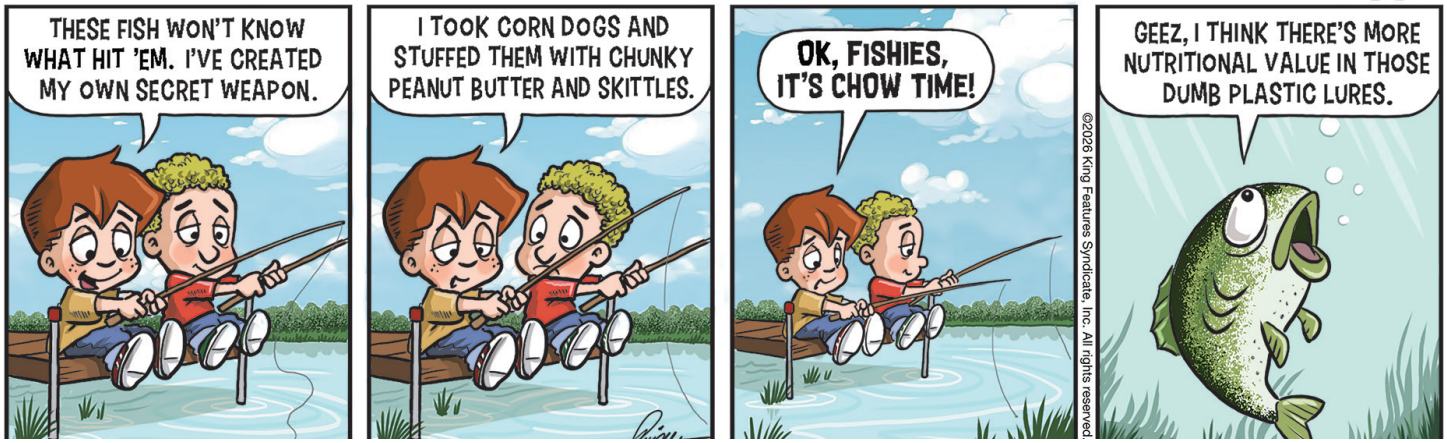
Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps



Groton Daily Independent
Sunday, July 19, 2026 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 044 ~ 22 of 78

The grim statistics on lost pets

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: My cat "Grimsby" got out of my apartment through a hole in the patio screen last summer. I put flyers all over the neighborhood and posted on social media, but he never returned and was never found. I did not microchip Grimsby, and he didn't have a collar on when he escaped -- since he was a completely indoor cat, I assumed he didn't need any of that. Please warn your readers that even indoor cats can escape and get lost. -- Ciara J. in Lakeland, Florida

DEAR CIARA: I'm so sorry to hear that Grimsby hasn't yet been found. Thank you for your story, which illustrates why indoor cats need to wear ID at all times and why microchipping is recommended.

According to a 2012 study, about half to three-quarters of lost cats are eventually found. Lost dogs are found and returned at a much higher rate of 71% to 97%. However, a 2018 study found that cats are much less likely to be returned to their owners after going missing for more than 90 days. Many end up in shelters, where they may be euthanized.

What should you do if your cat or dog escapes?

-- Act fast. Pets are recovered most often within the first week of disappearing, but only if the owners start searching immediately.

-- Put up signs and notices. Social media posts and paper signs are still effective according to all studies of lost pet recovery.

-- Engage your neighbors. Knock on doors, make phone calls and let everyone in the vicinity know that your pet has gone missing.

-- Contact local shelters and rescues. Surprisingly, shelters have a low return-to-owner rate -- unless a pet is microchipped.

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

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Groton Daily Independent
Sunday, July 19, 2026 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 044 ~ 23 of 78

Strange BUT TRUE

* According to facial recognition software, LEOnardo da Vinci's "Mona Lisa" is 83% happy, 9% disgusted, 6% fearful and 2% angry.

* The low air pressure of a twister can literally pull a person's eardrum outward.

* In 1900, motor boating was included in the Olympic Games. Only a few races were held, however, and they were eventually discontinued due to inconsistent weather and mechanical failures.

* One acre of peanuts can make 30,000 peanut butter sandwiches.

* The first Europeans to discover the Great Lakes named them the "Sweetwater Seas" and believed that China bordered their shores.

* The skin of a jellyfish is so thin that the animal can breathe through it.

* Cellist Daniel Crawford composed a musical piece for the cello in which each note represents a year on NASA's record of global average temperature, from 1880-2012.

* Between 1930 and 1935, nearly 750,000 American farms were lost through bankruptcy or sheriff sales.

* A man once sued Anheuser-Busch with the claim that the company's ads misrepresented his potential attractiveness to the opposite sex, if he would just drink their beer.

* The Persian epic "Explanation of Chatrang and the Invention of Nard" tells the story of chess being introduced to the royal court by an envoy from India.

* During the 18th and 19th centuries, many British and American newspapers featured elegies for dead pets. Among them, one scholar found six for monkeys, 12 for canaries, 17 for cats and 53 for dogs.

* Egyptians used vast amounts of linen to mummify a body -- in fact, the fabric on one mummy from the 11th dynasty measured 9,095 feet, enough to cover three tennis courts.

***

Thought for the Day: "You've got to get to the stage in life where going for it is more important than winning or losing." -- Arthur Ashe

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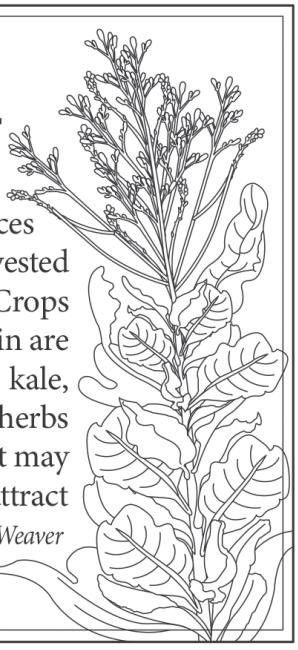
The Garden Bug

Bolting

Bolting, or "going to seed," is the stage of crop plant growth that produces flowers and seeds. If the crop plant is harvested after bolting, it's likely to taste bitter. Crops well-known for bolting as summer heat sets in are lettuce, spinach, arugula, broccoli, cabbages, kale, collards, carrots, radishes, beets, turnips and herbs such as cilantro, dill and parsley. A bolted plant may not taste very good, but its flowers can attract many pollinators to your garden. – *Brenda Weaver*



Sources:
gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu, www.civicgardencenter.org

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Groton Daily Independent
Sunday, July 19, 2026 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 044 ~ 24 of 78

VETERANS ★ POST ★

by Freddy Groves

The VA OIG at work

The VA's Office of Inspector General (OIG) took a close look at expenditures for pharmaceuticals for one year and discovered that some of the money wasn't spent as required. Specifically, the VA spent $11.7 billion on drugs during that year, and $11.4 billion was spent correctly via prime vendor contracts. However, 3% ($322.5 million) was spent outside the required contract. While it's a fraction of the whole amount, three hundred million is still three hundred million.

The purchasing rules say that employees have to document their attempts at finding the required drugs before they go straight to open market buying. Without compliance with those rules, the budget goes out the window, not to mention the potential for fraud.

The OIG had recommendations for the Veterans Health Administration and, truthfully, the VHA should have been embarrassed to have to be told those things: establish guidance for staff, do routine assessments of purchases and develop a way to keep an eye on purchases made outside the contracts.

Meanwhile the OIG has continued to go after the scammers who think they'll never get caught.

Such as the thief who impersonated a veteran for 30 years, stealing benefits, medical care and drugs. Prior convictions included stolen property, grand larceny, sale of drugs, forgery and more. When he was finally nabbed, he was staying in housing for veterans using the stolen name.

Then there is the husband and wife team who allegedly ran a drug abuse recovery program. They thought they could get away with wire fraud and excessive billing.

And how about the company that billed both Medicaid and the VA for sleep studies that had been done by unqualified personnel, studies that were never done at all, and forged referrals? This went on for four years.

Sleep studies fraud must be a big thing, because at the same time there was another case across the country that had netted the thieves in excess of $2 million.

To report fraud, see www.vaoig.gov/hotline/online-forms.

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Groton Daily Independent
Sunday, July 19, 2026 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 044 ~ 25 of 78

Wishing Well®

7	2	7	6	4	8	4	2	4	2	4	8	7
J	B	O	L	G	G	L	E	O	A	R	O	Y
2	7	6	3	4	7	2	4	6	3	6	7	3
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N	Y	R	G	E	O	J	U	E	R	O	O	X
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5	3	8	3	5	8	5	8	5	8	5	8	8
G	C	S	E	O	A	F	H	A	E	R	A	D

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

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Trivia test by Fifi Rodriguez

1. ANATOMY: How many vertebrae are in the human spine?
2. U.S. CITIES: Which city is home to the Gateway Arch, known as the tallest arch in the world?
3. TELEVISION: Which 1970s sitcom introduced a neighbor named Phyllis Lindstrom?
4. HISTORY: When was the first heart transplant performed?
5. GEOGRAPHY: Where are the Cape Verde islands located?
6. MOVIES: Which 1991 film featured a villain named Max Cady?
7. MUSIC: When did Taylor Swift's second studio album ("Fearless") win the Country Music Association's Album of the Year award?
8. SCIENCE: What is nephology?
9. MEASUREMENTS: What instrument is used to measure the depth of oceans?
10. ANIMAL KINGDOM: What is a baby deer called?

Answers

1. 33.
2. St. Louis, Missouri.
3. "The Mary Tyler Moore Show."
4. 1967.
5. Off the west coast of Africa.
6. "Cape Fear."
7. 2009.
8. The scientific study of clouds.
9. An echo sounder or fathometer.
10. A fawn or calf.

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Groton Daily Independent
Sunday, July 19, 2026 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 044 ~ 26 of 78

South Dakota Governor

Larry Rhoden

South Dakota: *Under God, the People Rule*

Soaring Higher

America 250 is a great time to reflect on who we are and what we have fought to build and keep for so long. We are an example for freedom to the rest of the world, and a symbol of hope, as well. But we have our own symbols that represent who we are.

Our Founding Fathers believed in the power of symbols – like our flag and our Declaration of Independence. Another symbol is our national bird: the American Bald Eagle. This powerful symbol was chosen as the center for our national seal almost as long ago as our Independence was claimed, but not officially adopted until more recently.

For the Lakota and Dakota, an Eagle feather carries prayers, honor, and the reminder to live in a good way, known as Wolakota, with respect for the Creator, the people, and all living beings. Throughout South Dakota, you can see how this belief continues to guide families and communities. Every feather reflects a story of connection, responsibility, and the values passed down from one generation to the next. These values are why South Dakotans are stronger and more resilient than people in many other states.

Eagles are naturally strong fliers, but they prefer to soar – with slow but powerful wing beats to expend less energy to go further than other birds. Eagles are larger than almost any other bird they may come in contact with, so they are not averse to attacks.

One of the birds shameless enough to fight an eagle is the crow. They will land directly on an eagle's back and peck and claw to assert their dominance. The eagle could respond with its superior strength and mighty talons, but it doesn't. Instead, it chooses not to waste its energy on the invitation for battle. The eagle rises higher in elevation, completely ignoring the frazzled foe on its back. And the higher the eagle flies, the harder the crow will find it is to breathe. Eventually, the crow falls away due to lack of oxygen. And the eagle is free.

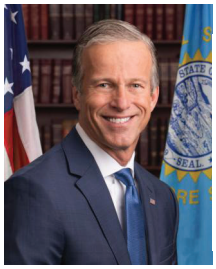
This fact about eagles reminds me that freedom isn't built in short order, and it is not without turns, twists, and even some backtracking. I have had to learn from the eagle not to fight those that are trying to steal my peace or suggesting we turn our free state upside down to fix a problem that can be addressed with a more targeted solution. As Governor, I've made an effort to remain disciplined and focused on what is important.

Our newest revenue reports show that South Dakota's robust economy is driving steady revenue growth, moving our budget in an even stronger direction. We have worked steadily and with discipline to keep our taxes very low and ensure we have the highest return on each dollar invested. We're setting an example for the nation of good stewardship of taxpayer dollars by doing things the right way, the South Dakota way.

Every year, South Dakota receives the highest credit rating and celebrates a balanced budget – and that's not because of one decision or one person. We have risen to be a national example because of a tradition of sound decisions, respectful debate, and core values.

We do a lot of things right in South Dakota, and for as long as I am Governor, we'll stay focused on soaring even higher.

Groton Daily Independent
Sunday, July 19, 2026 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 044 ~ 27 of 78



JOHN THUNE
U.S. SENATOR FOR SOUTH DAKOTA

Working for South Dakota Farmers and Ranchers

Agriculture is a way of life. It's a tough way of life, but it's the lifeblood of South Dakota. As I've talked with farmers and ranchers in our state these last few years, I've heard about the challenges they have been facing; higher input costs, lower commodity prices, natural disasters, and disease, to name a few. So last year, when Republicans passed the Working Families Tax Cuts, we made sure it addressed some of the challenges facing our producers.

That started with strengthening the farm safety net by bolstering crop insurance and reauthorizing commodity programs through 2031. On top of that, higher reference prices for every covered commodity will go into effect this fall, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture is currently rolling out the voluntary base acre update from this bill as well.

Livestock producers also got good news from this bill. It improved the Livestock Indemnity Program, so it covers 75 percent of losses due to weather or disease, plus a supplemental payment for loss of unborn livestock. It also included a provision I authored to trigger payments from the Livestock Forage Disaster Program after four consecutive weeks of drought rather than eight. And it made critical investments in disease prevention and preparedness efforts too.

Farmers and ranchers have also been able to benefit from the tax relief in the Working Families Tax Cuts. The 199A small business deduction has been critical for agriculture operations, and it's now a permanent feature of the tax code thanks to this bill. Then there's 100 percent immediate expensing, which allows farmers and ranchers to deduct the full cost of a new piece of equipment the year they start using it and is also now permanent.

I'm especially proud of our work to protect more family farms and ranches from the death tax. The Working Families Tax Cuts permanently raised the exemption threshold for this unfair tax, saving a lot more families from a big tax bill when they pass their operation onto the next generation – not to mention the costs and headaches of estate planning many undertake because of the death tax.

My Republican colleagues and I remain focused on supporting America's farmers and ranchers. Work continues on a farm bill and additional agriculture aid. As a longtime supporter of renewable fuels, I am committed to advancing legislation for nationwide year-round E15 as well. And we're working on trade and supply chain issues as well as the cost of fertilizer.

The Working Families Tax Cuts delivered a number of wins for South Dakota's producers, but it's not the last word on supporting agriculture in our state. I continue to listen to farmers and ranchers in our state and work to deliver the support they need.

Groton Daily Independent
Sunday, July 19, 2026 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 044 ~ 28 of 78

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PO Box 831313 - Ocala, FL 34483
1-352-216-3025

After All, A Penny Is A Penny

As I was leaving the post office, I hurried across the parking lot to get to my vehicle. As I usually do, I kept my eyes focused on the ground as I walked to my vehicle.

Then, I saw it. There it was in all of its stunning beauty. I stopped for a few moments to look at it, and then bent over and picked it up. It was a penny. That's right, one cent.

I couldn't wait to get home to show it to The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage. She knows how much I love collecting pennies. Of course, I have other coins as well, but it's so great to walk in a parking lot and find a Penny.

Walking in the front door of the house, I shouted, "Honey, I'm home. You'll never guess what I found today."

She shouted back at me, "Let me guess. You found a penny in the parking lot."

Quite stunned, I replied, "How did you know?"

"Well," she said, "I knew you were going to the post office which has a large parking lot and you always find a penny in the parking lot. So I really wasn't guessing I just knew what you found."

I walked into the kitchen where she was and showed her the penny I found at the parking lot. With a great smile on my face, I said, "Isn't this penny beautiful?"

"You do know," she said, "that a penny is only a penny?"

"I know a penny is a penny and I've been collecting them for years."

She wasn't really impressed with my obsession with coins. I had a fairly large coin collection, and I can always add to it, even if it's just a penny.

I tried to explain to her that 100 pennies equal one dollar, and even if it's just a penny, collecting them is about enjoying the small wins and the simple pleasures in life, which I believe everyone can appreciate.

What I find intriguing about pennies in a parking lot is that they don't cost anything. These tiny treasures bring me simple happiness, and I enjoy the feeling of finding something free and unexpected.

The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage is one of those BOGO shoppers, and she's quite proud of how she can really get bargains. When you buy one and then get one free, that means they're half the cost. Anytime you can save money is okay with me.

I spent some time in the afternoon looking at my collection of pennies. I knew all of the parking lots where I found a penny. I've been on vacation and found a penny in a parking lot. I can't tell you how much pleasure I get just looking at these pennies I found. Pennies that cost me nothing, I like.

There was that one time when The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage came home and said, "You'll never guess what I found today. I found a quarter in the Publix parking lot." Then she laughed most hysterically.

She came into my office, where I was working, held up that quarter, and said to me, "See, a quarter is much more than a penny." All she talked about that day was the quarter she found in the parking lot. A quarter equals 25 pennies. Duh!

I knew what she was doing, and I congratulated her on her wonderful findings for the day. I know that quarter will be used in her BOGO shopping. Believe me, I was happy for her.

Once in a while, I'll find a quarter or a nickel or even a dime, which brings me great pleasure, I can assure you.

I know these parking lot findings are really that valuable. But, as I tell The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage, they're all free. And that makes them special to me.

This will never happen, but one day I would love to find a $100 bill in a parking lot. That thrill of surprise would make my day, and I'd be eager to share it with The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage.

Since the government has stopped producing pennies, maybe one day my collection will be worth a lot. Until then, I appreciate how my frugal habits, like saving pennies, reflect a wise approach to life and money.

My father passed his frugal attitude down to me. Because of that, I have a great deal of respect for coins like pennies. I believe it's not how much you make in life, but how much you spend. A friend won a million-dollar lottery. Within two years, he was bankrupt.

Another attitude of my father was that it's not how much you make, but how deep in debt you are. And I've been very careful over the years not to get into debt. I don't need the best of things or the latest; just what I can afford.

One of my favorite Bible verses is 1 Timothy 6:10. "For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."

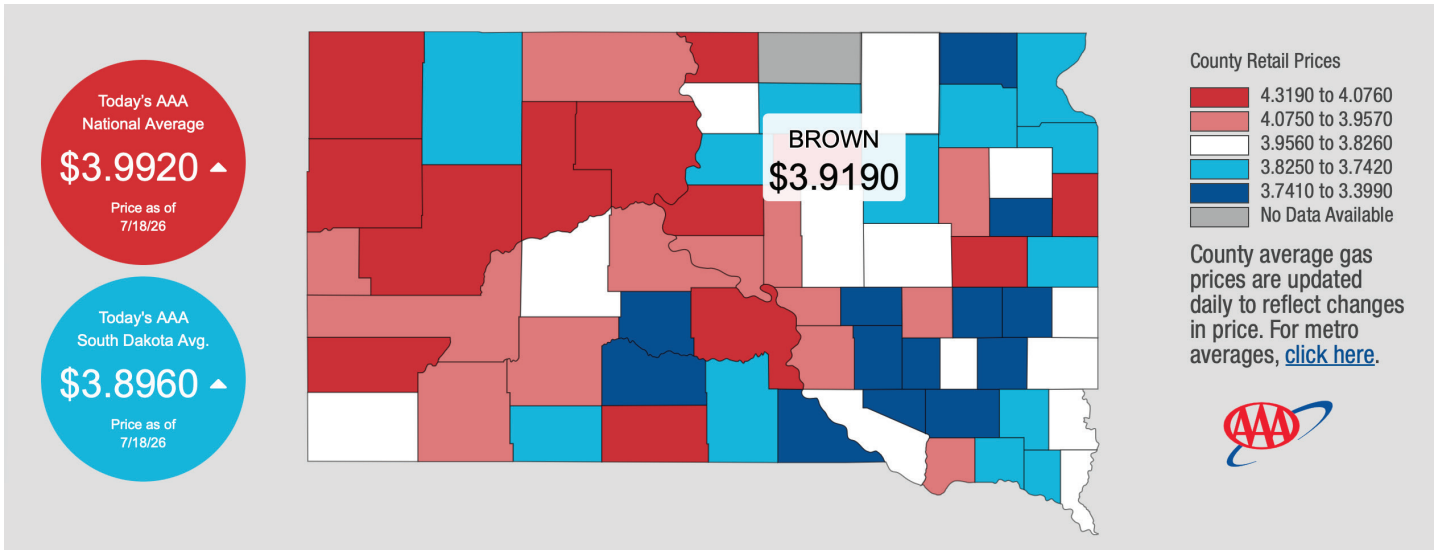
Many people misunderstand this verse and use it out of context. Money is not the problem; the "love of money is the root of all evil." I need money to live, but I must realize that there is more in my life than money.

Groton Daily Independent
Sunday, July 19, 2026 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 044 ~ 30 of 78

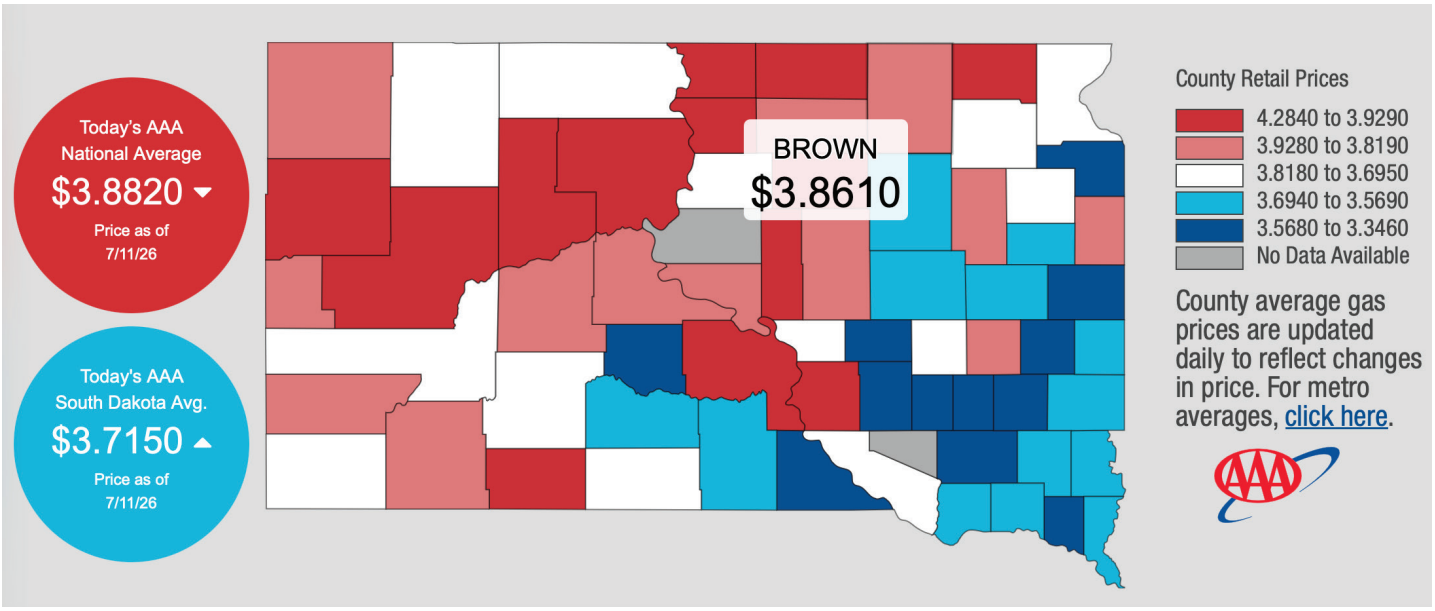
South Dakota Average Gas Prices

	Regular	Mid-Grade	Premium	Diesel
Yesterday Avg.	$3.8810	$4.0580	$4.5510	$4.4980
Week Ago Avg.	$3.7150	$3.9180	$4.4140	$4.3130
Month Ago Avg.	$3.9190	$4.1390	$4.6160	$4.6120
Year Ago Avg.	$3.0060	$3.2010	$3.6570	$3.3590

This Week

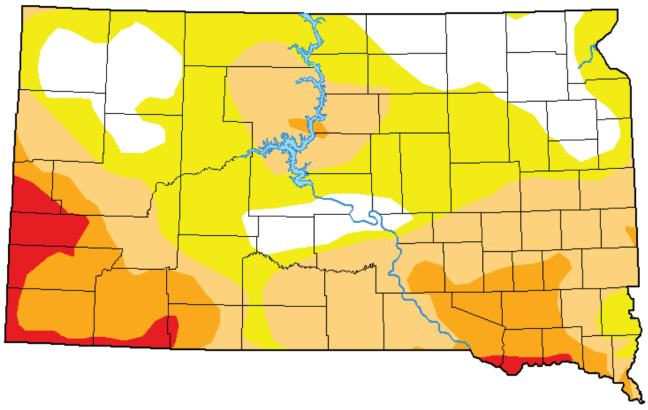


Last Week

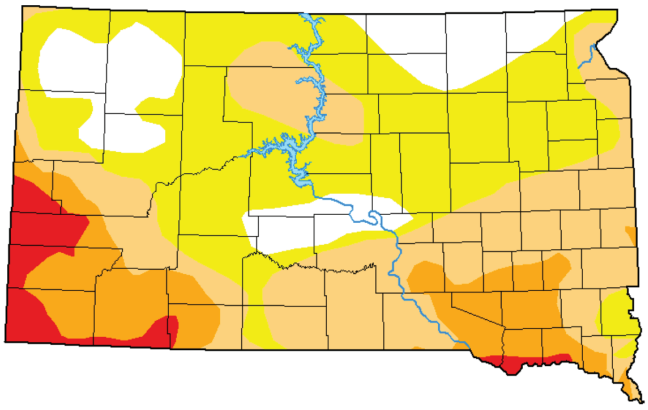


Groton Daily Independent
Sunday, July 19, 2026 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 044 ~ 31 of 78

Drought Monitor



July 14



July 7

Rains exceeding 2 inches fell this week in northeast South Dakota and from parts of south-central Nebraska southeast through parts of northeast Kansas. Spotty heavy rain, locally in the 1.5-2-inch range, fell across eastern Colorado, western Kansas, western Nebraska and southwest South Dakota, as well as a few areas in North Dakota. These rains led to localized improvements in eastern Colorado, western Kansas and western Nebraska, where soil moisture improved and precipitation deficits decreased in severity. Widespread improvement to ongoing drought and abnormal dryness occurred in northeast South Dakota where the heaviest rains fell there. In eastern North Dakota, short-term precipitation deficits combined with reduced soil moisture, resulting in widespread expansion of abnormal dryness with a small area of moderate drought. A few areas in north-central and northwest South Dakota had a few degradations where short- and mid-term precipitation deficits and low soil moisture occurred. Temperatures in the northern portions of the High Plains region, particularly from northwest Nebraska north, were 3-9 degrees above normal this week as a heat wave took hold. The impacts of this heat and locally drier weather will be assessed in the coming weeks.

Groton Daily Independent
Sunday, July 19, 2026 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 044 ~ 32 of 78

SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT
https://southdakotasearchlight.com

More inmates denied early release as more parolees return through crackdown

Statistics on parolees track with trends of tougher enforcement, tighter control across South Dakota

BY JOHN HULT

The number of people granted discretionary parole by the South Dakota Board of Pardons and Paroles has fallen by 17% over the last two years, according to data shared at a board meeting Wednesday.

News of the long-term trend came alongside a more recent spike in returns to prison for those already on parole. It also comes on the heels of efforts by legislators to tighten laws on early release, and by law enforcement to capture more people actively avoiding their parole agents.

Gov. Larry Rhoden initiated a Department of Corrections-led crackdown on parole violations in response to the late April shooting of a police officer in Sioux Falls. A man on parole supervision is charged in that case.

Rhoden promised more and faster returns to prison for parolees accused of misbehavior like drug or alcohol use, as well as for arrests on certain new criminal charges — regardless of whether the person on parole has been found guilty.

Rhoden also announced that the state would hire more parole agents to backfill the positions of five experienced agents who'd make up an "enhanced compliance unit" designed to offer intensive supervision to the parolees most in need of it and check in with parolees on nights and weekends.

Last month, parole board staff screened 176 people for potential parole revocation. That's a slight drop from May, but still represents a notable increase over the number of revocations in the months before Rhoden's announcement.

Rhoden initially announced the state's intention to reform parole in early April. The announcement of the new parole unit and declaration that drug use would result in a certain return to prison came at the end of that month.

There were 111 parolees returned to prison in April and 237 in May. Between July 2025 and March of this year, the monthly tally was never greater than 87.

The appointed board does not supervise parole agents, but rather makes decisions based on their supervisory work, in addition to acting as an advisory panel to the governor on requests for pardons and sentence reductions, known as commutations.

The recently dictated policy shifts have changed both the workload for the part-time board and the way its members talk about parole with the inmates they deal with.

Myron Rau, the board's chairman, said Wednesday that he's begun telling potential parolees that "the world has changed," and that the days of leniency and second chances are over.

"You sign a document that says 'I'm not going to drink,'" Rau said. "If they catch you drinking, you're coming back to prison. All of this stuff is serious now. There's no more of this 'it was just marijuana.'"

Changes coincide with more repeat offenses

The figures for the month of June were presented as a coda to the fiscal year, which ended on June 30 and is used by the Department of Corrections for statistical compilation purposes.

Discretionary parole represents around a third of all parole cases. The majority of people on parole get their through presumptive parole. Under that system, sentences are trimmed automatically for good behavior and successful completion of individualized self-improvement plans that include things like earning a GED or finishing chemical dependency treatment.

Inmates get their road map to release during their first few weeks in prison, and needn't ask the parole board to leave unless they stray from the path.

Inmates who act up or fail to hit the marks are resigned to make a case for early release to two-person parole board panels. If the two members disagree about whether an inmate deserves release, the full nine-member board weighs in.

In fiscal year 2024, the board granted discretionary parole to 57% of the inmates who asked for it. During fiscal year 2026, which ended two weeks ago, 40% of inmates in discretionary release hearings earned the blessing of the board.

"You've also seen recidivism tracking upwards" said Shelli Gust, the board's administrator, using a term for the percentage of released inmates who return to prison within three years. "So that makes sense if you're trying to look at that. That tells me that people aren't doing very well on parole."

The spike in revocation hearings is newer, Gust said, but appears to be durable. The number of revocations for July is on pace to match June, she said, which was slightly down from May, the first month of stricter supervision.

More revocations, more work, jail visits

Gust has noticed another trend emerge, as well, she told board members: revocation hearings involving people who'd been on parole for two years or more.

"It used to be pretty rare to see somebody who had been out more than two years," Gust said, referring to the names on her list of revocation requests, "and I've seen a lot of people in the last two months that have been out for quite a while."

Gust said she hasn't "done a case study" to determine why, but said it's possible that some of the people who'd been out a long time had been violating the terms of their parole and given multiple chances by their parole agents.

Board member Kurt Hall said parole agents "are buckling down a little more than they did in the past." Hall is the sheriff of Faulk County, and said he's noticed that in the day-to-day, parole agents have been easier to find and work with.

"A few years ago, it seemed like the parole agents were just hiding under a rock," Hall said. "You couldn't find one. Now, if you reach out and contact a parole agent, they're very proactive, very helpful."

Agents recommend revocations for people on parole, but only the board can actually send someone back to prison. In practice, the agents and other parole staff in Gust's orbit offer recommendations to board members, who meet in special sessions to consider the arguments of people on parole who believe they should not be sent back.

It's been difficult to keep up with revocations, but Gust said parole staffers have stepped up to meet the swollen demand for their services. Parole staffers have visited jails in Brookings and Ipswich over the past two months to meet with inmates and process violations.

She warned the board to be prepared to see a jump in the number of discretionary parole requests starting around November. Parolees who return to prison often get a chance to make their case for another shot at freedom eight months after their return on a parole violation.

November "is about eight months out from when we had that big bump of people," Gust said.

Long-term trend toward tough enforcement, sanctions

The focus on parole supervision is wrapped up in efforts to improve Corrections Department cooperation with the wider law enforcement community, as well as a push for restrictions on early release at the legislative level.

The day after the parole board meeting, leaders of local, state and federal agencies held a press conference to trumpet the results of a three-day enforcement action spearheaded by the U.S. Marshals Service. The roundup operation, dubbed "Operation Repeat Offender," led to the apprehension of 35 people wanted on arrest warrants or for ducking their parole agents.

State troopers lent their assistance to the three-day federal effort, but U.S. Marshal Dan Satterlee said Thursday that the campaign was distinct from another branded series of saturation patrols called "Operation Prairie Thunder." That operation is led by the South Dakota Highway Patrol, with 14 patrols across 11 cities conducted over the past year to target all manner of criminal activity. Those patrols have collectively led to the apprehension of 21 people wanted for losing touch with their parole officers.

Sioux Falls Police Chief Jon Thum, who'd called for more parolee accountability following the shooting of one of his officers, said parole agents have grown steadily more involved in local policing efforts over the past few years.

An absconder apprehension unit was first formed in late 2022 works with sheriff deputies and local police, and the number of parolees listed as absconders — meaning they've lost touch with their supervising parole agent on purpose — has since plummeted.

Even as that happened, however, concerns about second chances for apprehended parolees simmered for leaders like Thum in Sioux Falls and Pennington County Sheriff Brian Mueller, who formed a multi-agency parole task force for the Rapid City area earlier this year.

Since the end of April, Thum said, the level of coordination and communication between correctional staff and policing agencies has been remarkable.

"The conversations, the collaborations we've seen since April have been, I'll put it this way, very, very positive," Thum said. "I'm very encouraged about the momentum and where we're headed, and I have no reason to believe that's not going to continue."

On the legislative side, lawmakers have passed measures to lengthen prison terms and restrict clemency requests.

A bill known colloquially as "truth in sentencing" became law in 2023, and requires people convicted of certain violent crimes to serve between 85 and 100% of their sentences, cutting off inmates imprisoned for crimes like manslaughter, kidnapping, robbery or burglary eligible for early release through good behavior or program completion.

Another bill passed by the Legislature and signed into law in 2024 requires people serving life sentences to wait four years between requests for commutations, which can shorten a person's sentence and make them eligible for parole.

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

Groton Daily Independent
Sunday, July 19, 2026 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 044 ~ 35 of 78

COMMENTARY

Put down the bratwurst. The Legislature says you're supposed to be fasting.

by Dana Hess

Just when you thought it was time to fire up the grill, along comes Senate Concurrent Resolution 604. If you don't remember, the resolution, approved by both chambers of the South Dakota Legislature, admonishes citizens to use July to "seek the Lord Most High."

According to the resolution, South Dakotans are advised to use this July and every July as a month of fasting and prayer "depriving ourselves of those temporary physical comforts so that we may be awakened to our need and hunger for God, humbling ourselves before Him, prayerfully seeking His face, asking for His forgiveness, forsaking all wickedness, and begging Him to bestow His healing, blessing, grace, and mercy upon us, so that we, our communities, our state, and our nation will be transformed in a people fit to be His own."

Is it just me or does that sound a lot like Lent?

Resolutions reflect the mood of the Legislature. They don't require the governor's signature and don't have the power of law. And, in the case of SCR 604, no one seems to remember the Legislature's pledge to get us all to fast and pray in July.

The resolution was approved by the Senate 22-11 and by the House 42-23. Fasting doesn't really have that many fans. However, the vote totals show that even in deep red, Trump-loving South Dakota, 34 legislators were willing to cast a vote against prayer. Remember, both chambers have only a handful of Democrats. That means 18 Republicans in the House and eight in the Senate cast their vote against prayer. Maybe they didn't remember that this was an election year. Maybe they just couldn't bring themselves to vote for such a silly resolution.

Maybe that split vote made the bill's sponsors realize that they were dangerously close to narrowing the separation of church and state and perhaps running afoul of the First Amendment. Whatever the reason, when July 1 rolled around … crickets.

There were no news releases with a reminder to quit smashing burgers and spend more time in prayer. A cursory search of the internet revealed not a peep about July's need for us to humble ourselves and ask forgiveness. A check of the Facebook pages of the resolution's House and Senate sponsors showed that they didn't even make an effort to remind their friends.

There's got to be a reason why this was important enough to vote on during the legislative session and then forget about in July. The reason is simple. It's all for show.

The bill's 12 sponsors were wanna-be culture warriors, determined to show the rest of the Legislature and their constituents that they are more conservative than the next guy. If it really meant something to them, they would have howled their heads off leading up to July 1. Instead, they left it up to us to just remember to fast and pray. Even the church knows that won't work.

We're not going to just remember when it's time to be good. We're not going to straighten up on spec. That's what Ash Wednesday is for. The Christian church gives us a literal marker that lets us know when it's time to concentrate on prayer, fasting and alms-giving. In the case of this legislative Lent there was … nothing.

The failure of lawmakers to remind us of this important time in July should serve as a symbol for how seriously we should take it when they try to insinuate themselves into our religious lives. In 2019 they managed to mandate that "In God We Trust" be displayed on a prominent wall in our schools.

They weren't as successful in 2025 when an attempt to clear some more space on school walls for the state motto, "Under God the People Rule," failed. Also going down in defeat that year was a measure to display the Ten Commandments in schools as well as teach about the commandments' historical significance.

There's a chance that the next Legislature might not be as willing to go all culture warrior on our religious

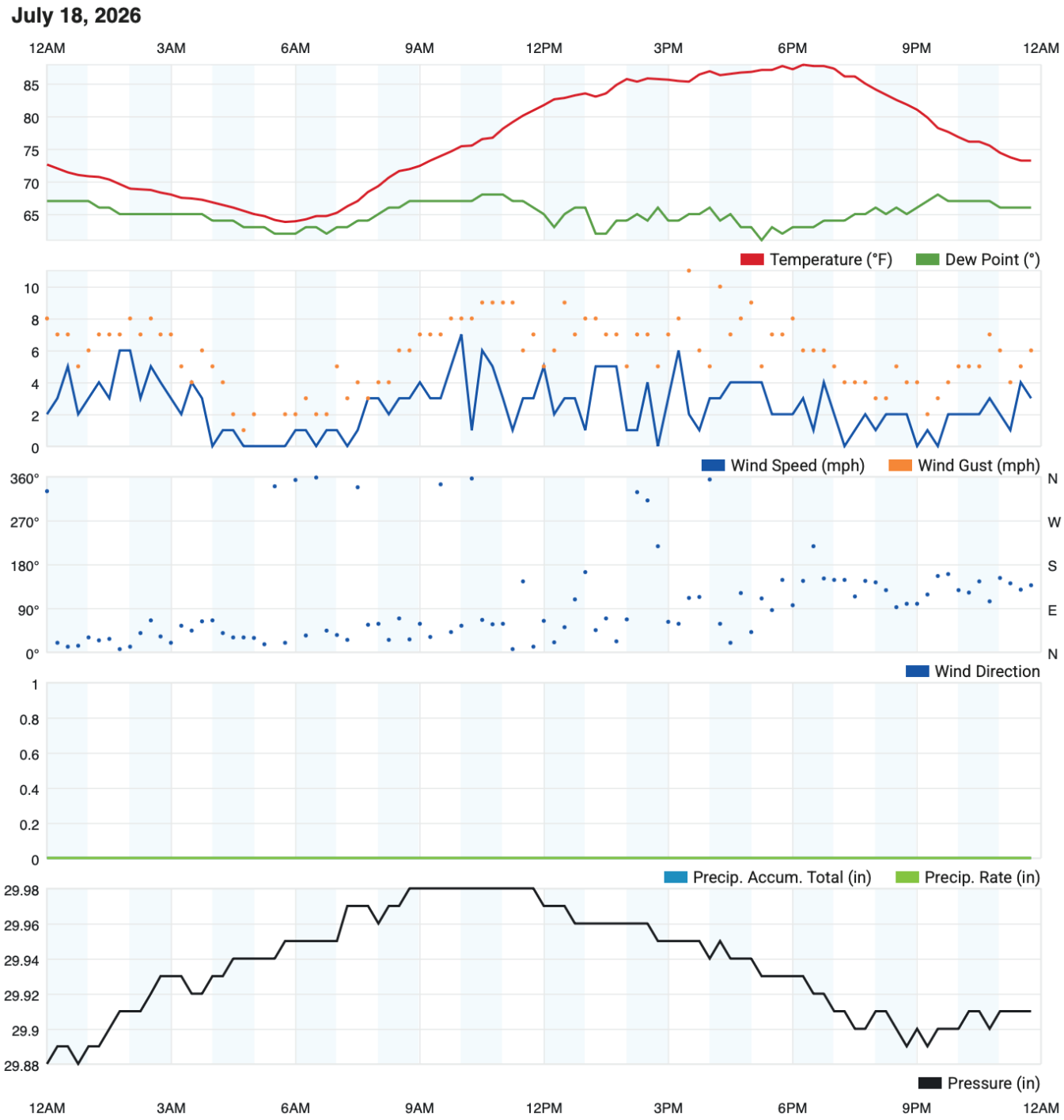
rights. Of the 12 sponsors of SCR 604, two didn't seek reelection, three were defeated in the primary and one is under pressure to drop out of the general election because he's facing a felony indictment for falsifying election documents. Now there's a fellow who needs some prayers.

Here's hoping that the 2027 Legislature is less concerned with religion and more concerned with balancing the budget and finding decent funding increases for schools, healthcare and state employees. They won't need to swing for the fences and try to save my immortal soul. My priest is already hard at work on that.

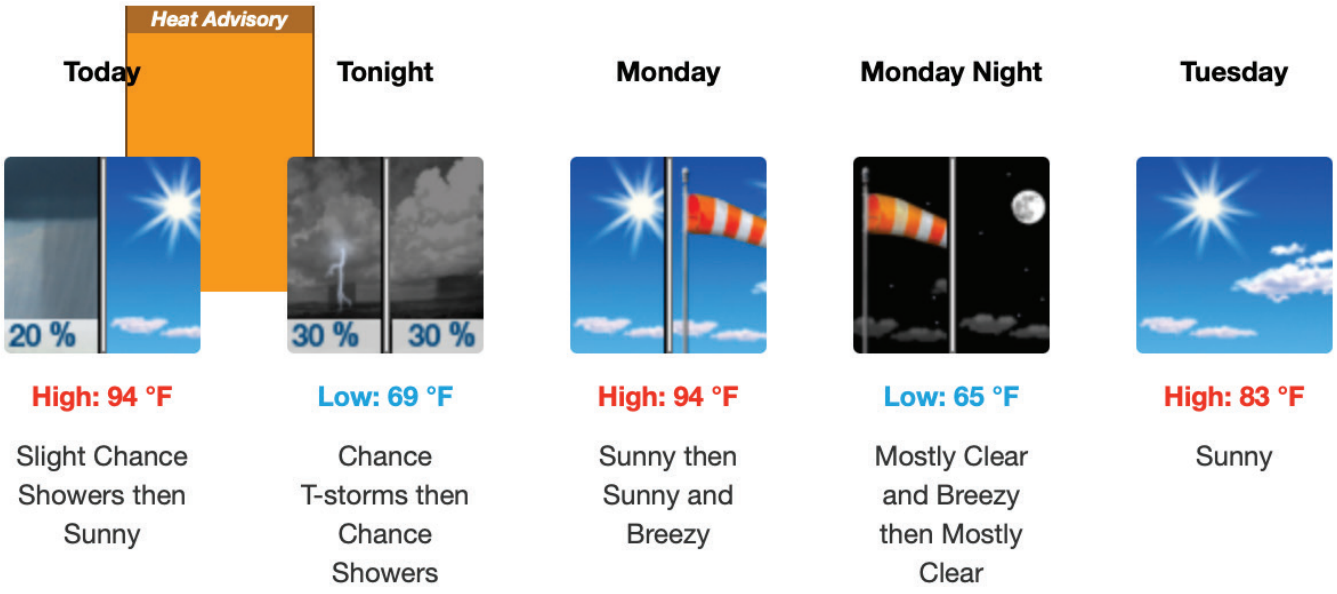
Dana Hess spent more than 25 years in South Dakota journalism, editing newspapers in Redfield, Milbank and Pierre. He's retired and lives in Brookings, working occasionally as a freelance writer.

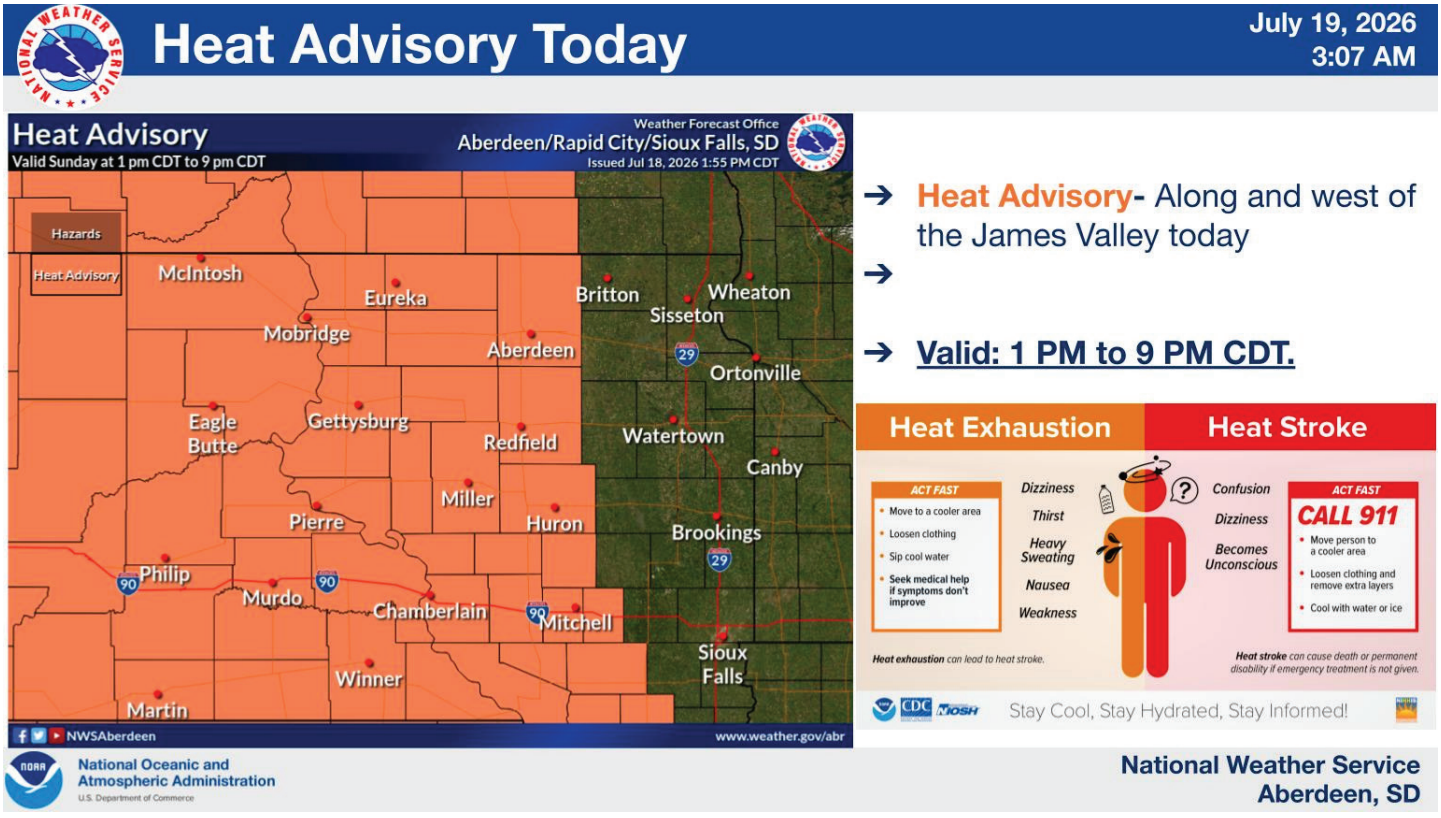
Groton Daily Independent
Sunday, July 19, 2026 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 044 ~ 37 of 78

Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



Groton Daily Independent
Sunday, July 19, 2026 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 044 ~ 38 of 78





Temperatures in the mid 90s to low triple digits combined with dewpoints in the 60s will produce heat indices of 100 to 104 degrees from the James Valley west this afternoon.

Groton Daily Independent
Sunday, July 19, 2026 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 044 ~ 39 of 78

Scattered SEVERE STORMS Tonight

THREAT ASSESSMENT

HIGHEST LOCAL RISK

2

WHAT THIS MEANS:
SCATTERED severe storms *possible*

TIMING
6 PM CDT Sunday through 4 AM CDT Monday

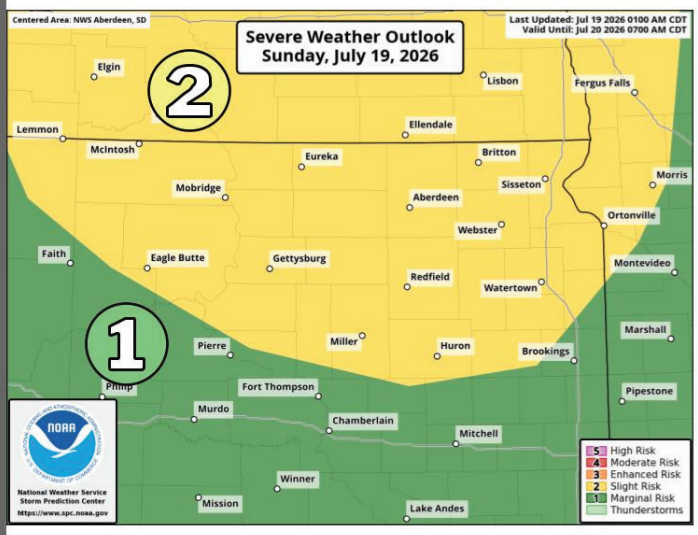
PRIMARY THREATS

LARGE HAIL up to 1 inch

DAMAGING WIND of 65-75 mph

SECONDARY THREATS

BRIEF HEAVY RAIN



What To Expect

- Storms move into central SD during the evening (40-60% chance) then spread east through the overnight into Monday morning, with some becoming severe

What To Do?

- **Stay Weather Aware!**
- Be ready to take shelter indoors when storms approach
- Have multiple ways to receive warnings

MULTIPLE WAYS TO RECEIVE WARNINGS

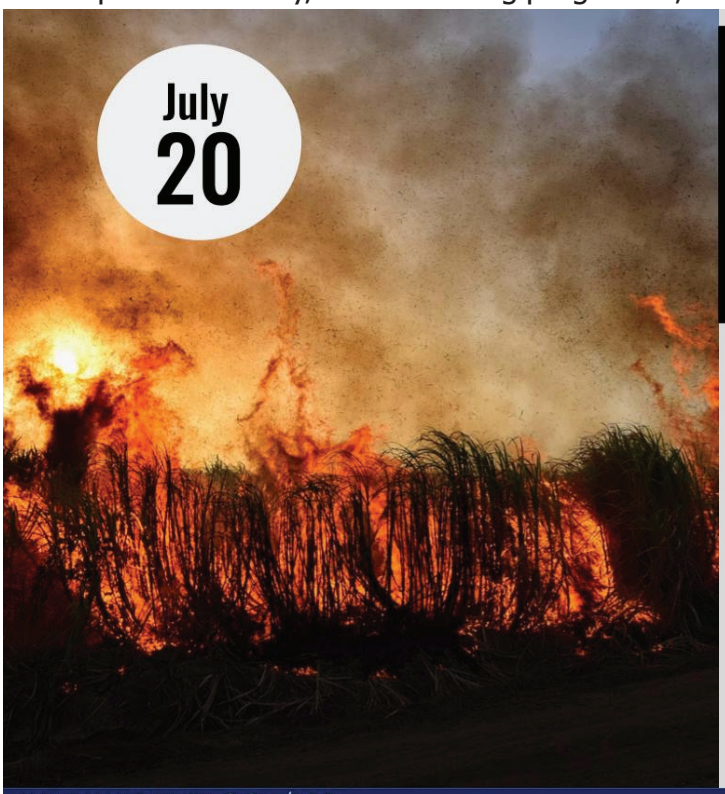
OUTDOOR PLANS? STAY WEATHER AWARE

SEVERE THUNDERSTORM RISK

NONE 1 2 3 4 5 HIGH

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

There is a slight risk (level 2 of 5) for most of the forecast area north of I-90 to see severe thunderstorms. Storms will move into central SD this evening and spread east overnight. While large hail and strong winds will be possible initially, as the evening progresses, the main threat becomes strong winds of 65 to 75 mph.



Elevated FIRE DANGER MONDAY - Central SD

Gusty Northwesterly Winds
Warm Temperatures
Dry Conditions
Abundant Dry Grasses/Brush

WHAT TO AVOID

- AVOID BRUSH/GRASS BURNING
- USE EXTRA CAUTION WITH HEAVY EQUIPMENT
- DO NOT CARELESSLY DISCARD CIGARETTES

WWW.WEATHER.GOV/ABR

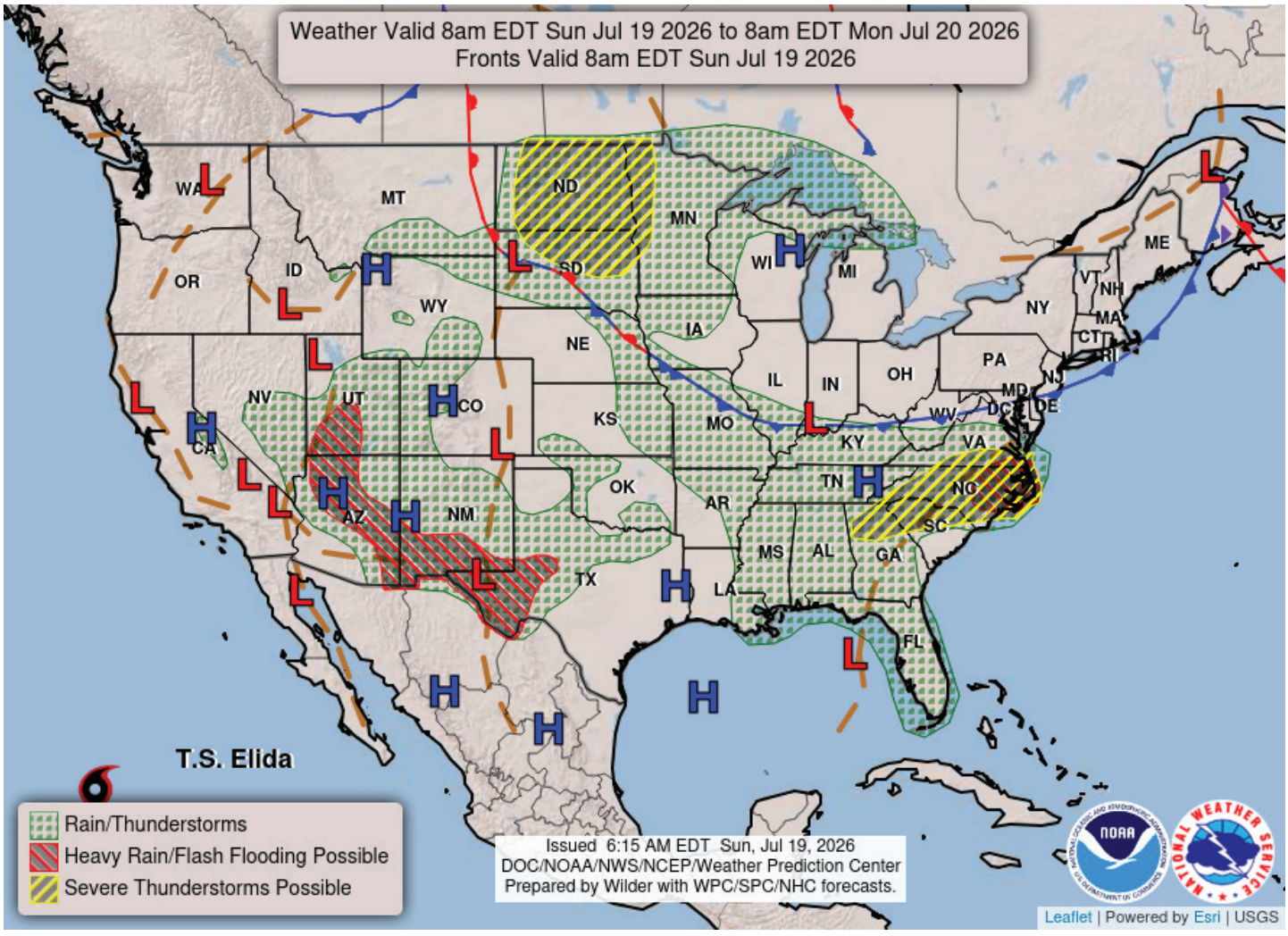
Groton Daily Independent
Sunday, July 19, 2026 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 044 ~ 40 of 78

Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 88 °F at 6:23 PM
Low Temp: 64 °F at 5:43 AM
Wind: 11 mph at 3:26 PM
Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 106 in 1932
Record Low: 42 in 1900
Average High: 85
Average Low: 60
Average Precip in July.: 2.09
Precip to date in July.: 4.72
Average Precip to date: 13.10
Precip Year to Date: 14.19
Sunset Tonight: 9:14 pm
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:03 am



Groton Daily Independent
Sunday, July 19, 2026 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 044 ~ 41 of 78

Today in Weather History

July 19, 1933: An F2 tornado moved ESE from west of Tulare to 3 miles ENE of Hitchcock. About ten farms had damage, and several barns were destroyed.

July 19, 2010: Severe storms produced a wide swath of hail and high winds from northern Butte County, through southern Meade, eastern Pennington, Jackson, and Bennett Counties. Millions of dollars in crop damage was reported, along with some damage to homes and automobiles.

1886: The 1886 Atlanta Hurricane season was a very active year with ten hurricanes, seven of which struck the United States. During the evening hours of July 18th, a category 1 storm made landfall near Homosassa Springs, Florida. Damage was slight as the area was thinly inhabited. The hurricane weakened to tropical storm status south of Gainsville and emerged on the eastern side of Florida, south of Jacksonville during the morning hours of the 19th. This was the fourth hurricane to make landfall in the United States.

1886 — A hurricane from the Gulf of Mexico crossed Florida causing great damage from Cedar Keys to Jacksonville. (David Ludlum)

1960 — Cow Creek and Greenland Ranch in Death Valley, CA, reported morning lows of 102 degrees. The afternoon high at Greenland Ranch was 124 degrees, and the high at Cow Creek that afternoon was 126 degrees. The coolest low for the entire month for both locations was 82 degrees. (The Weather Channel)

1974 — A severe thunderstorm with winds to 80 mph and up to two inches of rain washed out four to five foot deep sections of roadway in Lake Havasu City, AZ. Three persons in a station wagon died as it was carried 3000 feet down a wash by a ten foot wall of water. (The Weather Channel)

1977 — Thunderstorms produced torrential rains over parts of southwestern Pennsylvania. Some places receive more than twelve inches in a seven hour period. The heavy rains cause flash flooding along streams resulting in widespread severe damage. The cloudburst floods Johnstown with up to ten feet of water resulting in 76 deaths, countless injuries, and 424 million dollars damage. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1987 — Fifteen cities in the western and the southeastern U.S. reported record low temperatures for the date, including Winnemucca, NV, with a reading of 33 degrees. Flagstaff AZ reported a record low of 34 degrees. Afternoon and evening thunderstorms produced severe weather in New York State and New Jersey. High winds and hail two inches in diameter injured two persons and caused considerable damage to crops in the Pine Island area of central New York State. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 — Thunderstorms in Nebraska produced more than five inches of rain at Red Cloud, including two inches in fifteen minutes. Torrid temperatures continued over California, with record highs of 115 degrees at Red Bluff and 116 degrees at Redding. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 — Early morning thunderstorms in the Lower Mississippi Valley produced 5.50 inches of rain south of Alexander, AR, in just ninety minutes, and flash flooding which resulted claimed the life of one woman. Thunderstorms in Indiana produced 4.95 inches of rain in twelve hours east of Muncie. Eight cities in the southwestern U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date, including Las Vegas, NV, with a reading of 115 degrees, and Phoenix, AZ, with a high of 116 degrees. The low that night at Phoenix of 93 degrees was the warmest of record for that location. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2005 — A severe heat wave gripped the region during early to mid-July. Las Vegas, NV tied their all-time record high temperature of 117 degrees, equalling the old record set on July 24, 1942.

2006 — The first of two severe thunderstorms hits the St. Louis area, causing the largest power outage in the city's history with over 570,000 people losing electricity.

2006: A derecho impacted a sellout crowd of almost 44,000 St. Louis Cardinals fans, packed into the new Busch Stadium. Winds of about 80 mph whirled around the St. Louis area, sending the fans running for shelter. The winds knocked out power and broke windows out of the press box. Nearly two minutes after the winds began at 100 mph, they stopped, and it started to rain. In all, about 30 people were injured at the stadium.

Groton Daily Independent
Sunday, July 19, 2026 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 044 ~ 42 of 78

InTouch Ministries

Daily Devotion

Partners in Ministry

As members of the body of Christ, we all share the mission to serve and spread the gospel.

Acts 20:1-6: 1 After the uproar had ceased, Paul sent for the disciples, and when he had exhorted them and taken his leave of them, he left to go to Macedonia.
2 When he had gone through those districts and had given them much exhortation, he came to Greece.
3 And there he spent three months, and when a plot was formed against him by the Jews as he was about to set sail for Syria, he decided to return through Macedonia.
4 And he was accompanied by Sopater of Berea, the son of Pyrrhus, and by Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians, and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia.
5 But these had gone on ahead and were waiting for us at Troas.
6 We sailed from Philippi after the days of Unleavened Bread, and came to them at Troas within five days; and there we stayed seven days.

No one can dispute that the apostle Paul played a foundational role in the establishment of the early church—but Paul rarely worked alone.

Throughout the book of Acts and the Epistles, we see glimpses of people who partnered with Paul in ministry. In today's reading, we meet a missionary team—including Luke—who accompanied Paul through Macedonia. Although we know little about most of them, each played an important part in the formation of the church.

In 1 Corinthians 12:14-27, Paul likens the church to a body, whose health depends on the functioning of all its parts. The Holy Spirit gives each believer a special ability for service within the church. Although people like Paul, who have a conspicuous role, may seem more necessary, every believer is just as essential.

God values our service not by its visibility but by the heart behind it. He's interested in our obedience, attitude, and motive for serving Him. Whether our role is noticed by many or by few, we can trust that the Lord sees our faithfulness. He promises to reward our service and invites us to find our satisfaction in knowing we're contributing to His eternal purposes—not in whether or not others recognize our contribution.

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

Groton Daily Independent
Sunday, July 19, 2026 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 044 ~ 43 of 78

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Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

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Groton Daily Independent
Sunday, July 19, 2026 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 044 ~ 44 of 78

WINNING NUMBERS

MILLIONAIRE FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:
07.18.26

18 23 28 32 49 **3**

TOP PRIZE:
$1,000,000/year

NEXT DRAW: 14 Hrs 54 Mins 20 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:
07.17.26

22 34 45 48 55 **14**

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
$707,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

PREVIOUS RESULTS

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:
07.18.26

13 17 22 28 40 **3**

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
$2,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

PREVIOUS RESULTS

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:
07.18.26

1 13 27 28 29

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
$20,000

NEXT DRAW:

PREVIOUS RESULTS

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:
07.18.26

5 11 25 26 64 **11**

TOP PRIZE:
$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

PREVIOUS RESULTS

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:
07.18.26

9 14 44 50 56 **3**

Power Play: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:
$544,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

PREVIOUS RESULTS

Groton Daily Independent
Sunday, July 19, 2026 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 044 ~ 45 of 78

News from the AP Associated Press

Russian missile attack on Kyiv kills 1 and exposes holes in air defenses

By The Associated Press undefined

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russia attacked Kyiv overnight with ballistic missiles and other weapons, killing one and wounding 16 people, local authorities said Sunday, again highlighting Ukraine's shortage of U.S.-made Patriot air defense systems.

Moscow has in recent weeks stepped up its use of ballistic missiles as it seeks to choke off Ukrainian strikes on oil facilities deep inside Russia that have caused critical fuel shortages affecting both the military and the civilian population.

U.S. President Donald Trump has said he is prepared to grant Ukraine licenses to produce Patriots, the most effective means of intercepting Russian ballistic missiles, potentially bolstering Kyiv's defenses. However, the details and timeline remain unclear, and full production could take years.

The latest attack on Kyiv began at around 1:30 a.m. and continued for several hours, with explosions echoing across the city.

Russia launched 41 missiles and 125 drones across Ukraine overnight, according to the Ukrainian air force. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said most of the missiles had targeted the capital.

Ballistic missile strikes are becoming more frequent

The strikes on Kyiv sparked fires in five districts, damaging residential buildings, office and industrial sites, a dormitory and vehicles, according to Ukraine's State Emergency Service.

Viktoria Shejko, 32, was taking shelter in the corridor of her apartment block with her seven children and husband when they heard the loud explosions.

"When the alarm started, we checked that there were ballistics, then went into the corridor. Then it started exploding one missile after another," she said.

The strain of constant bombardment is "very difficult psychologically," she said. "It used to be once a week or even more rarely, but now if not every day, then every other day."

Rescuers pulled four people from a burning home in the Sviatoshynskyi district, while in the Shevchenkivskyi district, they rushed to save residents from a three-story building on fire. One person was found dead. Firefighters also responded to blazes in the Solomyanskyi, Desnianskyi and Dnipro districts.

Russia's Defense Ministry claimed the attack on Kyiv targeted sites linked to the Ukrainian military — including plants producing Flamingo drones and parts for Neptune guided missiles, as well as a postal terminal used for storing dual-use goods and assembling drones, robotic systems and electronic warfare equipment.

Oil tankers hit at key terminal off Russia's coast

Separately, a strike on two oil tankers at the Caspian Pipeline Consortium (CPC) terminal off Russia's Black Sea halted oil loadings at the site, the CPC said Sunday.

The attack on the ASIA and NISSOS tankers in the port of Novorossiysk sparked a fire aboard the ASIA, which was extinguished. The company did not say who was responsible for the attack. It added there were no casualties or oil spills, and the tankers — sailing under the flags of Liberia and the Marshall respectively — remained afloat.

Both Russia and Ukraine have sharply ramped up strikes on ships in the Black and Azov seas over the past week. Ukraine says it targets Russia's so-called shadow fleet, which ships oil in violation of international sanctions over the Kremlin's invasion of its neighbor.

Kyiv has for months been targeting Russia's oil industry, which it says both directly fuels Moscow's war effort and funds it through export revenues, triggering acute fuel shortages in a country that is one of the world's top oil producers.

The CPC is a 940-mile (1,510-kilometer) oil pipeline connecting Kazakhstan's Caspian Sea oil deposits

with Novorossiysk, where the oil is loaded and shipped by tanker to world markets. The pipeline accounts for about 80% of oil-rich Kazakhstan's crude exports, with the Russian government and Russian state oil firms holding a combined 31% stake in the enterprise.

Russia's energy sector under attack

Separately, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy announced on Sunday that Ukrainian units struck more energy infrastructure in Russian territory.

He said units of Ukraine's Security Service agency struck three oil depots in the Stavropol region, while a separate army unit of the army hit another fuel-related facility in the same region. Three Russian tankers were also struck in the Black Sea, he said.

Stavropol Gov. Vladimir Vladimirov earlier referenced Ukrainian drone attacks sparking fires at "industrial facilities" in two locations within the region. He did not specify what the facilities were, but said nobody was hurt.

Russian news outlet Astra on Sunday claimed that three oil depots may be burning in Stavropol, based on its analysis of photos and videos sent in by locals after the attack.

Russian air defense systems shot down 140 Ukrainian drones over eight Russian regions, annexed Crimea, and the Black and Azov seas overnight into Sunday, Russia's defense ministry reported. It did not say how many were launched or reached their targets.

In Russia's Kursk region near the Ukrainian border, Ukrainian drones struck four apartment buildings, setting off a fire and injuring one person, according to local Gov. Alexander Khinshtein.

Takeaways from the AP-NORC poll of more than 1,000 Jewish Americans

By LINLEY SANDERS Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Associated Press surveyed more than 1,000 Jewish adults in the U.S. to better understand their views on Israel's military actions in Gaza, their opinions of the political parties and their experiences with prejudice in the United States.

The survey of 1,022 Jewish adults — including people who identify as Jewish by religion and religiously unaffiliated people who identify as Jewish through culture, ethnicity or family background — offers a rare detailed accounting of a key demographic that sits at the very center of some of the nation's most divisive political debates.

Here are five takeaways from the AP-NORC survey:

Jewish adults have complicated views about Israel and the war in Gaza

Among Jews with a religious affiliation, views on Israel's recent military actions are far from uniform or uncritical.

About 7 in 10 Jewish adults overall identify as Jewish when asked about their religious affiliation. The rest, about 3 in 10 Jewish adults, say they are atheists, agnostics, or have no particular religious affiliation, but still identify as Jewish in other ways.

While about 8 in 10 of those with a religious affiliation say Israel's immediate military response to Hamas' attack on October 7 was "justified," only about half say Israel's ongoing military operations in Gaza are justified. Among Jewish adults without a religious affiliation, only about half saw Israel's immediate response as justifiable. Now, only about 2 in 10 say the ongoing military operations are acceptable.

About one-quarter of Jewish adults with a religious association believe Israel has committed genocide against Palestinians in Gaza, an accusation that's been leveled by some major human rights organizations and a team of independent experts commissioned by the United Nations. That accusation has been vehemently denied by Israel and the U.S. government. Roughly 4 in 10 Jewish adults without a religious affiliation say Israel has committed genocide.

Many Jewish adults feel unsafe in the United States

About 6 in 10 Jewish adults say prejudice against Jewish people is an "extremely" or "very" serious problem in the United States today.

About one-third of Jewish adults in the survey say they feel "very" or "somewhat" safe as a Jewish person in the U.S. today, while about one-third feel "very" or "somewhat" unsafe. The remaining roughly 3 in 10 say they feel neither safe nor unsafe.

A significant share of Jewish adults, about 3 in 10, say they or someone in their household has experienced physical assault, verbal abuse, online harassment or damaged property because of their Jewish background over the last year, according to the survey.

The survey points to how Jewish adults' attitudes toward their own personal safety have changed over a relatively short period as more Americans became critical of the United States' close alliance with Israel and the war in Gaza. The poll found that Jewish adults who feel a close emotional tie to Israel are particularly likely to feel unsafe in the country today.

Most American Jews don't feel politicians are supporting Jewish people

Few Jewish adults believe that President Donald Trump — or the Democratic or Republican parties — are doing a good job supporting Jewish people in the U.S.

Only about 2 in 10 Jewish adults say Trump supports Jewish people in this country "extremely" or "very" well. That's similar to the slight share who find the Republican Party and the Democratic Party highly supportive, but Jewish adults are more likely to say the Democratic Party is at least "somewhat" supportive.

Americans overall are more likely than Jewish adults to see Trump as "extremely" or "very" supportive of Jewish people in the United States. About 3 in 10 U.S. adults say Trump is highly supportive of Jewish people, compared to about 2 in 10 Jewish adults.

The poll also found most Jewish adults have negative views of Trump. About 7 in 10 Jewish adults have a "very" or "somewhat" unfavorable opinion of Trump, compared to about 3 in 10 who have a favorable view.

Jewish adults are divided over whether protesting Israel is a form of antisemitism

Protests around events conducted in support of Israel became more common following the backlash over Israel's military action in Gaza.

The war in Gaza began with Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, attack on Israel that killed roughly 1,200 people, most of them civilians. Israel responded with a yearslong counterattack that killed more than 73,000 people, according to the Gaza Health Ministry, which is part of the territory's Hamas-run government. Its casualty figures are viewed as generally reliable by U.N. agencies and international organizations but don't distinguish between civilians and militants.

The poll found that about half of Jewish adults say protesting an event that is supportive of Israel is not a form of antisemitism, but roughly 4 in 10 say it is. About 1 in 10 are uncertain.

Jewish adults are more unified in deeming some actions as definitively antisemitic. The overwhelming majority say vandalizing synagogues or Jewish-owned businesses because of Israel's actions is antisemitism. The same goes for denying the reality or scope of the Holocaust, putting responsibility for Israel's actions on Jewish people in the United States or saying Israel shouldn't exist as a Jewish state.

Support for Israel is less of a priority for younger Jewish adults

Support for Israel is a key component of the religious identity of many older Jewish adults in the United States, but younger Jewish adults appear less likely to prioritize it.

About half of older religious Jewish adults — those 45 and older — say that supporting Israel is "extremely" or "very" important for their Jewish identity. By contrast, only about 4 in 10 younger religious Jewish adults emphasize support for Israel.

Younger Jewish adults are more likely to prioritize other forms of connection, like celebrating Jewish holidays. About 7 in 10 Jewish adults under 45 say celebrating Jewish holidays is at least "very" important to their Jewish identity, compared to about half of older Jewish adults.

How to keep the air inside your home clean during wildfires

By DEVI SHASTRI AP Health Writer

MILWAUKEE (AP) — The eerie glow of an orange sun through thick wildfire smoke might be unnerving, but the biggest risk from the haze is something much harder to see.

Tiny particles in the air can cause a range of short-term and chronic health issues, experts say.

Wildfire smoke can settle over cities for days — like the recent blanket over parts of the U.S. from burning fires in Canada, which has created hazardous air for millions of people across multiple states.

Health officials advise people to stay indoors — and to take steps to keep the air in your home clean.

How to safely run your AC

If you have central air conditioning, it should clean the air in your home.

Make sure filters are replaced on schedule and are of the highest level of filtration your system can handle. Filters rated MERV 13 or higher are ideal. Set the air to recirculate and close any vents that pull air from outside if you can. The University of Oregon's Center for Wildfire Smoke Research and Practice recommends running the system's fan through the entire smoke event, not just when cooling.

If you buy a portable air filter, look for a HEPA air filter or one that says it traps small particles of pollution. Ensure it does not generate ozone, another harmful air pollutant.

If you can only afford one portable air filter, use it to create a "clean room" in your house where you can spend most of your time.

"The basic message is that something is better than nothing," said Amy Kalkbrenner, an environmental epidemiologist at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

The science behind DIY air filters

There's good evidence that DIY filters made by duct-taping furnace air filters to a box fan work.

They're simple, relatively affordable and scientists at the Environmental Protection Agency have found they are just as good at removing fine particles of pollution from the air as a small commercial air purifier.

"The good news is they really work," said Kalkbrenner.

All you need to have to make one is: four 20-by-20-inch (50.8-by-50.8-centimeters) furnace air filters rated MERV 13 or higher, a box fan, cardboard and duct tape. The EPA's website shows how you can modify the design to only use one or two filters. The fan should blow out, and the arrows on the filters should point in. Make sure everything is taped up air-tight.

Using your window AC and cooling your air safely

Many window air conditioners, mini-split heat exchangers and portable air conditioners don't have the filters needed to remove fine pollution particles. But heat can also be dangerous.

"When smoke and heat occur together, the impacts on your health are even greater than when they occur by themselves," said Jess Downey, a researcher at the University of Oregon's Center for Wildfire Smoke Research and Practice

Downey said the ideal scenario is running the AC unit and using an air purifier or a DIY box fan filter to clean the air. Make sure your AC is well-sealed in your window frame, she added.

Make sure the window units are set to recirculate air. Portable units with a single hose should be used sparingly, according to the University of Oregon wildfire smoke center.

If you don't have AC, any reprieve from hot, smoky air is important. Head to the library, shopping mall or other space with clean, cool air.

Ways to seal up a home to keep hazardous air out

Whether it's a towel, some tape, or something else — plug areas where air could enter from outside.

"Being from Chicago, I think you can liken it to trying to keep the cold air out," said Dr. Khalilah Gates, a lung doctor with Northwestern Medicine. "Any areas in which air can come in, consider sealing up those areas to reduce the amount that's coming into the home."

When smoke levels are high, experts recommend avoiding anything that burns — candles, fireplaces, even gas stoves — so plan ahead with some meal prep.

How wildfire smoke affects the body

Exposure to wildfire smoke can lead to shortness of breath, chest tightness, headaches, and a burning sensation in the nose and eyes.

"When you ever start to feel those symptoms and they're not severe, it's important to acknowledge, 'Oh, my body is responding to this. I need to move away from it. I need to move inside,'" Gates said.

If you're wheezing, can't catch your breath or are in distress, get to the emergency room immediately, she said.

What to know about the Tate brothers, social media influencers facing rape and trafficking charges

By SYLVIA HUI Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Influencer brothers Andrew and Tristan Tate were arrested Saturday in Miami after U.K. prosecutors said they brought further rape and sex trafficking charges against them.

Britain's Crown Prosecution Service said the new charges relate to four further victims and were brought after authorities received evidence from Bedfordshire Police in southeastern England. The charges include rape, assault, trafficking and offenses relating to "indecent images of a child and extreme pornography."

The charges announced Saturday, which bring the total number of alleged victims in the U.K. to seven, are the latest in a long-running international legal saga involving the brothers that has spanned the U.S., Britain and Romania. The brothers have denied wrongdoing.

Here are some things to know about the Tate brothers:

Who the Tate Brothers are

Andrew Tate, 39, and Tristan Tate, 38, are dual U.S.-British citizens known for their social media empire promoting wealth, male dominance and misogyny.

Andrew Tate is a former professional kickboxer and self-described misogynist who has amassed more than 10 million followers, most of them boys and young men, on X. He has been banned from platforms like YouTube, TikTok and Instagram for violating hate speech guidelines.

He also runs an online academy where he says he teaches young men how to get rich and attract women. Tristan Tate is also a former kickboxer.

The brothers are avid supporters of U.S. President Donald Trump.

What the Tates are charged with

Andrew Tate and his brother have faced multiple charges in the U.K. and Romania, where they moved to in 2016.

British prosecutors said the new charges relate to alleged offenses that took place between 2010 and 2017. They said Andrew Tate was charged with seven further counts of rape, three counts of arranging or facilitating trafficking for sexual exploitation, three counts of assault and 19 charges for offenses relating to indecent images of a child and extreme pornography.

Tristan Tate was charged with one count of sexual assault, two counts of rape and three counts of arranging or facilitating sex trafficking.

The Crown Prosecution Service said in a statement it "has requested the extradition of the Tates from the U.S. They have been arrested and await extradition proceedings to the U.K."

The Tates already face previous charges of rape, bodily harm, human trafficking and controlling prostitution for gain relating to three other alleged victims in the U.K. between 2012 and 2015.

In June, a U.K. High Court judge threw out a legal bid by the Tates to be told the names of their accusers.

In Romania, the siblings were arrested in late 2022 along with two Romanian women. The four were accused of participating in criminal schemes to lure women for sexual exploitation. They denied those allegations and the Romanian case hasn't gone forward because of legal and procedural problems.

The case hasn't been closed, and there is also a separate legal case against the brothers in Romania.

Andrew Tate has repeatedly claimed that prosecutors in Romania have no evidence against him and that there is a political conspiracy to silence him.

Why the Tates were in the U.S.

British police previously sought the Tates' extradition to the U.K. once their legal proceedings in Romania concluded.

But in February 2025 they were allowed to leave Romania after authorities lifted travel restrictions, and

they flew to Florida on a private jet.

Romania's foreign minister said at the time that a U.S. official in the Trump administration had expressed interest in the brothers' legal case in Romania.

Trump said he knew "nothing about" the case when asked if his administration pressured the Romania government to release the Tates.

Rescuers in Indonesia find mother and son survivors from sunken passenger boat

By MOHAMMAD TAUFAN and EDNA TARIGAN Associated Press

PALU, Indonesia (AP) — Rescuers in eastern Indonesia found two more survivors, a mother and son, on Sunday from a passenger boat that sank earlier in the week and were searching for 18 others still missing.

The 46-year-old woman and her 24-year-old son were found stranded on Balaloho Island, one of the small inhabited islands in Selayar, , by fishermen, officials said.

More than 200 rescuers aboard vessels were joined by Indonesian troops, police, fishermen and residents, said Andi Sultan, head of emergency response in Makassar.

"Rescue teams also faced extremely harsh weather conditions, including waves as high as 2–3 meters and strong winds," Sultan said.

Search and rescue team retrieved five survivors on Saturday evening, including a 7-year-old girl, who were clinging to a fish trap.

At least one person was confirmed dead.

The KM Nurul Salsa, which was carrying 78 passengers and crew, experienced engine failure and sank Wednesday about 43 nautical miles (79 kilometers) from the port in the Selayar Islands, in South Sulawesi Province.

Passenger boats are a common form of transportation in Indonesia, an archipelago with more than 17,000 islands. Lax safety standards and problems with overcrowding frequently result in accidents.

The World Cup final is here, with Argentina taking on Spain in soccer's showdown

By TIM REYNOLDS AP Sports Writer

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. (AP) — Lionel Messi and Argentina on one side. Lamine Yamal and Spain on the other.

The World Cup final is finally here.

Kickoff is at 3 p.m. EDT at MetLife Stadium. Argentina is seeking its fourth title, Spain its second — and could become the first nation to simultaneously hold the World Cup crowns in both men's and women's soccer.

It's the 104th match of the biggest World Cup ever, a 48-team event that played out over the U.S., Canada and Mexico. Because there were more matches than any previous World Cup, it was no surprise that there were more goals than all other editions — 307 and counting entering Sunday.

If Argentina and Spain combine for at least two goals in the final, this World Cup will also have the highest average number of goals per game since the 1956 event saw 3.6 per contest. (If the teams score fewer than two Sunday, it'll still be the highest average per game since 1970's World Cup saw 2.97 goals per game.)

The spectacle will not be limited to simply soccer.

Post Malone will headline the closing ceremony, which starts 90 minutes before the final. The halftime show — a first for FIFA — has Justin Bieber, Madonna, Shakira and BTS as fellow headliners, along with Burna Boy, Venezuelan conductor Gustavo Dudamel, the PS 22 Chorus featuring Coldplay, and even characters from Sesame Street and the Muppets.

President Donald Trump is expected to attend as well, with plans calling for him to be part of the trophy

presentation at the conclusion of the match.

Argentina is wearing its light blue and white vertically striped jerseys for the match, while Spain is wearing predominantly red with navy sleeves. The officiating crew is from Slovenia — Slavko Vinčić is the referee, with Tomaž Klančnik and Andraž Kovačič his assistant referees.

If history is any indication, expect some goals in the World Cup final between Argentina and Spain

By TIM REYNOLDS AP Sports Writer

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. (AP) — Expect some goals in the World Cup final. At least, that's what history says.

In the 22 previous World Cup men's finals (which would include the 1950 match between Uruguay and Brazil that technically wasn't a final, but decided who won the World Cup), the winning team has averaged 2.6 goals in the title matchup. The losing team has averaged 1.1 goals.

The two most recent World Cup finals have been offensive slugfests, with a combined 12 goals. France beat Croatia 4-2 in 2018, while Argentina and France tied 3-3 in 2022 (before Argentina prevailed in a penalty shootout).

Teams scoring at least two goals have won the World Cup title 17 times; there have been eight instances of a team scoring at least two goals in the final and still falling short.

There have been three 1-0 wins: West Germany over Argentina in 1990, Spain over Netherlands in 2010 and Germany over Argentina in 2014. And there was one 0-0 tie in a final; Brazil wound up winning over Italy in a penalty shootout the 1994 final, which had been the only one played on U.S. soil before now.

Scaloni looking to join elite club

If Argentina wins Sunday, Lionel Scaloni — who led the team's push to the 2022 title — would be just the second person to coach two World Cup championship clubs.

Italy went back-to-back as World Cup champions in 1934 and 1938, with both those clubs coached by Vittorio Pozzo.

Nobody else has two titles as a coach. There are three men — Brazil's Mário Zagallo, West Germany's Franz Beckenbauer and France's Didier Deschamps — to have won World Cups as both a player and a coach.

Messi matters

When he takes the field Sunday, Argentina star Lionel Messi will be the oldest field player to appear in a World Cup final.

Messi is 39. Sweden's Gunnar Gren was 37 when he played against Brazil in the 1958 final.

The only player older than Messi to play in a final was Italy goalkeeper Dino Zoff — who was 40 when his club beat West Germany for the 1982 crown. But among field players, Messi will stand alone as the oldest after Sunday.

Messi is also in position to join Brazil's Cafu as the only person to play in three World Cup men's finals. And since Cafu was a reserve in one of his appearances, Messi would be the first to start the title game on three occasions.

For Spain, youth may be served. Experience may, too.

Youth may be served by Spain in this World Cup final. And if La Roja prevails, experience would also have paid off.

It's an interesting mix.

Spain is slated to have two teenagers — Lamine Yamal and Pau Cubarsí, a pair of 19-year-olds — play Sunday against Argentina in the World Cup final, and no team has ever had more than one teen in the lineup and won the title.

So, that's the power of youth.

Here's the flip side of that: If Spain wins, coach Luis de la Fuente — who is 65 — would become the oldest World Cup-winning sideline boss, passing Vicente del Bosque, who was 59 when Spain won its first title in 2010.

For the record, teenagers enter Sunday unbeaten in World Cup finals, according to FIFA, which says only three have ever played in soccer's biggest game. Pelé was 17 when he helped Brazil win the final over Sweden in 1958, Giuseppe Bergomi was 18 when Italy beat West Germany in 1982, and Kylian Mbappé was 19 when France beat Croatia in 2018.

Spain seeking record streak

Spain is 28-0-9 in its last 37 matches, which has tied Italy for the longest unbeaten run by a European men's national team.

Italy also went 28-0-9 from October 2018 through September 2021 — before losing to Spain 2-1 on Oct. 6, 2021 in Milan.

Argentina has a streak worth noting as well. It has won seven consecutive World Cup matches, tied with Italy for the second-longest such run in men's tournament history. Only Brazil, which won 11 straight spanning 2002 and 2006, has a longer World Cup winning streak.

Argentina-Spain history

The game is just the second head-to-head meeting in a World Cup between Argentina and Spain. Argentina won 2-1 in the 1966 group stage.

Across all competitions and friendlies, the sides have played 14 times. Each has won six times and they tied twice.

Chinese company demands compensation from the UK over British Steel nationalization

BEIJING (AP) — The Chinese company that formerly owned British Steel demanded Sunday compensation from the U.K. government for investment losses following the nationalization of the manufacturer last week.

The British government took operational control of the company last year after Jingye Group said that it was considering closing the blast furnaces at its Scunthorpe plant in northern England, the last in the United Kingdom to make "virgin steel" from raw materials.

Jingye Group said in a WeChat statement that the nationalization move tarnished the credibility of the British government, spooked international investors and caused great losses to the company's operation and British taxpayers' funds. It also demanded that the U.K. government stop "trampling on international investment rules."

The Chinese company announced it had initiated negotiation procedures under relevant bilateral investment agreements, reserving all rights, including to international arbitration. Jingye said it will also represent British taxpayers seeking to hold the U.K. government and British Steel's management legally liable. However, it did not specify how it would handle the case.

"The U.K. disregarded Jingye's continuous investment and significant contribution and was only willing to provide almost zero compensation," it said.

An independent evaluation will be carried out to determine whether any compensation will be paid to Jingye Group, the U.K. government said last week.

The Department for Business and Trade announced the move on July 17, saying it would save thousands of jobs and protect the U.K.'s national interest by ensuring a supply of domestically produced steel for major construction projects and the defense industry.

British Steel and its forebears have been making steel at Scunthorpe for more than 130 years, building on the U.K.'s development of improved steelmaking technology during the Industrial Revolution. The plant currently employs about 2,700 people.

Jingye bought British Steel in 2020 and said it saved the steel company from crisis.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry on Saturday said the way the U.K. handles the issue would directly influence how Chinese investors view the British investment environment and the credibility of the British government.

"China urges the UK to earnestly respect market principles and the spirit of contract, and find solutions on compensation and other issues acceptable to both sides," it said in a statement.

It added China supports enterprises in safeguarding their legitimate rights through legal means.

Groton Daily Independent
Sunday, July 19, 2026 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 044 ~ 53 of 78

Social media influencers Andrew and Tristan Tate arrested in Miami, US Marshals Service tells AP

By ALANNA DURKIN RICHER Associated Press

Influencer brothers Andrew and Tristan Tate, whose social media empire promoting wealth, male dominance and misogyny has made them among the world's most polarizing internet personalities, were arrested Saturday in Miami as British authorities sought their extradition on rape and sex trafficking charges.

The brothers were taken into custody by the U.S. Marshals Service on a sealed warrant, agency spokesperson Brady McCarron told The Associated Press, placing the United States at the center of an international legal saga that has stretched from Romania to Britain.

Britain is seeking their extradition on rape and trafficking charges

British prosecutors announced Saturday that they were seeking the brothers' extradition on charges alleging they raped and trafficked women between 2010 and 2017.

The dual U.S. and British citizens moved to Romania in 2016. They were arrested there in 2022, accused of participating in schemes to lure women for sexual exploitation. They denied those allegations and the Romanian case hasn't gone forward because of legal and procedural problems.

Last year, they were allowed to leave Romania and flew to Florida on a private jet.

The brothers are expected to appear in Miami's federal court early next week, according to a person familiar with the matter who spoke to on the condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive law enforcement operations.

The pending charges in the United Kingdom accused the brothers of abusing women in an area north of London, where they grew up. Their lawyers had said they denied the allegations.

Joseph McBride, an attorney representing the Tate brothers, said in a phone interview Saturday evening that he has not been able to speak with his clients but called the new charges out of the U.K. "filth and slander" intended to derail defamation lawsuits filed by the brothers in the U.S.

"They're pulling out all the stops to make sure these guys never get their day in court," McBride said.

"We are confident that once a competent judge sees the facts, and once the Department of Justice confronts this egregious abuse of its own authority, Andrew and Tristan Tate will walk free. America does not do Britain's political dirty work."

Tate has been banned from social media platforms for hate speech

Andrew Tate, 39, first reached a mainstream audience as a contestant on the U.K. reality television show "Big Brother" in 2016. He was removed from the show when a video surfaced that appeared to show Tate assaulting a woman. He and his brother Tristan Tate, 38, are vocal supporters of U.S. President Donald Trump.

Andrew Tate has amassed over 10 million followers on X but has been banned from platforms like YouTube, TikTok and Instagram for violating hate speech guidelines. His most widely condemned rhetoric includes comments that women who are sexually assaulted should bear some responsibility for their attacks, graphic descriptions of how he might attack women and criticisms of people who seek treatment for mental illness.

The Tate brothers have consistently denied allegations of abuse and human trafficking, claiming that violent and misogynistic statements have been taken out of context or were intended as jokes.

In a statement Saturday, the U.K.'s Crown Prosecution Services said that in addition to the charges publicly announced against the brothers in 2025, involving alleged crimes against three women, it was bringing a total of 38 new charges related to "four further victims."

Both brothers are accused of rape and human trafficking. Andrew Tate faces an additional charge of profiting from prostitution, and 19 charges "for offences relating to indecent images of a child and extreme pornography," according to U.K. authorities.

"There is no place for male violence against women and girls, and we will continue to work tirelessly to

support victims and investigate all reports made to us," said Karena Thomas, an assistant chief constable of the Bedfordshire Police, which investigated the case.

Thunderstorms will clear wildfire smoke from Northeast ahead of World Cup final, meteorologists say

By JENNIFER McDERMOTT and PHILIP MARCELO Associated Press

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. (AP) — Smoke from Canadian wildfires that engulfed the Northeast in haze is expected to mostly clear from the New Jersey area just in time for the World Cup final on Sunday thanks to thunderstorms passing through, meteorologists said.

Still, warnings of unhealthy air remained in effect Saturday across a wide swath of the United States, and President Donald Trump continued to lay blame on Canada for the smoke crossing the border.

Trump, who planned to attend the cup final, threatened to impose tariffs in response, and Ontario Premier Doug Ford criticized that as unacceptable and shortsighted.

At MetLife Stadium, where the World Cup final is scheduled to take place, the sky was the same thick, soupy gray it has been for days, even after a drenching thunderstorm prompted warnings of flash flooding and forced the Spanish national team to suspend its last outdoor training session ahead of the clash with Argentina.

After the rain cleared, Netherlands tourists Joost Timpers and his two sons were among fans taking photos outside the open-air venue, which has been renamed the New York/New Jersey Stadium for the matches.

They did not have tickets to the final but biked more than an hour from their hotel just to see the arena up close. Timpers said he was certain players and fans will fare just fine even if conditions do not improve.

"We're not experts in air quality, of course, but we are experiencing the quality now," he said. "I didn't experience anything different from cycling in the Netherlands or anywhere else."

Storms will help clear the air

Saturday's storm front will largely move the smoke out of the Northeast before the final between Spain and Argentina, said Tyler Roys, a senior meteorologist at AccuWeather.

"There could be some lingering smoke that would make things hazy, but very faint," Roys said. "In terms of the thickest smoke, the smoke that has really been eye-popping and leads to poor air quality, that is not expected across New York City or much of the Northeast."

WFLA-TV Chief Meteorologist and Climate Specialist Jeff Berardelli, in Tampa, Florida, echoed Roys, saying the storm front would "sweep the atmosphere clean," leaving only a thin smoke that World Cup spectators may still smell in the air.

The air quality index shows an improvement from unhealthy air for sensitive groups on Saturday to "moderate" air quality Sunday in East Rutherford, which means little to no health risk for the general public.

"It won't be dangerous anymore," Berardelli said. "It's going to be dramatically better."

The smoke could still cause issues for people who are sensitive to particulate matter, and they should check the air quality index particularly in the morning, said Rob Shackelford, a meteorologist for The Weather Channel app and weather.com.

Air quality at the field is measured every 10 minutes, said David Lu, CEO and co-founder of Clarity Movement, an environmental technology company providing air quality monitoring services. In the past two days, the readings have swung between the level where the air is unhealthy for sensitive groups and the level where it's very unhealthy, Lu said. He said Saturday afternoon he expects to see improvement in the readings within hours because of the rain.

Temperatures are forecast to be around 80 degrees Fahrenheit (27 degrees Celsius), with light breezes and low humidity for the start of the final.

"You couldn't have asked for much better weather for the World Cup," Berardelli added.

Both Roys and Berardelli expect the heavier smoke Sunday to be concentrated closer to the fires, hanging over parts of the Midwest and the Great Lakes region.

Trump talks of new tariffs on Canada

The president made no mention of the World Cup final but said on his social media platform, "We are holding Canada responsible." He added that the U.S. "is being unnecessarily invaded by filthy, polluted, and unhealthy air, the quality of which is dangerous, and totally unacceptable!"

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney addressed the topic of U.S. officials complaining about smoke from during a news conference Thursday. Carney said climate change is the responsibility of everyone, including the United States.

Ford said Canada has contributed to fighting fires in the U.S. and offered assistance when Georgia was hit by a hurricane in 2024 because "that's what neighbors do." Ford called the rhetoric "absolutely unacceptable" when Canada is "trying to get through this."

There are hundreds of active fires in Canada

Wildfires have been igniting across Canada and northern Minnesota this month. Berardelli said they are burning longer and faster because of climate change. The Canadian Wildland Fire Information System showed hundreds of active fires Saturday. Environment Canada issued air quality warnings across the country and into the Northwest Territories.

The fires prompted evacuations, including in Nova Scotia where there's a large fire that local and provincial crews have been fighting since Wednesday, and in northwestern Ontario, where some of the most intense fires are burning.

In Ontario, nearly 200 wildfires have already scorched more land than all of last year's fires. In Thunder Bay, Ontario, Fire Chief Dave Tarini said this fire season is unprecedented in his more than 35 years as a firefighter.

In British Columbia, about 100 fires are burning, a huge jump from the 20 firefighters were facing Wednesday. The BC Wildfire Service says the fires are largely the result of 4,000 lightning strikes that hit the province Friday.

The biggest takeaways from the 2026 World Cup

By JAMES ROBSON AP Soccer Writer

ATLANTA (AP) — The World Cup final between Spain and defending champion Argentina marks the end of the biggest tournament in the competition's history. At the final whistle in New Jersey on Sunday, a record 104 games will have been played across almost six weeks and three countries.

The supersized tournament delivered thrilling action on the field, with upsets, dramatic comebacks, spectacular goals and standout performances by the biggest stars of the game.

It also generated controversy, from political tensions surrounding Iran's participation to criticism against innovations such as hydration breaks, which were unpopular among many fans.

Here are some key takeaways from the 2026 World Cup in the United States, Mexico and Canada.

More teams, more drama

A newly expanded 48-team format raised concerns about lopsided matches and a lack of jeopardy in the group stage.

Tell that to Cape Verde, Congo and even Curaçao, which all made history and won new fans.

Cape Verde held Spain to a draw in its opening game, advanced to the round of 32 and gave Argentina a scare before eventually losing 3-2 in extra time in a World Cup classic. Cape Verde's goalkeeper Vozinha became a breakout star at the age of 40, gaining millions of followers on social media.

Congo also advanced beyond the group stage and pushed England before eventually losing, while Curaçao was still in with a chance of making the knockouts going into its final group match.

FIFA opened its door to more teams and they proved they could compete on soccer's biggest stage. Nonetheless, it was top-ranked nations Argentina, Spain, France and England — all former champions — that made it to the final four.

The big stars delivered

The race for the golden boot became a who's who of the world's top players with Lionel Messi, Kylian Mbappé, Erling Haaland, Harry Kane and Jude Bellingham firing on all cylinders.

Mbappé led the way ahead of Sunday's final with 10 goals in the tournament and a record 22 career World Cup goals. Messi had eight at this World Cup and 21 in total with one game to go.

Cristiano Ronaldo couldn't lead Portugal to success in what he said was his last World Cup, while Spain's teenage sensation Lamine Yamal — the star of the Euros two years ago — had to work his way into the tournament after overcoming injury.

Big tech, big complaints

Video reviews known as VAR were at the center of a number of contentious decisions, ruling out huge goals for Germany, Croatia and Egypt.

Egypt coach Hossam Hassan launched a furious tirade after Argentina staged a spectacular comeback from 2-0 down to win 3-2 in the round of 16.

"We have suffered injustice," he said after Egypt had a goal overturned when the score was still 1-0.

Fitted with sensors, the high-tech ball in use at the tournament cost Croatia a dramatic late equalizer against Portugal in the round of 32 when it detected the slightest of touches from Igor Mantanovic and ruled Josko Gvardiol's goal offside.

"All these decisions take the joy out of football," said Croatia coach Zlatko Dalić, who has since stepped down.

Exorbitant ticket prices, but fans still turned up

There were concerns going into the tournament that FIFA's introduction of dynamic pricing would make game tickets unaffordable for average fans. Some critics accused FIFA of a "monumental betrayal."

Official ticket prices on general sale ranged from $140 to $2,735 for group stage matches and up to $8,680 for the final, far beyond the prices at the previous World Cup in Qatar in 2022. After criticism FIFA said it would offer a selection of $60 tickets for every game to the 48 national federations participating.

FIFA's resale market place allowed sellers to list tickets for massively more than face value, including ones for the final for just under $2.3 million. FIFA didn't control resale pricing, but took a cut from sales.

For all the criticism, fans still turned up in big numbers, even for games that didn't feature marquee teams or players.

After a shaky start when there were empty seats for the game between South Korea and the Czech Republic in Guadalajara, stadium after stadium reported full houses.

Many foreign visitors were impressed by the hospitality they experienced in the U.S.

Hydration breaks a turnoff

FIFA's new hydration breaks midway through each half — a novelty for this World Cup — prompted loud jeers from fans inside the stadium, while former players were also critical.

"We're in America, right? So, it's like it is a timeout," former Ireland international Roy Keane said on The Overlap podcast.

The breaks were introduced to help players deal with the summer heat, but FIFA stipulated they would occur regardless of the weather, venue or location.

Coaches used them like timeouts to pass on in-game tactical instructions. Broadcasters, meanwhile, used them as an opportunity to take commercial breaks.

It is unclear whether FIFA will implement hydration breaks at future World Cups, but the English Football Association said they were unlikely to be in place for the 2028 European Championship, co-hosted by England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland.

Iran participated despite the war

It's not unusual for politics and sport to intertwine at the World Cup. This time the biggest political tensions surrounded the national team of Iran.

The war in the Middle East raised doubts about whether the Iranian team would show up at all. It did, but only after moving its base camp from Arizona to Mexico.

Its participation was overshadowed by visa issues, with the U.S. refusing visas to several members of Iran's delegation. The Iranians also complained about travel restrictions, including having to leave the U.S. immediately after each match.

When Iran was eliminated at the group stage, Homeland Security Secretary Markwayne Mullin made his

feelings clear. "I'm just glad they're done and they're not coming back," he said.

Trump's role in focus

While the Trump administration's travel restrictions on a series of countries prevented some fans from traveling to the U.S., there were no reports of the aggressive immigration enforcement that some human rights groups had feared could take place around World Cup stadiums.

Besides the final, Trump didn't attend any World Cup games. However, his relationship with FIFA president Gianni Infantino came into sharp focus when U.S. striker Folarin Balogun's one game ban for a red card was suspended ahead of the team's round of 16 game against Belgium.

Trump said he had called Infantino to ask for the decision to be reviewed before FIFA made Balogun eligible to play. FIFA insisted its disciplinary bodies acted independently, but the incident raised question about political interference.

Ultimately, the decision didn't help the U.S. as it lost 4-1 to Belgium.

Nigerian children pay the price for the Iran war as malnutrition and poverty surge

By OPE ADETAYO Associated Press

SOKOTO, Nigeria (AP) — Maryam Aminu was hardly surprised when the last of her six children was diagnosed with malnutrition in April for a second time. She was barely feeding the 18-month-old regularly, let alone with nutritious foods.

Although the family in northwest Nigeria has struggled with economic hardship, their situation deteriorated after February, when her husband, Shehu Aminu, lost his job as a taxi driver due to a spike in the retail price of petrol caused by the war in Iran.

"When she was diagnosed the second time, even though I suspected it, I was sad and angry because I knew why," Aminu said in the living area of their unvarnished two-bedroom house in the quiet town of Kware, Sokoto, as ash from the coal stove billowed into the room. "Times are tough, and the food is not consistent."

Children relapsing into malnutrition has become an increasingly common occurrence in the state and across northern Nigeria, according to local health and aid workers, who cite knock-on effects from the Iran war.

Northern Nigeria, one of the world's poorest regions, is already under pressure from an insurgency crisis. Now, the conflict in the Middle East has worsened food security for millions of people living in poverty, especially children.

At the same time, Nigerian President Bola Tinubu's vast economic reforms sparked high inflation after fuel subsidies were removed three years ago and the currency was devalued. A World Bank technical report this week stated that 139 million Nigerians are now poor or vulnerable to poverty.

If the war in the Middle East continues, up to 23.4 million additional children could fall into monetary poverty — meaning a lack of income or consumption — by the end of the year, the United Nations children's agency UNICEF said in a report this week. It warned that at least 80% would be in Africa and Asia.

"Children are paying the price for the escalating conflict in the Middle East, including children far beyond the region," said UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell. "The longer this continues, the worse the consequences will be."

Dangers ahead for children

Amid the Iran war, the closure of the Strait of Hormuz — through which a fifth of the world's oil and gas passed before the war — sent a ripple effect across the world. A worldwide fuel shock drove up the prices of everything from gas and groceries to fertilizer and airline tickets.

In Nigeria, fuel pump prices jumped from 800 naira ($0.58) per liter in February to 1,400 naira ($1.02) in April, with a knock-on effect on the prices of food and necessities.

U.S. President Donald Trump has been trying to force Iran to fully reopen the route for months, turning to everything from airstrikes and naval blockades to negotiations and threats.

In Sokoto, where the soaring prices have brought more hardship for families, health workers told The Associated Press that they've been seeing more children returned to health facilities this year after falling back into malnutrition.

At a hospital in Sokoto, records shared with AP show nearly 40 children previously treated for malnutrition since February are currently under treatment again, in addition to those not documented.

"I am worried and sometimes angry about the increasing numbers we are seeing," said health worker Halimah Muhammad.

Beyond current realities, soaring prices and economic hardship mean that children in poor households are more likely to be stunted in the long term, UNICEF's Russell said in an interview with the AP as she was visiting Sokoto this week.

"Their development will be compromised. They are less likely to stay in school because their parents are under so much financial stress. So the long-term implications for children are absolutely terrible," said Russell.

The war has also affected fertilizer supplies and prices, threatening the planting season and worsening the fate of mostly farming communities in northern Nigeria who have struggled to access their farmlands amid a deadly conflict with armed groups.

"I wake up every morning unhappy, seeing I can no longer provide for my family," said Shehu, Maryam's husband. "Then, 2,000 naira could buy you a nutritious meal for the whole family. Now, you need 5,000 naira to buy what 2,000 naira would buy."

Most of their meals are pap, a kind of corn pudding, and rice. "There is no way to feed the children," he said.

'I wish she were excited and full of life'

People in northwest Nigeria are caught between regular attacks by bandit groups who specialize in kidnapping for ransom and Islamist militants who have been expanding their territory. The Iran war, analysts say, compounds the impact.

"This distant war offers no relief for the north's vulnerable," Ikemesit Effiong, a partner at SBM Intelligence, a Lagos-based geopolitical risk advisory, said.

Larai Malami, a 35-year-old mother of 10, gave birth to her last child in December, but the infant has already been diagnosed with malnutrition twice.

Her family has been struggling after her husband lost his job as a motorcycle rider and crossed the border into neighboring Niger to look for work.

Malami worries about the fuel price because it keeps the price of food high and her husband away. "I worry that the child might never be fully well," she said.

That is a sentiment shared by Aminu, too. "I wish she were excited and full of life," she said.

A centuries-old festival in Japan brings Shinto traditions and towering floats to the streets

By FRED MERY and MARÍA TERESA HERNÁNDEZ Associated Press

KYOTO, Japan (AP) — There's a special moment when Katsushi Horikawa feels closer to the gods. It comes as he rides atop one of the towering floats pulled through the streets in a centuries-old procession in Japan.

This is the Gion Matsuri festival, born more than 1,000 years ago as a ritual to ward off epidemics and celebrated in the former imperial city of Kyoto throughout July.

"I am conscious of them when I'm riding on top," Horikawa said. "When we're assembling it as well, but I think the main time is when I'm riding on it."

The parades — accompanied by dances, music and song — draw large crowds and tourists every year. The biggest floats can weigh up to 12 tons. Yet behind the festive atmosphere lies a tradition rooted in the worship of deities and rituals of protection.

"Those performances are not meant primarily for the entertainment of people," said Fabio Rambelli, a religious studies professor at the University of California, Santa Barbara. "They are offerings to the gods."

A festival that has layers of religious history

The Gion Matsuri originated in the late 9th century as a ritual to appease spirits believed to cause epidemics and to pray for protection from disease. It takes its name from Kyoto's Gion District and "matsuri," the Japanese word for festival.

At the heart of the celebration is Kyoto's Yasaka Shrine, a Shinto site whose principal deity has long been revered as a protector against calamities. But the shrine's history also reflects centuries of interaction between Shinto and Buddhism in Japan.

"Until about 150 years ago it was a Buddhist temple," Rambelli said. "That's part of the religious changes that have taken place in Japan."

Back then, the sanctuary's main deity was Gozu Tennō, an ox-headed figure believed to have the power either to spread epidemics or to avert them.

"It was a kind of syncretic deity — probably of Indian origin — with connections to Korea and local folklore," Rambelli said. "A lot of gods in Japan are a mixture of different traditions."

Early versions of the Gion Matsuri involved that deity, Rambelli said.

To show evil forces and spirits that their god would confront them, devotees carried him around the city in processions that resembled those seen throughout Kyoto today.

A shrine's turn from Buddhism helps shape today's Shinto practices

Japan's government separated the two traditions of Shinto and Buddhism in 1868 during the Meiji era, effectively bringing Shinto shrines under state control and placing the emperor at the center of the new order.

"Because the emperor was the direct descendant of the goddess of the sun, they purified the whole system creating what now we see as Shinto," said Andrea De Antoni, professor of anthropology and religious studies at the University of Kyoto.

De Antoni said a strong anti-Buddhist movement followed. Temples, mandalas and statues were burned and destroyed.

Shinto was formally separated from the state after World War II, but its traditions still reflect a broader history of religious and cultural influences.

"It is an institutionalized religion that revolves around ideas of deities called kami and different spirits," De Antoni said.

"Kami shares its rules with general ideas of animism that can be found throughout the world, but there are a lot of similarities with certain parts of Southeast Asia and with the Pacific," he added.

Ancient traditions bring communities together

Japanese festivals often serve as ways for deities to be brought into the streets for sacred or ritual purposes while also bringing communities together in celebration.

"This is the festival of all the people in the neighborhood," said Jacques Garrigues, a Frenchman who has lived in Kyoto for three decades and who attended the Gion Matsuri procession with his son on Friday.

"We also come together through a certain sense of religion, although the religious significance is not the same as in France," he added.

Among the traditions preserved by the Gion Matsuri is the choosing of a boy as a sacred messenger to the gods. During the parade, the selected boy is seen sitting on one of the floats, his feet never touching the ground.

Some key participants spend months getting ready for the celebrations. Different neighborhoods prepare their floats with great care and dedication, with many people trusting the floats will drive away evil spirits.

Atsushi Matono is responsible for erecting the shingi, a sacred tree placed at the top of one of the floats —the holiest part of the structure, to which a deity is believed to descend.

Like Horikawa, he describes feeling a sacred presence.

"I always carry out my work with great care and respect," Matono said. "Feeling the presence of the gods."

Groton Daily Independent
Sunday, July 19, 2026 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 044 ~ 60 of 78

What to know about the challenges Andy Burnham will face as UK prime minister

By BRIAN MELLEY Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Andy Burnham will enter 10 Downing Street on Monday with a wave of enthusiasm behind him and a mountain of challenges ahead.

His coronation as British prime minister may be short-lived as he faces the same struggles as his predecessor in trying to temper a cost-of-living crisis, improve overstretched public services, and step into the international spotlight during major wars in Ukraine and the Middle East.

He arrives after spending most of the past decade running Greater Manchester, in northwest England, before winning his ticket back to Parliament in a special election last month.

Leading a government delivering services for 70 million people will be a monumentally larger task with problems on a larger scale and facing issues foreign to a leader of a region with 3 million residents.

Here are the main issues confronting Burnham and some hints to how he may approach them:

Boosting the economy and decentralizing government

Burnham has been vague, but promised to provide details this week about how he would fund a domestic agenda to kick-start a sluggish economy, enhance services and raise living standards.

"This change today is the most significant change moment in our politics for 40 years," he said Friday as he became Labour Party leader. "It will take us to a country where life is more affordable, and all people and places are lifted from where they are now."

Burnham inherits an economy that was improving until the Iran war upended forecasts and growth is now widely predicted to slow sharply over this year while inflation rises.

He has said he wants to equalize opportunities around the U.K., particularly by decentralizing government, funneling money to local governments and taking back some services that were privatized four decades ago.

His brand of business-friendly socialism — known as "Manchesterism" and aiming to harness private and public money to invest in areas like transportation, housing and infrastructure — could take years to put in place.

Joshi Herrmann, founder of Manchester news site The Mill, who has covered Burnham for years, said he may be able to soften the blow for some people who are struggling.

"But if the essay question is who can get economic growth and who can remodel the economy in the post-Brexit, post-financial crash era, I'd be very surprised if the answer to that question is Andy Burnham," Herrmann said.

With the uncertain state of public finances, Burnham won't have much room to raise spending. He is replacing Prime Minister Keir Starmer, who was elected on a manifesto that ruled out increases in the government's major tax rates, so he's locked in unless he breaks those pledges.

Burnham said he would not rule out a wealth tax, telling Gary Lineker on the Goalhanger podcast last week that the government "might be having to ask for a little more."

Foreign policy and striking the right tone with Trump

Burnham has little foreign policy experience, but has promised to continue the government's NATO commitment and support for the U.K.'s nuclear deterrent.

He said Britain will remain a strong booster of Ukraine and a firm United States ally.

Relations with the U.S. could depend on how he interacts with a capricious President Donald Trump, who initially gave Starmer glowing reviews only to sour on him for not supporting his war with Iran.

Burnham has publicly criticized Trump in the past but has said he would deal with him respectfully, as he does with others, but would also be willing to disagree.

"I like to think I've got some personality myself and I'll just, you know, I'll deal with him very upfront in the same way," he told Lineker. "Where you disagree, do it, but do it in a way that is kind of meeting him where he's at."

Trump has pushed NATO members to significantly boost military spending, and Burnham will be under

pressure to exceed the defense spending goals set out by Starmer.

The defense plan calling for a 15 billion pound ($20 billion) spending boost is much smaller than military leaders had sought and has been criticized for not being fully funded under the current budget.

Sensitive messaging about Israel's war with Hamas

Burnham has criticized Starmer's approach to Israel's war with Hamas and the devastation of Gaza.

Burnham condemned the Oct. 7, 2023, attacks on southern Israel by Hamas militants, who killed around 1,200 people and took 251 others hostage, but said the British government waited too long to call for a ceasefire.

More than 73,000 Palestinians have been killed, according to the Gaza Health Ministry, which is part of the Hamas-led government. The ministry, which does not differentiate between civilians and combatants, is staffed by medical professionals who maintain detailed records viewed as generally reliable by United Nations agencies and independent experts.

Burnham said the U.K. would consider further sanctions against Israelis involved in Gaza violence and illegal West Bank settlements.

The issue is a sensitive one for Labour, which was found to be tainted with antisemitism before Starmer took over, and also relies on the support of a large Muslim population.

Burnham's comments drew a backlash from Jewish groups, but he's also been criticized by pro-Palestinian groups for not declaring Israel's bombardment of Gaza a genocide.

The thorny issue of migration

During his acceptance speech as Labour's leader on Friday, Burnham did not mention immigration, which is a top issue for many voters.

Like much of Europe and other wealthier nations, the U.K. has seen an influx of migrants fleeing war-torn areas, famine, climate-driven crises, political persecution and poverty.

Concerns over English Channel crossings in overcrowded inflatable boats has helped propel the anti-immigration Reform UK party to victory in recent local and regional elections that led Labour to oust Starmer as leader.

Burnham has largely said he would follow the current Labour playbook on migration, which has touted reductions in net migration from more than 900,000 in 2023 to 171,000 last year. Channel crossings are down 40% this year compared to the same time in 2025.

Burnham wants to continue reducing net migration and voted in support of a bill that aims to further cut channel crossings and direct people to safer, legal routes.

Rescuers in China search the rubble for survivors of landslide that killed 8 and left 34 missing

By ANDY WONG and KANIS LEUNG Associated Press

CHONGQING, China (AP) — Rescue crews used excavators on Sunday to comb through the rubble in search of survivors from a landslide in the southwestern Chinese city of Chongqing that killed at least eight people and left another 34 missing.

Massive amounts of rocks and soil roared down a slope and buried more than 10 residential buildings early Friday in Pengshui County on the outskirts of Chongqing.

On Sunday morning, about nine rescuers were seen carrying a sealed orange bag from the scene. It was not immediately clear if a victim had been pulled out.

State broadcaster CCTV reported that all the residents staying in 21 buildings in the potential impact zone had been evacuated. Authorities carried out the evacuations from buildings on slopes and in low-lying areas within a kilometer radius of the disaster site, relocating over 1,100 people, Chongqing authorities said in a WeChat post published Sunday.

Authorities said one of 10 survivors was discharged from the hospital while the other nine were in stable condition. Eight people pulled from the rubble had died.

On Saturday, rescue crews aided by dogs and detectors found signs of life, confirming that at least one

survivor was still trapped beneath the rubble. But authorities said the crews needed to carefully map out a rescue plan since a reckless excavation could risk triggering a secondary collapse, especially with the boulders at the scene.

The landslide contained about 18,000 cubic meters (635,500 cubic feet) of rocks and debris, with one boulder being around 3,000 cubic meters (106,000 cubic feet), Wang Chuanjun, head of Planning and Natural Resources in Pengshui County, told reporters Friday.

More than 120 experts were deployed to the scene to help with the operation.

The rain-triggered landslide occurred near a stretch of the Wujiang River that cuts through karst mountains peppered with small towns and terraces.

Pengshui County is located in the southeast part of Chongqing, bordering the provinces of Hubei and Guizhou.

Trump celebrates the World Cup as a US victory as he prepares to present trophy to the winning team

By SEUNG MIN KIM and JOSH BOAK Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — President Donald Trump is set to present the World Cup trophy to the winner of Sunday's final between Argentina and Spain. But to him, the real victor of soccer's premier tournament just might be the United States.

"It turned out we were a soccer country, and I think it's going to remain," Trump said Friday at a FIFA reception at Trump Tower in New York City. "This has really brought the world together."

For the White House, Sunday's match is the culmination of well over a year of navigating a litany of logistical challenges alongside co-hosts Canada and Mexico for what would be the biggest World Cup in history. It had to balance the Trump administration's hard-line migration policies that barred fans from some World Cup qualifier countries from entry into the United States.

The White House faced warnings from human rights groups, and the tournament confronted backlash over high ticket prices. For months, Trump flirted with the idea of moving games out of cities that did not cooperate with federal immigration authorities, and in the weeks before the tournament's start, local authorities sparred with FIFA over high transit costs, heightening tensions even more.

As the first games were preparing to begin, the administration continued to find itself under global scrutiny for its visa decisions, such as denying entry to a referee from Somalia who had won accolades for his officiating. The pressure increased after Trump launched a war with Iran, leaving the administration to grapple with an Iranian team whose fans and some supporting personnel were barred from the U.S, and that ultimately was based across the border in Tijuana.

But the broader story of the World Cup eventually shifted. Social media was flooded with tales of soccer fans from around the world enjoying the treats and traditions of the U.S., from beer to ranch dressing. Some fears about the Trump administration that circulated beforehand, such as the threat of immigration enforcement raids near the games, never materialized.

"One of the things that we talked about beforehand was, if we're talking about what happened on the pitch, then we've done our job," Andrew Giuliani, the executive director of the White House FIFA Task Force, said in an interview with The Associated Press. "But I think it's even better than that. We're not just talking about only the incredible, athletic feats on the pitch, but we're talking about all these incredible, incredible cultural moments."

Still, Trump did create controversy with a phone call he made to FIFA chief Gianni Infantino earlier this month in which he asked for a review of a controversial referee call in Team USA's match against Bosnia and Herzegovina. The referee gave a red card to U.S. star forward Folarin Balogun, meaning he wouldn't be able to play in the subsequent match against Belgium.

Trump says he simply asked Infantino, who has cozied up to the U.S. president and faced backlash for doing so, to review the call. FIFA then reversed the call, and Trump told Infantino at the FIFA reception on Friday that "you made another great decision, if you think about it," because it allowed the U.S. to keep

a key player on the field even though the team lost the match to Belgium 4-1.

Giuliani said the administration had a "duty" to ask questions and raise concerns about the officiating process, which drew scrutiny because of the use of video review and slow-motion replay to issue the red card. He noted that the Trump administration invested billions in federal funding to ensure that the World Cup was "not just a safe and secure event, not just where we welcomed the world, but an event that was filled with integrity."

The Trump administration was under considerable pressure to pull off a successful World Cup tournament because the U.S. will soon host the 2028 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles and the 2034 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City.

The U.S. is also largely expected to be awarded the 2031 Women's World Cup, although Giuliani said in the AP interview that part of getting those hosting duties will be "ensuring that, in fact, women and only women will play in that 2031 Women's World Cup" — an allusion to the Trump administration's fierce opposition to transgender women participating in women's sports.

Sen. Andy Kim, D-N.J., a self-professed World Cup superfan whose home state is hosting Sunday's final, noted that logistics for the tournament have gone mostly smoothly, aside from the occasional hiccups on some issues such as transit to the games.

But "overall, just the joy that people have, the excitement that they have, has dramatically outweighed" any downsides, Kim said, who has been eagerly watching the games with his two young sons over the last several weeks.

The U.S. also faced broader tensions with its World Cup co-hosts of Canada and Mexico. Trump announced stiff tariffs on both countries in his return to the White House, and he has chosen not to renew a trade pact among the three countries, setting up a new period of negotiations.

On Friday, Trump threatened to tariff Canada over its wildfires, which have hurt air quality in parts of the U.S., including northern New Jersey where the World Cup final is being held. He joked on Friday that FIFA should choose the U.S. for the World Cup soon again, and "this time, we'll leave Mexico and Canada out."

Still, Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum and Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney plan to attend the final at Trump's request, in a sign that soccer can overcome some geopolitical tensions.

"I received an invitation from President Trump to attend the World Cup final on Sunday, and I decided to go because it's a direct invitation from the President of the United States," Sheinbaum said. "Prime Minister Carney will also be there."

Trump, as is generally customary for heads of state hosting the tournament, will present the trophy to the eventual winner. But he hasn't tipped his hand publicly about whether he has a preferred team.

Spain is a known irritant to Trump, with its reticence to meet NATO defense spending goals and its refusal to let the U.S. launch strikes against Iran from its bases. Meanwhile, Argentine President Javier Milei is a favorite of the Trump administration, with the U.S. president going as far as to threaten to cut aid to the country if Milei's coalition didn't prevail in legislative elections.

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez plans to attend the game, although Milei — citing superstition — will stay at home.

US military launches new airstrikes to 'swiftly punish' Iran for deaths of US troops

By JON GAMBRELL, TOQA EZZIDIN and KONSTANTIN TOROPIN Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — The U.S. military said that it carried out new airstrikes against Iran on Sunday to "swiftly punish" the country's Revolutionary Guard after an attack on a base in Jordan killed two American service members, left one missing and four requiring hospitalization.

The strikes were designed to further degrade Iran's ability to restrict the traffic of oil tankers through the Strait of Hormuz, U.S. Central Command said. The waterway accounted for roughly 20% of global oil supplies before the war. Iran effectively closed the strait to shipping traffic after the war started with U.S. and Israeli strikes on Feb. 28.

The new strikes came after the U.S. military announced its first troop deaths from direct Iranian fire since the opening days of the war, following a drone and missile attack on a base in Jordan on Friday. The dead were not identified, and Central Command didn't offer any further details on the deaths.

Since the war began, 16 U.S. service members have been killed and over 430 wounded.

Strikes target southern Iran

An area near Sirik, on the Strait of Hormuz, was targeted around 1:30 a.m. local time, according to Iran's state-run IRNA news agency, which cited local authorities in southern Hormozgan province.

In the same province, a location near Hajiabad was targeted and explosions were heard in Bandar Abbas, according to IRNA. An area near Qeshm Island, which is inside the strait, was also targeted, according to Iran's state-run broadcaster, IRIB.

On Saturday, Iranian state media reported that U.S. airstrikes had hit an electricity and desalination plant in Hormozgan and damaged tunnels and bridges, disrupting a main highway toward Bandar Abbas, the site of Iran's main port near the narrowest part of the strait.

An official in Khuzestan province, also on the Gulf, said a strike hit near the city of Shadegan, according to state media.

Trump has threatened to target Iran's power stations and bridges to try to compel Tehran to loosen its hold on the Strait of Hormuz.

The U.S. in the past week also reimposed a naval blockade on Iranian ports to halt its shipments of crude oil, and the military on Saturday said it had redirected five ships and disabled one since then.

Iranian authorities said Saturday that at least 50 people have been killed and more than 500 wounded in U.S. strikes in the past three weeks, including eight killed in a strike on a bridge Friday.

Strikes hit Iraq's Kurdish region

In neighboring Iraq, a base of the Kurdistan Freedom Party, an Iranian Kurdish dissident group, near Irbil was struck by a drone early Sunday, wounding eight of its members, according to Rebaz Sharifi, a military official with the group.

Residents of Irbil, the capital of Iraq's semi-autonomous northern Kurdish region, also heard explosions from air defenses early Sunday.

Irbil has been targeted by drone attacks multiple times over the past four days, which coincided with a visit by new Iraqi Prime Minister Ali al-Zaidi to Washington last week and an ongoing escalation between the U.S. and Iran.

No group has claimed responsibility for the attacks, but in the past both Iran and Iran-backed Iraqi militias have launched attacks in the Kurdish region, where both U.S. troops and armed Kurdish Iranian dissident groups are present.

Iran's supreme leader warns of 'unforgettable lessons'

Minutes before the U.S. announced the troop deaths earlier Saturday, Iran's supreme leader warned of "unforgettable lessons" if the U.S. keeps attacking the Islamic Republic.

The remarks read out on state TV and attributed to Mojtaba Khamenei, still unseen since the war began, called President Donald Trump's signature "worthless and invalid." An Iranian negotiator said Tehran was suspending its commitments to the interim deal signed about a month ago and aimed at permanently ending the fighting.

Iran's joint military command said that U.S. "covetousness, bullying, totalitarianism or brutality" would meet with a "devastating response."

Tehran's declarations snapped another fragile thread as the war shows no end in sight. Now Khamenei warns of "lessons" not only from Iran but also its armed proxies in the region, calling them the "Axis of Resistance." The U.S. issued a global travel alert over the rising tensions.

The battle has focused on control of the Strait of Hormuz. The widening strikes now threaten civilians and infrastructure, including desalination plants for drinking water, while the global economy again is on alert.

The U.S. has violated its commitments under the deal and now Iran is "no longer implementing them," Kazem Gharibabadi, Iran's deputy foreign minister, told state TV.

There was no new word on mediation efforts.

US soldiers face growing risks

The last recorded death of a U.S. service member was that of a helicopter pilot who crashed in the Arabian Sea earlier this month. Early in the war, an Iranian drone strike on a command center in Kuwait killed six soldiers. Another soldier died after an attack on a base in Saudi Arabia, and six were killed when a refueling aircraft crashed in Iraq.

On Saturday, the most significant damage from Iranian strikes occurred in Kuwait, where a water desalination plant and an oil facility were hit, according to the Kuwait authorities and the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation. Both declined to provide locations.

It was the second attack against a desalination plant in two days in the tiny desert nation that depends on desalination for 90% of its drinking water. The strikes injured several people at the oil facility and caused a fire at the desalination plant, forcing several power generation units offline.

Several firefighters and a worker were injured while battling two other blazes sparked by Iranian strikes, according to the Kuwait Fire Force. Kuwait briefly closed its airspace due to missile threats, and Kuwait Airways said it was rescheduling most flights to and from the capital.

Jordan's state-run Petra news agency said the kingdom's air defense systems had downed Iranian missiles, while air sirens sounded multiple times in Bahrain throughout the day and in Saudi Arabia in the morning, according to their governments.

The secretary-general of the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council, Jasem Mohamed al-Budaiwi, accused Iran of war crimes for strikes on infrastructure and civilian facilities.

Cuban artist and dissident exiled from country after 5 years in prison arrives in US

MIAMI (AP) — A famous Cuban dissident artist and musician, Luis Manuel Otero Alcántara, arrived in Miami on Saturday after being released from a five-year prison sentence on the condition that he leave his country.

Alcántara, 38, was greeted at the airport by a crowd that was cheering, singing and holding their phones high in the air to get a photo of him. They draped him in a Cuban flag, printed with the words "Patria y Vida" — "Homeland and Life" — the title of a song he shared a Grammy for that became an anthem for Cuba's political opposition against repression.

The United States granted him parole into the country earlier this week, according to a social media page maintained by his friends and supporters. They wrote that he accepted exile as the only way to escape persecution and continue his art and activism.

Alcántara co-founded a group of Havana artists, writers and musicians called the San Isidro Movement — named for the neighborhood where Alcántara lived.

He was arrested on July 11, 2021, during a public protest. In 2022, a court sentenced him to five years in prison for public disorder, contempt and disrespect toward national symbols.

His arrest and incarceration had long been denounced by human rights organizations and the U.S. government. Groups including Amnesty International called him a political prisoner, an allegation the Cuban government rejected.

Alcántara was held in a maximum-security prison, he said, and was expected to be released last week. But for days, advocates said they still could not contact him and did not know where he was.

The organization Cubalex, which legally advises dissidents and reports human rights violations from outside of the country, filed a habeas corpus petition on his behalf Monday.

Until he boarded a plane Saturday, his advocates were not sure of his location, or if he was truly free.

His said his first stop on American soil would be at the Shrine of Our Lady of Charity to make an offering.

Other political prisoners remained imprisoned, including his fellow artist Maykel "Osorbo" Castillo Pérez, his advocates said, and they hoped Alcántara's release would prompt insistence that Pérez also be set free.

Alcántara brought from Cuba a broken statue of the Virgin Mary, which he described as a symbol of

hope and healing, a chance to put back together something from fragments.

Saka's hat trick lifts England past Mbappé and France 6-4 in wild World Cup third-place game

By ALANIS THAMES AP Sports Writer

MIAMI GARDENS, Fla. (AP) — England and France delivered a thriller in a World Cup match that was supposed to be an afterthought.

A day before Lionel Messi and Argentina were set to try and defend their title in a highly anticipated final, Bukayo Saka scored three goals to lead England past Kylian Mbappé and France 6-4 in a wild third-place game.

Mbappé surpassed Messi's record for World Cup goals, scoring twice in the second half. The 27-year-old star has 22 goals in his career and 10 in this World Cup, two ahead of Messi in the Golden Boot race.

It was the highest-scoring World Cup game since Hungary beat El Salvador 10-1 in 1982, and the 10 goals were the most in a third-place match.

Saka had goals in the 37th minute and in first-half stoppage time, then added his third on a penalty in the 87th for his second career hat trick with England. The Three Lions also got goals from Declan Rice and Ezri Konsa to build a 4-0 halftime lead, and they hung on against a relentless France attack in the second half to secure their second-best finish in the World Cup. England won its only title in 1966.

"I hope that the players can be proud of that in some time," England coach Thomas Tuchel said. "We are fiercely competitive, so we almost don't allow ourselves to be proud of third place because 18 months ago we set the highest goal. We set the highest dream to chase, and we were very, very ambitious with our dream to make it to the final and win the World Cup. So it's very, very painful if you miss out."

Tuchel said he viewed England's World Cup run as a success despite its collapse in the semifinals. The Three Lions blew a 1-0 lead against Argentina and lost 2-1 when Messi assisted on two late goals.

Tuchel was criticized for his tactical decisions in the loss, with many wondering what it will take for England to end its decades-long wait for another trophy.

He said Saturday's result was the first step toward closing the gap with teams like Argentina and France.

"This game will help us for sure," he said, "even if a part will never allow you to fully celebrate the bronze medal."

Jude Bellingham capped the scoring in the eighth minute of second-half stoppage time, his seventh goal of the tournament and the most in a World Cup by an England player. Captain Harry Kane scored six this year and in 2018, and Gary Lineker had six in 1986.

Bradley Barcola and Ousmane Dembélé also scored in the second half for France, which pulled within 4-3 on Mbappé's second goal.

Messi — with 21 career World Cup goals and eight in this tournament — will get one last shot to pass Mbappé for the scoring title when he and defending champion Argentina face Spain on Sunday in East Rutherford, New Jersey. Mbappé also won the Golden Boot four years ago, when France lost the final to Argentina on penalties.

"Leo scores all the time," Mbappé told Fox Sports in French. "Tomorrow he will score for sure. I just try to help my team every time to score. It's certain that when you score so many goals in the World Cup, it elevates you to certain levels. I would have preferred not to be the top scorer in history and play in the match tomorrow."

Both teams had said they'd rather be playing in Sunday's final. France had enough offensive firepower to potentially win the tournament, but Les Bleus lost to Spain in the semifinals and squandered their chance at reaching a third straight World Cup final.

Still, a sellout crowd of 64,478 showed up to watch the seventh and final match of this World Cup at Hard Rock Stadium.

Plenty of supporters were cheering for both teams. Many were there simply for the atmosphere of the low-stakes match, and it more than delivered.

"I love English football," said Gaston Esquivel, a native of Mexico City who came to support England. "I've followed the Premier League since I was a kid. I am a Manchester United fan. I like their style, I like their game."

Thomas Viel, who traveled from Paris to follow France throughout the tournament, was hoping to see a hat trick by Mbappé. He nearly got his wish.

France trailed 4-0 when Mbappé flicked a shot past goalkeeper Dean Henderson in the 48th minute. Then he beat Henderson again with a left-footed strike from about 14 yards in the 66th.

"I think Messi will not score a hat trick tomorrow," Viel said.

It was also the final match for France coach Didier Deschamps, who has said he will step down after 14 years. Deschamps embraced players and waved toward the crowd as he exited the pitch.

"We were not expecting such a first half," Deschamps said through an interpreter. "And we did better in the second half. We were deeply disappointed, gutted after the semis. I don't want to sum up my career on this moment."

Taylor Farms recalls lettuce shipped to 27 states over cyclospora risk

By SAVANNAH PETERS Associated Press

Taylor Farms has expanded a voluntary recall of its iceberg lettuce products sourced from central Mexico because of a potential link to the multistate cyclospora outbreak that has sickened people across the U.S.

Products with the potential to be contaminated with the diarrhea-causing parasite were shipped to 27 states including Texas, Florida, Pennsylvania, Illinois and New Jersey, the California-based company said in a statement Friday.

"We are actively removing the implicated products," the statement said, adding that the company has stopped sourcing lettuce from an implicated lot in central Mexico.

U.S. health officials earlier this week identified lettuce from a supplier in Mexico as a source of cyclospora contamination in food served at Taco Bell restaurants in five Midwestern states.

The Taylor Farms recall announcement listed 25 shredded lettuce and salad mix products sold under eight different brand codes. Taylor Farms did not respond to an emailed request for the full names of those brands or retailers. The recalled products were shipped as recently as Thursday and have "best by" dates as late as Aug. 3.

Sysco, the nation's largest food distributor, has halted distribution of all Taylor Farms iceberg lettuce products sourced from Mexico and instructed customers to destroy them.

Cyclospora is a microscopic parasite that infects food that has come into contact with human feces, most commonly when produce is irrigated or washed with contaminated water. When ingested, the parasite causes intestinal illness marked by "frequent and sometimes explosive bowel movements," according to the CDC.

In 2026, cyclospora has sickened at least 1,645 people in the U.S. and hospitalized 141, according to the CDC, which is investigating more than 5,000 additional illnesses that may be linked to the parasite. This time last year, only 249 cases had been reported.

The CDC initially warned consumers to avoid eating shredded lettuce served at Taco Bell restaurants in Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio and West Virginia.

"Taco Bell worked swiftly to voluntarily remove the product from restaurants and the affected ingredient has been removed from our supply chain nationwide," the company said in a statement Friday.

16 US service members have died in the Iran war, reflecting a conflict fought largely in the air

By JOSH BOAK Associated Press

BRIDGEWATER, New Jersey (AP) — The U.S. military said on Saturday that two additional service mem-

bers were killed as part of the war with Iran, bringing the total number of deaths to 16.

The deaths reflect the complicated reality that American boots don't need to be on the ground for there to be lethal risks in a conflict that involves drones, missiles and airplanes. American forces are arrayed across the Middle East, making other nations targets of Iran as the fighting has escalated after a breakdown in peace talks.

President Donald Trump has said the war is necessary to stop Iran from developing nuclear weapons. As of Saturday afternoon, he had yet to issue a statement on the latest set of deaths that occurred in Jordan, with the White House instead sending the statement issued by U.S. Central Command.

First fatalities came soon after the war started

Shortly after the war began on Feb. 28, an Iranian drone strike at a civilian port in Kuwait killed six American soldiers. The soldiers were part of a supply and logistics unit based in Iowa who were working at a shipping container-style building that had no defenses.

A seventh soldier died more than a week after being wounded during a March 1 attack by Iran on the Prince Sultan Air Base in Saudi Arabia.

Later in March, six service members were killed when a KC-135 refueling aircraft supporting U.S. military operations against Iran crashed in Iraq. The aircraft was in "friendly" airspace when an unspecified incident involving another aircraft took place, according to U.S. Central Command.

On Monday, the U.S. military said a Navy pilot died in a helicopter crash in the Arabian Sea. The Navy initially described the July 1 crash as an emergency landing and said there was "no indication the emergency was caused by hostile action." The remaining three sailors aboard the helicopter were rescued.

On Saturday, the U.S. Central Command said two service members were killed in Jordan while defending against Iranian ballistic missile and drone attacks. The military said one U.S. service member is "currently" missing after the attack.

The military said as part of the most recent announcement that it was withholding additional information, including the names of the deceased, until 24 hours after families had been notified.

The deaths in the war are not limited to Americans.

Iranian authorities said at least 50 people have been killed and more than 500 wounded in U.S. strikes in the past three weeks, including eight killed in a strike on a bridge Friday.

People working on ships, as well as foreign workers and others in Gulf nations, Israel and Lebanon have also perished in the conflict.

Ukrainian drones hit warehouses and other sites across Russia, killing 9 and wounding over 80

By The Associated Press undefined

Ukrainian drones struck two sprawling warehouses, one of them just east of Moscow, as part of attacks overnight and on Saturday afternoon that killed nine people and wounded more than 80, Russian officials said.

Kyiv's forces have pressed their relentless aerial campaign against energy infrastructure and military targets inside Russia, aiming to undermine Moscow's war effort and make Russians feel the consequences of the Kremlin's all-out invasion of Ukraine that is well into its fifth year.

Two sprawling warehouses of Russia's major online retailer, Wildberries, were hit by Ukrainian drones overnight, according to Russian officials — one in the town of Kotovsk in the Tambov region, some 360 kilometers (220 miles) from the border with Ukraine, and another in the city of Elektrostal, about 50 kilometers (30 miles) east of Moscow.

A Ukrainian drone also hit an oil depot in the city of Noginsk, just north of Elektrostal, sparking a fire and prompting evacuations of a nearby maternity hospital and a residential building, according to the governor of the Moscow region, Andrei Vorobyov. Drone debris also hit a kindergarten building, Vorobyov said, sparking a fire that has since been put out.

Seven night shift workers were killed at the warehouse in Kotovsk and 25 others were wounded, Tambov

regional Gov. Yevgeny Pervyshov said.

A total of 61 people were wounded in the Moscow region, Vorobyov said: 20 sought outpatient care, while 40 others were hospitalized. One person died of their injuries, he said.

One more person was killed and another wounded in a Ukrainian drone attack on Russia's Belgorod region on Saturday afternoon, according to local authorities.

Both warehouses caught fire, Wildberries founder Tatyana Kim said, and the blaze in Kotovsk was put out. Images and footage released by Russian online outlets showed a fire raging at the Elektrostal facility, with massive plumes of smoke towering over it.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in a Telegram post on Saturday that Ukrainian long-range strikes hit two "significant logistical facilities in the Moscow and Tambov regions."

"These facilities were used by the aggressor to supply sanctioned components for the production of drones and navigation equipment," he wrote. An oil facility was also hit, he said.

In the city of Vladimir, some 180 kilometers (110 miles) east of Moscow, a Ukrainian drone hit a residential building, sparking a brief fire, Vladimir Gov. Alexander Avdeyev said. There were no casualties, he added.

Ukrainian special operations also conducted strikes against targets in the Sea of Azov and in occupied territory, Zelenskyy said.

Ukraine's General Staff said in a statement on Saturday that the fuel depot in Noginsk that was targeted overnight supplied the Russian armed forces. It also reported hitting two tankers, two floating cranes and a tugboat in the Black and Azov seas, saying the vessels were used to transport oil, fuel and military cargo.

Separately, the military said it struck a Project 10410 Svetlyak-class patrol ship in Kerch, describing it as the second vessel of that class hit in two days, as well as a railway bridge over the Bila River near Sabivka in the occupied Luhansk region that it said Russia uses for military logistics.

Overall, the Russian Defense Ministry said its air defenses overnight intercepted 379 Ukrainian drones over 19 Russian regions, as well as the illegally annexed Crimea, the Sea of Azov and the Black Sea.

David Crowley reenters battleground Wisconsin's Democratic governor primary with Gov. Evers' backing

By MEG KINNARD Associated Press

Two weeks after shuttering his bid for Wisconsin governor, David Crowley reentered the state's Democratic primary on Saturday, with the Milwaukee County executive boasting a last-minute backing from outgoing Gov. Tony Evers in a seeming move to best position the party for success in November.

Evers had initially declined to endorse in the race, but threw his weight behind Crowley and resuscitated his bid to lead the swing state known for razor-thin election margins, where appealing to moderate and independent voters is crucial. It was the latest turn in a chaotic Democratic primary that has jeopardized the party's chances this fall and comes after Lt. Gov. Sara Rodriguez said she was abandoning her campaign for the state's top office after a campaign finance scandal.

Democrats are looking to November to secure full control of Wisconsin state government for the first time since 2010, and hope it will send a signal about where the country's politics are headed by shaping a key political battleground that helps decide presidential campaigns.

In an event in Milwaukee Saturday relaunching his campaign, Crowley referenced the stakes, saying that "winning this election will require building the broadest possible coalition," and touting his ability to forge relationships across partisan divides. And Evers' endorsement, he went on, "reflects his confidence that I have the experience" to lead and to win.

Evers was on a trade visit to Africa and not in attendance at Crowley's Saturday event but acknowledged in a social media post that he was now "all in" for Crowley, touting his executive leadership on issues including job creation and balancing budgets.

"He's not just a candidate who can win in November, but he's the kind of person who cares about doing the job right," Evers wrote.

Crowley, 40, is reemerging into a competitive primary for Wisconsin's open governor's race that was

turned on its head Friday with the departure of Rodriguez, who earlier in the week fired her campaign manager after discovering her campaign had hundreds of thousands of dollars less on hand than expected.

Now, as they approach Wisconsin's primary election on Aug. 11, Democrats are hoping to hold onto the governor's office as they also eye flipping majority control of the state Legislature, which Republicans have held since 2011.

The primary also comes following democratic socialists' earlier victories in the liberal strongholds of New York City, Washington, D.C., and Denver. Francesca Hong, a single mother who has worked as a dishwasher and line cook, is trying to do the same with her campaign for Wisconsin governor, with her candidacy turning the Democratic contest into a test of just how far left voters are willing to go in the November midterms.

Crowley, who would be the state's first Black governor if elected, had shuttered his own bid two weeks ago to back Rodriguez. Now, he's returning to a contest against Hong, former Lt. Gov. Mandela Barnes, state Sen. Kelda Roys and Joel Brennan, a former top aide to Evers.

In an interview Saturday afternoon, Crowley told The Associated Press that voters would see "a much more aggressive campaign" from him in the primary's closing weeks, buoyed in part by Evers' backing and "a renewed, energized, volunteer base."

"I wouldn't have gotten into this race if I didn't believe a pathway was there," Crowley said. "We can not only get over the hump in winning on the Aug. 11 primary, but then we'll be able to really focus on how we can make sure that Tom Tiffany doesn't bring an extreme MAGA agenda to the state of Wisconsin," Crowley said.

Democrats have been struggling to overcome disarray in other messy primaries across this year's mid-term calendar. In California, the race to replace outgoing Gov. Gavin Newsom devolved into a chaotic free-for-all, with dozens of names on the ballot, and one of the leading contenders, Democratic Rep. Eric Swalwell, abruptly quit both his campaign and Congress following sexual assault allegations. Democrat Xavier Becerra and Republican Steve Hilton ultimately advanced from a " jungle primary."

In the first iteration of his campaign, Crowley leaned into his background, highlighting how his family was once homeless in Milwaukee but he rose to become a community organizer and was elected to the state Assembly in 2016 at age 30. He served until the middle of 2020, when he was elected as executive of Milwaukee County, the state's largest county. He was the first Black person to hold that job and also the youngest at age 33.

The winner of the Democratic primary will advance to the general election against Republican Rep. Tom Tiffany, who faces only token primary opposition.

In a statement to AP, Tiffany portrayed Crowley as "asleep at the wheel" in his role as county executive and described his reemergence as Democrats' "only shot at stopping the socialist who wants to abolish the police and prisons."

In an email statement, the Republican Governors Association said that "watching Wisconsin Democrats is like watching a clown car crash into a parked semitruck."

Israeli strikes in Gaza kill 3 children and 6 adults, health officials say

By WAFAA SHURAFA Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — Israeli strikes in Gaza City on Saturday killed at least nine Palestinians, including three children, hospital officials said.

A strike on an apartment in the Nasr neighborhood killed at least five people, including the children between the ages of 8 and 18, said Mohammed Abu Selmiya, director of Shifa Hospital where the bodies were taken. Six other people were wounded, including four children between the ages of 8 and 16, he said.

Israel's military said it targeted Hamas infrastructure and had located Hamas militants in the area, without elaborating.

Another Israeli strike hit a group of people in the Zeitoun neighborhood, killing four and wounding another critically, health officials said.

The Israeli military said it targeted a "Hamas terrorist" and it was looking into the results of the strike.

Palestinians have reported an increase in the scale of Israeli strikes across the enclave over the past few days.

Despite a ceasefire agreement reached in October between Israel and the Hamas militant group, Israel still carries out near-daily attacks across the territory. It says it is targeting Hamas and other militants who pose a threat. Hamas and Israel have traded accusations of violating the ceasefire.

At least 1,127 Palestinians, including at least 260 children, have been killed since the ceasefire, according to Gaza's Health Ministry. Five Israeli soldiers have been killed in that time.

The Oct. 7, 2023, attack by Hamas-led militants that sparked the war killed some 1,200 people in Israel and saw 251 others taken hostage. Israel's retaliatory offensive has killed 73,250 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry.

The ministry is part of the Hamas-led government and is staffed by medical professionals who maintain detailed records viewed as generally reliable by United Nations agencies and independent experts. It does not distinguish between civilians and militants but says women and children make up around half of all deaths.

McIlroy accuses DeChambeau of trying to 'hold the tournament hostage' at British Open

By STEVE DOUGLAS AP Sports Writer

SOUTHPORT, England (AP) — Rory McIlroy saved one of his best shots at the British Open on Saturday for Bryson DeChambeau.

The world No. 2 didn't hold back when asked for his thoughts on DeChambeau's conduct late Friday, when the American was involved in a lengthy, heated post-round exchange with rules officials as they reviewed whether he had inadvertently improved the path of his swing on the fifth hole.

DeChambeau was penalized two shots and there were doubts over whether he would show up for the weekend. The extraordinary late-evening scenes also delayed the release of the tee times for Saturday's third round.

"I won't pretend to be up here and defend Bryson," McIlroy told reporters after shooting a 1-under 69 in the third round. "I'm not particularly fond of him. I think a lot of it is performative. I think a lot of it's for attention."

"To hold the tournament hostage like that," McIlroy continued, "and to have all of us — players, volunteers, everyone — waiting on him to depart, I didn't feel like it was a great look."

McIlroy said he watched the initial incident live with a few other players and felt DeChambeau's actions "didn't seem right."

"I think there's no doubt that he improved the line of his backswing," McIlroy said. "Again, it's like, whether it was careless or whether it was intentional, I don't think it matters. Hopefully it was careless, but I think the two-shot penalty was justified, for sure."

Other players were more diplomatic when discussing the incident.

"If I was in that position, I'd just be very careful where I'm standing and how I get into the ball and make sure I don't improve my lie," said English player Marco Penge, who was among the golfers to post on X late Friday about his frustrations about the tee times being published so late. "Yeah, I would never want anyone to think I was doing that. That's how I would deal with it."

Former Open champion Xander Schauffele said DeChambeau could have been given "the benefit of the doubt."

"He said he didn't do it intentionally and it's unfortunate that he got penalized because he was playing incredibly well and obviously he's still playing incredibly well," Schauffele said, "so he's obviously going to have something to prove these next two days."

Groton Daily Independent
Sunday, July 19, 2026 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 044 ~ 72 of 78

Safety fears limit Ebola response in Congo, with more than 12 attacks recorded

By PROSPER HERI NGORORA and CONSTANT SAME BAGALWA Associated Press

BUNIA, Congo (AP) — At least a dozen attacks on health facilities and workers have been recorded during Congo's Ebola outbreak as safety fears restrict the response in the worst-affected region, authorities said Saturday.

Many health workers and other frontline workers in Ituri province have also gone on strike over unpaid salaries, further complicating response efforts in what's been declared the fastest-growing Ebola outbreak on record. So far 2,181 cases have been recorded, including 864 deaths.

The Bundibugyo virus responsible for this outbreak is less common than others that cause Ebola disease, and there is no approved vaccine or treatment.

Many of the attacks have been carried out by angry mobs who have stormed treatment centers or targeted response teams in the field, Pierre Akilimali, incident manager for the Ebola response, said at a press briefing in Bunia, the capital of Ituri.

The attacks are not limited to healthcare teams and affect frontline workers like burial teams, according to Dr. Adelard Lufongola, operations manager for the Ebola response.

"Members of the various response teams have been held captive in some health zones. Teams responsible for safe and dignified burials have been threatened and continue to be threatened in some cemeteries and within several communities," Lufongola said at the briefing.

Ebola spreads in the human population through contact with bodily fluids such as vomit, blood or semen, and with contaminated surfaces and materials. Traditional funerals in which loved ones wash and prepare bodies have been restricted, which has angered some residents.

In Ituri, which accounts for around 90% of all cases, health and aid workers have been seen leaving remote communities considered hot spots and heading to Bunia in recent days, locals told The Associated Press.

U.N. spokesman Stéphane Dujarric on Thursday told reporters that humanitarian actors are "deeply concerned by escalating violence" impacting the Ebola response and that access to treatment centers and surrounding communities remains constrained.

"The worsening security situation has forced several humanitarian partners involved in the Ebola response to temporarily relocate staff to Bunia which is relatively safer," he said.

The most recent attack recorded was on Wednesday, when residents in the town of Nyakunde attacked a hospital and touched an Ebola treatment center nearby.

Officials said treatment and care resumed on Thursday at the center after its occupants, including some patients, fled in the aftermath of the attack. Concerns, however, remained about risks of transmission amid the chaos.

"I fear that the aid workers involved in combating this Ebola outbreak are going to leave the area. This risks making the task of eradicating the outbreak more difficult," said Christophe Munyanderu, a civil society leader in Ituri's Irumu territory.

Rescuers race to find survivors in the rain after a landslide in China kills at least 8

By ANDY WONG and KANIS LEUNG Associated Press

CHONGQING, China (AP) — Rescue crews on Saturday raced to find survivors from a landslide in the southwestern Chinese city of Chongqing that killed at least eight people and left 34 missing.

The landslide occurred in Pengshui County on Friday morning on the outskirts of Chongqing municipality, when massive amounts of rocks and soil washed down a slope, burying more than 10 residential buildings, state broadcaster CCTV said. Ten people were rescued and sent to the hospital, while more than 1,100 people have been relocated.

Associated Press photos and videos showed that one of the fallen rocks appeared larger than a multistory building, with ruins scattered across the steep terrain. One of the damaged buildings had its top part crushed and a car was seen half-buried near another building.

The landslide contained about 18,000 cubic meters (635,500 cubic feet) of rocks and debris, and the largest single rock was around 3,000 cubic meters (106,000 cubic feet), Wang Chuanjun, head of Planning and Natural Resources in Pengshui County, told a news conference on Friday.

CCTV said persistent rain hit Pengshui from Friday night to Saturday morning, with 19.2 centimeters (nearly 8 inches) recorded at a weather station. The unstable weather made the rescue operation more challenging, it said. As the rain eased slightly, rescue teams entered the site to conduct on-the-ground inspections of the collapsed buildings and riverbank areas.

While rescue operations are being carried out on one side of the massive rocks, teams will later need to look beneath them, where they may risk injury if the boulders become unstable and slide, CCTV reported. Once the search of the surrounding areas is complete, officers will drill into the boulders and fill the holes with explosives to break them apart, it said.

Beyond the deployment of excavators, a CCTV video report showed a search dog barking to alert a rescuer about signs of life.

Volunteers rode on motorbikes to deliver supplies to rescuers and some stranded residents. Other residents in Pengshui reported that the water supply to their homes was only available at certain intervals.

China's National Development and Reform Commission on Saturday allocated a relief fund of 30 million yuan ($4.4 million) to support the restoration of infrastructure and public service facilities following the disaster.

The rain-triggered landslide occurred near a stretch of the Wujiang River, which cuts through karst mountains peppered with small towns and terraces.

Pengshui County is located in the southeast part of Chongqing, bordering the provinces of Hubei and Guizhou.

Massive fire becomes Norway's largest in modern times after destroying more than 100 homes

DRAMMEN, Norway (AP) — The largest residential fire in modern Norwegian history destroyed more than 100 homes and forced hundreds of people to evacuate, authorities said Saturday.

The fire in southern Norway started in a townhouse in the city of Drammen around 3:30 p.m. Friday, police said. It then spread through the area and into nearby forests. Firefighters on Saturday morning continued their efforts to bring the blaze under control.

The Norwegian Directorate for Civil Protection said Saturday that it was the largest fire of its kind in modern times.

NRK, Norway's public broadcaster, said hundreds of people went to an evacuation center.

No residents have been reported missing, police said. It was not immediately clear what caused the fire.

Drammen is roughly 34 kilometers (21 miles) southwest of Oslo.

Sen. Ossoff fuels reelection campaign with attacks on Trump

By BILL BARROW Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Nearly a decade ago, Jon Ossoff was a 30-year-old Democratic congressional candidate promising Georgia suburban voters he would "cut wasteful spending" and make "both parties in Washington" be "accountable to you." His Republican opponent even complained that Ossoff "talks like a Republican."

Nobody would make that mistake today. After losing that race in 2017 and narrowly winning a U.S. Senate seat during a runoff in 2021, Ossoff is running for reelection with a full-throated broadside on President Donald Trump as a "national disgrace" leading a "Mar-a-Lago mafia" and "the most corrupt administration of all time."

The 39-year-old senator has always been a vessel for Trump opposition, no matter his message on the campaign trail. But not until now has Ossoff openly embraced the role. His approach is being noticed across the Democratic spectrum, from activists hungry for the right message in the 2026 midterms to those pining for viable presidential candidates in 2028.

This week, as Trump renewed his fixation on false claims of voter fraud in the 2020 election that brought Ossoff to Washington, the senator never missed an opportunity to denounce the "world's most famous sore loser."

"The senator is definitely having a moment, and these breakout moments can certainly become a launching pad for something bigger," said Lis Smith, a Democratic strategist who helped Pete Buttigieg go from being an unknown Indiana mayor to a presidential contender in 2020. She said Ossoff's approach — tying Trump's personal financial gain to his performance on the economy — is "one that more Democrats should adopt."

Ossoff insists he's focused only on "providing Georgians with the best possible service, investigating and exposing corruption and abuse, and winning this pivotal Senate race" over Rep. Mike Collins, who won a Republican primary runoff after Trump's last-minute endorsement.

Collins argues that Ossoff is just another "out-of-touch, far-left liberal," and he has criticized him as "weak" and "woke."

But Ossoff's turn in the spotlight, coupled with prodigious fundraising, puts him in a stronger position for a second term than most political observers expected when Trump returned to the White House less than two years ago. And with Ossoff being the only Democratic senator facing reelection in a state Trump won in 2024, defending his seat is critical for Democrats as they try to gain at least four seats elsewhere to reclaim a Senate majority.

Maryland Gov. Wes Moore, who is also seeking reelection and is mentioned as a potential 2028 candidate, was in Georgia recently campaigning for Ossoff and Democratic nominee for governor Keisha Lance Bottoms.

He described them both as "fighters" and said Ossoff is making the right pitch for voters who "want someone that will disrupt the status quo and do what's necessary to make their lives easier as the Trump administration raises prices on everything from gas to groceries."

In 2017, Trump wasn't Ossoff's initial focus

Ossoff was a political unknown when he decided to run for Congress in 2017. It was the first special congressional election of Trump's presidency, an open seat because Trump nominated Tom Price as health secretary thinking the district that once sent House Speaker Newt Gingrich to Washington was safe for Republicans.

The young Democrat had been a congressional aide and started a production company focused on investigative documentaries. But Ossoff became a fundraising sensation as rank-and-file Democrats looked for a way to counter Trump. He led an initial all-party primary, supercharging the national attention on a runoff campaign.

"The atmosphere of disarray and gridlock and dysfunction and chaos in Washington doesn't serve the American people, and it's not just this administration or this White House — it's career politicians in Congress," he said.

Ossoff lost to Karen Handel, a Republican who previously served as Georgia secretary of state.

In 2020, a careful candidate and senator emerged

Running against Republican Sen. David Perdue in 2020, Ossoff continued a disciplined, wonkish approach. Georgia was not considered to be a top battleground, and what early attention it got was focused more on Democrat Raphael Warnock, running in a special Senate election against Sen. Kelly Loeffler. She was considered more vulnerable than Perdue after being appointed to replace Johnny Isakson, who retired because of health issues.

The dynamics changed when Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden carried Georgia and both Georgia Senate contests went to runoffs — with control of the chamber hanging in the balance. Trump tried to overturn Biden's victory and began his yearslong fixation with falsely claiming U.S. elections are

rigged, with Georgia as his prime example.

Still, throughout his 2020 campaign, Ossoff kept his focus on Perdue's personal business dealings and the Republican reaction to the COVID-19 pandemic. In one debate, Ossoff did not mention the president at all. In another, when asked about Trump, he answered broadly.

"That kind of leadership really only grows when there's already been a destruction of faith in our political institutions," he said.

In 2026, an aggressive stump speech goes viral

As a senator, Ossoff has built relationships and a constituent services operation that span Georgia. He regularly announces appropriations for infrastructure, hospitals and other programs — including in heavily Republican areas. He led a congressional investigation into problems in Georgia's child services programs, and he's focused heavily on veterans' care.

But his 2026 breakout has been anchored by a stump speech built around a withering take down of the president. He mocks Trump's social media blitzes on Truth Social and proposals to put his face on U.S. money.

"When he's not posting, he's been trying to rob us. Have you seen it?" Ossoff asks, shifting to allegations of corruption and incompetence.

He ticks through Trumps' lawsuit against the Internal Revenue Service, his idea for a restitution fund that could compensate Jan. 6 rioters and foreign business deals by his sons. "Prince Don and Prince Eric," Ossoff calls them.

He blasts Trump's tax cuts as tilted to the rich, his effort to shield the Jeffrey Epstein case files, and an Iran war that "no one voted for and no one can explain."

"All this while you pay more for gas, for groceries, for healthcare," he says.

Ossoff still nods to an overall "rot" in a "coin-operated" political system that goes beyond Trump. But the applause lines, which campaign aides cut and distribute across social media platforms in real time, are trained on Trump.

"He's a failed president and a national disgrace," Ossoff repeatedly says.

Election denial has been a backdrop for Ossoff's political career

Ossoff won his Senate seat in the midst of Trump's election denial in Georgia, and the president has revived the topic as he runs for reelection. Trump has directed his administration to investigate the 2020 election, and federal agents seized hundreds of boxes of ballots from Fulton County, a Democratic stronghold that includes Atlanta.

Refusing to acknowledge that Biden legitimately defeated Trump has become a litmus test for serving in the administration, one that Ossoff highlighted when questioning Jay Clayton, Trump's nominee for national intelligence director.

"Who won the 2020 election?" Ossoff said.

"I'm not going to get into that with you," Clayton responded.

As Clayton continued to dodge, Ossoff said, "isn't it humiliating to be unable to answer this question, to have to indulge the president's delusions?"

Ossoff raised $20 million during the second quarter of 2026 and had $42 million left to spend. Collins raised about $2.1 million and had about the same amount in his coffers. And a 20-to-1 money advantage certainly helps a politician trying to stay in office, and in the spotlight.

Smith offered one caution about Ossoff.

"You can't live off one great speech or one viral exchange," she said. "You have to prove you can perform in every format." The question, she said, is how someone goes "from flavor of the month to a more serious national political figure."

Groton Daily Independent
Sunday, July 19, 2026 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 044 ~ 76 of 78

Trump shifts his tone on Jimmy Carter while grappling with Iran, inflation and his own legacy

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Jimmy Carter used to be one of President Donald Trump 's favorite political targets, a catchall foil for feckless Democrats that he could jeer at to make himself look strong and decisive.

But lately, Trump's sentiments on the 39th president have become more wistful as he faces some of the same challenges the late Carter did.

Those include the war in Iran with no end in sight — and now escalating as the U.S. moves to control the Strait of Hormuz — and inflation, a drag on the economy Trump hasn't tamed despite long insisting that his business background would wipe it out.

The comparison seems to be on Trump's mind, too. Asked last month why he didn't dispatch U.S. Special Forces into Iran to forcibly remove its enriched uranium, he responded, "I didn't feel like being Jimmy Carter."

That recalled the failed 1980 raid to free U.S. hostages that killed eight American servicemen. Trump also said in March that the unsuccessful mission "cost them the election" against Ronald Reagan in 1980, sounding cognizant of political realities in a way he didn't when using Carter as a punchline.

The shift in tone coincides with Trump's increased focus on his personal legacy and comes as the parallels between the two presidents become harder to ignore.

"I think it is dawning on him — it's getting through even his thick skull — that he's kicked over a hornet's nest and his presidency might be remembered for some of the same things Jimmy Carter's presidency is," said Jonathan Alter, author of "His Very Best: Jimmy Carter, A Life."

Despite some similarities, the two had glaring differences

Asked about Trump's change in tone on Carter and the two facing overlapping challenges, White House spokesperson Olivia Wales said, "Trump will never allow Iran to have a nuclear weapon" and "remains laser-focused on implementing his proven economic agenda to lower costs."

"The president is a one-of-a-kind leader who will always unapologetically advance America's interests," Wales said in a statement. "The only legacy he is concerned with is making America greater than ever before."

Kori Schake, a former member of George W. Bush's National Security Council, said she doesn't think Trump is reassessing Carter. "He doesn't stitch facts together and create theories," she said.

Still, Trump's more recent comments are a long way from his 2024 reelection campaign, when he routinely called Joe Biden "the worst" president who made Carter look "brilliant" by comparison. Trump still frequently mentions Carter, who died two years ago at age 100, but usually to incorrectly suggest that he was wary of mail-in ballots.

Other disparities between the two are legion.

Carter was married to his wife, Rosalynn, for 77 years, was deeply religious and pledged to "never knowingly lie to the American people." Trump is twice divorced, relishes cursing publicly and offers a never-ending onslaught of falsehoods.

As president, Carter placed his family's peanut business in a blind trust. Control of the Trump Organization has transferred to Trump's sons, but the president took in nearly $1.2 billion from his crypto businesses last year while not being shy about turning his presidency into a major source of personal benefit in other ways.

Speaking in 1977, Carter declared, "We are now free of that inordinate fear of communism." Trump has seized on primary wins by progressive Democrats to constantly stoke new fears about communism.

Carter also won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2002. Trump hasn't, despite declaring himself more deserving than any of the award's past recipients.

The two have inflation and Iran in common

While inflation plagued both presidents, Carter had it much worse, facing a peak inflation rate of 14.7% in April 1980. Consumer prices rose 4.2% this May from a year earlier — a three-year high — and though they fell sharpl y from May to June, that decline included lower gas prices fueled by a U.S.-Iran ceasefire. That deal is now in tatters, driving up oil prices again.

Trump suggested he didn't think about Americans' financial woes when it comes to Iran, a war he started

in conjunction with Israel in February. More recently, he shrugged off inflation concerns. But resolution has proved tricky and U.S. attacks have intensified anew after Iran's attacks on commercial ships in the Strait of Hormuz.

Like Trump, Carter was also bedeviled by the strait, declaring during his 1980 State of the Union address that the situation "demands the participation of all those who rely on oil from the Middle East and who are concerned with global peace and stability."

Another Trump-Carter parallel was the Democrat having considered military action to seize Kharg Island, though he ultimately decided against it so as not to jeopardize the hostages. Trump targeted the island with U.S. strikes early in the war, looking to thwart Iranian oil exports, and has threatened it again.

Schake, a senior fellow and director of foreign and defense policy studies at the American Enterprise Institute, noted a key difference was "while the Carter administration gave serious consideration to attacking Kharg Island, the reason they didn't do it was they didn't want to be at war with Iran."

"And we're already at war with Iran," she said.

Alter said Iran tried to hurt Carter's reelection chances and raised the possibility that they may do the same to Trump's Republican Party ahead of the November midterm elections.

"These people are master diplomats, and they proved that during the Carter administration," Alter said. "They're proving that again. They're really good at rope-a-dope."

Trump now talks up presidential history

The president has lately name-checked many of his predecessors, praising William McKinley 's support for tariffs and Teddy Roosevelt as a "great he-man." Trump said a key reason for reaching the now-imperiled June ceasefire with Iran was to avoid the "economic catastrophe " that befell Herbert Hoover.

"I'm a student of a lot of history," Trump said this week.

During his first term, Trump frequently compared his own populist streak to Andrew Jackson's. He still praises Jackson but has more recently extolled many past presidential records, including those of Democrats like Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

Trump even listed some of Carter's accomplishments on the " Walk of Fame" he installed along the White House Colonnade despite displays for other Democrats, such as Barack Obama and Biden, offering biting attacks.

"Trump is thinking of his legacy, and he might have thought that attacking Iran would have enhanced it. But, in fact, it will seriously hurt," James P. Pfiffner, a professor emeritus at George Mason University and author of several books including "The Character Factor: How We Judge Our Presidents," said via email.

After his presidency, Alter said, Carter asked Trump for a donation to help build Carter's presidential library. Trump later wrote that Carter wanted $5 million, but he didn't answer him.

Then, during Trump's first term, Carter wrote the president a letter and Trump called to thank him, eventually leaving Carter with the impression that he might serve as a special envoy to China — an offer that never actually materialized.

"If he had learned anything from Carter's experience — and listened to predictions about the Strait of Hormuz — he would have hesitated," Pfiffner said of war with Iran. "But he ignored lessons of history and geography."

Venezuela earthquakes death toll surpasses 5,000

CARACAS (AP) — The death toll from the two powerful earthquakes that shook Venezuela last month rose to 5,069 late on Friday, local authorities said.

The interim government of President Delcy Rodriguez added in a statement that the number of injured remains unchanged at 16,740, as in the past 11 days.

Ongoing recovery and debris-clearing operations have led to the increase in the death toll, particularly in the coastal state of La Guaira, the hardest hit by the quakes close to the Caribbean Sea. A total of 1,331 aftershocks had been recorded by Friday.

Venezuela's government says 856 buildings are damaged and 190 collapsed completely since the 7.2 and 7.5 quakes on June 24. Hundreds of other types of structures, such as bridges and roads, were also affected.

Groton Daily Independent
Sunday, July 19, 2026 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 044 ~ 78 of 78

Today in History: July 19, the Seneca Falls Convention

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Sunday, July 19, the 200th day of 2026. There are 165 days left in the year.

Today in History:

On July 19, 1848, the first "Convention to discuss the social, civil and religious condition and rights of Woman" convened at the Wesleyan Chapel in Seneca Falls, N.Y.

Also on this date:

In 1812, during the War of 1812, the First Battle of Sackets Harbor in Lake Ontario resulted in an American victory as U.S. naval forces repelled a British attack.

In 1969, Apollo 11 and its astronauts, Neil Armstrong, Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin and Michael Collins, went into orbit around the moon.

In 1975, the Apollo and Soyuz space capsules that were linked in orbit for two days separated.

In 1979, the Nicaraguan capital of Managua fell to Sandinista guerrillas two days after President Anastasio Somoza fled the country.

In 1980, the Moscow Summer Olympics began, minus dozens of nations that boycotted the games because of Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan.

In 1989, 111 people were killed when United Airlines Flight 232, a DC-10 that sustained a tail engine failure and the loss of hydraulic systems, crashed while making an emergency landing at Sioux City, Iowa; 185 other people survived.

In 1990, baseball's all-time hits leader, Pete Rose, was sentenced in Cincinnati to five months in prison for tax evasion.

In 1993, President Bill Clinton announced a policy allowing gays to serve in the military under a compromise dubbed "don't ask, don't tell, don't pursue."

In 2006, prosecutors reported that Chicago police beat, kicked, shocked or otherwise tortured scores of Black suspects from the 1970s to the early 1990s to try to extract confessions from them.

In 2005, President George W. Bush announced his choice of federal appeals court judge John G. Roberts Jr. to replace Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor. (Roberts ended up succeeding Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist, who died in September 2005; Samuel Alito followed O'Connor.)

In 2013, in a rare and public reflection on race, President Barack Obama called on the nation to do some soul searching over the death of Black teenager Trayvon Martin and the acquittal of his shooter, George Zimmerman, saying Martin "could have been me 35 years ago."

In 2018, a duckboat packed with tourists capsized and sank in high winds on a lake in the tourist town of Branson, Missouri, killing 17 people.

In 2021, Paul Allard Hodgkins, a Florida man who breached the U.S. Senate chamber on Jan. 6, 2021, received an eight-month prison term in the first resolution of a felony case arising from the U.S. Capitol insurrection. (In 2025, President Donald Trump pardoned, commuted the prison sentences or vowed to dismiss the cases of all 1,500-plus people charged with crimes in the riot.)

In 2022, Britain shattered its record for the highest temperature ever registered amid a heat wave that seared swaths of Europe; the Met Office weather agency registered a reading of 40.3 degrees Celsius (104.5 degrees Fahrenheit) at Coningsby in eastern England.

Today's Birthdays: Civil rights activist and educator Rachel Robinson, widow of baseball's Jackie Robinson, is 104. Blues singer-musician Little Freddie King is 86. Singer-musician Alan Gorrie (Average White Band) is 80. International Tennis Hall of Famer Ilie Nastase is 80. Rock musician Brian May (Queen) is 79. Rock musician Bernie Leadon is 79. Movie director Abel Ferrara is 75. Movie director Atom Egoyan is 66. Actor Campbell Scott is 65. Actor Anthony Edwards is 64. Ukrainian politician and former boxing champion Vitali Klitschko is 55. Actor Benedict Cumberbatch is 50. TV chef Marcela Valladolid is 48. Actor Trai Byers (TV: "Empire") is 43.