

Groton Daily Independent

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Community Calendar

Sunday, Aug. 16

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m.
St. John's Lutheran: Worship 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.

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PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445

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



Monday, Aug. 17

Senior Menu: Chef salad with deli ham, tomatoes and cucumbers, fruited Jell-o, fruit.
Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.
Groton Area Staff Development Day
Boys Golf at Sioux Valley Invitational, 10 a.m.
Back-to-School Open House, 4-6 p.m.
Senior Citizens meet at the Community Center, 1 p.m.

Tuesday, Aug. 18

Senior Menu: Sloppy joe on a bun, baked potato, baked beans, fruit.
St. John's Lutheran: Quilting, 9 a.m.
United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.
Groton Area Staff Development Day
Girls Soccer at Lennox, 4 p.m.
City Council Meeting, 7 p.m.

Wednesday, Aug. 19

FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

Senior Menu: Chicken alfredo, tossed salad, broccoli, fruit, breadstick.
United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Nominations Committee Meeting, 6 p.m.; Groton Ad Council, 7 p.m.

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We the People

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



By David Adler

How Shall America Live: The Urgency of Checks and Balances

In our continuing conversation about the defining question of the character of our nation—How shall America live?—we address the defining features of American Constitutionalism, first sketched in the 1760s by colonists who were outraged by English laws and practices that trenched upon their natural rights and rights as Englishman and the sweeping powers of King and Parliament. The expanding circle of complaints and protests, as readers know, fired the imaginations of those who sought separation from England and exploded in the Declaration of Independence, which declared to the world and to posterity, that a new nation was born, one grounded on the principles of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Over the next decade, drafters of state constitutions trumpeted governing mechanisms that would grant and limit the powers of those elected to office in service of the citizenry. These fundamental assumptions were embraced, refined and extended by delegates to the Constitutional Convention, who unleashed the First Principles of American Constitutionalism.

The distinctive feature of American Constitutionalism—the doctrine of checks and balances—represents the engine, indeed, the workhorse, of our governmental system. When it works well, it maintains the fundamental rights of the citizenry to self-governance, representation, adherence to and fulfillment of the enumeration of powers, essential limits on those serving in the legislative, executive and judicial branches, protection of civil rights and civil liberties, equal protection of the law and, certainly, voting rights. In sum, the doctrine of checks and balances represents the guarantor of government of, by and for the people, the essential rationale of the American Revolution.

When the system of checks and balances is not functioning well, when it is rendered ineffective by the lapses of those at the helm, the men and women vested by law with powers and responsibilities to turn the wheels of our constitutional democracy, anything can happen. Our rights and liberties can be trampled, limits on power ignored and violated, the allocation of powers approved and authorized by the people in the ratification of the Constitution and subsequent amendments to the Constitution—the exercise of popular sovereignty—shredded beyond recognition, and, of course, the rise of an authoritarian president.

The collapse of checks and balances can be seen in the misappropriation of tax dollars for personal presidential projects not authorized by Congress, ICE agents roaming the streets of blue and purple states, acting far beyond their initial mission and purpose of border control to break into homes of citizens without adequate search warrants, assaulting and killing Americans, without accountability and in defiance of courts of law, and a presidential war of choice in Iran, which has already cost taxpayers well in excess of \$50 billion, resulted in the deaths of 18 soldiers, dozens and dozens of unreported injuries to members of our military, censorship at the Pentagon, unmitigated attacks on freedom of the press and freedom of speech, and unprecedented concentration of power in the executive that smashes the restraints on the presidency conceived by the framers of the Constitution.

Each of these grave injuries to American democracy has implications for the citizenry. There is, for example, no apparent, face-saving exit for President Trump from the war in Iran, which he started, and which has spread throughout the Middle East, which means the rising costs of the war that you and I endure—at the gas pump and the grocery store—will continue. That is our immediate future, one that will span the months ahead as American workers make difficult choices between gasoline, food and medicine. This failure of checks and balances, conspicuous in Trump's unconstitutional presidential war-making and the absolute failure of Republicans in Congress to reclaim the institution's constitutional control over matters of war and peace, reach into your living rooms, your kitchen, your ability to pay rent and meet mortgage payments. In short, the failure of checks and balances has a direct effect on the pocketbooks of Americans, which is precisely why we citizens should care deeply about the violation of this fundamental feature of the American Constitutionalism.

Since the doctrine of checks and balances is a defining feature of America, the question of if, when and how, our elected representatives adhere to it, represents a commentary on how American is living. It is a question about the character of our nation. Do we like what we see in the mirror?

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Highway Patrol Sturgis Rally Daily Information

Compiled from 6 a.m. Saturday, August 8, 2026, to 6 a.m. Saturday, August 15, 2026

Item	Sturgis	Rapid City District	District Total	Last Year to Date
DUI Arrests	76	29	105	112
Misd Drug Arrests	160	37	197	238
Felony Drug Arrests	81	19	100	94
Custodial Arrests	152	62	214	N/A
Total Citations	792	764	1,556	1,361
Total Warnings	2,642	1,560	4,202	4,367
Cash Seized	\$6,116.00	\$0.00	\$6,116.00	\$0.00
Vehicles Seized	0	0	0	1
For Drug Poss.	0	0	0	1
For Serial No.	0	0	0	0
Non-Injury Accidents	15	12	27	27
Injury Accidents	15	23	38	63
Fatal Accidents	1	2	3	4
# of Fatalities	1	2	3	4

Fatal Crashes:

None

Injury Crashes:

At 1:25 p.m. Friday, U.S. Highway 16A, mile marker 48: A 2008 Harley-Davidson motorcycle, operated by a 42-year-old male (Unit 1), was traveling eastbound on U.S. 16A near mile marker 48. A 2024 Harley-Davidson motorcycle, operated by a 37-year-old male (Unit 2), was traveling westbound. The driver of Unit 1 was unable to negotiate a curve in the roadway. Unit 1 crossed the center line and collided with Unit 2. Both drivers sustained non-life-threatening injuries and were transported to Monument Health of Rapid City.

At 1:49 p.m. Friday, Playhouse Rd near 24445 Playhouse Rd: A 2017 Harley-Davidson motorcycle, operated by a 69-year-old male, was northbound near 24445 N Playhouse Rd with a 59-year-old female passenger. The driver failed to negotiate a right curve in the roadway and the motorcycle overturned. The passenger sustained non-life-threatening injuries and was transported to Monument Health of Rapid City.

At 2:07 p.m. Friday, U.S. Highway 16A, mile marker 54: A 2002 Harley-Davidson motorcycle, operated by a 63-year-old female, was westbound on U.S. 16A near mile marker 54 when the motorcycle had an equipment failure. The driver lost control, left the roadway, and was separated from the motorcycle. The driver was wearing a helmet and sustained non-life-threatening injuries. She was transported to Monument Health of Rapid City.

At 4:02 p.m. Friday, U.S. Highway 14A, mile marker 31: A 2009 Harley-Davidson motorcycle, operated by a 47-year-old male, was eastbound on US 14A near mile marker 31. The motorcycle had a tire failure and the driver lost control, leaving the roadway. The driver was not wearing a helmet and sustained life-threatening injuries. He was transported to Monument Health of Rapid City.

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At 10:33 p.m. Friday, South Dakota Highway 44, mile marker 28: A 2021 Kawasaki motorcycle, operated by a 21-year-old male, was eastbound near mile marker 28 on SD 44. The driver failed to negotiate a curve in the roadway and left the roadway. The driver was transported to Monument Health of Rapid City with non-life-threatening injuries.

At 11:50 p.m. Friday, U.S. Highway 14A, mile marker 49: A 2019 Harley-Davidson motorcycle, operated by a 42-year-old male, was eastbound on U.S. 14A with a 27-year-old female passenger. The driver failed to negotiate a curve in the roadway. The driver and passenger were separated from the motorcycle and both sustained non-life-threatening injuries. The driver was transported to Monument Health of Sturgis and the passenger declined transport.

All information released so far is only preliminary.

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



FOR RENT

1 bedroom apartment for rent

Downtown Groton, SD

\$650 per month

- + Includes electricity
- + Includes electric range
- + Includes refrigerator
- + Includes electric heat

Laundromat service available

Call/Text Tina
605/397-7285

Chargers pull away in second half to spoil Lady Tiger's home opening soccer game



Eighth grader Tori Schuster was busy protecting the net for Groton Area, having 18 saves on the day.

(Photo by Paul Kosel)

Groton Area's girls soccer team faced another early-season test Saturday as the Tigers hosted perennial power Sioux Falls Christian, with the Chargers coming away with a 5-0 victory.

The matchup completed a difficult opening weekend for Groton Area, which faced Dakota Valley on Friday before turning around to play Sioux Falls Christian on Saturday.

Sioux Falls Christian struck first with 22:54 remaining in the opening half when Maci Connell found the net. The Tigers kept the Chargers from adding another goal before halftime and went into the break trailing 1-0.

Groton Area had an opportunity to cut into the deficit early in the second half when McKenna Tietz was awarded a penalty kick with 31:52 remaining. Her attempt went wide to the left, however, keeping the Tigers off the scoreboard.

The Chargers pulled away from there.

Makinli Reitsma scored with 25:48 remaining to give Sioux Falls Christian a 2-0 advantage. Emily Van Hofwegen added another goal at the 20:35 mark, and Connell followed with her second goal of the game with 20:11 remaining. Victoria Gassen also scored for the Chargers as Sioux Falls Christian built the final 5-0 margin.

Groton Area goalkeeper Tori Schuster was busy throughout the contest and finished with 18 saves. Sioux Falls Christian goalkeeper Nealie Stanford recorded four saves while keeping the Tigers off the scoreboard.

Despite opening the season with two losses, Groton Area coach Matt Baumgartner said the weekend gave his young team an opportunity to see where improvements need to be made.

"We've learned a lot," Baumgartner said. "We've learned where people need to be on the field in certain situations that need to be fixed. Fitness might be a little bit off at the moment, but everyone still has to fight till the final whistle."

That learning process will be especially important for a Groton Area roster that features a large number of younger players.

Baumgartner said approximately nine of the team's 19 players are seventh- or eighth-graders, meaning many of them will receive valuable varsity experience throughout the fall.

"We're a little bit younger on that end, so there'll be plenty of minutes for them to experience varsity soccer this fall," Baumgartner said. "We've got to learn and adapt as we go."

The coach felt the Tigers showed improvement Saturday after struggling to stay together at times during Friday's loss to Dakota Valley.

"Yesterday was, you know, we got kind of beat on some of that fast turf against a very good athlete in Sophie Meyer from Dakota Valley," Baumgartner said. "The heads kind of get down when the fourth, fifth goal goes in and maybe there's no crawling back that they don't think. But you still have to fight till that final whistle."

Against Sioux Falls Christian, Baumgartner saw more of the cohesion he wants his team to develop.

"Overall, I'm pleased with what we're doing," he said. "We're learning and adapting our shape to the season, and the girls are learning their roles. We'll just have to take it day by day and pick different pieces

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of the puzzle and put them together each and every single day."

The Tigers still have ambitious goals despite the difficult opening weekend. Baumgartner said the team hopes to work its way into one of the top positions in the state standings and earn the opportunity to host a postseason match.

"I think we want to be top four, top three in the state so we can get ourselves a home playoff game and kind of control the cards from there," he said. "Each game at a time. We've got to take one game at a time."

Groton Area will get another opportunity Tuesday when the Tigers travel to Lennox. Lennox is a new opponent for Groton Area, leaving Baumgartner and his team with little history to draw upon.

"They're a brand-new team. We haven't seen them before," Baumgartner said. "They've got some athletes down there, track stars and basketball stars, so we'll have to just do what we can against the mystery of a team at this moment."

The Tigers will then head west next Friday and Saturday for matches against Belle Fourche and St. Thomas More, two programs Groton Area has enjoyed success against in recent seasons.

After a demanding opening weekend, Baumgartner said the emphasis remains on development, learning assignments and continuing to compete regardless of the score.

For a young Tiger squad, every early-season match provides another piece of experience as Groton Area works toward putting those pieces together over the course of the fall.

The game was broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by Agtegra, Avantara, Bierman Farm Service, Bk Custom Ts & More, Dacotah Bank, Groton Chamber, Groton Ford, Heartland Energy, Jacobson Electric, John Sieh Agency, Rix Farms/R&M Farms and The Meat House of Andover. Savannah Bible assisted Paul Kosel with the broadcast.



Savannah Bible is the new assistant on the GDILIVE.COM team this year. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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Water break at GHS

Yvonne Lorenz sent a text to Paul Kosel at 2:04 that asked, "Is there supposed to be water coming out of the ground by the east side of the high school, and running across the streets?" Well, that didn't sound good, so Paul text city supervisor Dwight Zerr the message. As it turned out, the water service line entering the high school gym utility room had busted. For a spell, two blocks of water were turned off until the valve for the high school was found and then turned off. The left photo features Superintendent Joe Schwan inspecting the corner of the utility room where water had seeped in. The right photo features Dwight Zerr turning the water main back on as Jesse Anderson is at the end of the block monitoring the water as the main had to be flushed out before returning to service. So just days before the start of school, the school will have to deal with the repairs of the water service line.

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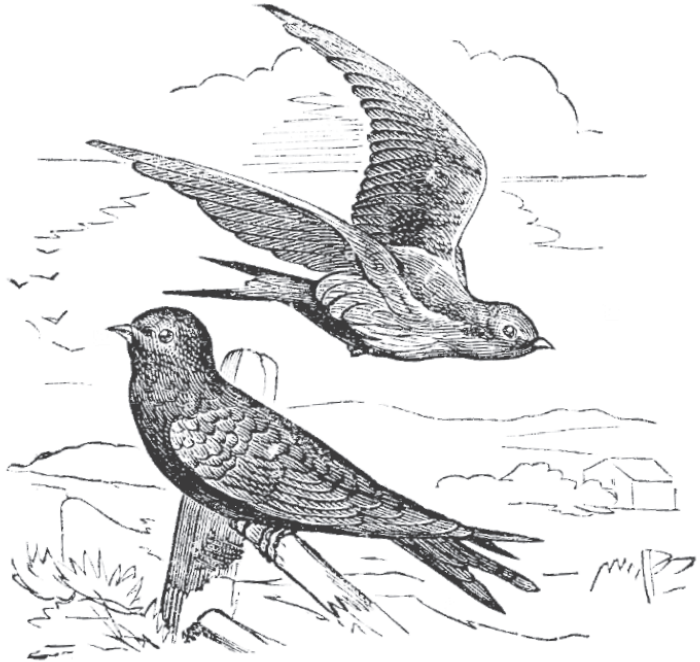
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THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

Do not curse the king,
even in your thought;
Do not curse the rich,
even in your bedroom;
For a bird of the air
may carry your voice,
And a bird in flight
may tell the matter.

— Ecclesiastes 10:20 —



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BIBLE

TRIVIA

by Wilson Casey

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

2. Which gospel does not contain the Olivet prophecy? *Matthew, Mark, Luke, John*

3. The prophecy of Obadiah is basically about what nation? *Shem, Edom, Tabor, Nebo*

4. Who said, "Rabbi" and kissed Jesus? *Alexander, Mark, Mordecai, Judas*

5. David was what relation to Boaz? *Brother, Son, Grandson, Great-grandson*

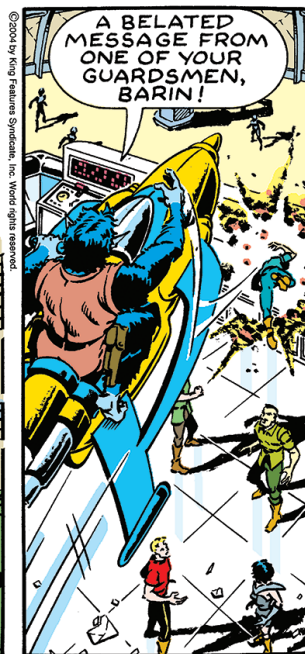
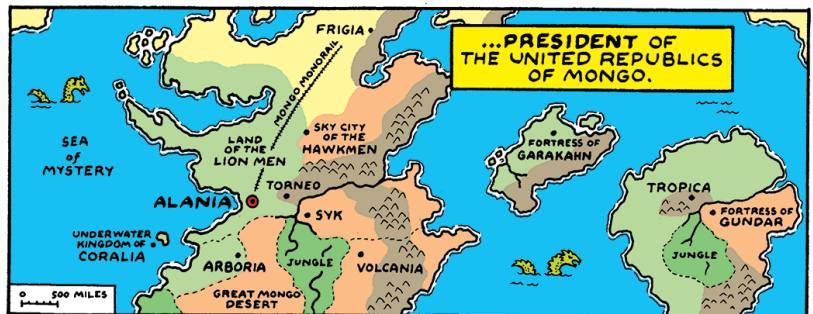
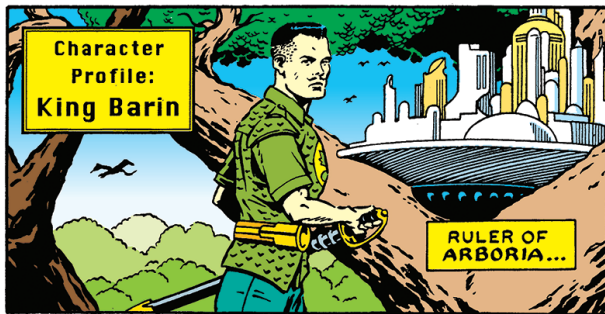
6. Who was Nun's son? *Jehoshaphat, Joshua, Zacchaeus, Meshach*

ANSWER: 1) Old, 2) John, 3) Edom, 4) Judas, 5) Great-grandson, 6) Joshua

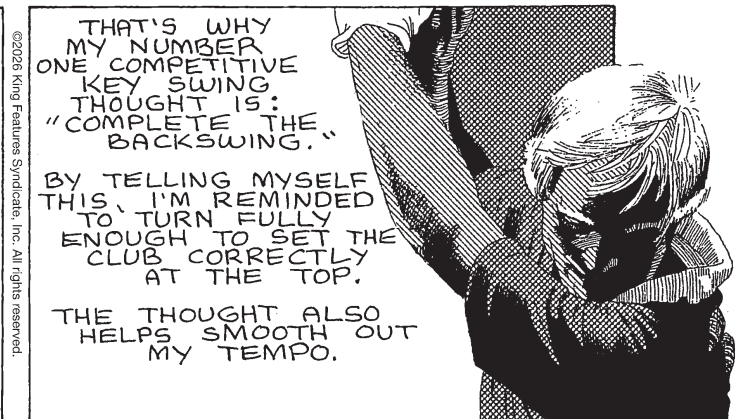
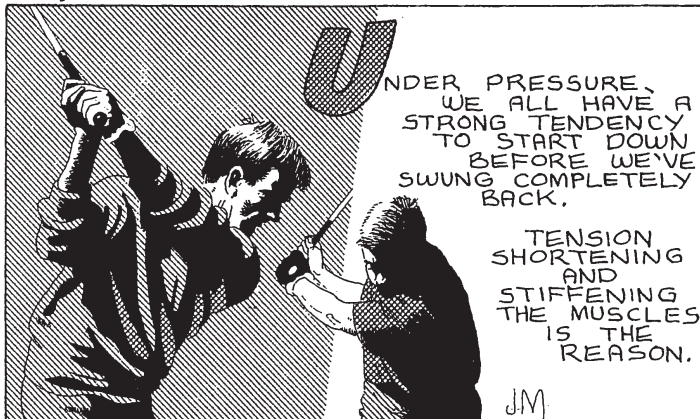
Find expanded trivia online with Wilson Casey at www.patreon.com/triviaguy. FREE TRIAL!

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Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS





Weakness and More Persist in Woman After Gallbladder Removal

DEAR DR. ROACH: I have a friend who had gallstones and ultimately got her gallbladder removed. When they went in, they saw lots of infections, cleaned her out, and put drains in her liver. She's been feeling awful and weak, and she wants to get a second opinion. Which type of specialist should she see? -- D.L.G.

ANSWER: Treatment for a complex problem like hers often takes a team of specialists -- in this case, certainly a surgeon and very likely a gastroenterologist and an infectious disease specialist. The ideal person to see now might be any of these specialists, especially one who saw her in the hospital and knows her case. However, it sounds like she may have lost

confidence in the team who initially treated her.

Getting a useful second opinion would require getting this specialist the information that they'd need, which would include imaging studies, operative reports and microbiology reports at a minimum. A surgeon is unlikely to be interested unless it's clear that further surgery may be necessary, so I suggest that she starts with a generalist or a gastroenterologist.

I've been involved in cases where a person who had a complex hospital course at a different medical system was admitted to my inpatient service, and getting the necessary information required many hours of work. With electronic medical records that can communicate with each other (sometimes), this can be done much more easily now. It's more feasible in the inpatient setting, but I hope your friend doesn't get any sicker that she needs to go in the hospital.

DEAR DR. ROACH: My son's going to be spending several weeks on a lake. I was looking at a permethrin-impregnated sleeping bag liner, and I'm wondering if this type of treated sleeping bag is good to prevent bites from various insects. Is it worth the money? -- J.M.M.

ANSWER: Permethrin-impregnated clothing is highly effective. Studies have shown an 80% to 90% reduction in bites when it's used. (Permethrin can't be used on skin as it's inactivated by skin oils.) Sleeping bag liners and bed nets aren't as well-studied, but they're still recommended by expert groups.

While I can't answer whether it's worth the money to you, I'd want myself or my child to have as much protection as possible. The permethrin in factory-applied gear lasts longer than self-applied permethrin, but it'll gradually become less effective, especially when it gets exposed to sunlight and oxygen.

The cost for a sleeping liner online was about \$80 when I checked. A bottle of spray is about \$25 and lasts for about six weeks on clothing or gear. There's an additive effect of using permethrin-impregnated products and topical skin repellants, and I certainly recommend both. I think it'd be worth it just to avoid itchy and unpleasant mosquito bites.

If he's going to be in an area with high amounts of tick-borne diseases (like Lyme disease, ehrlichiosis or babesiosis), I'd say that the sleeping liner would help prevent an infection, which could potentially ruin his time on the lake or even cause health issues that might require him to leave.

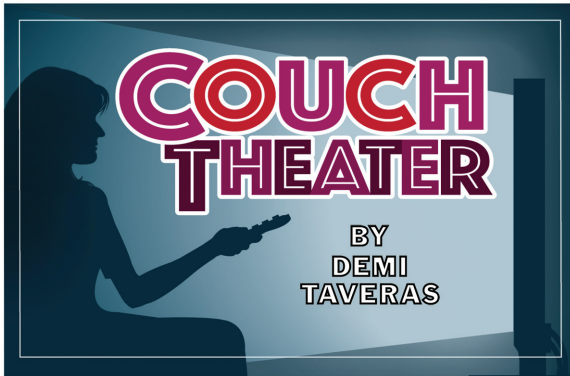
Dr. Roach regrets that he is unable to answer individual questions, but will incorporate them in the column whenever possible. Readers may email questions to ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu.

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Drew Starkey, left, and Madelyn Cline star in "Outer Banks: Season 5." (Courtesy of MovieStillsDB)

"Toy Story 5" (PG) -- The third-highest-grossing film of 2026 is officially available to rent on Aug. 18, after a box-office run of \$1.096 billion against its \$250 million cost. (Pixar needed the money back since this installment is also one of the most

expensive animated films ever made!) Tom Hanks, Tim Allen and Joan Cusack, respectively, reprise their roles as iconic characters Woody, Buzz Lightyear and Jessie; meanwhile, Conan O'Brien ("If I had Legs I'd Kick You") joins the cast as Smarty Pants, a toy that assists with potty training, and Greta Lee ("Past Lives") enters the series as Lilypad "Lily," a frog-themed tablet. The film, which takes place two years after "Toy Story 4," follows our favorite group of toys and their latest debacles as electronics start to take over their playtime with their current owner, Bonnie! Fun fact: Scarlett Spears, who now voices Bonnie, also played Young Glinda in last year's "Wicked: For Good." (Amazon Prime Video)

"Outer Banks: Season 5" (TV-MA) -- The wait is almost over for the series finale of this hit 2020 series! Fans have followed these characters from the Outer Banks of North Carolina to the Bahamas, South America and Morocco, and they've even had to say "goodbye" to a much-beloved main character, Rudy Pankow's JJ Maybank. Season 5 kicks off right after JJ's death with his friends drowning in grief, but the Pogues are still determined to track down JJ's killer, his biological father Chandler Groff (J. Anthony Crane), as well as the mythical artifact of the Blue Crown. The Pogues are still getting run out of their own town, and with no other people left to help them besides Sarah's deranged brother, Rafe (Drew Starkey), they embark on yet another unbelievable adventure full of close calls with death and spur-of-the-moment action! Look for all 10 episodes of season 5 to premiere on Aug. 20. (Netflix)

"The Invite" (R) -- This comedy-drama film out now to rent is Olivia Wilde's third directorial feature film, following her 2022 psychological thriller "Don't Worry Darling." Wilde also stars in the film, with just three of her fellow actors rounding out the cast -- Seth Rogen ("The Studio"), Penelope Cruz ("The Bride!"), and Edward Norton ("A Complete Unknown"). "The Invite" takes place over the span of one night in a San Francisco apartment owned by married couple Joe (Rogen) and Angela (Wilde). To Joe's surprise and dismay, Angela has invited their noisy upstairs neighbors over for dinner. But when neighbors Pina (Cruz) and Hawk (Norton) arrive for dinner, the night takes quite an unexpected turn for Joe and Angela, as they receive an extremely alluring invite of their own. (Fandango at Home)

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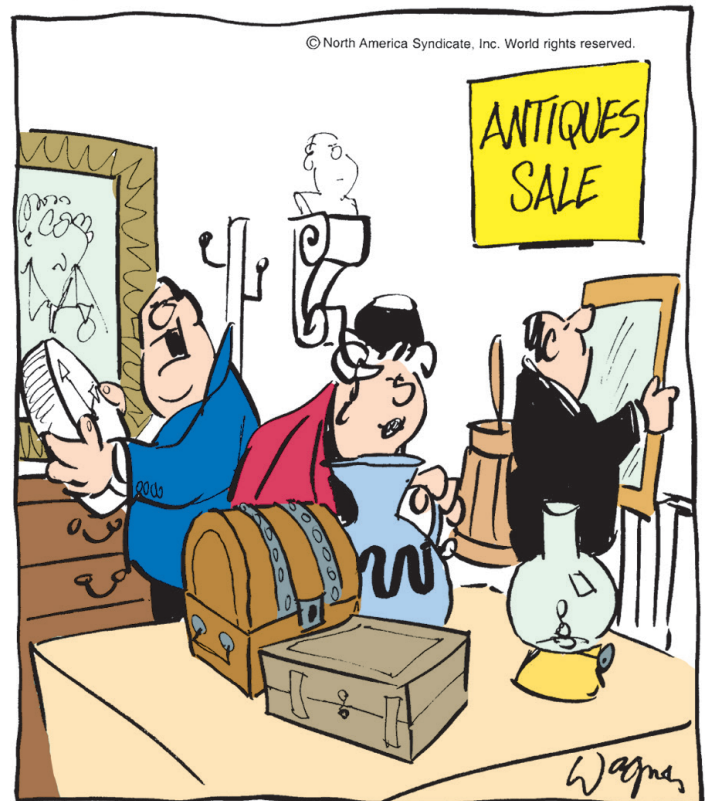
1. Who was the Beatles drummer before Ringo Starr?
2. How did Jefferson Airplane lead singer Grace Slick (think: "White Rabbit") get her name?
3. Name the first No. 1 song the Beatles had in the U.S. Which song first topped the charts in the U.K.? (They're not the same!)
4. Who was known as the "Queen of Soul"?
5. Name the song that contains this lyric: "Big Sam left Seattle in the year of '92, With George Pratt his partner and brother Billy too."

Answers

1. Pete Best. He was the Beatles' drummer from August 1960 until August 1962, when he was replaced by Ringo Starr. Best's mother had a coffee house (called the Casbah Club) in the basement of her house, which was where the band first played. The Casbah is now available for Airbnb rental.
2. She married Gerald Slick in 1961. She was born Grace Barnett Wing.
3. "I Want to Hold Your Hand" topped the charts in the U.S. and "From Me to You" in the U.K.
4. Aretha Franklin.
5. "North to Alaska," by Johnny Horton, in 1960. The song was used in the 1960 film of the same name and tells the tale of a man going to the frozen north to look for gold. Sadly, Horton died five days before the movie came out.

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GRIN and BEAR IT *Wagner*



"This dates back to one of the early Antiques Roadshows!"

Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps

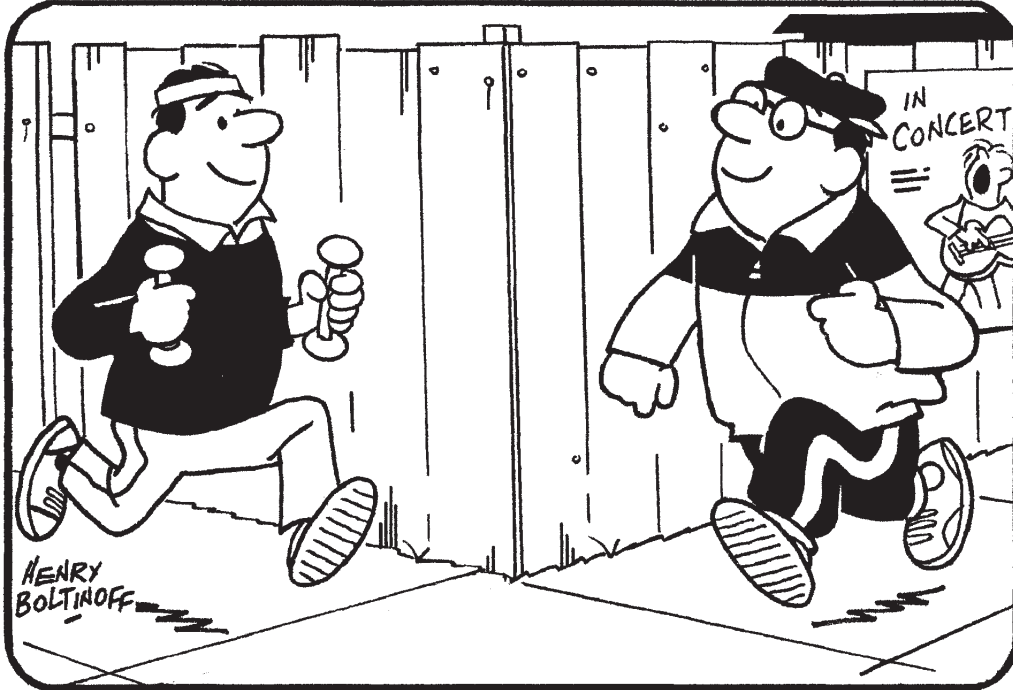


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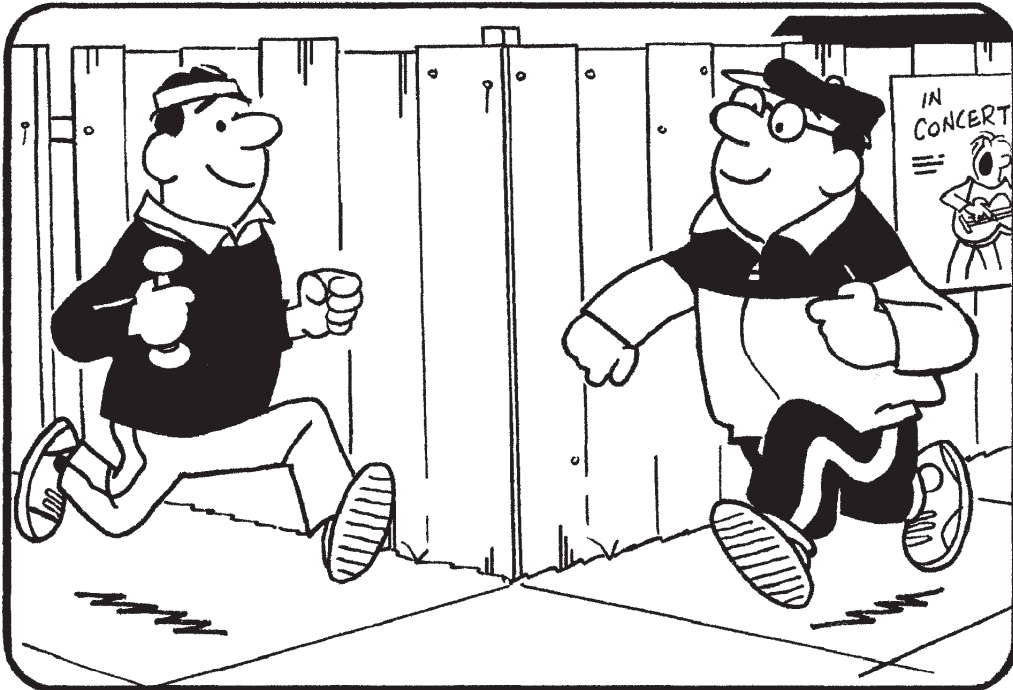
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HOCUS-FOCUS

BY
HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



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Differences: 1. Arm is raised. 2. Poster is smaller. 3. Weight is missing. 4. Cap is reversed. 5. Line in sidewalk is moved. 6. Leg is moved.

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* Soaking window decals with baby wipes will soften the adhesive, allowing you to remove a decal from glass easier.

* "Potty training can be stressful for both the child and the parent. We tried many things, but in the end, you have to wait for the child to want to train. One thing that helped keep our daughter motivated was a sticker chart. Be bought all kinds of stickers, and whenever she used the potty, she would get to choose a sticker to put on the chart. We would remark on how many stickers she had and the variety, which made her feel successful!" -- D.R. in Iowa

* "Last week, we found my son's favorite sippy cup half-filled with sour milk under the couch. I washed it very well with hot soapy water, but it still smelled bad. I stuffed the cup with

newspaper pieces and screwed the top back on. The newspaper absorbed the smell. I took about a week, but it's back in use." -- T.L. in Texas

* "My pup loves to ride in the car, and my car seats love his hair, too. Seems like it's impossible to get out! A vacuum didn't work, so my neighbor suggested I use dish gloves. Just put a latex rubber glove on your hand and wipe over seats. A very lightly damp sponge can work as well." -- P.I. in Washington

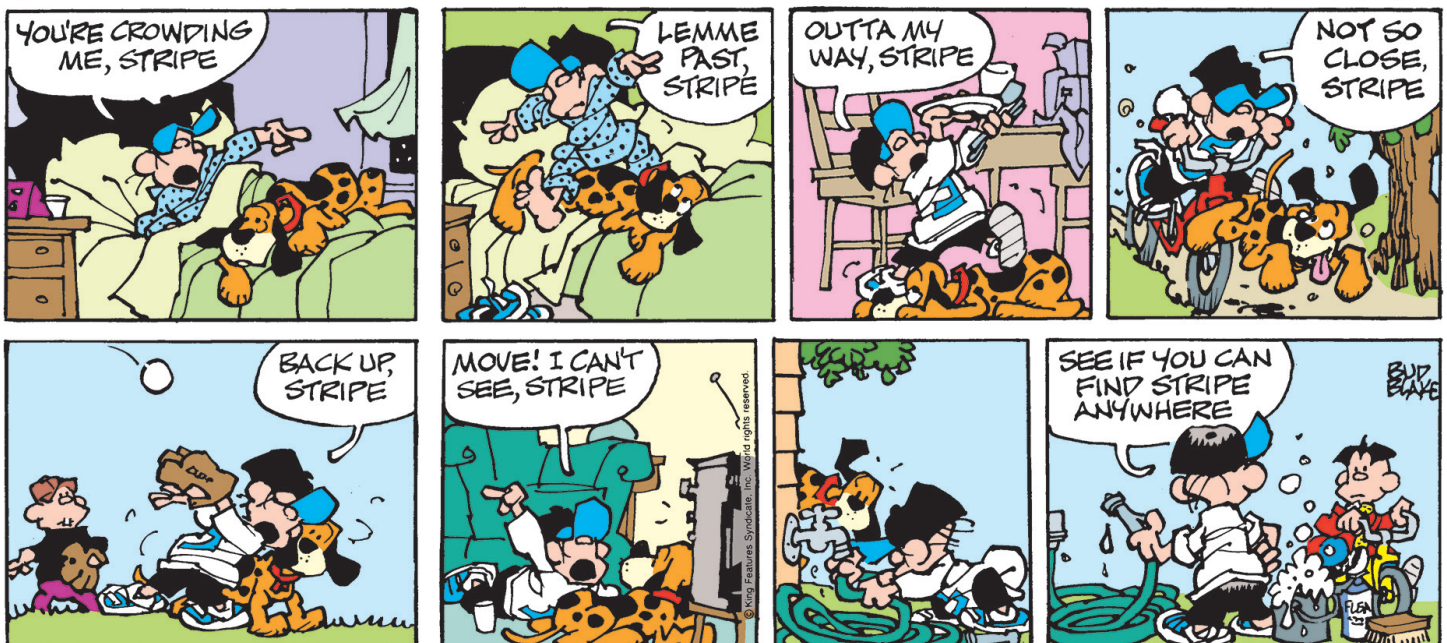
* Lotion scent too strong? Purchase a pump bottle of unscented lotion, and remove about a third to a small bottle or even a plastic zipper-top bag. Add your scented lotion, and mix well by shaking the bottle or stirring with a long stick. The scent will be diluted, and you can always add more scented lotion or top off with the excess unscented lotion.

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

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TIGER

by BUD BLAKE



Groton Daily Independent

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King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Layer
4 Radiant
9 Soup legume
12 Dubai's country, for short
13 Kin of "Presto!"
14 Online chats, briefly
15 Keyboard piece for two
17 Impose
18 Pained sounds
19 Nobel-winning Mother
21 "Hooray!"
24 Story lines
25 Hollywood's Gabor

- 26 Genetic stuff
28 Nasser's successor
31 Stinging insect
33 Pop
35 Arias for one
36 Animal's nose
38 Mexican Mrs.
40 Teeny
41 "Phooey!"
43 Disney exec Michael
45 1912 Olympic legend
47 MGM motto start
48 Tease
49 Teen's formalwear

1	2	3		4	5	6	7	8		9	10	11
12				13						14		
15				16						17		
				18				19		20		
21	22	23					24					
25				26		27		28			29	30
31				32		33		34		35		
36				37		38		39		40		
			41			42		43		44		
45	46						47					
48				49		50				51	52	53
54				55						56		
57				58						59		

- 54 Under the weather
55 Perfume compound
56 To and —
57 Flamenco cheer
58 Belittle
59 Box office buys, slangily

DOWN

- 1 Young dog
2 Chou En- —
3 Pro vote
4 Acknowledged
5 Blessing
6 Actress Lucy

- 7 "Get Here" singer Adams
8 Tends the lawn
9 Stops talking
10 Flightless birds
11 Hammett pooch
16 M-Q connection
20 Some HDTVs
21 Evergreen trees
22 Nobelist Pavlov
23 Latin ballroom dance

- 27 Small batteries
29 Sheltered
30 Wedding cake layer
32 Kitten's sound
34 Visionary
37 Designated
39 Put on a clothesline
42 Succinct
44 Lith., once
45 Small combo
46 Mound
50 Non-Rx
51 Newt
52 — Lanka
53 Boston squad, for short

Groton Daily Independent

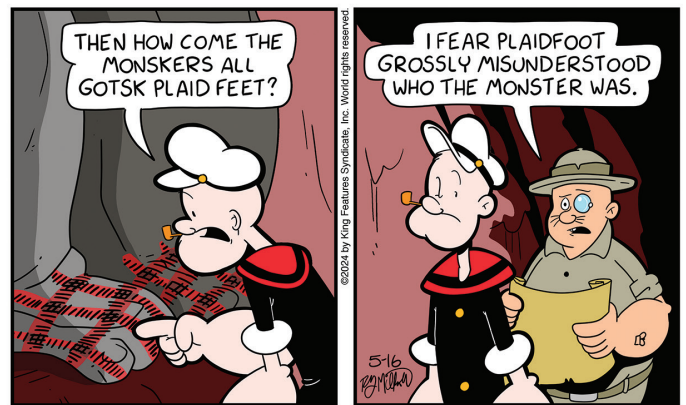
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— King Crossword — Answers

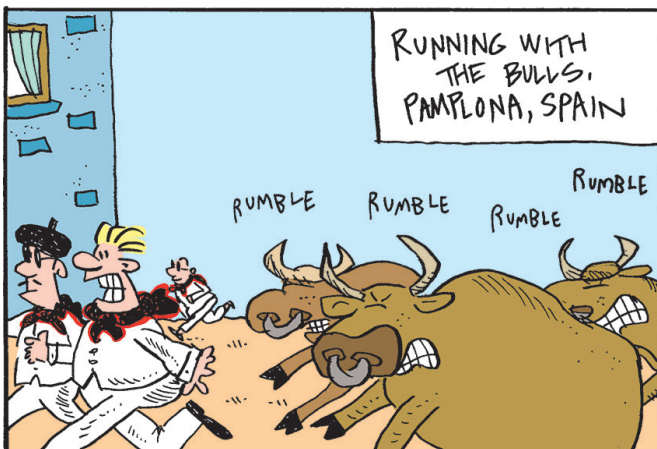
Solution time: 22 mins.

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			O	W	S		T	E	R	E	S	A
Y	I	P	P	E	E		A	R	C	S		
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W	A	S	P		D	A	D		S	O	L	I
S	N	O	U	T		S	R	A		W	E	E
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Olive

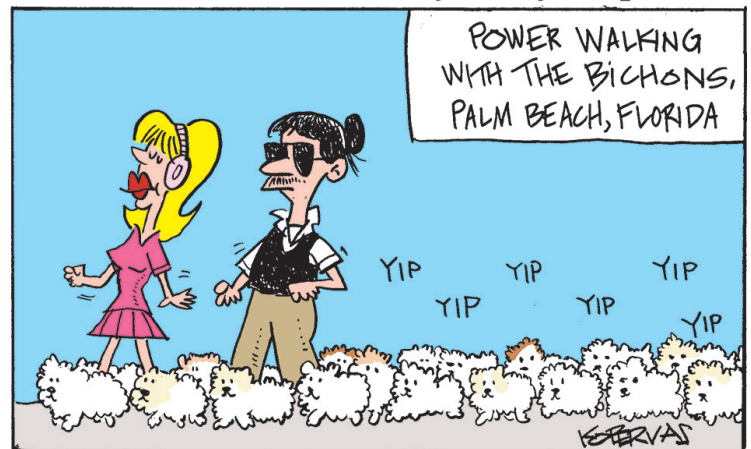


Out on a Limb



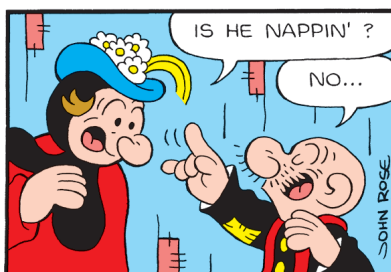
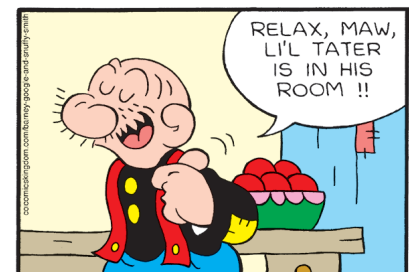
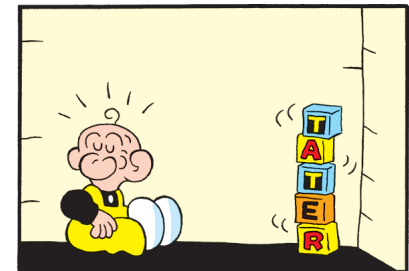
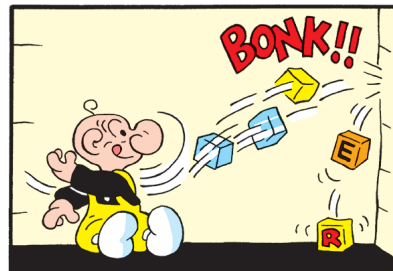
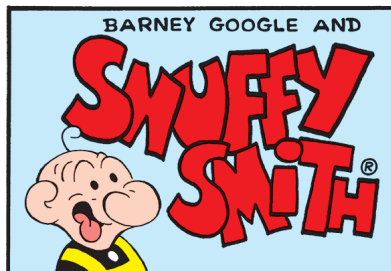
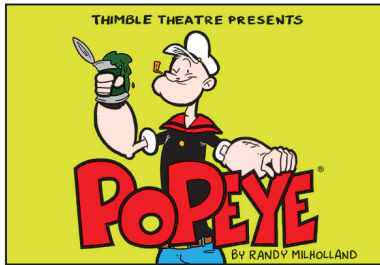
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by Gary Kopervas



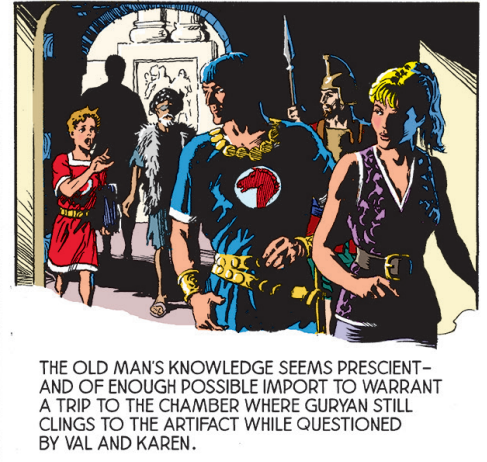
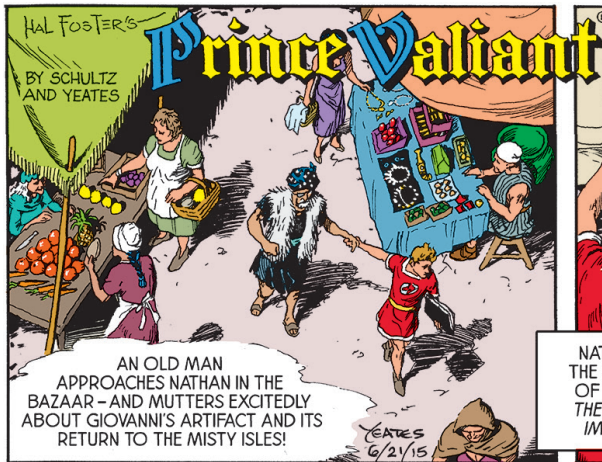
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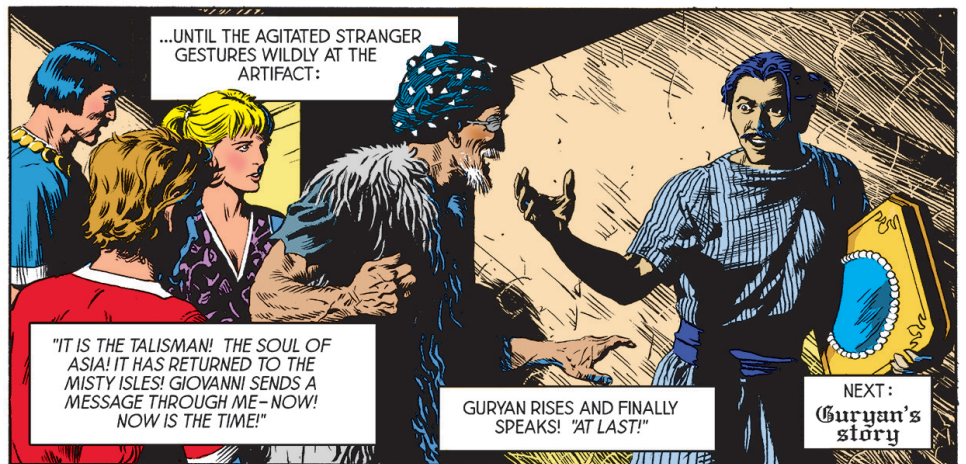
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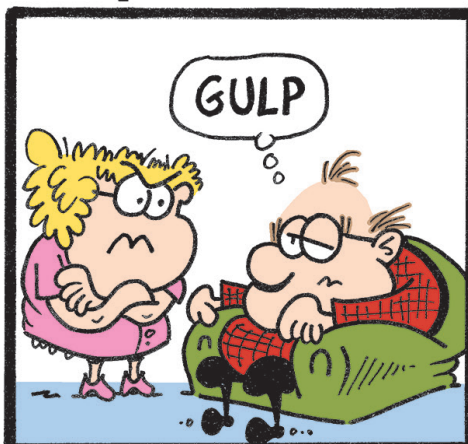
GURVAN, DESPITE ALL PERSUASION AND THREATS, HAS STUBBORNLY REFUSED TO DIVULGE ANY INFORMATION ABOUT THE TERRIBLE THING THAT HE GUARDS SO LOYALLY FOR HIS MASTER, GIOVANNI...

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The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



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SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

When will salads be safe to eat?

I'll be the first to admit that when I recently strolled through the vegetable aisles at the store, trying to decide what to buy, my overriding feeling was one of concern.

A show of hands: How many have avoided salad products for several weeks now? Between iceberg lettuce causing a massive cyclospora parasite outbreak because the defective product was sent to retailers and restaurants, we also have jalapeno peppers and cucumbers with salmonella.

They say (they, being the experts) that while we should avoid bagged salads, it's OK to eat whole head lettuce as long as we throw away the outer two or three leaves and then wash the rest under running water.

For right now, I'm going to pass. Those same experts concede that completely washing cyclospora off lettuce leaves is very difficult. Buying from your local farmers markets might be the best bet right now, until this cyclospora outbreak goes away.

Listeria has surfaced, with the producer voluntarily expanding its own recall, and the list of potential bagged items affected is long: green beans, bell peppers, yellow and zucchini squash, and cucumbers. The produce was sold at a wide variety of retailers across many states.

But it's not only salads that are a problem right now. There are the 1.5 million dozen eggs contaminated with salmonella and sold under different brand names.

And we have organic blueberries with E. coli.

And pistachio nut butter, made in Italy and sold by a big box store, that's contaminated with salmonella.

Our best bet: Sign up for email alerts that will tell us quickly what foods are being recalled. Start with the FDA (www.fda.gov/food), and include alerts from the USDA (www.fsis.usda.gov/recalls) and FoodSafety (www.foodsafety.gov). Consumer Reports (www.consumerreports.org) will send phone alerts for food recalls if you sign up. Put "food safety alerts" in the search box.

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1. Which team defeated the DeVry Hoyas 258-141 in January 1992 in the highest-scoring NCAA basketball game in history?

2. What barrier did Bernice Gera break at a minor league baseball game between the Geneva Senators and the Auburn Phillies in June 1972?

3. Name the St. Louis Blues player who had the tip of his left index finger severed from blocking a slapshot in a December 1990 game against the Chicago Blackhawks.

4. Reilly the Bona Wolf is the mascot of which New York university's athletic teams?

5. CBS Television City studio complex in Los Angeles was built on the site of which stadium that was demolished in 1952?

6. Name the Hungarian brothers who both became placekickers in the NFL in the 1960s.

7. In 1981, which boxer was mugged outside a Detroit bar and had \$45,000 in clothes, jewelry and gold teeth stolen from him?



by Ryan A. Berenz

Answers

1. The Troy State Trojans.

2. She became the first woman to umpire a professional baseball game.

3. Paul Cavallini.

4. The St. Bonaventure Bonnies.

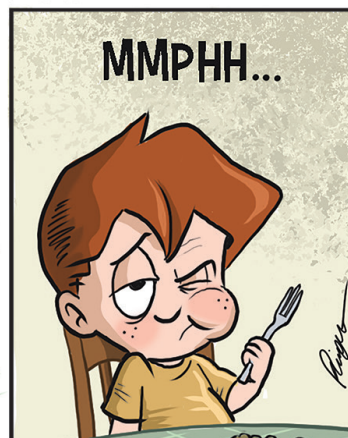
5. Gilmore Stadium.

6. Pete and Charlie Gogolak.

7. LEOn Spinks.

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Amber Waves



by Dave T. Phipps

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Environmental allergies affect pets and people

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: The vet says my dog "Wyatt" has hay fever and should be kept inside the house when pollen counts are high. She also says my cat "Snowball" is allergic to something inside the house. Does that mean she has to stay outside? Sign me -- Confused in Crystal Lake, Illinois

DEAR CONFUSED: Dealing with pet allergies can be frustrating and confusing. But don't toss the cat outside yet.

Allergic reactions caused by pollen, dust and other things in the environment (known as atopic dermatitis) are more common in pets than many owners realize.

But they can be managed with a veterinarian's help.

Symptoms of hay fever and other environmental allergies can include frequent sneezing; irritated, runny, itchy eyes; a runny nose; scratching much more than usual; and even a rash on the paws or face. Dogs may frantically lick between their paws to ease the itching. Excess scratching can cause sores and hot spots on a pet's skin, which can get infected.

Vets diagnose atopic dermatitis by its symptoms and common factors, like the time of year they occur. You can help with this by writing down everything you notice about your pet, including symptoms, behavior and their daily activities.

They'll create a treatment plan based on the severity of symptoms. Steroids may be prescribed short-term to reduce inflammation. Antibiotics or antifungals will clear any secondary infections caused by scratching and chewing. Longer-term treatment may include allergy shots (hyposensitization, a type of immunotherapy), medication to reduce immune response and omega-3 supplements. These can all take a few months to be effective, so your pets may need additional treatment for acute symptoms in the interim.

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

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Strange BUT TRUE

* On average, it takes between 12 to 14 dates before couples will trade house keys.

* In 1915, the Kansas legislature introduced a bill that would make it a misdemeanor for a woman under age 44 to wear lipstick because it would “create a false impression.”

* The rocket frog can jump more than six feet by releasing energy it stores in its tendons.

* While several companies claim to be America’s oldest soft drink brand, including Moxie, Dr Pepper, Vernors Ginger

Soda and Hires Root Beer, all of which were created in the late 19th century, the inventor of carbonated water was Swedish chemist Joseph Priestley, in 1767.

* The Grand Canyon is so large that it can be seen from space.

* When language barriers caused confusion during international soccer tournaments, English referee Ken Aston was inspired to create the yellow and red card system while sitting at a traffic light. The cards were introduced at the 1970 World Cup.

* Ancient Romans sent slaves into the mountains to collect snow that they flavored with fruits and juices to create their own version of ice cream.

* Sunlight hitting Earth for one hour contains more energy than the world uses in a year.

* In 2013, the Chicago Sun-Times laid off 28 of its full-time photographers and trained its reporters to take their own iPhone photos.

* Bees contribute to more than \$15 billion worth of crops every year through pollination.

* Wagyu beef, generally held to be some of the world’s best, usually comes from cows raised in Japan with such luxuries as massages, a better diet and longer lifespans.

* Studies have shown that mice have dropped dead after breathing some new carpet fumes.

Thought for the Day: “One thorn of experience is worth a whole wilderness of warnings.” -- James Russell Lowell

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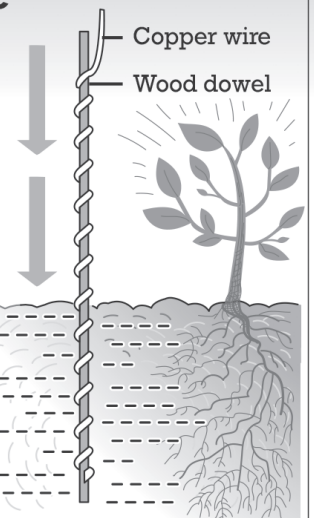


Electroculture

Though this concept was first written about more than 120 years ago, with claims of success in accelerating plant growth, it was not further studied seriously in western culture.

In 2023, the Academy of Sciences in Beijing compared regular pea plants to pea plants that were exposed to an electrical field. The electrified pea seeds germinated faster, and later produced higher yields.

Sources: www.greenmatters.com
www.nature.com/articles/s43016-021-00449-9





by Freddy Groves

New clinical trials at the VA

The VA has started two important trials.

The first trial, titled "Psilocybin Intervention for Veterans Overcoming Treatment-Resistant Depression," is to determine the effectiveness as well as the safety of a compound that's used to treat depression and post-traumatic stress disorder: psilocybin.

Psilocybin is a mushroom, more commonly known as "magic mushrooms," that converts to psilocin in the body, altering brain activity. Its use as a solution to mental health conditions that haven't responded to previous treatment is hoped to bring relief to sufferers.

The trial will compare two different dosages and study how they affect depression levels, PTSD and side effects. They will be held at five different VA locations: Birmingham VA Health Care System, Tuscaloosa VA Medical Center, VA Portland (Oregon) Health Care System, Corporal Michael J. Crescenz VA Medical Center and VA Puget Sound Health Care System.

The other new trial will take a diabetes drug, semaglutide, a GLP-1 receptor agonist, and explore its use as treatment for alcohol use disorder. Semaglutide appears to affect the rewards part of the brain. Researchers took their clues from a prior study that concluded that GLP-1 helped with alcohol, cannabis, cocaine, nicotine and opioid use disorders, following study participants for up to three years.

There are over 400,000 veterans who've been diagnosed with alcohol use disorder, and GLP-1 has been shown to reduce the rate of emergency hospital visits, hospitalizations and other adverse outcomes. The goal of the trial is to determine whether it can reduce alcohol use disorder in veterans.

The study ("Cessation or Reduction of Alcohol Consumption in Veterans") will be held at 18 VA medical centers starting with an initial enrollment of 600 veterans. Participants will either receive a placebo or semaglutide shot every week for 24 weeks while researchers track the outcomes.

To learn about participating in either trial, contact your nearest VA medical center or look for the trial by name at [ClinicalTrials.gov](https://clinicaltrials.gov).

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Wishing Well®

7	6	4	2	7	4	5	2	8	4	5	2	3
S	J	B	T	E	E	B	H	E	E	U	I	Y
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8	6	5	6	5	8	3	8	3	6	3	8	3
L	I	E	T	S	O	A	V	P	Y	P	E	Y

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

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1. TELEVISION: Which musical instrument does Leonard play in "The Big Bang Theory"?
2. MUSIC: In what year did the Woodstock music festival take place?
3. MOVIES: Which horror movie features a character named Ellen Ripley?
4. HISTORY: When did the French Revolution begin?
5. FOOD & DRINK: What is carpaccio?
6. U.S. STATES: How many states border Mexico?
7. GAMES: How many wooden blocks are in the game of Jenga?
8. GEOGRAPHY: What is the longest mountain chain in the world?
9. ART: Who painted the "Mona Lisa"?
10. MATH: How many sides does a hexagon have?

Answers

1. Cello.
2. 1969.
3. "Alien."
4. 1789.
5. Thinly sliced raw meat or fish.
6. Four: California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas.
7. 54.
8. The Andes in South America.
9. Leonardo da Vinci.
10. Six.

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South Dakota Governor



Larry Rhoden



South Dakota: *Under God, the People Rule*

Building for Our Future

South Dakota's kids and grandkids are our future. My mission as Governor is to keep South Dakota strong, safe, and free, especially for our next generation, and education is a key component to make that happen. In recent years, we've made key investments in technical education to give our kids the opportunity to find a career right here in South Dakota.

I have always believed there is dignity in working with your hands. In making something start to finish. There is something special about being able to step back at the end of the day and see what you built, what you fixed, or what you made better.

Manufacturing is a huge part of South Dakota's economy. It supports thousands of good-paying jobs. It strengthens communities across our state. And manufacturing makes sure that our products aren't just made in America – they're made in South Dakota. But our businesses need skilled people to keep growing. And that's why we invest in technical education.

We need to make sure the next generation of South Dakotans knows about these career opportunities. Our technical colleges do this very well. They listen to industry. They understand what employers need. And then they give students the practical, hands-on education to get to work – and then they routinely churn out student placement rates of well above 90%!

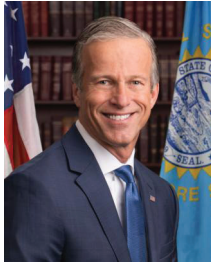
Unique opportunities like the Build Dakota Scholarship build partnerships between our businesses and tech colleges to put students directly into job placements and help them get their career started here in South Dakota. This past year, my Administration helped award more Build Dakota Scholarships than ever before!

Recently, we broke ground on a key investment in Southeast Technical College in Sioux Falls. Just a few months ago, I was at Southeast Tech to sign the bill to invest \$6 million in this project. And now, we put shovels in the ground to bring it to life! This is an exciting development for Southeast Tech, for Sioux Falls, and for our entire state.

The new facility at Southeast Tech will be the James Abdnor Center for Advanced Manufacturing. And I can't think of a more fitting person to name this building after than Senator Jim Abdnor. He believed deeply in South Dakota, in public service, and in creating opportunities for young people.

This center will carry his legacy forward. When it opens, it will give even more students the opportunity to learn skills and a trade. Students will train in hands-on fields that are critical to our future – fields like advanced manufacturing, automation, mechanical engineering technology, welding, and more. Welding is my personal favorite!

South Dakota is Open for Opportunity! And investments in manufacturing and technical education make sure we stay that way. Together, we will continue to make some incredible things right here in South Dakota!



JOHN THUNE
U.S. SENATOR FOR SOUTH DAKOTA

Moving Through a Long To-Do List

At the start of last year, Republicans had a long to-do list. The American people had made their priorities clear, and we were ready to deliver on them. Republicans were committed to strengthening our economy, securing the border, and making America safer and stronger in the years ahead. And that's exactly what we've been working on since taking control in Washington last year.

This April, 97 percent of American taxpayers saw a tax cut thanks to Republicans' Working Families Tax Cuts law. Almost everyone who filed a tax return this year was able to keep more money in their pocket thanks to Republicans' landmark bill. We made lower tax rates permanent, raised the child tax credit and standard deduction and made them permanent, and we delivered additional tax relief like no tax on tips and a bonus deduction for seniors. And the Working Families Tax Cuts also delivers significant and permanent tax relief that benefits South Dakota's small businesses and family farms and ranches.

Republicans have not just focused on putting more money in Americans' pockets. We have also worked to bring down costs. We passed the 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act, which cuts some of the red tape that has contributed to homeownership becoming unaffordable for too many Americans. We did away with Biden-era regulations that would have driven up the cost of household appliances, not to mention eliminating electric vehicle mandates. And Congress has taken concrete action to drive down costs at the pharmacy counter and strengthen rural health care.

President Trump and Republicans in Congress have also ended the Biden border crisis. President Trump took swift action last year to secure the border. The Working Families Tax Cuts provided the resources necessary to hire more agents, finish the border wall, and keep the border secure for the long term. And we've also made it a priority to strengthen our military, including by making a generational investment in military readiness and reforming the way the Pentagon does business to ensure tax dollars are spent to maximum effectiveness for our men and women in uniform.

These are just some of the ways we're delivering on our promises to the American people. We've done a lot since last January, and we have more still to do. We're keeping our foot on the gas to strengthen our economy, secure our country, and make America stronger in the years ahead.

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Dr. James L. Snyder Ministries

PO Box 831313 - Ocala, FL 34483

1-352-216-3025

Keeping Up Is Hard To Do At My Age

There was a time in my life when keeping up was part of my daily routine. I started each day with a specific objective, and by the end of the day, I had completed it.

I took pride in completing my work on time. The secret was to plan carefully. Some projects required several days; therefore, I organized them accordingly.

That had been true throughout my life until a very serious enemy came into view and hindered me from finishing some projects. This enemy has been a curse in my life.

Comparing me with The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage, you will discover that she had no such enemy in her life messing with her schedule. If she wanted something done, she completed it on time. I, on the other side of the marriage table, had trouble along these lines, and even though I wanted something done, I never actually got it done when I wanted it.

You might ask what this enemy is. It was something I really never expected in my life, and voilà, there it is. That vicious enemy is "Old Age." It has snuck up on me without any indication it was coming.

Although The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage is technically two years older than me, she doesn't have that same enemy messing up her daily schedule. No matter what, she finished a project exactly on time.

When I was younger, I was taught that "Old Age" was chasing me and would catch up sooner than I expected. Laughing, I always pushed it aside and said everybody gets old except me.

I looked at my father and mother and noticed they were getting old. I never really believed that I would actually come face-to-face with "Old Age," and yet here it was.

Every time I celebrated a birthday, it never occurred to me that it meant I was one year older than the year before. Why do we celebrate birthdays every year? Don't we realize that your birthday means you're just older?

Sitting at my desk the other day, I noticed a pile of work I needed to complete. I never realized I had so much to do at my age and it was taking me longer to do it.

I had the superstitious idea that getting older didn't mean you couldn't accomplish all that you could years before. I just assumed that celebrating my birthday was just another click on the clock.

My birthday and The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage's birthday are two days apart. We went to a restaurant to celebrate our birthday like we usually do.

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At the restaurant, we told our waitress we were celebrating our birthday. Looking at me, she said, "How does old feel?"

Without even looking at her, I reached across the table, took hold of The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage's arm and gently squeezed it. Then I looked back at the waitress and said, "It doesn't feel really that bad."

The waitress didn't know whether she should laugh or walk away. Unfortunately, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage knew exactly what to do, and it wasn't to laugh. The look she gave me still burns in my head today.

My predicament is trying to get around that stupid remark to the waitress. As long as I have been married, I still have trouble dealing with my stupidity.

Through 55 years of marital bliss, I have worked hard to keep up with The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage. When I think I've accomplished it, something happens that sets me back in a remarkable way.

I'm not quite sure how she can keep up with everything. If I knew her secret, maybe I could apply it to my life and get to the place where I'm actually keeping up with everything. However, if I asked her the secret, I'm not exactly sure how she would respond.

Looking back over the years of my life, I think I can say the only place I have actually kept up with everything was my relationship with The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage. The fact that we've been married 55 years says quite a lot about both of us.

The secret I have discovered is The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage can fix anything wrong or broken.

About eight years ago, the bumper on my truck broke and was almost dragging on the ground. I had no idea what to do, and as I was looking at it, the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage came out and said, "What's wrong?"

When I told her, she looked at it for a moment and then said, "I think I know how to fix that. Let me go inside and get something."

She came out in a few moments with some large paperclips. She looked under the bumper, asked me to hold it up, and then put three paperclips underneath the bumper. That was eight years ago, and those paperclips are still doing their job of keeping the front bumper in place.

If she can't keep up, nobody else can.

Thinking on this reminded me of a Bible verse. "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil." (Ephesians 5:15-16).

I need to be careful each day, live as it pleases the Lord, and focus on what is important. Some things are worth doing, and I need to know the difference.

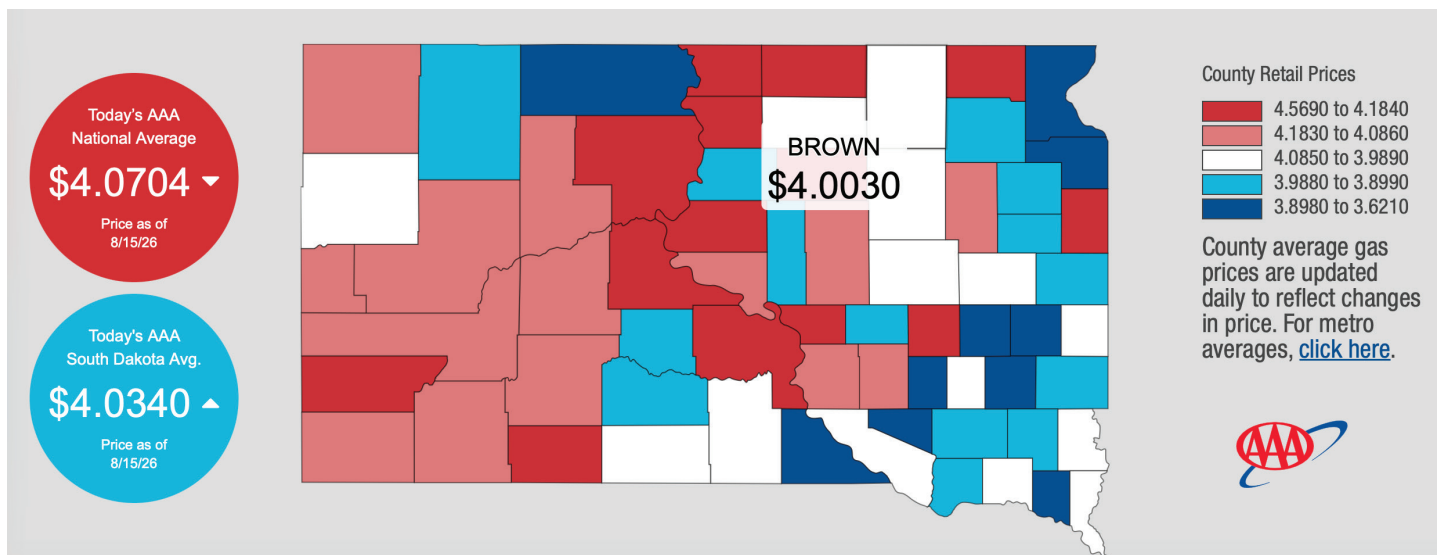
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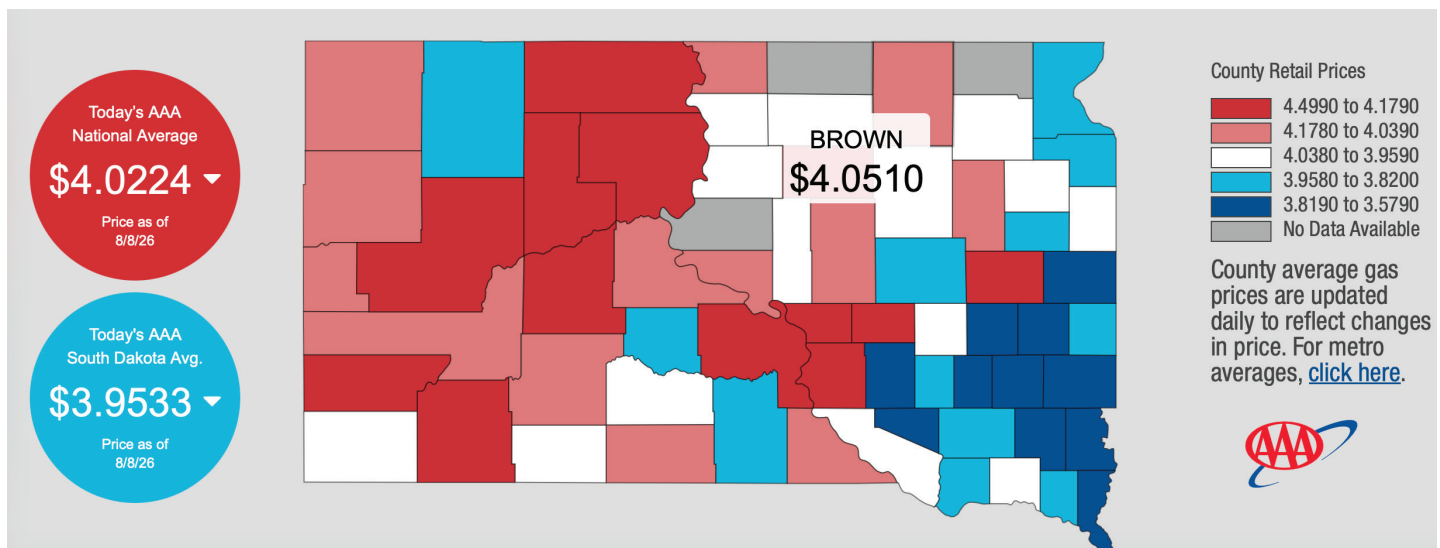
South Dakota Average Gas Prices

	Regular	Mid-Grade	Premium	Diesel
Current Avg.	\$4.0340	\$4.2177	\$4.7388	\$5.0977
Yesterday Avg.	\$4.0247	\$4.1885	\$4.7248	\$5.0358
Week Ago Avg.	\$3.9533	\$4.1568	\$4.6587	\$4.8951
Month Ago Avg.	\$3.7564	\$3.9531	\$4.4514	\$4.3514
Year Ago Avg.	\$2.9820	\$3.1756	\$3.6194	\$3.3918

This Week



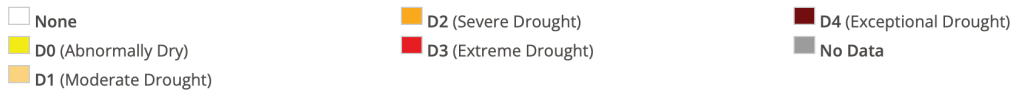
Last Week



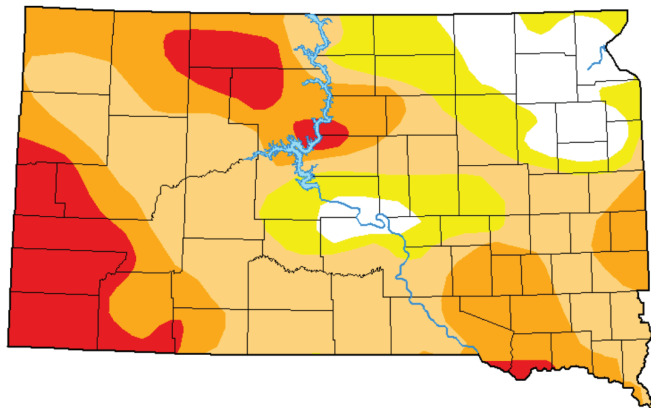
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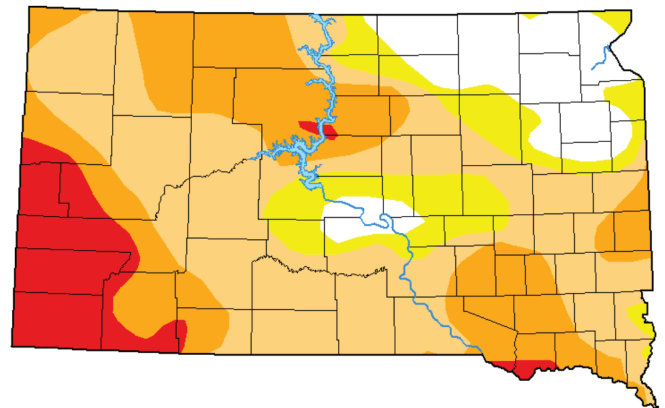
Drought Classification



Drought Monitor



August 11



August 4

Moderate to heavy rainfall doused portions of eastern Kansas and adjacent Nebraska, leading to some limited relief, but totals were considerably lower elsewhere. Over 0.5 inch with isolated heavy amounts were observed in southern North Dakota, western and southern South Dakota, numerous patches across Nebraska, south-central and west-central Kansas, and the higher elevations of Colorado. Other locations measured a few tenths of an inch, if any. Improvements were restricted to small sections of north-central and southeastern Nebraska while dryness and drought persisted or intensified elsewhere. Areas from south-central through northeastern Colorado, southernmost and northwestern through north-central Kansas, northeastern Nebraska, and the northern half of the Dakotas saw the most widespread deteriorations. Over the past 30 days, most locations outside the highest elevations of Wyoming and Colorado have recorded well below normal precipitation, with less than 25 percent of normal amounts recorded over central and southwestern Kansas and much of North Dakota. There are a few stripes in the Great Plains with near or above-normal 30-day totals, but these conditions cover much smaller areas than those experiencing dryness and drought. Currently, large sections of Colorado and Wyoming are enduring severe to exceptional drought (D2 through D4), with the worst conditions affecting significant portions of Colorado and a few patches in western Nebraska. In the Great Plains, severe (D2) or extreme (D3) drought also extends across much of Nebraska and some adjacent locales, the central and western Dakotas, and a few patches in southeastern South Dakota and southwestern Kansas. The dryness is impacting especially surface moisture stores, including areas of reduced streamflows and degraded crops. Not all crop damage may be the result of dryness and drought, but it is the most significant contributing factor. In Colorado, 64 percent of pastures and rangelands are in poor or very poor condition (5-year average 23 percent), along with 70 percent of those in Nebraska (5-year average 30 percent), and 75 percent in Wyoming (5-year average 38 percent). Several crops in Colorado have a significant proportion in poor or very poor condition, including 46 percent of corn (5-year average 15 percent) and 57 percent of sorghum (5-year average 8 percent). In North Dakota, 53 percent of sorghum and 40 percent of corn are in similar condition (5-year averages of 13 and 15 percent, respectively). Significantly above-normal temperatures have also prevailed during the last 30 days, with temperatures averaging generally 6 to 9 deg F. above normal in the western Dakotas, the adjacent High Plains, central and western Colorado, and western Wyoming, with the largest departures observed in the latter region.

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EARTHTALK

Dear EarthTalk: What's new in terms of making the cons-
Dear EarthTalk: Has climate change already had any significant impacts on wine production around the world?

—Wendy Baumgarten, Dubuque, Iowa

Eight out of the ten hottest years on record have occurred in the past decade. Thus, it is no surprise that rising global temperatures have had a significant impact on wine production. One study by the University of British Columbia (UBC) found that temperatures during the wine growing season

have drastically increased around the world. "That kind of change can affect harvest times, grape ripening, and thus the taste of the wine," reports UBC's Elizabeth Wolkovich, one of the study authors.

One aspect of wine production that climate change has affected is the growing cycle. Warmer temperatures lead to the growing cycle happening earlier. In fact, budding, flowering, fruit-set, veraison (when the grapes begin to ripen and change color), and harvest all take place around ten days to two weeks sooner than normal. This leads to higher alcohol levels, lower acidity levels, and less refined tannins, all of which affect taste. Hot temperatures during the growing season also make it more difficult for those who grow wine to achieve balance in the fruit. During the winter, mild temperatures lead to vines coming out of dormancy quicker and becoming more vulnerable to frost as a result.

Global warming has also increased weather disasters. As vines are one of the most weather-sensitive agricultural crops, weather catastrophes can be detrimental. Smoke from wildfires can easily cover vineyards and ruin wines, a phenomenon that has already occurred in the U.S., Australia, and South Africa. A shortage of rainwater can decrease the fruitfulness of wine production, while hail can be extremely destructive. Droughts and wildfires, both of which have become more common due to climate change, have therefore negatively affected the quality of harvests.

Amid this crisis, one study published in the journal *Nature Reviews Earth and Environment* shows that around 90 percent of coastal and low-altitude regions in California may be unable to produce good wine if global warming exceeds +2°C, reducing the growable surface area of wine. With increasing temperatures reducing grape crops and the quality of wine, researchers estimate that up to 70 percent of the world's suitable wine regions will become too warm for production by the end of the century. That said, a warmer climate is expected to boost production in 25 percent of current wine regions.

Winemakers have begun taking adaptive measures. For instance, new grape varieties are being used as they are better suited to climate change. Growers can also plant on differently oriented slopes that receive less sun and more wind, or slopes at higher altitudes to mitigate temperature increases. While these measures may come at high costs, they are now crucial to preserving the prosperity of wine production worldwide.



The wine industry as we know it is on the ropes thanks to climate change.

Credit: Pexels.com.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Flock Safety tightens safeguards as states, cities question surveillance network

More than 50 communities have canceled contracts or deactivated cameras this year

BY AMANDA WATFORD

Flock Safety is tightening privacy and oversight controls for its nationwide network of automated license plate readers as more communities pull back from the technology and lawmakers across the political spectrum push for new restrictions.

The company announced Thursday that it will recommend that police agencies retain license plate reader data for seven days, down from 30, while adding tools to restrict data sharing between agencies and detect potentially abusive searches. Flock also plans to require law enforcement users to associate searches with case codes and automatically suspend users whose activity is flagged as abnormal.

The changes come amid growing scrutiny of a surveillance network that Flock says has more than 120,000 cameras across 49 states and serves thousands of law enforcement agencies and communities.

The cameras photograph passing vehicles and record information including license plates, vehicle characteristics, location and time. Police can search the resulting data during investigations, sometimes across jurisdictional lines.

More than 50 agencies or communities have canceled, suspended or rejected a Flock contract or deactivated their cameras since the beginning of 2026, according to DeFlock, a grassroots group that tracks license plate reader deployments. Cameras have also been vandalized in communities around the country.

Recent incidents involving police officers accused of using Flock to track friends, relatives and romantic partners have added to concerns about how the data can be accessed and shared. The technology also has been criticized after inaccurate license plate information contributed to wrongful police stops, arrests and detentions.



Flock Safety license plate readers are typically mounted on tall poles, with a camera and solar panel on top. The company says its technology is used in more than 6,000 communities across 49 states in partnership with thousands of law enforcement agencies nationwide. (Photo

courtesy of Flock Safety)

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Flock says the new measures will give communities greater control over their data while strengthening safeguards against misuse.

"These changes, like I said, are the next chapter of a long book I hope to write on how we build a better version of America that's both safer, protects our privacy and holds those who have power accountable," Flock Safety co-founder and CEO Garrett Langley said in a video statement.

But civil liberties advocates say some of the safeguards have been tried before and question whether the company's changes address broader concerns about a system that can create a record of people's movements even when they are not suspected of a crime.

States have taken different approaches to regulating technologies used in policing, including artificial intelligence, facial recognition, drones and automated license plate readers. More than a dozen states have enacted laws governing such technologies, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures, but there is no consistent national framework for their use.

Strengthening privacy and accountability

Flock's seven-day retention recommendation is one of its most significant changes.

When the company launched nine years ago, it set 30 days as the default recommendation, while allowing communities to choose shorter or longer periods.

For investigations that require older information, Flock is introducing "Evidence Mode," which will allow detectives to preserve specific license plate data as evidence in an active case.

The change does not automatically apply to existing customers, which can keep their current retention policies. Communities also will continue to choose their own retention periods.

The American Civil Liberties Union called the shorter retention period a potential step forward but said its impact will depend on how the new mode works. In a statement, the group recommended a 48-hour retention period and warned that if searches cause data to be preserved, the new system could allow significant amounts of location information to remain available longer than seven days.

Flock also is giving communities more control over which outside agencies can search their cameras. Under the new "offense filtering" system, a community could allow another agency to search its cameras for specific crimes or offenses and block searches related to immigration enforcement, for example.

Flock also will require all law enforcement customers to adopt its audit assistance tool by the end of the year. The system looks for unusual search activity and flags it for administrator review. Flock plans to automatically suspend users whose activity meets certain criteria for abnormal behavior while their access is reviewed.

The company also will require case codes for law enforcement searches by the end of the year. Officers can bypass the requirement during emergencies, but those searches also will be flagged for review.

Police misuse and erroneous alerts

Flock's new controls build on safeguards the company has introduced in recent years, including electronic audit logs and requirements that users provide a reason for searches.

The ACLU, in its statement, said some of those earlier safeguards were ineffective. The group pointed to cases in which officers circumvented search-purpose restrictions by entering vague or meaningless explanations before Flock replaced a free-text field with a list of approved search reasons.

The Washington Post reported earlier this month that nearly 50 police officers had been charged or accused of using Flock cameras for unauthorized purposes, many involving attempts to track current or former romantic partners or family members.

In Savannah, Georgia, four police officers and two civilian employees were fired last week after a department investigation found searches involving personal acquaintances and family members, according to a news release. The investigation also found that an officer had allowed an outside law enforcement agency to access Savannah's Flock system.

The activity was identified using Flock's audit assistance tool. All six cases were referred to the Georgia Bureau of Investigation for independent criminal investigations.

The technology has also drawn scrutiny when information in the system is inaccurate or outdated.

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In Wisconsin, a woman was pulled over at gunpoint earlier this month after a Flock camera incorrectly flagged her vehicle as being involved in a homicide. Brookfield police stopped Amber Newell on Interstate 94 after receiving the alert, but Milwaukee police told officers they no longer needed the vehicle or its occupants. Newell was released.

Milwaukee police later said the incident was caused by an employee's failure to remove an outdated wanted-vehicle alert from the Flock system, rather than an error by Flock itself. Newell said she had also been stopped at gunpoint earlier that week and was afraid to drive afterward.

In its announcement, Flock said its alerts are intended to be investigative leads rather than conclusions and that officers should visually confirm a vehicle's license plate before taking action. The company said its system produces fewer than nine human-reported errors for every 1 million alerts.

Bipartisan interest

A bipartisan group of Pennsylvania lawmakers announced Monday that they plan to introduce legislation establishing statewide privacy and accountability requirements for automated license plate readers, including Flock cameras.

The proposal would establish rules governing access to the data, documented reasons for searches, audit trails, data retention and transparency. It also would create civil penalties for unauthorized access, use or disclosure and allow people harmed by misuse to bring civil suits.

"Technology that can help keep our communities safe should never become a tool for stalking or abuse," Democratic state Rep. Jennifer O'Mara said in a statement announcing the proposal.

Republicans in Congress also have introduced or plan to introduce at least two proposals aimed at restricting automated surveillance technology. One would restrict federal agencies from purchasing or using certain automated surveillance technology, while the other would bar state and local police from using federal funds to acquire automated license plate reader systems.

Last month, 15 Democratic lawmakers in Michigan sent a letter to the state Department of Transportation to end an agreement allowing federal agencies, including U.S. Border Patrol and Homeland Security Investigations, to install surveillance technology on state property. The lawmakers argued that automated license plate readers infringe on residents' constitutional rights.

The West Virginia House Democratic Caucus also released a statement last month opposing Flock cameras and said it is monitoring canceled contracts and lawsuits involving the technology.

Abandoning the technology

Some local governments are going further by ending their relationships with Flock altogether.

DeFlock's tracker lists dozens of communities that have canceled contracts, deactivated cameras or rejected proposals since 2021.

More than 50 agencies or communities have taken one of those steps since the beginning of 2026.

Several communities in Rhode Island and Nebraska have acted this month, with city leaders voting to cancel contracts or uninstall cameras.

Earlier this month, the Burnet County Sheriff's Office in Texas announced that it had removed all fixed Flock cameras after repeated vandalism damaged the equipment. The cameras were provided by the Heart of Texas Auto Theft Task Force, a multi-agency, multijurisdictional task force in Central Texas. The sheriff's office has initiated criminal cases, but there are currently no suspects, according to a news release.

The debate over this technology is likely to continue through the rest of the year and into 2027, when more state legislatures return to session. That could bring additional proposals to regulate artificial intelligence tools used in policing, as well as how license plate reader data is collected, retained, shared and used.

Stateline reporter Amanda Watford can be reached at awatford@stateline.org.

This story was originally produced by Stateline, which is part of States Newsroom, a nonprofit news network which includes South Dakota Searchlight, and is supported by grants and a coalition of donors as a 501c(3) public charity.

Amanda Watford (née Hernández) is a national reporter covering criminal justice and public safety for Stateline. Her reporting focuses on how states are reshaping approaches to policing, crime victims' services, corrections, courts, drug policy, gun violence and more.

COMMENTARY

Governor candidate learned the hard way that South Dakotans like courtesy and specifics

Doeden lost big in a runoff after finishing first in primary

by Dana Hess

Looking back, there has to be some reason why the first-place finisher in South Dakota's Republican governor primary failed so miserably in the runoff.

Aberdeen businessman Toby Doeden finished first in the primary in a four-candidate field with 31% of the vote, setting up a runoff with Gov. Larry Rhoden, who finished second with 25%. When the runoff votes were counted, Rhoden had 71% to Doeden's 29%.

The runoff pitted a political outsider versus an establishment politician. In the runoff between the two, Republican voters went in a big way for the status quo. There are probably many reasons to explain the outcome, with some having to do with the influence of President Donald Trump, Doeden's demeanor and the one glimmer of specificity in a property tax plan that had always been just vague enough to be popular.

To some extent, all four of the GOP candidates in the primary could be mistaken for Trump fanboys. No one in the quartet wrapped themselves in the president more than Doeden. That might look to be a winning strategy in a state where Trump finished with more than 60% of the vote in 2016, 2020 and 2024.

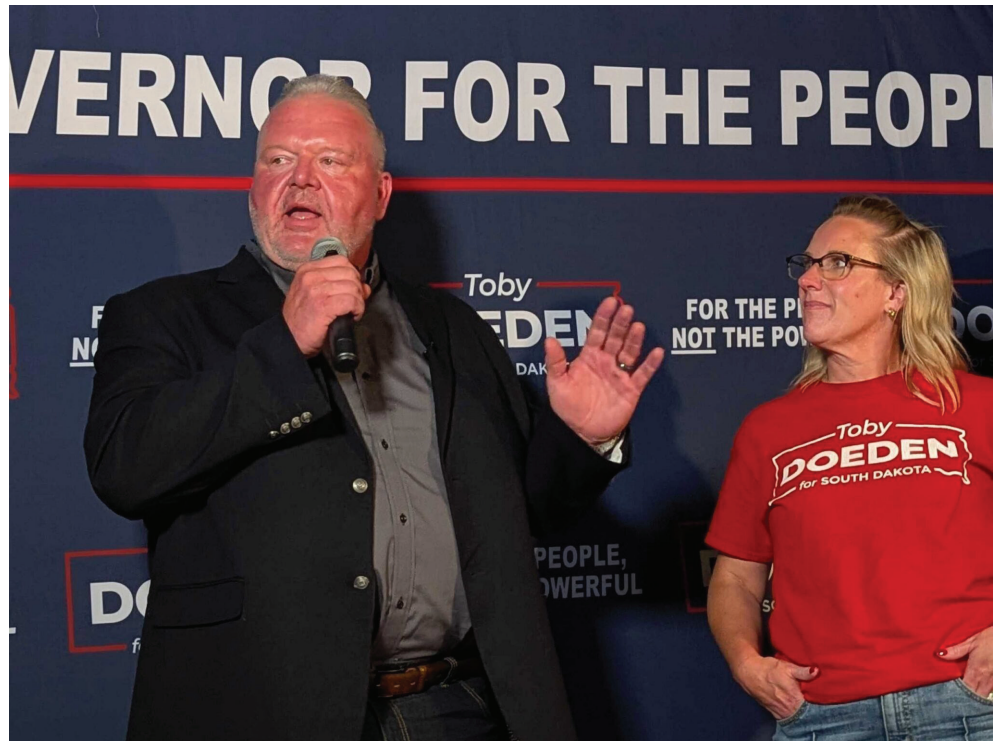
Doeden styled himself after the president as a successful businessman who would use his business acumen to shake things up in Pierre. He was a political maverick, as he told it, striking fear into establishment politicians.

Doeden even struck the same Trump-like belligerent tone, labeling bad news about his campaign as "fake" and hurling insults at his opponents and those who disagreed with him.

In trying to be a Trump clone, Doeden forgot that he lacked one of the president's important qualities — fame. American voters have a long history of belonging to a cult of celebrity that has elevated entertainers to positions of responsibility in government. The public's embrace of that celebrity gave us Presidents Trump and Ronald Reagan and Governors Arnold Schwarzenegger and Jesse "The Body" Ventura.

Outside the Aberdeen area, Doeden wasn't a known quantity in South Dakota. When voters who were unfamiliar with him saw Doeden, it wasn't as a Trump-in-the-making but as a rich guy with a surly attitude.

Doeden's willingness to pick a fight and belittle his opponents in a Trump-like fashion likely didn't sit well



Toby Doeden speaks to reporters at his election night watch party in Aberdeen on July 28, 2026, after losing the runoff for the South Dakota Republican nomination for governor. With Doeden is his wife, Liz. (Photo by John Hult/South Dakota Searchlight)

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with an electorate in a state where personal connections run deep from community to community.

Republican voters may chuckle when they see Trump demean or make up silly nicknames for his opponents. However, it hit a little close to home when, after his primary victory, Doeden declared that he was glad to have ended Dusty Johnson's political career. When Sioux Falls mayoral candidates Greg Jamison and Joe Batcheller, both Republicans, endorsed Democrat Jamie Smith over Republican Christine Erickson, Doeden called them "proven losers and petty politicians." During the campaign he took to calling Rhoden "Lyn' Larry" and tried to paint the governor and lieutenant governor as closet liberals by labeling them "RhoBiden" and "Minnesota Tony."

That kind of thing has worked for Trump because we all observe national politics at a distance. Doeden was insulting our friends and neighbors. It was easy to wonder who would be next if he was elected.

If South Dakota Republican voters were uneasy with his bullying and name-calling, they could also have had concerns about Doeden's plan for eliminating property taxes. Doeden was never big on the specifics of his plan, but a South Dakota Searchlight story noted that the Aberdeen businessman never delineated between which property owners would be helped. He asserted that his plan would help "farmers, ranchers and small business owners."

Then the Rhoden campaign and a coalition of business groups began to wonder out loud and often about how Doeden planned to plug a \$1.8 billion hole in the budgets of schools and counties if he eliminated property taxes. That's when Doeden spokesman Matt Hurley said that the plan was only ever meant to eliminate property taxes for homeowners. That late attempt to add some previously missing specificity to his plan may have cost Doeden support among farmers.

South Dakota political candidates of the future should heed the outcome of the Doeden/Rhoden runoff. Among the lessons in that race are that what works in Washington, D.C., falls flat in the Rushmore State. We like specifics in our tax plans and common courtesy in our politicians. Anyone who doubts that should look at the failed campaign of Toby Doeden, a candidate who won a battle and then lost the war.

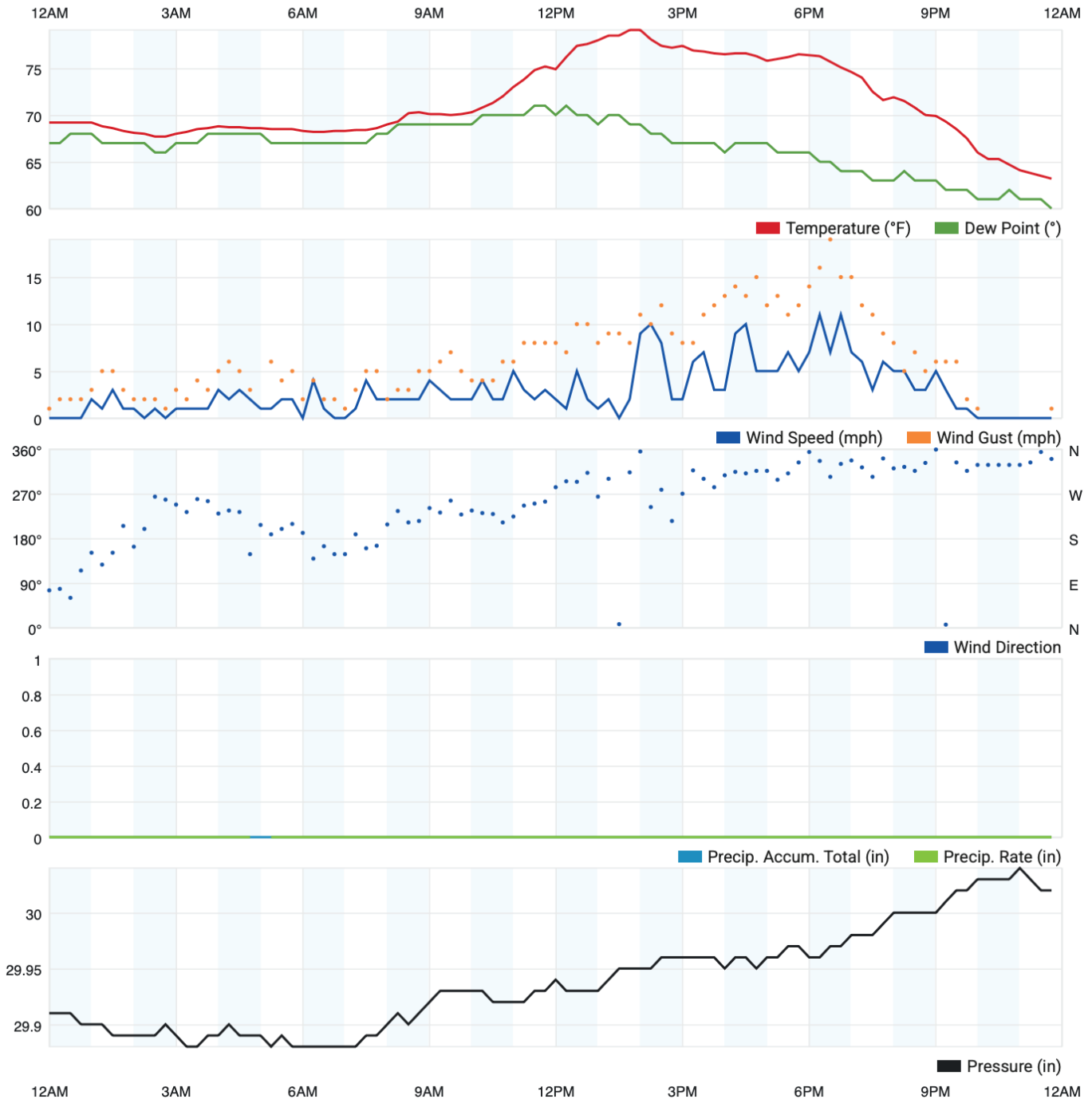
Dana Hess spent more than 25 years in South Dakota journalism, editing newspapers in Redfield, Milbank and Pierre. He's retired and lives in Brookings, working occasionally as a freelance writer.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

August 15, 2026



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Today



High: 81 °F

Sunny

Tonight



Low: 56 °F

Partly Cloudy

Monday



High: 83 °F

Chance
Showers then
Sunny

Monday Night



Low: 57 °F

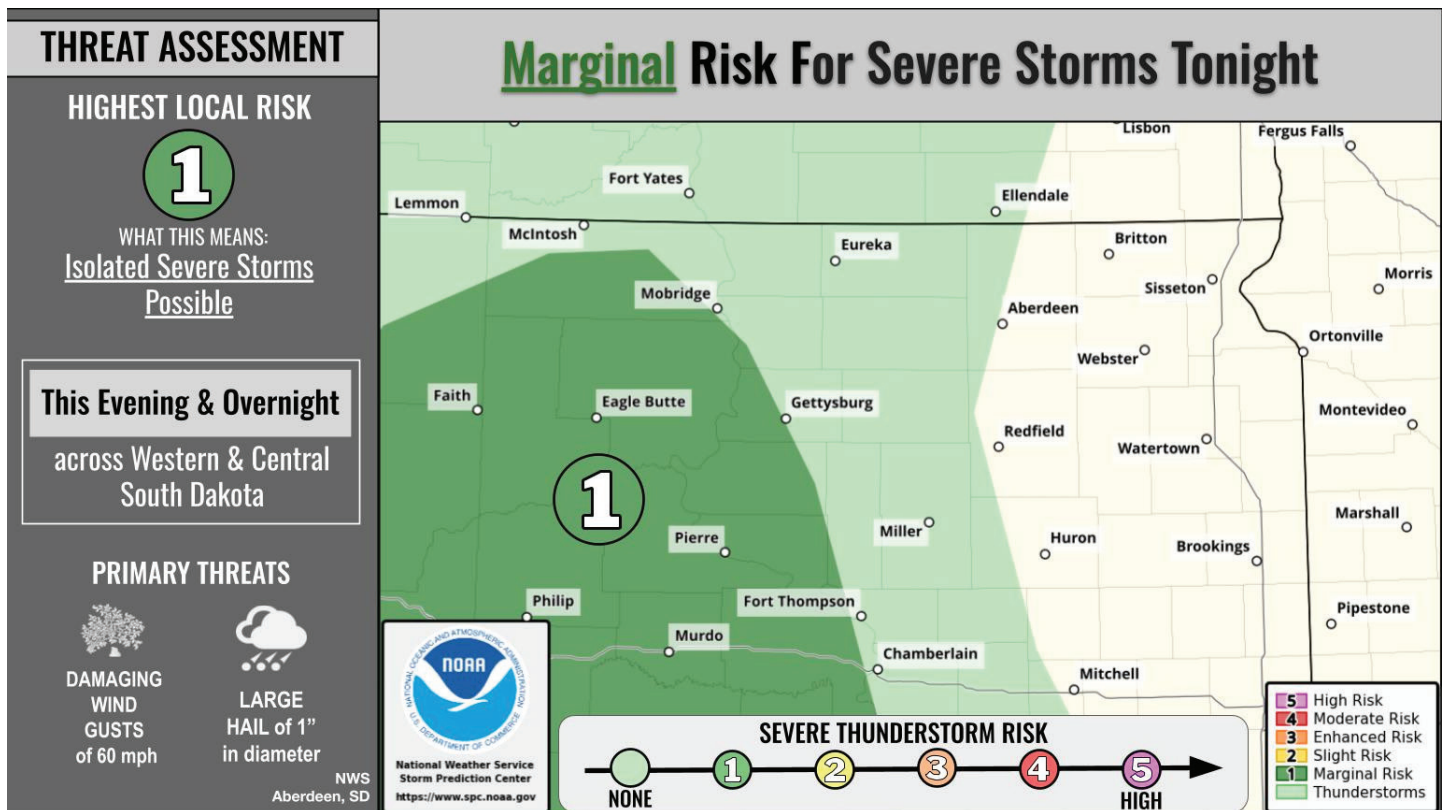
Chance
Showers then
Mostly Cloudy

Tuesday



High: 78 °F

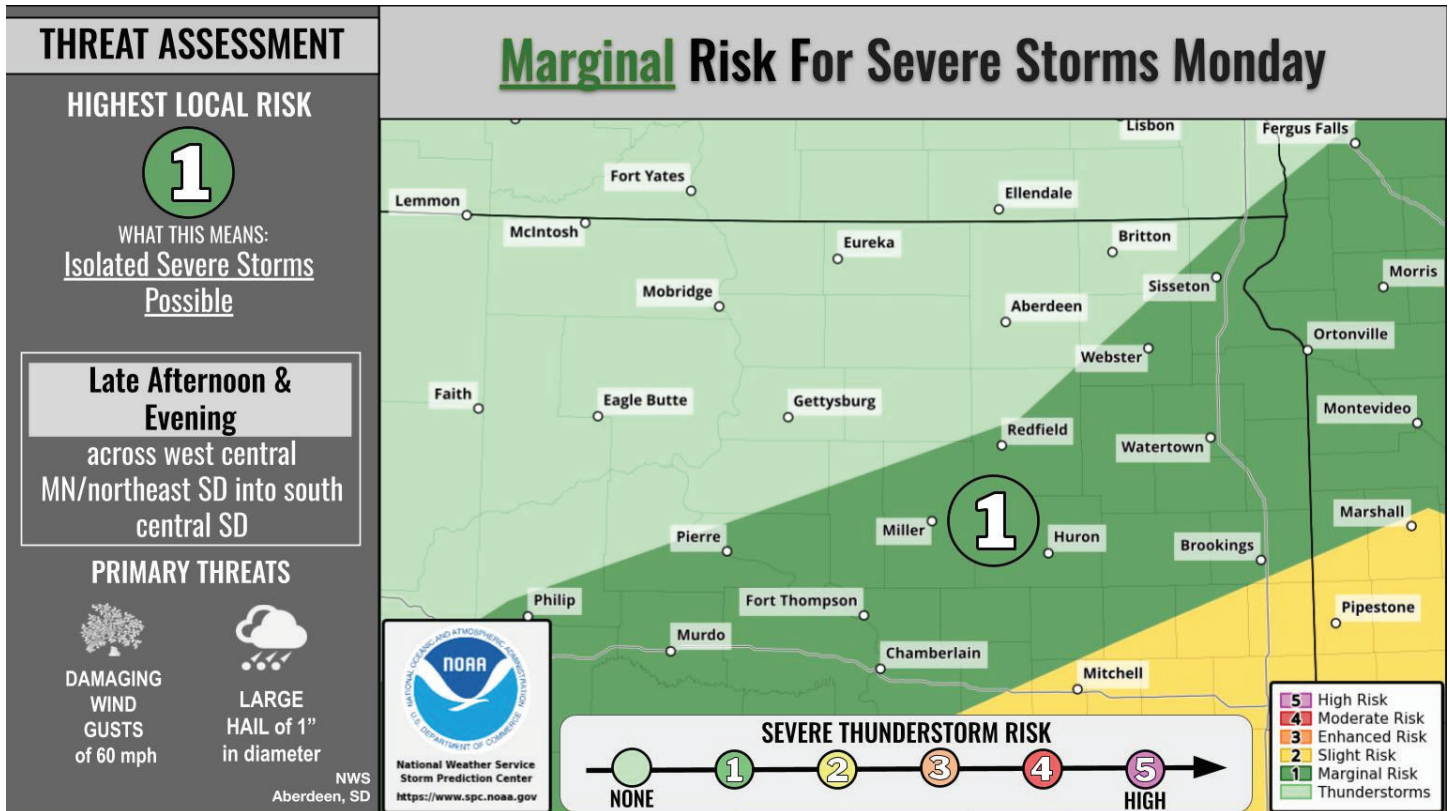
Slight Chance
Showers then
Slight Chance
T-storms



A Marginal Risk (level 1 of 5) for severe weather has been posted for parts of western and central South Dakota for this evening into the overnight hours. Any storms will be capable of damaging winds up to 60 mph and large hail up to 1 inch in diameter.

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A Marginal Risk (level 1 of 5) for severe weather has been posted for Monday afternoon and evening. This risk runs primarily north and east from south central SD into parts of northeast SD and west central MN. Damaging winds and large hail will be the primary threats.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 80 °F at 1:59 PM

Low Temp: 64 °F at 11:27 PM

Wind: 20 mph at 6:17 PM

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 111 in 1937

Record Low: 42 in 1895

Average High: 83

Average Low: 57

Average Precip in Aug.: 1.08

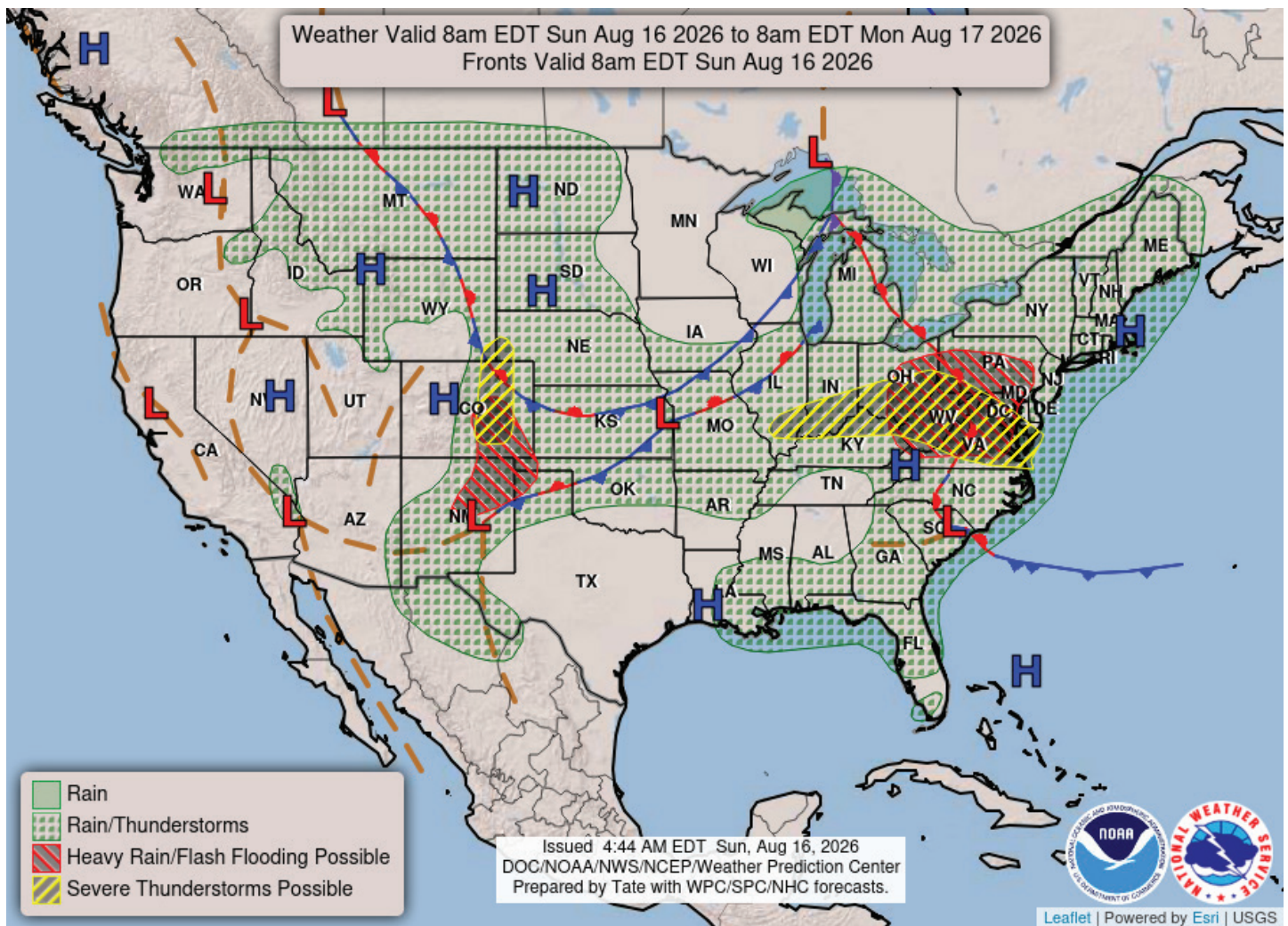
Precip to date in Aug.: 10.14

Average Precip to date: 15.18

Precip Year to Date: 19.61

Sunset Tonight: 8:40 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:34 am



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Today in Weather History

August 16, 1986: Thunderstorm winds gusted to 60 mph in Forestburg, in Sanborn County. Thunderstorm winds gusting to 100 mph uprooted trees and damaged buildings in the northern part of Hanson County. On several farms, barns, garages, silos, and small buildings were destroyed. The worst affected area was south of Epiphany where large steel sheds were damaged, and a roof was blown in.

1777: The Battle of Bennington, delayed a day by rain, was fought. The rain-delayed British reinforcements and allowed the Vermont Militia to arrive in time, enabling the Americans to win a victory by defeating two enemy forces, one at a time.

1909 — A dry spell began in San Bernardino County of southern California that lasted until the 6th of May in 1912, a stretch of 994 days! Another dry spell, lasting 767 days, then began in October of 1912. (The Weather Channel)

1916 — Altapass, NC, was deluged with 22.22 inches of rain in 24 hours to establish a state record. (The Weather Channel)

1987 — Afternoon and evening thunderstorms developing along a cold front produced severe weather from Oklahoma to Wisconsin and Lower Michigan. Thunderstorms in central Illinois produced wind gusts to 80 mph at Springfield which toppled two large beer tents at the state fair injuring 58 persons. Thunderstorms also drenched Chicago IL with 2.90 inches of rain, making August 1987 their wettest month of record. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 — Thunderstorms developing along a slow moving cold front produced severe weather from North Dakota to Lower Michigan during the day. Nine tornadoes were sighted in North Dakota, and thunderstorms also produced hail three inches in diameter at Lakota ND, and wind gusts to 83 mph at Marais MI. Thirty-seven cities in the northeastern U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date, including Rockford IL with a reading of 104 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1992: One of the most destructive United States hurricanes of record started modestly as a tropical wave that emerged from the west coast of Africa on August 14. The wave spawned a tropical depression on August 16, which became Tropical Storm Andrew the next day.

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Daily Devotion

The Rewards of Patience

As we wait upon the Lord and align with His will, we experience the fullness of His grace and faithfulness.

Psalms 40:1-3: 1 I waited patiently for the LORD; And He inclined to me and heard my cry.

2 He brought me up out of the pit of destruction, out of the miry clay, And He set my feet upon a rock making my footsteps firm.

3 He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God; Many will see and fear And will trust in the LORD.

Scripture contains many stories of people who waited years before God's promises came to pass. Waiting upon the Lord develops character and deepens our trust in Him.

Today let's look at David. He was the chosen heir to Israel's throne, but he spent years dodging King Saul's wrathful pursuit. Despite having two different opportunities for vengeance, David resisted the temptation and spared Saul's life. He chose to adhere to God's timetable for his coronation instead of dishonoring the Lord by killing the divinely anointed king.

In Psalms 18:16-19, Psalm 139:14, and others, David reveals his intimate awareness of the Lord's work in his life. The shepherd king not only ascended the throne through patience; he also learned God's way is always best. He grew in his commitment to trust the Lord rather than force outcomes through his own actions.

We cannot rush God's timing, and our patient endurance doesn't earn His favor; that's already ours through grace. But waiting on the Lord does transform us. David didn't receive his blessings because he was special or because he earned them through patience. He received them because God is faithful to His promises. And that same faithfulness extends to us as we learn to wait on Him.

We all need the encouragement, comfort, and peace that comes through God's grace. Our daily devotionals, known as Seeds of Hope, have been a means through which thousands of people have experienced this grace. Each devotional comes from God's Word and we pray this good "seed" finds good soil in your heart. Our aim is that the Seeds of Hope will be a great source of daily encouragement to you and that God will use them to draw you near to Him

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Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

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WINNING NUMBERS

MILLIONAIRE FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:

08.15.26

12 13 26 35 43 4

TOP PRIZE:

\$1,000,000/year

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 54 Mins 50 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:

08.14.26

3 23 27 46 60 11

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$100,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 16 Hrs 39 Mins 50 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:

08.15.26

8 18 19 40 41 10

All Star Bonus: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$2,600,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 15 Hrs 54 Mins 49 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:

08.15.26

4 16 18 29 33

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$31,000

NEXT DRAW: 3 Days 16 Hrs 9 Mins 49 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:

08.15.26

19 21 45 46 65 20

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 38 Mins 49 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:

08.15.26

5 8 27 29 63 13

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$35,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 38 Mins 50 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the **AP** Associated Press

Ukraine launches one of its largest aerial attacks of the war, killing at least 6 people in Russia

By The Associated Press undefined

Ukraine launched hundreds of drones across Russia Sunday, killing at least six people in one of Kyiv's largest aerial attacks of the war.

Kyiv has stepped up its attacks on Russia this year, with long-range missiles and swarms of drones increasingly targeting military industries and energy facilities. It has also increasingly pummeled giant Wildberries depots, burning billions of dollars' worth of merchandise belonging to the Russian online retail giant and bringing the war home to the Russian public nearly 4½ years into Moscow's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Russia's Ministry of Defense said that it had destroyed 822 Ukrainian drones overnight. Some 600 drones were detected headed toward the Russian capital, Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin said, with a third of those destroyed over the Moscow region itself.

An 83-year-old man was killed after a Ukrainian drone hit a private home in the Moscow region, local Gov. Andrey Vorobyov said. He also confirmed that a Ukrainian attack had sparked a blaze at a Wildberries warehouse in the town of Podolsk.

A drone attack targeted three towns in Russia's southwestern Rostov region, killing five people, local Gov. Yury Slyusar said. The attack, with more than 150 drones, damaged several homes and a railway station and sparked a forest fire.

Russian strikes kill 5 in Ukraine

A Russian missile attack on Ukraine's Kryvyi Rih killed two people and wounded 14 others, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy wrote on social media Sunday. He also said that one more person had been killed in the city of Sumy.

Elsewhere, a man and a woman both died when their home was hit by a Russian strike in Ukraine's southern Zaporizhzhia region, said Ivan Fedorov, the head of the local military administration.

More attacks sparked fires throughout the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv, wounding six people.

"Wherever the Russians can reach with their ballistic missiles, they strike civilian infrastructure," Zelenskyy said. "Since this morning, air raid alerts have continued in many regions — the Russians launched another wave of drones."

Russia's Ministry of Defense said Sunday that it had targeted a metallurgical plant in Kryvyi Rih and several military-industrial sites in Kyiv, including a manufacturing facility for Ukraine's Flamingo missiles.

The domestically produced missiles are increasingly key to Ukraine's long-range attacks on Russia, with Zelenskyy announcing Saturday that Kyiv had used the weapons to attack a rocket research and production center in Samara approximately 900 kilometers (560 miles) from the Ukrainian border.

NATO jet downs drone in Romanian airspace

Romania's Ministry of National Defense said Sunday that a Spanish Air and Space Force F-18 fighter jet shot down a drone that had entered Romanian airspace.

The drone's entry into the NATO member's airspace was detected by surveillance systems at 4:44 a.m., the ministry said, about 24 kilometers (14.9 miles) north of the eastern city of Galati near the border with neighboring Moldova. Moldova is a landlocked country between Ukraine and Romania.

A Spanish F-18 aircraft that was performing air policing duties "made radar contact with the target and received engagement approval," the ministry said. "The drone was safely shot down by the F-18 aircraft at 05:01."

Officials did not specify the drone's origin.

The incident comes weeks after Romanian pilots shot down the three drones over three days from F-16 fighter jets, as Russia intensified attacks against Ukraine near the border. Since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Romania has reported dozens of drone incidents, including some that have crashed and

exploded on its territory.

Acting Foreign Minister Oana Toiu said in a post on X that the Spanish deployment in Romania was scaled up "at the request of Romania and NATO to bolster the Eastern Flank following prior drone incidents," and that it was Spain's fourth such deployment.

Rescuers dig through rubble and landslides after Indonesia quake kills 51

By FIRDIA LISNAWATI Associated Press

RUTENG, Indonesia (AP) — Rescue teams in eastern Indonesia recovered four more bodies Sunday after a magnitude-7.7 earthquake struck the day before, bringing the death toll to 51, authorities said. Thousands have been displaced.

The U.S. Geological Survey said the powerful earthquake hit eastern Indonesia's Flores region at a depth of 10 kilometers (6 miles) at 5:58 a.m. local time. Residents fled in panic as tsunami warnings were issued and later lifted. At least 235 aftershocks followed, according to Indonesia's meteorological agency.

Rescuers on Sunday dug through debris looking for people feared buried beneath landslides triggered by the quake across six regencies on Flores, a predominantly Catholic island in Muslim-majority Indonesia. They focused on three regencies that remained inaccessible after the earthquake: the hardest-hit Manggarai, East Manggarai and Nagekeo.

"We have cleared most landslides and reopened roads to previously isolated villages, although communication disruptions and power outages continue to hamper search efforts," said Fathur Rahman, head of the Search and Rescue Office in Maumere, the capital of Sikka regency.

The National Search and Rescue Agency said 101 people were injured. More than 900 homes were destroyed and 450 more damaged, forcing about 5,000 people into temporary shelters.

Thousands at Labuan Bajo, the gateway to Komodo National Park, one of Indonesia's best-known tourist destinations, spent the night outdoors, fearing strong aftershocks.

"The shaking was terrifying, so intense that my house nearly collapsed," said Anastasia Imad, a farmer, speaking from a makeshift green tent beside her damaged home. "We feared the aftershocks would bring it down on us while we slept."

Landslides blocked sections of the Trans-Flores Highway, a roughly 700-kilometer (435-mile) road linking communities across the mountainous island.

Meanwhile, relief workers distributed rice, ready-to-eat meals, drinking water, blankets and medicine, while emergency shelters were being set up for displaced residents. Authorities said restoring electricity and communications, as well as delivering aid to remote villages isolated by landslides, remained among the biggest challenges.

Indonesia, an archipelago of more than 17,000 islands, is prone to earthquakes and volcanic eruptions because of its location on the Pacific "Ring of Fire," a horseshoe-shaped arc of seismic faults and volcanoes.

Flores has experienced some of the country's deadliest disasters. A powerful earthquake and tsunami in 1992 killed about 2,500 people on the island.

In 2018, a magnitude 7.5 earthquake triggered a tsunami on Sulawesi that killed more than 4,400 people. In 2004, a magnitude 9.1 quake off Sumatra unleashed a tsunami that killed about 230,000 people in a dozen countries.

Indiana authorities say at least 5 people have died as severe weather crosses the state

By SUSAN MONTOYA BRYAN Associated Press

Indiana authorities said at least five people have died as a result of severe storms and flooding across the state this week, as first responders used boats to rescue more people Saturday from rising waters in neighborhoods along the White River in Indianapolis.

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The state has been hammered over the past week by heavy rains, resulting in rivers reaching record levels and sending residents in search of higher ground. More than a dozen counties have declared local disasters, with much of the latest damage concentrated along river corridors from Hamilton County heading into the northern Indianapolis suburbs.

President Donald Trump approved an emergency declaration for Indiana, and federal disaster assistance is available to the state, the Federal Emergency Management Agency said Saturday.

Residents evacuate as water rises

Indianapolis Mayor Joe Hogsett said the city was experiencing its most severe flooding in more than 30 years, noting that conditions were shifting rapidly. Hundreds of homes in neighborhoods that were located between the river and parallel canals were evacuated Saturday, as first responders used boats to rescue people who were already stranded.

Rita Reith, a spokesperson with the Indianapolis Fire Department, put the number of rescues at 95 people and 45 pets as of late afternoon. Dispatchers had received hundreds of calls for service throughout the day.

The governor's office reported more than 350 evacuations have occurred in Delaware County and that a senior mobile home community in Tipton County was being evacuated. Rescues and welfare checks also were happening in Fayette County.

Indiana authorities said Saturday at least five people have died as a result of the severe weather over the past week. That includes a boy killed when a tree fell on his home, a woman who was swept away after driving into floodwaters and a teen who was reported missing after jumping in to a river on Wednesday.

"My heart is with the families and loved ones of the five Hoosiers we have lost and every family whose life has been changed by these storms," Braun said in a statement issued Saturday. "Please continue to take flooding seriously and stay away from floodwaters."

Rivers and creeks surge after days of rain

Jacob Spence, director of Marion County Emergency Management, called it a once-in-a-lifetime type flood.

"This is an unprecedented event, and unfortunately we're setting some new records," he told The Associated Press.

The National Weather Service reported that more than 11 inches (28 centimeters) of rain fell over a two-day period in some areas. The White River crested at more than 24 feet (7.32 meters) in the communities of Anderson and Noblesville, surpassing records set in 1913.

While some floodwaters were receding north of Indianapolis, flash-flood warnings and watches remained in place Saturday across a swath of central Indiana.

Forecasters expected the White River to crest Saturday evening in the Indianapolis area, where National Guard vehicles were among those helping with the rescue efforts. Rita Reith, a spokesperson with the Indianapolis Fire Department, put the number of rescues at 95 people and 45 pets as of late afternoon.

Earlier this week, severe storms wreaked havoc across other parts of the Midwest, causing tornadoes, heavy rains and flash flooding. Storm damage was reported from the Chicago area all the way to western Pennsylvania. Power had yet to be restored for some residents in other parts of Indiana.

Cleanup begins for upstream communities

Residents posted videos on social media that showed submerged homes, vehicles stranded in high water, a power pole being toppled by rushing water and roads being washed away.

There were ominous clouds over Noblesville on Saturday morning, but the river already had marked its historic crest the night before, leaving homes standing in water, parking lots flooded and corn fields saturated. The community's historic covered bridge — Potter's Bridge — was still standing.

"This is crazy for all of us," said Matt Doudt, the city's photographer, who was out early to document the aftermath. He pointed to a grassy commons area that usually hosts farmers' market and concerts. That was under water. So was a brand new memorial and flower garden recently installed by the city.

He said Noblesville, with its historic charm and brick streets, didn't get much rain in recent days but that the flooding was caused by the downpours that happened in communities upstream. All that water had no where to go but rush down to Noblesville — and now Indianapolis, he said.

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Still, Doudt and others are thankful.

"We have a lot of damage," he said, "But we didn't lose any lives and everybody got rescued and our city is taking care of people pretty well."

US top Middle East commander visits deployed aircraft carrier, and other Mideast news

By The Associated Press undefined

Adm. Brad Cooper, the top U.S. military commander in the Middle East, visited the USS Lincoln in the Arabian Sea during a 10-day tour in the region that concluded on Saturday, U.S. Central Command said.

Israel said its strikes in southern Lebanon, which killed at least 11 people, targeted two Hezbollah commanders. And a Hamas delegation is in Cairo on Sunday for Gaza ceasefire-related talks with Egyptian officials.

Here's a look at the latest developments on Sunday in the Iran war and the wider Middle East. Full coverage can be found here.

US Central Command chief visits aircraft carrier

Adm. Cooper visited the USS Lincoln in the Arabian Sea as reports have emerged of mental health and supply issues aboard the long-deployed aircraft carrier. The Lincoln arrived in the Middle East in January and has been supporting the U.S. war against Iran, including the blockade on Iranian ports. Its deployment has included a record-setting uninterrupted time at sea of more than 240 days.

Extended deployments of carriers – which can have more than 5,000 sailors and Marines on board – have raised concerns about the impact not only on the ships but on service members.

"History will record this deployment as one of the most operationally intense and consequential of the modern era," Cooper said of the Lincoln strike group in a statement released Saturday.

Cooper also went to Bahrain, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates to meet with civilian and military leaders, according to the Central Command statement.

Israel targets two Hezbollah commanders in Saturday's strikes

Israel's military said it targeted two Hezbollah commanders in strikes in southern Lebanon on Saturday, in the deadliest attacks since a truce between Israel and Iran-backed Hezbollah went into effect in June.

Lebanon's Health Ministry and state news agency said at least 11 people were killed in two strikes – one on a home on the edge of Ansar village where seven people died, and another on the village of Deir al-Zahrani, where four were killed.

Israel's military said early on Sunday morning that the latter strike killed Abu Hassan Alaa, whom it described as a "senior commander" for Hezbollah who had taken part in attacks against Israel's soldiers in southern Lebanon as well as led militants who targeted Israeli soldiers and civilians over several years.

Earlier, Israel's military had said the strike on Ansar killed Ali Samir Al-Haj Hassan, whom it described as a battalion commander with Hezbollah's elite Radwan Force unit. The military said Haj Hassan's family was with him, but emphasized that the family was not targeted.

The United States has been mediating talks between Israel and the Lebanese government.

On Saturday, Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam criticized Israel's airstrikes. The office of Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Hezbollah violated the ceasefire by attacking Israeli soldiers inside Lebanon, seriously wounding three. It added the military responded by striking the Hezbollah headquarters, which ordered the attack, learning only later that Hezbollah "deliberately put civilians" in that military compound.

Hamas delegation is in Cairo for Gaza ceasefire talks

A Hamas delegation, chaired by the group's leader Khalil al-Hayya, is in Cairo Sunday for Gaza ceasefire-related talks with Egyptian officials, the group said.

The talks come as mediators push for the implementation of a roadmap to move forward with U.S. President Donald Trump's peace plan, which calls for the disarmament of Hamas and other Palestinian militant groups in Gaza, the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the area as well as handing over power to

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Palestinian technocrats.

Israel's Netanyahu has rejected Trump's latest plan to advance the stalled ceasefire in Gaza, saying Israel will not withdraw from any of the roughly 60% of the territory it controls until Hamas has been completely disarmed — something the militant group controlling the other 40% has long resisted.

It wasn't immediately clear whether al-Hayya would meet with Trump's son-in-law and negotiator Jared Kushner, the Board of Peace's high representative Nickolay Mladenov, or executive board member and former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, who are scheduled to travel to Israel and Egypt this week.

Iran says Qatar is holding 3 of its pilots

Qatar's armed forces captured and are holding three Iranian pilots who went missing in March when their jets were downed, the Missing Persons Committee of Iran's Armed Forces General Staff said. Qatar, however, denied it.

Iran's state TV reported on Sunday that the committee's commander responded by urging Qatar to allow Iranian Air Force experts to conduct a field investigation.

Saturday's statement alleged that Qatar had not allowed the pilots to meet or communicate with families or Iranian officials handling their cases. A spokesperson with Qatar's foreign ministry, Majed Al Ansari, denied the claims and indicated on X that the pilots had been shot down and that Qatar's search and rescue teams found the remains of one.

Hurricane Lala skirts Hawaii's Big Island without making landfall as heavy wind, rain lash region

By ALEXA ST. JOHN and ED WHITE Associated Press

Hurricane Lala skirted Hawaii's Big Island Saturday without making landfall and is expected to gradually weaken after lashing the region with strong winds and drenching rain that flooded roads and turned rivers into raging torrents.

The possibility the island could witness its first direct hit from a hurricane in 155 years faded as the eye of the storm passed the island's southern tip. Landfall is not expected at this point, said National Weather Service meteorologist Joseph Clark.

However, hurricane-force winds are expected to continue into the overnight hours, with the strongest wind gusts likely in areas of higher terrain, the National Hurricane Center said. Heavy rainfall into Sunday could produce flooding and mudslides, while powerful waves pound the coast, the agency said.

Tropical storm warnings remain in effect for the islands of Maui, Molokai, Lanai, Kahoolawe, Oahu, Kauai and Niihau as the storm moves west. The Big Island is the state's largest, with a population of about 210,000.

Whitecap surf slammed ashore nonstop, howling winds whipped the tops of palm trees and waterways swelled with fast-moving runoff from relentless rain that blew nearly sideways.

Gov. Josh Green said at least one person died in a car accident in the South Point area of the Big Island, while 19 roofs were lost and 190 flights were postponed. "You definitely want to be home, do not be out on the roads," he said.

Forecasters said higher elevations on the island, dominated by the towering Mauna Kea volcano, could get as much as 25 inches (63.5 centimeters) of rain. That could cause life-threatening mudslides in a mountainous area where people live off the grid in improvised housing.

Earlier the governor called it an "enormous storm," capable of destructive flooding and even the possibility of wildfires kicked up by strong winds across the island chain.

Tens of thousands of homes were without power.

Residents prepare for the worst

Bobby Camara, a 75-year-old lifelong resident, said he planned to "hunker down, cross my fingers, hope the lights don't go out" at a care home just outside Hilo. He said gas stations were busy as people sought fuel for chain saws and vehicles.

"I think stocking up is part of life over here. ... You learn to be self-reliant," Camara said.

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Mike Caputo, who lives in Keaau, near the Big Island's east coast, said his power generator was ready and a 10,000-gallon (37.8 kiloliter) home water tank was full. He said the main concern was flash flooding and fallen trees, especially albizia, a common tree.

"They're not very sturdy, but they grow extremely large," said Caputo, 50, a local fire captain. "They can make roads impassable."

Warnings posted everywhere

Lala intensified from a tropical storm into a hurricane early Saturday as its maximum sustained winds increased to 75 mph (120 kph), the hurricane center reported, making it a Category 1 hurricane. The Big Island is Hawaii's largest and has a population of about 210,000.

A hurricane last made landfall on the islands in 1992, when Hurricane Iniki — a Category 4 storm — lashed Kauai.

"It did \$3 billion worth of damage. It destroyed thousands of homes, and it did kill six people," said Green, the governor. "We just can never know if a storm is going to turn."

The Big Island was last hit directly in 1871, when a Category 3 hurricane hit the northeast corner, according to research by a University of Hawaii atmospheric scientist.

On Saturday, shelters were opened, events were canceled and ranchers were urged to leave their cattle in pastures, rather than structures that might collapse.

Christine Matsuda, who lives in Waimea, on the northern side of the island, said "big gusts every few minutes rattle the whole house."

"We're finding unexpected leaks in places that don't see water under normal conditions," Matsuda said.

The hurricane center predicted 8 to 12 inches (20.3 to 30.5 centimeters) of total rainfall across Maui and the lower elevations of the Big Island, and 4 to 6 inches (10.2 to 15.2 centimeters) across the island chain.

Many Hawaii residents are still dealing with the aftermath of devastating floods in March.

US pulls last aircraft carrier in Asia as Trump focuses on Iran and the Western Hemisphere

By BEN FINLEY and DIDI TANG Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's war against Iran is stretching the limits of U.S. aircraft carriers and leaving the western Pacific without one of the key American warships as China shows more signs of aggression.

The USS George Washington is departing the Pacific and expected to replace the USS Abraham Lincoln in the Middle East amid growing concerns about mental health and supply issues aboard the long-deployed carrier. The Lincoln has had its time at sea extended from its original May return date to support operations against Iran.

The lack of a U.S. carrier in the Pacific may be short-lived if the Navy deploys another in the next couple of months. But it shows how the open-ended operations with Iran are running some American sailors ragged, analysts say, while the Trump administration further retreats from the Asia-Pacific region and focuses on the Western Hemisphere.

"The administration says that the Pacific is supposed to be the most important behind the Western Hemisphere," said Greg Poling, director of the Southeast Asia Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. Instead, the U.S. is "doing the exact opposite" of its previously expressed goal of pulling out of the Middle East.

American allies in the Pacific are unsettled over the unpredictability of the Republican administration, Poling said, while Beijing "is quite happy with U.S. distraction, with the frustration of U.S. allies and partners."

China may take advantage of US carrier's absence

Beijing sees the U.S. military presence in the region as a threat to China's rise and an obstacle to its ambition to seize Taiwan, the self-governing island it claims as its own. But the United States has argued that the Pacific region is too important economically to lose.

No one expects China to invade Taiwan because an American aircraft carrier has left the region. But the

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carrier's absence gives the Chinese another opportunity to show its strength, said Bryan Clark, a former Navy submariner who is a defense analyst at the Hudson Institute.

"They're using this as part of the narrative to demonstrate to the Philippines, to Japan, to Indonesia and others that the U.S. is not the big dog in the western Pacific anymore," Clark said. "They would just prefer that countries in the region decide that China is the bigger power and the U.S. is not able to guarantee their security anymore."

China conducted naval exercises this week with Indonesia and recently has shown signs of aggression toward Japan and the Philippines, two key U.S. allies that also have territorial disputes with Beijing.

China carried out military drills this month near the Scarborough Shoal in the South China Sea. Both China and the Philippines have claims over the shoal. Last month, a Chinese guided-missile destroyer conducted a live-fire exercise off Japan's southernmost island of Okinotori.

Adm. Frank Bradley, head of the U.S. Special Operations Command, has been trying to reassure regional allies of Washington's commitment. He was in Manila on Thursday, telling his Filipino counterparts that U.S. special operations forces are ready to step up joint exercises to strengthen the countries' alliance. He also is expected to travel to Japan.

"We have the ability to project force, the United States, anywhere on the globe," Bradley told The Associated Press. "And when the threat in the region of the Middle East has been attended to, we will redeploy and reorient and be able to project that force wherever else it might be required."

"I also feel very confident in the Armed Forces of the Philippines' ability to protect their sovereignty here and for us to remain close with them," he said.

Evan Sankey, a policy analyst at the Cato Institute who focuses on U.S. policy toward China, said aircraft carriers provide psychological assurance to U.S. allies. The absence of carriers in the region, he said, "adds to the general sense that the U.S. is distracted by events in the Middle East."

Trump has relied on aircraft carriers for military actions

Trump has relied heavily on aircraft carriers to support military operations during his second term. For example, the USS Gerald R. Ford returned home in mid-May after an 11-month deployment, the longest since the Vietnam War, during which it supported the U.S. fight against Iran and the capture of Venezuela's then-leader, Nicolás Maduro.

The Ford had experienced a fire in a laundry space that forced the carrier to turn around and return to the Mediterranean Sea for repairs and left hundreds of sailors without places to sleep. Meanwhile, the Lincoln has spent a record uninterrupted time at sea of more than 240 days. Democratic lawmakers have been calling for investigations and greater visibility into conditions aboard the ship.

Warships and their crews can only handle so much, said Robert Farley, who teaches national security and diplomacy at the University of Kentucky and often writes about aircraft carriers.

"People don't get enough rest. It's psychologically exhausting. And R&R is part of keeping the crew healthy," Farley said. "Sometimes it's framed as, 'These people haven't had a vacation.' But we are dealing with well-known limits on the capacity of a crew to operate at top efficiency over time. And that just declines."

Clark, of the Hudson Institute, said the squeeze on the nation's aircraft carriers stems from the lack of preparation and planning for the Iran war.

"If we were going to mobilize to do this kind of conflict, and we anticipated it might go this long, we might have done some changes to the carrier schedule to make sure more would be available," Clark said.

Clark said the Navy has 11 aircraft carriers and typically deploys two or three at a time. But it could soon deploy four if the USS Theodore Roosevelt leaves San Diego for the Middle East, allowing the Washington to return to Pacific.

But the massive warships will need maintenance, likely causing a bottleneck at the nation's only two carrier shipyards.

"We'll end up with a maintenance debt that needs to be paid for the next few years," Clark said. "We'll probably have less carrier presence than we've had in the previous years because carriers will be lined

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up to get into the shipyard.”

There are questions about the use of aircraft carriers in modern warfare

Michael Swaine, a senior research fellow in the Quincy Institute's East Asia Program, questions the future need for aircraft carriers as warfare rapidly changes.

Carriers can be more easily targeted with drones and missiles, particularly by an adversary such as China, Swaine said, while smaller ships and submarines can be as effective in striking targets as the fighter jets that launch off a carrier.

Top Navy officials have indicated a desire to move away from a heavy reliance on carriers. Adm. Daryl Caudle, chief of naval operations, told The Associated Press in February that he wants to convince commanders to use smaller, newer ships and other assets instead of consistently turning to huge aircraft carriers.

Police have arrested a 19-year-old in connection with Virginia State University shooting

By PATRICK WHITTLE Associated Press

Police arrested a 19-year-old found hiding in a dormitory closet at Virginia State University on Saturday in connection with an overnight shooting on campus that left five people wounded, including one with critical injuries.

Camron Harris of Henrico, Virginia, is not a student on campus nor were four of the people injured, Chesterfield County Police said in a statement. They ranged in age from 17 to 23. One of the injured, a 20 year old, is a student and has now been released from the hospital, authorities said. The victims' names have not been released.

Authorities have given no information about a possible motive. Police obtained eight felony warrants for Harris, including for malicious wounding and the use of a firearm in the commission of a felony. It wasn't immediately clear if he had an attorney who could speak on his behalf. Efforts to reach Harris' family by phone were unsuccessful.

The university said in an earlier statement that authorities were searching for multiple suspects, but police provided no additional information Saturday evening about the search. University officials said earlier in the day that law enforcement did not believe there was an immediate threat to the campus community, and a campus lockdown had been lifted.

The shooting, just after 1:30 a.m. Saturday, prompted a campus lockdown and came as students were getting ready for the new school year.

It happened near the university's Quad Annexes, where campus police and Chesterfield County officers discovered five people suffering from gunshot wounds outside campus dormitories.

According to the university's website, residence halls opened for students a week ago, and classes resume on Monday. Many students had just completed the university's "New Trojans Experience" for incoming students.

"We recognize the concern this incident has caused among our students, parents, alumni, friends, and the broader VSU community," the university statement said. "The safety and well-being of our students remain our highest priority."

The campus had a large law enforcement presence on Saturday morning, and the university informed students that they should monitor their email for additional safety measures and information about support services. The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and the Hanover County Sheriff's Office were assisting, county police said.

Virginia State University is a historically Black university located in Ettrick, Virginia, about 24 miles (39 kilometers) south of the state capital of Richmond. The public university has about 5,700 students and was the first fully state-supported four-year college for Black Americans. Most of its students are undergraduates.

The university has grown in recent years while attempting to improve safety and retain its historic charm, said Arthur Fridrich, the university's former director of distance education, who lives near the campus and visits regularly. A shooting like this just as students return for classes is heartbreaking for the community,

he said.

"To start a new year with this event is very tragic. It casts a shadow in the minds of all students, and for some it will be difficult to rid their minds of this term," Fridrich said. "For those that were shot, my heart bleeds. I hope that they all mend and somehow do not let this event define their lives."

Teen boy among 6 dead including suspect in Michigan shootings; girl survived

By JACQUELINE GANUN Associated Press/Report for America

A teenage boy and four adults were killed Friday in shootings that prompted a wide search for the fleeing gunman, whose body was ultimately found in a wooded area alongside one of his victims, authorities said. A teenage girl survived and was in stable condition, police said.

Chad Hickman, 39, was found dead after a wide search in Missaukee County, police said. Police released the ages and genders of the victims on Saturday but did not specify whether they were related to each other or the suspect.

Officers responded Friday morning to reports of a shooting at a home about 170 miles (270 kilometers) northwest of Detroit, where they found the bodies of a 16-year-old boy, a 45-year-old man and 40-year-old woman, and a 13-year-old girl in critical condition, Michigan State Police said.

Authorities say Hickman fled that scene, leading to a large-scale search. Police found the body of a 53-year-old man at a second home, and then a 29-year-old woman, dead alongside Hickman, in the woods. All the victims died of gunshot wounds, police said.

"This situation is heartbreaking for the community and challenging for the investigators involved," Lt. Ashley Miller said in a Friday statement. Miller said Saturday the investigation is ongoing.

Hickman was convicted in 2024 of misdemeanor fourth-degree child abuse, according to court records. He was sentenced to one year in jail. In the same case, the court dismissed felony assault and criminal sexual conduct charges.

Tim Penrose, who lives on the street where the 53-year-old was found dead, said Hickman lived in that home. Penrose said he heard shots but didn't think much of it until police arrived because he lives in a rural area where gunfire is not uncommon. Penrose said Hickman frequently harassed him and his wife, though he didn't provide more details.

Gov. Gretchen Whitmer said Friday that she was monitoring the situation. "My thoughts are with the victims, their families, and the Missaukee community," she said.

Iran claims Qatar is holding pilots, Israeli strikes kill 11 in Lebanon, and other Middle East news

By The Associated Press undefined

Iran said Qatar was holding three of its pilots who had been missing since March, which Qatar denied. The United Arab Emirates accused Iran of again attacking one of its vessels in the Strait of Hormuz. The Iran-backed Houthis again struck a Red Sea port in Yemen.

And in southern Lebanon, 11 people were killed in Israeli airstrikes, some of the deadliest since a shaky truce between Israel and Iran-backed Hezbollah went into effect on June 20.

Here's a look at the latest developments on Saturday in the Iran war and the wider Middle East. Full coverage can be found [here](#).

Iran says Qatar is holding 3 of its pilots

Qatar's armed forces captured and were holding three pilots who went missing in March when their jets were downed, the Missing Persons Committee of Iran's Armed Forces General Staff said. Qatar, however, denied it.

Until now, Tehran had said it had no information about their fate. This is the first known case in the war

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where Iran has said a regional country is holding its fighters. Qatar on March 2 said its air force shot down two Iranian bombers as Tehran lashed out against countries hosting U.S. military bases in the opening days of the war.

Saturday's statement alleged that Qatar had not allowed the pilots to meet or communicate with families or Iranian officials handling their cases. Iran asked the International Committee of the Red Cross president for help. The letter said a fourth pilot was killed while on the mission "targeting an enemy military base in Qatar," state media reported.

A spokesperson with Qatar's foreign ministry, Majed Al Ansari, later denied the claims and indicated on X that the pilots had been shot down and that Qatar's search and rescue teams found the remains of one. He said Iran was invited in April to visit and be briefed on those efforts, with no response.

A tanker is attacked in the Strait of Hormuz

The tanker owned by Abu Dhabi's state-owned oil and gas company ADNOC was attacked while transiting the Strait of Hormuz, the Emirati state-run WAM news agency said Saturday.

There were no injuries in the Friday evening attack, the agency reported. It was the third such attack on a vessel operated by ADNOC in the critical waterway in the last week. The United Arab Emirates in a statement called on Iran to stop the unprovoked strikes.

The United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations center said a bulk carrier was struck in the hull by an unknown projectile on Friday. It was not immediately clear if it was the same vessel.

Iran asserted control over the strait after the war started on Feb. 28 with U.S. and Israeli strikes. About one-fifth of the world's traded oil and natural gas passed through the waterway at the mouth of the Persian Gulf before then.

Talks between the U.S. and Iran have stalled while Iran is in discussions with Oman about how to manage the strait that runs between them and had been considered an international waterway.

Israeli strikes kill 11 in southern Lebanon

Israeli airstrikes on southern Lebanon killed at least 11 people Saturday.

Lebanon's Health Ministry and state news agency said one strike targeted a home on the edge of the village of Ansar and killed seven people, including three children, and wounded two. The second, on the village of Deir al-Zahrani, killed four and wounded 17.

Israel's military said it killed a Hezbollah battalion commander and several other militants at a headquarters in southern Lebanon in response to the group's actions against Israeli soldiers operating there. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office in a separate statement said three soldiers were seriously injured. The military blamed an explosive drone.

The military said the commander's family was with him, and that "it should be emphasized that the family members were not the target of the strike." Both the military and Netanyahu's office alleged the commander used the family members as human shields.

It was one of the deadliest days since the Lebanese government and Israel announced a "framework agreement" laying out a plan for Israeli forces to withdraw from southern Lebanon in exchange for Hezbollah's disarmament.

The militant group refused direct talks and was not part of the agreement.

Houthis in Yemen attack Red Sea port, killing at least 3

Yemen's military said the Houthis attacked the Red Sea port of Mokha under the control of the internationally recognized government. Port director Abdul-Malik al-Sharabi told journalists that Friday evening's attack killed three people including two marines, and that port operations had been suspended.

Military spokesperson Col. Majed al-Nazili said in a statement that the Houthis fired six ballistic missiles.

The Houthis' attack was the latest on government-held areas and on neighboring Saudi Arabia, part of an escalation threatening to plunge Yemen back into civil war.

Analysts say the escalation reflects how Iran is scaling up pressure on the United States and its regional allies.

Democrats' 2028 presidential calendar gives Black and Latino voters and union members an early say

By MIKE CATALINI and BILL BARROW Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Democrats seeking the party's presidential nomination in 2028 will need to prove themselves early on in states where Black and Latino voters and union members are key supporters, under an election-year calendar approved Saturday.

The primary lineup pushes Iowa from the traditional top spot and makes South Carolina the leadoff state, voting on Jan. 22, 2028, followed by Nevada on Feb. 1. New Hampshire, New Mexico, Michigan and Virginia round out the early states, throughout February, according to the plan endorsed by the Democratic National Committee at its meeting in Texas.

DNC Chairman Ken Martin said that to win the general election, "You have to be battle-tested in a way that you already have campaigned in front of and for the support of various communities throughout the country." That is why the calendar designed by the party matters, he said in an interview.

Some potential candidates in what is expected to be a large field have visited early-voting states such as South Carolina. Party leaders have said the order give candidates the best shot at winning back the White House after Republican President Donald Trump's second term.

"They have to show that they can go to the South and talk to Black voters and rural voters, as well as out west, talking ranching and mining issues, to a border state, to union members," said party strategist Karen Finney, who has worked on multiple presidential campaigns. "Whoever survives will be battle-tested."

Former presidential candidate Howard Dean, a onetime Vermont governor, recalled his tenure as national party chairman, when Democrats solidified Nevada and South Carolina as early states behind Iowa and New Hampshire. The latest change is even better, he said.

"These states look more like the country," as a whole, he said, "whereas Iowa and New Hampshire don't."

Rita Hart, chair of the Iowa Democratic Party, said bypassing her state in the early going would sideline important voter voices and give a political edge to Republicans, who are expected to keep Iowa atop their calendar.

Nonwhite voters claim top billing

As the first-in-the-South primary, South Carolina was more decisive than Iowa and New Hampshire for nominees Barack Obama in 2008, Hillary Clinton in 2016 and Joe Biden in 2020. All three dominated among South Carolina's large Black population, which can yield more than half the state's Democratic primary electorate.

With Nevada and New Mexico following, that will require candidates to court more Latino voters early in the process.

Shifting from Iowa and New Hampshire does not mean little-known candidates cannot catch fire, as Pete Buttigieg did in Iowa and New Hampshire in 2020, when he was a 37-year-old former mayor. They just will not be able to do it with an almost entirely white audience.

"If you can't go to every part of this country and make your case, you should not be running for president," Finney said.

The progressive vs. establishment dynamics may shift

There is disagreement over how Democrats' split between progressives and mainstream liberals may or may not surface in the nominating calendar.

"I think our primary voters up north are probably a little different than primary voters in South Carolina," said Boyd Brown, a former DNC member from South Carolina. "It's not the woke ideologies that we just can't get away from" in other places.

Nina Smith, a former Buttigieg adviser who now works closely with progressive causes, disagreed. Smith said Black South Carolinians, especially, have gravitated to more moderate candidates — twice rejecting Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders in favor of Clinton and Biden.

But, she said, "Southern Black voters are more progressive than they're given credit for" on policy but

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also “realists” about what is possible.

“Living through Jim Crow and other oppressive structures will force you to take that approach,” she said.

Smith said that with South Carolina leading off and many Southern states following on Super Tuesday soon after the early lineup concludes, progressives will have to take the time to listen and then tailor their messages.

“A lot of Black voters don’t necessarily see themselves in the ideas and arguments that progressives put forward,” she said.

Unions will get a spotlight in the early-voting states

Nevada has the service industry unions because of Las Vegas; Michigan has the auto industry and associated manufacturing support industries; Virginia is home to more federal workers than any other state.

“Labor is still so important,” Dean said.

Beyond seeking the backing of organized labor, the campaigns and the party will look to unions for help in spreading Democrats’ message to voters and getting people to the polls.

More scheduling efficiency for candidates

Campaigns struggle to balance many demands such as meeting voters in person, raising money and the logistics of travel. As a result, places such as Nevada have gotten short shrift in the past because candidates, most from the eastern part of the country, have concluded the investment of time is not worth it.

An expanded calendar offers more clustering opportunities.

A swing to the West could hit two early states — Nevada and New Mexico — and include a fundraising stop in California, full of Democratic donors. A South Carolina trip could mean fundraisers and public appearances in Atlanta, Charlotte and Raleigh, both in North Carolina. Virginia offers proximity to donors and national TV studios in Washington; the same options are available by adding a New York City stop on the way to New Hampshire.

Bre Maxwell is a DNC member from South Carolina who said the state’s smaller size and lower media costs are a financial equalizer, allowing not only the best-funded candidates to have an impact.

“They can campaign from the top to the bottom in a day,” Maxwell said.

It’s about primaries, with a clear look to November

Of the six early states, all but South Carolina have been competitive in general elections.

That means that even before Super Tuesday, the Democratic candidates will have spent significant time and resources in states worth a combined 43 Electoral College votes. That is not insignificant on the way to the 270 needed to win.

Television ads and news coverage can spill over, as well. Markets targeting parts of South Carolina also reach portions of North Carolina and Georgia.

After all, Brown said, the point is to put a Democrat in the White House.

“This is not a social or a debate club. It is a political party,” he said.

Bedbugs can cause people to lose sleep — and blood. Here’s what to do about them

By MIKE STOBBE AP Medical Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Bedbugs are sometimes called the vampires of the insect world — hiding during the day and coming out at night to feast on human blood. Generations of children have been told: “Sleep tight. Don’t let the bedbugs bite.”

Well, bad news: Bedbug infestations are increasing. This is the time of year when they tend to be at their worst. And some scientists think the reviled pests might be capable of spreading an antibiotic-resistant infection called MRSA.

For centuries, the bugs have horrified homeowners and occasionally panicked the public. That happened in New York City in 2018, when at least a half dozen city buses were taken out of service after reports of bedbugs crawling on seats. It happened again in Paris in 2023, when reports of bedbugs at a movie

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theater, on trains and on buses popped up in the lead-up to the 2024 Olympics.

"They certainly are out there," said Christopher Hayes, a North Carolina State University assistant professor who has been bitten by bedbugs more than 50 times in the course of research. "And if you're unaware, if you're not on top of your game, it's easy to bring them into your home."

Bedbugs really do come out at night

Bedbugs are reddish-brown bloodsuckers about the size of an apple seed. Some researchers estimate they date back to the time of the dinosaurs, but they are best known for their unfortunate ability to live with — and prey on — humans.

They can hide in narrow crevices in furniture and lurk in clothes, linens and mattresses. They are hard to see but can be detected through the small dark excrement stains they leave.

The pests can be year-round problems but they have traditionally thrived in the summer. They tend to emerge at night, crawling onto people and using a beaklike body part to pierce human skin and suck blood for several minutes.

The bite itself is painless. Some people develop itchy red welts a day or so later, but others have no reaction.

That's a problem, because people unaware that they are repeatedly being bitten can quickly find themselves victims of an infestation.

One of the more gruesome stories about bedbugs and human health was detailed in a 2020 medical journal case report from France.

It told of a 70-year-old man who lived by himself in an apartment and fainted on the street one day. He was brought to a hospital emergency department in a Paris suburb where he was diagnosed with dementia — and with anemia caused by a longstanding loss of blood.

He also had bedbugs feeding on his neck, head and shoulder. An investigation of his apartment detected thousands of them in his bed and on the floor, walls and curtains of his home.

They aren't thought to spread disease, but one experiment raises questions

Some good news about bedbugs is there hasn't been clear evidence that they have spread diseases from one person to another. The bugs' digestion and anatomy seem to prevent germs from being passed on efficiently, said Chow-Yang Lee, an entomologist at the University of California at Riverside.

But University of South Dakota researchers in 2023 published the results of an experiment — using blood capsules with an artificial skin — that demonstrated bedbugs could acquire MRSA during one feeding and spread it during a later one.

Follow-up research is needed to really prove bedbugs actually are spreading MRSA to people, said one of the study's authors, Jose Pietri, who is now at Purdue University. But "it changes the perspective of what bedbugs do, in terms of public health," Pietri said.

Bedbugs are more resistant to pesticides

Bedbug populations in developed countries were decimated after World War II due to the widespread use of the pesticide DDT. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency banned the pesticide for most uses in 1972, citing evidence that it was harming animals and was a potential risk to people.

Bedbugs had already started to develop resistance to DDT by then, and they have only been getting stronger and more common, said Lee, noting that insecticide resistance has driven a continued resurgence in bedbugs in recent decades.

Exactly how much more common isn't clear. Pest control companies generate annual rankings of U.S. cities with the worst bedbug problems. (Orkin currently ranks Chicago at No. 1, while Terminix says Philadelphia has the biggest problem.) But those lists are based on how many calls each company receives in a year, not a rigorous survey.

Many bedbug infestations happen in low-income or public housing, which may not hire the big companies that compile those rankings, Lee said in an email.

How to protect yourself from the pests

The best thing you can do is never get them in the first place, experts say. That means not bringing

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them into your home.

Travelers can pick them up in hotel rooms. So before you unpack for your stay, check the room for signs of bedbugs by pulling back the covers and bedsheets to look for bugs or fecal spots.

Do not place luggage on beds or on the floor near beds, and consider placing your bags in a light-colored trash bag or even in the bathtub. When you get home, open the luggage outside and take laundry right to the washing machine and dryer.

Sometimes, bedbugs enter homes by hitching a ride on secondhand furniture or other products. Visually inspect those items and treat them before you take them into your home, Hayes advised. Some experts advise vacuuming, steaming or heating furniture, and quarantining it in a garage or storage unit for a few days before bringing it inside the house.

If it's clothes, wash them and put them through the dryer for an hour. Shoes or other items? Consider putting them in a freezer for a week "to make sure that everything in there that could be alive is taken care of," Hayes said.

How to get rid of bedbugs if you have them

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency offers do-it-yourself guidance for getting rid of the pests, but it's labor-intensive, involving sealing hiding spaces and treating infested items.

It also contains many warnings of what not to do.

"You can't just blast random chemicals and expect it's going to work because there's a fairly high likelihood that they'll be resistant to some of the first-line insecticides," Pietri said.

It makes sense to hire professional exterminators who are experienced in getting rid of bedbugs, Pietri and other experts said. But it can cost hundreds or even thousands of dollars.

Insecticides are not the only option.

Silica dust treatments, for example, absorb the bedbug's body moisture, killing them.

Sustained dry heating works wonders, killing eggs as well as adult bedbugs. But it has to be at least 122 degrees (50 degrees Celsius) and can damage furniture, paintings and other personal possessions, so it must be done by professionals.

"I think the biggest piece of advice is just people shouldn't panic," Hayes said. "They just need to take action. If you think you have bedbugs, don't wait to deal with it."

Israeli airstrikes on southern Lebanon kill 11 people in another test to truce

By BASSEM MROUE Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Israeli airstrikes on southern Lebanon killed at least 11 people Saturday, in the deadliest attacks since a truce between Israel and Hezbollah went into effect on June 20.

Lebanon's Health Ministry and state news agency said an airstrike that targeted a home on the edge of Ansar village killed seven people, including three children, and wounded two. The second, on the village of Deir al-Zahrani, killed four and wounded 17.

Israel and the Lebanese government announced a "framework agreement" on June 26, laying out a plan for Israeli forces to withdraw from southern Lebanon in exchange for the disarmament of the Iran-backed Hezbollah militant group. It envisions steps toward an eventual peace agreement between the countries, which remain technically at war nearly 80 years after Israel's establishment.

Hezbollah has refused direct talks and wasn't party to the deal.

Prime minister says Israeli strikes undermine efforts at stability

Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam criticized Israel's airstrikes on southern Lebanon, saying they intimidate "residents in their homes" and undermine efforts to stabilize the situation in the south.

"The seven martyrs of the Israeli airstrike on the town of Ansar are not military infrastructure and the children and women killed were not military targets," Salam said on X. He added that it is the job of the Lebanese state to deal with any military infrastructure in the country.

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President Joseph Aoun said in comments released by his office that the strikes are “a clear message to the negotiation track and to the American efforts aimed at implementing this agreement.”

Israel says it was responding to action against its soldiers

Intense Israeli airstrikes early Saturday also hit the strategic Ali Taher hill, which overlooks parts of the southern city of Nabatiyeh and main roads leading to it, NNA reported. Despite the truce, Israel’s military has continued near-daily attacks in the area north of the Litani River, with large areas to the south under Israeli military control.

The Israeli military said in a statement it struck Hezbollah infrastructure in the areas of Ali Taher and Ansar in response to an action against Israeli soldiers in the area.

The office of Israel’s Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Hezbollah violated the ceasefire by attacking Israeli soldiers inside Lebanon, seriously wounding three. It said the military responded by striking the Hezbollah headquarters which ordered the attack, learning only later that Hezbollah “deliberately put civilians” in that military compound. Israel’s military later said the soldiers were hurt by an explosive drone.

The Israeli military issued another statement later Saturday saying the strike on Ansar killed Ali Samir Al-Haj Hassan, whom it described as a battalion commander with Hezbollah’s elite Radwan Force unit. The military said Haj Hassan’s family was with him and was harmed, but emphasized that the family was not targeted.

Hezbollah refuses to disarm

Hezbollah supporters posted photographs on social media of the commander, his wife, three sons and one daughter and said they were all killed in the strike.

A Hezbollah official did not immediately respond when asked for comment on whether they carried out any attacks on Israeli forces in southern Lebanon.

Hezbollah called on the Lebanese state to find ways to halt “this aggression” rather than pursuing U.S.-sponsored direct talks with Israel, arguing that would be “free gifts for the enemy despite the crimes and aggression it is carrying out.”

“The American side is a partner of the Israeli enemy in its crimes and massacres,” Hezbollah added in the statement.

Earlier this month, two Israeli soldiers were killed in an explosion in southern Lebanon, the first Israeli deaths since the truce. Hezbollah has not commented on the blast.

Lebanon and Israel have held seven rounds of talks; the most recent took place in Rome earlier this month.

The Iran-backed Hezbollah has refused to disarm and accuses the Lebanese government of making too many concessions without guaranteeing an Israeli withdrawal.

The latest Israel-Hezbollah war erupted on March 2, when Hezbollah fired rockets across the border two days after the U.S. and Israel launched their attacks on Iran. More than 4,000 people have been killed by Israeli strikes in Lebanon since then, including hundreds of civilians. About 40 soldiers and three civilians — including a military contractor — have been killed on the Israeli side.

UK’s leader calls for reflection after the death of former Cambridge professor accused of plagiarism

By SYLVIA HUI Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Britain’s prime minister called for reflection on Saturday after a Black professor who faced a storm of plagiarism accusations died suddenly, days after resigning from a prestigious role at the University of Cambridge.

Jason Arday, who became Cambridge’s youngest Black professor in 2023, was found dead inside an address in south London on Friday. He resigned last week as professor of sociology of education after coming under intense media scrutiny, with weeks of news headlines alleging plagiarism in his academic work and questions surrounding claims about his athletic and fundraising accomplishments.

His death has prompted outcries that the allegations against Arday, 41, were magnified into a cruel public

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takedown motivated by racism and longstanding hostility to diversity, equity and inclusion, or DEI, policies at universities and other institutions.

Prime Minister Andy Burnham said Arday's death was "a tragedy on so many levels."

"It's not a moment for any rushing to judgment. It's a moment for reflection, I would say, reflecting on how things came to this," Burnham told reporters.

Arday's family says he suffered years of abuse and harassment

Police said the death was being treated as "unexpected" but not suspicious. They said officers were called to an address in south London on Friday afternoon and a 41-year-old man was pronounced dead at the scene. They did not name Arday, in accordance with police policy.

A friend said Arday had told him that he "felt he couldn't go on" in a voice note earlier Friday.

"He was being subjected to relentless scrutiny, including ridicule, discrediting absolutely every detail of his life, and he wasn't coping with the loss of his career, the loss of his reputation," Cambridge professor and director of the Autism Research Centre, Simon Baron-Cohen, told the BBC.

Arday's family said in a statement that he had been subjected to a "campaign of harassment" and "sustained abuse" ever since he took up his post as professor at Cambridge.

"The campaign of misinformation was too much for Jason," the family said in a statement issued through his publisher Simon & Schuster U.K. "We are in shock to have lost this amazing father, partner, brother, uncle and son."

Cambridge vice chancellor Deborah Prentice, who earlier announced that the university will investigate the circumstances around Arday's employment, said she was "desperately saddened" by the news.

Cambridge had opened investigations into plagiarism

Questions about Arday's qualifications were raised publicly last month by Nathan Cofnas, a one-time Cambridge philosophy researcher who left the university after his critique of diversity, equity and inclusion programs sparked widespread protests. Cofnas previously argued that in a meritocracy, Black people "would disappear from almost all high-profile positions outside of sports and entertainment."

Newspapers soon published stories alleging that more than 100 passages from Arday's 2015 Ph.D. thesis were "identical or near-identical" to an earlier paper written by another researcher.

British media then raised wider questions about many of Arday's claims about his life, including statements he had raised 5.5 million pounds (\$7.4 million) for charity through feats such as running 30 marathons in 35 days and 600 miles in six days. Arday later revised those claims.

Some also questioned his claim that he had overcome developmental delays that left him non-verbal until the age of 11. Arday said he was diagnosed with autism at a young age and didn't read or write at 18 years old.

Arday resigned from Cambridge on Aug. 5. He denied plagiarism, but admitted to some mistakes when working on his doctorate.

Dozens of Cambridge academics signed a letter calling for an independent inquiry into how Arday was appointed. Cambridge initially stood by Arday, saying that the plagiarism allegations had been investigated by Liverpool John Moores University, which awarded Arday's doctorate.

The university then changed its stance and said it had opened an investigation "following new information about Professor Arday's qualifications and honorary appointments."

Prentice, the university's vice chancellor, said this week she shared concerns regarding his appointment and that Cambridge will run a review of how it hires senior staff.

Criticism of Arday became part of broader culture wars

While some believe Arday was a victim of media "hounding" and racism, others say there are more complex issues at play — including whether Cambridge made the right call when it appointed Arday to such a high-profile position.

Daniel Kebede, general secretary of the National Education Union, said questions about Arday's credibility "unleashed a tirade of racism."

"There is a profound difference between scrutiny and a sustained public campaign that turns an individual into a symbol of everything the right believes is wrong with DEI," he said. "The effect has been chilling."

It tells Black people and others from underrepresented backgrounds that entering prominent public positions will make you a target.”

London Mayor Sadiq Khan said Arday had been “the victim of a pernicious public shaming that other people in his position simply wouldn’t have faced.”

Former Conservative home secretary James Cleverly, who is Black, wrote on X that academic institutions “have serious questions to answer.”

“They put him into positions he was clearly not qualified for so they could have a Black wunderkind to show off; they pushed him into the spotlight for their own benefit,” he said.

Magnitude 7.7 earthquake strikes off Indonesia’s coast, killing at least 47 and toppling buildings

By YACOB HERIN Associated Press

MAUMERE, Indonesia (AP) — A powerful magnitude 7.7 earthquake struck off the coast of Indonesia early Saturday, killing at least 47 people, collapsing buildings and causing panic in a region prone to deadly quakes. Authorities said dozens more residents were injured and warned that the death toll would almost certainly rise.

Authorities issued a tsunami warning and urged coastal residents to move to higher ground, but later lifted the warning when Indonesia’s meteorological agency said monitoring showed no significant sea-level changes that posed a threat to coastal communities. Some smaller tsunamis were reported.

The U.S. Geological Survey said the quake hit eastern Indonesia’s Flores region at a depth of 10 kilometers (6 miles) at 5:58 a.m. local time. Its epicenter was 68 km (42 miles) north-northwest of the city of Ende in East Nusa Tenggara province.

The quake triggers landslides and generates small tsunamis

The meteorological agency said the quake was followed by at least 235 aftershocks, with the largest recorded at magnitude 6.2.

The agency’s sea-level monitoring stations acknowledged some small tsunamis reached coastal villages in Manggarai and East Manggarai regencies. Videos obtained by The Associated Press showed the coastal village of Riung in Ngada regency blanketed in mud and debris after what the agency described as a 1.61-meter (5.3 feet) tsunami. Fishing boats were stranded ashore, infrastructure damaged, and homes surrounded by sediment left by receding waters.

Waves measuring 0.94 meters (3.1 feet) were observed in Maurole, Ende Regency.

Tsunami waves exceeding 0.5 meters (1.6 feet) were detected in Bulukumba, South Sulawesi, and Sape in Bima Regency.

A strong, land-based earthquake of 6.9 magnitude hit North Sumatra province in western Indonesia on Saturday afternoon, according to the USGS. It struck 172.5 kilometers (107 miles) beneath the earth’s surface, meaning it was too deep to cause significant damage or casualties, Indonesian authorities said.

The quake has caused buildings to collapse

East Nusa Tenggara Police Chief Rudi Darmoko said power outages hampered the spread of information about the impact of the earthquake in cities and villages, complicating search and rescue efforts.

“We are continuing to collect reports of damage and casualties, but there are communication disruptions,” Darmoko said. He said quake-triggered landslides in Ende regency blocked the Trans-Flores highway, a roughly 700-kilometer (435-mile) paved mountain road spanning Flores Island, from Labuan Bajo to Larantuka.

The head of the National Disaster Management Agency, Suharyanto, said rescuers have recovered at least 47 bodies, mostly in Sikka, Manggarai and East Manggarai, and at least 50 people were taken to hospitals.

Suharyanto, who like many Indonesians uses a single name, said the quake flattened at least 157 houses and damaged nearly 200 more, forcing about 2,000 villagers to abandon their homes and move to temporary shelters. The powerful temblor also destroyed more than 100 public facilities, including schools, medical centers and churches.

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The death toll could rise because landslides triggered by the earthquake buried or cut off many remote villages across six regencies on Flores Island, said Fathur Rahman, who heads the Search and Rescue Office in Maumere, the capital of Sikka.

Some remote villages are completely buried, he said, and damaged infrastructure and a lack of heavy equipment were hindering rescue efforts.

Authorities deployed three helicopters and a rescue vessel to support logistics and emergency response operations, including potential evacuations. East Nusa Tenggara consists of numerous islands and presents significant transportation and access challenges.

Residents ran for their lives when the quake struck

The quake was felt across much of Flores island with initial reports indicating heavy damage.

Yohanna Embu, who lives in Sikka, said people ran in a panic to higher ground.

"Many buildings here were damaged ... I saw that the waiting room at the port terminal in Maumere had collapsed," she said.

Students at St. Peter Major Seminary in Sikka who were attending morning Mass fled when the roof of an assembly hall collapsed, said the Rev. Guidelbertus Tanga, rector of the seminary, known locally as Ritapiret Seminary on the predominantly Catholic island of Flores.

"Our students and nuns ran out in panic beneath a collapsing roof," Tanga said. "At least one priest suffered a broken leg after jumping from the second floor of a building during the quake."

The quake also struck Labuan Bajo, a gateway town to eastern Indonesia's Komodo National Park, one of the country's best-known attractions. Damage was reported in Bima, a city in neighboring West Nusa Tenggara province, and in parts of southern Sulawesi island.

Indonesian authorities initially issued a tsunami warning for parts of East Nusa Tenggara, West Nusa Tenggara, South Sulawesi and Southeast Sulawesi provinces, and urged residents to stay away from beaches and riverbanks. The agency located the shallow undersea quake near Flores island.

Indonesia, a vast archipelago of more than 17,000 islands, is prone to earthquakes and volcanic activity because of its location on the "Ring of Fire," an arc of volcanoes and fault lines in the Pacific Basin.

Most notably, a powerful earthquake caused a tsunami in 1992 that killed about 2,500 people on Flores, part of a group of islands in the eastern half of Indonesia, while in 2018, a magnitude 7.5 quake spawned a large localized tsunami that wiped out coastal areas, killing more than 4,400 people.

In December 2004, a massive magnitude 9.1 earthquake off Sumatra in western Indonesia triggered a tsunami that killed 230,000 people in a dozen countries.

While Taliban leaders mark 5 years in power in Afghanistan, a UN official warns of a rights crisis

By ABDUL QA HAR AFGHAN and SUZAN FRASER Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — Taliban rulers and other officials gathered at Afghanistan's traditional Loya Jirga assembly hall on Saturday to celebrate the fifth anniversary of their return to power, touting what they described as restored stability and an end to decades of conflict.

A top United Nations official, however, warned of a grave human rights crisis in Afghanistan, where girls over age 12 are barred from attending school.

The Taliban seized power on Aug. 15, 2021, as the U.S. and other NATO troops withdrew following a costly two-decade war. The U.S. withdrawal led to chaos at Kabul airport as crowds of people tried to flee the country in desperation.

Soon after taking power, the Taliban administration imposed a ban on girls' education beyond the sixth grade and later banned higher education for women, despite having pledged before the takeover that women would be allowed access to education, employment and public participation.

Women have also been banned from public spaces such as gyms and parks, from taking part in sports and traveling to distant locations without a male guardian.

Taliban hails 'liberation' from American forces

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At the Loya Jirga, high-ranking officials were joined by some foreign representatives and thousands of ordinary citizens for speeches marking what they said was Afghanistan's liberation from American forces.

"We pray to Almighty God to forever protect our homeland from occupation, aggression, wars, and insecurity, and to enable our people to enjoy peace, tranquility, and prosperity under the auspices of the Sharia-based government," the Taliban government's deputy spokesman, Hamdullah Fitrat, said during the ceremony.

Abdul Salam Hanafi, the deputy prime minister in charge of administrative affairs, said the Taliban rule ended an era of external interventions and internal strife in Afghanistan "over the past half-century," restoring security.

"At least 300 Afghan youth were martyred or killed every day," Hanafi said. "Three hundred sisters would become widows, several children would become orphans and 300 mothers would be grieving. Praise be to God, with the rule of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, this tragedy was removed from the Afghan nation."

There were no women present at the ceremony.

Top Taliban official calls for more international engagement

Five years on, the Taliban government remains isolated internationally, with Russia being the only country to have recognized it formally.

Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi said countries that have engaged with the administration have gained from doing so and called on others that have not established contacts to reconsider their approach.

"They should move towards a policy of engagement and mutual interaction," he said.

Celebrations held under tight security

In Kabul, Afghans took to the squares carrying Taliban flags and chanting slogans in support of the government. Convoys of vehicles wound their way through the city, causing traffic jams.

Security was tight, with a heavy Taliban security force presence and several checkpoints on a main road leading to the Loya Jirga.

Celebrations were also held in provinces across Afghanistan, where Taliban flags and posters emblazoned with slogans in praise of the Taliban's return to power were displayed along major roads and marketplaces.

UN warns of worsening human rights crisis

In a video message, Richard Bennett, the U.N. special rapporteur on the human rights situation in Afghanistan, said the country was undergoing a deep human rights crisis.

"While the era of war has ended, it's questionable whether there's real peace, and the human rights situation has steadily deteriorated, most dramatically for women and girls," Bennett said. "My mandate has concluded that this system amounts to the crime against humanity of gender persecution."

"The crisis extends well beyond gender discrimination, even beyond gender apartheid," he continued, noting that the U.N. continues to document arbitrary arrests, torture, extrajudicial killings and persecution of minorities in Afghanistan.

Bennett warned the international community against "normalizing" the Taliban's policies, saying it would legitimize the discrimination and tell "victims their suffering is negotiable."

In an interview with The Associated Press earlier this week, Molvi Hayatullah Mahajar Farahi, deputy minister in the Taliban government for broadcasting at the Ministry of Information and Culture, said despite "challenges and difficulties" the administration has in the past five years delivered security and infrastructure and created jobs.

2.4 million girls excluded from secondary education

Farahi, when asked, did not address the issue of the education of girls and women but said "the level of investment made in universities surpasses anything seen in the past."

The U.N. agency on education and culture, UNESCO, estimates that some 2.4 million girls have been excluded from secondary education. The U.N. World Food Program said child malnutrition has reached critical levels in a third of Afghanistan's provinces and is expected to worsen due to funding shortfalls.

U.N. Women said this week that women and girls are facing the harshest restrictions in the world and that the bans are damaging Afghanistan's future, with the lack of teachers, doctors, nurses and midwives threatening the country's social and economic foundations.

After nearly 30 years, a man is on trial in the fatal shooting of Tupac Shakur. Here's what to know

By ANDREW DALTON AP Entertainment Writer

When Tupac Shakur was fatally shot at age 25 on Sept. 7, 1996, the presidential race between incumbent Bill Clinton and Bob Dole was in its stretch run. The Atlanta Olympics had just ended. The internet was in its infancy.

In a booming music business, CDs were king, like Shakur's monumental "All Eyez on Me," which topped the Billboard album chart a few months earlier. It was the pinnacle of a brief hip-hop career whose legend would only grow in the following decades. His shooting was one of several momentous mid-1990s musical deaths, including those of Kurt Cobain and Shakur's archrival the Notorious B.I.G.

Starting Monday in Las Vegas, that September night will come under intense scrutiny again as 63-year-old Duane "Keffe D" Davis is tried in his killing. It is a moment that many fans and followers of the formerly cold case thought might never come.

Prosecutors allege Davis orchestrated Shakur's shooting. They have charged him with one count of murder with a deadly weapon with the intent to promote, further or assist a criminal gang.

Davis has pleaded not guilty. His defense attorneys argue there is no evidence he directed the shooting and the state is relying on witnesses who weren't there.

Here's a look at key elements of the trial that is expected to last about a month.

What happened on the night Tupac was shot

Shakur and Death Row Records co-founder Marion "Suge" Knight were in Las Vegas to watch Mike Tyson knock out Bruce Seldon at the MGM Grand Garden Arena. Just outside the fight, Shakur, Knight and their entourage got into a brawl with a group that included Davis' nephew, Orlando "Baby Lane" Anderson.

Authorities, authors and Davis himself say the shooting was an act of retaliation. Davis' 2019 memoir "Compton Street Legend," said the men had "crossed the line" when they beat up Anderson.

"We couldn't let no record company studio gangsters do us like that," says the book, which along with Davis interviews revived the cold case and led to Davis being charged. The co-authored memoir will be essential to the trial. Davis' defense fought unsuccessfully to get it excluded.

Later in the night, Shakur and Knight were heading to a nightclub where Shakur was scheduled to perform. At a red light near the Las Vegas Strip, a white Cadillac pulled up beside them, and gunfire erupted. Shakur was shot multiple times and died six days later. Knight survived with minor injuries.

Prosecutors say Davis called for shooting that was fueled by long gang feud

The long, lingering question of who shot Tupac may stay unanswered. But prosecutors hope to prove that Davis was the shot caller and provided the weapon.

He was one of four men in the Cadillac, authorities said. The other three have all died in the years since. Authorities say neither the car nor the gun used in the shooting were recovered.

Grand jury testimony portrayed the shooting as a culmination of a longstanding feud between rival record labels — Death Row Records and Bad Boy Records — and rival gang sects Mob Piru and South Side Compton Crips.

The key players at trial

The jury will consist of six men and 10 women who were seated Thursday. Four are alternates.

Attorney Michael Sanft will lead Davis' defense. He has said he took the case on a pro-bono basis. His previous high-profile clients include Michele Fiore, a Nevada politician convicted of wire fraud but pardoned by President Donald Trump before she was sentenced, and Andrew Cote, a former Las Vegas pastor found guilty of shooting and killing his 71-year-old neighbor and her 54-year-old boyfriend.

Chief Deputy District Attorney Marc DiGiacomo will head the prosecution. He previously faced off with Sanft as the prosecutor in the Cote case.

Judge Carli Kierny was a public defender for 10 years in Clark County, Nevada, where she was elected

as a judge in 2020. She is on the ballot again later this year.

Dozens of prosecution witnesses could include 'Suge' Knight

Prosecutors expect to call between 35 and 45 people to the stand. Along with police and technical witnesses, they are expected to include people who saw Shakur moments before he was shot and those who were associates of both Shakur and Davis at the time.

Knight, the West Coast hip-hop mogul who was once one of the most important and most feared men in music, is the only surviving eyewitness other than the defendant. He is on the witness list and may be summoned. He has said he wants no part in the trial. He is serving a 28-year prison sentence in California for running over and killing a Compton businessman in 2015.

Davis wrote in his book that moments before the shooting, he and Knight "looked each other dead in the eye" like "two rams locking horns."

Sean "Diddy" Combs, Knight's East Coast counterpart and fierce foe, will not be testifying.

The defense intends to call only a handful of witnesses. They have not said whether Davis will testify.

The three men who didn't live to take part in the trial

Law enforcement authorities long suspected that the gunman was Anderson, Davis' 12-years-younger nephew who was 22 at the time. He was sitting in the backseat of the Cadillac, behind his uncle. Anderson, who denied involvement in Shakur's killing, died two years later in what police said was an unrelated shooting at a Compton car wash.

Deandrae "Freaky" Smith was in the backseat sitting next to Anderson. Denvonta Lee, a former associate of Smith who talked to him about the shooting soon after it happened, told a grand jury it was Smith who fired the shots but let Anderson take credit for Shakur's death. Smith died in 2004 at age 30 from what authorities said were natural causes.

Terry "Bubble Up" Brown was the driver of the Cadillac. He died in a 2015 shooting at a medical marijuana dispensary in Compton.

Obesity drugs show early promise against the hormonal disorder PMOS, giving a suffering family hope

By LAURA UNGAR AP Medical Writer

Charlotte Touzalin was still a young teenager when she began struggling with weight gain, abnormal periods and unwanted facial hair — the same puzzling symptoms that plagued her mom for decades and that no doctor could piece together.

"I'd go home and I'd cry," said Touzalin, an 18-year-old college student from Colorado. "I didn't understand why all this weight was coming back or why my friends didn't have to shave their faces and I had to."

Touzalin and her mom, Anne Schultz, were finally diagnosed with polyendocrine metabolic ovarian syndrome, a hormonal condition affecting 1 in 8 women worldwide. But unlike her mom, Touzalin is beginning young adulthood with new hope after taking part in a study testing blockbuster GLP-1 drugs as a treatment.

A small but growing body of research shows that these obesity medications may also work for the disorder known as PMOS — not only by promoting weight loss but also by improving insulin resistance, hormone balance and ovulation. These things are key to the disease, which used to be called polycystic ovary syndrome but was renamed earlier this year to shift the focus away from ovaries and cysts.

"We need to do a better job taking care of it," said Dr. Melanie Cree, who has led three studies testing GLP-1 drugs for PMOS including the one Touzalin joined. "We are finding them incredibly effective and really exciting for improving symptoms in women with this condition."

PMOS is a mysterious and maddening disease

Touzalin and her mom's long, frustrating journey with PMOS is common.

Diagnosis often takes years because symptoms overlap with other conditions, vary widely and may be dismissed by doctors. The disorder tends to run in families, and many but not all women affected carry excess weight. But there's no known cause or specific treatment, just symptom management such as taking birth control pills to regulate periods and keeping weight in check with diet and exercise.

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Two hormones are key drivers of PMOS: insulin, which acts like a key to let blood sugar into cells, and testosterone, which among other things helps maintain sexual desire, bone density and muscle mass.

Most women with PMOS, regardless of their body size, have insulin resistance, which means this hormone doesn't work as well as it should, said Cree, PMOS clinic director at Children's Hospital Colorado. In many women, the high insulin can go directly to the ovaries, spurring them to make more testosterone and leading to problems like skipped periods, severe acne and even beard growth.

Schultz, 43, didn't even know the condition existed when she first began having irregular periods and bloating around age 18. In addition to struggling with the same symptoms as her daughter, she had problems with her ovaries and numerous miscarriages, which are more common with PMOS.

Schultz received various diagnoses before learning she had PMOS around the same time as her daughter, who faced a similar medical runaround.

Schultz recalled talking about Touzalin's symptoms with a pediatrician who was seeing her for what they thought was primarily an issue with binge eating and ADHD.

Schultz told the doctor: "There's gotta be something else going on here."

Touzalin said she felt "heard for the first time" when a nurse practitioner began piecing things together a few years ago. Cree definitively diagnosed her last year.

"It was like a godsend," said Schultz, tearing up. "We finally had an answer and some kind of a path for her."

In Cree's study, Touzalin gave herself shots of semaglutide weekly for 10 months. The abnormal hair growth slowed and her periods normalized. For the first time, she felt full after eating and stopped gaining weight constantly.

"I became a happier version of myself," she said. "I felt like a normal person."

While research on GLP-1s for PMOS continues, insurers put up barriers

Touzalin's results weren't unique. Early data from the study, published in June in the journal *Fertility and Sterility*, said eight of 11 participants completing the trial lost at least 10% of their body weight. The median weight loss among them was about 42 pounds; the median drop in testosterone was 52%. Six women had more periods and four of them went to monthly periods.

In all three of Cree's studies, women on GLP-1s lost more weight than those in control groups, and levels of testosterone, blood sugar and insulin dropped. While the study involving Touzalin looks at semaglutide shots, the other studies examined semaglutide pills in one and exenatide shots in the other.

Other studies globally have shown similarly positive results. Although the studies are small, some researchers say GLP-1s are already showing promising potential for targeting metabolic issues in PMOS. Others say the evidence remains uncertain, and more studies are underway.

As research continues, more and more doctors are prescribing the drugs "off label" for PMOS and seeing improvements in their patients. But insurance coverage is often a problem because the drugs are not approved to treat the condition.

"I use these medicines a great deal," said Dr. Rana Malek, an endocrinologist with the University of Maryland Medical System.

Among patients with insulin resistance, she said she usually uses them to help with weight loss.

Doctors stress that results vary. GLP-1s don't work for everyone and can have side effects, like nausea and constipation. If people stop taking them, weight can return.

Still, they can help a lot of PMOS patients, Malek said, and it's frustrating that many can't get them because of insurance issues. Not only are they unapproved for PMOS, some insurers don't cover them for weight loss.

Touzalin recently ran into this barrier herself. After finishing her study participation, she no longer gets free GLP-1s and had to go off them in June.

Schultz is determined to get her back on them. She's fighting with her insurer and has a backup plan to get medications through a drug company program. She'd also like to try GLP-1s for her own PMOS, but said her daughter comes first.

Touzalin hopes for a day when any PMOS patient can get the treatment if she needs it.
"It's something that could help a lot of other people," she said.

Ukraine attacks Russia's Samara industrial site as Kyiv ramps up long-range strikes

By The Associated Press undefined

A large-scale Ukrainian attack struck industrial infrastructure in Russia's southwestern Samara region Saturday, a Russian official said.

Ivan Noskov, head of the region's capital, Samara, said air defense forces had repelled a "massive" missile attack, with "localized damage" to the city's industrial sites. He also said that medical assistance has been provided to those injured in the attack, but did not give further details.

Ukraine has stepped up its long-range aerial attacks on Russian military industries and energy facilities, aiming to cut Moscow's revenue for the war and make Russians feel the consequences of the invasion, now in its fifth year.

Zelenskyy says need for peace has to be felt in Russia

Writing on social media, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said that Kyiv's forces had carried out a strike against Samara's Progress Center, which operates under Russian space agency Roscosmos and is involved in producing rocket technology and electronics.

He said that the strike used Ukraine's domestically produced Flamingo missiles to hit the site, which is approximately 900 kilometers (560 miles) from the Ukrainian border.

Zelenskyy also said Russia's Savasleyka air base, some 700 kilometers (430 miles) from the front line, had also been hit.

"Peace is needed, and this must be evident in Russia — through concrete damage to specific facilities," Zelenskyy wrote.

While most of Ukraine's strikes have a range of less than 200 kilometers (125 miles), its longer-range attacks have increased dramatically this year. It launched three times as many of those strikes in July as it did in January, according to data from ACLED, an independent conflict monitor. Repeatedly hitting deep into Russia has forced its military to stretch air defenses over a larger area.

Russia's Ministry of Defense said Saturday that it had shot down 598 Ukrainian drones over 19 Russian regions, as well as the Black and Azov Seas and the annexed Ukrainian peninsula of Crimea.

Separately, two people, including a nine-year-old child, were wounded when a Ukrainian drone attack hit a private home in the town of Shatura in the Moscow region, local Gov. Andrey Vorobyov said.

Child killed in drone strike

Elsewhere, a Russian strike on an apartment block in southeastern Ukraine Saturday killed a three-month-old baby and wounded 11 people, local officials said.

Drones hit the building in the town of Marhanets, said Oleksandr Hanzha, head of the Dnipropetrovsk Regional Military Administration.

Meanwhile, hundreds of mourners gathered in Kyiv at a memorial ceremony dedicated to 3-year-old Dmytro Kucher and his grandparents, Halyna and Petro Kucher, who were killed by a Russian drone strike on August 8.

Multiple Russian drones destroyed the family's home in the Brovary district, northeast of Kyiv.

An initial ceremony was held at Kyiv's Spaskyi Lyceum, where Halyna had served as school principal for more than 20 years, before moving to a churchyard in the suburb of Zazymia, close to the former family home.

The couple's son, Oleksandr Kucher, said that his parents had been together since the fifth grade. "They died together," he said. "The Shahed (drone) completely tore my mother apart. We recovered only about two kilograms (about 4.4 pounds) of her remains."

He described his 3-year-old son, Dmytro, as "our little miracle" and "the soul of our family."

"He kept my parents, me and our entire family going," Kucher said.

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Russia's Ministry of Defense also said Saturday that it had targeted warehouses and infrastructure at the Ukrainian ports of Odesa, Izmail and Yuzhnyi.

Ukraine's Air Force said that Russia launched 152 drones over the country Saturday, of which 124 were destroyed.

Democratic primary turnout has soared in some states. Can it carry over to November?

By JOEY CAPPELLETTI, LEAH ASKARINAM and JOSH BOAK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Democratic voters are showing up for this year's primaries in numbers not seen in decades, a pattern emerging across several states that has the party optimistic about its prospects in November when control of Congress will be at stake.

In Tuesday's primary, Wisconsin Democrats cast nearly 800,000 ballots, their highest total for a midterm in more than 20 years. That followed 1.5 million Democratic voters in Michigan the week before, a midterm record for the state.

The enthusiasm extends beyond the Midwest. Democratic turnout also surged earlier this year in Texas and Georgia, states that will have competitive Senate races in the fall. It is giving Democrats a string of strong showings heading into the midterms, when the president's party is normally at a disadvantage. That is compounded this year by President Donald Trump's weak approval ratings, persistent inflation and an unpopular war with Iran.

"The big news is that Democrats are getting huge turnouts," said David Axelrod, who was a top adviser to Democratic President Barack Obama. "That's been a steady story throughout this period."

Competitive Democratic primaries have helped drive the surge, giving the party's voters more reason to participate. Republican primary turnout remained closer to historic norms in Michigan, even with a competitive statewide contest.

Voter turnout in primary elections is an imperfect predictor of general election results, especially when one party has the more compelling early contests. Republicans say they are responding with a major effort to turn out their voters in the fall.

GOP leaders say they can energize voters by tapping into a major fundraising advantage over Democrats and sending Trump back out campaigning, including during a midterm convention in Texas next month.

"Primary turnout doesn't win general elections," said Mike Marinella, spokesman for the National Republican Congressional Committee. "House Republicans are entering November with the money, momentum, stronger candidates and a battle-tested operation built to turn out voters when it actually counts."

Democratic turnout in some states is the highest in two decades

The scale of the Democratic turnout advantage varied across states, but the pattern extended across much of this year's competitive landscape for House, Senate or governor's races.

In Wisconsin, more than 790,000 people voted in the Democratic primary for governor, putting turnout at about 22% of registered voters. More than 1.5 million people voted in Michigan's recent Democratic Senate primary, which accounted for a little more than 18% of registered voters. It was the state's highest midterm turnout rate in a Democratic primary since at least 2002 — the same as in Wisconsin, according to an analysis of Associated Press election data.

In Minnesota, Democratic primary turnout was on par with the 2018 midterm election, with both years marking the state's highest Democratic primary turnout in a midterm year so far this century.

For Republicans in Wisconsin and Michigan, turnout in last week's primary was in line with previous GOP midterm primaries in each state. In Michigan, turnout for the Republican governor's race was about 11%. In Wisconsin's Republican primary for governor, it is expected to be about 14%.

"Republicans in Michigan will close the enthusiasm gap by highlighting the massive differences between our nominees and the extreme, out-of-touch politicians the Democrats have nominated," said Ted Goodman, a spokesperson for the Michigan GOP. "It's one thing to lead in enthusiasm before we know who is running. Now, the differences are clear."

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Other states that held elections earlier this year also saw significant Democratic primary turnout. In Georgia and Texas, the midterm turnout rate in the Democratic primaries was higher than it's been since at least 2002. In Georgia, just over 1 million people voted in May in the Democratic governor's race, a little more than 13% of registered voters. In Texas, about 2.3 million people voted in March in the Democratic Senate primary, a little more than 12%.

Competitive primaries fueled turnout. They may complicate Democratic unity

The robust primary turnout has been a "good sign for Democrats," said Corwin Smidt, a political science professor at Michigan State University. But he cautioned that it is "not a very solid predictor" of how voters will break in November.

Smidt pointed to several factors behind the numbers, including high turnout in recent elections, which has created a larger pool of regular voters.

"Voting is a lot of habit-forming," he said.

He also noted that many of the states with high turnout had what he described as "media spotlight candidacies."

Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota all held marquee progressive versus moderate races in August that likely helped drive Democratic participation.

In Michigan, spending in the Democratic Senate primary topped \$80 million, making it one of the most expensive races of the year so far, according to AdImpact. Progressive Abdul El-Sayed narrowly defeated Rep. Haley Stevens after a campaign that drew national attention and energized younger voters and university communities.

But Stevens carried Wayne County, the state's largest source of Democratic votes, and some of the congresswoman's supporters said before the primary that they would not back El-Sayed if he became the nominee.

In Wisconsin, the governor's primary was repeatedly reshaped as moderate Democrats left and reentered the race while democratic socialist Francesca Hong consolidated progressive support. Hong lost narrowly to Milwaukee County Executive David Crowley, a more moderate candidate.

The races highlight how competitive primaries helped drive attention and also how the winning candidates have work to do to bring their party together for November. Both Wisconsin and Michigan Democrats held unity breakfasts in the days after the primaries.

Sen. Bernie Sanders, a Vermont independent who backed El-Sayed and Minnesota Senate nominee Peggy Flanagan but did not endorse Hong, said in an interview this week that he expects Democratic voters to bridge their differences for the general election.

"At the end of the day, when it comes to taking on Trump and creating a Democratic House and a Democratic Senate, there is going to be unity, because I think everybody knows how important that is," he said.

A favorable environment, but a difficult map

Democrats have reason to believe the primary enthusiasm could last. The president's party has historically lost ground in midterm elections, and Trump enters the fall deeply unpopular amid economic unease and an unpopular war.

Some 33% of American adults approve of his job performance, according to the most recent polling by The AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs.

But a favorable national environment may not be enough. Democrats will need unusually strong turnout to overcome a congressional map that has become more favorable to Republicans.

The number of competitive House races has shrunk considerably this year after Republican-controlled states redrew congressional districts in their favor at Trump's urging. Some Democratic-controlled states responded, but the new lines are expected to produce a net benefit for Republicans, who hold a slim House majority.

Republicans control the Senate 53-47, with Democrats needing to pick up four seats to win the majority. Democrats will have to generate energy similar to Republicans two years ago, Smidt said.

"If we have a national tide like we had in 2024, suddenly that opens the map a little more," he said.

The buck stops somewhere else: A look at Trump's tendency to avoid blame when things go awry

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — It is among the most famous phrases in presidential history: "The buck stops here." Except with President Donald Trump, it almost never does.

Concerns about a weak economy and still-high inflation? His predecessor, Joe Biden, saddled him with that, he says, even though the Democrat has been out of office for 18-plus months and despite Trump once promising an immediate turnaround.

The problem-plagued revamp of the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool? That was marred by vandalism, the Republican president insists, even though the office of a prosecutor he put in the job has said the damage was due to shoddy workmanship.

The increasingly unpopular war in Iran that has kept oil prices high, Trump's approval rating low and sent shock waves through the global economy? Actually, this was Trump making up for timid earlier presidents who, he argues, squandered nearly 50 years of opportunities to curb Tehran's nuclear ambitions.

Pithy slogans aside, all modern presidents shift responsibility onto others to some degree, frequently blaming the commander-in-chief who preceded them, Congress — or both. But Trump has taken it to a new level, effectively embracing a de facto political strategy of being in charge of everything but responsible for nothing when things go badly.

"Taking responsibility being a characteristic of presidential leadership — or any kind of leadership — is absolutely true," said Nicole Anslover, a history professor at Florida Atlantic University and author of "Harry S. Truman: The Coming of the Cold War."

Trump's tendency to point fingers at others is increasingly in the spotlight before November's midterm elections, when Republicans are trying to retain control of Congress. His unwillingness to accept blame sometimes leads him to deny that there are problems at all, and could leave GOP leaders in tight races with little reassurance for voters that their concerns are being addressed.

The White House counters that Trump is working to correct long-festered challenges, not simply throwing up his hands and ignoring them.

The president is "rightfully addressing the failures of his predecessors while taking action to deliver big wins for the American people," spokesperson Taylor Rogers said, pointing to a series of policies that she said Republicans can run on, including tax cuts, efforts to lower prescription drug prices, cracking down on immigration and the U.S.-Mexico border, increasing domestic energy production and a strong stock market.

Ducking responsibility dates to Trump's first term

Truman famously kept a "The Buck Stops Here" sign on his desk as president. That came from "pass the buck," which, according to Truman's presidential library, dates to frontier times, when poker players would pass a buckhorn handle knife to the person whose turn it was to deal the cards.

"The president, whoever he is, has to decide," Truman said during his farewell address in 1953. "He can't pass the buck to anybody. No one else can do the deciding for him. That's his job."

The understanding of the phrase has broadened over the years to include taking responsibility for the outcome of tough decisions. Trump used to espouse similar beliefs, saying back in 2013 that in running a business, "Whatever happens, you're responsible. If it doesn't happen, you're responsible."

Accepting the 2016 presidential nomination, Trump said, "Nobody knows the system better than me, which is why I alone can fix it." But as president, he has often suggested that the solution and blame rest elsewhere.

"The buck stops with everybody," Trump said in 2019, during a lengthy government shutdown. In 2020, on the same day he declared the coronavirus pandemic a national emergency, he said, "I don't take responsibility at all" for a lack of COVID-19 testing.

Anslover said Truman took full responsibility for dropping atomic bombs on Japan even though he was not informed that the U.S. was developing such weapons until his predecessor, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, died.

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John F. Kennedy saw his approval ratings rise after he acknowledged he was to blame for the failed Bay of Pigs invasion in Cuba. Ronald Reagan said he was sorry for any involvement he may have had in the Iran-Contra scandal even while saying he wasn't sure he was to blame. "The buck stops here with me," he said then.

At his final news conference in early 2009, George W. Bush listed a series of mistakes he had made, including failing to find weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. His successor, Barack Obama, said, "I screwed up," after his nominee for health chief, Tom Daschle, withdrew because of unpaid back taxes.

Presidents before Trump "really usually take accountability," Anslover said.

'We inherited a total catastrophe,' Trump says

The president acknowledged in a recent Punchbowl interview that voters are angry, but he said they are not mad at him but at congressional Republicans.

Trump believes his party can hold its congressional majorities after November, but he was clear that if Republicans lose, it won't be his fault — echoing his comments before the 2018 midterms that he would not accept blame if his party lost control of the House, which it did.

Trump's approval rating on the economy, once seen as among his strongest issues, has fallen throughout his time in office, from 40% in March 2025 to 32% in July, according to Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research polling. About 6 in 10 U.S. adults say Trump's economic policies have made economic conditions worse, according to Pew Research Center polling.

"The public certainly expects the president to be concerned about, and focused on, making life more affordable," Republican pollster Frank Luntz said.

Trump instead points to Biden, under whom inflation hit a four-decade peak of 9.1% in 2022 as the pandemic was still roiling the world economy, before declining to 2.7% by November 2024. Last month, pressured by the Iran war, it was 3.4%.

"When we took office, we inherited a total catastrophe," Trump said at a recent rally, later adding, "I inherited those high prices, just so you understand."

Andrew Bates, a Democratic strategist and former Biden White House spokesperson, noted that Trump no longer mentions his campaign promise to "immediately end inflation" on Day One.

"He may not remember having made those promises, but swing voters sure as hell do," Bates said.

Trump has shown the same pattern with Iran and the Reflecting Pool

The president has characterized the Iran war as "a little excursion" or "detour." To play down how long it has lasted, he frequently notes that U.S. wars in Vietnam and Afghanistan dragged on for years, though the Iran conflict — which he initially said would be over in four weeks to five weeks — is now in its sixth month with no clear end in sight.

Trump has sought to shift blame to the past on the Reflecting Pool, falsely suggesting that Biden and Obama spent "hundreds of millions of dollars" trying unsuccessfully to fix it.

But Trump's main defense has been vandalism. And, so far, at least four cases alleging that, including the most prominent case against an Olympic canoeist, have been dropped because of a lack of evidence.

Anslower said that, after 11-plus years in politics, Trump has proved he is not afraid to violate norms of presidential comportment. Lots of his core supporters do not seem bothered.

"For many Americans, it has either been a shift in how they view the presidency, or, like with so many things, they just feel empowered to say, 'These are my priorities. My priority is not the facts,'" she said.

Today in History: August 16, American music loses two legends

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Sunday, Aug. 16, the 228th day of 2026. There are 137 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Aug. 16, 1977, Elvis Presley died at his Graceland estate in Memphis, Tennessee at the age of 42; forty-one years later, in 2018, singer Aretha Franklin, known as the "Queen of Soul," died in Detroit at the age of 76.

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Also on this date:

In 1777, American forces won the Battle of Bennington in what was considered a turning point of the Revolutionary War.

In 1812, Detroit fell to British and Native American forces in the War of 1812.

In 1861, President Abraham Lincoln issued Proclamation 86, which prohibited the states of the Union from engaging in commercial trade with states that were in rebellion — i.e., the Confederacy.

In 1896, gold was discovered in Canada's Yukon Territory, sparking the "Klondike Fever" that would draw tens of thousands to the region in search of fortune.

In 1948, baseball legend Babe Ruth died in New York at age 53.

In 1954, the first issue of "Sports Illustrated" was released.

In 1962, the Beatles fired their original drummer, Pete Best, replacing him with Ringo Starr.

In 1978, James Earl Ray, convicted assassin of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., told a Capitol Hill hearing he did not commit the crime, saying he'd been set up by a mysterious man called "Raoul."

In 1987, people worldwide began a two-day celebration of the "Harmonic Convergence," which heralded what believers called the start of a new, purer age of humankind.

In 2014, Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon declared a state of emergency and imposed a curfew in the St. Louis suburb of Ferguson, where police and protesters repeatedly clashed in the week after a Black 18-year-old, Michael Brown, was shot to death by a white police officer.

In 2020, lightning sparked the August Complex wildfire in California. More than 1,600 square miles — greater than the size of Rhode Island — would burn over the following three months.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Julie Newmar is 93. Film director Bruce Beresford is 86. Actor Bob Balaban is 81. Ballerina Suzanne Farrell is 81. Actor Lesley Ann Warren is 80. Actor Reginald VelJohnson is 74. Singer/author/TV personality Kathie Lee Gifford is 73. Singer J.T. Taylor (Kool and the Gang) is 73. Movie director James Cameron is 72. Singer/actor Madonna is 68. Actor Angela Bassett is 68. Actor Timothy Hutton is 66. Actor Steve Carell (kuh-REHL') is 64. Country musician Emily Strayer (The Chicks) is 54. Actor/filmmaker Taika Waititi is 51. Singer Vanessa Carlton is 46. Country singer Dan Smyers (Dan & Shay) is 39. Actor Rumer Willis is 38. U.S. Olympic gold medal swimmer Caeleb Dressel is 30. Actor Piper Curda is 29. Tennis player Jannik Sinner is 25. Actor Seth Carr is 19.