

Groton Daily Independent

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Church Services

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church: Worship in the church at 8:30 a.m. (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/215332349572015/>)

Groton Christian & Missiary Alliance Church: Worship in the church at 10:30 a.m.: (<https://www.facebook.com/GrotonCMA/>)

St. John's Lutheran Church: Worship in the church at 9 a.m. (<https://www.facebook.com/stjohnsgroton/>)

Emmanuel Lutheran Church - Worship inside and also on-line at 9 a.m.

(<https://www.facebook.com/Emmanuel-Lutheran-Church-GrotonSD-ELCA-636505039852208/>)

United Methodist Church: Worship in the Sanctuary at 11 a.m. (<https://www.facebook.com/grotonsdumc>)

Buffalo Lake Lutheran Church, rural Eden, 10:30 a.m. People will stay in their vehicles and listen to the service on their FM radio.

Heaven Bound Ministries of Pierpont has worship on Saturdays at 5:30 p.m. in the basement.

Heaven Bound Ministries of Pierpont / Buffalo Lake Lutheran Church, rural Eden - will have a podcast posted. <https://anchor.fm/paul-irvin-kosel>



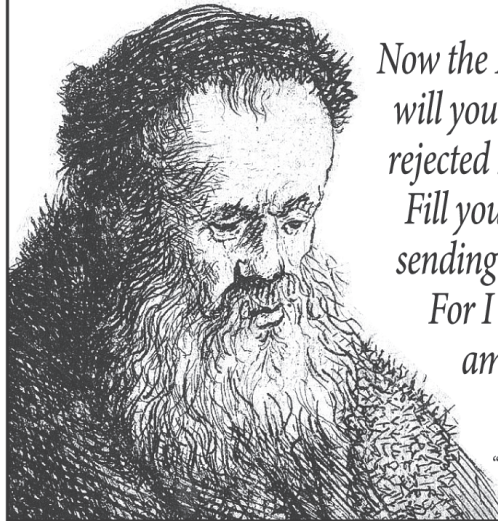
OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

The recycling trailer is located west of the city shop. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.

Sunday Extras



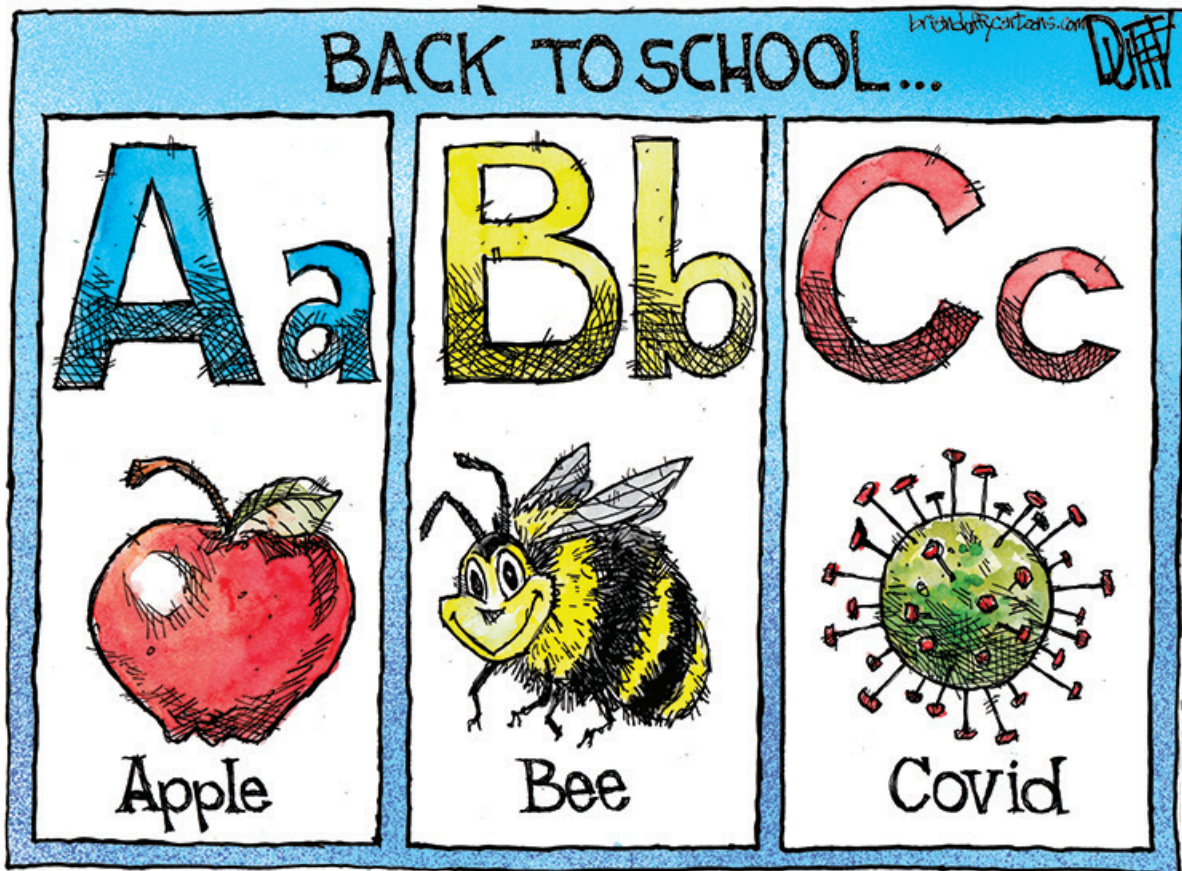
THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE



Now the Lord said to Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and go; I am sending you to Jesse the Bethlehemite. For I have provided Myself a king among his sons." 1 Samuel 16:1

"Bust of a Bearded Old Man with a High Forehead"
by Rembrandt (1631)

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BIBLE TRIVIA

by Wilson Casey

1. Is the book of Ephesians in the Old or New Testament or neither?

2. In Matthew 4, Jesus says, "Man shall not live on bread alone," but by what else? *Joyful noise, Praise, God's word, Kind deeds*

3. What was the aristocratic party of the Jews at the time of Jesus? *Pharisees, Reubenites, Israelites, Sadducees*

4. In Acts 9, what fell from Saul's eyes when he regained his sight? *Ants, Scales, Blood, Salt*

5. From 1 Kings 6, who built the first temple in Jerusalem? *Samuel, Joshua, Solomon, Aaron*

6. What's a sepulcher? *Coin, Robe, Tomb, Sermon*

ANSWERS: 1) New; 2) God's word; 3) Sadducees; 4) Scales; 5) Solomon; 6) Tomb

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

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by Healthy Exchanges

Peanut Butter Apple Crumb Pie

When you add peanut butter and apples, you're doing Magical Meal Math! Don't be tardy — stir this up today, and you'll be sure to go to the head of the class for desserts.

- 3 cups (6 small) cored, peeled and sliced cooking apples
- 1 (6-ounce) purchased graham-cracker pie crust
- 1 (4-serving) package sugar-free vanilla cook-and-serve pudding mix
- 1½ cups water
- 6 tablespoons reduced-fat peanut butter
- 6 tablespoons purchased graham cracker crumbs or 6 (2 1/2-inch) graham crackers, made into fine crumbs

1. Heat oven to 350 F. Evenly arrange apple slices in pie crust.

2. In a medium saucepan, combine dry pudding mix and water. Add 1/4 cup peanut butter. Mix well to combine. Cook over medium heat until mixture thickens and starts to boil, stirring constantly. Evenly spoon hot pudding mixture over apples.

3. In a medium bowl, combine graham-cracker crumbs and remaining 2 tablespoons peanut butter until mixture is crumbly. Evenly sprinkle crumb mixture over top of pie. Bake for 40 to 45 minutes. Place pie plate on a wire rack and let set for at least 30 minutes. Makes 8 servings.

• Each serving equals: 234 calories, 10g fat, 4g protein, 32g carb., 282mg sodium, 2g fiber; Diabetic Exchanges: 1 Starch, 1 Fat, 1 Fruit.

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FLASH GORDON

Character Profile:

Dale Arden

AN AIRPLANE IS TORN ASUNDER BY A FREAK METEOR SHOWER!

THAT FATEFUL FLIGHT BRINGS RAVEN-HAIRED BEAUTY DALE ARDEN INTO THE ARMS OF WORLD-RENOWNED ATHLETE FLASH GORDON.

SINCE THEN THEIR LIVES HAVE BEEN BOUND TOGETHER... FACING ADVENTURES UNDREAMED OF IN THE HOPES OF SAVING A WORLD ON THE BRINK OF DESTRUCTION!

FLASH GORDON BY JIM KEEFE

9-13

AS DUROK RAISES HIS WEAPON TO FIRE, A LITHE FIGURE DARTS FROM THE SHADOWS.

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SNICT!

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RRRAHR!

WHO DARES!

FOR A MOMENT ALL STARE IN DISBELIEF.

PRESUMED DEAD, DALE ARDEN STANDS BEFORE THEM...

DEFENSELESS, SHE BRACES HERSELF FOR DUROK'S ATTACK!

TO BE CONT'D ~

Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS

PLAY YOUR TEE SHOTS AWAY FROM THE WORST HAZARDS.

FOR EXAMPLE, WHEN THERE'S OUT-OF-BOUNDS ONE SIDE OF A FAIRWAY AND BUNKERS THE OTHER SIDE, TEE UP ON AND HIT AWAY FROM THE OB SIDE.

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HITTING INTO THE SAND WILL PROBABLY COST YOU ONE SHOT AT MOST, WHEREAS GOING OB PENALIZES YOU TWO SHOTS FOR SURE (STROKE AND DISTANCE).

SO GET INTO THE HABIT OF EVALUATING HAZARDS IN PLANNING ALL YOUR TEE SHOTS.

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Cologuard Test Worth Risk of False Positive

DEAR DR. ROACH: I am a 77-year-old man in good health. At my recent annual physical exam, my physician ordered a Cologuard kit to be sent to me to screen for colorectal disease. I have never had symptoms of disease or problems with any part of my gastrointestinal tract. I had two colonoscopies at different times several years ago, the results of which were negative. When I got the kit, I read the patient guidelines and learned that the Cologuard test could result in false positives and that there is an unspecified increase in the risk of false positives for persons over the age of 75.

A positive result from the test requires a follow-up colonoscopy, which is also riskier for elderly patients. Since I am in good health with no symptoms of any disease, I decided I did not want to risk a false positive result from the test, which would require a follow-up colonoscopy. Did I make the right decision? — E.G.

ANSWER: Cologuard is a brand of test that looks at DNA in stool for evidence of cancer. Certain DNA mutations are highly suggestive of cancer. In addition, Cologuard does an immunochemical test looking for blood. Because it combines these two techniques, Cologuard is more sensitive than only a test looking for blood. Compared with colonoscopy, Cologuard is about 92% sensitive in finding cancers, meaning it will miss about 8%.

With improved sensitivity comes a

lack of specificity, which means you could have a false positive result. The Cologuard can say that you have an abnormality when a colonoscopy would indicate normal. For 45% of people with a positive Cologuard test, no abnormalities will be found upon colonoscopy. You are right that false positives are more prevalent in older individuals.

There are two reasons that I think the Cologuard is still a reasonable choice, despite the fact that it isn't as good as colonoscopy. The first is that I continue to recommend a screening test for healthy 77-year-old men, and although colonoscopy is my first choice, a normal Cologuard test prevents a need for colonoscopy, and a false positive would lead to the same colonoscopy you would have gotten anyway (although there probably is more anxiety after a false positive test).

The second is that a person with an abnormal Cologuard and a normal colonoscopy may be at risk for an abnormality that wasn't found on colonoscopy. A study looking at people in this category found a 25% risk of abnormality on follow-up colonoscopy, if the Cologuard was abnormal again one to two years later.

DEAR DR. ROACH: I had lung surgery in 2014. The scar is still red and sore. I got no instructions on how to deal with it. Do you have any suggestions? — J.S.B.

ANSWER: That's a very long time for the scar to still be red and sore, and I would encourage you to have the surgeon or your regular doctor take a look. For people with redness and soreness in a scar shortly after surgery, I recommend silicone gel (there are many available), as it has been shown to be effective. Many people recommend vitamin E oil, but well-done studies have shown this does not help and may harm the cosmetic appearance.

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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1. Who originally released "Show and Tell"?
2. Two different songs titled "One Man Band" were released, in 1970 and 1973. Name the two groups.
3. Which group had an international hit with "The Boys Are Back in Town"?
4. What was Babble's original name?
5. Name the song that contains this lyric: "Other arms reach out to me, Other eyes smile tenderly, Still in peaceful dreams I see, The road leads back to you."

Answers

1. Johnny Mathis in 1972. He was followed by Al Wilson in 1973. It was Wilson's version that reached No. 1 and was a Cash Box Number One Single of the Year.
2. Three Dog Night, in 1970, on their "Naturally" album, and Roger Daltrey in 1973 on his debut "Daltrey" album.
3. Thin Lizzy, in 1976. The song got no attention until two Kentucky DJs started playing it all the time, and other stations noticed.
4. The Thompson Twins, formed in 1977.
5. "Georgia On My Mind," first released by Hoagy Carmichael in 1930. Ray Charles brought attention to the song in 1960, and Willie Nelson followed in 1978. The state of Georgia made it the official state song in 1979.

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Just Like Cats & Dogs by Dave T. Phipps



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GRIN and BEAR IT ^{by Wagner}

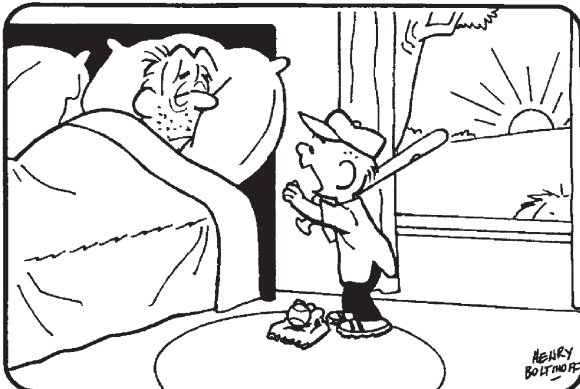


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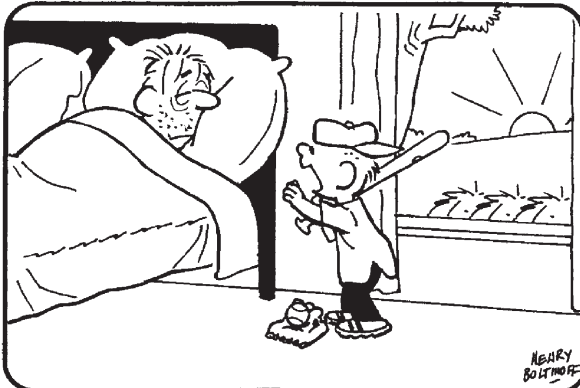
"I believe we can get your confession thrown out on the grounds that you're a habitual liar."

HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



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Differences: 1. Rug is missing. 2. Hat is backward. 3. Blanket is shorter. 4. Man's hair is different. 5. Sun has fewer rays. 6. Shrubs have been added.



- If you are looking after baby kittens that are bottle feeding, when you handle the kittens, wear pants and long sleeves. Tiny kitten nails are like razor blades they are so sharp! And of course, they love to climb up on you to get your attention.

- “While my family is still participating in virtual learning, it’s important that we recognize some structure. This means preparing — or at least planning — lunch meals ahead of time. Our house is small, and one of us is near the kitchen. This saves us two to three periods of someone banging around in the kitchen being disruptive.” — *E. in Florida*

- “Want to be more organized in your home cleaning? It seems many people want to have a cleaner, more organized home but get overwhelmed when putting it into practice. Start by creating a cleaning schedule that breaks down jobs into a list incorporating tasks to be done daily, weekly and even monthly

or quarterly. It takes the ‘if I can’t do everything I’ll just do nothing’ factor out of play.” — *J.M. in Pennsylvania*

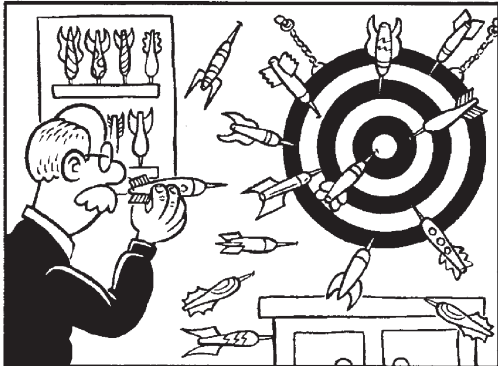
- A bathroom squeegee can help eliminate water spots before they form on your shower doors. Hang one in your shower.

- If you haven’t worn an item in six months (of its seasonality), it’s time to let it go. That’s been the Golden Rule for as long as I can remember. I was asked recently, Does it apply this year? I think now, like always, is a good time to look critically at your overall summer wardrobe, but I would add “opportunity” to the caveats. Meaning, if you haven’t worn it because you have not had an opportunity you otherwise would have had, save it. Those work clothes will be important again! — *JoAnn*

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

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EVERYONE brought their own darts to the local tournament. See if you can spot two darts that are exactly alike in one minute flat.

Illustrated by David Coulson

A STUNNING SUMMATION!

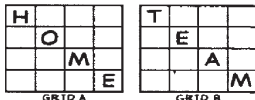
Challenge the class math whiz to solve this one. Have him/her arrange the nine digits below so that the sum of the even digits equals the sum of the odd digits.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Answer: (Even digits) $2 + 4 + 4 + 6 + 6 + 8 = 12.8$. (Odd digits) $1 + 3 + 7 + 9/5 = 12.8$.

LET'S SEE IF YOU HAVE THE HOME TEAM ADVANTAGE! Pictured below are two puzzle grids for you to fill in. Hints are given for each word. The words in Grid B contain the same letters as the words in Grid A.

1. Indirect information.
2. Not any.
3. Inclined surface.
4. Being identical.



1. Lacking substance.
2. Type of light.
3. English baby conveyance.
4. A layer of coal.

Answers: 1. Orb, 2. Nail, 3. Mamba, 4. Lava, 5. Kid, 6. Jut, 7. Item, 8. Halva, 9. Gawkw, 10. Fax.

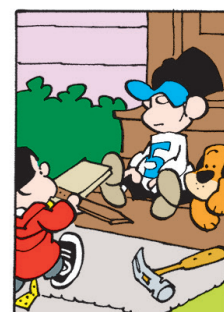
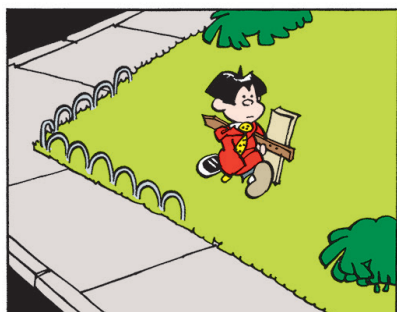
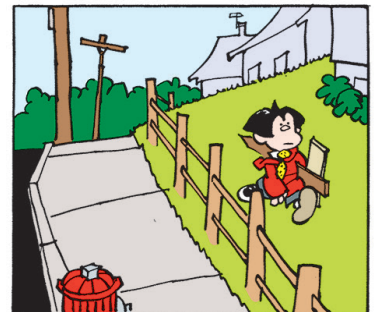
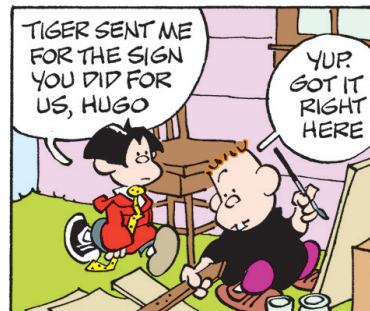
A WORD BRIDGE!

The bridge above contains 10 supporting words. We give you the first letter of each word plus plenty of hints:

1. A spherical object.
2. A fastener.
3. Latin American dance.
4. Hot and flowing.
5. A young goat.
6. To extend outward.
7. One of many.
8. A Mideast confection
9. To stare stupidly.
10. An electronic transmission.

TIGER

by BUD BLAKE



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BUD BLAKE

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King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Waller or Domino
- 5 "— not choose to run"
- 8 Stoolie
- 12 Hardly ruddy
- 13 Calendar abbr.
- 14 In due time
- 15 Noble gas
- 16 Born
- 17 Loosen
- 18 Cowpoke of the pampas
- 20 Get new actors
- 22 Car-pool lane abbr.
- 23 Profit
- 24 Elevator name
- 27 Crucial experiment
- 32 See 12-Across
- 33 Heavy weight
- 34 Mainlander's memento
- 35 Midday party
- 38 Favorable votes
- 39 Raw rock
- 40 Boom times
- 42 Merry
- 45 This or that, it matters not
- 49 Sheltered
- 50 Possess

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			

- 52 Legislation
- 53 Factory-fresh
- 54 Craze
- 55 Malaria symptom
- 56 Automaton, for short
- 57 To and —
- 58 Egg part
- DOWN**
- 1 Vampire tooth
- 2 Cruising
- 3 Grand
- 4 Harmonizes
- 5 Start something new
- 6 Buck's mate
- 7 Finished
- 8 Tap
- 9 From birth
- 10 Affirmative actions
- 11 Entanglement
- 19 Word after heave or gung
- 21 Finish
- 24 Night flyer
- 25 Greek cross
- 26 Guiltless
- 28 Bill and —
- 29 Sly slur
- 30 Glimpse
- 31 "— the season ..."
- 36 Vinegar bot-
- 7 tles
- 37 Coop denizen
- 38 Off
- 41 "Life of —"
- 42 Door-frame piece
- 43 Hodgepodge
- 44 Remove, as a cap
- 46 "Les Miserables" writer
- 47 Hebrew month
- 48 Stench
- 51 Simple card game

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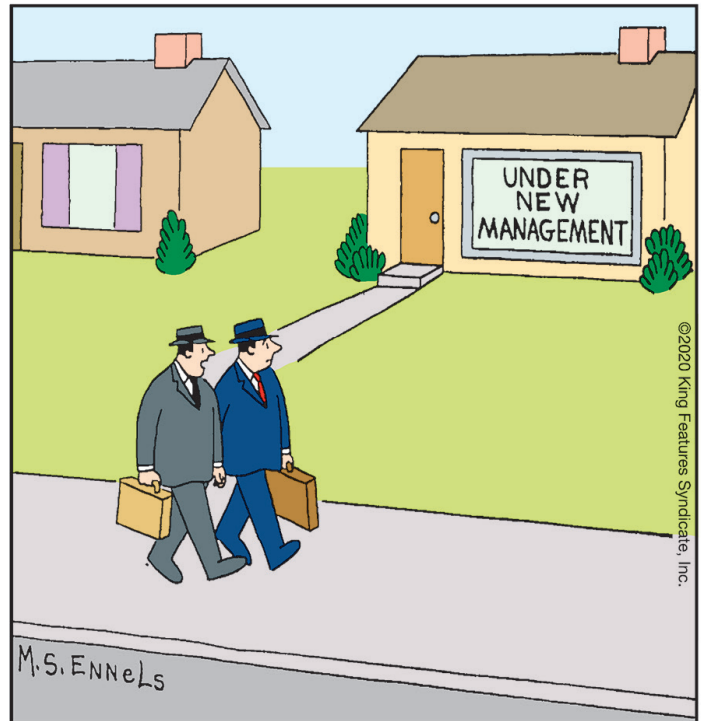
— King Crossword —

Answers

Solution time: 25 mins.

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

LAFF - A - DAY



"Harvey's mother-in-law moved in last week."

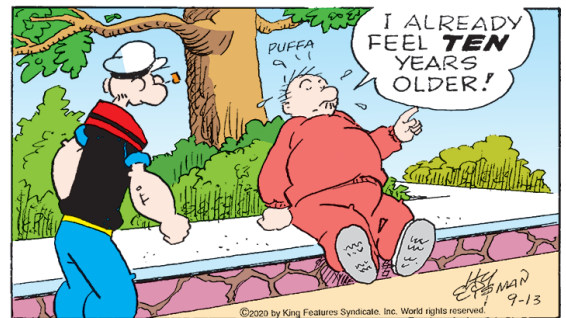
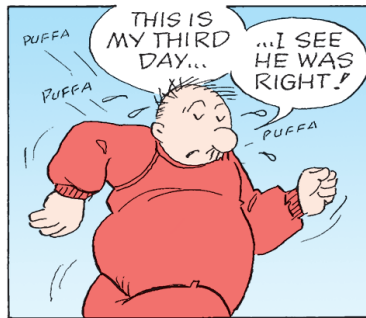
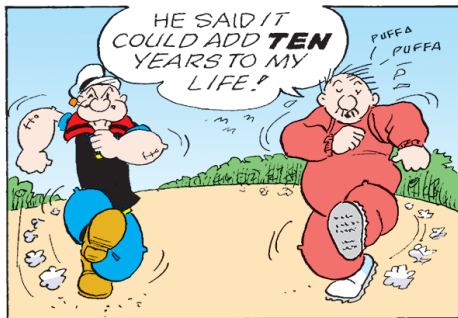
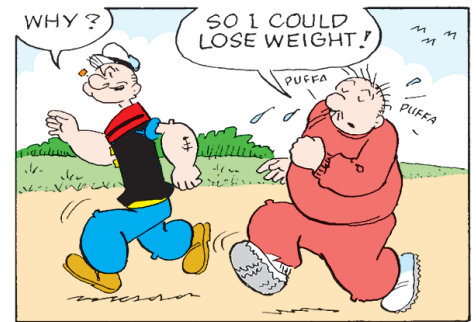
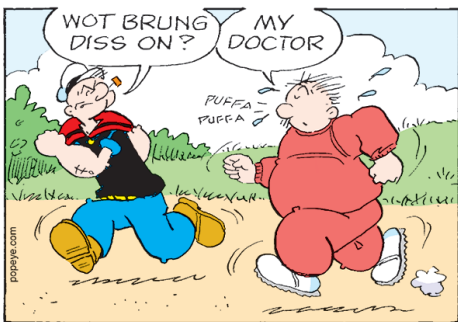
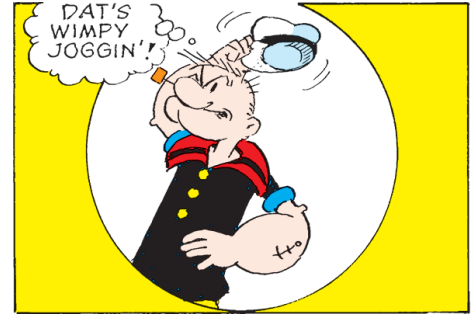
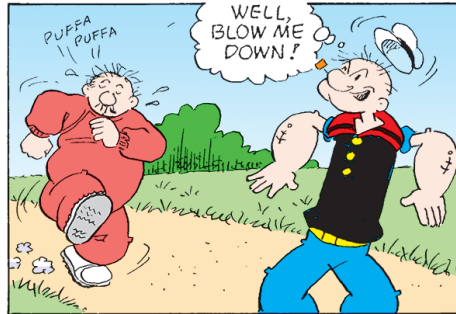
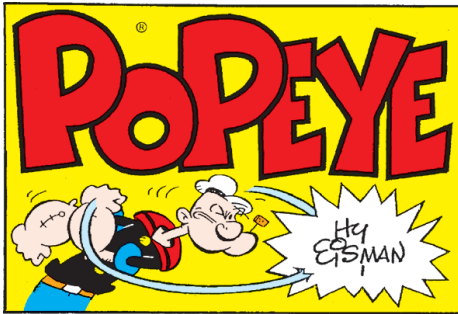
Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



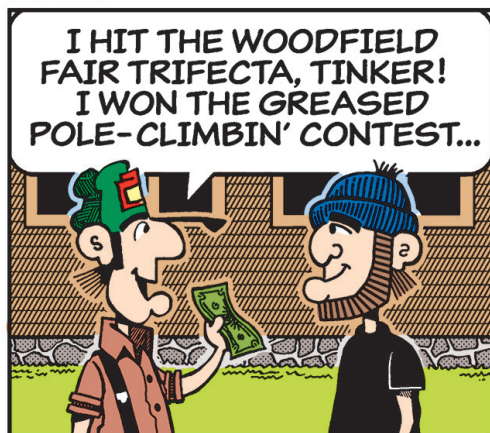
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R.F.D.

by Mike Marland

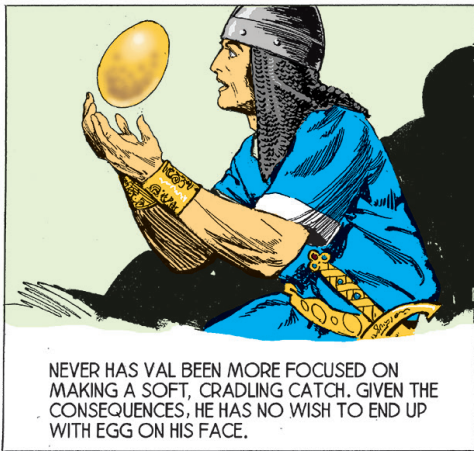
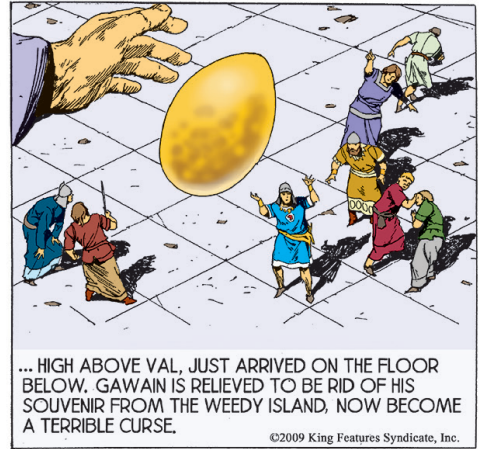


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The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

Quarantine Scofflaws Put Us All at Risk

A recent local party was so loud it could be heard nearly a quarter mile away. A curious neighbor got in his car and went to investigate. He reported back that it was a very large gathering of young people in an alley, music echoing off the brick walls, not a mask to be seen, nor any social distancing. The neighbor did a quick calculation and estimated that the crowd had many times more than the restrictions allow. A call to the police netted this sad truth: They really don't care.

The alley party the other night does not bode well for the coming fall. It's highly likely they were college students, celebrating a return to school. The next days they were in the grocery stores stocking up. (Thankfully there is at least one store in town that insists on the wearing of masks and spacing in lines. The other one's stated policy is that they are not the police.)

We see on the news that tens of thousands of young people are frolicking together on the beach ... and we know the outcomes of those interactions. The virus is going to flourish in those environments, and it will spread even more than it already has, forcing us to stay locked down even longer.

While it's not smart to personally approach those who are violating the rules, we can make calls. Let the store managers know you won't be shopping in their stores unless they enforce mask and distance rules. Get your neighbors and friends to call as well. Let the town council know the police are not responsive, as well as retail and dining establishments that allow flouting of the rules.

Those are a few things we can safely do.

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1. What U.S. Olympic gymnast, born in Moscow in 1989, won the women's all-around gold medal at the 2008 Beijing Summer Games?

2. The annual award given to Major League Baseball's best left-handed pitcher is named in honor of what legendary southpaw?

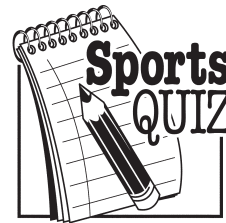
3. What Heisman Trophy winner had his No. 27 retired by both the Tennessee Titans and the Ohio State Buckeyes?

4. What country won the gold medal in the inaugural Olympic women's ice hockey tournament at the 1998 Nagano Winter Games?

5. Name the three drivers who share the record for NASCAR Cup Series season titles with seven apiece.

6. What stadium was ransacked by souvenir hunters during the Philadelphia Phillies' final home game there in 1970?

7. With what Major League Baseball team did Bo Jackson finish his playing career in 1994?



by Ryan A. Berenz

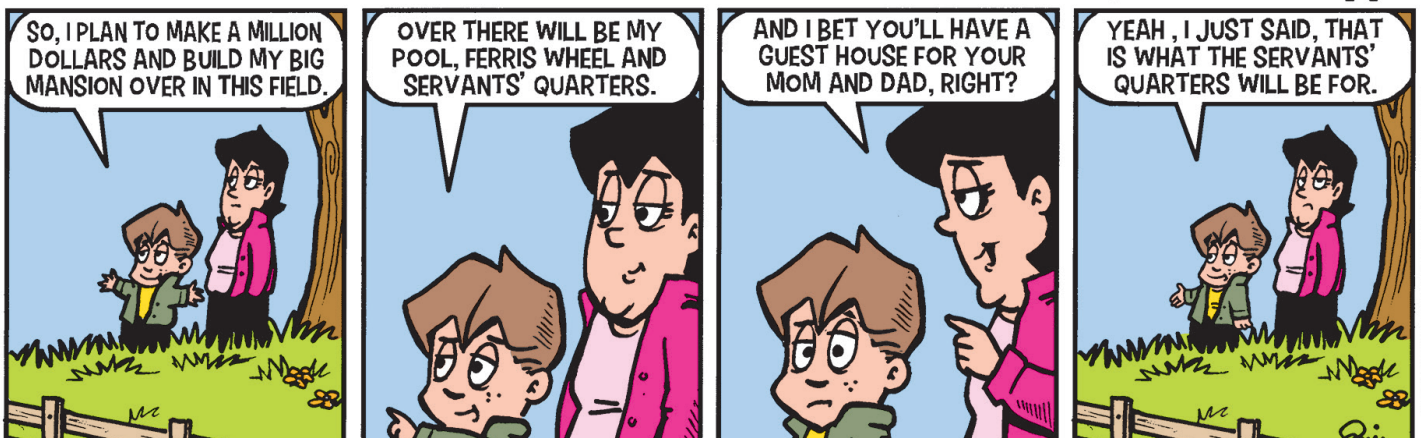
Answers

1. Nastia Liukin.
2. Warren Spahn.
3. Eddie George.
4. The United States.
5. Dale Earnhardt, Jimmie Johnson and Richard Petty.
6. Connie Mack Stadium.
7. The California Angels.

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Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps



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CONGRESSMAN
DUSTY JOHNSON
Representing **SOUTH DAKOTA** at large



A March to Common Ground

Congress passed the last COVID-19 relief bill 174 days ago. Hundreds of thousands of Americans – schools, families, and small businesses – are still struggling from this virus. Both the House and the Senate have proposed vastly different proposals to help these hurting Americans. The House passed a bill with a \$3T price tag – that’s too much spending so I voted no. The Senate has offered several packages with a lower price tag, but Senate Democrats have offered no support. We need to find common ground.

Because of that, a few weeks ago the White House reached out to a few U.S. House members, asking that they develop a bipartisan proposal that could break the stalemate. I was honored to be one of the four members leading that project.

Our group, two Republicans and two Democrats, put aside brinkmanship and political games. Once we focused on what was good for the country, it didn’t take us long to find common ground. This is how Congress is supposed to work.

Our proposal, the “March to Common Ground,” made a lot of headway this week. The Trump Administration said the framework is something they can work from to get to a deal, it was endorsed by the Washington Post and the New York Times, and several Senators and Representatives on both sides of the aisle have agreed – this proposal is a good compromise.

The framework addresses key areas of need, including testing, direct stimulus payments to families, small business support, liability protection, food security, election support, state and local aid, and school funding.

The March to Common Ground spends less than half what the Speaker wants to spend, but it’s still a lot of money. I am very consciously concerned about our nation’s debt. Our country’s top economists all agree our country needs an additional stimulus package to dig our way out of this COVID-19 economic slump.

Like many Americans, I’ve been frustrated with the lack of progress we are seeing from Congress. The leaders of both chambers have been at this for a long time – I know they can get something done for the American people.

I’m proud of the work a few new, but bipartisan, members of Congress were able to get done over the last several weeks. This proposal is gaining traction and bringing people back to the table.

Americans can’t afford to wait any longer. Please read the March to Common Ground proposal [here](#).

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Backing the Blue

Jacob Chestnut. John Gibson. They're not household names instantly recognizable. They were sons, husbands and fathers. They were two regular people, just like the rest of us, except they possessed a little bit more courage. Their stories weren't known until July 24, 1998. On that fateful day, a lone gunman walked into the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C. He shot and killed the first person he encountered, Officer Chestnut, operating the X-Ray machine at an entrance. Quickly, the gunman then found Detective Gibson who heard the previous gunshots and was helping others find safety. Even after being mortally wounded, Detective Gibson was still able to return fire and wound the gunman just enough to stop him from inflicting any more harm.

Our nation mourned this senseless loss of life. Congress saluted these two officers by making them the first people to ever 'lie in honor' in our nation's Capitol. Prior to this, Presidents and Members of Congress were recognized after death by 'lying in state' at the Capitol Rotunda. This new distinction, lying in honor, bestowed upon the officers has only since been granted to Rosa Parks and the Rev. Billy Graham. The officers were buried in Arlington National Cemetery. Our country honored these two fallen officers and remembered them exactly as they were: heroes who risked their lives to protect others.

Right now, there's a growing hostility toward law enforcement in this country. This past week, we watched videos showing two officers sitting parked in their squad car being ambushed at pointblank range in California. The hatred needs to stop. It's simply un-American.

This aggression was seeded in the Defund the Police movement. Following the death of George Floyd, riots broke out in Minneapolis. Peaceful well-meaning protests turned violent and chaos has spread across the country from Kenosha to Portland. Law-abiding citizens feel unsafe and are fleeing to new communities and states that understand the link between liberty and security.

It goes without saying that here in South Dakota, we've got it pretty good. We are patriots who love our country and want to see it succeed. And we don't understand how local leaders could stand by and watch their communities burn.

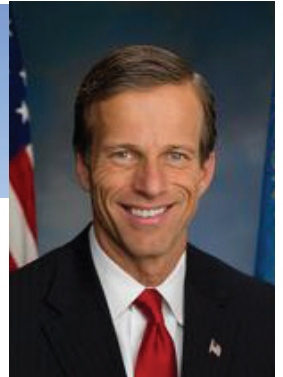
Our law enforcement community is not perfect. Like all professions, we've witnessed examples of bad apples in police departments. But let's be clear, those bad apples have not spoiled the entire bunch. Police forces in South Dakota and across our country are filled with brave men and women who put their lives on the line, day in and day out, to make sure our communities stay safe. Police officers are public servants. Police officers are not public enemies; they fight the enemies.

That's why, in June, when many spewed hatred toward our law enforcement community, Senate Republicans joined together and proposed commonsense legislation, called the Justice Act, which made significant, meaningful reforms to police departments. Unfortunately, National Democrats saw the chaos unfolding in our country as a winning issue heading into the November election, suggesting that our proposal did not go far enough to penalize police officers. They put partisan politics ahead of protecting people and blocked our bill from moving forward.

While our efforts may have stalled, there's still significant work to be done. This week, in light of the recent surge of attacks on officers, my colleagues and I introduced legislation making it a federal crime to knowingly cause, or attempt to cause, serious bodily injury to a law enforcement officer. If convicted, the criminals could face up to 10 years imprisonment, or a life sentence if the offense includes attempted murder, kidnapping, attempted kidnapping or if a death results. Last week, we also sent a letter to Attorney General Barr asking him to consider whether the Department of Justice needs additional authorities, resources or tools to protect our officers. If so, we stand ready and willing to assist.

Having a legitimate discussion about improving policing policies is one thing. Attempting to defund the police is entirely different. Defunding the police can only lead to one thing and that's anarchy - just look at Portland, Kenosha or Minneapolis. These cities should learn a lesson from South Dakota and back the blue.

John Thune
U.S. SENATOR - SOUTH DAKOTA



A Reason for Gratitude in Tough Times

South Dakota veterans and the Hot Springs community are currently celebrating the VA's announcement that it has begun the process of rescinding the order to close the Hot Springs VA facility. This was a hard-fought victory in a battle that we weren't always sure we would win. It started almost a decade ago, in 2011, when the Obama administration announced plans to realign – read, close – the Hot Springs VA facility.

I was well aware of what the Hot Springs facility means to South Dakota veterans and to the entire Hot Springs community, and I determined that there wasn't going to be a closure if I could help it.

I knew that closing the Hot Springs facility would put accessible care out of the reach of a lot of rural and tribal veterans. Not only rural and tribal South Dakota veterans, but rural and tribal veterans from neighboring Wyoming and Nebraska who depend on the Hot Springs facility for care. Traveling to Rapid City for care, as the VA proposed, would be a real hardship, if not an impossibility, for many of these veterans.

I also strongly disagreed with moving not only medical care but the vital post-traumatic stress disorder program from Hot Springs to Rapid City. Not only would this put this program out of the reach of some veterans, I believed it was also a mistake to remove a tremendously effective program from the place where it has been so successful and try to reconstitute it elsewhere. So I got to work in Congress, along with other members of the South Dakota delegation.

My first priority was simply trying to get Hot Springs' veterans a hearing with the VA. In 2016, after years of trying, we persuaded then-VA secretary Bob McDonald to visit Hot Springs. Unfortunately, the visit didn't work, and the next year the secretary signed an order finalizing the decision to close the majority of the facility. But the battle wasn't over.

In 2014, I had succeeded in attaching a measure to appropriations legislation prohibiting the closure of the Hot Springs facility until a national VA realignment strategy was introduced. Each year I've managed to renew that measure. And in March of this year, we got another chance to persuade the VA. After I learned that VA Secretary Robert Wilkie would be visiting Hot Springs in March, I organized a letter with the rest of the South Dakota delegation strongly urging the secretary to make time to sit down with Hot Springs veterans and other stakeholders and listen to their concerns about the planned closure.

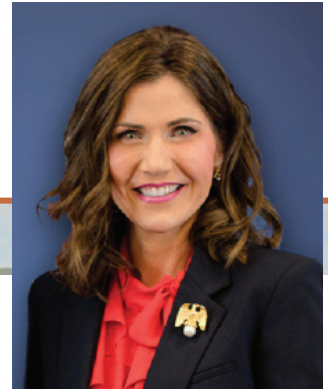
To our great gratitude, the secretary agreed. And days after meeting with the veterans, the secretary announced that the VA would be rescinding its decision and that Hot Springs would remain open. That meeting was the key.

I worked hard in Congress – along with other members of the South Dakota delegation – to keep the Hot Springs facility open, but the battle would never have succeeded without the passion of Hot Springs veterans and the Hot Springs community, which rallied in support of the facility. Meeting with these veterans and other stakeholders and hearing their thoughts and stories played a major role in Secretary Wilkie's decision.

2020 has been a tough year. But even in tough times, good things happen. The VA's announcement that it has begun the process of rescinding its order to close the Hot Springs facility has given a lot of us reason for gratitude. I'm thankful to Secretary Wilkie for taking a real look at South Dakota veterans' concerns and reversing the VA's decision to close the facility. I look forward to celebrating with South Dakota veterans the next time I'm in Hot Springs – or as a lot of us know it, the Veterans' Town.



SOUTH DAKOTA GOVERNOR **KRISTI NOEM**



Good News for Ethanol

For years, I've been working to advance ethanol to benefit South Dakota farmers. Our state ranks sixth in the nation for ethanol production capacity, and we produce more than 1 billion gallons of ethanol annually. Not only does biofuel production help our farmers, but it also supports additional job creation in South Dakota. We have ethanol jobs ranging from truck drivers to PhD microbiologists. I have several pieces of good news to share regarding progress we've made on ethanol.

The EPA recently reiterated its commitment to the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS.) The RFS is crucial to ensure that there is a market for our farmers to sell their corn for ethanol production. President Trump also recently announced that E15 blends will be more widely available across the country. These are but the latest bits of progress for our crucial ethanol industry.

As Chair of the Governor's Biofuels Coalition, I've urged the Trump administration to drop restrictions on the ethanol industry, and we've already made progress on these goals. The Trump administration approved the use of E15 year-round. We also persuaded President Trump to reject a movement that would have waived portions of the RFS for small petroleum refineries. It's been tough work, but it's worth it to help South Dakota farmers.

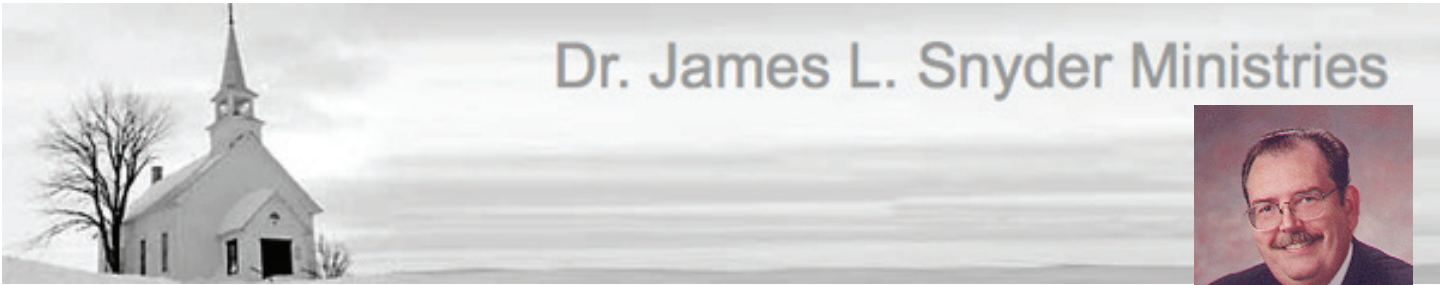
We've been working diligently to convert our state's fleet vehicles to be flex-fuel compatible, and 76% of our fleet now has such capabilities. We're already dispensing E30 ethanol for state vehicles at sites in Sioux Falls, Pierre, and the SDSU campus. By the end of November, we'll have added sites in Aberdeen, Chamberlain, Yankton, Huron, and Webster, with four additional sites across the state in the works for next year. State government is leading by example, and it is my sincere hope that South Dakota's businesses and citizens emulate this support for our ethanol industry.

As COVID-19 swept across the country, I issued an executive order to provide regulatory relief for ethanol facilities, and I instructed our state department of Environment and Natural Resources to help ethanol producers adjust their operations while still meeting federal requirements. I also joined fellow governors to ask United States Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue to use CARES Act dollars to assist our biofuel industry. Secretary Perdue has taken that message to heart, pushing Congress to provide funding for ethanol in future relief packages.

The Obama administration paid lip service to ethanol, but President Trump is actually following through on his promises to farmers. His administration is taking the necessary steps to promote biofuels and expand ethanol production. Frankly, it takes leadership from the top, and I want to thank President Trump for continuing to fight for agriculture. There is still more work to accomplish, but I'm confident that we can build on the progress that we've already made and get it done.

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Getting Away With It Is Half the Fun

I must admit I don't get away with very much, and I never have. It's not that I never try. It's just that whenever I try to get away with something, it always backfires.

I wish there were a class somewhere entitled, "How You Can Get Away with Anything." I certainly would sign up. But I haven't found it yet.

Every time I do something behind the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage's back, she always turns around. I don't know if she has eyes in the back of her head or if it's just women's intuition. Believe me, I will not investigate this subject.

The many times she has fooled me is beyond calculation. I am probably the easiest person to fool in all the world. A salesman, I am not.

As a kid, I made little dishes out of popsicle sticks. Then I went around the neighborhood to try to sell them. My sales pitch was, "You don't want to buy one of these, do you?"

I didn't sell any.

I complained to my mother, and she said, "You need to try again. Maybe this time it will work."

The next day I put together my material and went door to door in the neighborhood. Much to my surprise, everybody bought one of my little dishes.

I went home very excited and told my mother how many I sold. In the next couple of days, I worked to produce these little popsicle dishes. As I was working on them, I was whistling and sometimes singing.

Years later, I discovered the real story. Remember, Paul Harvey, who used to say, "Now for the rest of the story."

Behind my back, my mother called all the neighbors, up and down our street explaining the situation and asked them to purchase one of my popsicle dishes. I don't know this for sure, but she may have paid them to do that. I've never been able to find out the truth.

If you can't put one over on me, you might as well hang up your boots and go to bed.

During this "in-house season," the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage put me on a diet. What am I to do? I'm not allowed in the kitchen because of the catastrophe that happened the last time I was in the kitchen. Don't ask.

She put together a diet for me that was supposed to be very healthy.

My diet is simply anything I can get into my mouth at the time. Barring, of course, vegetables. Her diet composed of nothing but vegetables.

Her idea is I am a little bit overweight. I then remind her of my favorite Bible verse that says, "all the fat is the Lord's" (Leviticus 3:16). When I quote this verse, I always smile and counter it with a grimace I cannot overcome.

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She will pat my stomach and say, "That's not what that verse means."

Never argue with a wife, especially your wife.

All the cookies have been eradicated from our premises. Believe me, I've searched everywhere and I have not found one cookie crumb.

She made a mistake the other day. As we were sitting down to watch a little TV, she brought over one cookie and said, "Since you have been good with your diet, here is your reward."

I wish she would not have done that. Once I start something, I have an obsession with completing it. And believe me, when I say, one cookie doesn't complete the obsession.

I smiled and thanked her and graciously munched on the cookie.

That gave me an idea, I had to pass a little store the next day, and they sold cookies. I thought to myself, "Well, what's another cookie going to do to hurt me?"

I only bought one little bag of cookies; that's how disciplined I am. I thought one little bag could easily be hidden. At least that's what I thought.

When I got home, my wife was not there yet, so it allowed me time to conceal my little cookie obsession. I concealed it near my easy chair, so I could access it without her knowing it.

I love it when a plan comes together.

I forgot about the bag of cookies because days can get hectic. After supper, we sat down in the living room to relax and enjoy just a little TV. It suddenly dawned on me that I had a little stash of cookies underneath my chair. The more I thought of it, the more I thought of it.

During a commercial, my wife got up to go to the bathroom, so I thought this would be a great time to sneak a cookie. I reached under my chair to grab the bag of cookies, and I couldn't find it. I searched and searched and searched, and it wasn't there. I started to scratch my head and wonder where I put it.

Then my wife came into the room and said, "You weren't looking for this, were you?"

In her hand was the bag of cookies I hid under my chair.

Wearing a little grin on my face, I thought of a verse of Scripture, "But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the Lord: and be sure your sin will find you out" (Numbers 32:23).

Try as we might, our sin will finally catch up with us.

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**Rob
Monson**

Every effort being made to keep students and staff safe

As the Executive Director of the School Administrators of South Dakota, I am connected with every public-school district in South Dakota as well as a handful of private schools. I am here to tell you that they are all doing the absolute best they can to keep the students and staff members safe in their schools.

I can also tell you they are stressing on many levels.

The superintendents, and in some cases the principals, are the ones who are helping to track down the close-contact tracing when a positive case gets reported to them. They are making these calls to parents and guardians during the school day, in the evenings, and in a lot of instances on the weekends. They are in contact with the Department of Health as soon as they get notice of a case that is brought to their attention.

Do you all remember 5 or 6 months ago when as parents you, or we, were all wanting nothing more than for our students to be back in school? We wanted things to be back to normal. Well, here we are. I will tell you that your school board, administrators, teachers and support staff are doing everything they can to do just that.

I have done a few media interviews and the analogy I have used is that we needed to get this airplane into the air. Once we had it there, we knew we would need to fix the engine, repair a wing, but at least we were flying. Your school is trying to do everything they can to keep the airplane in the air at whatever "level" they can. (masks, in-person, masks in passing, hybrid with some online and some in person, etc)

I am not making this political, so please don't attack the guy who is hearing from the people working in these schools. If wearing a mask for the day, or part of the day will help to keep the airplane in the air, isn't it worth a try? If taking a "breather" for a day helps the school to come back full time in a day or two or next week, isn't it worth a try?

Keeping the teachers and support staff healthy and in the schools is paramount right now. I had a conversation earlier this week with a superintendent from one of the AA schools who told me they were 9 subs short in the high school on Monday and 5 short in the elementary. I asked how they were able to have school with that many vacancies? I was told that the teachers covered for each other that day and they got through the day, but that could not be sustained for very long. This is the reality many can and will be facing and the reason we need to do all we can to keep everyone safe. It is going to be the teachers and support staff shortages that will eventually force the change in delivery. I am sure many of you have heard of the adjustments that have had to be made in Lemmon, Burke, Selby, Pierre, and various other schools due to teachers becoming a positive case and the district not having enough substitutes. In some cases it is to just let things settle down a little to get on top of it.

Again, this is not a political post, this is a plea.

No one, and I mean NO ONE wants to stay in school more than the educators! This is what we do. We missed the students, we missed the energy, we missed activities, we missed doing OUR JOBS in front of students! We all want to keep them IN THE SCHOOLS!

The alternative is one that no one wants to think about. Just think back to Friday March 13, 2020. That is the day we went to online learning at home. Let us do all we can TOGETHER so we do not have to go back to March 13.

If you get a chance, just throw a "Thank You" to an educator in passing, they will appreciate it.

#209 in a series

Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller

This has nothing to do with Covid-19, but I am going to start tonight's Update off with a word on the estimable and now late Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. A legal giant, she made up for her diminutive size with her powerful intellect and, by all accounts, her outsized kindness. A great many of us hold her in highest regard, and the entire nation owes her a debt for her service through the greatest of difficulties and long past an age when most of us decide to kick back and take it easy. She has earned her rest, but I will note that the world is a bit less bright today and every day for her absence.

Things look pretty much the way they looked yesterday. There were 42,100 new cases reported today, a 0.6% increase to 6,788,200 cases in the US. We're up to 199,146 deaths. Today, 703 new deaths, a 0.4% increase, were reported.

We have another monoclonal antibody preparation whose maker is announcing findings showing a benefit. The drug is tocilizumab, an interleukin-6 (IL-6, a cytokine) inhibitor, and it has already been approved for use in treating rheumatoid arthritis. The interesting thing about this study is that it primarily enrolled Hispanics and Blacks; 85% of participants belong to racial or ethnic minorities. The findings, which have been neither published nor peer-reviewed yet, were that 12% of those taking the drug needed ventilation or died within 4 weeks, whereas 19% of those receiving placebo needed ventilation or died. Deaths were similar in the two groups, so I'm guessing the primary benefit is in reducing the need for ventilation in those who recover. It's difficult to say much more without a look at the actual data. It remains to be seen how it will stand up to more rigorous testing in a larger group, but it's one more thing to look at. As always, the more things in the pipeline, the better.

We're seeing many colleges and universities struggling to contain outbreaks. Providence College in Rhode Island announced a stay-at-home order this week, as did local health officials for Grand Valley State University in Ottawa County, Michigan. The University of Colorado Boulder was put into a two-week quarantine this week. Notre Dame just came out of one, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, too. Sororities have been quarantined at Texas A&M. The University of Southern California had already planned online classes, but have now had to quarantine those living off-campus. At the University of Maryland, just yesterday, a group of some 200 students was asked to restrict their movements, to avoid in-person classes and in-person work. Some schools have moved classes online after outbreaks as did SUNY Oneonta and the University of Dayton. Others are continuing with in-person classes, but employing various means to discipline students breaking restrictions. There will continue to be outbreaks; the question will be whether these can be held to levels that university officials find tolerable. I am not hopeful.

We have another motorcycle rally underway, this one smaller than Sturgis, but with 125,000 expected participants, still a superspreader risk. At BikeFest at the Lake of the Ozarks, like Sturgis, many events are outdoors, but there has been a great deal of crowding into indoor bars and other venues where the risks of transmission are higher. Also like Sturgis, the area has some pretty high current rates of transmission. And, going for the trifecta, like Sturgis, there are no mask requirements or limits on crowd size indoors or out. Public health authorities have expressed their concern, and the party rolls on. BikeFest ends tomorrow; then we'll wait.

Dr. Robert Redfield, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), testified to the Senate Appropriations Committee a couple of days ago. In his testimony, he told the senators we are probably better protected by face masks than we will be with vaccines. "I might even go so far as to say that this face mask is more guaranteed to protect me against COVID than when I take a COVID vaccine," explaining that, while a vaccine will not be 100% effective—or close to that—a mask offers evidence-backed protection.

Other experts pretty much all concur. No one thinks vaccines, particularly these first ones, will necessarily be super effective. The FDA has said it will approve one with 50% efficacy. So we're most likely not going to fall into a world where you get a vaccine and then you're completely immune. Besides, we still don't know how long the immunity you do develop as a result of vaccine will last, so that's another

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concern. Masks, on the other hand, combined with social distancing, according to Dr. Paul Offit, professor of pediatrics at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and a co-inventor of the rotavirus vaccine, "will be far more effective than that." And of course, if we combine the vaccine with the masks and distancing, we'll have even more protection so we can slow this virus down and get our lives back.

You may be aware that a whole lot of physicians are also musicians; it is very common for doctors to have played instruments as children and to have continued into adulthood. The skill sets for doctoring and playing have some things in common: the act of close listening, the need for concentration and striving for excellence, and a neurological connection. Playing music as a child rewires some circuits in the brain, causing it to develop differently; and that difference is valuable in medicine—it makes better doctors.

Physicians frequently seek opportunities to continue playing with others as their medical careers proceed. As one result, there are actually around twenty medical orchestras around the country. And a thing that started before the pandemic, but seems oddly suited to these times, is the National Virtual Medical Orchestra, a group of 60 medical professionals and students all over the country that does digital performances together. Recently, in Newton, Massachusetts, eight of them got together in person, neatly distributed over a back yard to engage in the rare pleasure of playing with someone in person.

An important purpose the music serves these days is to help the doctors cope with the things they're dealing with every day at work. Violist and critical and pulmonary care doctor at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, Dr. Michael Cho, says, "There was a lot of tragedy. For example, one of the worst things, I think, about the pandemic is seeing family members. So a husband and wife both come in, a woman and her nephew. They're sick at the same time, and maybe they both succumb to the illness. Those kind of things are just horrible to think about; and to have my colleagues and my coworkers and my friends and my family in music is what keeps me resilient through all of this." "All of this" includes, according to one of the participants, exhaustion, helplessness, sadness. This pandemic has been brutal for these folks, and again according to Cho, "We want to be healing."

The orchestras who are accustomed to performing together in person have lost that outlet in most places. The Providence Medical Orchestra, like the others, has had to shut down. Music director, John Masco, himself the son of two doctors, said, "I started to hear very quickly from people about how it was simultaneously happening that their stress levels were rising astronomically in their professional lives and that the vital outlet they had for relieving that and for using a different part of their brain was now gone." So Masco has found a new way to produce music in virtual space. He sent out parts to his 60 musicians along with video of himself conducting a piece. The musicians practice it, record video of themselves playing, and send it to him. Masco critiques it, everyone reworks their parts, and then they send their final versions in. Sound professionals knit the various parts together, and the result is quite remarkable. It was just a night or two ago we discussed the technical skill this requires, and I'll add another appreciation for that here. This venture has been so successful, the organization is looking to use these techniques to expand the ways they can make music even after they're able to play together in person once again. They've found ways to help themselves while making music for the world.

People continue to discover ways to be together apart. Working on ways to do that in our own lives is worth some effort as well.

Take care. We'll talk again.

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COVID CASES OVER THE WEEKS WORLDWIDE

3 Weeks Ago

2 Weeks Ago

Last Week

This Week

Global Cases

25,026,014

Global Cases

26,906,338

Global Cases

28,787,808

Global Cases

30,804,120

5,961,582 US

3,846,153 Brazil

3,542,733 India

987,470 Russia

639,435 Peru

622,551 South Africa

599,884 Colombia

591,712 Mexico

439,286 Spain

408,009 Chile

6,246,162 US

4,123,000 Brazil

4,113,811 India

1,022,228 Russia

683,702 Peru

658,456 Colombia

636,884 South Africa

629,409 Mexico

498,989 Spain

471,806 Argentina

6,486,401 US

4,754,356 India

4,315,687 Brazil

1,059,024 Russia

716,670 Peru

708,964 Colombia

663,973 Mexico

648,214 South Africa

566,326 Spain

546,481 Argentina

6,766,631 US

5,400,619 India

4,528,240 Brazil

1,098,958 Russia

758,398 Colombia

756,412 Peru

694,121 Mexico

659,656 South Africa

640,040 Spain

622,934 Argentina

Global Deaths

842,892

Global Deaths

880,008

Global Deaths

920,795

Global Deaths

957,348

182,779 deaths
US

120,262 deaths
Brazil

63,819 deaths
Mexico

63,498 deaths
India

41,585 deaths
United Kingdom

35,473 deaths
Italy

188,540 deaths
US

126,203 deaths
Brazil

70,626 deaths
India

67,326 deaths
Mexico

41,638 deaths
United Kingdom

35,534 deaths
Italy

193,705 deaths
US

131,210 deaths
Brazil

78,586 deaths
India

70,604 deaths
Mexico

41,712 deaths
United Kingdom

35,603 deaths
Italy

199,268 deaths
US

136,532 deaths
Brazil

86,752 deaths
India

73,258 deaths
Mexico

41,848 deaths
United Kingdom

35,692 deaths
Italy

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Area COVID-19 Cases

	Sept. 9	Sept. 10	Sept. 11	Sept. 12	Sept. 13	Sept. 14	Sept. 15
Minnesota	81,608	81,868	82,249	82,659	83,588	84,311	84,949
Nebraska	36,477	36,917	37,373	37,841	38,108	38,188	38,642
Montana	8,381	8,468	8,663	8,785	8,925	9,021	9,107
Colorado	59,674	59,920	60,185	60,492	60,907	61,324	61,699
Wyoming	3,483	3,520	3,559		3,635	3,679	3,723
North Dakota	13,872	14,110	14,443	14,684	15,151	15,577	15,831
South Dakota	15,403	15,571	15,834	16,117	16,437	16,638	16,801
United States	6,328,099	6,359,313	6,397,547	6,452,607	6,486,401	6,517,326	6,555,243
US Deaths	189,699	190,784	191,802	193,177	193,705	194,036	194,545

Minnesota	+383	+260	+381	+410	+929	+723	+638
Nebraska	+502	+440	+456	+468	+267	+80	+454
Montana	+65	+87	+195	+122	+140	+86	+86
Colorado	+187	+246	+265	+307	+415	+417	+375
Wyoming	+58	+37	+39		+76	+44	+44
North Dakota	+71	+238	+337	+244	+468	+431	+254
South Dakota	+105	+169	+263	+283	+320	+201	+163
United States	+28,930	+31,214	+38,234	+55,060	+33,794	+30,925	+37,917
US Deaths	+533	+1,085	+1,018	+1,375	+528	+331	+509

	Sept. 16	Sept. 17	Sept. 18	Sept. 19	Sept. 20
Minnesota	85,351	85,813	86,722	87,807	88,721
Nebraska	38,970	39,419	39,921	40,387	40,797
Montana	9,244	9,431	9,647	9,871	10,163
Colorado	62,099	62,686	63,145	63,750	64,356
Wyoming	3,762	3,866	3,936	4,009	4,039
North Dakota	16,066	16,333	16,723	17,230	17,607
South Dakota	16,994	17,291	17,686	18,075	18,444
United States	6,606,674	6,631,561	6,676,410	6,726,480	6,766,631
US Deaths	195,961	196,831	197,655	198,603	199,268

Minnesota	+402	+462	+909	+1,085	+914
Nebraska	+328	+449	+502	+466	+410
Montana	+137	+187	+216	+224	+292
Colorado	+400	+587	+459	+605	+606
Wyoming	+39	+104	+70	+73	+30
North Dakota	+ 235	+267	+390	+507	+377
South Dakota	+195	+297	+395	+389	+369
United States	+51,431	+24,887	+44,849	+50,070	+40,151
US Deaths	+1,416	+870	+824	+948	+665

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September 19th COVID-19 UPDATE

Groton Daily Independent from State Health Lab Reports

One male and one female, both in their 70s, have died in South Dakota from COVID-19. One in Codington County and the other in Pennington County.

South Dakota had 369 more positive cases while North Dakota had 379. North Dakota has 192 deaths associated with the coronavirus and South Dakota has 200.

Locally, Brown had 16 positive and 14 recovered cases, Day had one positive and three recovered, Edmunds had two positive and four recovered, Marshall had three recovered, McPherson had two positive cases and Spink had five positive and three recovered.

Brown County:

Total Positive: +16 (1,017) Positivity Rate: 23.2%

Total Tests: 69 (9,685)

Recovered: +14 (882)

Active Cases: +0 (132)

Ever Hospitalized: +0 (36)

Deaths: 0 (3)

Percent Recovered: 86.7%

South Dakota:

Positive: +369 (18,444 total) Positivity Rates: 13.1%

Total Tests: 2,808 (241,274 total)

Hospitalized: +12 (1,268 total). 153 currently hospitalized (+9)

Deaths: +2 (200 total)

Recovered: +230 (15,298 total)

Active Cases: +137 (2,946)

Percent Recovered: 82.9%

Staffed Hospital Bed Capacity: 6% Covid, 48% Non-Covid, 45% Available

ICU Bed Capacity: 5% Covid, 67% Non-Covid, 28% Available

Ventilator Capacity: 5% Covid, 15% Non-Covid, 80% Available

Fully recovered from positive cases (gained Miner):
Aurora 42-42, Mellette 25-25, Miner 19-19.

The following is the breakdown by all counties. The number in parenthesis right after the county name represents the number of deaths in that county.

Aurora: +2 positive (2 active cases)

Beadle (9): +5 positive, +1 recovered (42 active cases)

Bennett (1): +6 positive, +1 recovered (26 active cases)

Bon Homme (1): +1 positive, +1 recovered (19 active cases)

Brookings (2): +26 positive, +17 recovered (99 active cases)

Brown (3): +16 positive, +14 recovered (132 active cases)

Brule: +3 positive, +1 recovered (17 active cases)

Buffalo (3): 4 active cases

Butte (1): 18 active cases

Campbell: +3 positive (6 active cases)

Charles Mix: +3 positive, +2 recovered (19 active cases)

Clark: +1 positive, +1 recovered (9 active cases)

Clay (5) +2 positive, +3 recovered (60 active cases)

Codington (3): +20 positive, +22 recovered (182 active cases)

Corson (1): +1 positive, +4 recovered (9 active cases)

Custer (2): +3 positive, +17 recovered (42 active case)

Davison (2): +3 positive, +3 recovered (37 active cases)

Day: +1 positive, +3 recovered (13 active cases)

Deuel: +1 recovered (12 active cases)

Dewey: +3 positive, +3 recovered (35 active cases)

Douglas: +7 positive (23 active cases)

Edmunds: +2 positive, +4 recovered (22 active cases)

Fall River (3): +2 positive, +1 recovered (20 active cases)

Faulk (1): +1 positive, +2 recovered (12 active cases)

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Grant (1): +2 positive, +3 recovered (32 active cases)
 Gregory (1): +8 positive, +3 recovered (48 active cases)
 Haakon: +2 positive (8 active case)
 Hamlin: +1 positive (10 active cases)
 Hand: +1 positive (8 active cases)
 Hanson: 5 active cases
 Harding: Fully Recovered
 Hughes (4): +5 positive, +4 recovered (136 active cases)
 Hutchinson (2): +3 positive (16 active cases)
 Hyde: +4 positive (10 active cases)
 Jackson (1): +4 positive (12 active cases)
 Jerauld (1): +3 positive, +1 recovered (16 active cases)
 Jones: +1 positive (2 active cases)
 Kingsbury: +2 positive, +1 recovered (11 active cases)
 Lake (7): +7 positive, +2 recovered (30 active cases)
 Lawrence (4): +9 positive, +6 recovered (65 ac-

tive cases)
 Lincoln (2): +21 positive, +17 recovered (176 active cases)
 Lyman (3): +1 positive (4 active cases)
 Marshall: +3 recovered (10 active cases)
 McCook (1): +2 positive, +1 recovered (15 active cases)
 McPherson: +2 positive (11 active case)
 Meade (4): +14 positive, +9 recovered (97 active cases)
 Mellette: -1 positive (4 active cases)
 Miner: Fully Recovered
 Minnehaha (76): +65 positive, +28 recovered (603 active cases)
 Moody: +1 positive, +2 recovered (11 active cases)
 Oglala Lakota (3): +4 positive, +1 recovered (26 active cases)
 Pennington (35): +34 positive, +25 recovered (337 active cases)
 Perkins: 7 active cases
 Potter: +2 positive (14 active cases)
 Roberts (1): +9 positive, +1 recovered (40 active cases)
 Sanborn: +1 positive, +2 recovered (3 active cases)
 Spink: +5 positive, +3 recovered (29 active cases)
 Stanley: +3 positive, +1 recovered (7 active cases)
 Sully: 1 active case
 Todd (5): +2 positive, +1 recovered (10 active cases)
 Tripp: +16 positive, +1 recovered (59 active cases)
 Turner (2): +4 positive, +2 recovered (36 active cases)
 Union (5): +8 positive, +5 recovered (55 active cases)
 Walworth: +5 positive, +3 recovered (34 active cases)
 Yankton (4): +10 positive, +1 recovered (85 active cases)
 Ziebach: (16 active case)

AGE GROUP OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Age Range	# of Cases	# of Deaths
0-9 years	587	0
10-19 years	2012	0
20-29 years	4564	2
30-39 years	3229	7
40-49 years	2517	10
50-59 years	2457	20
60-69 years	1629	32
70-79 years	807	34
80+ years	642	95

SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths
Female	9473	96
Male	8971	104

North Dakota Dept. of Health Report

- 5.9% rolling 14-day positivity
 - 5.8% daily positivity
 - 379 new positives
 - 6,553 susceptible test encounters
 - 78 currently hospitalized (+1)
 - 3,096 active cases (+273)
- Total Deaths: +8 (192)

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County	Positive Cases	Recovered Cases	Negative Persons	Deceased	Community Spread
Aurora	44	42	483	0	None
Beadle	696	645	2247	9	Substantial
Bennett	63	36	631	1	Substantial
Bon Homme	75	55	1098	1	Moderate
Brookings	658	557	4199	2	Substantial
Brown	1017	882	6397	3	Substantial
Brule	92	75	972	0	Moderate
Buffalo	117	110	710	3	Minimal
Butte	74	55	1161	1	Moderate
Campbell	10	4	139	0	Minimal
Charles Mix	139	120	1972	0	Moderate
Clark	32	23	501	0	Moderate
Clay	531	466	2193	5	Substantial
Codington	682	497	4342	3	Substantial
Corson	81	71	687	1	Moderate
Custer	169	125	990	2	Substantial
Davison	200	161	3159	2	Moderate
Day	59	46	876	0	Moderate
Deuel	75	63	585	0	Substantial
Dewey	115	80	2727	0	Substantial
Douglas	57	35	512	0	Substantial
Edmunds	80	58	548	0	Substantial
Fall River	87	64	1274	3	Substantial
Faulk	58	45	286	1	Moderate
Grant	87	54	1014	1	Substantial
Gregory	93	44	579	1	Substantial
Haakon	17	9	328	0	Moderate
Hamlin	79	69	908	0	Moderate
Hand	25	15	422	0	Moderate
Hanson	28	23	305	0	None
Harding	3	3	65	0	Minimal
Hughes	295	154	2512	4	Moderate
Hutchinson	71	53	1127	2	Moderate

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Hyde	15	5	194	0	Minimal
Jackson	24	11	538	1	Minimal
Jerauld	66	49	312	1	Moderate
Jones	7	5	85	0	None
Kingsbury	41	30	742	0	Moderate
Lake	169	132	1200	7	Substantial
Lawrence	321	253	2996	4	Moderate
Lincoln	1190	1012	9479	2	Substantial
Lyman	110	103	1158	3	Minimal
Marshall	33	23	608	0	Moderate
McCook	80	64	839	1	Substantial
McPherson	27	16	285	0	Moderate
Meade	444	343	2892	4	Substantial
Mellette	29	25	444	0	None
Miner	19	19	313	0	Minimal
Minnehaha	6170	5491	36557	76	Substantial
Moody	69	58	821	0	Moderate
Oglala Lakota	219	193	3395	3	Moderate
Pennington	1960	1588	14387	35	Substantial
Perkins	28	21	280	0	Minimal
Potter	35	21	410	0	Moderate
Roberts	148	110	2526	1	Substantial
Sanborn	18	17	292	0	Minimal
Spink	102	73	1403	0	Substantial
Stanley	32	25	377	0	Moderate
Sully	9	8	123	0	None
Todd	104	84	2626	5	Moderate
Tripp	88	31	773	0	Substantial
Turner	135	99	1210	2	Moderate
Union	349	295	2513	6	Substantial
Walworth	89	55	1051	0	Substantial
Yankton	345	256	4278	4	Substantial
Ziebach	60	44	490	0	Moderate
Unassigned	0	0	15231	0	



Crash experts question Ravensborg's car-deer explanation and raise concerns of distracted driving

Or...

Crash experts question Ravensborg's car-deer explanation

Bart Pfankuch

South Dakota News Watch

An experienced traffic-accident reconstruction expert is casting doubt on the claim made by South Dakota Attorney General Jason Ravensborg that he thought he hit a deer with his car the night of Sept. 12 when in fact he had struck and killed a man.

Kurt Weiss is a mechanical engineer who has 34 years of experience in reconstructing hundreds of car accidents and is the owner of Case Study Collision Science, a California forensic research firm. Weiss is accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Traffic Accident Reconstruction and has worked on cases for government agencies and clients in civil and criminal trials.

After viewing an image of the site where Ravensborg hit and killed 55-year-old Joseph Boever, reading articles about the incident and viewing a photo of Ravensborg's vehicle taken after the crash, Weiss said it is highly improbable that Ravensborg would not have known he'd hit a man unless he was distracted and not looking at the road at the time of the collision.

Ravnsborg struck and killed Boever at 10:30 p.m. on Sept. 12 on U.S. Highway 14 just west of Highmore, S.D. on his way back from a political event in Redfield.

"If he [Ravnsborg] is looking forward and had the headlights on, it would be easy to discern if it's someone's jeans and a flannel [shirt] versus a beige-colored deer," Weiss told News Watch in an interview. "But if he's looking down or to the left and he blasts something, you might not know what you hit. But how could he not; look at the hole in the windshield."

Weiss said that even at a high speed and on a dark night, Ravensborg likely would have known he did not hit a deer if he had been driving without distraction.

"It would be easy to tell the difference; even at 100 mph, you would be able to tell the difference between an erect human versus a deer, no question," Weiss said, "and that would be part of the interrogation of Mr. Ravensborg."

Weiss and another accident-reconstruction expert interviewed by News Watch said it will be difficult but certainly possible for investigators to determine how and where on or off the roadway the collision between Ravensborg's car and Boever took place. Information from the road, debris at the site, overhead images taken by drone cameras, tire or skid marks on the roadway, and details from the car and its internal information systems can all be used to determine what happened that night, they said.

The second reconstruction expert interviewed by News Watch, John Desch of John Desch Associates of New Jersey, said that if the investigation reveals that Ravensborg struck Boever on the road shoulder and not in the travel lane, then



Jason Ravensborg



Joseph Boever

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Ravnsborg would have more culpability in Boever's death.

"That would be clear negligence on the part of the driver," Desch said. "If a pedestrian is walking on the shoulder, there is some kind of reliance on their part that they're in a safer area."

Weiss further said that the broken windshield of Ravensborg's 2011 Ford Taurus would likely have contained clothing fibers, human skin or hair that could have indicated to Ravensborg or Hyde County Sheriff Mike Volek that Ravensborg had hit a person and not a deer. Likewise, a deer likely would have left hair, hide or bone fragments in the broken windshield or on the front of the car to indicate an animal was struck.

"A jagged glass edge is going to catch some fibers, and for me, as an experienced reconstructionist, if you look at the glass edge, you know the difference between a human and a deer," Weiss said. "It would be very apparent."

Weiss examined a photo of [Ravnsborg's crashed vehicle](#) posted by KELO news; the red Ford Taurus with a smashed windshield was also seen at a highway maintenance facility in Highmore by Nick Nemec, a cousin of Boever, when he was at the accident scene in the days following the collision.

Investigators from the South Dakota Highway Patrol and the state of North Dakota are investigating the accident.

Ravnsborg, a 44-year-old Republican, released a statement two days after the accident saying that on the night of the collision he thought he had struck a deer, that he stopped his car and immediately called Sheriff Volek, and that the two looked

"It would be easy to tell the difference, even at 100 mph, you would be able to tell the difference between an erect human versus a deer, no question ... and that would be part of the interrogation of Mr. Ravensborg."

-- Kurt Weiss, accident reconstruction expert



Kurt Weiss



Nick Nemec, left, and his brother, Victor, have made several visits to the scene of the accident on U.S. Highway 14 west of Highmore, S.D., where their cousin Joseph Boever was killed after being struck by a car driven by South Dakota Attorney General Jason Ravensborg on Sept. 12, 2020. Photo: Nick Lowrey, South Dakota News Watch

but could not find evidence of what Ravensborg had struck. Ravensborg said that because his car was damaged, Volek loaned him his own car to drive back to Pierre, where Ravensborg lives.

On his way back to Pierre, about a half mile west of the crash site, Ravensborg passed a white pickup that was stalled in the westbound ditch. That pickup was the vehicle that Boever's family members believe he was walking toward when struck.

The next morning, returning in two vehicles to Highmore with his chief of staff, Tim Bormann, Ravensborg said he and Bormann stopped at the accident site to look around and discovered Boever's body in the ditch. He said they then drove to Volek's house and the formal investigation began.

Ravnsborg, who has several past speeding tickets, said he had not been drinking alcohol the night of the accident. The attorney general said he would not answer any further questions until the investigation is complete.

State officials, including Gov. Kristi Noem and Public Safety Director Craig Price, have acknowledged the fatal accident and the investigation

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but have released few details. Price said on Sept. 15 that the state hired a Wyoming accident-reconstruction expert to aid in the investigation.

Department of Public Safety spokesperson Tony Mangan told News Watch that the state has hired John Daily of Jackson Hole Scientific Investigations, Inc., of Jackson Hole, Wyo., to reconstruct the accident. Daily has a mechanical engineering degree and spent 25 years as a law enforcement officer; his website said he has investigated more than 1,000 accidents.

Mangan said on Sept. 16 that a contract with Daily's firm had not yet been signed.

News Watch contacted Daily on Sept. 17 and he said, "Let's just put it this way, I have not signed any contracts, and I best not chat with you until the process is much further along," before hanging up.

Significant evidence to consider

Desch is also a veteran car-accident reconstruction expert. His firm has more than 30 years of experience in accident analysis and has a staff of 10 accredited reconstruction experts.

Desch said Daily is a highly respected reconstruction expert who has authored three textbooks, including Fundamentals of Traffic Crash Reconstruction, and has led numerous industry training sessions on accident reconstruction.

Desch said that if Boever was wearing dark clothing and walking in the traffic lane, it is possible that Ravensborg could have struck him and not known that he hit a person.

A car traveling 65 mph is covering about 100 feet per second, so there isn't much time for a driver to recognize an object that suddenly illuminates in the headlights, Desch said.

Desch said that if Boever was wearing dark clothing and was in the travel lane when struck, then the culpability of Ravensborg would be diminished.

But if the evidence shows that Boever was on the highway shoulder or in the ditch when struck, then "that's a whole different matter and then you begin to look at distractions," Desch said.

Desch said the culpability of Ravensborg increases if Boever was on the shoulder when struck, especially since Ravensborg would have heard the loud sounds from the "rumble strips" cut into the pavement just off the travel lane likely would have looked up.

Weiss said the accident was clearly a high-speed collision because the passenger-side windshield on Ravensborg's car was smashed in.

Weiss said a low-profile vehicle such as a Ford Taurus would tend to sweep a person or a deer onto the hood and into the windshield, which should have made it easier to identify what object was struck.

Desch said a reconstruction expert might try to recreate the conditions of that night and actually drive the road to get a sense of what happened, or might create a computer simulation of what took place.

Desch and Weiss said the reconstruction expert may benefit from a wealth of information gathered from computers within Ravensborg's car.



The skid marks at the scene of the accident on U.S. 14 west of Highmore appear to show that right tire of the car driven by South Dakota Attorney General Jason Ravensborg was on the shoulder of the road and not in the travel lane when braking began. Photo: Nick

Lowrey, South Dakota News Watch

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According to manufacturer information, the 2011 Ford Taurus is equipped an air-bag control module that can show both pre-crash and crash data, including speed, engine RPM, brake and throttle application levels, rate of deceleration, and when safety measures such as air bags and seat belt tensioners deployed. Those data-collection systems, however, may not engage in a pedestrian accident if the impact is not significant enough, they said.

Weiss said the 2011 Ford might also have an infotainment system that can record significant real-time information, including the precise time an accident occurred and a global-positioning system that can show exactly where a car suddenly decelerated.

Weiss said that with a white line on the edge of the travel lane, a paved shoulder and then a gravel shoulder on the side of the road, "it would be ridiculous for Boever to be walking in the middle of the road because the shoulder is adequate" for him to walk on.

A News Watch reporter measured the shoulder at the scene of the accident and found that the paved and gravel shoulder together are 11 feet wide.

"If Boever's not in the road, he's doing his own thing, he's off the roadway and he's trying to stay safe, and if Ravensborg comes along and gets off the road and pops him, that's Ravensborg's problem," Weiss said. "Boever did everything he could to stay safe, so that would be a focus."

That section of U.S. 14 also has so-called "rumble strips" carved into the pavement just off the travel lane to alert drivers that they are leaving the roadway. If Ravensborg's car made contact with the strips before striking Boever, it would be more likely that he would have looked up and seen what he was about to hit even if he had been distracted prior, Weiss said.



Victor Nemec, the cousin of Joseph Boever and likely the last person to be with Boever before his death on Sept. 12, holds a piece of a red car found on Sept. 17 at the accident scene along U.S. Highway 14 where Boever was hit and killed. South Dakota Attorney General Jason Ravensborg was driving a red Ford Taurus at the time he struck Boever.

Photo: Nick Lowrey, South Dakota News Watch

A pair of black tire tracks are still clearly visible on the pavement in the westbound lane of U.S. 14 at the accident scene just outside of Highmore. The tire marks are heading off the roadway to the right; the right tire mark first appears on the paved shoulder of the road.

The tire tracks are dotted with evenly spaced splotches of green spray paint made by investigators. The tracks start a little more than half a mile from the U.S. 14 intersection with state Highway 47 and about 280 feet west of a 65 mph speed-limit sign that marks the end of a reduced-speed zone through Highmore.

The green paint near the tire tracks appeared on Sunday, Sept. 13, when crash investigators were swarming the highway, said Nick Nemec, a former state lawmaker. Nemec and his brother, Victor, have walked the scene of the collision that killed their cousin at least once a day since identifying his body because they want to understand what happened and are not getting information from state officials.

Nick Nemec said he first saw the green paint when he walked the scene for the first time on Sept. 14 after investigators left. A new series of white spray-painted squares appeared after investigators apparently returned to the collision scene on Sept. 15, he said.

Nemec said investigators returned to Highmore and shut down a roughly one-mile stretch of U.S. 14 on Sept. 17, and that South Dakota Highway Patrol troopers told him investigators were performing more tests at the scene of the collision.

The Nemecs believe Boever was walking west, with traffic, on the shoulder of U.S. 14 when he was struck as he headed toward his pickup that was in the ditch after becoming disabled earlier that evening. By the time

Victor Nemec left Boever's house on Sept. 12, it was about 9:30

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p.m., so he doesn't think Boever had enough time to have already walked to his truck and begun to return to his home when he was struck.

The Nemecs said they do have serious doubts about the story Ravensborg has told the public and wonder whether an alert driver could mistake a man for a deer, even on an unlit stretch of highway.

Another odd detail, Nick Nemec said, was that Ravensborg returned to the scene the next day and found Boever's body. Ravensborg said in a statement issued Monday, Sept. 14, that as he and Bormann "approached Highmore, they noticed the debris from the crash the night before. The



This image, posted to the Facebook page of South Dakota Attorney General Jason Ravensborg on Oct. 8, 2019, appears to have been taken by Ravensborg while he was driving. In the post, Ravensborg wrote: "I spend many hours behind the wheel traveling our great state, so I thought I would show you some of my great views and take more pictures of South Dakota as I travel." Photo: Facebook



South Dakota Attorney General Jason Ravensborg would have driven past this vehicle parked in the ditch on his way back to Pierre after the fatal pedestrian accident on Sept. 12. The truck, which became disabled after Joseph Boever had an accident earlier that day, is believed to be the destination that Boever was heading to or from at the time Ravensborg struck and killed him along U.S. Highway 14. Photo: Courtesy Dakota News Now

noticed the debris from the crash the night before. The two men stopped to see if they could see the animal Ravensborg thought he hit."

Ravnsborg said the pair then walked the highway and found Boever's body in the ditch, and that they then drove to Volek's home to alert him. Nick Nemec said that seems a bit odd because Volek's home is located about half a mile west of the crash scene, meaning that Ravensborg and Bormann drove past Volek's house to return to the accident scene before returning the borrowed car.

Distracted driving a concern for experts

Three key questions the reconstruction expert will try to answer are whether Ravensborg was distracted while driving, if he was traveling above the speed limit when Boever

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Nick Nemec, a former South Dakota lawmaker and a cousin of Joseph Boever, has done his own informal investigation of the accident that killed Boever, and Nemec wonders how South Dakota Attorney General Jason Ravensborg could have thought he hit a deer when in fact he struck and killed Boever on Sept. 12. Photo: Nick Lowrey, South

Dakota News Watch

was struck and where Boever was standing or walking when he was hit.

Speed can be determined through vehicle computer data or through formulas that are based on the "throw distance," or how far the pedestrian's body flew after being struck.

Desch said that if alcohol was not a factor, then Ravensborg could have been distracted while driving, though he noted that drivers are typically legally allowed to check or adjust mirrors, to change the radio station or manipulate dials to defrost windows or change the temperature in the vehicle.

The experts said the deconstructionist can also glean significant information from an examination of Ravensborg's cellphones, including whether he may have been talking or texting on his phone. South Dakota law changed in July to make it a Class 2 misdemeanor to use a cellphone while driving except in an emergency, to use a GPS application or to read or enter a phone number.

In his statement, Ravensborg said he turned over two cellphones he had with him the night of Sept. 12 to state investigators.

Desch said that since the collision occurred at 10:30 p.m., it is also possible that Ravensborg fell asleep behind the wheel.

Ravensborg posted on his Facebook page the day before the accident, on Friday, Sept. 11, that he had driven to a Lincoln Day Dinner in Rapid City and had returned home to Pierre about 1:15 a.m. Saturday, a roughly 350-mile round trip. The trip from Pierre to Redfield the next day covered about 115 miles and the trip from Redfield to Highmore added about 70 miles more.

Without a video of the accident, the best on-scene evidence of where a person was located when struck

would be scuff marks left by their shoes at the point of impact, though Weiss and Desch said scuff marks are rarely found. The final position of the body and injuries present can also indicate where a person was located and how he was struck, Weiss and Desch said.

Blood evidence and debris from the vehicle can also be used to indicate the location of the pedestrian when hit. The first blood visible at the site of the Ravensborg crash is on the shoulder of the road, according to a visit to the site by a News Watch reporter on Sept. 17.

South Dakota statute 32-27-5 states that pedestrians can legally walk along a highway where there are no sidewalks but "shall, when practicable, walk only on the left side of the roadway or its shoulder facing traffic which may approach from the opposite direction." A violation is a petty offense.

Victor Nemec, likely the last person to spend time with Boever, said it is likely that Boever was walking on the roadway shoulder and was walking with traffic on the way to his stalled vehicle. Nemec said Boever was probably wearing a dark-colored coat and would not have had time from the last time Nemec saw him to have been to his truck and already walking facing traffic on the way back to his home when he was hit.

Desch said an autopsy performed on Boever's body would likely show whether he was struck from behind or in the front.

Weiss said it is difficult to anticipate how long a reconstruction may take, and the length can depend on

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the complexity of the case and whether the investigator has to work within a budget. The accuracy of a reconstruction is often dictated by the amount and quality of information developed by the initial crash investigation, Weiss said.

"It's hard to work on deadlines in this industry," he said. "You want to work at your own pace, as it results in a better process, and I hope he's not working under a budget on a case like this."

Both Weiss and Desch said they were happy to hear that the state was hiring a reconstructionist and had brought in investigators from North Dakota to reduce the potential for bias in the investigation.

"They better not just try to cover this thing up or make it a half-assed job," Desch said. "That would not serve anybody."

— South Dakota News Watch reporter Nick Lowrey contributed to this report.

ABOUT BART PFANKUCH



Bart Pfankuch, Rapid City, S.D., is the content director for South Dakota News Watch. A Wisconsin native, he is a former editor of the Rapid City Journal and also worked at newspapers in Florida. Bart has spent more than 30 years as a reporter, editor and writing coach.

ABOUT NICK LOWREY



Nick Lowrey, based in Pierre, S.D., is an investigative staff reporter for South Dakota News Watch. A South Dakotan for more than 20 years, he is a former editor of the Pierre Capital Journal.

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Lady Tigers tame Blue Dragons

Groton Area posted a 5-0 win over Garretson in soccer action played Saturday in Groton. The event was broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by Jason Roberts and Lisa Pray.

The Tigers are struggling to get into the playoffs as Garretson is still holding on to the number six position while Groton Area is at number seven. The top six teams advance to the playoffs.

The five goals were scored by five different players. The first score was with 22:37 left in the first half. A Groton player kicked the ball and it bounced off the top bar, landing just in front of the goal. Garretson's goalie lost track of the ball and Jerica Locke was there to give the ball and boot and it rolled into the net. The second score in the first half came with 38 seconds left when Mia Crank kicked the ball towards the goal and Kenzie McInerney finished the play with the hard kick and the ball went flying into the net for a 2-0 lead.

Groton Area scored early in the second half at the 38:07 mark when Riley Leicht kicked the ball into the net. The Tigers scored again at the 23 minute mark when Regan Leicht kicked the ball in, and the final score was with 14:40 left when Brooklyn Hansen scored.

Groton Area, now 3-4-1, will host Tea Area on Saturday for the regular season finale at 1 p.m. That game will be broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM/GDIRADIO 89.3 FM.

The boys were suppose to play Freeman Academy on Saturday, but that game was called off. Freeman Academy has not played any games this year. The boys will host James Valley Christian on Thursday and that game will be broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM/GDIRADIO 89.3 FM, sponsored by Larry and Val Flihs.

- Paul Kosel

Class A GIRLS

Top 6 (based on seed points) qualify for playoffs

School	Seed Points	W-L-D
1 SF Christian	42.500	5-1-3
2 West Central	41.955	6-2-3
3 Tea Area	41.750	4-3-3
4 Vermillion	41.667	3-2-4
5 Dakota Valley	40.313	3-2-3
6 Garretson	38.800	2-6-2
Groton Area	38.563	3-4-1
St. Thomas More	38.091	2-9-0
Belle Fourche	35.545	0-11-0
Hot Springs	0.000	0-0-0

Class A BOYS

Top 6 (based on seed points) qualify for playoffs

School	Seed Points	W-L-D
1 SF Christian	43.833	8-0-1
2 Vermillion	41.083	4-1-1
3 Tea Area	41.000	3-3-2
4 St. Thomas More	40.318	4-6-1
5 Belle Fourche	40.000	5-6-0
6 James Valley Christian	36.667	0-7-2
Groton Area	35.917	0-5-1
Hot Springs	34.333	0-6-0
Freeman Academy	0.000	0-0-0

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Allyssa Locke and goalie Jaedyn Penning
(Photo by Paul Kosel)



Jerica Locke
(Photo by Paul Kosel)



Emma Schinkel
(Photo by Paul Kosel)



Brooklyn Gilbert
(Photo by Paul Kosel)

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Kenzie McInerney
(Photo by Paul Kosel)



Trista Keith
(Photo by Paul Kosel)



Regan Leicht
(Photo by Paul Kosel)



Jaedyn Penning
(Photo by Paul Kosel)

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- ✓ 30 year law enforcement veteran with city and county government experience
- ✓ Progressive thinker/ Conservative spender
- ✓ Common sense approach to solving issues



I pledge

- ✓ to put taxpayers first by no wasteful spending
- ✓ to increase transparency to taxpayers
- ✓ to maintain roads and bridges
- ✓ to the creation of a criminal justice task force addressing Meth, Opioid and other drug addictions

Your vote will be much appreciated!



Absentee voting begins September 18th



Representation from eastern Brown County is long overdue! (35 years)

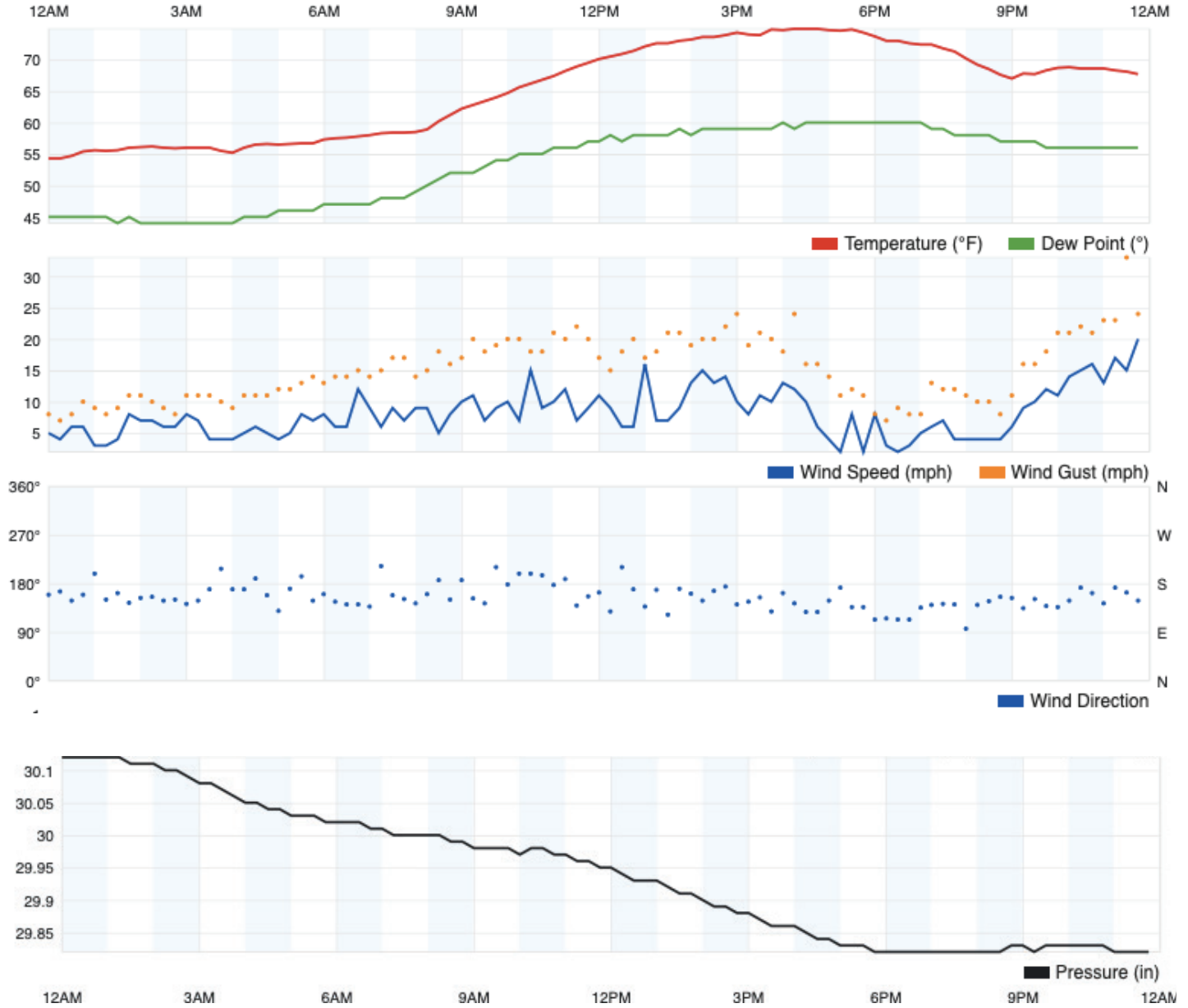
Vote for Michael Nehls for Brown County Commission (your vote **only for Mike could make a difference)**

Paid for by the committee to elect Mike Nehls to Brown County Commission

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today



Slight Chance
T-storms

High: 82 °F

Tonight



Mostly Clear

Low: 50 °F

Monday



Sunny

High: 83 °F

Monday
Night



Mostly Clear

Low: 53 °F

Tuesday



Sunny

High: 84 °F



Warm Throughout This Week

Today:
Partly Sunny breezy slight chc showers/Tstorms.
Highs 75-85°. **High Grassland Fire Danger**

Tonight:
Mostly clear and cool. Lows in the 50s.

Monday:
Mostly Sunny and warm with highs in the 80s.

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

ISSUED: 5:35 AM - Sunday, September 20, 2020

There is a slight chance of showers/Tstorms today, otherwise the forecast will be dry and warm through this week.

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Today in Weather History

September 20, 1970: During the late afternoon, golfball hail fell in and around Redfield with a tornado reported just north of Doland. No damage was reported with the hail or the tornado.

September 20, 1972: About 430 pm, in southeast South Dakota, a tornado caused an estimated \$95,000 damage to property and 50,000 damage to crops in Utica and nearby rural areas. Buildings were damaged; trees and power lines were downed.

1845 - A tornado traveled 275 miles across Lake Ontario, New York and Lake Champlain. (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders - 1987)

1909: A large and deadly Category 3 hurricane made landfall near Grand Isle, Louisiana during the late evening hours. The states of Louisiana and Mississippi showed catastrophic damage resulting in 371 deaths and \$265 million in damage (2010 USD).

1926 - A hurricane which hit Miami, FL, on the 18th, pounded Pensacola with wind gusts to 152 mph. Winds raged in excess of 100 mph for four hours, and above 75 mph for 20 hours. (The Weather Channel)

1961: On September 10th, the Television Infrared Observation Satellite observed an area of thunderstorms west-southwest of the Cape Verde Islands, suggesting a possible tropical cyclone. This storm is the first large tropical cyclone to be discovered on satellite imagery and would eventually become Hurricane Esther. On September 20th, Hurricane Esther, a Category 4 storm off of Cape Hatteras, North Carolina began to slow down as it moved north-northeast well off the Jersey shore. The storm continued to weaken as it made a five-day loop south of Cape Cod, Massachusetts, then moved to Cape Cod and into Maine on the 26th.

1967 - Hurricane Beulah moved into South Texas, and torrential rains from the hurricane turned the rich agricultural areas of South Texas into a large lake. Hurricane Beulah also spawned a record 115 tornadoes. (David Ludlum)

1983 - The temperature at West Yellowstone MT plunged to six degrees below zero, while the temperature at San Francisco CA soared to 94 degrees. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Afternoon and evening thunderstorms produced severe weather in Oklahoma and west Texas. In Oklahoma, a thunderstorm at Seiling produced three inches of rain in one hour, golf ball size hail, and wind gusts to 60 mph which collapsed a tent at the state fair injuring nine persons. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Showers and thunderstorms produced locally heavy rains in central Wyoming, and snow in some of the higher elevations. Casper WY reported 1.75 inches of rain in 24 hours, and a thunderstorm north of the Wild Horse Reservoir produced 1.90 inches of rain in just forty minutes.

1989 - Hugo jilted Iris. Hurricane Hugo churned toward the South Atlantic Coast, gradually regaining strength along the way. Tropical Storm Iris got too close to Hugo, and began to weaken. A cold front brought strong and gusty winds to the Great Basin and the Southern Plateau Region, with wind gusts to 44 mph reported at Kingman AZ. (The National Weather Summary)

2002: A glacial avalanche buries the village of Karmadon in Russia, killing more than 100 people.

2005 - Hurricane Rita tracked through the Florida Straits and just south of the Florida Keys. Winds were sustained at tropical storm force at Key West, where peak winds gusted to 76 mph.

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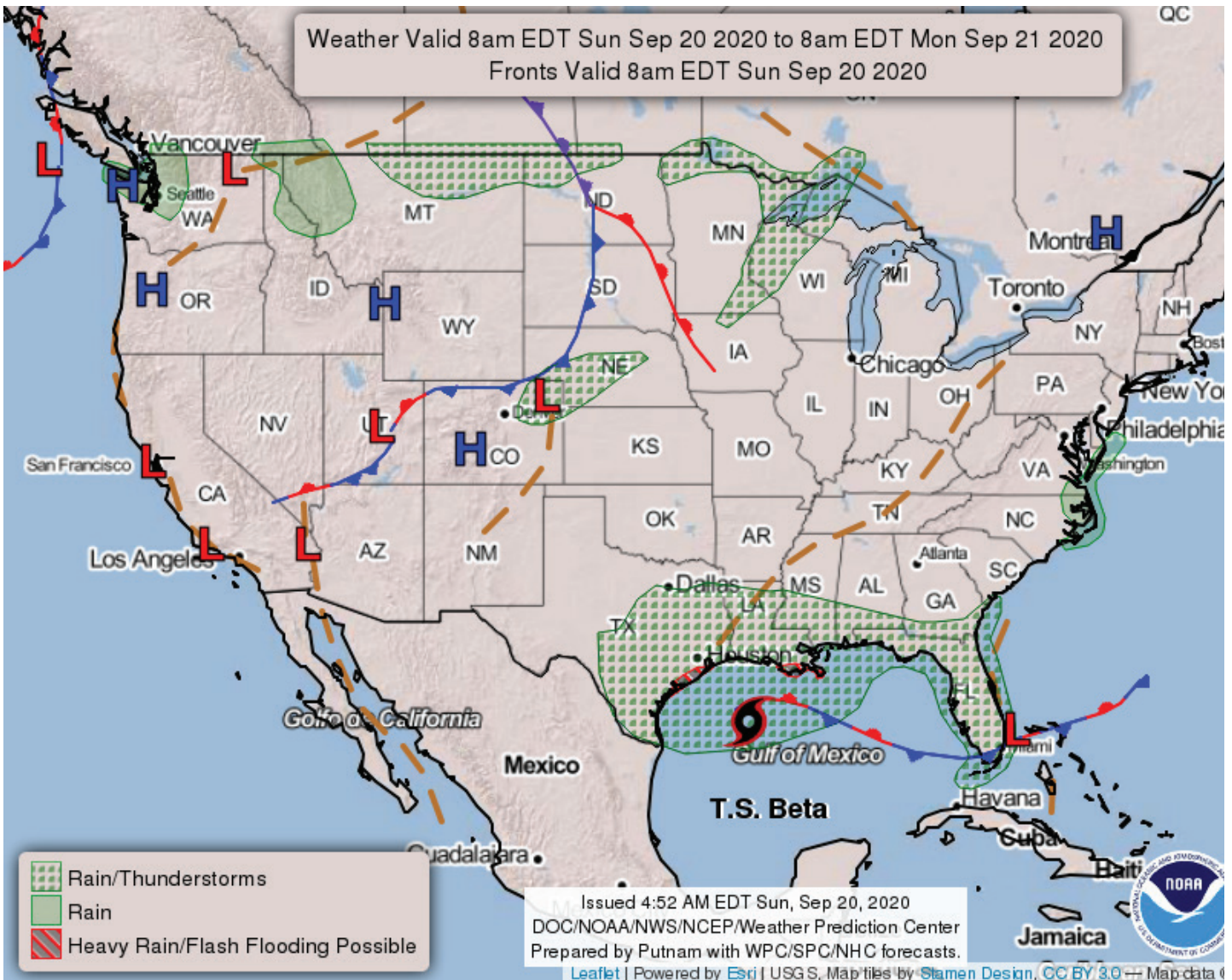
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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 75 °F at 4:09 PM
Low Temp: 54 °F at 12:02 AM
Wind: 25 mph at 2:35 PM
Precip: .00

Today's Info

Record High: 94° in 1937
Record Low: 20° in 1901
Average High: 70°F
Average Low: 44°F
Average Precip in Sept...: 1.41
Precip to date in Sept.: 1.52
Average Precip to date: 17.70
Precip Year to Date: 14.87
Sunset Tonight: 7:34 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:20 a.m.



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IRREVERSIBLE CALL

The legendary Babe Ruth was known for stating his opinion - whether anyone wanted it or not. On one occasion, there was an umpire who displeased "The Babe," and he violently disagreed with one of his calls.

Shouted Ruth, "There are 40,000 people in the stands who know that pitch was a ball!"

"Maybe so," said Umpire Pinelli, "but mine is the only one that counts."

Not quite. There is an Ultimate Judge - God. Scripture declares that "As surely as I live, says the Lord, every knee will bend to me, and every tongue will confess and give praise to God. Yes, each of you will give a personal account to God."

Paul clearly states that there is a Righteous Judge before whom we play "the game of life." He knows each of us by name, and everything there is to know about us. He is infallible and impartial and cannot be bought or bribed.

Unfortunately, many Christians adopt or adapt their standards of conduct on what others in society are doing. This reflects a weak faith and a disregard for the teachings of the Word of God.

Since we will all give an account to the Lord for every thought we think and all the deeds we do, we must look to Him for His guidance and His Word for directions.

Prayer: Father, we often live life as if what we do does not matter. Awaken us to the reality that we will stand before You one day to be judged for everything we do. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: For the Scriptures say, "'As surely as I live,' says the Lord, 'every knee will bend to me, and every tongue will declare allegiance to God.'" Romans 14:11

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2020 Groton SD Community Events

- **CANCELLED** Groton Lions Club Easter Egg Hunt - City Park (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
- **CANCELLED** Dueling Piano's Baseball Fundraiser at the American Legion
- **CANCELLED** Fireman's Fun Night (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
- **POSTPONED** Front Porch 605 Rural Route Road Trip
- **CANCELLED** Father/Daughter dance.
- **CANCELLED** Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales, (1st Saturday in May)
- **CANCELLED** Girls High School Golf Meet at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 05/25/2020 Groton American Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services
- 07/04/2020 Firecracker Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 07/12/2020 Summer Fest/Car Show
- 07/16/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Pro Am Golf Tourney
- 07/24/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Ferney Open Golf Tourney
- 07/25/2020 City-Wide Rummage Sales
- **CANCELLED** State American Legion Baseball Tournament in Groton
- 08/07/2020 Wine on Nine Event at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 09/12-13/2020 Groton Fly-In/Drive-In at the Groton Airport north of Groton
- 09/12/2020 Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Sat. after Labor Day)
- 09/13/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Couples Sunflower Classic
- 10/09/2020 Lake Region Marching Band Festival (2nd Friday in October)
- 10/10/2020 Pumpkin Fest (Saturday before Columbus Day)
- 10/30/2020 Downtown Trick or Treat
- 10/31/2020 Groton United Methodist Trunk or Treat
- **CANCELLED** Groton Legion Annual Turkey Party (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)
- 11/26/2020 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center
- 12/05/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Tour of Homes & Holiday Party
- 12/05/2020 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services
- 01/--/2021 83rd Annual Carnival of Silver Skates

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News from the Associated Press

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) _ These South Dakota lotteries were drawn Saturday:

Dakota Cash

12-18-26-28-31

(twelve, eighteen, twenty-six, twenty-eight, thirty-one)

Estimated jackpot: \$189,000

Lotto America

15-34-35-43-52, Star Ball: 4, ASB: 4

(fifteen, thirty-four, thirty-five, forty-three, fifty-two; Star Ball: four; ASB: four)

Estimated jackpot: \$2.4 million

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$22 million

Powerball

11-14-23-47-57, Powerball: 14, Power Play: 4

(eleven, fourteen, twenty-three, forty-seven, fifty-seven; Powerball: fourteen; Power Play: four)

Estimated jackpot: \$20 million

Saturday's Scores

By The Associated Press

PREP VOLLEYBALL=

Aberdeen Central def. Watertown, 25-19, 21-25, 25-10, 23-25, 15-10

Clark/Willow Lake def. Wilmot, 25-13, 25-13, 25-10

Colman-Egan def. James Valley Christian, 25-20, 25-13, 25-18

Hamlin def. West Central, 25-19, 19-25, 25-19, 25-23

Highmore-Harrold def. Jones County, 25-18, 25-13, 25-15

Lyman def. Bennett County, 25-17, 14-25, 25-21, 25-21

Mitchell def. Spearfish, 21-25, 25-18, 25-12, 25-17

Pierre def. Douglas, 0-0

Sanborn Central/Woonsocket def. Oldham-Ramona/Rutland, 25-21, 25-19, 21-25, 25-17

Bridgewater-Emery Tournament=

Pool 1=

Bridgewater-Emery def. Ethan, 20-25, 25-13, 25-22

Bridgewater-Emery def. Howard, 25-13, 25-23

Bridgewater-Emery def. Platte-Geddes, 18-25, 25-15, 25-14

Ethan def. Howard, 25-18, 25-20

Platte-Geddes def. Ethan, 18-25, 25-20, 25-22

Platte-Geddes def. Howard, 25-13, 25-18

Pool 2=

Irene-Wakonda def. Menno, 25-13, 25-22

Irene-Wakonda def. Viborg-Hurley, 25-20, 25-19

Ipswich Tournament=

Aberdeen Christian def. Langford, 25-18, 20-25, 25-13

Aberdeen Christian def. Lemmon, 25-12, 25-16

Aberdeen Christian def. Leola/Frederick, 25-17, 25-18

Ipswich def. Aberdeen Christian, 25-16, 25-14

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Ipswich def. Langford, 25-20, 25-21
Ipswich def. Lemmon, 25-17, 25-12
Langford def. Lemmon, 20-25, 25-16, 25-23
Lemmon def. Leola/Frederick, 25-20, 11-25, 25-25
Leola/Frederick def. Langford, 25-18, 15-25, 25-22
Pool A=
Ipswich def. Leola/Frederick, 25-21, 25-17
Lake Preston Invite=
East Division Pool=
Arlington def. Sioux Valley, 25-20, 25-11
Estelline/Hendricks def. Sioux Valley, 25-14, 25-10
West Division Pool=
DeSmet def. Lake Preston, 25-10, 25-16
Lake Preston def. Arlington, 25-21, 25-20
Lake Preston def. Iroquois, 25-17, 25-18
O’Gorman Triangular=
Sioux Falls O’Gorman def. Rapid City Stevens, 25-9, 25-8, 28-26

Some high school volleyball scores provided by Scorestream.com, <https://scorestream.com/>

South Dakota hits grim milestone of 200 COVID-19 deaths

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Health officials confirmed two additional COVID-19 deaths in South Dakota Saturday, bringing the statewide death toll to 200 since the pandemic began.

Health officials on Saturday reported 369 new cases of the coronavirus.

The state now has had 18,444 cases of COVID-19. There were 2,946 cases still active Saturday.

Health officials report 15,298 recoveries from the disease, and a total of 153 people who are currently hospitalized.

For most people, the new coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough that clear up in two to three weeks. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia and death.

Authorities identify man killed in tractor crash

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Authorities have identified a man killed in a farm tractor crash near Ipswich. The South Dakota Department of Public said 49-year-old Blake Lunder, of Roscoe, was killed Monday after his tractor hit a deer and the vehicle went into a ditch and rolled.

The Argus Leader reports Lunder was pronounced dead at the scene.

The South Dakota Highway Patrol is continuing to investigate the crash.

A rapper, an elevator and an elephant: stories Ginsburg told

By JESSICA GRESKO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — In recent years Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg was surprised to find herself so popular that “everyone wants to take a picture with me.” The justice, who died Friday at 87, had become a feminist icon, with books, movies, clothing and even coloring books devoted to her.

People wanted to give her awards. They wanted to hear her talk. Ginsburg was invited to speak so often that inevitably she was asked the same questions and delivered the same punch lines, always, it seemed, to a delighted new audience.

Some of the things Ginsburg liked to tell groups:

WHAT SHE HAD IN COMMON WITH A RAPPER

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Ginsburg came to be known as "The Notorious RBG," a play on the name of the rapper "The Notorious B.I.G." Ginsburg liked to note they had one important thing in common. Both were born and bred in Brooklyn, New York.

WHEN ASKED FOR HER ADVICE

Ginsburg often dispensed a piece of wisdom her mother-in-law gave her on her wedding day. The secret to a happy marriage is this: "Sometimes it helps to be a little deaf." Ginsburg said it was excellent advice in dealing with her colleagues on the court, too.

ON EQUAL PARENTING

Ginsburg's son James was what she called a "lively child," and she would often get calls from his New York City school about his latest caper. Ginsburg finally told the school: "This child has two parents. Please alternate calls." It was Ginsburg's husband's turn, she said.

So Ginsburg's husband went to the school and was told James had "stolen the elevator," taking a group of kindergartners for a ride.

But "after the elevator incident, the calls came barely once a semester," Ginsburg noted, and not because James was any better behaved. "They were much more reluctant to take a man away from his work than a woman," Ginsburg liked to explain.

ON FACING DISCRIMINATION

Ginsburg often noted that she had "three strikes" against her in trying to get a job when she graduated from Columbia's law school in 1959, despite graduating at the top of her class. She was Jewish. She was a wife. And she was a mother.

"Getting the first job was hard for women of my vintage," she'd say. "But once you got the first job you did it at least as well as the men and so the next step was not as hard."

Ginsburg also liked to note something Justice Sandra Day O'Connor would say: "Sandra said, 'Where would the two of us be if there had been no discrimination?' Well, today we'd be retired partners from a large law firm."

ON HER FRIENDSHIP WITH ANTONIN SCALIA

The genuine friendship between the liberal Ginsburg and conservative Justice Antonin Scalia, who died in 2016, puzzled many audiences. Ginsburg explained: "The number one reason why I loved Justice Scalia so is he made me laugh."

The two shared a love of opera. And they were close enough that their families spent New Year's together. Scalia would sometimes call to point out grammar errors in Ginsburg's opinion drafts. Ginsburg, for her part, would sometimes tell him: "This opinion is so overheated, you'd be more persuasive if you tone it down." She liked to say: "He never listened to that."

Ginsburg often described a famous picture of the two of them riding an elephant together in India, the heavyset Scalia in front and diminutive Ginsburg in the rear. Ginsburg's feminist friends were horrified. Why was she in the back? Weight distribution, she explained.

ON HER ACHIEVEMENTS

Ginsburg's mother, Celia Bader, who died the day before Ginsburg graduated high school, never attended college but worked as a bookkeeper. Ginsburg would sometimes ask audiences: "What's the difference between a bookkeeper in New York's Garment District and a U.S. Supreme Court justice?" Her answer: "One generation."

ON CHANGING THE CONSTITUTION

When asked how she might change the Constitution if given the opportunity, Ginsburg liked to point to the effort in the 1970s to pass the Equal Rights Amendment, which fell three states short of ratification. Ginsburg said passing it was still a good idea.

"I have three granddaughters," Ginsburg liked to say. "And I'd like to be able to take out my pocket Constitution and say that the equal citizenship stature of men and women is a fundamental tenet of our society."

ON THE SUPREME COURT'S WOMEN

Ginsburg, the second female justice, was sometimes asked when there would be enough women on the Supreme Court. Her response: "When there are nine." She'd explain: "Some people are taken aback until they remember that for most of our country's history there were only men on the high court bench."

Thai protesters reinstall plaque symbolizing democracy

By TASSANEE VEJPONGSA Associated Press

BANGKOK (AP) — Anti-government demonstrators occupying a historic field in the Thai capital on Sunday installed a plaque symbolizing the country's transition to democracy to replace the original one that was mysteriously ripped out and stolen three years ago, as they vowed to press on with calls for new elections and reform of the monarchy.

The mass student-led rally that began Saturday was the largest in a series of protests this year, with thousands camping overnight at Sanam Luang field near the royal palace in Bangkok.

A group of activists drilled a hole in front of a makeshift stage and, after Buddhist rituals, laid down a round brass plaque in cement to commemorate the 1932 revolution that changed Thailand from an absolute monarchy to a constitutional monarchy.

"At the dawn of Sept. 20, here is where the people proclaim that this country belongs to the people," read part of the inscription on the plaque. In April 2017, the original plaque vanished from Bangkok's Royal Plaza and was replaced by one praising the monarchy.

"The nation does not belong to only one person, but belongs to us all," student leader Parit "Penguin" Chirawak told the crowd. "Therefore, I would like to ask holy spirits to stay with us and bless the people's victory."

Another activist, Panusaya Sithijirawattanakul, said their demands do not propose getting rid of the monarchy. "They are proposals with good intentions to make the institution of the monarchy remain graciously above the people under democratic rule," Panusaya said.

Still, such calls took the nation by surprise. Protesters' demands seek to limit the king's powers, establish tighter controls on palace finances and allow open discussion of the monarchy. Their boldness was unprecedented, as the monarchy is considered sacrosanct in Thailand, with a harsh law that mandates a three- to 15-year prison term for defaming it.

The protesters later attempted to march toward the Grand Palace to hand over a petition seeking royal reforms to the head of the Privy Council, the king's advisers, but were blocked by police barricades. One of them, Panusaya, was allowed to deliver the petition, which was addressed to the king. It was received by a police official, who promised to forward it to the council.

Just before the rally ended, Parit called for a general strike on Oct. 14, the anniversary of a popular student uprising in 1973 that ended a military dictatorship after dozens were killed by police. He also called for another protest Thursday outside parliament to follow up on their demands.

Organizers had predicted that as many as 50,000 people would take part in the weekend protest, but Associated Press reporters estimated that around 20,000 were present by Saturday evening.

Tyrell Haberkorn, a Thai studies scholar at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, said that by holding their protest at Sanam Luang, a longtime "site of recreation and protest for the people, taken over in recent years by the monarchy," the protesters "have won a significant victory."

"Their resounding message is that Sanam Luang, and the country, belong to the people," he said.

The crowd were a disparate batch. They included an LGBTQ contingent waving iconic rainbow banners while red flags sprouted across the area, representing Thailand's Red Shirt political movement, which battled the country's military in Bangkok's streets 10 years ago.

There were skits and music, and speakers gave fiery speeches late Saturday accusing the government of incompetence, corruption in the military and failing to protect women's rights. At least 8,000 police officers were reportedly deployed for the event.

"The people who came here today came here peacefully and are really calling for democracy," said Panupong Jadnok, one of the protest leaders.

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Their core demands were the dissolution of parliament with fresh elections, a new constitution and an end to intimidation of political activists.

They believe that Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha, who as army commander led a 2014 coup toppling an elected government, was returned to power unfairly in last year's general election because the laws had been changed to favor a pro-military party. Protesters say a constitution promulgated under military rule is undemocratic.

The students are too young to have been caught up in the sometimes violent partisan battles that roiled Thailand a decade ago, said Kevin Hewison, a University of North Carolina professor emeritus and a veteran Thai studies scholar.

"What the regime and its supporters see is relatively well-off kids turned against them and this confounds them," he said.

The appearance of the Red Shirts, while boosting the protest numbers, links the new movement to mostly poor rural Thais, supporters of former populist billionaire Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, who was ousted in a 2006 coup. Thaksin was opposed by the country's traditional royalist establishment.

The sometimes violent struggle between Thaksin's supporters and the conservative foes left Thai society polarized. Thaksin, who now lives in exile, noted on Twitter on Saturday that it was the anniversary of his fall from power and posed the rhetorical question of how the nation had fared since then.

"If we had a good government, a democratic government, our politics, our education and our healthcare system would be better than this," said protester Amorn Panurang. "This is our dream. And we hope that our dream will come true."

Arrests for earlier actions on charges including sedition have failed to faze the young activists. They had been denied permission to enter the Thammasat University campus and Sanam Luang on Saturday, but when they pushed, the authorities retreated, even though police warned them that they were breaking the law.

The Latest: Madrid protesters decry new virus restrictions

By The Associated Press undefined

MADRID — Spaniards are protesting in Madrid against the handling of the coronavirus pandemic by the city's regional head, who has placed new restrictions on neighborhoods with the highest contagion rates.

Wearing face masks and trying to maintain social distancing, protestors clapped in unison while shouting for regional President Isabel Díaz Ayuso to step down. The protesters gathered at noon Sunday around the city, making it difficult to estimate the size of the protest.

In the Vallecas neighborhood, protesters chanted "For everyone or no one!" in a criticism of the restrictions Díaz Ayuso announced Friday for some of the poorest areas of Madrid where local authorities say the virus is spreading the fastest.

The restrictions affect around 860,000 people who won't be able to leave their neighborhoods except for work, study or a medical appointment. Parks in the area are closed and shops and restaurants have to limit occupancy to 50%.

Spain is struggling to contain a second wave of the virus, which has killed at least 30,400 people according to the Spanish Health Ministry. Madrid's rate of transmission is more than double the national average, which already leads European contagion charts.

HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE VIRUS OUTBREAK

- Sweden seems to be avoiding second wave of infections hitting other European nations
- Virus measures targeted by protesters despite case spikes
- Director of the University of Colorado's football operations cited for violating coronavirus health orders after a team practice involved 108 people on a mountain hike.
- Police in London clashed with protesters at a rally against coronavirus restrictions, even as the mayor warned that it was "increasingly likely" that the British capital would soon need to introduce tighter rules

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to curb a sharp rise in infections.

— The official Oktoberfest is canceled in Munich, so 50 of the German city's beer halls are hosting their own, smaller parties conforming to coronavirus guidelines.

— The pandemic retools diplomacy as world leaders gather virtually

Follow AP's pandemic coverage at <http://apnews.com/VirusOutbreak> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

HERE'S WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING:

LONDON — Britain's government will fine people who refuse an order to self-isolate up to 10,000 pounds (\$13,000) as the country sees a sharp surge in coronavirus infections.

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Health officials say the downward trend is a result of stringent social distancing rules imposed on the densely populated Seoul metropolitan area. Those rules were recently relaxed.

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The increase followed the state Department of Health Service's recent changing of its case-counting methodology to adopt an updated national standard that includes "probable" results from less-accurate antigen testing.

The counting change resulted in big bulges of additional cases Thursday and Friday as the department updated its records to include more than 1,300 probable cases from September and previous months.

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Public health officials said in their weekly monitoring report that Italy's seven-week uptick in cases represented a "slow and progressive worsening of the outbreak." However, it's not as bad as in other European countries where new daily cases have exceeded 10,000.

The Latest: Madrid protesters decry new virus restrictions

By The Associated Press undefined

MADRID — Spaniards are protesting in Madrid against the handling of the coronavirus pandemic by the city's regional head, who has placed new restrictions on neighborhoods with the highest contagion rates.

Wearing face masks and trying to maintain social distancing, protestors clapped in unison while shouting for regional President Isabel Díaz Ayuso to step down. The protesters gathered at noon Sunday around the city, making it difficult to estimate the size of the protest.

In the Vallecas neighborhood, protesters chanted "For everyone or no one!" in a criticism of the restrictions Díaz Ayuso announced Friday for some of the poorest areas of Madrid where local authorities say

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the virus is spreading the fastest.

The restrictions affect around 860,000 people who won't be able to leave their neighborhoods except for work, study or a medical appointment. Parks in the area are closed and shops and restaurants have to limit occupancy to 50%,

Spain is struggling to contain a second wave of the virus, which has killed at least 30,400 people according to the Spanish Health Ministry. Madrid's rate of transmission is more than double the national average, which already leads European contagion charts.

HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE VIRUS OUTBREAK

- Sweden seems to be avoiding second wave of infections hitting other European nations
- Virus measures targeted by protesters despite case spikes
- Director of the University of Colorado's football operations cited for violating coronavirus health orders after a team practice involved 108 people on a mountain hike.
- Police in London clashed with protesters at a rally against coronavirus restrictions, even as the mayor warned that it was "increasingly likely" that the British capital would soon need to introduce tighter rules to curb a sharp rise in infections.
- The official Oktoberfest is canceled in Munich, so 50 of the German city's beer halls are hosting their own, smaller parties conforming to coronavirus guidelines.
- The pandemic retools diplomacy as world leaders gather virtually

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Tropical Storm Beta meandering toward Texas, Louisiana

By KEN MILLER Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — Tropical Storm Beta on Sunday was making a slow crawl to the shores of Texas and Louisiana, casting worries about heavy rain, flooding and storm surge across the Gulf Coast.

Beta was one of three named storms whirling in the Atlantic basin during an exceptionally busy hurricane season. If the system makes landfall in Texas — which forecasters predict it will sometime Monday — it would be the ninth named storm to make landfall in the continental U.S. in 2020. Colorado State hurricane researcher Phil Klotzbach said that would tie a record set in 1916.

Coastal communities began preparing for Beta over the weekend, with both the city of Galveston and Galveston County on Saturday issued voluntary evacuation orders. The city of Seabrook to the north of Galveston did, too.

Mayor Pro Tem Craig Brown said in a statement that high tides and up to 10 inches (25 centimeters) of expected rainfall would leave roads impassable, especially along the city's west end and low-lying areas.

County Judge Mark Henry said during a Saturday news conference that his concern is also based on rising waters creating a storm surge and that a mandatory evacuation is not expected.

"If you can survive in your home for three or four days without power and electricity, which we're not even sure that's going to happen, you're OK," Henry said. "If it's uncomfortable or you need life support equipment, maybe go somewhere else."

Beta was brewing in the Gulf of Mexico, 205 miles (355 kilometers) southeast of Galveston, Texas, the U.S. National Hurricane Center said Sunday morning. The storm had maximum sustained winds at 60 mph (95 kph) and was moving west-northwest at 3 mph (6 kph).

Little change in strength was expected as the system approaches Texas, forecasters said. Earlier predictions showed Beta could reach hurricane strength before making landfall.

A tropical storm warning was in effect from Port Aransas, Texas, to Morgan City, Louisiana. A hurricane watch, a tropical storm watch and a storm surge watch were all discontinued Sunday morning.

In Lake Charles, Louisiana, where thousands of people remain without power more than three weeks after Hurricane Laura slammed into the coast, there are concerns that Beta could super-soak the region once again. Up to 20 inches of rain (51 centimeters) is possible in some parts of the area, Donald Jones, a National Weather Service meteorologist based in Lake Charles, said in a Saturday briefing.

"A lot of people have been saying, 'Is this going to be like Harvey? Is this going to be like Imelda?'" Jones said. "We're not talking about rainfall totals yet that are on the orders of magnitude that we saw with that." Imelda, which struck southeast Texas in 2019, was one of the wettest cyclones on record. Harvey — which dumped more than 50 inches (127 centimeters) of rain on Houston in 2017.

However, if the storm ends up moving a bit slower than what's being forecast now, rainfall totals could be even higher than 20 inches, Jones said.

"Harvey was a very specific and unique event, but we are talking about the same idea in terms of very heavy, heavy rainfall," he said.

Forecasters were predicting up to 4 feet (1.2 meters) of storm surge from Port Aransas, Texas, to Rockefeller Wildlife Refuge, Louisiana. Strong winds, and life-threatening surf and rip current conditions were also expected with the storm.

Forecasters ran out of traditional storm names on Friday, forcing the use of the Greek alphabet for only the second time since the 1950s.

Meanwhile, Hurricane Teddy remained a powerful hurricane Sunday, with maximum sustained winds

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at 115 mph (185 kph) and moving northwest at 12 mph (19 kph). Teddy was centered 340 miles (550 kilometers) south-southeast of Bermuda less than a week after Hurricane Paulette made landfall in the wealthy British territory.

A tropical storm warning was in effect for Bermuda. Large swells from Teddy were impacting the Lesser Antilles, the Greater Antilles, the Bahamas, Bermuda, the U.S. East Coast and Atlantic Canada, forecasters said.

Tropical Storm Wilfred was still at sea but expected to dissipate by Tuesday.

Parts of the Alabama coast and Florida Panhandle were still reeling from the effects of Hurricane Sally, which roared ashore on Wednesday. At least two deaths were blamed on the system. Roughly 82,300 were still without power in the Florida Panhandle on Saturday. Gulf Power said 95% of its customers in hardest hit Escambia and Santa Rosa counties will have power restored by the end of the day Tuesday.

Meanwhile, residents in Springfield were warned to avoid contact with standing water after 5,000 gallons (about 19,000 liters) of raw sewage spilled into Lake Martin, according to county health officials.

The Salvation Army was distributing roughly 10,000 meals Saturday at 10 locations throughout the Panhandle.

AP reporters Kelli Kennedy in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and Jeff Martin in Marietta, Georgia, contributed to this report.

Sweden spared surge of virus cases but many questions remain

By DAVID KEYTON Associated Press

STOCKHOLM (AP) — A train pulls into the Odenplan subway station in central Stockholm, where morning commuters without masks get off or board before settling in to read their smartphones.

Whether on trains or trams, in supermarkets or shopping malls — places where face masks are commonly worn in much of the world — Swedes go about their lives without them.

When most of Europe locked down their populations early in the pandemic by closing schools, restaurants, gyms and even borders, Swedes kept enjoying many freedoms.

The relatively low-key strategy captured the world's attention, but at the same time it coincided with a per capita death rate that was much higher than in other Nordic countries.

Now, as infection numbers surge again in much of Europe, the country of 10 million people has some of the lowest numbers of new coronavirus cases -- and only 14 virus patients in intensive care.

Whether Sweden's strategy is succeeding, however, is still very uncertain.

Its health authorities, and in particular chief epidemiologist Dr. Anders Tegnell, keep repeating a familiar warning: It's too early to tell, and all countries are in a different phase of the pandemic.

That has not stopped a World Health Organization Europe official from saying the continent could learn broader lessons from Sweden that could help the virus battle elsewhere.

"We must recognize that Sweden, at the moment, has avoided the increase that has been seen in some of the other countries in western Europe," WHO Europe's senior emergency officer, Catherine Smallwood, said Thursday. "I think there are lessons for that. We will be very keen on working and hearing more from the Swedish approach."

According to the European Center for Disease Control, Sweden has reported 30.3 new COVID-19 cases per 100,000 inhabitants in the last 14 days, compared with 292.2 in Spain, 172.1 in France, 61.8 in the U.K. and 69.2 in Denmark, all of which imposed strict lockdowns early in the pandemic.

Overall, Sweden has 88,237 reported infections and 5,864 fatalities from the virus, or 57.5 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants since the beginning of the crisis.

The way Sweden's strategy was viewed outside the country seems to depend largely on what stage of the pandemic the observer was experiencing at the time. Initially, many abroad were incredulous at images of Swedes dining with friends in restaurants or sipping cocktails on the Stockholm waterfront. Some were envious that Swedish businesses were not forced to close.

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Then came shock as the virus ripped through the country's nursing homes and hospices.

By mid-April, more than 100 deaths were reported each day in Sweden, while mortality rates were falling elsewhere in Europe.

Today, as fears of a second wave grow across Europe, it's fashionable to praise Sweden, with reporters from France, the U.K. and elsewhere traveling to Stockholm to ask about its success.

But a Swedish government commission investigating the handling of the pandemic will, undoubtedly, have hard questions to answer: Did authorities wait too long to limit access to nursing homes, where about half of the deaths occurred? Were they too slow to provide personal protective equipment to staff in those homes when shortcomings in the elderly care sector had long been known? Why did it take so long to set up wide-scale testing?

Tegnell also refuses to rule out a second wave of coronavirus infections in Sweden. A particular concern is the return of students to high schools for the first time since March.

"We need to be very careful and find the first sign that something is going on so that we can do as much as possible to prevent it from escalating," he told The Associated Press.

Localized outbreaks are expected, but rather than fight them with nationwide rules, officials plan to use targeted actions based on testing, contact-tracing and isolating patients rapidly.

"It's very important that we have quick and local response to hit down the virus without making restrictions for the whole country," Health Minister Lena Hallengren said last week.

From the beginning, health officials argued that Sweden was pursuing a sustainable approach toward the virus that the population could adopt — for years, if necessary. "This is a marathon, not a sprint," became a slogan repeated by ministers at every opportunity, given that neither a vaccine nor a cure yet exist.

While the rest of the world watched with envy at the freedoms that Swedes enjoyed amid lockdowns elsewhere, there were not as many as people have assumed. Gatherings were capped at 50, and congregating at bars was banned.

Most of the changes involved voluntary actions by citizens, rather than rules imposed by the government.

This trust given to the population to shoulder personal responsibility in the pandemic puts Sweden at odds with most other countries that used coercive measures such as fines to force compliance.

This is often attributed to a Swedish model of governance, where large public authorities comprised of experts develop and recommend measures that the smaller ministries are expected to follow. In other words, the people trust the experts and scientists to develop reasonable policies, and the government trusts the people to follow the guidelines.

Swedes were asked to work from home when possible and maintain a social distance, and most willingly complied. While people now ride public transportation without masks, there are also far fewer people commuting than before.

Unlike most European countries that have mandated wearing face masks in public spaces, Sweden does not recommend their broad use, and people largely follow that recommendation.

Health officials say face masks used outside health care facilities by untrained personnel can provide a false sense of safety that could see sick people leave home and ignore social distancing. Instead, they believe simple but nonnegotiable guidelines provide clear rules that can stay in place for long periods of time: staying home when showing symptoms of COVID-19, maintaining good hand hygiene and keeping social distancing.

In a country the size of California with only a quarter of that state's population of 41 million, and with low levels of transmission, most Swedes believe wearing masks makes little sense.

Carol Rosengard, 61, who runs a center for disabled youth, has seen people wear masks improperly or take them off to smoke a cigarette or drink water.

"That's not how they should be handled," Rosengard said, explaining her support for not imposing face mask rules on the population.

That view is echoed by Hallengren, the health minister, who doesn't totally dismiss the effectiveness of masks and sees their usefulness in cases of severe local outbreaks. At the same time, she rejects blanket rules for the entire country.

"People will not wear masks for years," she said.

Associated Press reporters Jan M. Olsen in Copenhagen, Denmark, and Vanessa Gera in Warsaw, Poland, contributed.

Follow AP pandemic coverage at <http://apnews.com/VirusOutbreak> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

Desert communities told to evacuate as winds stoke flames

By MARCIO JOSE SANCHEZ and CHRISTOPHER WEBER Associated Press

JUNIPER HILLS, Calif. (AP) — Strong winds stoked a wildfire burning for nearly two weeks in mountains northeast of Los Angeles, prompting authorities to issue new evacuation orders for desert communities that lost some homes a day earlier.

Meanwhile, officials were investigating the death of a firefighter on the lines of another Southern California wildfire that erupted earlier this month from a smoke-generating pyrotechnic device used by a couple to reveal their baby's gender.

The death occurred Thursday in San Bernardino National Forest as crews battled the El Dorado Fire about 75 miles (120 kilometers) east of Los Angeles, the U.S. Forest Service said in a statement.

In northern Los Angeles County, firefighters focused on protecting homes Saturday as increasingly erratic winds pushed the Bobcat Fire toward foothill communities in the Antelope Valley after churning all the way across the San Gabriel Mountains. An evacuation order was issued Saturday for all residents in that zone as the fire burned toward Wrightwood, a mountain community of 4,000, said fire spokesman Andrew Mitchell.

The fire grew to 142 square miles (368 square kilometers) on Saturday when winds pushed the flames into Juniper Hills.

Some residents fled as blowing embers sparked spot fires, hitting some homes but sparing others. Bridget Lensing feared her family's house was lost on Friday after seeing on Twitter that a neighbor's house three doors down went up in flames.

The house stood when she made her way back Saturday afternoon but her neighbors' houses in the remote community were burned to the ground.

"Everything around us is gone," she said.

The extent of the destruction in the area about 50 miles (80 kilometers) northeast of downtown LA wasn't immediately clear. But, Los Angeles County park officials said the blaze destroyed the nature center at Devil's Punchbowl Natural Area, a geological wonder that attracts some 130,000 visitors per year.

No injuries were reported.

On the south side of the Bobcat Fire, firefighters continued to protect Mount Wilson, which overlooks greater Los Angeles and has a historic observatory founded more than a century ago and numerous broadcast antennas serving Southern California.

The fire that started Sept. 6 had already doubled in size over the last week. It is 15% contained.

Officials said the fire has been challenging because it is burning in areas that have not burned in decades, and because the firestorms across California have limited resources. There were about 1,660 firefighters on the lines.

The name of the firefighter killed in the nearby El Dorado Fire was being withheld until family members are notified. The body was escorted down the mountain in a procession of first-responder vehicles. No other information was released about the circumstances of the death.

A statement from the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, or Cal Fire, said it was the 26th death involving wildfires besieging the state.

A new blaze sparked by a vehicle that caught fire was growing in wilderness outside Palm Springs.

To the north, a fire burning for nearly a month in Sequoia National Forest roared to life again Friday and

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prompted evacuation orders for the central California mountain communities of Silver City and Mineral King.

More than 7,900 wildfires have burned more than 5,468 square miles (14,164 square kilometers) in California this year, including many since a mid-August barrage of dry lightning ignited parched vegetation.

The El Dorado Fire has burned more than 34 square miles (89 square kilometers) and was 59% contained, with 10 buildings destroyed and six damaged.

Cal Fire said earlier this month that the El Dorado Fire was ignited Sept. 5 when a couple, their young children and someone there to record video staged the baby gender reveal at El Dorado Ranch Park at the foot of the San Bernardino Mountains.

The device was set off in a field and quickly ignited dry grass. The couple frantically tried to use bottled water to extinguish the flames and called 911.

Authorities have not released the identities of the couple, who could face criminal charges and be held liable for the cost of fighting the fire.

Throughout the Northwest, firefighters welcomed cooler weather and rain, as well as much-improved air quality and visibility that would allow some to survey fire activity with drones.

Associated Press writer John Antczak in Los Angeles and Daisy Nguyen in San Francisco contributed to this report.

Trump promises to replace Ginsburg with a woman - and soon

By JONATHAN LEMIRE, LISA MASCARO and STEVE PEOPLES Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump is promising to put forth a female nominee in the coming week to fill the Supreme Court vacancy created by the death of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, pushing the Republican-controlled Senate to consider the pick without delay.

Taking the stage Saturday night at a North Carolina rally to chants of "Fill that seat," the president said he would nominate his selection despite Democrats' objections. And, after conducting what he joked was a "very scientific poll" of the Fayetteville crowd as to whether supporters wanted a man or a woman, he declared the choice would be "a very talented, very brilliant woman."

He added that he did not yet know whom he would choose.

"We win an election and those are the consequences," said the president, who then seemed to signal that he'd be willing to accept a vote on his nominee during the lame-duck period after the election. "We have a lot of time. We have plenty of time. We're talking about January 20th."

But one Republican senator had already broken ranks. Maine's Susan Collins, who is in a tough reelection battle, said earlier Saturday that she believed replacing Ginsburg should be the decision of the president who is elected Nov. 3. Three more defections from the GOP ranks would be needed to stop Trump's nominee from joining the court.

At stake is a seat held by a justice who was a champion of women's rights and spent her final years on the bench as the unquestioned leader of the court's liberal wing. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky. vowed to call a vote for Trump's nominee, but Democrats countered that Republicans should follow the precedent that GOP legislators set in 2016 by refusing to consider a Supreme Court choice in the run-up to an election.

The impending clash over the vacant seat — when to fill it and with whom — scrambles the stretch run of a presidential race for a nation already reeling from the pandemic that has killed nearly 200,000 people, left millions unemployed and heightened partisan tensions and anger.

McConnell pledged to Trump in a phone call Friday night to bring the choice to a vote though he has not said if it would be before the election.

Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden said any selection should come after Nov. 3. "Voters should pick the president and the president should pick the justice to consider," he said. Biden has promised to nominate a Black woman to the high court if given the chance, but he has said he will not release names of possible nominees before the election.

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Trump this month added 20 more names to his roster of potential court nominees, and aides in recent days have focused on a short list heavy on female candidates, according to four White House aides and officials close to the process. They spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to publicly discuss private conversations.

Those under close consideration for the high court include three women who are federal appeals court judges: Amy Coney Barrett, beloved among conservatives and an early favorite; Barbara Lagoa, who is Hispanic and comes from the battleground state of Florida; and Allison Jones Rushing, who clerked for Justice Clarence Thomas and for Neil Gorsuch, when the current Trump-appointed justice was an appeals court judge.

At least one man, appeals court Judge Amul Thapar, has also been under consideration. A McConnell ally from Kentucky, he has been screened by Trump's team for past openings and he would be the first Asian American on the high court.

McConnell, who sets the calendar in the Senate and has made judicial appointments his priority, declared unequivocally in a statement that Trump's nominee would receive a confirmation vote. In 2016, McConnell refused to consider President Barack Obama's nominee months before the election, eventually preventing a vote on Judge Merrick Garland.

Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer of New York convened a conference call with Democratic senators at midday Saturday, according to a person on the private call who was not authorized to discuss it publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity. He told senators the "No. 1 goal" must be to communicate the stakes of the confirmation vote.

Schumer also warned that if Republicans push through the nominee, "nothing is off the table" for Senate rules changes to come, the person said.

Ginsburg's death seemed certain to stoke enthusiasm in both political parties as the election could now be viewed as referendum on the high court's decisions, including the future of abortion rights. Democrats raised more than \$71 million in the hours after Ginsburg's death, indicating her passing has already galvanized the party's base.

Hundreds of mourners gathered for a second night outside the Supreme Court building, holding candles in honor of Ginsburg and listening to a succession of testimonies and rallying speeches. Among the speakers was Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., who eulogized Ginsburg as "an icon, a trailblazer and a friend" and accused McConnell of seeking to cynically hijack the confirmation process.

"Today Mitch McConnell and his henchmen think they can ram through a Supreme Court justice only 45 days before the election," Warren said. "What Mitch McConnell doesn't understand is that the fight has just begun."

A confirmation vote in the Senate is not guaranteed, even with a Republican majority.

McConnell has launched a risky, unprecedented strategy. It could motivate conservative voters to rally behind Trump and GOP senators or it could push away moderates who prefer to see the Senate stick to norms or are fearful of a right-leaning court stripping away women's right to choose an abortion.

Typically, it takes several months to vet and hold hearings on a Supreme Court nominee, and time is short before November. Key senators may be reluctant to cast votes so close to the election. With a slim GOP majority, 53 seats in the 100-member chamber, Trump's choice could afford to lose only a few.

McConnell did not specify the timing. But trying for confirmation in a lame-duck session after the Nov. 3 election, if Trump had lost to Biden or Republicans had lost the Senate, would carry further political complications.

Democrats immediately denounced McConnell's move as hypocritical, pointing out that he refused to call hearings for Garland 237 days before the 2016 election. The 2020 election is 46 days away.

The average number of days to confirm a justice, according to the Congressional Research Service, is 69, which would be after the election. But some Republicans quickly noted that Ginsburg was confirmed in just 42 days. Obama waited more than a month to nominate Garland after Justice Antonin Scalia died in February 2016.

John Fischetti, who waited in line more than two hours to enter Trump's Fayetteville rally, said replacing

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Ginsburg would inflame tensions but was within the president's rights.

"I would assume it would make everyone more energized," Fischetti said of the political repercussions. "Trump's people want him to always press forward."

Four GOP defections could defeat a nomination, while a tie vote could be broken by Vice President Mike Pence. After Collins' decision, focus grew on Sens. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska and Mitt Romney of Utah, who have been critical of Trump and protective of the institution of the Senate.

And because the Arizona Senate race is a special election, that seat could be filled as early as Nov. 30 — which would narrow the window for McConnell if the Democratic candidate, Mark Kelly, wins.

The next pick could shape important decisions beyond abortion rights, including any legal challenges that may stem from the 2020 election. In the interim, if the court were to take cases with eight justices, 4-4 ties would revert the decision to a lower court; for instance, the Affordable Care Act could then be struck down by a lower Texas court.

Lemire reported from New York. Peoples reported from Montclair, New Jersey. Additional reporting by Darlene Superville, Alexandra Jaffe and Ashraf Khalil in Washington and Kevin Freking and Bryan Anderson in Fayetteville, North Carolina.

Oops, says Emmy: 'This Is Us' actor gets award after mix-up

By LYNN ELBER AP Television Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — In a virtual Emmys version of the wrong-winner Oscars gaffe, Ron Cephas Jones' guest actor award for "This Is Us" was announced for another nominee, Jason Bateman.

The error occurred during Saturday's online creative arts Emmys, precursor to Sunday's main ceremony and the culmination of a week of events honoring technical and other achievements.

Saturday's show on FXX, however, was the only one of the creative arts presentations to be televised, making the error more glaring. In a voice-over announcement, Bateman was declared the winner for his guest appearance on HBO's "The Outsider," while the screen displayed Jones' name.

The confusion wasn't addressed until after a commercial break, with an on-screen message that read, "Our apologies, an incorrect winner has been announced. We're fixing it now," followed by the repeated display of Jones' name but without an announcement.

There was no immediate explanation for the mistake.

Jones was good-natured about the mistake when he fielded questions virtually afterward, focused instead on his second Emmy for "This Is Us" and especially on his daughter, actor-singer Jasmine Cephas Jones.

He expressed delight when learning that the pair made Emmy history as the first father and daughter to win in the same year. Her short-form series acting trophy came earlier this week for Quibi's "#FreeRayshawn."

"My heart just explodes when I think about her and watch her and the success that she's had," he said.

Bateman has another shot Sunday, when he is competing for the best actor honors for "Ozark." The ABC telecast (8 p.m. EDT) will be hosted by Jimmy Kimmel.

Given the virtual event's lack of on-stage presenters and a theater audience, the error was far less dramatic than the 2017 Oscars mix-up, in which Warren Beatty and Faye Dunaway mistakenly announced "La La Land" as the best picture instead of winner "Moonlight."

But the Emmys misstep represented a cautionary note for Sunday's show, which also will be virtual because of the pandemic but has ambitious plans. More than 100 cameras are being deployed to nominees at home and elsewhere so winners can accept their award in real time.

Other winners Saturday included Eddie Murphy, whose return to "Saturday Night Live" after more than three decades earned the star his first Emmy Award, for guest comedy series actor.

Maya Rudolph claimed the category's guest actress trophy for her portrayal of Sen. Kamala Harris, two days after claiming a voice-over performance Emmy for "Big Mouth."

Cherry Jones won the guest drama actress trophy for "Succession."

Rudolph, also nominated in the comedy category for her guest role on "The Good Place," paid tribute to Ruth Bader Ginsburg after the telecast. The robe worn by Rudolph's judge character was modeled on that of the Supreme Court associate justice, who died Friday.

"When you think of a judge, when you think of all-knowing, when you think of powerful, when you think of all good, yeah, we modeled her robe after RBG, so that was pretty cool," Rudolph said.

Tropical Storm Beta spurs hurricane worries for Texas

By KEN MILLER Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — An exceptionally busy Atlantic hurricane season was churning along Saturday as the Texas coast prepared for a tropical storm that could strengthen into a hurricane before breaching its shores in the week ahead.

Both the city of Galveston and Galveston County on Saturday issued voluntary evacuation orders ahead of Tropical Storm Beta, as did the city of Seabrook to the north of Galveston.

Mayor Pro Tem Craig Brown said in a statement that high tides and up to 10 inches (25 centimeters) of expected rainfall would leave roads impassable, especially along the city's west end and low-lying areas.

County Judge Mark Henry said during a Saturday news conference that his concern is also based on rising waters creating a storm surge and that a mandatory evacuation is not expected.

"If you can survive in your home for three or four days without power and electricity, which we're not even sure that's going to happen, you're OK," Henry said. "If it's uncomfortable or you need life support equipment, maybe go somewhere else."

Tropical Storm Beta was brewing in the Gulf of Mexico, 235 miles (375 kilometers) southeast of Galveston, Texas, the U.S. National Hurricane Center said.

The system could approach hurricane strength as it approaches Texas on Monday, officials said. Forecasters issued a tropical storm warning from Port Aransas, Texas, to Morgan City, Louisiana. A storm surge warning was issued from Port Aransas, Texas, to Rockefeller Wildlife Refuge, Louisiana.

If Beta makes landfall in Texas, it would be the ninth named storm to make landfall in the continental U.S. in 2020, tying a record set in 1916, according to Colorado State University hurricane researcher Phil Klotzbach.

In Lake Charles, Louisiana, where thousands of people remain without power more than three weeks after Hurricane Laura slammed into the coast, there are concerns that Beta could super-soak the region once again. Up to 20 inches of rain (15 centimeters) is possible in some parts of the area, Donald Jones, a National Weather Service meteorologist based in Lake Charles, said in a Saturday briefing.

"A lot of people have been saying, 'Is this going to be like Harvey? Is this going to be like Imelda?'" Jones said. "We're not talking about rainfall totals yet that are on the orders of magnitude that we saw with that." Imelda, which struck southeast Texas in 2019, was one of the wettest cyclones on record. Harvey — which dumped more than 50 inches (127 centimeters) of rain on Houston in 2017.

However, if the storm ends up moving a bit slower than what's being forecast now, rainfall totals could be even higher than 20 inches, Jones said.

"Harvey was a very specific and unique event, but we are talking about the same idea in terms of very heavy, heavy rainfall," he said.

Beta had maximum sustained winds at 60 mph (95 kph) and was moving north-northeast at 2 mph (4 kph) Saturday night.

Forecasters were predicting up to 4 feet (1.2 meters) of storm surge along parts of the Texas coast that included Baffin Bay, Corpus Christi Bay, Galveston Bay and more. Wind, heavy rainfall and life-threatening surf and rip current conditions were also expected with the storm.

Forecasters ran out of traditional storm names on Friday, forcing the use of the Greek alphabet for only the second time since the 1950s.

Meanwhile, Hurricane Teddy remained a powerful hurricane Saturday, with maximum sustained winds at 115 mph (185 kph) and moving northwest at 13 mph (20 kph). Teddy was centered 405 miles (655

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kilometers) south-southeast of Bermuda less than a week after Hurricane Paulette made landfall in the wealthy British territory.

A tropical storm warning was in effect for Bermuda. Large swells from Teddy were forecast to impact the Lesser Antilles, the Greater Antilles, the Bahamas and Bermuda, and were expected to impact the U.S. East Coast.

Parts of the Alabama coast and Florida Panhandle were still reeling from the effects of Hurricane Sally, which roared ashore on Wednesday. At least two deaths were blamed on the system. Roughly 82,300 were still without power in the Florida Panhandle on Saturday. Gulf Power said 95% of its customers in hardest hit Escambia and Santa Rosa counties will have power restored by the end of the day Tuesday.

Meanwhile, residents in Springfield were warned to avoid contact with standing water after 5,000 gallons (about 19,000 liters) of raw sewage spilled into Lake Martin, according to county health officials.

The Salvation Army was distributing roughly 10,000 meals Saturday at 10 locations throughout the Panhandle.

AP reporters Kelli Kennedy in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and Jeff Martin in Marietta, Georgia, contributed to this report.

This story has been corrected to show that the Salvation Army was distributing about 10,000 meals at 10 locations, not 9,000 meals at nine locations.

Tigers manager Gardenhire announces immediate retirement

By NOAH TRISTER AP Baseball Writer

DETROIT (AP) — Ron Gardenhire mostly maintained his jovial demeanor this season. As recently as Friday night, he was needling a reporter while discussing a strategic decision from the late innings.

Less than 24 hours later, Gardenhire announced his retirement. This year was taking more of a toll on the 62-year-old Detroit Tigers manager than he'd necessarily let on.

As much as he enjoyed managing, Gardenhire valued his health more.

"It's been wonderful here, but I also know I have to take care of myself," said Gardenhire, who was nearing the end of his third season with the Tigers. "When you come to the ballpark, and you're stressed out all day, and your hands are shaking, that's not fun. I've got grandbabies, I've got kids that I need to take care of, and my wife."

Gardenhire's announcement came in an abruptly scheduled video conference about an hour before Saturday night's game against Cleveland. General manager Al Avila said he made a routine visit to Gardenhire's office Saturday, when the manager told him about the decision.

Gardenhire, who has battled cancer and diabetes, expressed some unease about the coronavirus back in June before the season began. He also recently missed a couple games because of stomach issues.

"This is tough. It's a tough day for me. Didn't expect it, tell you the truth, when I walked in," Gardenhire said. "But I just know how I've been feeling lately, and I expressed that to Al, and elected to just go ahead and step down."

A message of "Thank you, Gardy" was posted on the scoreboard at Comerica Park.

"On behalf of all of us with the Detroit Tigers, congratulations to Ron Gardenhire on a tremendous managerial career," Tigers CEO Christopher Ilitch said in a statement. "One of the best baseball men around, we're fortunate to have had Gardy lead our team for the past three seasons, and during this rebuilding period. He has done a great job in shaping the future successes I know our organization will see."

Bench coach Lloyd McClendon is taking over as manager for the rest of the season, which is scheduled to end Sept. 27. Detroit is 22-29 after beating the Indians 5-2 on Saturday. That was the 500th managerial victory for McClendon, who had stints with Pittsburgh and Seattle.

McClendon, who said after the game he'd be interested in the Detroit opening beyond this season, spoke a bit about the rigors of 2020 and how they might have affected Gardenhire.

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"I know things were weighing on him heavily, and it was a tough grind," McClendon said. "This has been a very, very emotional season for all of us in a lot of different ways — with the pandemic and all the other things that are going on in this country, it's been really, really tough. The 60-game schedule in a lot of ways has seemed like a 175-game schedule."

Gardenhire previously had a 13-year run with the Minnesota Twins that included six AL Central titles.

"I'd like to congratulate Gardy on one of the best managerial careers, really in major league baseball history," Avila said. "His leadership and hard work over the last three seasons has put us in a position to get closer to our goal of bringing back winning baseball to Detroit."

Gardenhire had to oversee a significant rebuild with the Tigers that included a 114-loss season in 2019.

"He took us through the toughest two years of the transition. This year, this third season, probably as tough as any, just because of the pandemic," Avila said. "The COVID-19 over your head, all the new changes ... the stress level was through the roof."

Gardenhire's surprise retirement came as the Indians were getting ready to play their 38th game without their manager, Terry Francona, who has been sidelined after undergoing surgery for a gastrointestinal issue and some blood clotting complications which followed the procedure.

The 61-year-old Francona, who is in his eighth year with Cleveland, still hopes to return before this season ends.

Whoever takes over the Detroit managerial job will be tasked with guiding the team through an important stage in its process. Pitching prospects Casey Mize and Tarik Skubal had a chance to get some experience in the majors this year, and other young players will be crucial over the next couple seasons.

Gardenhire took over for longtime Twins manager Tom Kelly and managed Minnesota from 2002-14, going 1,068-1,039. Minnesota won the division six times in his first nine seasons at the helm, and he was American League Manager of the Year in 2010.

He was a bench coach for the Arizona Diamondbacks before returning to the AL Central with the Tigers for the 2018 season. Detroit was 132-241 under Gardenhire.

Gardenhire played five seasons in the majors, all with the New York Mets, and was a light-hitting infielder in the 1980s.

"Always, you'll miss baseball," Gardenhire said. "You miss the game, but you miss the people in it, the coaches, the staff here. Those are the tough things, but I'm only a phone call away. ... I won't just go away totally. This is just a moment, I know I have to take care of myself right now and get myself back to where I need to be."

"I appreciate baseball for everything they've given me and my family, and it's been a good career."

Follow Noah Trister at <https://twitter.com/noahtrister>

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AP source: Envelope addressed to White House contained ricin

By MICHAEL BALSAMO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Federal officials intercepted an envelope addressed to the White House that contained the poison ricin, a U.S. law enforcement official told The Associated Press on Saturday.

The letter appeared to have originated in Canada, according to a statement from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, which said it was assisting the FBI.

The letter was intercepted at a government facility that screens mail addressed to the White House and President Donald Trump, the U.S. official said. A preliminary investigation indicated it tested positive for ricin, a poison found naturally in castor beans, the U.S. official said.

The U.S. official was not authorized to discuss the ongoing investigation publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Federal investigators were working to determine where the enveloped originated and who mailed it. The

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FBI, the Secret Service and the U.S. Postal Inspection Service were leading the investigation.

In a statement, the FBI said agents were working to investigate "a suspicious letter received at a U.S. government mail facility" and that there is "no known threat to public safety."

A Navy veteran was arrested in 2018 and confessed to sending envelopes to Trump and members of his administration that contained the substance from which ricin is derived.

Authorities said the man, William Clyde Allen III, sent the envelopes with ground castor beans to the president, FBI Director Christopher Wray, along with then-Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, then-CIA Director Gina Haspel, Adm. John Richardson, who at the time was the Navy's top officer, and then-Air Force Secretary Heather Wilson. The letters were intercepted, and no one was hurt.

In 2014, a Mississippi man was sentenced to 25 years in prison after sending letters dusted with ricin to President Barack Obama and other officials.

Associated Press writer Rob Gillies in Toronto contributed to this report.

Trump pledges woman for court, pushes Senate to move on pick

By JONATHAN LEMIRE, LISA MASCARO and STEVE PEOPLES Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump on Saturday promised to put forth a female nominee in the coming week to fill the Supreme Court vacancy created by the death of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, pushing the Republican-controlled Senate to consider the pick without delay.

Taking the stage at a North Carolina rally to chants of "Fill that seat," the president said he would nominate his selection despite Democrats' objections. And, after conducting what he joked was a "very scientific poll" of the Fayetteville crowd as to whether supporters wanted a man or a woman, he declared the choice would be "a very talented, very brilliant woman."

He added that he did not yet know whom he would choose.

"We win an election and those are the consequences," said the president, who then seemed to signal that he'd be willing to accept a vote on his nominee during the lame duck period after the election. "We have a lot of time. We have plenty of time. We're talking about January 20th."

But one Republican senator already broke ranks. Maine's Susan Collins, who is in a tough reelection battle, said Saturday that she believed replacing Ginsburg should be the decision of the president who is elected Nov. 3. Three more defections from the GOP ranks would be needed to stop Trump's nominee from joining the court.

At stake is a seat held by a justice who was a champion of women's rights and spent her final years on the bench as the unquestioned leader of the court's liberal wing. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky. vowed to call a vote for Trump's nominee, but Democrats countered that Republicans should follow the precedent that GOP legislators set in 2016 by refusing to consider a Supreme Court choice in the run-up to an election.

The impending clash over the vacant seat — when to fill it and with whom — scrambles the stretch run of a presidential race for a nation already reeling from the pandemic that has killed nearly 200,000 people, left millions unemployed and heightened partisan tensions and anger.

McConnell pledged to Trump in a phone call Friday night to bring the choice to a vote though he has not said if it would be before the election. Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden said any selection should come after Nov. 3. "Voters should pick the president and the president should pick the justice to consider," he said.

The president this month added 20 more names to his roster of potential court nominees, and aides in recent days have focused on a short list heavy on female candidates, according to four White House aides and officials close to the process. They spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to publicly discuss private conversations.

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who have been critical of Trump and protective of the institution of the Senate.

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Biden has promised to nominate a Black woman to the high court if given the chance. His campaign reiterated Saturday that it would not release names before the election.

Lemire reported from New York. Peoples reported from Montclair, New Jersey. Additional reporting by Darlene Superville, Alexandra Jaffe and Ashraf Khalil in Washington and Kevin Freking and Bryan Anderson in Fayetteville, North Carolina.

This story has been corrected to show that Biden's campaign says Biden would not release names of potential Supreme Court nominees before the election, not that he would.

Trump backs proposed deal to keep TikTok operating in US

By STAN CHOE AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — President Donald Trump said Saturday he's given his "blessing" to a proposed deal that would see the popular video-sharing app TikTok partner with Oracle and Walmart and form a U.S. company.

Trump has targeted Chinese-owned TikTok for national security and data privacy concerns in the latest flashpoint in the rising tensions between Washington and Beijing. The president's support for a deal comes just a day after the Commerce Department announced restrictions that if put in place could eventually make it nearly impossible for TikTok's legions of younger fans to use the app.

Trump said if completed the deal would create a new company likely to be based in Texas.

"I have given the deal my blessing," he said. "If they get it done, that's great. If they don't, that's OK too."

Trump said the new company will be hiring at least 25,000 people and making a \$5 billion contribution to a fund dedicated to education for Americans. "That's their contribution that I've been asking for," he said.

TikTok said Oracle and Walmart could acquire up to a cumulative 20% stake in the new company in a financing round to be held before an initial public offering of stock, which Walmart said could happen within the next year. Oracle's stake would be 12.5%, and Walmart's would be 7.5%, the companies said in separate statements.

The deal will make Oracle responsible for hosting all TikTok's U.S. user data and securing computer systems to ensure U.S. national security requirements are satisfied. Walmart said it will provide its e-commerce, fulfillment, payments and other services to the new company.

"We are pleased that the proposal by TikTok, Oracle, and Walmart will resolve the security concerns of the U.S. administration and settle questions around TikTok's future in the U.S.," TikTok said in a statement.

Trump has been demanding that the U.S. operations of TikTok be sold to a U.S. company or else be shut down. He's also been targeting WeChat, another Chinese-owned app.

The administration contends that the user data collected by the two apps could be shared with the Chinese government. On Saturday, Trump said the U.S.-based TikTok "will have nothing to do with China." TikTok says it has 100 million U.S. users.

On Friday, the U.S. Commerce Department said it would bar TikTok from U.S. app stores as of late Sunday. Further restrictions that would prevent TikTok from accessing essential internet services in the country would go into effect on Nov. 12. Commerce said Saturday that it will delay the barring of TikTok from U.S. app stores until Sept. 27 at 11:59 p.m.

Commerce is imposing similar restrictions on WeChat, although all of the restrictions on that app are set to go into effect Sunday night at 11:59 p.m.

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Earlier Saturday, WeChat users asked a U.S. judge to block the government's actions, saying they would restrict free speech. WeChat is an all-in-one app with instant-messaging, social media and other communication tools. The U.S. government argued that it is not restricting free speech because WeChat users still "are free to speak on alternative platforms that do not pose a national security threat."

U.S. Magistrate Judge Laurel Beeler asked lawyers for the government and WeChat users whether the prohibitions would cripple WeChat as soon as the clock ticked from Sunday night into Monday morning without a resolution. An attorney for the government said they would likely lead to a "degradation" of WeChat over time.

Judge Beeler did not rule immediately on the motion.

WeChat has millions of U.S. users who rely on the app to stay in touch and conduct business with people and companies in China and around the world. In court filings, the founder of the Mental Health Association for Chinese Communities, who is a U.S. citizen in California, said that the group's primary tool to reach out and provide services to Chinese Americans is WeChat.

"Since many of the Chinese community members we serve are not fluent in English, WeChat is the only online tool that they rely on," Elaine Peng said.

The Trump administration's aggressive tactics are part of its latest attempt to counter the influence of China, a rising economic superpower. Since taking office in 2017, Trump has waged a trade war with China, blocked mergers involving Chinese companies and stifled the business of Chinese firms like Huawei, a maker of phones and telecom equipment.

China-backed hackers, meanwhile, have been blamed for data breaches of U.S. federal databases and the credit agency Equifax, and the Chinese government strictly limits what U.S. tech companies can do in China.

China's ministry of commerce condemned the U.S. moves and urged it to stop what it called bullying behavior. It also said China may take "necessary measures" to protect Chinese companies.

The U.S. Treasury Department said Saturday that TikTok's deal still needs to close with Oracle and Walmart, and it also needs documentation and conditions to be approved by the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States.

That, of course, also leaves the potential for more roller coasters of emotion for TikTok users, such as Haley Hoffman Smith, a 24-year-old who moved to Manhattan this year to pursue her dream of becoming a talk-show host. She said she had just hit 100,000 followers on TikTok and was crushed on Friday to hear it may be headed for a shutdown.

"TikTok is an inextricable part of my dream chasing story," she said, "and to lose it forever would not only be an inconvenient setback, but an absolute heartbreak."

AP Business Writers Tali Arbel, Matt O'Brien and Barbara Ortutay contributed.

McConnell's legacy: Wielding majority power to reshape court

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — It's legacy time for Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell.

Fulfilling the Supreme Court seat left vacant by the death of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg before the fall election is as much about McConnell's goal of securing a conservative majority on the court for decades to come as it is about confirming President Donald Trump's upcoming nominee.

There's no guarantee the Kentucky Republican will succeed. He is about to move ahead with a jarring and politically risky strategy to try to bend his majority in the Senate to accomplish the remarkable. If it works, he will have ushered three justices to the court in four years, a historic feat.

For better or worse, this will be how McConnell's tenure as a Senate leader will be measured.

"Sen. McConnell already has played a huge role in shaping the Supreme Court for decades to come," said Edwin Chemerinsky, dean of the University of California, Berkeley School of Law. "A third confirmation, especially under these circumstances, would truly make this the McConnell Court for a long time to come."

The path for how, exactly, McConnell will make this happen is being set swiftly in Washington. Many

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expect Trump to name his nominee in a matter of days and the Senate to start the confirmation process — condensing a typically monthslong endeavor into a matter of weeks.

Voting in the Senate could happen before the election or it could spill into the lame-duck period after the Nov. 3 vote. Either strategy is a political calculation for McConnell more than a substantive one.

For the longest serving Republican Senate leader in history, the course ahead depends on what is best for the handful of GOP senators who face difficult reelections in November and could make or break McConnell's slim majority. Sen. Susan Collins in Maine wants no vote before the election. Others want swift confirmation.

Conservative voters are expected to be energized by the prospect of a right-leaning court, and McConnell must weigh whether the endangered senators risk alienating them if they shy from a confirmation vote. Or, in their swing states, would the senators like Cory Gardner up for reelection in Colorado fare worse if they rushed into a vote, upsetting centrist and independent voters who prefer to stick to Senate norms?

For now, McConnell is eager to push ahead, willing to leave behind those senators whose votes he can afford to lose. Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, signaled hours before Ginsburg's death that it's too close to the election to vote on a confirmation. She and Sen. Mitt Romney, R-Utah, have been critical of Trump and could be votes against the nominee.

With a narrow 53-seat majority in the 100-member Senate, McConnell can lose three senators and still rely on Vice President Mike Pence to break a tie vote. Republicans think the risks of pushing ahead are worth it.

"McConnell's got to thread the needle here, and I have no doubt he will," said Mike Davis, a former chief counsel for the Senate Judiciary Committee. He now runs an outside advocacy group for conservative judges and advises Republican senators.

McConnell never set out to remake the Supreme Court as he has done during the Trump era.

But the death of Justice Antonin Scalia hours before one of the early-state presidential debates in February 2016 put McConnell on a course that will define his decades-long career.

McConnell stunned Washington by announcing the Senate would wait for the next president, after the November 2016 election, to choose Scalia's replacement, blocking then-President Barack Obama's choice of Judge Merrick Garland.

McConnell had no rule or precedent to fall back on, but he had a majority so he barreled ahead.

Once Trump became president, McConnell shocked Washington again by changing Senate rules to allow for simple confirmation, by 51 votes, rather than the 60 traditionally needed to advance a nominee. First the Senate confirmed Judge Neil Gorsuch in 2017. Then, with the retirement of Justice Anthony Kennedy, senators confirmed Judge Brett Kavanaugh in 2018 after dramatic hearings and allegations that the nominee had sexually assaulted women.

Now McConnell, again through an exercise in majority power, is saying that the standard he set in 2016 no longer applies because his party also controls the White House.

Hypocrisy, say Democrats. But McConnell is not likely to be wounded as he rushes toward another confirmation.

Former Democratic Sen. Harry Reid of Nevada, the onetime majority leader who tangled fiercely with McConnell, was the first to change the Senate's voting threshold on lower-level nominees out of Obama-era frustration with GOP blockades. Reid warned Republican senators not to follow their leader down this path.

"If Republicans attempt to force yet another nominee onto the Supreme Court against the will of the American people, then they risk delegitimizing themselves and their party even more," Reid said. He warned it would "further tear our country apart."

But McConnell left no doubt where this was headed.

Absent a robust legislative agenda aligned with Trump, McConnell set out on the Senate's other main role — confirmations. Along with the two Supreme Court justices, he has installed more than 200 federal appellate and trial court judges in the Trump era.

"Well, you don't get to write your own legacy," he said during an AP Newsmakers interview in 2018. "But

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I will say that what we're doing in the area of the court, I think, is the most important thing we're doing. Asked in February by Fox News how he would approach a high court vacancy, now that it was again an election year, he showed no hesitancy.

"Yeah, we would fill it," McConnell said.

How Ginsburg's death could reshape the presidential campaign

By STEVE PEOPLES Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A presidential campaign that was already tugging at the nation's most searing divides has been jolted by the death of Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, potentially reshaping the election at a moment when some Americans were beginning to cast ballots.

For months, the contest has largely centered on President Donald Trump's handling of the coronavirus, the biggest public health crisis in a century that has badly damaged his prospects for reelection as the U.S. death toll nears 200,000 people.

But in a flash, Ginsburg's death on Friday added new weight to the election, with the potential that Trump or his Democratic challenger, Joe Biden, could pick a successor who could decide abortion access, environmental regulations and the power of the presidency for a generation.

With early voting underway in five states and Election Day just over six weeks away, Democrats and Republicans were largely unified late Friday in praising Ginsburg as a leading legal thinker and advocate for women's rights. But strategists in both parties also seized on the moment to find an advantage.

Facing the prospect of losing both the White House and the Senate, some Republicans viewed the Supreme Court vacancy as one of the few avenues remaining for Trump to galvanize supporters beyond his most loyal core of supporters, particularly suburban women who have abandoned the GOP in recent years.

"It's hard to see how this doesn't help Trump politically," said veteran Republican strategist Alex Conant. "Biden wants this election to be a referendum on Trump. Now it's going to be a referendum on whoever he nominates to the Supreme Court."

Trump said Saturday he would "most likely" nominate a woman to replace Ginsburg. A female nominee could serve as a counterweight of sorts to Biden's choice of running mate, Sen. Kamala Harris, who would be the first woman to serve as vice president.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., pledged to quickly bring to a vote whomever Trump nominates. But he faces potential division within his own ranks. On Saturday, Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, said she believes the winner of the Nov. 3 election should nominate Ginsburg's replacement. The possibility that others might take that view — Cory Gardner of Colorado as well as Collins faces a rough reelection effort — is fueling optimism among Democrats that the vacancy could drive home the significance of the election to their base.

"The implications for Senate races could be profound," said Democratic strategist Bill Burton.

"The presidential race will see some immediate churn as activists on both sides will be newly energized," he continued. "The persistent question will be whether huge protests around the Capitol and the country will inflame such vigorous energy that it leads to awful clashes."

McConnell, in a note to his GOP colleagues Friday night, urged them to "keep their powder dry" and not rush to declare a position on whether a Trump nominee should get a vote this year. He told them they should not lock themselves prematurely "into a position you may later regret."

Biden, who has already pledged to appoint the first Black woman to the Supreme Court, told reporters late Friday that "voters should pick the president and the president should pick the justice to consider."

Democrats are enraged by McConnell's pledge to move forward, especially after he blocked President Barack Obama from appointing a justice to replace Antonin Scalia nine months before the 2016 election. That decision cast a long political shadow, prompting Pete Buttigieg, the former South Bend, Indiana, mayor who mounted a spirited bid for the 2020 Democratic presidential nomination, to make expansion of the Supreme Court a centerpiece of his campaign. Biden rejected the idea.

Some Democrats privately concede that the Supreme Court vacancy could shift attention away from the

virus, which has been a central element of Biden's campaign.

Trump took the unprecedented step in 2016 of releasing a list of Supreme Court picks before he was elected, a move that was credited with unifying skeptical conservative voters to unite behind him. Republicans also believe that the high-profile debate over Trump's last Supreme Court pick, Brett Kavanaugh, helped the GOP retain the Senate during the 2018 midterms, when the party lost control of the House.

The president, seeking to build the same type of energy that surrounded his 2016 bid, released another list of potential Supreme Court nominees this month.

But some Democrats said the political environment is already overheated, with partisan divides over everything from wearing a mask to curb the pandemic to addressing climate change. Ginsburg's death, they say, may not change that.

"It's already pretty ugly out there," said Megan Jones, a Democratic strategist who worked for former Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid. "I do not know how this does not become a fight of epic proportions."

Associated Press writers Andrew Taylor in Washington, Michelle Price in Las Vegas, Nicholas Riccardi in Denver and Bill Barrow in Atlanta contributed to this report.

Homes burned as winds push California fire into desert floor

By MARCIO JOSE SANCHEZ and CHRISTOPHER WEBER Associated Press

JUNIPER HILLS, Calif. (AP) — Strong afternoon winds intensified a wildfire burning for nearly two weeks in mountains northeast of Los Angeles, prompting authorities to issue new evacuation orders Saturday for desert communities that lost some homes a day earlier.

Meanwhile, officials were investigating the death of a firefighter on the lines of another Southern California wildfire that erupted earlier this month from a smoke-generating pyrotechnic device used by a couple to reveal their baby's gender.

The death occurred Thursday in San Bernardino National Forest as crews battled the El Dorado Fire about 75 miles (120 kilometers) east of Los Angeles, the U.S. Forest Service said in a statement.

In northern Los Angeles County, firefighters focused on protecting homes Saturday as increasingly erratic winds pushed the Bobcat Fire toward foothill communities in the Antelope Valley after churning all the way across the San Gabriel Mountains. An evacuation order was issued Saturday for all residents in that zone as the fire burned toward Wrightwood, a mountain community of 4,000, said fire spokesman Andrew Mitchell.

The fire grew to 142 square miles (368 square kilometers) on Saturday when winds pushed the flames into Juniper Hills.

Some residents fled as blowing embers sparked spot fires, hitting some homes but sparing others. Bridget Lensing feared her family's house was lost on Friday after seeing on Twitter that a neighbor's house three doors down went up in flames.

The house stood when she made her way back Saturday afternoon but her neighbors' houses in the remote community were burned to the ground.

"Everything around us is gone," she said.

The extent of the destruction in the area about 50 miles (80 kilometers) northeast of downtown LA wasn't immediately clear. But, Los Angeles County park officials said the blaze destroyed the nature center at Devil's Punchbowl Natural Area, a geological wonder that attracts some 130,000 visitors per year.

No injuries were reported.

On the south side of the Bobcat Fire, firefighters continued to protect Mount Wilson, which overlooks greater Los Angeles and has a historic observatory founded more than a century ago and numerous broadcast antennas serving Southern California.

The fire that started Sept. 6 had already doubled in size over the last week. It is 15% contained.

Officials said the fire has been challenging because it is burning in areas that have not burned in decades, and because the firestorms across California have limited resources. There were about 1,660 firefighters

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on the lines.

The name of the firefighter killed in the nearby El Dorado Fire was being withheld until family members are notified. The body was escorted down the mountain in a procession of first-responder vehicles. No other information was released about the circumstances of the death.

A statement from the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, or Cal Fire, said it was the 26th death involving wildfires besieging the state.

A new blaze sparked by a vehicle that caught fire was growing in wilderness outside Palm Springs.

To the north, a fire burning for nearly a month in Sequoia National Forest roared to life again Friday and prompted evacuation orders for the central California mountain communities of Silver City and Mineral King.

More than 7,900 wildfires have burned more than 5,468 square miles (14,164 square kilometers) in California this year, including many since a mid-August barrage of dry lightning ignited parched vegetation.

The El Dorado Fire has burned more than 34 square miles (89 square kilometers) and was 59% contained, with 10 buildings destroyed and six damaged.

Cal Fire said earlier this month that the El Dorado Fire was ignited Sept. 5 when a couple, their young children and someone there to record video staged the baby gender reveal at El Dorado Ranch Park at the foot of the San Bernardino Mountains.

The device was set off in a field and quickly ignited dry grass. The couple frantically tried to use bottled water to extinguish the flames and called 911.

Authorities have not released the identities of the couple, who could face criminal charges and be held liable for the cost of fighting the fire.

Throughout the Northwest, firefighters welcomed cooler weather and rain, as well as much-improved air quality and visibility that would allow some to survey fire activity with drones.

Associated Press writer John Antczak in Los Angeles and Daisy Nguyen in San Francisco contributed to this report.

GOP senators confront past comments on Supreme Court vote

By MATTHEW DALY Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Republican senators weighing what to do about the vacancy on the Supreme Court are facing questions about their own past comments amid complaints by Democrats that their views have shifted with changing political reality.

President Donald Trump on Saturday urged the GOP-run Senate to consider “without delay” his upcoming nomination to fill the seat vacated by Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, who died Friday. The move comes just six weeks before the election.

A look at what key Republican senators were saying in the past — and what they are saying now — about filling a seat on the Supreme Court during an election year.

SENATE MAJORITY LEADER MITCH McCONNELL

McConnell, a Kentucky Republican, vowed in a statement Friday night, hours after Ginsburg’s death, to call a floor vote on Trump’s nominee, although he did not specify a date. McConnell, who sets the calendar in the Senate, has made judicial appointments a top priority.

McConnell’s statement on the latest vacancy stands in stark contrast to the position he took in 2016, when he refused to consider President Barack Obama’s choice for the high court months ahead of the election. McConnell blocked hearings for Merrick Garland, a federal appeals court judge, saying the choice should be left to voters in an election year.

Democrats said Republicans should follow the precedent they set in 2016 by not considering a Supreme Court choice in the run-up to an election, but McConnell’s comments make it clear he has no intention of doing so.

“Americans re-elected our majority in 2016 and expanded it in 2018 because we pledged to work with President Trump and support his agenda, particularly his outstanding appointments to the federal judiciary.

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Once again, we will keep our promise," McConnell said.

SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN LINDSEY GRAHAM

Graham, who will oversee the vetting of the nomination as Judiciary chairman, tweeted Saturday that he will support Trump "in any effort to move forward regarding the recent vacancy created by the passing of Justice Ginsburg."

Graham's comment contradicts his statements in 2018 and 2016 that a Supreme Court nominee should not be considered in an election year.

"If an opening comes in the last year of President Trump's term, and the primary process has started, we'll wait to the next election," Graham said in 2018 at an event hosted by The Atlantic magazine. Reminded that he was speaking on the record, Graham said: "Yeah. Hold the tape."

Two years earlier, in the midst of the Garland battle, the South Carolina senator was even more emphatic, urging listeners at a Judiciary Committee meeting to "use my words against me. If there's a Republican president (elected) in 2016 and a vacancy occurs in the last year of the first term, you can say Lindsey Graham said, 'Let's let the next president, whoever it might be, make that nomination.'"

Despite those comments, Graham said Saturday that he supports moving forward on a new nomination because Democrats had changed the Senate rules to confirm more circuit court judges during Obama's tenure, and because Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer "and his friends in the liberal media conspired to destroy the life of Brett Kavanaugh and hold that Supreme Court seat open."

Kavanaugh was narrowly confirmed to the Supreme Court in 2018 after a bitter, partisan fight in which Graham played a key role to advance Kavanaugh.

SEN. SUSAN COLLINS

Collins, a Maine Republican who is considered a moderate, said Saturday that "in fairness to the American people," the Senate should not vote on a lifetime appointment to the Supreme Court until after the election and that the nomination "should be made by the president who is elected on November 3rd."

Collins voted in favor of Kavanaugh in 2018 — a vote that has played a key role in her reelection campaign. Liberal groups have targeted Collins over her support for Kavanaugh, and she trails her Democratic opponent in publicly released opinion polls. Her statement seems to leave open the possibility of supporting Trump's nominee in the "lame duck" session after the election if Trump wins a second term.

SEN. CHUCK GRASSLEY

Grassley, an Iowa Republican, drew condemnation from Democrats in 2016 when, as Judiciary chairman, he blocked confirmation hearings for Garland, who was nominated to the high court after Justice Antonin Scalia died unexpectedly in February 2016.

At the time, Grassley cited "the Biden Rule" in holding up the process. The informal "rule" — never adopted by the Senate in any formal sense — stemmed from a speech given by then-Sen. Joe Biden in 1992 that the Senate should not fill a Supreme Court vacancy until after the presidential election. Biden, who served as Obama's vice president, is now the Democratic nominee for president.

More recently, Grassley told reporters in July that if he still chaired Judiciary and a vacancy occurred, "I would not have a hearing on it because that's what I promised the people in 2016."

Grassley issued a statement Friday night praising Ginsburg but did not comment on whether Trump should move forward with a replacement.

SEN. JONI ERNST

Ernst, an Iowa Republican up for reelection this year, serves on the Judiciary panel. She said in July that in the event of a Supreme Court vacancy, the Senate should hold hearings on Trump's nominee, even if he loses the presidential election in November.

Ernst's campaign sent out a fundraising email Friday night saying: "Our Conservative values and Constitutional rights are now on the line. The next Supreme Court nominee will shape major decisions for decades to come."

Ernst issued a statement later Friday saying the email "never should have gone out."

"Though I never saw it, it was sent out under my name and I take responsibility for it," Ernst said. "To-

night, my prayers are with the family of Justice Ginsburg.”

SEN. LISA MURKOWSKI

Murkowski, an Alaska Republican who opposed Kavanaugh’s confirmation, said in an interview hours before Ginsburg’s death that she “would not vote to confirm” her replacement before the next president is inaugurated.

Her comments to Alaska Public Radio on Friday also occurred before McConnell said the Senate will vote on Trump’s nominee to replace Ginsburg. Murkowski’s comment appeared to put her at odds with McConnell, who will need at least 50 votes to push a Trump nominee through the Senate, plus a tie-breaking vote by Vice President Mike Pence.

Murkowski, like Collins, issued a statement after Ginsburg’s death that praised her but did not mention whether she’d favor voting on a Trump pick to replace her.

SEN. THOM TILLIS

Tillis, a North Carolina Republican who serves on the Judiciary panel, was among several GOP senators in tough reelection battles to join Trump in calling for a swift vote on a Supreme Court nominee. Arizona Sen. Martha McSally and Georgia Sen. Kelly Loeffler — both appointed to their seats — also called for a quick vote.

“There is a clear choice on the future of the Supreme Court between the well-qualified and conservative jurist President Trump will nominate and I will support, and the liberal activist Joe Biden will nominate and Cal Cunningham will support, who will legislate radical, left-wing policies from the bench,” Tillis said on Twitter, referring to his Democratic opponent, former state Sen. Cal Cunningham.

In 2016, Tillis opposed giving Merrick Garland a hearing, saying “the voice of the American people should be weighted heavily” in filling a Supreme Court vacancy, adding that the nomination “would be best left to the next president.”

SEN. MITT ROMNEY

Romney, a Utah Republican who was the sole GOP senator to vote in favor of Trump’s impeachment, issued a statement Friday praising Ginsburg, but did not comment on whether he would support a vote on Trump’s nominee.

His spokeswoman called a report that Romney would insist on delaying the vote until after Inauguration Day “grossly false.” Romney has never faced a vote on a Supreme Court nominee as a senator.

Carpenters wow public with medieval techniques at Notre Dame

By ELAINE GANLEY Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — With precision and boundless energy, a team of carpenters used medieval techniques to raise up — by hand — a three-ton oak truss Saturday in front of Notre Dame Cathedral, a replica of the wooden structures that were consumed in the landmark’s devastating April 2019 fire that also toppled its spire.

The demonstration to mark European Heritage Days gave the hundreds of people a first-hand look at the rustic methods used 800 years ago to build the triangular frames in the nave of Notre Dame de Paris.

It also showed that the decision to replicate the cathedral in its original form was the right one, said Gen. Jean-Louis Georgelin, who heads the cathedral’s reconstruction.

“It shows ... firstly that we made the right choice in choosing to rebuild the carpentry identically, in oak from France,” Georgelin said in an interview. “Secondly, it shows us the ... method by which we will rebuild the framework, truss after truss.”

A debate over whether the new spire should have a futuristic design or whether the trusses should be made of fireproof cement like in the Cathedral of Nantes, which was destroyed in a 1972 fire, ended with the decision in July to respect Notre Dame’s original design and materials.

A total of 25 trusses are to be installed at an unknown date in the cathedral nave. Philippe Gourmain, a forestry expert working on the cathedral project, said the carpentry phase will not come before 2022.

“The problem of Notre Dame is not a carpentry problem. We have the wood. We know how to do it,”

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Gourmain said. "The big issue is regarding the stone."

Some stones — which support the carpentry — were damaged by the fire and "it's not so easy now" to find similar stone, he said.

French President Emmanuel Macron wants the cathedral reopened in 2024 in time for the Paris Olympic Games, a deadline that many experts have called unrealistic.

For the moment, the delicate task of dismantling melted scaffolding, which was originally erected to refurbish the now-toppled spire, continues. That job, started in early June, will be completed in October.

The soaring cathedral vaults are also being cleared of debris by 35 specialists on ropes. The organ with its 8,000 pipes was removed for repair in early August.

It is not yet known what technique will be used to create and install the wooden trusses.

The truss mounted for the weekend display is a replica of truss No. 7, more advanced than the first six trusses, which were "more primitive," said Florian Carpentier, site manager for the team from Carpenters Without Borders team that felled the trees and used axes to cut the logs for the wooden frame. With rope cables and a rustic pulley system, the carpenters slowly pulled the truss they built in July from the ground where it was laid out.

"It's a moment to see, ancestral techniques that last. There is the present and the past and it links us to our roots," said Romain Greif, an architect who came with his family to watch the display. "It's an event."

In a final touch, once the No. 7 truss replica was raised on high, a carpenter shinned up the wooden beams — to cheers — to tie an oak branch to the top of the triangular structure, a symbol of prosperity and a salute to the workers, a tradition still honoured in numerous European countries.

Virus measures targeted by protesters despite case spikes

By SYLVIA HUI and VADIM GHIRDA undefined

LONDON (AP) — Demonstrators took the streets of London, Tel Aviv and other cities on Saturday to protest coronavirus restrictions, decrying how the measures have affected daily life even with infection rates rising in many places and the global death toll approaching 1 million.

In the U.K., the latest official estimates released Friday showed that new infections and coronavirus hospital admissions have been doubling every seven to eight days. Britain has Europe's highest death toll since the start of the pandemic, with 41,821 confirmed virus-related deaths.

The government recently banned social gatherings of more than six people in the hopes that it would help reverse a steep rise in COVID-19 cases and suggested that tougher restrictions could be coming.

Saturday's protest in Trafalgar Square, which was themed "Resist and Act for Freedom," ended in clashes between demonstrators and London police, as officers tried to disperse hundreds of people holding banners and placards scrawled with anti-restriction messages such as "This is now Tyranny."

London Mayor Sadiq Khan has warned that the city may add curfews, force pubs to close earlier and ban household visits to try to limit the city's sharp rise in new cases.

"I am extremely concerned by the latest evidence I've seen today from public health experts about the accelerating speed at which COVID-19 is now spreading here in London," Khan said Friday. "It is increasingly likely that, in London, additional measures will soon be required to slow the spread of the virus."

In Israel, meanwhile, authorities ordered a full lockdown that began Friday and coincided with the Jewish High Holidays, which are typically celebrated with family gatherings and large prayer services.

Demonstrators in swimsuits gathered on a beach in Tel Aviv and waved black and pink flags connoting various protest movements.

In Australia, about 100 protesters gathered in the Melbourne beachside suburb of Elwood on Saturday before being scattered by police.

Police in the region have tried to dissuade lockdown opponents from protesting, but the rallies have become routine. The Victoria police said in a news release that "the behaviour of these selfish few who choose to blatantly ignore the directions will not be tolerated."

In Romania's capital city, Bucharest, several hundred people protested against virus restrictions, includ-

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ing the mandatory use of masks in schools. About 2.8 million children in Romania began the school year Monday and schools took various precautions to try and prevent outbreaks.

Romania is among the countries that has had a new spike in confirmed cases, including a national daily record of 1,713 cases earlier in the week and 1,333 more on Saturday. In all, Romania has had 111,550 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 4,402 deaths from the disease since the start of the pandemic.

Protesters in Bucharest's University Square drew parallels between the protective measures against the pandemic and Nazi regimes. One of the speakers compared the measures to the torture of dissidents during communism.

The virulent language and comparisons echoed that of conservative protesters at rallies in dozens of U.S. cities earlier in the pandemic, including some who successfully pressured governors and local officials into lifting restrictions on businesses and social activities.

Experts have said some state authorities gave up on the restrictions too quickly, allowing the virus to continue spreading this summer in parts of the country that didn't experience the full force of the pandemic early in the year.

As of Saturday, Johns Hopkins University reported nearly 200,000 deaths in the U.S. since the start of the pandemic and 6.7 million confirmed cases of the virus in the U.S.

Ghirda reported from Bucharest, Romania.

Follow AP's pandemic coverage at <https://apnews.com/VirusOutbreak> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

Rights group: More than 300 detained at Minsk women's march

By YURAS KARMANAU Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Police in the capital of Belarus cracked down sharply Saturday on a women's protest march demanding the authoritarian president's resignation, arresting more than 300 including an elderly woman who has become a symbol of the six weeks of protest that have roiled the country.

More than 2,000 women took part in the march in Minsk. Such anti-government marches have become a regular feature of the unprecedented wave of large, persistent protests that began after the Aug. 9 presidential election. Officials said President Alexander Lukashenko won a sixth term in office with 80% support in that vote but opponents and some poll workers say the results were rigged.

During Lukashenko's 26 years in office, he has consistently repressed opposition and independent news media.

Large demonstrations have been held in cities throughout the country and some Sunday protests in Minsk have attracted crowds estimated at up to 200,000 people.

The human rights group Viasna said more than 320 people were arrested in Saturday's march.

"There were so many people detained that lines formed at the prisoner transports," Viasna member Valentin Stepanovich told The Associated Press.

Among those detained was Nina Bahinskaya, a 73-year-old former geologist whose defiance and tart tongue have made her a popular figure in the protests. Many of the women in Saturday's march chanted "We're walking!" referring to when police told Bahinskaya that she was taking part in unauthorized protest and she snapped back "I'm taking a walk."

Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, Lukashenko's main opponent in the election, praised the women's march in a video statement from Lithuania, where she took refuge after the election.

"They have frightened and put pressure on women for the second month, but despite this, Belarusians are continuing their peaceful protest and showing their amazing fortitude," she said.

Several top members of the Coordination Council the opposition has created to push for a new election have been jailed and others have been forced to leave the country. Maxim Znak, a leading member of the council, declared a hunger strike in prison on Friday.

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Last month thousands of protesters were detained and some displayed deep bruises from police beatings. Still, that did not stop the protests from growing to include strikes at major factories that had previously been a source of support for the embattled Lukashenko.

In a new strategy to stem the huge Sunday rallies, the Belarusian Prosecutor General's office said it has tracked down parents who took their children to opposition demonstrations.

Jim Heintz in Moscow contributed to this report.

Pandemic retools diplomacy as world leaders gather virtually

By EDITH M. LEDERER Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — With COVID-19 still careening across the planet, the annual gathering of its leaders in New York will be replaced this year by a global patchwork of prerecorded speeches, another piece of upheaval in a deeply divided world turned topsy-turvy by a pandemic with no endpoint in sight.

As U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres put it: "The COVID-19 pandemic is a crisis unlike any in our lifetimes, and so this year's General Assembly session will be unlike any other, too."

This is the first time in the 75-year history of the United Nations that there will be no in-person meeting. Gone will be the accompanying traffic jams, street closures for VIP motorcades, stepped-up security to protect leaders and noisy crowds in the halls of the sprawling United Nations complex overlooking New York's East River.

Only one diplomat from each of the U.N.'s 193 member nations will be allowed into the vast General Assembly hall. All will be socially distanced and masked.

Guterres said the virtual meeting will see speeches from "the largest number of heads of state and government ever" — 171, according to the latest speakers list.

World leaders are not barred from coming to speak in person. But presidents, prime ministers, monarchs and ministers travel with large entourages and at a time of pandemic and quarantine requirements, including in New York City, the General Assembly members agreed that crowds needed to be avoided.

They recommended that leaders each deliver a 15-minute pre-recorded speech, to be shown in the assembly hall and introduced by the ambassador or a diplomat from the country.

Turkish diplomat and politician Volkan Bozkir, who took over the one-year presidency of the General Assembly on Tuesday, said 10 leaders wanted to come to the U.N. to speak including Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. He lamented that they aren't able to because of US quarantine requirements.

This leaves U.S. President Donald Trump as the one leader who could travel to New York. Even though reports say he will not be appearing in person, the metal barricades police always put in place for a presidential visit went up Friday along First Avenue outside the United Nations.

The high-level meetings begin Monday with a commemoration of the U.N.'s 75th anniversary, including statements from world leaders and formal adoption of a declaration approved by all 193 member nations. It recalls the U.N.'s successes and failures and calls for "greater action" to build a post-pandemic world that is more equal, works together and protects the planet.

The United Nations was born out of the horrors of World War II with a mission to save succeeding generations from the scourge of conflict. The declaration says the U.N. has helped mitigate dozens of conflicts and saved hundreds of thousands of lives through humanitarian action. But it points to a world "plagued by growing inequality, poverty, hunger, armed conflicts, terrorism, insecurity, climate change, and pandemics."

"The stakes could not be higher," Guterres told a news conference Wednesday.

He pointed to an "out-of-control" pandemic that has claimed nearly a million lives and stressed the need for a deeply divided world to unite not only to defeat the coronavirus and ensure that "a people's vaccine" is available to all people but to make a collective push for peace.

Monday's anniversary commemoration will be followed by Tuesday's opening of the virtual high-level meeting, starting with Guterres' in-person speech on the state of the world in which he said he will repeat

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his March 23 call for a global cease-fire, this time by the end of the year.

"Today, from Afghanistan to Sudan, we see hopeful new steps toward peace," the U.N. chief said. "In Syria, Libya, Ukraine and elsewhere, cease-fires or standstills in the fighting can create space for diplomacy. In Yemen, we are pressing for a cease-fire, confidence building measures and resumption of the political process."

Guterres will be followed by addresses Tuesday from Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro, Trump, leaders from Turkey, China, Cuba, Russia, Jordan, Iran, France and dozens of others through Sept. 26. The speeches conclude on the morning of Sept. 29 after a two-day break.

Usually, hundreds of side events take place during the gathering. This year there are only a few meetings, including ones on digital cooperation, climate action, biodiversity and accelerating the pandemic's end. Two meetings commemorate the 25th anniversary of the U.N. women's conference in Beijing and promote the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons.

Guterres, the General Assembly's Bozkir and many U.N. diplomats say the key issue for world leaders today is how to build a post-pandemic world that is more peaceful and united and focuses on eradicating extreme poverty, preserving the environment and achieving gender equality by 2030.

Even before the pandemic, Guterres said, the world "was veering off course" and losing the battle against climate change. He cited the northern hemisphere's hottest summer ever, with ongoing wildfires.

"The world is burning, and recovery is our chance to get on track and tame the flames," he said.

As in recent years past, a major theme in speeches is expected to be multilateralism — the kind of cooperation that Guterres stressed is required for recovery from COVID-19.

"Multilateralism is the panacea to all the problems in the world," Bozkir said. He warned that unilateralism will only strengthen the COVID-19 crisis, saying that "no state can combat this pandemic alone."

France's U.N. Ambassador Nicolas de Rivière said the high-level week "will be an opportunity to reflect on the current COVID-19 crisis, and to reaffirm the crucial role of the United Nations and of multilateral cooperation, which are badly needed in these times."

While the high-level meeting of world leaders often faces criticism for its constant speechmaking and lack of visible results, much of its business takes place in one-on-one meetings and at lunches, dinners and small gatherings — and for U.N. officials and diplomats that will be the real missing ingredient this year.

"We will miss that contact, that personal contact, that I believe is very important for diplomacy to be effective," Guterres said, pointing to several unnamed situations where problems had no solutions but he was able to sit with both sides and discuss a way forward.

But even without face-to-face interactions, Bozkir said that after six months of almost entirely virtual meetings, "I think with all the high-level meetings and summits, we're going to show that the U.N. is back."

"Many people were thinking, 'Where is the U.N.?','" he said. "So now we will say, 'Here is the U.N.'"

Longtime international correspondent Edith M. Lederer has been chief U.N. correspondent for The Associated Press since 1998.

Pogacar crushes Roglic to seal Tour de France title

LA PLANCHE DES BELLES FILLES, France (AP) — In an incredible climax to the Tour de France, Tadej Pogacar crushed fellow Slovenian Primož Roglič in the last stage Saturday before the finish in Paris, snatching away his race lead to all but guarantee that he'll win cycling's showpiece event at his first attempt.

Set, at one day shy of 22, to become the youngest post-World War II champion, Pogacar flew on the penultimate stage, a lung-burning uphill time trial, and devoured the 57-second lead that had made Roglič look impregnable before the showdown in the mountains of eastern France.

Equally amazing: This is Pogacar's first Tour. Among others who pulled off the feat of winning at their first attempt: the great Eddy Merckx. The Belgian also won his next four Tours after his first in 1969. Given his young age and breathtaking talent, Pogacar's first also looks unlikely to be his last.

"Unbelievable, unbelievable," Pogacar said. "My head will explode."

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In the end, it wasn't even close. Pogacar was sensational, not only ripping the iconic race leader's yellow jersey from Roglic, but comfortably winning the time trial, too. He gobbled through the 36 kilometers (22 miles), slicing through the air in an aerodynamic tuck on a slick time-trial bike and then switching to a road bike for the sharp finishing ascent to the Planches des Belles Filles ski station.

Roglic labored in comparison, looking taut where Pogacar glided fluidly. He, too, hopped onto a road bike for the climb, his with yellow tape on the handlebars to match the jersey that he was in the process of losing.

As Roglic ascended, what was left of his lead melted away. It then became a yawning deficit to Pogacar, who'd been second overall going into the time trial, which amply lived up to its nickname: "The race of truth." The 30-year-old Roglic managed no better than fifth, a whopping 1 minute, 56 seconds slower than his younger and clearly fresher countryman. At the top, he sat slumped on the tarmac, the enormity of his collapse sinking in.

"I will cry. Or I did, already," Roglic said. "I struggled with everything, eh? Just not enough power,"

"I would want it to be a little different, but I cannot change it," he added. "It is how it is."

Not since British riders Bradley Wiggins and Chris Froome finished 1-2 at the 2012 Tour has one nation taken the top two spots.

But almost everyone — even Pogacar — had expected that Roglic would roll into Paris with the yellow jersey on his shoulders, sipping Champagne in the saddle on the processional ride, on his way to becoming Slovenia's first winner. Roglic had taken the race lead on Stage 9 and held it all the way to Saturday, Stage 20, the worst day to lose it. He now trails Pogacar by 59 seconds overall.

"I cannot believe how hard it must be for him," Pogacar said. "He must be devastated. But that's bike racing."

Only a major mishap Sunday — highly unlikely — will prevent Pogacar from taking over from 2019 winner Egan Bernal, who was 22, as the youngest post-war champion. So sure is his victory that he was already introduced at the race organizers' press conference Saturday evening as the Tour winner.

"I can't wait to cross the line in Paris," Pogacar said.

Australian Richie Porte will complete the podium, after he time-trialed brilliantly to hoist himself from fourth to third overall. Porte is a veteran of 10 Tours, but he'd only once finished in the top 10 — a fifth place in 2016 — in a career sometimes dogged by ill-fortune.

Aged 35, Porte wanted a picture of himself on the Tour podium before his career ends. He'll get that Sunday.

"It really does feel like a victory," Porte said.

He, too, said he felt for Roglic.

"It's kind of brutal what happened," he said.

The high drama was reminiscent of Frenchman Laurent Fignon's collapse in 1989. He had a lead of 50 seconds over Greg LeMond before the final stage, also a time trial, from Versailles to Paris. Fignon ended up losing to the American by just eight seconds — the smallest ever margin of victory.

Pogacar, who finished third at last year's Spanish Vuelta won by Roglic, might have had an even bigger lead by now had he not suffered a major setback in the first week of the three-week marathon, raced over more than 3,400 kilometers (2,100 miles) and all five of France's mountain ranges.

On Stage 7, Pogacar plummeted from third to 16th overall, when he was caught out in crosswinds. But he shook off his disappointment and set about clawing his way back.

A win on Stage 9 ahead of Roglic in the Pyrenees soon followed and helped put him back in contention. In hindsight, Roglic may well rue that he and his Jumbo-Visma teammates didn't pay closer attention and allowed his friend and rival from the UAE Team Emirates squad so much leash.

Pogacar followed up with another victory on Stage 15 and had been in second place overall for the past week.

While Roglic was surrounded at the Tour by powerful support riders who labored tirelessly to protect his race lead, Pogacar had no such luxuries. Beating Roglic in the man-to-man time trial, the two of them alone against the clock, was a fitting tribute to the way in which Pogacar has often relied on his own formidable

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resources, the brightest prodigy in an exciting crop of young riders who lit up the Tour.

Even Roglic, at the finish, gave him a thumbs-up.

"He definitely deserves his win," he said. "Obviously, a really, really super-talented guy."

More Tour de France coverage: <https://apnews.com/tag/TourdeFrance> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

'I loved her to pieces,' retired Justice Souter says of RBG

WASHINGTON (AP) — The remaining eight Supreme Court justices, and two former colleagues, are speaking out about their colleague Ruth Bader Ginsburg, who died Friday at age 87.

Some, like Clarence Thomas, and Stephen Breyer, served with her for nearly all of her 27 years on the high court, and wrote emotional statements following news of her death. The justices all spoke of her undying devotion to the law and her grace as a colleague.

Excerpts from their statements, as released Saturday by the court:

Chief Justice John Roberts:

"Our Nation has lost a jurist of historic stature. We at the Supreme Court have lost a cherished colleague. Today we mourn, but with confidence that future generations will remember Ruth Bader Ginsburg as we knew her -- a tireless and resolute champion of justice."

Justice Clarence Thomas:

Thomas wrote he was heartbroken to learn of her passing. "Through the many challenges both professionally and personally, she was the essence of grace, civility and dignity. She was a superb judge who gave her best and exacted the best from each of us, whether in agreement or disagreement. And, as outstanding as she was as a judge, she was an even better colleague – unfailingly gracious, thoughtful, and civil."

He said the quality and pace of her work never suffered as she was ill, nor did her demeanor toward her colleagues.

"The most difficult part of a long tenure is watching colleagues decline and pass away. And, the passing of my dear colleague, Ruth, is profoundly difficult and so very sad," he wrote. "I will dearly miss my friend."

Justice Stephen Breyer:

Breyer wrote that he heard of her death while he was reciting the "Mourner's Kaddish" at the Rosh Hashanah service.

He wrote:

"I thought:

a great Justice;

a woman of valour;

a rock of righteousness;

and my good, good friend.

The world is a better place for her having lived in it."

Justice Samuel Alito:

Alito wrote that he and his wife were deeply saddened.

"Ruth and Marty made us feel at home immediately when I joined the Court, and we will certainly miss her. Justice Ginsburg will go down as a leading figure in the history of the Court. She will be remembered for her intelligence, learning, and remarkable fortitude. She has been and will continue to be an inspiration for many. "

Justice Sonia Sotomayor:

Sotomayor called her a dear friend and colleague, and "an American hero" who spent her life "fighting for the equality of all people, and she was a pathbreaking champion of women's rights."

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"I will miss Ruth greatly," Sotomayor wrote. "She welcomed me to the Court with a warmth I could not have expected, and I came to feel a special kinship with her. She was someone whose wisdom, kindness, and unwavering support I could always rely on. I will forever cherish the moments we shared."

Justice Elena Kagan:

Kagan echoed Sotomayor's comments that Ginsburg was a hero and tireless fighter for equal rights. "Ruth reached out to encourage and assist me in my career, as she did for so many others, long before I came to the Supreme Court," Kagan said. "And she guided and inspired me, on matters large and small, once I became her colleague. I will miss her — her intellect, her generosity, her sly wit, her manifest integrity, and her endless capacity for work — for the rest of my life."

Justice Neil Gorsuch:

Gorsuch wrote he and his wife had lost a cherished friend and colleague who was a distinguished judge. "We are blessed by the happy memories that will remain, like traveling with Ruth to London where (to her delight) an uninformed guide kept calling her 'Ruthie,' or all the opera she tried so valiantly to teach me, or her sweet tooth at lunch, or the touching stories of her remarkable life with Marty. We will miss Ruth and our hearts go out to her family. May she rest in peace."

Justice Brett M. Kavanaugh:

Kavanaugh wrote that no American had ever done more than Ginsburg to ensure equal justice under the law for women. "A meticulous and pathmarking judge, she held herself to the highest standards of precision and accuracy in her beautifully crafted opinions. And she inspired all of us to try to meet those same exacting standards. I learned from her principled voice and marveled at her wonderful wit at our weekly conferences and daily lunches. Justice Ginsburg paved the way for women to become lawyers and judges."

Retired Justice David Souter

Souter wrote that "Ruth Ginsburg was one of the members of the Court who achieved greatness before she became a great justice. I loved her to pieces."

Retired Justice Anthony Kennedy:

"The members of the Court always will cherish all that Justice Ginsburg meant to us as a distinguished jurist and an inspiring, wonderful person," he wrote. "By her learning she taught devotion to the law. By her dignity she taught respect for others and her love for America. By her reverence for the Constitution, she taught us to preserve it to secure our freedom."

Minneapolis to name stretch of street for George Floyd

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — A stretch of a Minneapolis street that includes the place where George Floyd was killed will soon be named in his honor.

Although the street will still be called Chicago Avenue, the city will refer to the blocks between 37th and 39th streets as George Perry Floyd Jr. Place, the Star Tribune reported.

The City Council approved the naming Friday, and Mayor Jacob Frey's office said he would likely sign off on it as well.

Floyd, a Black man who was handcuffed, died May 25 after Derek Chauvin, a white officer, pressed his knee against Floyd's neck even as Floyd said he couldn't breathe. Floyd's death was captured in widely seen bystander video that set off protests around the world.

Months after Floyd's death, the intersection remains barricaded and now holds a memorial. A group of demonstrators has occupied the area, saying they will not leave until the city meets their demands, including funding for anti-racism training and a temporary property tax freeze for people within that zone.

The city had announced plans to reopen 38th Street this summer but backed off, avoiding a confrontation. The city continues to work on a long-term plan for the intersection.

Is 8 enough? Court vacancy could roil possible election case

By MARK SHERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg's death has left the Supreme Court shorthanded during a polarizing presidential campaign in which President Donald Trump has already suggested he may not accept the outcome and the court could be called on to step in and decide the fate of the nation.

It's the second time in four years that a justice has died during an election year, though that eight-justice court was not asked to referee any election disputes in 2016. Today, both sides have armies of lawyers ready to take the outcome to court.

The Supreme Court's role, then, could be vital in deciding a contested election, as it was in 2000 when its 5-4 ruling effectively handed the presidential election to Republican George W. Bush.

Just moments after Ginsburg's death the prospect of a disputed election and the role of the court in deciding it was already causing anxiety across the political spectrum.

But the makeup of the court is significantly different today from what it was after Justice Antonin Scalia died suddenly in February 2016.

Conservative, Republican-appointed justices hold five of the eight seats, including Chief Justice John Roberts, who is closest to the center of the court on many issues. Liberals appointed by Democrats have the other three.

In 2016, Scalia's death left the court evenly divided between four conservatives and four liberals, and it took at least one justice to cross over, in essence, to form a majority on the court.

Any time the justices divide 4-4 in a case, the lower court ruling remains in place. If say, the court were to split that way in a case involving the election, the tie would ratify whatever the lower court decided.

Trump said Saturday he has an "obligation" to fill the seat "without delay," and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., is promising to give Trump's nominee a prompt vote in the GOP-controlled chamber. Last time, the court was down one justice for more than a year, when McConnell and the Republicans refused to act on President Barack Obama's nomination of Judge Merrick Garland.

University of Kentucky law professor Joshua Douglas, who worried in 2016 about what he called a nightmare 4-4 election case outcome at the Supreme Court, said it would be worse in 2020 if Trump and McConnell move quickly to fill the seat and the election results wind up in court.

"To me, the scarier prospect is having a 5-4 decision on a presidential election where the swing vote comes from a new justice," appointed by the candidate who would get another four years in the White House as a result, Douglas said. He said the majority in such a case also likely would include two other justices appointed by Trump, Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh.

In 2016, "the court actually did a pretty good job when the court had eight justices for a while. It didn't have the kind of nightmare 4-4 decision on an issue that affects the country," he said.

Republican Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas, one of more than 40 people identified by Trump as potential high court nominees, backed the delay four years ago. But Cruz said in an interview with Fox News' Sean Hannity on Friday that Trump and the Senate should get the vacancy filled by Election Day, Nov. 3.

"We cannot have Election Day come and go with a four-four court. A four-four court that is equally divided cannot decide anything. And I think we risk a constitutional crisis if we do not have a nine-justice Supreme Court, particularly when there is such a risk of a contested election," Cruz said.

The justices are supposed to meet by telephone on Sept. 28 to consider hundreds of appeals that piled up over the summer; Some will be set for arguments; most will be rejected. A week later, on Oct. 5, the court will begin its new term, hearing arguments remotely because of the coronavirus pandemic.

After past deaths of justices, the entrance to the courtroom and the dead justice's place on the bench have been draped in black. That's one of many court practices that have been altered by the pandemic.

The court didn't schedule any politically explosive cases before the election. But it will turn quickly to

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two such disputes in the election's aftermath.

One case, set for argument a week after the election, could bring down the entire health care law popularly known as "Obamacare," which is facing its third major Supreme Court challenge since 2012.

Until Ginsburg's death, a five-justice majority that included Roberts and the four liberals remained on the bench.

The other major case, which will be argued on Nov. 4, involves a dispute between Philadelphia and a Catholic agency that finds foster homes for children. At issue is the agency's refusal to place children with same-sex couples.

Any case that divides the court 4-4 after arguments could be held and set for a new round of arguments when the court is back at full strength.

The Supreme Court has managed at less than its full nine-member strength at three points in the past 50 years, in 1970, 1987-88 and 2016.

Fifty years ago, the Democratic-controlled Senate rejected President Richard Nixon's first two choices before Justice Harry Blackmun joined the court in May 1970. The most notable issue the justices put off deciding may have been challenges to the death penalty, according to Bob Woodward and Scott Armstrong's book "The Brethren." It was another two years, after the retirements of two more justices, before the court took up the issue and struck down every state death penalty statute.

The Supreme Court heard about 150 cases in those years — twice as many as today — and Blackmun had to deal with hundreds of appeals in which his vote would determine whether or not the case was heard. In the end, he voted to hear only a handful, according to "The Brethren."

In the 1987-88 term, President Ronald Reagan's first two high court picks failed before Justice Anthony Kennedy was confirmed in February 1988. Kennedy came on board and the justices ordered new arguments in four cases in which they had been split 4-4, Jan Crawford wrote in her book, "Supreme Conflict." Four hundred appeals also awaited Kennedy's review, Crawford said.

AP FACT CHECK: Trump's virus revisionism; Biden on the hoax

By HOPE YEN and CALVIN WOODWARD Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — After months of mass death and sickness, what could possibly count as a success story against the pandemic?

President Donald Trump would have you believe Americans are already living that success story, even as the death toll approaches 200,000 and infections spread by the tens of thousands a day.

Trump's latest revisionism on the pandemic came during a week when he unleashed a torrent of misbegotten claims about mail-in voting, a monthslong preoccupation growing more intense with the approach of the Nov. 3 election.

While Democratic presidential rival Joe Biden laid out a broad and largely supported case that Trump has underplayed the severity of the pandemic, the devil was in the details: No, Trump did not call the coronavirus a hoax.

A review:

PANDEMIC

TRUMP: "If you look at what we've done and all of the lives that we've saved ... this was our prediction, that if we do a really good job, we'll be at about a hundred and — 100,000 to 240,000 deaths. And we're below that substantially, and we'll see what comes out. But that would be if we did the good job. If the not-so-good job was done, you'd be between 1.5 million — I remember these numbers so well — and 2.2 million." — news conference Wednesday.

THE FACTS: He's glossing over grim numbers and wrongly describing the scientific projections.

First and most notably, the U.S. is not running "substantially" below projections that 100,000 to 240,000 would die from COVID-19. The death toll is close to 200,000 and the pandemic is far from over. Tens of thousands of new infections are being reported each day.

The White House and federal public health authorities have often pointed to the Institute for Health

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Metrics and Evaluation at the University of Washington as a source for their pandemic projections. The institute now forecasts more than 378,000 U.S. deaths from COVID-19 by Jan. 1.

In early April, U.S. officials estimated at least 100,000 would die from the pandemic even if all conceivable steps were taken against it — a thorough and enduring lockdown, full use of masks and more. A death toll up to 240,000 assumed aggressive mitigation.

Trump has often cited a potential death toll of 2.2 million or so — a number that puts the reality of several hundred thousand deaths in a better light. He uses it to claim to have saved many lives. But such an extreme projection was merely a baseline if nothing at all were done to fight the pandemic. It was never, as he claimed, an expected death toll if “the not-so-good job was done.”

At an April 1 briefing, when Trump and his officials discussed the projection of 100,000 to 240,000 deaths, the president held out hope of keeping deaths under 100,000. “I think we’re doing better than that.”

Now he’s trying to move the goal posts and have the public consider anything under 240,000 deaths a success.

TRUMP: “We’ll have manufactured at least 100 million vaccine doses before the end of the year.” — news conference Friday.

TRUMP: “We expect to have enough vaccine for every American by April.” — news conference Friday.

THE FACTS: Don’t count on this.

Even if one or more vaccines is authorized for emergency use by the end of this year, those numbers stretch credulity.

Public authorities are so certain there will be only limited doses at first that they’re developing plans to triage them for people who need it the most, such as health workers. In a distribution plan released this past week, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s best-case option was that 35 million to 45 million doses would be available by the end of December if two of the leading candidates both proved safe and effective. And those candidates require two doses, three weeks to four weeks apart.

Having enough vaccine for everyone — whenever that may be — is different from getting it into people’s arms. Plans for how to accomplish that are still being worked out.

Trump is pushing hard to have a vaccine announced before the election or at least to convince people that such an outcome is possible. But federal health officials and scientists have signaled or outright stated that that is unlikely.

BIDEN VIDEO: “Trump in public: ‘Hoax.’ Trump in private: ‘Killer.’” — video tweeted by Biden on Tuesday.

BIDEN VIDEO, showing Trump saying at a Feb. 28 campaign rally in South Carolina: “The coronavirus — and this is their new hoax.”

THE FACTS: The accusation is misleading. So is the selective video editing that made it appear Trump was calling the coronavirus a “new hoax.”

At the rally featured in the video, Trump actually said the phrases “the coronavirus” and “this is their new hoax” at separate points. Although his meaning is difficult to discern, the broader context of his words shows he was railing against Democrats for their denunciations of his administration’s coronavirus response.

“Now the Democrats are politicizing the coronavirus,” he said. “You know that, right? Coronavirus. They’re politicizing it.” He meandered briefly to the subject of the messy Democratic primary in Iowa, then the Russia investigation before returning to the pandemic. “They tried the impeachment hoax. ... And this is their new hoax.”

Asked at a news conference the next day to clarify his remarks, Trump made clear he was not referring to the coronavirus itself as a hoax.

“No, no, no,” he said. “‘Hoax’ referring to the action that they take to try and pin this on somebody, because we’ve done such a good job. The hoax is on them, not -- I’m not talking about what’s happening here. I’m talking what they’re doing. That’s the hoax.”

He continued: “Certainly not referring to this. How could anybody refer to this? This is very serious stuff.”

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The video's reference to "Trump in private" calling the virus a "killer" comes from the president's interview in April with author and journalist Bob Woodward, whose new book "Rage" contains Trump's acknowledgment that he was playing down the virus threat in public, so as to avoid panic.

But it is incorrect for Biden to suggest, as the video does, that Trump insisted the virus was a hoax before ultimately acknowledging to the author in April that it was deadly and serious.

Trump on several occasions before that did refer publicly to the virus as a "plague" and a "killer," while also falsely dismissing it as something that would go away on its own, in hot weather or otherwise.

VOTING

TRUMP: "There's going to be fraud. It's a disaster. This is going to be the scam of all time." — news conference Friday.

TRUMP: "The big Unsolicited Ballot States should give it up NOW, before it is too late, and ask people to go to the Polling Booths and, like always before, VOTE. Otherwise, MAYHEM!!! Solicited Ballots (absentee) are OK." — tweet Thursday.

THE FACTS: Trump is overstating the potential for "mayhem" and fraud in "big unsolicited ballot states."

There is no such thing as an "unsolicited" ballot. Five states routinely send ballots to all registered voters so they can choose to vote through the mail or in person. Four other states and the District of Columbia will be adopting that system in November, as will almost every county in Montana. Election officials note that, by registering to vote, people are effectively requesting a ballot, so it makes no sense to call the materials sent to them "unsolicited."

More broadly speaking, voter fraud has proved exceedingly rare. The Brennan Center for Justice in 2017 ranked the risk of ballot fraud at 0.00004% to 0.0009%, based on studies of past elections.

In the five states that regularly send ballots to all voters who have registered, there have been no major cases of fraud or difficulty counting the votes.

TRUMP: "Because of the new and unprecedented massive amount of unsolicited ballots which will be sent to 'voters', or wherever, this year, the Nov 3rd Election result may NEVER BE ACCURATELY DETERMINED, which is what some want." — tweet Thursday.

THE FACTS: It's highly unlikely that any chaos in states with universal mail-in voting will cause the election result to "never be accurately determined."

The five states that already have such balloting have had time to strengthen their systems, while four new states adopting it — California, New Jersey, Nevada and Vermont — have not. Of those nine states, only Nevada is a battleground, worth six electoral votes and only likely to be pivotal in a national presidential deadlock. The others, including the District of Columbia, are overwhelmingly Democratic.

The main states that are being contested — Arizona, Florida, Michigan, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin — only send mail ballots to voters who request them. Trump said Thursday that such "solicited" ballots are absolutely "OK."

Trump frequently blasts mail-in voting as flawed and fraudulent while insisting that mail ballots in certain states such as Florida, a must-win state for him, are fine. But mail-in ballots are cast in the same way as what Trump refers to as "absentee" mail ballots, with the same level of scrutiny such as signature verification in many states. In court filings, the Trump campaign has acknowledged that mail-in and absentee ballots are legally interchangeable terms.

States nationwide expect a surge in mail-in voting due to the coronavirus threat.

TRUMP: "Unsolicited Ballots are uncontrollable, totally open to ELECTION INTERFERENCE by foreign countries, and will lead to massive chaos and confusion!" — tweet Thursday.

THE FACTS: Mail-in ballots aren't the biggest risk for foreign interference.

Trying to influence a federal election through mail-in ballots would probably mean paying thousands of U.S. citizens, carefully selected in pivotal states, who are willing to conspire with a foreign government and risk detection and prosecution.

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Far easier and cheaper would be a social media campaign seeking to discourage certain groups of people from voting, which is something the FBI has warned about. Or a cyberattack on voter registration data that would eliminate certain voters from the rolls. That could cause havoc at polling places or election offices as officials attempt to count ballots from people who are "missing" from their voter databases.

Attorney General Bill Barr has raised the possibility that a "foreign country could print up tens of thousands of counterfeit ballots." He argued they would be hard to detect, but that's been disputed by election experts.

Mail-in ballots are printed on special paper and must be formatted correctly in order to be processed and counted. Ballots are specific to each precinct, often with a long list of local races, and would be identified as fraudulent if everything didn't match precisely.

TRUMP: "The Governor of Nevada worked very hard to cancel all of our venues. Despite the fact that he controls the state, he failed, but would have rather done rally outside. Can you imagine this man is in charge ... of the Ballots in Nevada!? Not fair, Rigged Election!" — tweets Monday.

THE FACTS: You don't have to imagine that man being in charge of the election because he isn't.

Whatever his beef with Nevada's Democratic Gov. Steve Sisolak, the governor isn't running the state's new all-mail election in November. That responsibility falls to Nevada's secretary of state, Barbara Cegavske. She is a Republican.

ABORTION

TRUMP, on Virginia's governor: "He is in favor of executing babies after birth - this isn't late-term abortion, this is a step way beyond!" — tweet Friday, when advance voting opened in Virginia.

THE FACTS: This a gross distortion of Democratic Gov. Ralph Northam's position on late-term abortion. Northam brought trouble on himself with ambiguous comments on the subject but he has certainly not called for executing babies, which is a crime.

It is not necessarily a crime to forgo sophisticated medical intervention in cases where severe fetal abnormalities leave a newborn with no chance of survival. This has happened on rare occasions in the course of a late-term abortion. The U.S. government recorded 143 deaths between 2003 and 2014 involving infants born alive during attempted abortions.

This is the subject Northam addressed more than a year ago in a radio interview when he expressed support for state legislation that would allow late-term abortions. He said if a woman were to want an abortion as she's going into labor, the baby would be delivered and "resuscitated if that's what the mother and the family desired, and then a discussion would ensue" between doctors and the mother. He did not elaborate on the circumstances or what the discussion would be.

Organizations representing obstetricians and gynecologists say laws already provide protections to every healthy newborn, whether born during a failed abortion or under other circumstances.

But when anomalies are so severe that a newborn would die soon after birth, a family may choose what's known as palliative care or comfort care. This might involve allowing the baby to die naturally without medical intervention.

Similar decisions about whether to extend life support in hopeless cases are faced by the families of patients of any age. When families decide not to continue medical intervention in such a case, they are not "executing" the patient.

OBAMA'S NOBEL PEACE PRIZE

TRUMP: "You know, Obama came into office, they gave him the Nobel Prize, like almost immediately, right? In fact, he didn't even know why he got it. He didn't even know. He had no idea why he got it and he was right about that because nobody else does either. They still don't know." -- rally in Minden, Nevada, Sept. 12.

TRUMP: "But it's true, Obama got it for no reason whatsoever." -- rally in Henderson, Nevada, Sept. 13.

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Neither of Trump's oft-stated assertions about Obama and his Nobel Peace Prize is true. The Nobel committee announced Obama as recipient of the prize on Oct. 9, 2009, nearly nine months after his inauguration -- that's not "almost immediately."

As far as the reason for awarding the prize to Obama, the committee was quite clear in its 258-word statement issued 11 years ago, which focused on "his extraordinary efforts to strengthen international diplomacy and cooperation between peoples" and noted in particular "Obama's vision of and work for a world without nuclear weapons."

"Only very rarely has a person to the same extent as Obama captured the world's attention and given its people hope for a better future," the committee said in its statement.

To be sure, the prize reflected aspirations more than accomplishments. When Obama was asked later why he got the prize, he did say: "To be honest, I don't know." He said they give those prizes "to just about anybody these days." He was making self-deprecating jokes, which Trump turned against him at his rally.

But agree or disagree with the committee's decision, it gave its reasons for honoring Obama.

Associated Press writers Nicholas Riccardi in Denver and Lauran Neergaard, Eric Tucker and Douglass K. Daniel in Washington contributed to this report.

EDITOR'S NOTE — A look at the veracity of claims by political figures.

Find AP Fact Checks at <http://apnews.com/APFactCheck>

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Police, protesters clash as London eyes tighter virus rules

By SYLVIA HUI Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Police in London clashed with protesters Saturday at a rally against coronavirus restrictions, even as the mayor warned that it was "increasingly likely" that the British capital would soon need to introduce tighter rules to curb a sharp rise in infections.

Scuffles broke out as police moved in to disperse hundreds of demonstrators who gathered in London's central Trafalgar Square. Some protesters formed blockades to stop officers from making arrests and traffic was brought to a halt in the busy area.

The "Resist and Act for Freedom" rally saw dozens of people holding banners and placards such as one reading "This is now Tyranny" and chanting "Freedom!" Police said there were "pockets of hostility and outbreaks of violence towards officers."

Britain's Conservative government this week imposed a ban on all social gatherings of more than six people in a bid to tackle a steep rise in COVID-19 cases in the country. Stricter localized restrictions have also been introduced in large parts of England's northwestern cities, affecting some 13.5 million people.

But officials are considering tougher national restrictions after Prime Minister Boris Johnson confirmed Friday that Britain is "now seeing a second wave" of coronavirus, following the same trend seen in France, Spain and across Europe.

London Mayor Sadiq Khan said the city may impose some of the measures already in place elsewhere in the U.K. That may include curfews, earlier closing hours for pubs and banning household visits.

"I am extremely concerned by the latest evidence I've seen today from public health experts about the accelerating speed at which COVID-19 is now spreading here in London," Khan said Friday. "It is increasingly likely that, in London, additional measures will soon be required to slow the spread of the virus."

The comments came as new daily coronavirus cases for Britain rose to 4,322, the highest since early May.

The latest official estimates released Friday also show that new infections and hospital admissions are doubling every seven to eight days in the U.K. A survey of randomly selected people — not including those in hospitals or nursing homes — estimated that almost 60,000 people in England had COVID-19 in the week of Sept. 4, about 1 in 900 people.

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Britain has Europe's worst death toll in the pandemic with 41,821 confirmed virus-related deaths, but experts say all numbers undercount the true impact of the pandemic.

In a statement, British police said the protesters Saturday were "putting themselves and others at risk" and urged all those at the London rally to disperse immediately or risk arrest.

Follow AP's pandemic coverage at <http://apnews.com/VirusOutbreak> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

Evangelicals at base of Trump hopes for Pennsylvania repeat

By MARK SCOLFORO Associated Press

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) — President Donald Trump's homestretch push to repeat his razor thin victory in Pennsylvania four years ago won't happen without white evangelicals, and there are signs that critical component of his coalition hasn't lost the faith.

It's a group that has often made the difference for Republicans on the Pennsylvania ballot. And while some born-again voters had misgivings about Trump in 2016, they helped him eke out a 44,000-vote margin of victory in the pivotal swing state. This time around, they sound eager to repay him for supporting their agenda.

Trump's policies have helped keep in the fold evangelicals who otherwise might have been discomfited by his style. Their opinions on a range of political issues make them among the least likely voters to jump to former Vice President Joe Biden, the Democrat.

A recent NBC News/Marist poll in Pennsylvania found 79% of white evangelicals saying they will vote for Trump in this year's presidential election.

"Many of us who support the president wish sometimes he didn't say the things he did, wish he had a character more in line with scriptural teachings," said Laszlo Pasztor, a retired military officer from Carlisle who organizes evangelicals politically. "Many of us say he's a work in progress. However, his policies, nevertheless, have probably been more Christian than the policies of any president in my lifetime."

The Biden campaign frames "the real religious issue" at stake as systemic racism, while evangelical Trump voters point to his support for anti-abortion efforts, school choice, religious freedom and the movement of the U.S. embassy in Israel to Jerusalem.

Like-minded judicial appointees are key to the evangelical political agenda. Trump has had a transformative impact on the courts system: Last year, the number of federal judicial appointees approved by the U.S. Senate was more than twice the annual average over the past three decades. And conservatives have now set their sights on what would be the Trump administration's third U.S. Supreme Court seat, following the death of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg on Friday.

The vacancy is "an opportunity, albeit it's going to be quite turbulent and challenging because of the timing," Pasztor said, adding that participants in an online video conference for evangelical campaign efforts on Saturday morning prayed for "the comfort of Ginsburg's family."

Evangelicals, Christians who generally have had a "born again" personal religious conversion or awakening, form a significant slice of the electorate. They believe in the Bible as God's literal word and embrace an activist aspect to their faith. Trump was raised as a Presbyterian, a mainline Protestant denomination, and Biden is a practicing Catholic.

White evangelical voters made up 17% of the 2018 midterm electorate in Pennsylvania, according to an AP VoteCast survey. And a Pew Research Center analysis found 20% of voters nationwide in the 2016 election were white evangelicals; 77% of them backed Trump. Black Protestant voters often share religious views with white evangelicals, but they largely vote Democratic.

While evangelical voters are scattered across Pennsylvania, they are most concentrated in the vast T-shaped swath of farm and forest land outside the greater Philadelphia and Pittsburgh regions.

"It's a strong, quiet undercurrent that will sweep the T again in huge numbers," said state Senate President Pro Tempore Joe Scarnati, a Republican who represents a sparsely populated district along the New York border.

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Larry Denver, who helped found the Faith and Freedom Coalition state chapter, said his enthusiasm for Trump has grown since 2016. Like many other evangelicals, Trump was not his first choice four years ago — he favored U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas in the Republican primary.

"Throughout the scriptures, God has done most of his work through the most unlikely people," said Denver, a retired veteran from the Philadelphia suburbs. "The people he picks are not normally the ones you'd think would be involved."

Trump is "using white evangelicals, he's playing on their anti-intellectualism," said John Fea, an American history professor at Messiah University outside Harrisburg and an evangelical churchgoer who has written extensively about evangelicals in politics and public life.

"I feel that most white evangelicals who support Trump are often sacrificing the integrity of the office of the president," Fea said. "They're supporting a person — the list goes on — a liar, someone who has constantly played with racist language."

Biden's campaign hopes to make some inroads, with plans to launch an "evangelicals for Biden" effort next week, according to Josh Dickson, the campaign's national faith engagement director.

"In this moment, there is a stark moral contrast between the common good values of the Biden-Harris agenda, which deeply aligns with the values of people of faith, and the agenda of the current administration, which is based in divisiveness and fear," Dickson said in a statement.

Fea said Biden may be able to reach enough evangelicals to make a difference in a close race, particularly around Philadelphia, but he sees in evangelicals devotion to a political effort that has been entrenched for decades.

"Is the political playbook going to hold up even with a corrupt guy who doesn't hold our values? The answer is yes, the political playbook is the most important thing," Fea said.

Evangelicals often cite Trump's vice presidential selection of Mike Pence, who championed evangelical issues while an Indiana congressman and governor, as a turning point in getting behind Trump. They've noticed when Trump and Pence have brought up faith and made other religious references in public remarks.

"We have a vice president that not only speaks our language but has shown day in and day out that he is a man of God," said Justin Behrens, an evangelical Christian who chairs the Republican Party in Luzerne County, which Trump flipped in 2016 with a 25-point swing from President Barack Obama's reelection.

Trump needs his appeal to evangelicals to pay off ahead of the Nov. 3 election with campaign help, donations and the type of energy that makes someone persuade fence-sitting friends and neighbors.

Pasztor has been volunteering with the Trump Victory Faith Coalition's local organization and organizing voter registration drives, poll workers and neighborhood networks within the evangelical community, to reach those who did not turn out for Trump in 2016.

What remains to be seen is how the evangelical vote will play out at a time when the coronavirus pandemic is limiting the informal Sunday political talk at churches. Trump needs to energize that evangelical, churchgoing part of his base to claim Pennsylvania's 20 electoral votes.

Evangelical voters "tend to be competitive, they tend to be out front, they tend to be more involved, they go to rallies," said veteran Pennsylvania pollster Terry Madonna, a political science professor at Franklin & Marshall College. "They are critical."

Associated Press polling reporter Hannah Fingerhut in Washington contributed to this story.

AP's Advance Voting guide brings you the facts about voting early, by mail or absentee from each state: <https://interactives.ap.org/advance-voting-2020>

Underwater and on fire: US climate change magnifies extremes

By SETH BORENSTEIN AP Science Writer

America's worsening climate change problem is as polarized as its politics. Some parts of the country have been burning this month while others were underwater in extreme weather disasters.

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The already parched West is getting drier and suffering deadly wildfires because of it, while the much wetter East keeps getting drenched in mega-rainfall events, some hurricane related and others not. Climate change is magnifying both extremes, but it may not be the only factor, several scientists told The Associated Press.

"The story in the West is really going to be ... these hot dry summers getting worse and the fire compounded by decreasing precipitation," said Columbia University climate scientist Richard Seager. "But in the eastern part more of the climate change impact story is going to be more intense precipitation. We see it in Sally."

North Carolina State climatologist Kathie Dello, a former deputy state climatologist in Oregon, this week was talking with friends about the massive Oregon fires while she was huddled under a tent, dodging 4 inches (10 centimeters) of rain falling on the North Carolina mountains.

"The things I worry about are completely different now," Dello said. "We know the West has had fires and droughts. It's hot and dry. We know the East has had hurricanes and it's typically more wet. But we're amping up both of those."

In the federal government's 2017 National Climate Assessment, scientists wrote a special chapter warning of surprises due to global warming from burning of coal, oil and natural gas. And one of the first ones mentioned was "compound extreme events."

"We certainly are getting extremes at the same time with climate change," said University of Illinois climate scientist Donald Wuebbles, one of the main authors.

Since 1980, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has tracked billion-dollar disasters, adjusting for inflation, with four happening in August including the western wildfires. NOAA applied meteorologist Adam Smith said that this year, with at least 14 already, has a high likelihood of being a record.

Fifteen of the 22 billion-dollar droughts in the past 30 years hit states west of the Rockies, while 23 of the 28 billion-dollar non-hurricane flooding events were to the east.

For more than a century scientists have looked at a divide — at the 100th meridian — that splits the country with dry and brown conditions to the west and wet and green ones to the east.

Seager found that the wet-dry line has moved about 140 miles (225 kilometers) east — from western Kansas to eastern Kansas — since 1980.

And it's getting more extreme.

Nearly three-quarters of the West is now in drought, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor. Scientists say the West is in about the 20th year of what they call a "megadrought," the only one since Europeans came to North America.

Meager summer rains are down 26% in the last 30 years west of the Rockies. California's anemic summer rain has dropped 41% in the past 30 years. In the past three years, California hasn't received more than a third of an inch (0.8 centimeters) of rain in June, July and August, according to NOAA records.

California also is suffering its worst fire year on record, with more than 5,300 square miles (13,760 square kilometers) burned. That's more than double the area of the previous record set in 2018. People have been fleeing unprecedented and deadly fires in Oregon and Washington with Colorado also burning this month.

"Climate change is a major factor behind the increase in western U.S. wildfires," said A. Park Williams, a Columbia University scientist who studies fires and climate.

"Since the early 1970s, California's annual wildfire extent increased fivefold, punctuated by extremely large and destructive wildfires in 2017 and 2018," a 2019 study headed by Williams said, attributing it mostly to "drying of fuels promoted by human-induced warming."

During the western wildfires, more than a foot rain fell on Alabama and Florida as Hurricane Sally parked on the Gulf Coast, dropping as much as 30 inches (76 centimeters) of rain at Orange Beach, Alabama. Studies say hurricanes are slowing down, allowing them to deposit more rain.

The week before Sally hit, a non-tropical storm dumped half a foot of rain on a Washington, D.C., suburb in just a few hours. Bigger downpours are becoming more common in the East, where the summer has gotten 16% wetter in the last 30 years.

In August 2016, a non-tropical storm dumped 31 inches (nearly 79 centimeters) of rain in parts of Loui-

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siana, killing dozens of people and causing nearly \$11 billion in damage. Louisiana and Texas had up to 20 inches (51 centimeters) of rain in March of 2016. In June 2016, torrential rain caused a \$1 billion in flood damage in West Virginia.

In the 1950s, areas east of the Rockies averaged 87 downpours of five inches or more a year. In the 2010s, that had soared to 149 a year, according to data from NOAA research meteorologist Ken Kunkel.

It's simple physics. With each degree Celsius (1.8 degrees Fahrenheit) that the air warms, it holds 7% more moisture that can come down as rain. The East has warmed that much since 1985, according to NOAA.

While climate change is a factor, Seager and Williams said what's happening is more extreme than climate models predict and there must be other, possibly natural weather phenomenon also at work.

Pennsylvania State University climate scientist Michael Mann said that La Nina — a temporary natural cooling of parts of the equatorial Pacific that changes weather worldwide — is partly responsible for some of the drought and hurricane issues this summer. But that's on top of climate change, so together they make for "dual disasters playing out in the U.S.," Mann said.

As for where you can go to escape climate disasters, Dello said, "I don't know where you can go to outrun climate change anymore."

"I'm thinking Vermont," she said, then added Vermont had bad floods from 2011's Hurricane Irene.

Read stories on climate issues by The Associated Press at <https://apnews.com/hub/climate>.

Follow Seth Borenstein on Twitter at @borenbears.

The Associated Press Health and Science Department receives support from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

Coronavirus-wary Bavarians kick off toned-down Oktoberfest

BERLIN (AP) — Oktoberfest celebrations got underway Saturday in Munich with the traditional tapping of a keg and the cry of "O'zapft is!" — "It's tapped!" — but this year's festival is very non-traditional and highly regulated due to coronavirus concerns.

The official Oktoberfest has been cancelled, so there's no huge tents full of people or hundreds of stands selling food. Instead, 50 of the southern German city's beer halls and other establishments are hosting their own, smaller parties that follow guidelines on mask wearing, social distancing and other restrictions.

Former Mayor Christian Ude got the party started, hammering a tap into a 20 liter (5 gallon) keg — a tenth of the size of the Oktoberfest norm — at the Schillerbraeu beer hall while dressed in Bavarian lederhosen leather pants and wearing a protective mask.

Meantime, police patrolled the regular festival grounds to make sure no spontaneous parties broke out.

The loss of Oktoberfest is a huge hit for the Bavarian city, which saw 6.3 million guests flood in last year for the festival's 186th year. They were served 7.3 million liters (about 15.5 million pints) of beer over 16 days and consumed 124 oxen, among other traditional foods.

This year's toned-down celebrations run through Oct. 4.

Follow AP's pandemic coverage at <http://apnews.com/VirusOutbreak> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Sunday, Sept. 20, the 264th day of 2020. There are 102 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

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On Sept. 20, 2017, Hurricane Maria, the strongest hurricane to hit Puerto Rico in more than 80 years, struck the island, wiping out as much as 75 percent of the power distribution lines and causing an island-wide blackout.

On this date:

In 1519, Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan and his crew set out from Spain on five ships to find a western passage to the Spice Islands. (Magellan was killed enroute, but one of his ships eventually circled the world.)

In 1873, panic swept the floor of the New York Stock Exchange in the wake of railroad bond defaults and bank failures.

In 1881, Chester A. Arthur was sworn in as the 21st president of the United States, succeeding the assassinated James A. Garfield.

In 1958, Martin Luther King Jr. was seriously wounded during a book signing at a New York City department store when he was stabbed in the chest by Izola Curry. (Curry was later found mentally incompetent; she died at a Queens, New York, nursing home in 2015 at age 98.)

In 1962, James Meredith, a Black student, was blocked from enrolling at the University of Mississippi by Democratic Gov. Ross R. Barnett. (Meredith was later admitted.)

In 1963, President Kennedy proposed a joint U-S-Soviet expedition to the moon.

In 1967, the Cunard liner RMS Queen Elizabeth 2 was christened by Britain's Queen Elizabeth II in Clydebank, Scotland.

In 1973, singer-songwriter Jim Croce died in a plane crash near Natchitoches, Louisiana; he was 30.

In 1984, a suicide car bomber attacked the U.S. Embassy annex in north Beirut, killing at least 14 people, including two Americans and 12 Lebanese. The family sitcoms "The Cosby Show" and "Who's the Boss?" premiered on NBC and ABC, respectively.

In 1995, in a move that stunned Wall Street, AT&T Corporation announced it was splitting into three companies.

In 2000, Independent Counsel Robert Ray announced the end of the Whitewater investigation, saying there was insufficient evidence to warrant charges against President and Mrs. Clinton.

In 2001, during an address to a joint session of Congress, President George W. Bush announced a new Cabinet-level office to fortify homeland security and named Pennsylvania Governor Tom Ridge its director.

Ten years ago: The United Nations opened a three-day Millennium Development Goals summit to assess members' progress in the decade since promising to end global poverty. President Barack Obama reached out to skeptical voters who were still hurting long after the declared end of the recession, imploring them to stick with him in upcoming midterm congressional elections.

Five years ago: Pope Francis met with Fidel Castro after urging tens of thousands of Cubans to serve one another and not an ideology during a Mass in Havana's Plaza of the Revolution. The CEO of Volkswagen apologized and VW customers said they felt duped after the Environmental Protection Agency revealed that the German automaker had skirted clean air rules by rigging emissions tests for about 500,000 diesel cars. At the Emmys, the HBO series "Game of Thrones" won a record 12 awards; Viola Davis became the first Black woman to win an Emmy for best drama series actress for "How to Get Away with Murder." Poet C.K. Williams, 78, died in Hopewell, New Jersey. Actor Jack Larson, 87, TV's Jimmy Olsen in "Adventures of Superman," died in Los Angeles.

One year ago: President Donald Trump angrily defended himself against a complaint from an intelligence official over his contacts with the president of Ukraine; he said the complaint came from a "partisan whistleblower," even though Trump also said he didn't know who had made it. Walmart said it would stop selling electronic cigarettes at its namesake stores and at Sam's Clubs in the U.S. once it sold out of its existing inventory. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau acknowledged that he had let down his supporters, and all Canadians of color, by appearing years earlier in brownface and blackface. Three Mile Island in Pennsylvania, the 1979 site of the nation's worst commercial nuclear power accident, was shut down by its owner after producing electricity for 45 years. Antonio Brown was released by the New England Patriots after a second woman accused him of sexual misconduct; he had played just one game since

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being signed by the Patriots.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Sophia Loren is 86. Rock musician Chuck Panozzo is 72. Actor Tony Denison is 71. Hockey Hall of Famer Guy LaFleur is 69. Actor Debbi Morgan is 69. Jazz musician Peter White is 66. Actor Betsy Brantley is 65. Actor Gary Cole is 64. TV news correspondent Deborah Roberts is 60. Country-rock musician Joseph Shreve (Flynnville Train) is 59. Rock musician Randy Bradbury (Pennywise) is 56. Actor Kristen Johnston is 53. Rock singers Gunnar and Matthew Nelson are 53. Rock musician Ben Shepherd is 52. Actor Erika Okuma is 48. Actor-model Moon Bloodgood is 45. Actor Jon Bernthal is 44. Singer The-Dream is 43. Actor Charlie Weber is 42. Rock musician Rick Woolstenhulme (WOOL'-sten-hyoolm) (Lifehouse) is 41. Rapper Yung Joc is 40. Actor Crystle Stewart is 39. Actor Aldis Hodge is 34. Rock drummer Jack Lawless is 33. Actor Malachi (MAL'-ah-ky) Kirby is 31.