

Groton Daily Independent

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PRINCESS PROM

On GDILIVE.COM

Sunday, April 25, 2021, 4:30 p.m.

Groton Area High School Gym



OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

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United Methodist Church

Groton and Conde

Sunday, April 25, 2021

Conde Worship 9:00 AM
Sunday School 10:00 AM
Groton Worship 11:00 AM

Monday, April 26, 2021

PEO - outside group 7:30 PM

Tuesday, April 27, 2021

Bible Study 10:00 AM

Wednesday, April 28, 2021

UMYF 7:00 PM

Sunday, May 2, 2021

Communion in Worship
Conde Worship 9:00 AM
Sunday School 10:00 AM
Groton Worship 11:00 AM

Emmanuel Lutheran Church

Groton

Sunday, April 11

9 a.m.: Worship/Communion
Milestones: 1st & 4th grade

Monday, April 26

6:30 a.m.: Bible Study

Wednesday, April 28

6 p.m.: Confirmation

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton &

St. Joseph Catholic

Groton and Turton

Weekend Mass Schedule

Saturday 4:30pm Groton
Sunday 8:30am Groton & 11:00am Turton

Weekday

Tues 5:00pm Turton, W-F 8:30am Groton
Sat 10am Newman Center

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

Each morning before Weekday Mass at 7:15am
Tues 3:45pm Turton

Confessions:

Sat. 3:45-4:15pm & Sun. 7:45am to 8:15am (G)
Sun. 10:30-10:45am (T)

St. John's Lutheran Church

Groton

Sunday, April 25, 2021

Bible Study, 8 a.m.
St. John's Worship, 9 a.m.
Zion Lutheran Worship 11 a.m.
Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.

Heaven Bound Ministries

Pierpont

Buffalo Lake Lutheran

Rural Eden

Sunday, April 25: Worship at Buffalo Lake 10:30 a.m.

Saturday, May 1: Worship at Pierpont, 5:30 p.m.

Sunday, May 2: Worship at Buffalo Lake 10:30 a.m.

**To submit your monthly or weekly church calendar, email to
news@grotonsd.net**

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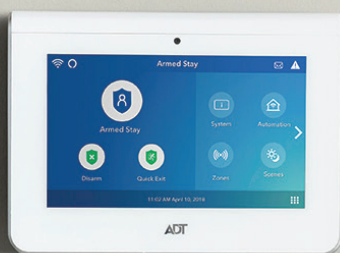
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General: Additional charges may apply in areas that require guard response service for municipal alarm verification. System remains property of ADT. Local permit fees may be required. Prices and offers subject to change and may vary by market. Additional taxes and fees may apply. Satisfactory credit required. A security deposit may be required. Simulated screen images and photos are for illustrative purposes only.

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Arena operators in South Dakota hope financial losses from COVID-19 are now behind them

Mark Andersen

South Dakota News Watch

Civic centers and arenas across South Dakota suffered significant financial losses during the COVID-19 pandemic but are seeing indicators of the potential for a return to profitability.

Auditoriums sat empty for a few months or more in the early days of the pandemic in early 2020, and bookings remained slow and event attendance was down through the rest of the year and into 2021.

Event cancellations or lost new business resulted from a desire by arena operators to be safe and by hesitancy of groups to gather indoors during the pandemic.

Operators had to reimburse thousands of dollars in pre-paid rents, lost money due to a drop in new business and saw unexpected expenses to provide social distancing and personal protective equipment.

Empty auditoriums led to employee furloughs or staff reductions at larger event centers in Sioux Falls to Rapid City and at smaller arenas in Aberdeen, Mitchell and Huron.

David Eckert, supervisor of the Aberdeen Recreation and Cultural Center, was told: "You probably should be prepared for up to a 20 percent budget cut."

The ARCC, as it is known in Aberdeen, is a multifaceted facility similar to the Washington Pavilion in Sioux Falls. It caters to some larger events, such as concerts and circuses, but it also serves local arts, sports, weddings.

The ARCC hosts 1,500 events of various sizes throughout the year, and in March 2020, dozens of scheduled events were crossed off the center booking calendar.

The facility refunded about \$150,000 to groups that cancelled, Eckert said. The pandemic also brought new expenses, including \$20,000 spent last year on masks and other COVID-19 prevention.

Immediately after COVID-19 led to shut downs, the ARCC laid off roughly 40 part-time staff. When it reopened in June 2020, it tried to refill those positions, but that proved difficult. Some workers stayed away due to concerns about their personal safety, while others were doing well on enhanced unemployment checks.

The event industry was hit harder by COVID-19 outside of South Dakota, which did not have strict shutdowns in place and had advertised that the state was open to visitors.

Some South Dakota event centers reopened in June 2020, enabling directors to creatively muddle through to keep revenues from tanking.



The Rushmore Plaza Civic Center in Rapid City furloughed employees to save money during the early days of the pandemic. Photo:

Bart Pfankuch, South Dakota News Watch

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Strong attendance at recent events has given hope to a financial revival in 2021 compared to 2020 for operators of the Denny Sanford Premier Center in Sioux Falls and at other arenas across the state. Photo: Bart Pfankuch,

South Dakota News Watch

Attendance and income is down across the board, but directors avoided the worst, and optimism has returned as promoters begin to consider possible event dates amid the rollout of COVID-19 vaccines.

Flexibility has been the focus at Rushmore Plaza, which accommodates whatever safety protocols the event organizers request, said Priscilla Dominguez, director of corporate sales and marketing in Rapid City.

Civic center directors cautiously hope for a new normal to emerge by this fall or early 2022. Heavy turnout for some recent events, like the Black Hills Stock Show & Rodeo at the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center in Rapid City in February, demonstrates that people are eager for social gatherings. The 2021 stock show saw its best attendance in five years.

The situation is similar at the Denny Sanford Premier Center in Sioux Falls.

In February, attendance at the annual wiener-dog ice races, a promotion for a local hockey team, brought in 6,000 visitors, up 50% from the typical 4,000, said Mike Krewson, general manager. Attendance at recent gun and home shows also equaled or exceeded those of prior years.

"It's all cause for hope and looking on the bright side," Krewson said.

South Dakota's smaller cities tend to operate their civic centers directly, potentially exposing taxpayers to financial downturns. Centers in Aberdeen, Mitchell and Huron exist to serve and enhance the community, the directors said. Subsidies are expected, but so far this year required no heroic taxpayer contributions. Federal assistance helped in some cases.

In Mitchell, the city government operates the Corn Palace mostly as a draw for tourists. Events largely pay for arena staffing, but the city pays for utilities and building improvements. After COVID-19 hit, the city purchased an infrared air purification system to kill floating viruses at the palace.

Mitchell also fared better than expected. Visitors coming to Mitchell were down 27% for 2020, said Doug Greenway, Corn Palace director, but tourism revenue fell by only 15%.

"There were fewer people, but they spent more," he said.

Mitchell did not furlough its Corn Palace employees, but it shifted workers around. Regular Corn Palace staff were reassigned to tying straw and crafting other decorations to adorn the building exterior. Normally, the city hires 10 to 12 students to do that work over the summer, but this year they were not hired, Greenway said.

The Crossroads Hotel & Huron Event Center is also operated directly by the city. It never fully locked down, but it cut capacity to keep people six feet apart, said Brenda Jager, director of sales and catering. The center has two ballrooms and several meeting rooms, with the largest accommodating 750 people. Conventions, meetings and weddings became cancelled or were postponed.

"The drop in attendance was huge," Jager said. "We used to have meetings every day," she said. "Some weeks (this year) we didn't have anything."

The center has few direct employees and provides catering through a contractor.

In Rapid City, the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center operates as an entirely separate entity from city government, answering to its own board of directors. The center is dependent on income generated through events with some support provided through a local bed, board and booze tax. COVID-19 also curtailed that revenue stream as people stayed home.

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In March 2020, as cancellation calls clogged the civic center phone lines, furloughs were imposed on all 40 civic center employees. The furloughs ranged in duration from four weeks to two months, with the longest reserved for those who could be made whole through emergency federal assistance, Dominguez said.

In Sioux Falls, Premier Center departments were reorganized, and a couple of people were laid off, Krewson said. Remaining staff were kept busy with projects and maintenance, such as painting walls, redecorating, sealing ice rinks and replacing chillers.

Other states have been slower to see convention and arena business return, Krewson said.

"For our national peers, it's still bad," said Krewson. "A lot of buildings in the network are still closed. I've been open and doing business almost that entire time."

Restrictions in other states did affect some South Dakota events. Promoters from other states, Krewson said, would tell him: "I can't leave my state. How can I do an event there?"

To fill empty rooms, event centers got creative. Local businesses needed large rooms where employees could gather yet remain six feet apart. In Aberdeen, the U.S. District Federal Court booked a room to do jury selection.

Directors also found creative ways to limit the danger of virus exposure during events. At the ARCC in Aberdeen, a large dance program typically comprises three recitals lasting more than two hours, leading to congestion in hallways and bathrooms during intermission. This year, instead of three long recitals, there were six shorter ones with no intermissions.

Some changes may endure beyond the pandemic.

In Sioux Falls, the Premier Center implemented cashless concessions, selling everything through credit cards. The industry was already moving in that direction, Krewson said, and it's likely to remain that way when normalcy returns. It's more efficient.

"Cashless speeds up transactions times," Krewson said.

Virtual ticketing might also endure. Eliminating paper tickets removes a touch point, but it also reduces the chance for fraud.

Predictions of when things will return to normal at state civic centers range from this summer to next year, but they're based as much on hope as expectation. However, things are picking up.

"People are just starting to get back into in-person meetings," said Jager of the Huron Event Center. Things began to turn as inoculations rolled out in January. A few summer weddings have already booked spaces.

In Aberdeen, large events began cautiously in December, when the ARCC opened for local high school basketball.

"It's looking hopeful for us that we'll be able to offer larger activities starting this summer," Eckert said.

In Mitchell, Greenway recently booked the Hairball concert, always a big draw there, for November of 2021. "They expect people will be vaccinated," he said.

Larger bands may wait longer before renewing tours, said Krewson.

Country music star Kenny Chesney is pushing off his stadium tour until next year.

About 75 percent capacity must be reached for a concert to become profitable, Krewson said.

"Fifty percent capacity is not going to make anybody any money."

Rising interest in bookings and strong attendance at recent events are positive signs, arena directors say.

In Sioux Falls, the recent State A high school basketball tournament drew about 90 percent of normal attendance, Krewson said, but it helped that Sioux Falls Christian won the title.

In Rapid City, the Rushmore Plaza is at 80 percent of normal.

"We're not hosting all the same events," Dominguez said, "but we're hosting a lot more of them."

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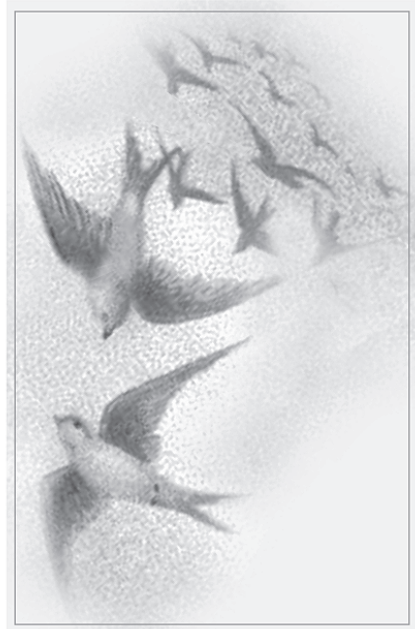
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THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

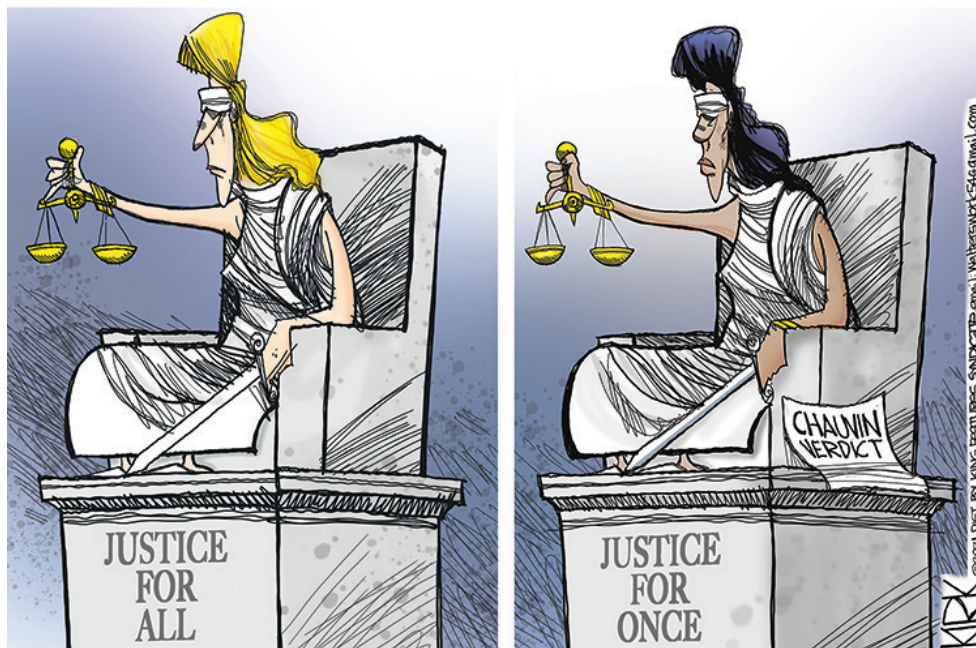
...Now ask the beasts, and they will teach you; and the birds of the air, and they will tell you; or speak to the earth, and it will teach you; and the fish of the sea will explain to you. Who among all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this, in whose hand is the life of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind?

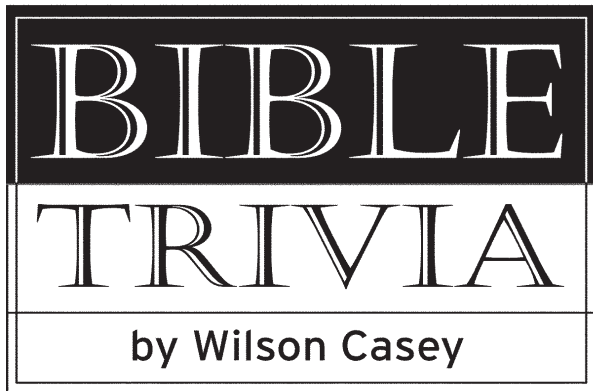
❧ Job 12: 7-10 ❧



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STILL TWO AMERICAS





Banana Coconut Cream Pie

What mother wouldn't be pleased if you presented her with a delicious pie you stirred up just for her on Mother's Day. It gives her a break from kitchen duty and -- unless you tell her -- she'll never know it took you just minutes to make!

- 1 (4-serving) package sugar-free vanilla cook-and-serve pudding mix
- 2/3 cup nonfat dry milk powder
- 1 2/3 cups water
- 1 teaspoon coconut extract
- 1 (6-ounce) purchased graham cracker piecrust
- 1 cup sliced banana
- 1/4 cup flaked coconut
- 2 tablespoons purchased graham cracker crumbs or 2 (2 1/2-inch) graham crackers made into fine crumbs

1. In a medium saucepan, combine dry pudding mix, dry milk powder and water. Cook over medium heat until mixture thickens and starts to boil, stirring constantly. Remove from heat. Stir in coconut extract.

2. Spread 1/2 cup hot filling mixture into piecrust. Evenly layer banana slices and 2 tablespoons coconut over filling. Spoon remaining filling mixture evenly over top.

3. In a small bowl, combine cracker crumbs and remaining 2 tablespoons coconut. Evenly sprinkle crumb mixture over top. Refrigerate for at least 2 hours. Cut into 8 servings.

* Each serving equals: 170 calories, 6g fat, 3g protein, 26g carb., 235mg sodium, 1g fiber; Diabetic Exchanges: 1 1/2 Starch, 1 Fat.

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

2. Emboldened by God's declaration, which Old Testament king went into battle with singers leading the army? *Ahaz, Hezekiah, Manasseh, Jehoshaphat*

3. From 1 Chronicles 29, how many years did David reign over Israel? *7, 33, 40, 57*

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

5. What was Aquila's profession in Corinth? *Tentmaker, Harp player, Mapmaker, Servant*

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

ANSWERS: 1) Old; 2) Jehoshaphat; 3) 40; 4) Edom; 5) Tentmaker; 6) Great-grandson

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

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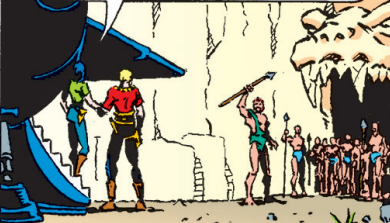
FLASH GORDON

By JIM KEEFE

4-18

HEARING A RECOVERY MISSION FOR A DOWNED ARBORIAN SHIP, FLASH MAKES A QUICK STOP EN ROUTE IN KIRA, THE KINGDOM OF CAVES.

LOOK, FLASH...ZUG'S PEOPLE STILL RECOGNIZE YOU AS THEIR LEADER.*



* FLASH HAD WON THE KINGDOM IN THE TOURNAMENTS OF MONGO.

ZUG, GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN!

I HAVE NEED OF ONE OF YOUR MEN. A SHIP HAS CRASHED IN THE MOUNTAINS NOT FAR FROM FRIGIA. THE PROWESS OF ONE OF YOUR CAVEMEN ON OUR TEAM WOULD BE INVALUABLE.



THERE IS AMONG US ONE WHO CLIMB HIGHER -- WITHOUT WEAKNESS -- THAN ALL OTHER.

THEN THAT'S THE MAN FOR THE JOB.

TENGSI, COME HERE!



YOU SHALL JOIN FLASH ON MISSION-- SERVE HIM.

IT WOULD BE MY HONOR, O KING.



TO BE CONT'D ~

Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS

MISS ANY TEE-TO-GREEN SHOT AND YOU CAN STILL RECOVER. MISS A SHORT PUTT AND IT'S A STROKE GONE FOREVER. THAT'S WHY THERE'S SUCH HEAVY PRESSURE ON THOSE SO-CALLED "GIMMIES."

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A POSITIVE ATTITUDE IS THE ONLY ANSWER WHICH COMES FROM CONFIDENCE IN YOUR STROKE AND GREENS-READING ABILITY.

SO SPEND TIME ON THE PRACTICE PUTTING GREEN, AS WELL AS ON THE DRIVING RANGE. IF YOU ASPIRE TO BEING A COMPLETE GOLFER.



No Miracle Supplement Can Cure Heart Disease

DEAR DR. ROACH: I ran across a recent article of yours about carotid artery stenosis. In this article you state that "there is no miracle food, drink or supplement that can clear out arteries."

This is actually not true. I'd like to point out Dr. Dean Ornish's work as well as Dr. Caldwell Esselstyn's work on heart disease. Both doctors showed regression in coronary plaques in their patients who followed a whole food plant-based diet. One young patient who suffered a heart attack even saw complete reversal in his coronary artery blockage on a whole food plant-

based diet.

I'd encourage you to check out their studies and books if you haven't done so already. Their work is very encouraging and shows that we do not have to succumb to heart disease. -- K.G.

ANSWER: I appreciate your writing to give me a chance to make my point a little more clearly.

I do want to emphasize that the patient was asking specifically about YouTube videos for "food, drinks and diet regimens that clear arteries." I have seen some of these, which say, for example, all you need is a cup a day of lemon juice and turmeric to clear your arteries. There are health-care professionals in the media who tout simple cures to reverse heart disease. These are what I refer to when I say there are no miracle cures.

That is not what you are referring to in the work of Drs. Ornish and Esselstyn. Theirs was a significant lifestyle intervention, not a miracle supplement. Dr. Esselstyn did a small, uncontrolled observational study; Dr. Ornish did a small controlled study. In the Esselstyn study, the diet was quite restrictive:

"Initially the intervention avoided all added oils and processed foods that contain oils, fish, meat, fowl, dairy products, avocado, nuts and excess salt. Patients were also asked to avoid sugary foods (sucrose, fructose and drinks containing them, refined carbohydrates, fruit juices, syrups, and molasses). Subsequently, we also excluded caffeine and fructose."

The Ornish study had a similar completely vegetarian diet, but 10% of calories from fat was allowed. In addition, there was (as there was not in Esselstyn) mandatory stress reduction time, and all smokers in the study quit. This study's results, proven by angiography, showed reversal in coronary blockages by 3% in five years, compared with 12% worsening in the control group in the same time.

Esselstyn analyzed the study by those judged adherent and nonadherent. For any subject who was judged nonadherent, 62% had coronary events. Less than 1% of adherent subjects experienced an adverse event.

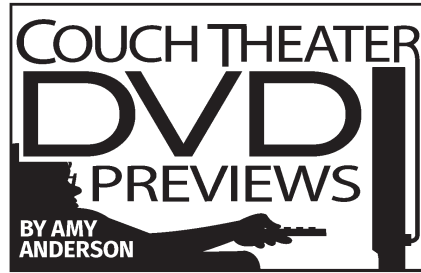
Together, these studies show that in a group of extraordinarily motivated study subjects, coronary lesions can undergo regression with a multi-interventional approach including profound diet changes and sometimes other lifestyle interventions. These aren't miracle diets. It's an entire dramatic change in lifestyle.

Extreme lifestyle changes are not necessary to show benefit. In the PREDIMED study, a Mediterranean-style diet was recommended, with high amounts of fruits, vegetables, legumes, olive oil and nuts, with less red and processed meat, less commercial baked goods and spread fats, and less soft drinks. Those who were recommended this diet had fewer heart attacks, strokes and death than those who were in the control group and were recommended a low-fat diet.

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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April 29 is International Dance Day, in case you didn't know. It's so placed on the calendar to celebrate the birthday of Jean-Georges Noverre (1727-1810), creator of modern ballet. That's according to the International Theatre Institute, the founder and creator of IDD. Here are seven films that each celebrate the art of dance in their own special way.

Dirty Dancing — Way up in the Catskills, Francis "Baby" Houseman (Jennifer Grey) learns more than the meringue from resident hunky dance instructor Johnny Castle (Patrick Swayze). When Johnny's is looking for a dance partner for the big, summer-ending dance, Baby steps in, falls in love and learns to fly.

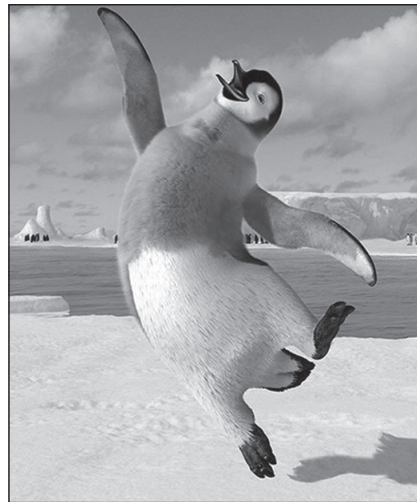
Black Swan — Natalie Portman plays Nina, a passionate, talented, obsessive dancer in Darren Aronofsky's dark psychological thriller. As a replacement for the previous prima ballerina, Nina fixates on the possibility of being replaced, personified by newcomer Lily (Mila Kunis).

Happy Feet — Elijah Wood voices Mumble, an Emperor penguin who can dance but not sing. This is a problem, because Emperor penguins find their soul mate by each casting a unique heartsong. Mumble stumbles his way through courtship, attempting to win the heart of Gloria (Brittney Murphy) while standing up for his own unique heartsong.

Billy Elliot — The story of an 11-year-old English boy (played by Jamie Bell) who is sent by his miner father to a gym to learn boxing and instead gravitates instantly to a dance class — an artform at which he excels. His father and family, as well as the townspeople, must band together to give this special young man a shot at the future he richly deserves.

You Got Served — Marques Houston and Omari "Omarion" Grandberry star as Elgin and David, two street dancers and friends who have the opportunity to participate in a dance competition for a \$50k prize and a spot in a Lil' Kim video (who performs as herself).

Girls Just Want to Have Fun — Straight-laced Janey (Sarah Jessica Parker) is an Army brat, Catholic schoolgirl and classically trained dancer obsessed with the local "Dance TV" show and a contest to add a new dancing couple to their lineup. Helen Hunt plays Lynne, a wild-spirit enabling friend who covers for Janey while she works out a routine (and some bad girl feelings) for local hunk Jeff (Lee Montgomery).



Warner Bros. Pictures

Scene from "Happy Feet"

Footloose — Kevin Bacon plays Ren MacCormack, a heck of a teen dream who sullenly relocates from Chicago to a small town. There, he must appeal to the gods — and the local minister (John Lithgow) and town council — to allow the high-school students to hold a senior prom, in a town where dancing has been banned as leading youth astray. He enlists the help of the minister's lovely daughter (Lori Singer), a rebel spirit with an angel's heart.

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1. Name the artist who left a Braille message embossed on the back of his album "Red Rose Speedway."

2. Which group released "Love (Can Make You Happy)"?

3. Where did Aretha Franklin's hit "The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face" originally come from?

4. Which artist released an album titled "Escape From Domination"?

5. Name the song that contains this lyric: "Way down Louisiana close to New Orleans, Way back up in the woods among the evergreens."

Answers

1. Paul McCartney. It's believed McCartney left the Braille message to Stevie Wonder. It read "We love

ya, baby."

2. Mercy, in 1969. The song, written by band member Jack Sigler, Jr., was used in the film "Fireball Jungle," as was the B-side, "Fireball."

3. It was a 1957 folk song written by Scottish songwriter Ewan MacColl. Several folk singers covered the song, but it was Franklin's 1972 version that won a Grammy for Record of the Year.

4. John David "Moon" Martin, in 1979. Martin wrote "Bad Case of Lovin' You (Doctor, Doctor)" and "Cadillac Walk."

5. "Johnny B Goode," by Chuck Berry in 1958. The song is one of the most recognizable in popular music and ranks seventh on Rolling Stone's "500 Greatest Songs of All Time" list.

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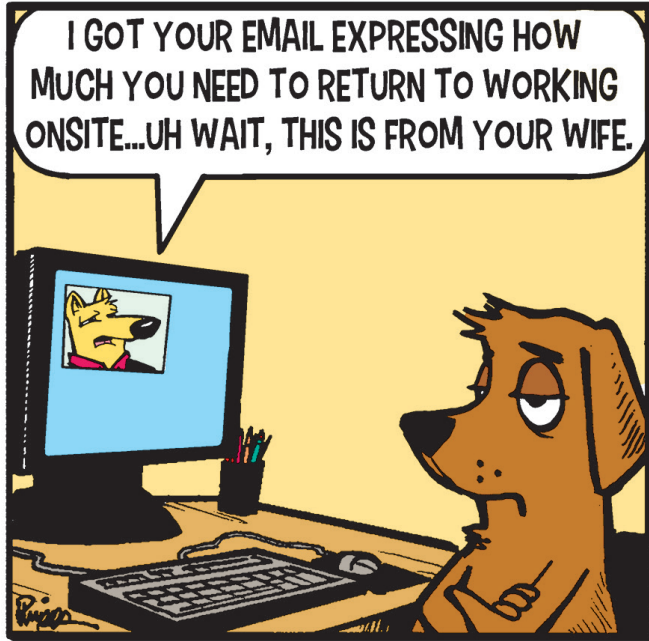
NOW HIRING

MJ's Sinclair of Groton is looking for someone to work weekends and nights. Stop out and see Jeff for an application.

Groton Daily Independent

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Just Like Cats & Dogs by Dave T. Phipps



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GRIN and BEAR IT ^{by Wagner}



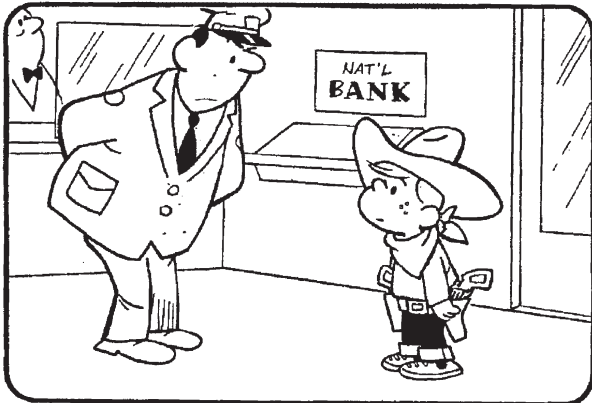
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HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



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Differences: 1. Sign is different. 2. Badge is missing. 3. Pocket is added. 4. Stripe is missing. 5. Kerchief is different. 6. Pen is missing.



• My family's spring-cleaning checklist is in full effect. Some people dread seasonal chores, but I relish the sense of accomplishment that comes from a job well done. With the right planning, and some helpful tips, spring cleaning can be a breeze. Here are some of the best we have to share. — *JoAnn*

• "Stainless steel appliances are very popular, and in the kitchen, they get plenty of chances to get fingerprinted up. My appliance guy recommended using a light-mist, wax-based aerosol dusting spray once or twice a week to keep my stainless steel appliance fronts looking their best." — *R.C. in North Carolina*

• In the closet, we all want to pare away unused items, but sometimes it seems like you wear clothes that you don't. Turn all the clothes hangers

the opposite way (facing out instead of in). When you use an item and it is returned to the closet, replace the hanger normally. In a few months, if an item has not been worn, it will be apparent. If it's not likely to be worn, it should go.

• Spring is a wonderful time to clean the walls inside your house. It clears away hidden dust and really freshens a room. Clean painted walls by dusting them first with a dry mop, then washing with a rag dampened in water. If you need a little extra oomph — say, in the kitchen or bath — add a couple drops of mild dish soap.

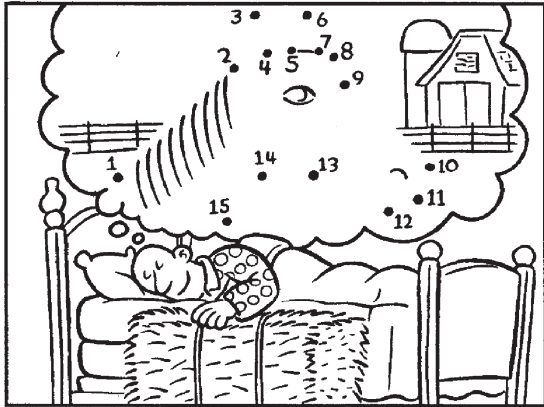
• New drapes or even new pillow covers in a fabulous pattern can really jazz up a room. Consider switching smaller furniture accents between common rooms or a fresh furniture arrangement to change it up.

• Keep a bottle of club soda handy for spot stains on carpets or upholstery. It's good for more than just drinks.

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

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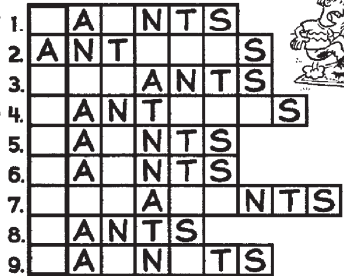


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SWEET DREAMS! Why did our pal, above, take a bale of hay to bed? Connect the dots to find the answer.
Answer: To feed his night mare.

Junior Whirl

by Charles Barry Townsend



ANTS IN THE PANTS!

THE next time Wally goes to a picnic, he'll watch where he sits! Like the word PANTS, Wally has ANTS. Another place you'll find ANTS is in the dictionary. Below are nine words that contain these little creatures. Use these hints to figure out what they are:

1. What a ghost does.
2. Moose's pride.
3. Little people.
4. Portable lamps.
5. Some statues, maybe.
6. Scornful remarks.
7. Christmas-tree decorations.
8. Loud speeches.
9. Things that attract.

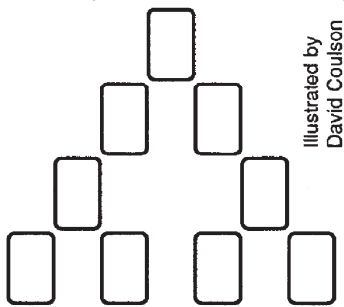
Also, you'll find that the first letters in these words, read vertically, will spell out something you get in the winter up north.

1. Haunts. 2. Antlers. 3. Infants. 4. Lanterns.
5. Saints. 6. Taints. 7. Ornaments. 8. Rants.
9. Magnets. Vertical word: Halistorm.

NUMBER GAME! The final problem in Professor Flunkum's math quiz: Three times what number gives the same result as eight times what number? P.S.: It's the same number.
The answer is zero.



DIAMOND SETTING! Did you know that you can use playing cards to create puzzles? Using the diamond suit, remove the cards ace up through nine and arrange them in a triangle as shown at right. Then, rearrange them so that the pips (diamonds, in this case) in the four cards along any of the three sides of the triangle add up to 23. The value of a corner card will be used in two sides.

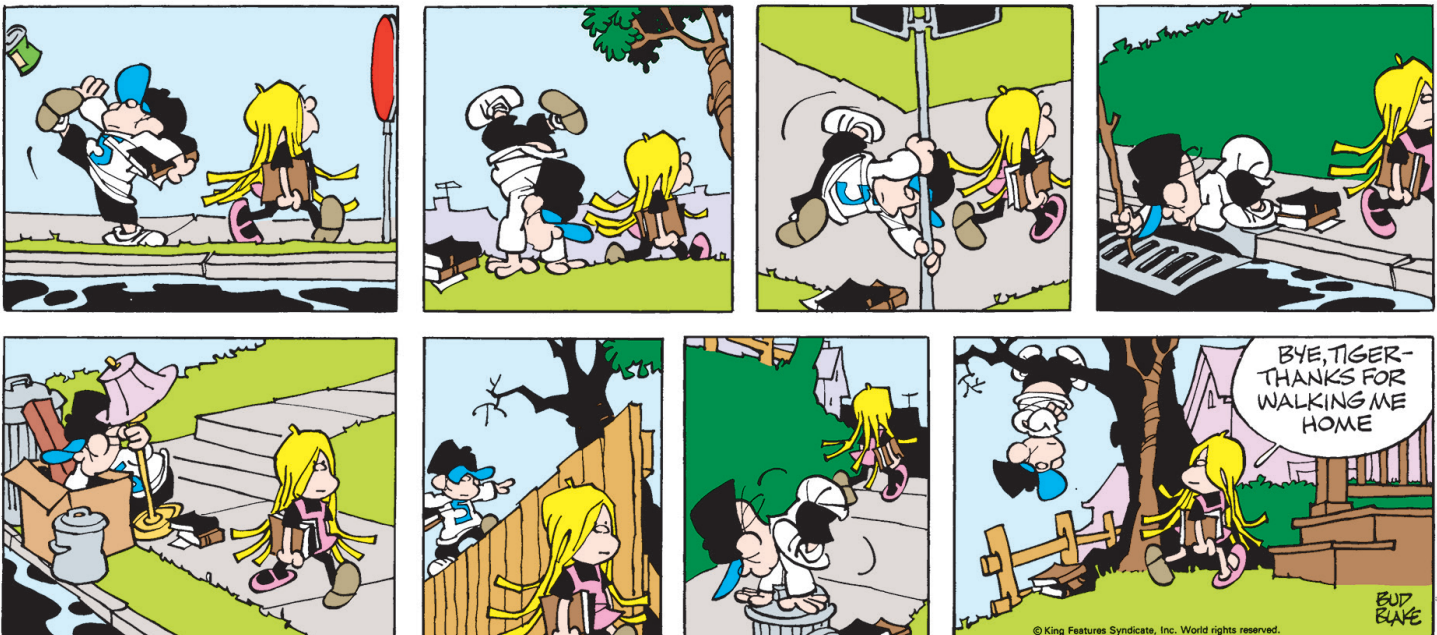


Illustrated by David Coulson

Starting at the top, and going clockwise, the cards are 7, 2, 6, 8, 1, 5, 9, 3, 4.

TIGER

by BUD BLAKE



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BUD BLAKE

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King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Fashion
- 6 Cougars
- 11 Copier part
- 12 Sanford of "The Jeffersons"
- 14 Sweatshirt variety
- 15 "The Raven" maiden
- 16 Off-roader (Abbr.)
- 17 Burn with steam
- 19 Khan title
- 20 "Moonstruck" star
- 22 — -la-la
- 23 War god
- 24 "Praying" singer

	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					

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 26 TV actor Prinze 28 Business mag 30 Melancholy 31 Dagwood's lady 35 Chic again 39 Lariat 40 Neither mate 42 Actress de Matteo 43 — -de-France 44 Red Square figure 46 Last (Abbr.) 47 Sister of | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moses 49 Restaurant fan 51 Sports venues 52 Not as small 53 Admin. aides 54 Plant firmly | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 Columns 7 Secondhand novel 8 Chess piece 9 On the train 10 Composer Prokofiev 11 Crude cabin 13 Rental contract 18 Canine cry 21 Bonn's river 23 Threw in 25 Moreover 27 Corn serving 29 Movie houses 31 Hat edges | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 32 Nabokov novel 33 Puccini works 34 Very long time 36 Plod 37 Counted (on) 38 Western flick 41 Sentry's weapon 44 Cannes milk 45 Linguist Chomsky 48 Check-cashing needs 50 Sphere |
|--|---|---|---|

DOWN

- 1 Mollify
- 2 Caches
- 3 Pay stub abbr.
- 4 Floral rings
- 5 Upright

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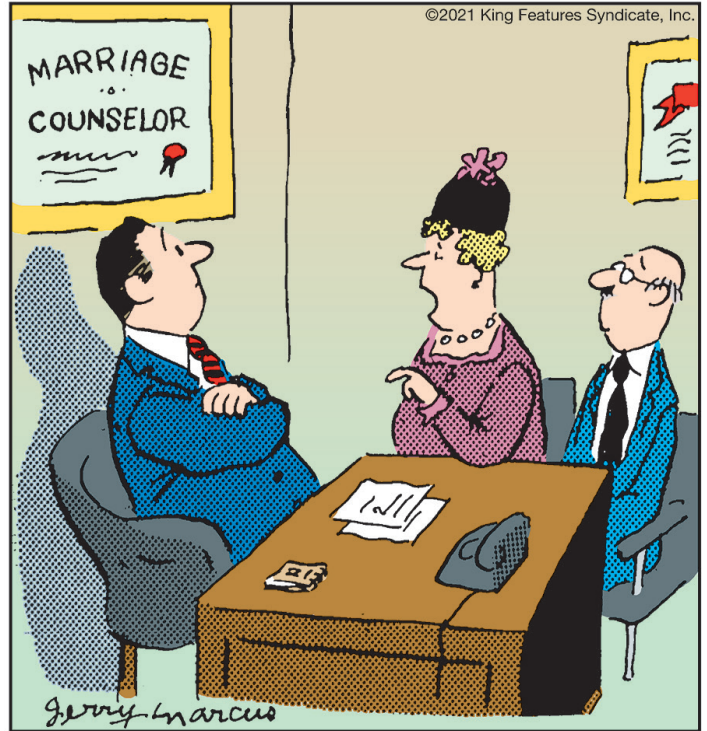
— King Crossword —

Answers

Solution time: 21 mins.

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

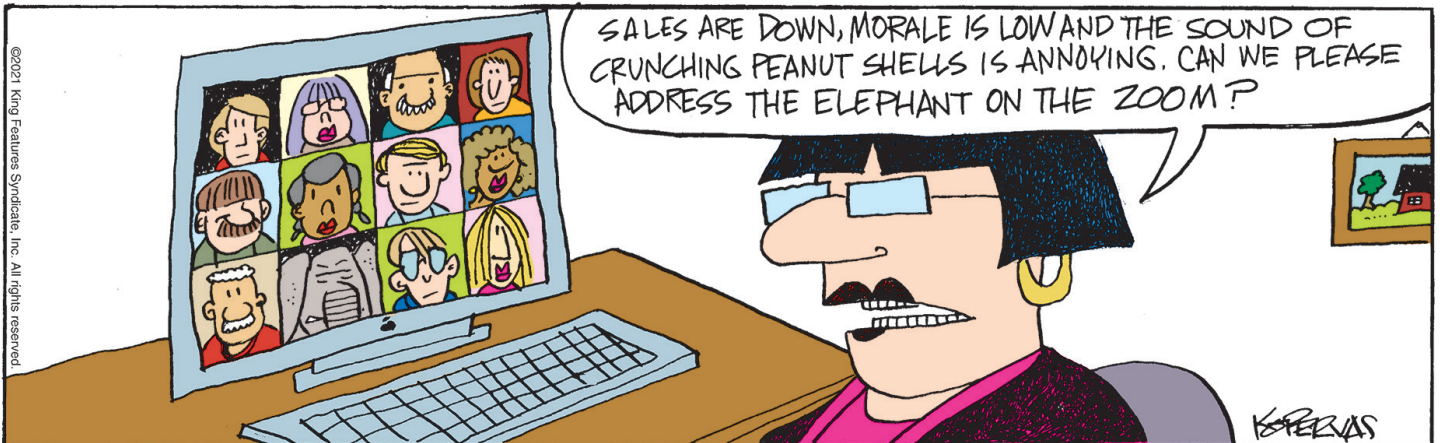
LAFF - A - DAY



"That's my story. Now I'll give you his story."

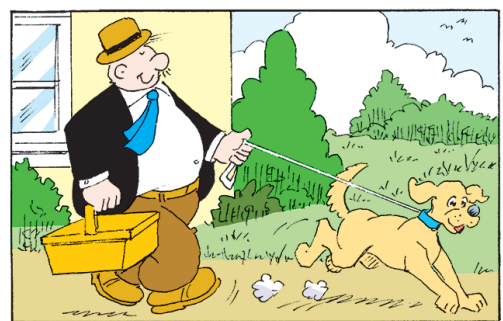
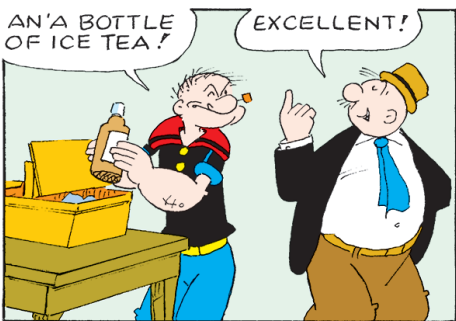
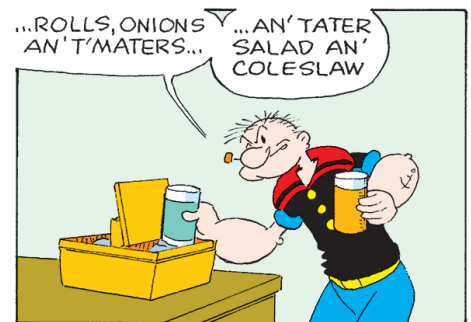
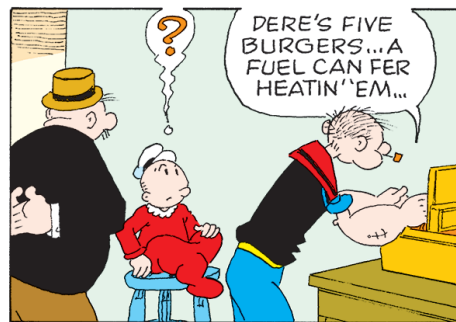
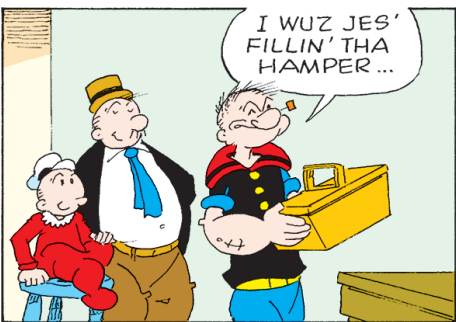
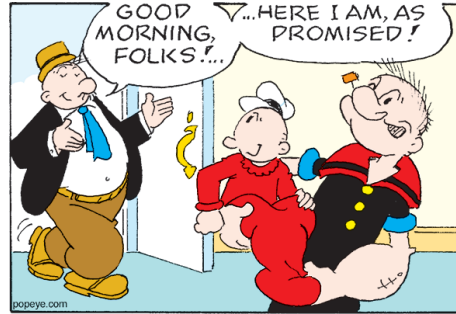
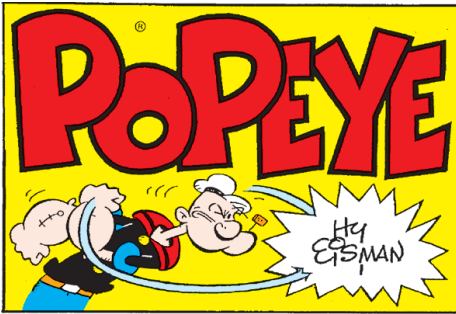
Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



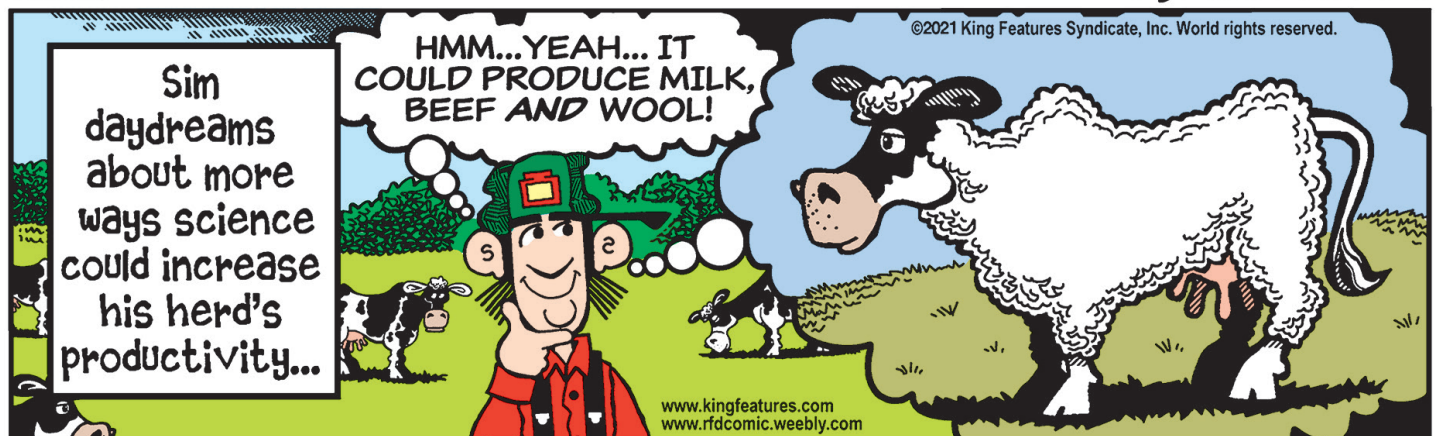
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R.F.D.

by Mike Marland



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Hal Foster's
Prince Valiant
BY GIANNI AND SCHULTZ



Our Story:
A STRANGE, REJUVENATED MERLIN HAS APPEARED TO RESCUE VAL, GAWAIN AND IG FROM THE RIVER'S COLD EMBRACE.

"MY COMPANION, THE WATER MAIDEN NIMUE, HAS CULLED ANOTHER FROM THE CURRENT—A FEMALE."

IG GASPS, HIS WORST FEAR REALIZED. IT WAS INDEED HIS BELOVED PRUDENCE WHO FELL FROM HER CAPTOR'S GRASP INTO THE TORRENT.



THE SHAMBLING CREATURE REGARDED AS A BEAST BY ALL CAMELOT DISPLAYS A VERY HUMAN AGONY: "WHY COULD IT NOT HAVE BEEN ME IN HER STEAD?"



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BUT MERLIN AND HIS UNEARTHLY CONSORT APPROACH SOFTLY—NIMUE RAISES HER HAND TO THE GIRL'S HEAD.



"PERHAPS SHE IS NOT SO LOST AS SHE APPEARS," THE NYMPH MURMURS.



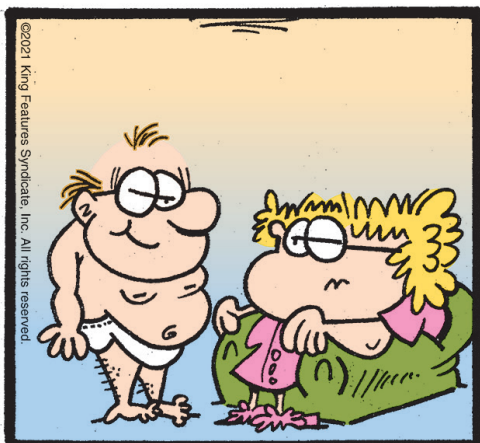
PRUDENCE'S EYES FLUTTER—SHE COUGHS AND HER CHEST HEAVES!

NEXT:
A new path

Gianni
©21-21-21

The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

Lessons for All of Us

I have a new friend. When she bangs on my door, on a daily basis now, it's clear that she wants to come in and visit. So, being a good neighbor, I open the door and in she trots. She now knows where the kitchen is and that I've laid in a supply of her favorite foods. She heads there, leading the way, talking a mile a minute. Stuffed after she eats, she'll sprawl on the couch and have a long nap, safe from the world.

My new friend is a cat — a grey tabby, age 4, with a tiny bell on her red collar.

This cat, whose name I'm told is Missy, is an orphan, at least right now. Her owner, a neighbor, is in the hospital and the prognosis is grim. The woman was found a few weeks ago when another neighbor noticed that Missy was still sitting on the porch in the middle of the afternoon, apparently unfed and upset. The neighbor investigated and found Missy's owner on the floor. An ambulance was called.

Let this be a lesson to all of us. If we have pets and we live alone, we need a backup plan for the animals' care.

Someone needs to know we have pets, know what they eat and where the food is kept. If it's an older animal and medicine is required, somebody needs to know how to give it, and when. This someone needs to know the name of the vet.

The second lesson is about us: Somebody needs to be aware enough of our daily routines that if something is wrong, they'll know to investigate: the blinds still closed, the paper still at the door ... or the cat still sitting unfed on the porch.

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1. What African soccer great was the first player to score goals in four different FA Cup final matches?

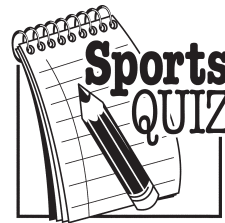
2. Attorney/politician Joe Robbie and actor/comedian Danny Thomas were the founders of what NFL franchise?

3. What University of Florida Gators offensive tackle did the Detroit Lions select in the first round of the 1985 NFL Draft?

4. With his bronze medal in the 100-meter dash at the 2002 Sydney Olympic Games, Obadele Thompson won the first Olympic medal in the history of what Caribbean nation?

5. "Saturday Night Live's" Kenan Thompson made his motion-picture debut in what 1994 Disney sports comedy sequel?

6. What 1964 U.S. Open winner retired from competitive golf in 1967 and went on to a 35-year career as a lead analyst for CBS Sports?



by Ryan A. Berenz

7. What team won the first three National Collegiate Women's Ice Hockey Championships from 2001-03?

Answers

1. Didier Drogba.
2. The Miami Dolphins.
3. Lomas Brown.
4. Barbados.
5. D2: The Mighty Ducks.
6. Ken Venturi.
7. The Minnesota-Duluth Bulldogs.

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Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps



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If Flea Collar Causes Reaction in Your Pet

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: I'm worried by recent reports that a certain brand of flea collar has been making dogs sick, and many have died. I live in an area where fleas and ticks are rampant, and flea collars are essential for my two pups. What can I do if they have a reaction to a new collar?
— *Jane in South Carolina*

DEAR JANE: It's understandable that you're worried. At the moment, the issues with the flea collar in question, Seresto, are being reviewed by the EPA, and no recall or warning has been issued.

Flea collars are widely available from different manufacturers. They're a popular choice because of the ease of use and affordability. However, any of them can cause side effects, and it's important to monitor your pet for them. A common one is a skin reaction directly

underneath the collar shortly after it's put on for the first time. Your dog may scratch at the area; you may see reddening of the skin. Some reactions include hair loss around the collar.

The itching is usually temporary. Consult your pet's veterinarian if you see redness or hair loss, if the scratching and whining continues, or if your dog shows other signs of distress. If your pet is lethargic, drooling, vomiting or behaving strangely right after a new collar is put on, contact the vet immediately; it likely needs emergency treatment.

To prevent these and other side effects, make sure to purchase the correct collar for your dog's size and age. Putting a collar designed for a 100-pound dog onto a 15-pound dog can cause dangerous side effects because a small dog's body just can't process that much flea treatment.

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

Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

at any moment. One method he used to avoid this dire fate involved ordering his tailors to sew iron rods into his clothing.

- * The world record to remove and replace a car engine is 42 seconds.
- * Rabbit jumping, shin kicking, toe wrestling, bog snorkeling and aggressive sitting are all actual sports.
- * Discarded shoes can take up to 1,000 years to break down.
- * Jerry Seinfeld was such a fan of comic book hero Superman that he included a reference to the character in every episode of his eponymous sitcom.
- * It only takes 23 people to enter a room to give you an even chance that two of them have the same birthday. Put 75 people in the room and the chances rise to 99%.
- * Chinese paintings from as far back as 200 B.C. depict people participating in the sport of mountain climbing.
- * The US government trains sea lions to find and retrieve equipment lost at sea and to identify intruders swimming into restricted areas. While they don't have sonar like dolphins, they do have excellent eyesight.
- * In some countries it is not illegal to escape prison as long as no laws are broken.

Thought for the Day: "Teachers open the doors, but you must enter by yourself." -- Chinese proverb

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* Kim Walker played clique leader Heather Chandler in the movie "Heathers." Her character was noted for stinging one-liners, one of which -- "Did you have a brain tumor for breakfast?" -- had a tragic echo. Walker died of a brain tumor 13 years after uttering the line onscreen.

* The fingerprints of a koala are so indistinguishable from humans that they have occasionally been confused at a crime scene.

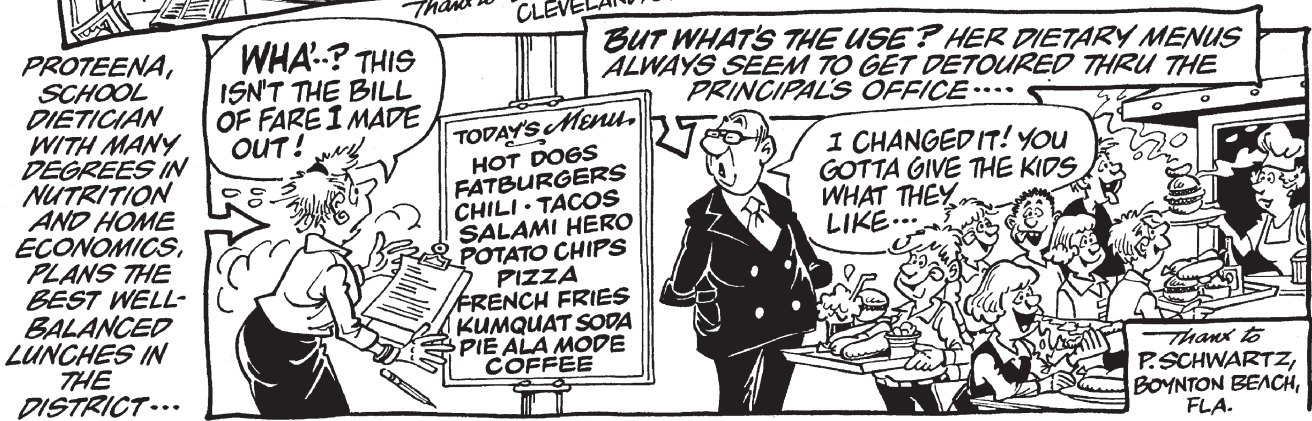
* Charles VI of France, aka Charles the Mad, believed he was made of glass and could shatter

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THEY'LL DO IT EVERY TIME

BY AL SCADUTO



Flowering Ground Covers

Landscapers love these plants, as they offer beauty and function, giving a yard color while helping to fight weeds and control erosion. Some favorites for full sun areas are Creeping Phlox (*Phlox subulata*), Candytuft (*Iberis sempervirens*), Ice Plant (*Delosperma cooperi*), Yellow Alyssum (*Aurinia saxatilis*), Dragon's Blood (*Sedum spurium*) and Snow-in-Summer (*Cerastium tomentosum*). Some shade-tolerating varieties are Pachysandra (*Pachysandra terminalis*), Bugleweed (*Ajuga reptans*), Yellow Archangel (*Lamium galeobdolon*), Cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster horizontalis*) and Sweet Woodruff (*Galium odoratum*). - Brenda Weaver

Source: www.thespruce.com

VETERANS ★ POST ★

by Freddy Groves

All Vets Now Eligible for COVID Vaccine

With the SAVE Act (Strengthening and Amplifying Vaccination Efforts), the Department of Veterans Affairs is opening the doors to vaccinating all veterans, spouses and caregivers. This is a major step forward from the previous rules of only vaccinating certain groups of veterans and employees. The numbers of those now eligible has gone from 9 million to 33 million.

First on the list are veterans who use VA health care, veterans who never enrolled but use care and medical services in the first 12 months after separation and the caregivers for those veterans.

Under the new rules, the following will then be eligible to receive the vaccine:

- Veterans who can't enroll in VA health care;
- Veterans who are eligible for hospital care, medical services and nursing

homes abroad in the Foreign Medical Program;

- Beneficiaries who are eligible for care due to a specific disability or death of a veteran;

- Caregivers of veterans participating in the VA's Medical Foster Home Program, Bowel and Bladder Program, Home-Based Primary Care Program or Veteran Directed Care Program;

- Spouses of veterans.

If you can't make it to the VA and can't find federal or state vaccination sites in your town, keep an eye out for VA-organized pop-up vaccine clinics. I recently went to an all-veterans pop-up clinic held in my town, one of eight rural locations that were opened in my state. It was impressive. The event had been widely announced on the news, on Facebook, in the newspapers. Somebody did a good job of spreading the word.

To sign up for the vaccine, whether you currently get care through VA or not, go here: www.va.gov/health-care/covid-19-vaccine. Scroll down to read how you'll be contacted when your group is eligible. You don't want to miss the phone call, email or text message. And keep an eye on your local facility's web page for updates.

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



Creeping Threat

"Fighting Escalates in Eastern Ukraine, Signaling the End to Another Cease-Fire."

"Russia seems to be preparing to invade Ukraine but it's not clear whether Putin will go through with it."

Those were two major headlines splashed across U.S. newspapers this week. It's easy to skip past them – after all, Russia is 5,010 miles from South Dakota. So why do these headlines matter? First, Russia is not our friend. Putin is a power-hungry egomaniac – and his attempts to influence American politics is unacceptable.

Ukraine, a country that teeters between the East and the West, encapsulates the tale of being stuck in the middle of opposing ideological, cultural worlds. Since the turn of the 20th century, the Ukrainian government has sided with the Western world, becoming steadily more like Europe after centuries of being influenced and governed by the Soviet Union. Putin has set his sights on Russia's neighbor to the southwest, looking to gain back control of the land its ancestors once claimed and undermine Ukraine's growing Europeanization.

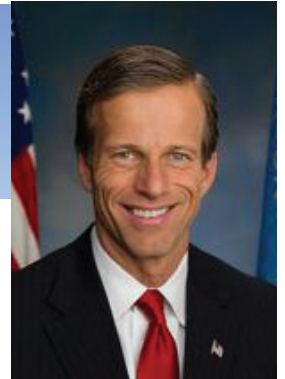
For nearly a month, Russia has been deploying more than 150,000 troops to the border of Ukraine, escalating tension and causing destabilization within the region. There's one reason for this escalation: power.

While Russian aggression towards Ukraine is nothing new, we haven't seen this scale of escalation since 2014 when Russian forces were successful in their annexation of Crimea – a clear violation of international sovereignty that remains status quo today.

Russia is too powerful, and any expansion of territory will not be good for the world. Any war with Ukraine threatens access to the Black Sea, threatening freedom of navigation. We can't risk the spread of Russia's malign influence on the world.

These threats are legitimate and national security issues aren't limited to Russia. During a briefing this week, I learned of China's continued violations of Taiwan airspace, North Korea's continued research into ballistic missile development, and Iran's increased uranium enrichment. America must stay vigilant, and while we cannot engage in every international conflict, one thing should be clear to President Putin: America is watching.

John Thune
U.S. SENATOR - SOUTH DAKOTA



Partisanship Is Not the Solution

Democrats want the Senate to take up infrastructure legislation in the near future – a goal Republicans fully support. What we don't support is Democrats' threat to shove through another massive, partisan bill – this time on infrastructure – using reconciliation rules (a parliamentary procedure to expedite legislation with only a simple majority) to ensure Republicans don't have a voice in the legislation.

The Senate was designed to promote moderation and consensus. It was intended to be a check on the more partisan – or, as the Founders would put it, factious – House of Representatives. And the Senate fulfills its constitutional role best when it engages in serious bipartisan consideration and negotiation – and ensures that members of both parties are heard. This is the framework we should adopt for any major piece of legislation.

Unfortunately, Democrats seem determined to push through a far-left agenda. Most recently, the House passed a bill to make D.C. the 51st state, trampling on the intention of our Founding Fathers: our capital's independence from any one state. This, along with their bill to expand the Supreme Court from nine justices to 13 and their attempt to eliminate the legislative filibuster, is yet another example of a Democrat power grab.

Democrats from both the House and the Senate also recently introduced their "Green New Deal," a left-wing smorgasbord of government-knows-best policies that, if enacted, would have a massively negative effect on the U.S. economy and hit family budgets across the country. For American families, it would essentially mean higher taxes and higher energy costs.

And now Democrats are threatening to go it alone to pass a \$2.2 trillion liberal wish list masquerading as an infrastructure bill.

Congress has a history of bipartisan collaboration on infrastructure legislation. Our last major infrastructure bill, the FAST Act, went through regular order in several committees, including the Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, which I led. It was supported by both Democrats and Republicans, and it was a remarkably successful bill. Not long thereafter, our committee spearheaded enactment of the longest reauthorization of the FAA since the early 1980s – including critical programs to improve airport infrastructure. And last Congress, the Environment and Public Works Committee developed bipartisan infrastructure legislation. There is no good reason that we shouldn't reach bipartisan agreement on another substantial piece of infrastructure legislation. But that will require a willingness from Democrats to actually engage in bipartisan collaboration.

Our Founders established a democratic republic, instead of a pure democracy, because they wanted to balance majority rule with protection for the rights of the minority. They knew that majorities could be tyrants, and so they wove protections for minority rights into our system of government. The Senate was one of those protections.

That's why we should be preserving rules like the filibuster, which ensures that the minority party – and the many Americans it represents – has a real voice in legislation.

If one thing is for sure, it's that a 50-50 Senate is not a mandate for one side to force through its agenda unchecked. It is absurd for Senate Democrats – or House Democrats – to pretend they have a mandate for a partisan revolution. And yet much of the legislation they have been pushing since taking office appears to have been drafted by members of the extreme left wing of their party.

In his inauguration address, President Biden appeared to recognize the importance of bipartisanship and his obligation to work with members of both parties and promote unity in the country. Unfortunately, to date his administration has not delivered on that promise of bipartisan leadership.

We can pass a substantial, bipartisan infrastructure bill together, or Democrats can continue down the extremely partisan path they've been pursuing. For the sake of our country, I hope they will choose bipartisanship.

South Dakota Governor

Kristi Noem



South Dakota: *Under God, the People Rule*

Joe Biden's First 100 Days – Disunity and Partisanship

When Joe Biden was sworn in as President of the United States on January 20, 2021, he declared that “my whole soul is in this: bringing America together . . . and uniting our nation.” He pledged to be a President for all Americans.

Now almost 100 days into his Presidency, Joe Biden has failed in that pledge.

He has signed (as of this writing) an astonishing forty Executive Orders. These actions have infringed on Americans’ second amendment rights by implementing gun control measures. He has revoked a number of President Trump’s actions that strengthened our economy and supported businesses. He has mandated mask use on federal property. He has expanded welfare programs, weakened our voting process, and made it easier for illegal immigrants to enter the United States.

Most recently, he has created a commission to review the size of the Supreme Court, with the clear intention of expanding the number of Justices. The United States Supreme Court has had nine Justices since 1869 – more than 150 years. The President once called this court-packing effort a “bonehead idea,” but now supports it so he can continue to implement his radical agenda.

His misguided policies on immigration have led to a situation that seemingly grows worse by the day. Our nation is less safe as a result, as terrorists have been apprehended crossing the border.

His energy policies have resulted in the elimination of thousands of jobs across the country, including many right here in South Dakota. It’s no coincidence that gas prices are skyrocketing as a result.

In March, President Biden signed an unprecedented \$1.9 trillion federal spending package, more than the federal government’s discretionary budget for an entire year. This irresponsible bill received zero Republican support in Congress, only passing because Vice President Kamala Harris cast the deciding vote to begin Senate debate. This stark partisanship is telling, because all previous COVID-related measures received bipartisan support.

President Biden is also proposing more than \$2 trillion in new spending on a broad swath of programs he’s calling the “care economy.” This astonishingly large package is being marketed as an infrastructure bill, but it includes billions of dollars in expanded social programs. Massive tax increases over the next 15 years would cover only a portion of this wasteful proposal and it would dramatically drive up our existing \$28 trillion national debt.

And on top of all this new spending, President Biden is also proposing to increase the “regular” federal discretionary budget by an additional 8 percent.

It’s no wonder that the President has reversed course yet again and urged the elimination of the filibuster in the Senate – an important part of our democracy that ensures a measure of bipartisanship in Congress – because political gamesmanship is the only way he can pass these huge spending increases.

After 100 days, Joe Biden’s partisanship has sewn disunity and made it clear that he is not a President for all Americans.

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Thank a Rancher

Calving season is the time of the year our South Dakota ranchers look forward to until: they have headlights out in the pasture at two in the morning; they are trying to tag 1202's calf without finding out if she's bluffing; or they are bringing heifers to the barn and out of the blizzard. There are a lot of variables in this industry. Whether you know a rancher or you are one, one thing is for sure - it's tough work.

Most people wouldn't work a job without knowing what their paycheck will be at the end of the month. They probably wouldn't take a job without any vacation or sick days, either. There are no days off for our local producers. Despite not knowing how many calves they will have come sale day or what the markets will do, they continue to get the job done just as they have for decades. It's a job of integrity. It's a way of life that has been and will continue in the family for generations.

Every generation of ranchers face challenges, and this generation has been especially tested. But one of these challenges should not be government bureaucrats telling them what's best for their operation. Suits and ties don't feed the world - ranchers do.

As it stands today, the four largest meat packers control over 80 percent of the cattle market. We have to increase competition for local producers if we want our small towns and operations to survive. For years, ranchers have seen immense price discrepancies between the price they receive per head of cattle and the price of beef on the shelf at the grocery store. The COVID-19 pandemic brought to light that reform is necessary. I am working for our independent South Dakota ranch families, not the packers who continue pushing the bureaucrats around. Their grip on government has been going on for years, weakening and preventing policies that help ranchers.

Last month, I reintroduced bipartisan legislation with Senator Chuck Grassley (R-IA) known as the "50-14" bill. The bill would require that a minimum of 50 percent of a meat packer's weekly volume of cattle purchases take place on the open or spot market. It would apply to meat-packing facilities that slaughter more than 125,000 head annually. These facilities would also be required to slaughter cattle purchased under this requirement within 14 days.

South Dakota ranchers produce some of the highest-quality beef in the world. Without a mandated amount of cash trade, our ranchers don't have a level playing field. We won't give up trying to get our ranchers a fair price in a competitive market.

Regardless of what happens in Washington, our ranchers will continue facing the variables head on and with grit. They will finish out calving season and do the work it takes to get ready for it all over again next year. Some years are harder than others, but they always show up. I am grateful for the work our ranchers do every day, and I am proud to represent them.

And, if you haven't already, thank a rancher.



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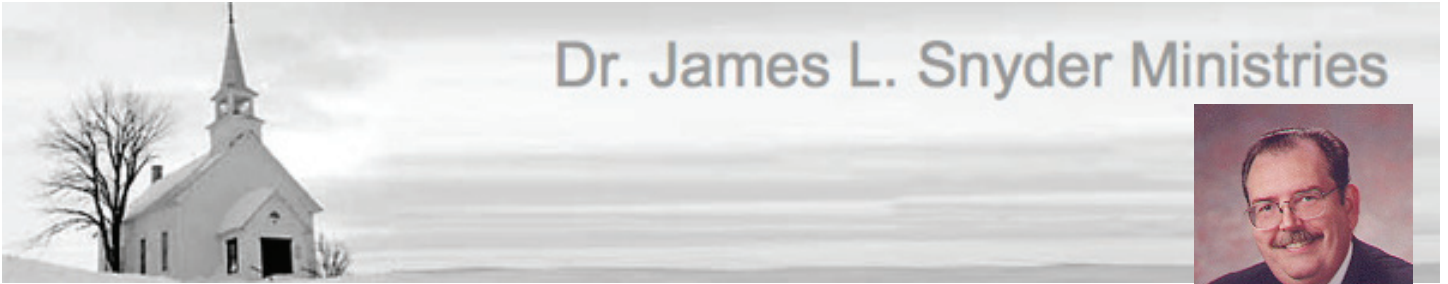
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MHPN-00441 Rev. 1

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Dr. James L. Snyder Ministries



What Would the World Be without Apple Fritters?

Stress is not something new in my life or anybody else's, for that matter. The thing about stress is that you never get used to it, or at least I don't.

I don't know what I would do if one week I had no stress at all. When that happens, I'll let you know.

This past week has not been one of those stress-free weeks. Starting on the very first day of the week, stress poked its nose into my business.

On Monday, as I sat at my office to begin the week's work, I opened up my laptop, and I could not turn it on. It would not accept my password. I've used that password for as long as I've had the computer. However, today it would not work.

I tried everything, but nothing worked except it worked up my stress level.

Finally, I had to take it to a computer store to fix it. It took them a little over an hour, but they finally fixed it. The tech also set it up so that I did not have to use a password to open up my computer. That eliminated a lot of stress.

I took it home, had lunch, and then went back to the office to begin my work for the day. Already half the day is shot. When I opened up my computer, everything worked except the passwords on all of my programs. Even Facebook would not work; it did not recognize my password.

For the rest of the day, I spent changing one password after another. Whoever invented the password phenomenon needs to be sued.

Finally, I got everything working, and all the passwords were in place, and I could commit the rest of the week to some kind of work.

I had an appointment with my eye doctor this week, having to do with my cataract surgeries. This was supposed to be the last one to make sure everything went fine. I was excited to go and get this done. Then, I could have my glasses ordered and be able to see and read simultaneously.

The appointment was at 9:45, and I wanted to make sure I would not be late. I could not drive because of eye drops I was supposed to put in preparing for this exam. So, the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage was to be my chauffeur for the day.

It was around 9 o'clock, I was dressed and ready to go, so I asked her, "Are we ready to go now? My appointment is at 9:45."

She looked at me with one of her "looks" and said, "Are you sure it is at 9:45?"

"Of course, I'm sure."

Again she looked at me and said, "What day is your appointment for?"

"It's for Thursday at 9:45 in the morning." I then looked at her and smiled one of my greasy smiles.

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"Are you sure it is for Thursday?"

She always tries to trick me, assuming this was one of her tricks, I just looked at her, smiled, and nodded very dramatically.

"So," she said rather hesitatingly, "what is today?"

I didn't say anything; I just looked at her and then looked at my watch.

"Oh, you silly boy, today is Wednesday."

I hate it when she is right! This only increased my stress level because now I had to wait a day for my eye appointment.

Part of my stress this week was all the phone calls I got to renew my car warranty, each one was the last call for my renewal.

By Friday morning, as I was going to my office, my stress level was the highest it's been for a very long time. I'm not very good at dealing with stress, especially when I'm the cause of it.

I usually stop at McDonald's in the morning to get a cup of coffee to take to the office. As I was going through the drive-through, I happened to think a very delightful thought. Not only do they sell coffee here, but also Apple Fritters.

Oh boy, when my brain starts thinking, it's hard to figure out where it's going.

Leaving McDonald's with my coffee and Apple Fritter, I was very happy. There is no comfort food quite as comforting as a fresh Apple Fritter.

Sitting down at my desk, I took a sip of coffee and then opened up the bag with the delicious Apple Fritter. I laid it on my desk and, just for a few moments, stared at it taking in the delightful aroma of this wonderful comfort food.

I took the first bite, and a great weight began to lift off my head. It was a wonderful experience and helped me get rid of all of that stress I had.

In finishing, I thought a few moments about that situation. If it were not for all the stress I experienced this past week, I wouldn't be having this wonderful experience of eating my comfort food. At least stress does have a good side to it.

I remembered what Jesus said, "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

Sometimes I let the world stress me out, but when I look to the Lord Jesus, I see He overcomes all of my stress.

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EARTHTALK

From the Editors of E - The Environmental Magazine

Dear EarthTalk: I've heard of XPRIZE, which funds innovations in space exploration technology. Is XPRIZE used to address climate change or other environmental problems? -- J.D. via e-mail

XPRIZE was launched in 1996 to spur innovation in the commercial aerospace sector. Back then, entrepreneur Peter Diamandis offered \$10 million to the first privately financed team that could build and fly a three-passenger vehicle 100 kilometers into space twice within two weeks. That first contest—officially dubbed the Ansari XPRIZE for Suborbital Spaceflight—attracted 26 teams from seven countries. The winner didn't emerge for another eight years, when Mojave Aerospace Ventures' SpaceShipOne successfully completed the challenge. All told, the contest led to \$100 million in aggregate R&D investment by the teams involved, spurring a new track in private commercial space development.

Given the success of this first contest, Diamandis then leveraged the concept and platform to fund innovation in a wide range of sectors, with the mission being to bring about "radical breakthroughs for the benefit of humanity" through incentivized competition. No longer focused on just aerospace, XPRIZE now fosters high-profile competitions to motivate individuals, companies and organizations across all disciplines to develop innovative ideas and technologies that help solve the world's grand challenges.

Subsequent XPRIZE competitions since Ansari have distributed \$140 million in prizes. Several of the competitions focus on specific niches within aerospace, but the majority tackle other issues. Multi-million-dollar prizes have gone to teams working on designing super-efficient vehicles, accelerating the use of sensing technology to tackle health care problems, and creating a mobile device that can diagnose patients better than or equal to human physicians.

Several others have focused on solutions to vexing environmental problems. A \$7 million XPRIZE went to a team building better technologies to map the Earth's seafloor. A \$1.75 million prize went to a project harvesting fresh water from thin air to help alleviate fresh water shortages. A \$2 million prize went to researchers developing better ways to study ocean acidification, which prevents some shellfish from forming their skeletons and shells. And a \$1 million prize funded a technology for cleaning up seawater surface oil resulting from spillage from ocean platforms, tankers and other sources.

Another recently launched competition, XPRIZE Rainforest, is offering \$10 million for the best autonomous technology that can assess the biodiversity of the tropical rainforest and utilize rapid data integration to unlock the secrets to conservation of this vanishing treasure trove of life. And a \$20 million prize is still waiting to be claimed by the team that develops the most impactful breakthrough technology to convert CO2 emissions into usable products.

This year will see the launch of the biggest XPRIZE competition to date, with \$100 million on the line to those who can develop the most efficient way to help humanity achieve funder Elon Musk's goal of removing 10 gigatons of CO2 from the atmosphere every year until 2050 to help mitigate climate change and restore the planet's natural carbon balance. Registration for participating teams opened on Earth Day 2021 (April 2021), with the winner to be announced in 2025.



XPRIZE founder Peter Diamandis has steered several competitions toward solving pressing environmental problems. Credit: XDRIVE Foundation.

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GHS Prom 2021

(Photos lifted from GDILIVE.COM Video)



Alyssa Thayler escorted by Cole Simon.



Erin Unzen escorted by Chandler Larson

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Madeline Flihs escorted by Braden Holland



Allyssa Locke escorted by Jayden Zak

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Trista Keith escorted by Anthony Schinkel



Emilie Thurston escorted by Jackson Cogley

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Allie Morgan escorted by Kaden Kurtz



Grace Wambach escorted by Trey Gengerke

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Ani Davidson escorted by Trevor Harry



Alexa Herr escorted by Jordan Bjerke

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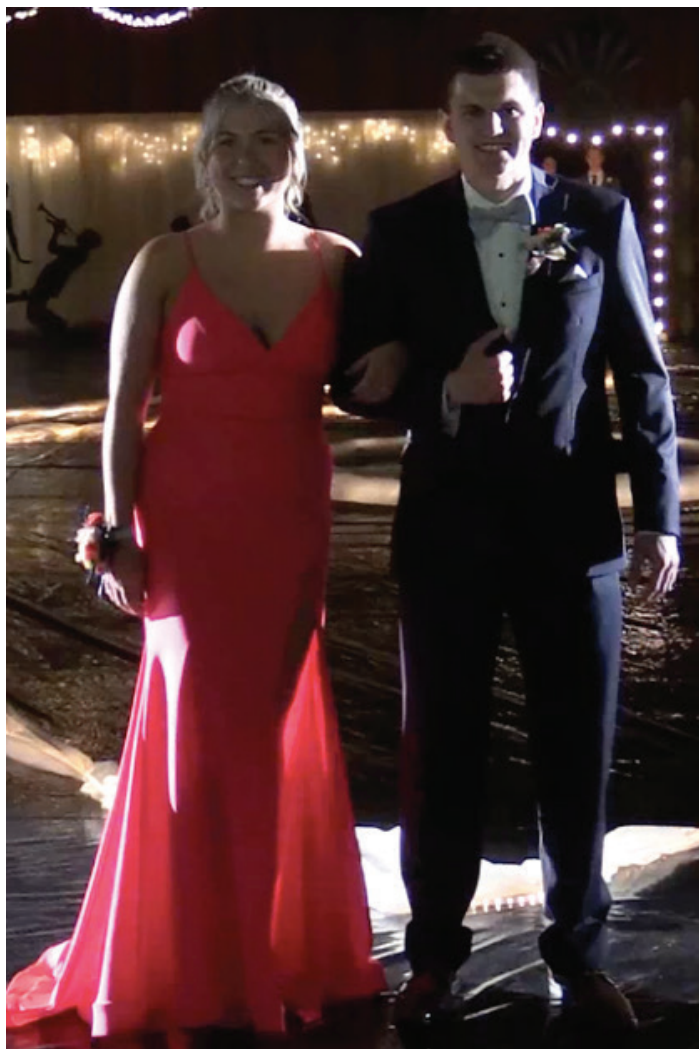
Tessa Erdmann escorted by Connor Lehman



Alexis Hanten escorted by Jamesen Stange

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Tanae Lipp escorted by Isaac Smith



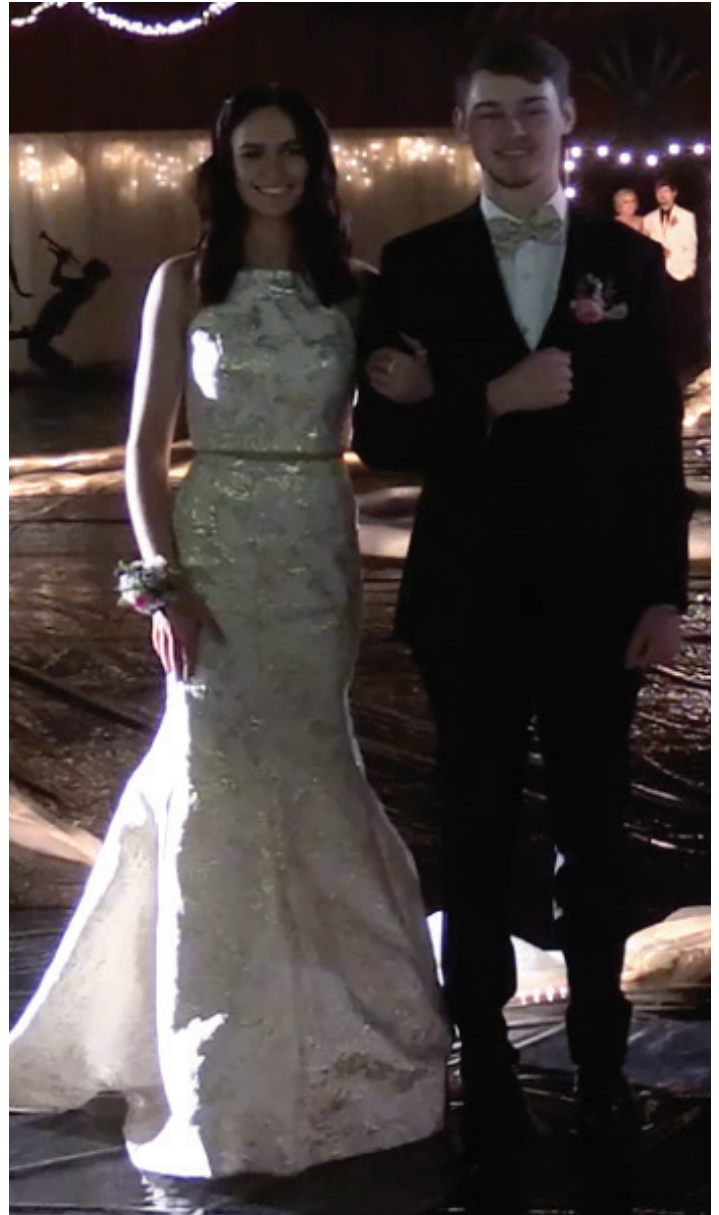
Brooklyn Gilbert escorted by Paxton Bonn

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Julianna Kosel escorted by Kannon Coats



Megan Flihs escorted by Steven Paulson

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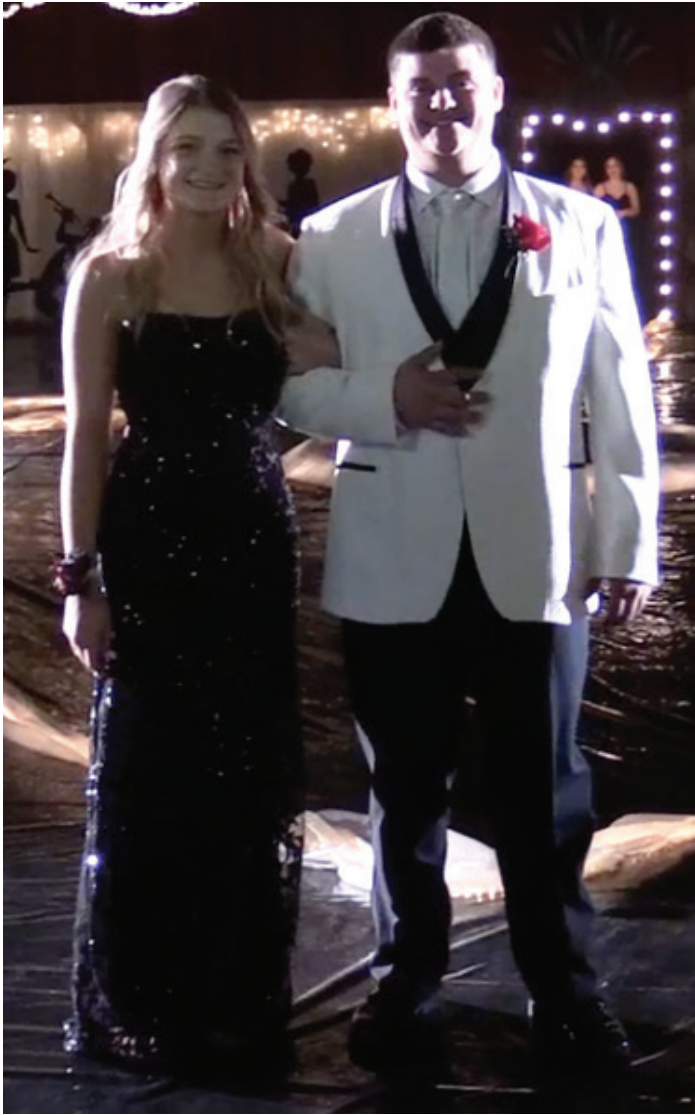
**Kenzie McInerney escorted
by Hunter Kassube**



Jasmine Gengerke escorted by Lane Tietz

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Jaycee Snell escorted by Alex Morris



Shaylee Peterson accompanied by Trinity Smith

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Tiara DeHoet escorted by Lucas Simon



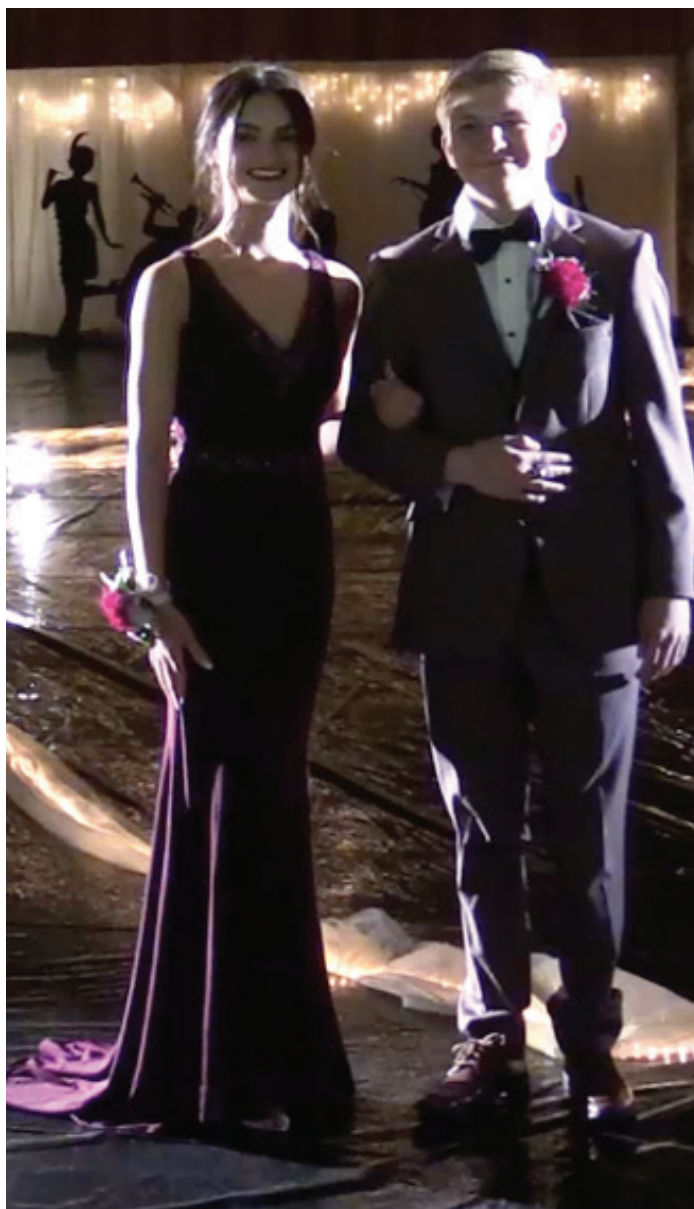
Grace Wiedrick escorted by Carter Barse

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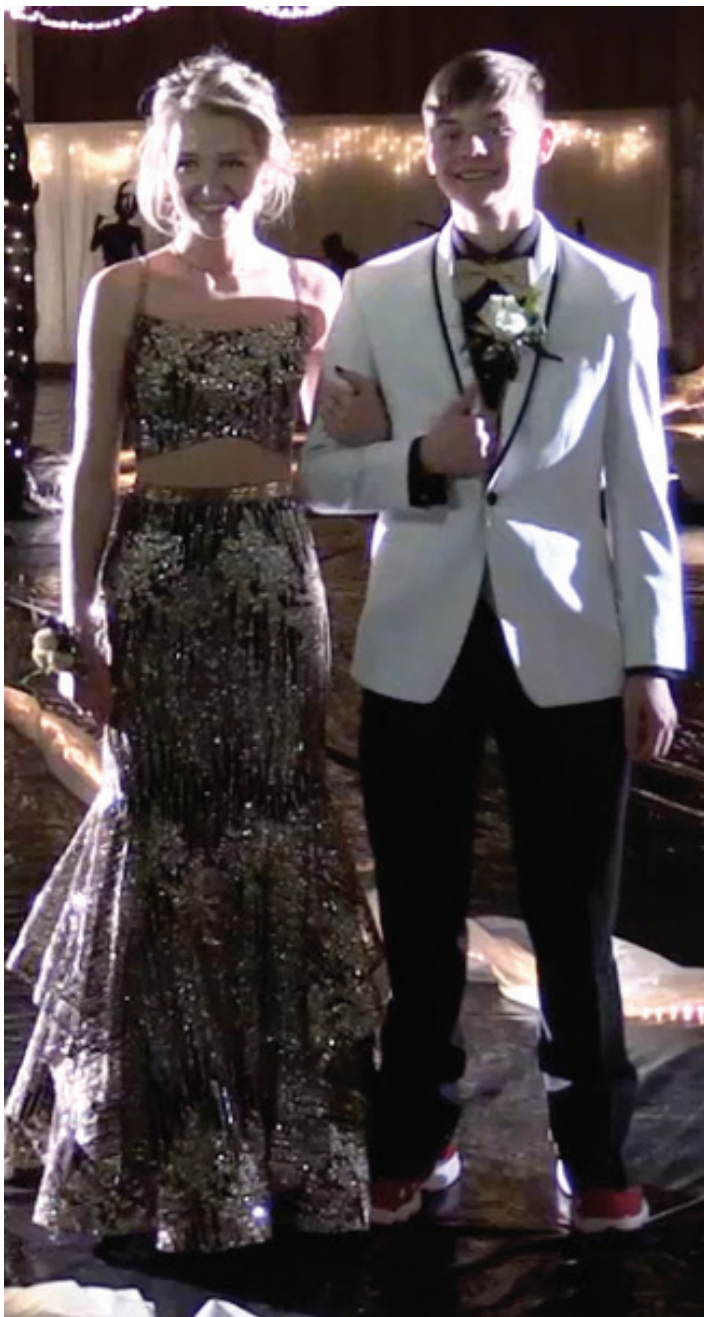
Eh Tha You Say escorted by Hunter Wilkie



Sierra Ehresmann escorted by Dragr Monson

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Riley Leicht escorted by Kaleb Hoover



Cassie Schultz escorted by John Reynen

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Regan Leicht escorted by Lee Iverson



Maddie Bjerke escorted by Andrew Marzahn

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Hailey Monson escorted by Boston Marlow



Kayla Jensen escorted by Braden Freeman

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**Cadance Tullis accompanied
by Sage Mortenson**



Brooke Gengerke escorted by Seth Johnson

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**Rylee Rosenau accompanied
by Alyssa Fordham**



Emily Thurston escorted by Kaden Carda

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Greta Adolf escorted by Dylan Krueger



Chloe Daly escorted by Colby Dunker

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Nathalia Garcia escorted by Jaimen Farrell



Kylie Schock escorted by Marcos Garcia

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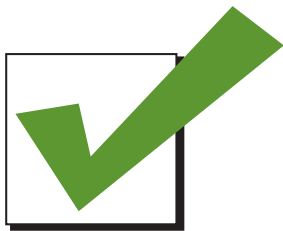
Annie Witt escorted by Tristan Traphagen



Sarah Jacobs accompanied by Nevaeh Pardick and Lee Lee Volk.

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#426 in a series

Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller

April 24, 2020, one year ago today, we had 902,072 cases and 46,243 deaths. We appeared to be on an upswing which, after what we'd been through, seemed like—and was—a disaster. Worldwide, cases were over 2.7 million and deaths were over 191,000. One hundred fifty Italian doctors had died; 10 percent of infections had occurred in health care workers. I find myself wondering what would have happened if we had bitten the bullet and shut the country down hard for a month back in February—last year. Supposing people complied for just 30 days, I suspect we'd be looking at a far different outcome today, even though there would have been small surges along the way. Instead of being a model for the rest of the world, we are an example. I have to be careful not to think this way too long at one time. Far too depressing.

Today, we're up to 32,019,467 cases, which is 0.2% more than yesterday. There were 68,019 new cases reported today. Fourteen-day average hospitalizations are up a bit to 45,724. There were 871 new deaths reported today, bringing us up to 570,746, which is 0.2% more than yesterday. Things seem to be getting better. While some hot spots remain hot, new cases are declining at long last. Michigan has reported a 27 percent decline in new cases over the past 14 days. Minnesota has had an eight percent drop. Illinois is still in some trouble, but it appears we might be catching up to the virus with vaccinations. About time.

We have now administered 225,640,460 doses of vaccine out of the 290,685,655 delivered. While our seven-day average dipped below three million yesterday and remains below, our 24-hour total is at 3.3 million. Over 138 million people have received at least one dose, and over 93 million are fully vaccinated.

There is another variant that turned up in India late last year, labeled B.1.617; it is the dominant variant there in their ongoing crisis. This is currently categorized as a variant of interest; we don't know enough about it yet to classify it as a variant of concern (if we ever do), but it has some worrisome mutations. The rapidity with which it has taken over in India argues for increased transmissibility, although no one's sure about that; we're trying to figure out whether it is the primary driver of the devastating surge in infections seen in the country. Because it took months to take off in India and has popped up here and there elsewhere without causing a surge, it's just very difficult to say whether it is as transmissible as, say B.1.1.7. It has mutations L452R and E484Q (similar to E484K, the Eek variant, which we've talked about before) that may help it to evade our immune responses to some degree. Neither of these mutations has been demonstrated to overcome vaccinated persons' defenses because these defenses are so broad, which does still leave us with some concern about those who've had prior infections, but were not vaccinated. Irrespective of that, we've talked about the ways a highly transmissible variant can actually kill more people than a more deadly one because of the sheer number of infections it will cause. This is a wait-and-see sort of situation. There have been cases spotted in Australia, Belgium, Germany, Namibia, New Zealand, Singapore, the UK, and the US. Now several cases have showed up in Canada, and one was detected at the airport in Switzerland this week. Great.

On the subject of variants, it appears we have an entirely new branch on the SARS-CoV-2 family tree. The original virus that emerged in Wuhan, China, around 18 months ago, give or take, is what we call a wild-type virus, the one that originally emerged "in the wild," so to speak. At some point, this variant we've been calling D614G, which quickly swept across the world and was, until quite recently, the predominant variant in the US, emerged as a branch or lineage, called the B.1 lineage; the original variant in this lineage, D614G, is officially named B.1—and no, I have no idea why we haven't just been calling it B.1. This lineage has three defining mutations; various members of the lineage have other mutations, but just these three are common to all B.1 variants. These mutations are what make a B.1 variant a B.1 variant. If you haven't been with us all along or need a refresher about all this mutation and genetic stuff, as well as variants, you can brush up at my Update #377 posted March 6, 2021, at <https://www.facebook.com/marie.schwabmiller/posts/4500262516656786>. Trust me: This is fairly painless science, even for those who were scared in their youth by someone's maniacal insistence you memorize the Periodic Table or some such.

The first of these mutations that are characteristic of the B.1 lineage, described in some detail in that earlier post, is D614G; it likely first emerged in mid-January, 2020, and by the end of June was represented

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in 91.5 percent of US patients. That's some pretty kick-ass competitive advantage driving this kind of growth. The mutation occurs in the coding for the viral spike (S) protein which is the part of the virus that binds to that ACE2 receptor on host cells, enabling the virus to get inside your cells in the first place. D614G makes the spike better at binding and stabilizes the interaction between the two proteins (S1 and S2) on the viral spike; this is going to make the virus more infectious—better at entering cells. This one-amino acid substitution has a lot, but not everything, to do with this variant's success; there's a fair amount of work that leads us to believe this single mutation is probably not enough to account for the vastly greater competitiveness of this variant that enabled it to take over the world.

Another mutation that characterizes this variant and probably helps to explain its rise is the RdRp P323L mutation in the RNA-dependent RNA polymerase coding in the NSP12 region of the viral genome. What??? Let's unpack this a bit. NSP12 is a specific region on the viral genome that codes for a nonstructural protein (NSP)—that is, not a protein the virus is built out of, but one the virus uses to get its work done. This particular protein is called RNA-dependent RNA polymerase, or RdRp. The name comes from this: RNA is a polymer—a long biological molecule built out of many similar building blocks, sort of like a necklace built out of all different colors and not-too-different shapes of beads—and -ase is the suffix that denotes an enzyme; so a polymerase is an enzyme that builds polymers, and RNA polymerase is an enzyme that builds, specifically, the polymer that is RNA. This polymerase uses the virus's RNA as a template (pattern) for this RNA building, so it is considered to be RNA-dependent. And so we have an RNA-dependent RNA polymerase, and now that name's not even intimidating any more, right?

So what are we building RNA for? Several things, but this particular RNA polymerase is focused on making new "negative-image" (like a photo negative) copies of the viral RNA—copies the cell can turn around and use as a template to make perfect positive image copies, that is viral RNA in the original form. Think of this the way you see your right and left hands. They're the same, but mirror images of one another, right? If you place them both palm-down, you can't superimpose your right and left hands and get a perfect match because one hand is "opposite" of the other, isn't it? So let's say the way hands serve as templates for the production of new hands is that the old and new hand face one another palm-to-palm. That means, if you have a supply of spare parts—fingers and thumbs—so you can match finger for finger and thumb for thumb with palms together, and you try to use your right hand as a template to build a "right hand" out of these spare parts, you're going to end up with a left hand, not a right one, wouldn't you? And that would be all wrong. If you're starting out with a right hand and you want to make right hands, you need to first make a left hand using that right hand as your template and then use the new left hand as a template to build right hands off of that. What the virus is doing here with RdRp is making left hands to use as templates—lots of left hands. These new copies will then serve as templates for the production of scads of viral RNA molecules for packaging into all the new baby viruses your cell is hospitably building for its guest.

This makes RdRp critical to viral replication and the success of an infection (from the virus's viewpoint). The P323L mutation involves the substitution of the amino acid proline for the amino acid leucine at position 323 on the polymerase; so whereas the wild-type virus would make a polymerase with leucine at position 323, the mutated one sticks a proline in there instead. This causes a shift in the shape of the polymerase. Now we spent a fair amount of time in that post I linked above discussing the importance of shape in determining protein function, and here's one of those situations. The shape of this polymerase is absolutely essential to the way it works. This particular position on the enzyme happens to be a shape-critical one and the change imposed by the proline substitution appears to provide greater conformational stability to the protein—one of those one-in-a-million mutations that seems to confer an advantage to the virus. This looks to be beneficial to the virus—makes it better at infecting us. Just what we need.

There is a third mutation occurring in an as yet untranslated region of the genome. While it has been defined, we don't know enough about that one to speculate on its importance; but we do know that these three mutations characterize B.1.

So this new variant, which emerged in Tanzania and has now popped up in Angola as well, appears to have none of these three defining mutations, which means it is of an entirely different lineage. That

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means it branched off the family tree before B.1 did: If it had branched off later, it would share B.1's mutations. It does have eight of its 13 mutations in common with one or another of the B.1 variants, which is probably a sign some of those mutations are particularly beneficial to the virus; but because it lacks the three the B.1s hold in common, it is its own thing. When you get the same evolutionary development in independent populations, something called convergent evolution, it's generally because that new features are advantageous in some way. Those are the mutations to watch because advantageous for this virus is generally (but not always) something we're not going to be nuts about. There are five spike mutations unique to this Tanzanian variant; we'll want to give these some attention because they're likely to show up in B.1 variants at some point too.

One mutation showing up in this and several B.1 variants is E484K (Eek, which we've talked about), the mutation that confers increased affinity of viral spike (S) protein for our ACE2 receptors, which increases transmissibility and also confers resistance to our neutralizing antibodies. We don't love that. Another mutation of interest is P681H, which occurs near the furin cleavage site between S1 and S2 spike subproteins. (We discussed the polybasic cleavage site between the S1 and S2 proteins in the viral spike in our talk about viral genomics way back when in my Update #42 posted April 6, 2020, at <https://www.facebook.com/marie.schwabmiller/posts/3487224904627224>.) It involves a substitution of the amino acid histidine for the amino acid proline at position 681 in the spike (S) protein. It appears this mutation also helps the virus to evade host immune responses by avoiding neutralizing antibodies.

Several spike protein mutations in what's called the N-terminal domain (appears to be important in viral binding to host cell receptors) show up in various B.1 lineage variants, so far not all together in any single variant. This domain contains an antigen that is the target of many of our neutralizing antibodies. We do not want to see mutations in this site, yet many of the mutations of the Tanzanian virus map to this site. We haven't worked out the functions of this particular domain, but this set of mutations seems as though it's going to increase the ability of the virus to escape our immune responses. That is not a good thing. There are an additional 18 amino acid changes in proteins away from the spike (S) protein; these may involve viral replication, one way or another. We see a lot of this sort of thing in B.1 lineage variants as well. There is some thinking these confer enhanced replication competence, which would increase the viral load in a given patient and therefore enhance transmissibility as well. There may be other mutations we should be concerned about as we move along.

So does this variant spell trouble for us? Good question. We're not yet sure what it represents in terms of threat. It may be more infectious or more immune evasive, and it may not. It doesn't help that the Tanzanian government has imposed a blackout on information; they maintain that they haven't had any cases this year, which is pretty much impossible. It could be a while before we sort this one out. It's never good when public health becomes political instead of a simple matter of public health; we know this from our own experience.

I had a question today about FDA-approved home-based Covid-19 tests. There is quite a panoply of tests available. They come in two general categories. The first consists of tests where you collect a specimen at home and then send it off to a lab for processing; the lab contacts you with your results. There is quite a list of those that use either a nasal swab or saliva: EverlyWell, LetsGetChecked, Hims and Hers, Vitagene, QuestDirect, MyLabBox, Vault, Picture, Phosphorus, and Pixel by LabCorp. These run from around \$110 to \$150 or so in cost.

The other category includes tests that are done fully at home. Here, you don't send a specimen off to a lab; you can read out or collect your results much more quickly at home. These come in two varieties, antigen tests and molecular tests. You may recall that antigen tests detect the presence of viral proteins in your specimen; the quick tests you might get at the clinic are antigen tests. Molecular tests detect viral RNA in your specimen; the RT-PCR tests your clinic sends away to a laboratory are molecular tests. There are three antigen tests and two molecular tests which have emergency use authorization from the FDA. In general, molecular tests are better.

(1) Ellume is an antigen test authorized for home use in people aged 2 and older. No prescription is needed, which means it is likely your insurance will not cover the cost. The specimen is what's called a mid-

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turbinate swab: This is collected from deeper than the nasal swab, but not as deep as the nasopharyngeal swab you've heard about. Once you've collected your specimen, you mix it with fluid in a vial, then place several drops of fluid into an analyzer, which returns a result you read in the window. There is a 15-20 minute wait for results. Good sensitivity in symptomatic people, less so in asymptomatic. (Sensitive tests return fewer false negative results; those occur when the test says you are not infected when in fact you are infected.) About \$30 per test.

(2) Abbott BinaxNOW is an antigen test authorized for home use in people aged 2 and older. No prescription is needed, which means it is likely your insurance will not cover the cost. The specimen is an anterior nasal swab (not as deep as the mid-turbinate swab). You mix the swab into fluid and poke it into a hole on a little card, reading the result as lines in a window, much like an at-home pregnancy test. There is a 15-minute wait for results. Looks like it may be a bit more sensitive than Ellume's test. About \$12 per test; sold in a 2-pack for \$24.

(3) Quidel's QuickVue is an antigen test authorized for home use in people aged 8 and older. I believe a prescription is needed, which makes it more likely insurance will cover the cost. The specimen is an anterior nasal swab. You mix the swab into fluid, dip a test strip into the tube, reading the result as lines on the strip. There is a 10-minute wait. Looks like it may be less sensitive than the above tests. Pricing is a mystery—cannot find it anywhere; comes in a 2-pack.

(4) Cue Health's test is a molecular test authorized for people aged 2 and older. No prescription needed, so it is unlikely insurance will cover it. I believe it uses an anterior nasal swab (or "sample wand" in the company's terminology). You need a cartridge reader which must be purchased separately. You plug a test cartridge into the reader, wait for it to heat up, then insert the sample wand into that. 20-minute wait. Very good sensitivity, probably better than the antigen tests above. Mystery pricing here too, and I'm thinking the reader's going to run the cost up, especially for someone who's only ever going to run one test.

(5) Lucira makes a molecular test authorized for people aged 14 and over. It requires a prescription; I think you may have to acquire it from your physician, which isn't so at-home really, but is probably covered by your insurance. Anterior nasal swab is inserted into a vial. Vial is inserted into test unit (comes with the kit—not a separate purchase), and LEDs light up for positive or negative test. 30-minute wait. Very good sensitivity; looks similar to Cue Health. \$50.

Dr. Ben Moor is an anesthesiologist at Beth Deaconess Hospital in Plymouth, Massachusetts, south of Boston. He has intubated many, many Covid-19 patients to put them on mechanical ventilators over the course of the pandemic. Like most health care workers involved in the care of Covid-19 patients, he's been pushed hard for more than a year, and he's undoubtedly tired.

He described to CNN what happens to patients as "a very, very medicalized process," especially when everything happens in the absence of family, which makes the whole thing an isolating, frightening experience, especially when people are facing the real risk of death. He had started taking a minute with people before intubating them, a minute to see the person behind the patient: "I kind of got this ritual of, you know, you hold the patient's hand just briefly. I think there's a value and a need to recognize this moment, that this might be the last interaction this person has. This might be the last hand that squeezes theirs." And so he humanized the moment—the one that may be the last conscious moment of the person's life.

Then he was vaccinated. Like most health care workers, he was in the first flush of people to receive vaccine in the US, becoming fully vaccinated in early January. Once that happened and his risk of acquiring an infection himself was significantly reduced, he stopped by the Covid-19 unit one day before he went home. "It really impressed on me how lonely these patients were," he told ABC News, explaining that, while the care might have been excellent, "the nurses, the doctors on these floors are particularly busy." There was simply no way they had or could take the time for these humanizing interactions, not when there was always another patient to see, another treatment to render.

And he saw a new way he could help. He started stopping in to see a few patients each day when his shift ended—which gave him an idea. He sought and received permission and then sent out an e-mail to colleagues asking for volunteers. It said in part, "These volunteers will be a physical presence who can

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visit with the patient, hold a hand, bring in gifts from families, assist with video and phone calls, and offer comfort. The time commitment may be a few minutes to an hour or so a day—whatever you can do—but daily contact would be a good goal.”

He was a little concerned about asking for more time and more help from some pretty burned-out colleagues, but he had a huge response—at least 60 people. Those who were fully vaccinated went right to work, and others waited until they were eligible to join the effort. They visit the unit outside of their work hours, taking on as much as they are able. The volunteers report some patients want to look at photos of family and pets, some want to watch TV with volunteers, and others set up video and phone calls with family and friends. They help to ground those who are confused. Sometimes, patients talk about the anxiety and fear they are feeling. One man said he just wanted someone to sit and talk with him, just to have a person there. And always, the volunteers move into the role families usually play in health care, stepping in “to fill the role of caregiver,” according to Dr. Moor.

Kerri Hurley, whose policeman-husband was hospitalized in January and reached the point where he couldn’t speak to her on the phone, said, “Dr. Moor became my lifeline of communication to my husband.” She didn’t want to bother the doctors and nurses on shift because they were so busy. Moor texted with her, inviting her to get in touch whenever she needed something, bringing her husband coffee and a donut before he started work for the day, and letting her know how things looked. When her husband finally came home, he reported seeing that smiling face every day “meant the world.” She said, “Dr Moor became almost like my guardian angel.”

Moor explained that being vaccinated gives these volunteers the luxury of “just doing the good stuff.” He said this program gave the workers a sense of control in a situation where so much was out of their control. Sounds like this was a comfort to everyone involved. And that’s probably better than leaving work a little earlier each day. When we give it an opportunity, the beauty in the human soul will fight to the surface and shine. We should encourage that sort of thing.

Stay safe. I’ll be back tomorrow.

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County	Total Cases	Recovered Cases	Negative Persons	Deceased Among Cases	Community Spread	% PCR Test Positivity Rate (Weekly)
Aurora	468	451	934	15	Minimal	6.9%
Beadle	2927	2855	6375	40	Substantial	10.6%
Bennett	389	379	1225	9	Minimal	5.6%
Bon Homme	1538	1498	2258	27	Moderate	7.9%
Brookings	4149	3971	13342	37	Substantial	7.1%
Brown	5463	5308	13690	91	Substantial	10.8%
Brule	706	691	1994	9	Minimal	2.9%
Buffalo	424	410	917	13	None	0.0%
Butte	1039	996	3458	20	Moderate	5.0%
Campbell	130	126	275	4	None	0.0%
Charles Mix	1374	1321	4276	22	Moderate	2.1%
Clark	450	436	1020	5	Moderate	0.0%
Clay	1910	1873	5885	15	Moderate	5.0%
Codington	4531	4346	10404	81	Substantial	12.1%
Corson	478	465	1087	12	Minimal	4.3%
Custer	826	797	2898	12	Substantial	13.8%
Davison	3204	3097	7190	66	Substantial	8.8%
Day	699	657	1937	29	Moderate	8.6%
Deuel	523	501	1239	8	Moderate	13.3%
Dewey	1460	1428	4071	27	Minimal	2.8%
Douglas	454	442	994	9	Minimal	4.8%
Edmunds	507	487	1124	13	Moderate	0.0%
Fall River	589	563	2848	15	Moderate	9.6%
Faulk	368	352	737	13	Minimal	25.0%
Grant	1032	979	2436	42	Moderate	8.9%
Gregory	579	546	1394	30	Minimal	8.0%
Haakon	262	250	578	10	Minimal	0.0%
Hamlin	792	743	1955	39	Substantial	7.9%
Hand	361	353	906	6	Minimal	0.0%
Hanson	385	380	785	4	Minimal	7.7%
Harding	95	93	201	1	Minimal	0.0%
Hughes	2463	2377	7167	39	Substantial	9.2%
Hutchinson	898	840	2621	27	Substantial	15.6%

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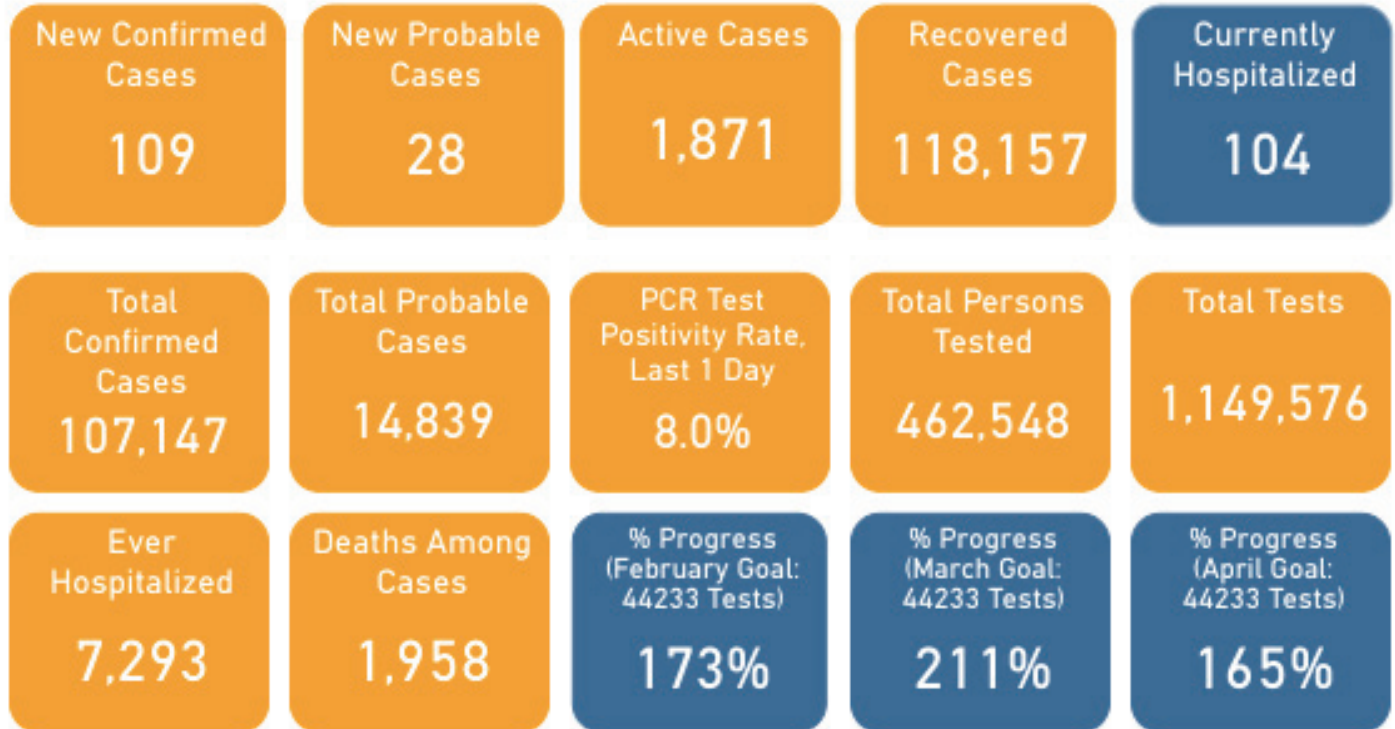
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Hyde	141	139	447	1	None	12.5%
Jackson	289	274	958	14	Minimal	0.0%
Jerauld	273	257	601	16	None	0.0%
Jones	93	93	254	0	None	16.7%
Kingsbury	808	770	1832	14	Substantial	19.6%
Lake	1355	1312	3741	18	Substantial	10.0%
Lawrence	2941	2862	8911	47	Moderate	3.7%
Lincoln	8575	8336	22220	77	Substantial	9.1%
Lyman	640	621	2013	11	Minimal	1.0%
Marshall	366	358	1311	6	Minimal	10.0%
McCook	804	772	1819	24	Minimal	0.0%
McPherson	243	239	612	4	Minimal	0.0%
Meade	2739	2685	8236	30	Moderate	5.0%
Mellette	259	255	798	2	Minimal	12.5%
Miner	297	286	629	9	Minimal	0.0%
Minnehaha	31139	30213	85948	349	Substantial	9.5%
Moody	643	614	1880	17	Moderate	5.2%
Oglala Lakota	2103	2046	7022	49	Moderate	1.9%
Pennington	13545	13190	41977	191	Moderate	8.0%
Perkins	353	339	862	14	Minimal	0.0%
Potter	390	383	896	4	Minimal	7.1%
Roberts	1352	1303	4490	38	Moderate	5.6%
Sanborn	341	338	750	3	Minimal	0.0%
Spink	837	806	2265	26	Moderate	2.3%
Stanley	346	340	1030	2	Minimal	6.7%
Sully	141	135	335	3	Minimal	0.0%
Todd	1222	1191	4368	29	Minimal	1.1%
Tripp	752	730	1591	17	Minimal	0.0%
Turner	1160	1090	2955	56	Moderate	8.5%
Union	2209	2140	6865	42	Substantial	5.6%
Walworth	766	744	1922	16	Moderate	5.6%
Yankton	3048	2952	10103	30	Substantial	6.8%
Ziebach	343	333	933	9	Minimal	0.0%
Unassigned	0	0	1767	0		

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South Dakota



AGE GROUP OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Age Range with Years	# of Cases	# of Deaths Among Cases
0-9 years	5247	0
10-19 years	14277	0
20-29 years	21552	8
30-39 years	20110	19
40-49 years	17472	39
50-59 years	17082	116
60-69 years	13836	265
70-79 years	7199	448
80+ years	5211	1063

RACE/ETHNICITY OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Race/Ethnicity	# of Cases	% of Cases
White	91624	75%
Native American	14047	12%
Unknown	5608	5%
Hispanic	4537	4%
Black	2756	2%
Other	1753	1%
Asian / Pacific Islander	1661	1%

VARIANT CASES OF COVID-19 IN SOUTH DAKOTA

COVID-19 Variant	# of Cases
B.1.1.7	66
B.1.429	10
B.1.351	1
B.1.427	1
P.1	1

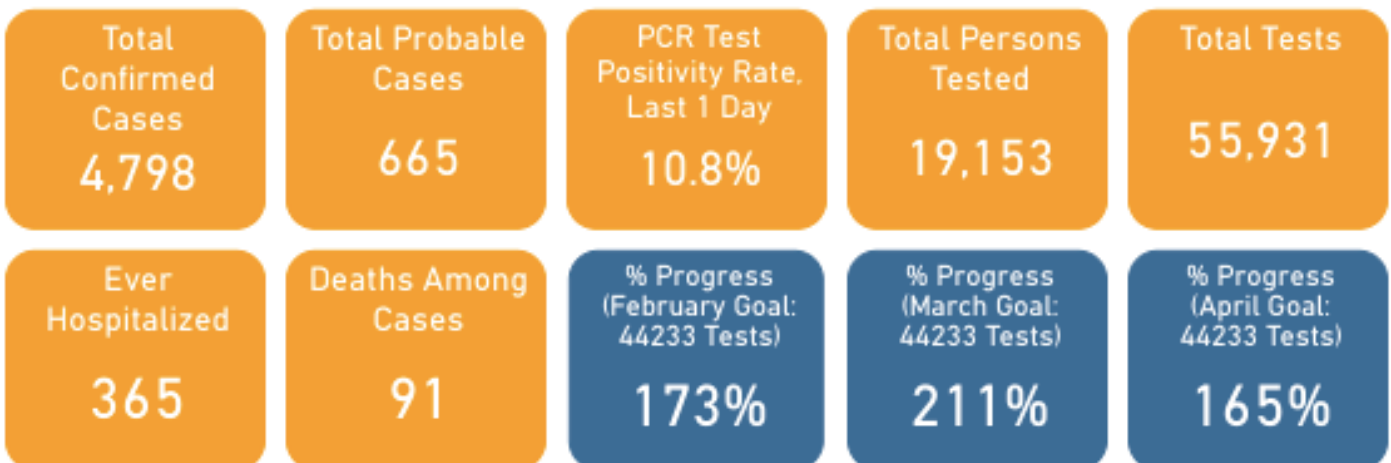
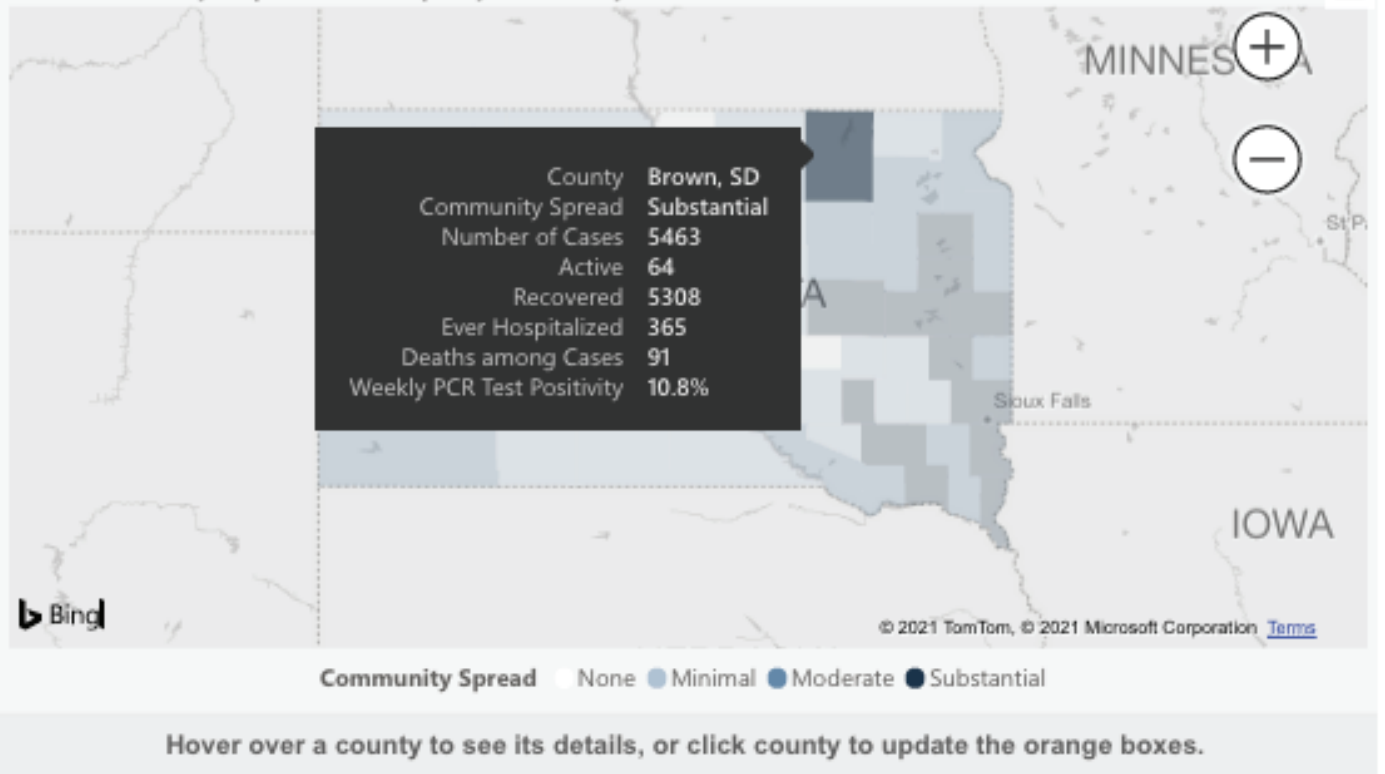
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Brown County



Community Spread Map by County of Residence



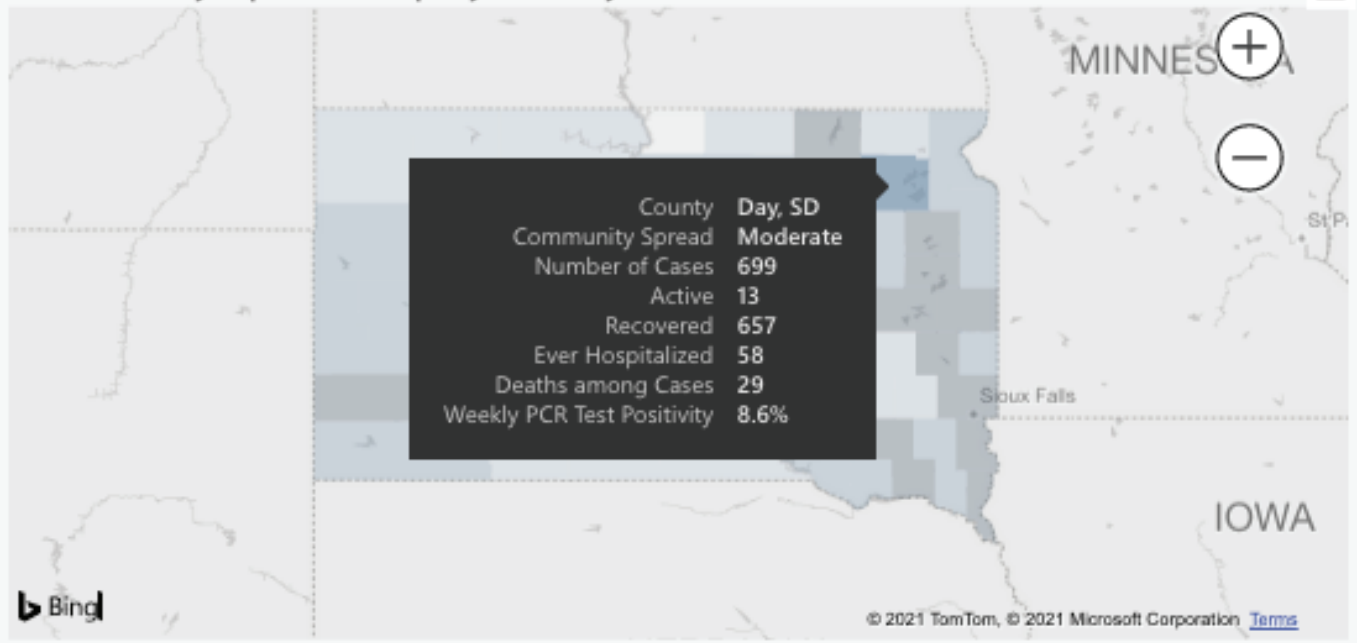
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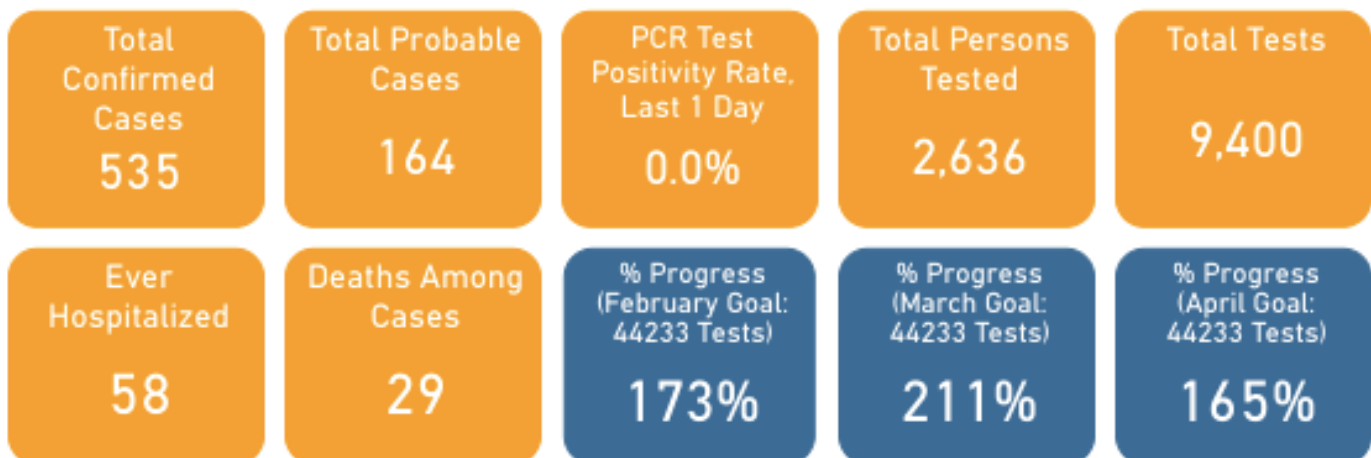
Day County



Community Spread Map by County of Residence



Hover over a county to see its details, or click county to update the orange boxes.



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Vaccinations

Total Doses Administered*

564,599

Total Persons Administered a Vaccine*

323,716

Percent of State Population with at least 1 Dose**

54%

Manufacturer	# of Doses
Janssen	16,295
Moderna	252,817
Pfizer	295,487

Doses	# of Recipients
Janssen - Series Complete	16,295
Moderna - 1 dose	30,599
Moderna - Series Complete	111,109
Pfizer - 1 dose	35,955
Pfizer - Series Complete	129,766

Doses	% of Pop.
1 dose	53.77%
Series Complete	42.65%

Based on 2019 Census Estimate for those aged 16+ years.

County	# Doses	# Persons (1 dose)	# Persons (2 doses)	Total # Persons
Aurora	1,850	224	813	1,037
Beadle	11,882	1,727	5,077	6,804
Bennett*	725	109	308	417
Bon Homme*	5,527	471	2,528	2,999
Brookings	20,698	5,464	7,617	13,081
Brown	27,796	3,674	12,061	15,735
Brule*	2,723	379	1,172	1,551
Buffalo*	175	77	49	126
Butte	4,060	754	1,653	2,407
Campbell	1,523	153	685	838
Charles Mix*	5,037	787	2,125	2,912
Clark	2,289	499	895	1,394
Clay	9,707	1,987	3,860	5,847
Codington*	18,543	3,159	7,692	10,851
Corson*	430	52	189	241
Custer*	4,928	788	2,070	2,858
Davison	14,607	2,079	6,264	8,343
Day*	4,360	600	1,880	2,480
Deuel	2,642	444	1,099	1,543
Dewey*	494	68	213	281
Douglas*	2,002	224	889	1,113
Edmunds	2,405	265	1,070	1,335
Fall River*	4,145	499	1,823	2,322
Faulk	1,818	160	829	989

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Haakon*	801	87	357	444
Hamlin	3,188	604	1,292	1,896
Hand	2,503	219	1,142	1,361
Hanson	1,032	158	437	595
Harding	243	59	92	151
Hughes*	14,401	1,919	6,241	8,160
Hutchinson*	5,987	708	2,639	3,347
Hyde*	841	75	383	458
Jackson*	624	76	274	350
Jerauld	1,524	128	698	826
Jones*	1,000	96	452	548
Kingsbury	4,405	711	1,847	2,558
Lake	8,070	1,758	3,156	4,914
Lawrence	15,373	2,357	6,508	8,865
Lincoln	45,570	5,759	19,905	25,664
Lyman*	1,328	212	558	770
Marshall*	3,401	473	1,464	1,937
McCook	3,855	663	1,596	2,259
McPherson	452	76	188	264
Meade*	11,064	1,638	4,713	6,351
Mellette*	74	10	32	42
Miner	1,497	269	614	883
Minnehaha*	147,623	20,728	63,445	84,173
Moody*	3,250	386	1,432	1,818
Oglala Lakota*	286	66	110	176
Pennington*	61,018	8,148	26,435	34,583
Perkins*	1,118	118	500	618
Potter	1,708	182	763	945
Roberts*	6,508	762	2,873	3,635
Sanborn	1,821	221	800	1,021
Spink	4,777	517	2,130	2,647
Stanley*	2,143	269	937	1,206
Sully	736	82	327	409
Todd*	262	52	105	157
Tripp*	3,057	319	1,369	1,688
Turner	5,788	696	2,546	3,242
Union	6,457	1,113	2,672	3,785
Walworth*	2,762	360	1,201	1,561
Yankton	17,959	2,139	7,910	10,049
Ziebach*	87	17	35	52
Other	11,787	3,121	4,333	7,454

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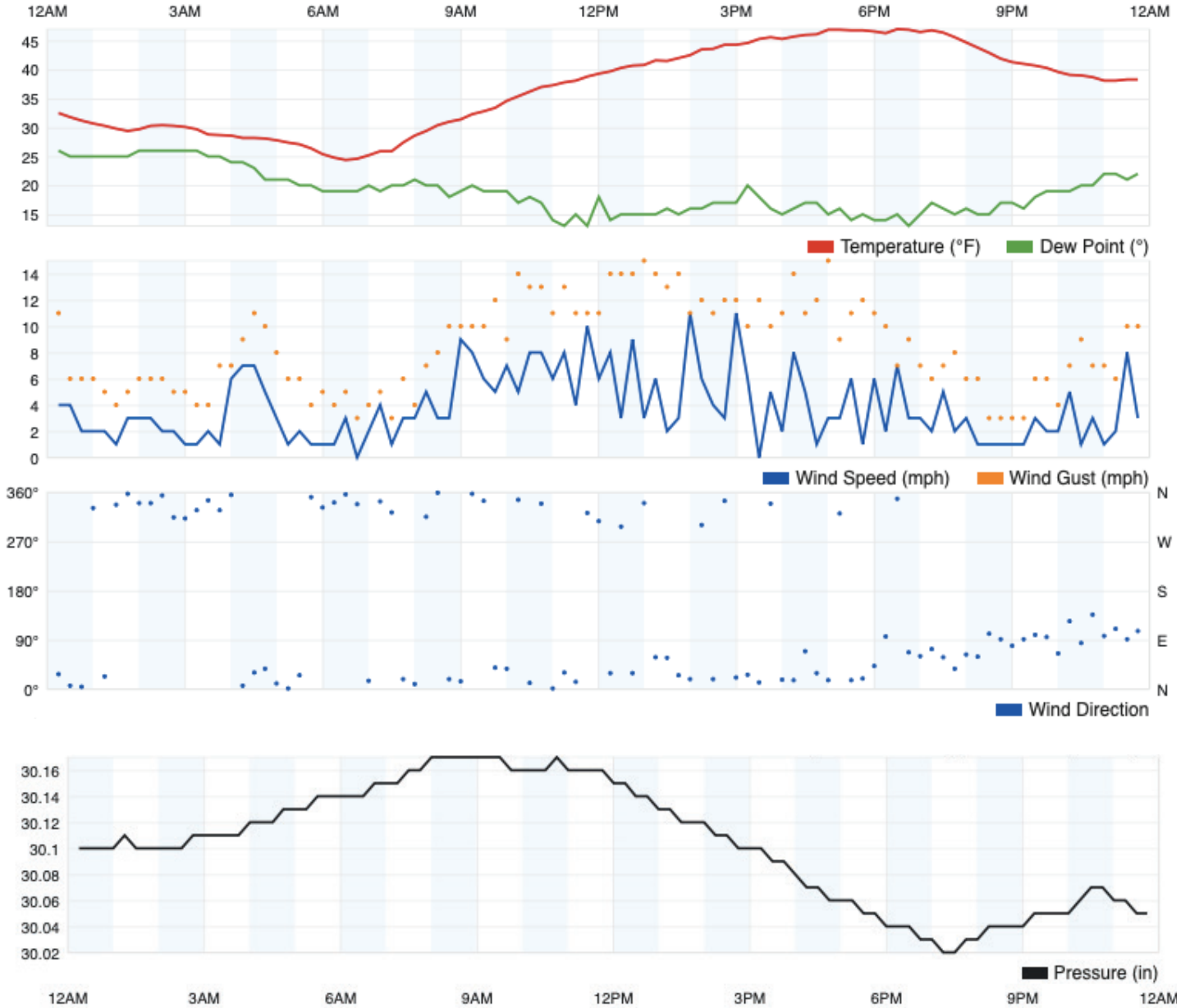
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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday	Monday Night	Tuesday
 80% → 30%	 50%	 30%		 20%
Breezy. Rain/Snow then Chance Rain	Mostly Cloudy then Chance Rain	Chance Rain	Mostly Cloudy	Slight Chance Showers
High: 44 °F	Low: 35 °F	High: 56 °F	Low: 38 °F	High: 57 °F

Snow This morning

Timing: Through the morning hours today

Most impacted: NESD and west central MN

Totals: 1-3" with locally higher amounts possible*

**Uncertainty remains in regards to snow totals*



Updated: 4/25/2021 3:27 AM Central

Precipitation is beginning to fill in over the area this morning after having a difficult time overcoming dry air. Snow is expected to fall primarily over the northeastern quarter of South Dakota, as well as far west central Minnesota, this morning. Totals are expected to remain around 1-3", however, uncertainty exists in regards to snow totals due to a few factors. 1) How quickly dry air saturates this morning allowing precipitation to reach the ground. 2) How quickly liquid precipitation turns to snow. 3) Where the most intense bands set-up and how long they persist.

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Today in Weather History

April 25, 1994: Lightning from a thunderstorm 4 miles W of Aberdeen struck two houses, causing structural damage and starting a fire which caused further damage to one home. The second house suffered damage only to a surge protector.

April 25, 1996: An intense area of low pressure brought high winds of 30 to 50 mph with isolated gusts to 80 mph to central and north central South Dakota from the morning to the evening of the 25th. The dry April soil was picked up by the high winds, lowering visibilities in blowing dust. Some places experienced dust storm conditions with low visibilities and drifting dust. Many roofs lost shingles due to the strong winds. In Eagle Butte, the Vietnam Veterans Center roof was blown off. Other buildings were also damaged across the area, along with some broken windows. Some power poles and lines were downed west of Fort Pierre. Some trees and branches were also downed. Near Isabel, a cattle trailer was tipped over, and two calf shelters were destroyed. Also, a twenty foot Conoco sign was blown down near Isabel along with other signs damaged across the area. The dust storm reminded many of the 1930s. Some wind gusts include 60 mph at Mobridge and Selby, 70 mph at Miller, Pierre, and Murdo, and 80 mph at Isabel and Eagle Butte.

1875: New York City received three inches of snow, the latest measurable snowfall on record for that location.

1880: A violent tornado, at times up to 400 yards wide, swept away at least 20 homes in Macon, Mississippi. Pieces of houses were found 15 miles away. 22 people died, and 72 were injured. Loaded freight cars were thrown 100 yards into homes. Clothes were carried for eight miles.

1910: Chicago, Illinois was blanketed with 2.5 inches of snow, and a total of 6.5 inches between the 22nd and the 26th. It was the latest significant snow on record for the city. Atlanta, Georgia also received late-season snowfall when 1.5 inches fell. Their 32 degrees low is the latest freeze on record.

1912: An estimated F4 tornado struck Ponca City, Oklahoma. One person was killed, and 119 homes were damaged or destroyed. Dozens of oil derricks were flattened or twisted, southwest of town. The tornado was reportedly visible and audible for 20 miles.

1990: Thunderstorms produced severe weather from Texas to Nebraska. Thunderstorms spawned fifteen tornadoes, including a powerful F4 tornado near Weatherford, Texas. Between 3 PM and 8 PM, a storm complex tracking northeastward across central Kansas spawned four tornadoes along a 119-mile path from Ness to Smith Center, with the last tornado on the ground for 55 miles. Del Rio TX was hit with hail two inches in diameter and wind gusts to 112 mph. Brown County and Comanche County in Texas were deluged with up to 18 inches of rain, and flooding caused more than 65 million dollars damage.

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HERE'S HOPE!

Jake Hess, the great gospel singer was known to say, "Things are going to get better, get worse or stay about the same." How true!

We all seem to face three types of trouble: things that trouble us from the past, things that are troubling us now, and things we expect to trouble us in the future. Trouble, as well as troubles, seem to be a large part of everyone's life.

David had his troubles, too. On one occasion his troubles were so severe that he was downcast by what had happened in his past and when he viewed his future he became even more discouraged by what he expected would someday happen to him.

However, one day when he realized what was going on in his life as he faced his future, he asked himself two questions: "Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why am I feeling so disturbed?" The word "downcast" means "to be depressed" and the word "disturbed" means "to growl like a bear."

When he sensed the extent of his depression, he became alarmed. It seemed like a bear was growling inside of him. But suddenly, he decided to look upward, not inward, and said from the depths of his heart – "Put your hope in God," not in yourself!

And when he did he shouted, "For I will yet praise Him, my Savior and my God." His inner feelings expressed themselves in questions of despair and thoughts of defeat. In that moment of loneliness, his faith was tested and tried but not trampled by doubt. Ultimately he triumphed by giving himself some great advice: "Put your hope in God," he said, "and continue to praise Him!" And he did. And it worked!

Faith and doubt often appear as twins. But when doubt was about to triumph, his faith gave him hope and surged within him, and he overcame the troubles he faced by the trust he had in God. What an example for us to follow: faith and hope and trust in God.

Prayer: Father, in our moments of despair may we turn to You with a never-ending hope-filled trust, that You will rescue and deliver us from harm. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

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2021 Community Events

- Cancelled** Legion Post #39 Spring Fundraiser (Sunday closest to St. Patrick's Day, every other year)
03/27/2021 Lions Club Easter Egg Hunt 10am Sharp at the City Park (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
04/10/2021 Dueling Pianos Baseball Fundraiser at the American Legion Post #39 6-11:30pm
04/24/2021 Firemen's Spring Social at the Fire Station 7pm-12:30am (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
04/25/2021 Princess Prom (Sunday after GHS Prom)
05/01/2021 Lions Club Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales 8am-3pm (1st Saturday in May)
05/31/2021 Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services (Memorial Day)
6/7-9/2021 St. John's Lutheran Church VBS
06/18/2021 SDSU Alumni & Friends Golf Tournament at Olive Grove
06/19/2021 Lions Crazy Golf Fest at Olive Grove Golf Course, Noon
07/04/2021 Firecracker Golf Tournament at Olive Grove
07/11/2021 Lions Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 10am-4pm (Sunday Mid-July)
07/22/2021 Pro-Am Golf Tournament at Olive Grove Golf Course
07/30/2021-08/03/2021 State "B" American Legion Baseball Tournament in Groton
08/06/2021 Wine on Nine at Olive Grove Golf Course
09/11/2021 Lions Club Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales 8am-3pm (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
09/12/2021 Sunflower Classic Golf Tournament at Olive Grove
09/18-19 Groton Fly-In/Drive-In, Groton Municipal Airport
10/08/2021 Lake Region Marching Band Festival (2nd Friday in October)
10/09/2021 Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm (Saturday before Columbus Day)
10/29/2021 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm
10/31/2021 Groton United Methodist Trunk or Treat (Halloween)
11/13/2021 Legion Post #39 Turkey Party (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)
11/25/2021 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm (Thanksgiving)
12/11/2021 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services 9am-Noon

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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

11-13-14-30-34

(eleven, thirteen, fourteen, thirty, thirty-four)

Estimated jackpot: \$151,000

Lotto America

05-20-21-26-27, Star Ball: 4, ASB: 2

(five, twenty, twenty-one, twenty-six, twenty-seven; Star Ball: four; ASB: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$5.25 million

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$297 million

Powerball

22-36-48-59-61, Powerball: 22, Power Play: 3

(twenty-two, thirty-six, forty-eight, fifty-nine, sixty-one; Powerball: twenty-two; Power Play: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$104 million

Gronowski throws 3 TDs, S. Dakota St. tops Holy Cross 31-3

BROOKINGS, S.D. (AP) — Mark Gronowski passed for three touchdowns, Isaiah Davis ran for 156 yards and another score and South Dakota State, the No. 1 seed, walloped Holy Cross 31-3 on Saturday in the first round of the FCS playoffs.

The second-ranked Jackrabbits (6-1) held Patriot League champion Holy Cross (3-1) to 198 yards of offense while rolling up 439. The defense recorded four sacks and eight tackles for loss. Special teams blocked a field goal attempt and recovered a fumble after a punt.

South Dakota State, winner of the Missouri Valley Football Conference, built a 17-0 lead before Holy Cross got on the scoreboard with a Derek Ng 47-yard field goal with 29 seconds left in the first half.

In the third quarter, Holy Cross' defense forced a Jackrabbits three-and-out, but John Smith fumbled the punt which was recovered by SDSU's Chase Norblade near midfield.

One play later, Gronowski, with plenty of time in the pocket, fired deep down the middle of the field for Jadon Janke, who caught the ball in stride for a 45-yard touchdown. It was Gronowski's second TD on Jadon Janke. He also had an 11-yard scoring toss to Jason Janke.

Davis capped the scoring with a 60-yard touchdown burst early in the fourth quarter.

Holy Cross was held to five punts on six possessions after halftime. The Crusaders' Matthew Sluka was held to 76 yards passing, and gained another 22 on the ground.

Man arrested in after high-speed police pursuit

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A Harrisburg man is in trouble with the law after he allegedly led sheriff's deputies on a high-speed chase.

The Sioux Falls Argus Leader reported on Friday that the chase began Wednesday night near Harrisburg High School when an officer attempted to pull over a car for speeding, according to the Lincoln County Sheriff's Office.

The vehicle took off, turned off its lights and raced away. The vehicle reached speeds of more than 100 mph with its headlights off.

Deputies terminated the chase when the vehicle entered Sioux Falls due to safety concerns. Deputies

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discovered the 20-year-old Harrisburg man owned the vehicle and later arrested him outside his house. He was booked into jail on suspicion of aggravated eluding, possession of a controlled substance, driving under the influence, reckless driving, open container and multiple other traffic violations.

Sioux Falls man gets double lung transplant after COVID

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A Sioux Falls man has undergone a double lung transplant after suffering complications from COVID-19.

The Sioux Falls Argus Leader reported Friday that 42-year-old Nathan Foote suffered severe pneumonia after contracting the disease in October. He suffered severe scarring in his lungs. Doctors said he got a double transplant or die in hospice care.

He was placed on the transplant list in February at the University of Minnesota Medical Center in Minneapolis. He was offered two potential matches but both fell through because of changes in the donors' health.

He finally underwent the procedure April 10. The surgery lasted eight hours. A few days later he took his first breath on his own in six months.

Foote says he's still in pain and he's still eating through a feeding tube. He's also trying to teach himself how to walk again.

"I didn't think I'd ever make it this far," he said. "I did my part even when they told me I was going to die, because I didn't believe that."

4 people indicted in connection with motel shooting

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Four people have been accused of killing a man in a Rapid City motel room earlier this month.

The Rapid City Journal reported Friday that Travis Nelson, Tracy Laughlin, William Long and Gilbert Reyna have all been indicted on a first-degree murder charge in connection with the April 9 shooting death of 20-year-old Jesus Vance. Nelson and Laughlin remain at large.

Police found Vance shot dead in a room at the South Dakota Rose Inn.

The four suspects also have been charged with assaulting and kidnapping 37-year-old Jake Williams, who was found outside the hotel. According to police reports, the group cut Williams face so badly he needed staples to heal. Williams was found with methamphetamine, a gun holster and a magazine. He has been charged with methamphetamine possession.

It's unclear how the kidnapping and assault may be related to Vance's death. The Rapid City Journal reported most court documents in the case have been sealed. Police spokesman Brendyn Medina said Friday that the large number of people involved is complicating the case.

Iraq Interior Ministry: 82 killed in Baghdad hospital fire

By SAMYA KULLAB Associated Press

BAGHDAD (AP) — Iraq's Interior Ministry said Sunday that 82 people died and 110 were injured in a catastrophic fire that broke out in the intensive care unit of a Baghdad hospital tending to severe coronavirus patients.

Negligence on the part of hospital authorities has been blamed for the Saturday night fire, which initial reports suggest was caused when an oxygen cylinder exploded in the ward of Ibn al-Khatib hospital. Iraq's prime minister fired key hospital officials hours after the catastrophic incident.

Among the dead were at least 28 patients on ventilators battling severe symptoms of the virus, tweeted Ali al-Bayati, a spokesman of the country's independent Human Rights Commission. The commission is a semi-official body.

Firefighters rushed to battle the flames that raged across the second floor of the hospital. Civil defense teams put out flames until the early hours of the morning.

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Ambulances transported dozens of wounded. The Health Ministry said at least 200 people were rescued from the scene.

Doctors at the scene were frazzled by the chaos unfolding around them. They said numerous burned bodies were carried out by paramedics from the hospital floor.

By midday Sunday, relatives were still searching anxiously for unaccounted for loved ones.

"Please, two of my relatives are missing. ... I am going to die (without news about them)," posted a young woman on social media after a fruitless search for her family members. "I hope someone can help us find Sadi Abdul Kareem and Samir Abdul Kareem, they were in the ICU."

The fire came as Iraq grapples with a severe second wave of the coronavirus pandemic. Daily virus cases now average around 8,000, the highest since Iraq began recording infection rates early last year. At least 15,200 people have died of coronavirus in Iraq among a total of at least 100,000 confirmed cases.

In response to the fire, Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi fired the director-general of the Baghdad Health Department in the al-Rusafa area, where the hospital is located. He also fired the director of Ibh al-Khatib Hospital and its director of engineering and maintenance, according to a statement from the Health Ministry and his office.

After the fire first broke out, Al-Khadhimi held an emergency meeting at the headquarters of the Baghdad Operations Command, which coordinates Iraqi security forces, according to a statement on his Twitter account.

In the meeting he said the incident amounted to negligence.

"Negligence in such matters is not a mistake, but a crime for which all negligent parties must bear responsibility," he said. He gave Iraqi authorities 24 hours to present the results of an investigation.

U.N. envoy to Iraq Jeannine Hennis-Plasschaert expressed "shock and pain" over the incident in a statement and called for stronger protection measures in hospitals.

Turkey summons US Ambassador over genocide announcement

By ZEYNEP BILGINSOY Associated Press

ISTANBUL (AP) — Turkey's foreign ministry has summoned the U.S. Ambassador in Ankara to protest the U.S. decision to mark the deportation and killing of Armenians during the Ottoman Empire as "genocide."

Deputy Foreign Minister Sedat Onal met with David Satterfield late Saturday to express Ankara's strong condemnation. "The statement does not have legal ground in terms of international law and has hurt the Turkish people, opening a wound that's hard to fix in our relations," the ministry said.

On Saturday, U.S. President Joe Biden followed through on a campaign promise to recognize the events that began in 1915 and killed an estimated 1.5 million Ottoman Armenians as genocide. The statement was carefully crafted to say the deportations, massacres and death marches took place in the Ottoman Empire. "We see that pain. We affirm the history. We do this not to cast blame but to ensure that what happened is never repeated," it said.

The White House proclamation immediately prompted statements of condemnation from Turkish officials, although Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is yet to address the issue.

Turkey rejects the use of the word, saying both Turks and Armenians were killed in the World War I-era fighting, and has called for a joint history commission to investigate. For years, American presidents have avoided using "genocide" to describe what Armenians call Meds Yeghern, or the Great Crime.

The announcement comes as Turkish-American relations suffer from a host of issues. The U.S. has sanctioned Turkish defense officials and kicked Turkey out of a fighter jet program after the NATO member bought Russian-made S400 defense system. Ankara is frustrated by Washington's support of Syrian Kurdish fighters linked to an insurgency that Turkey has fought for decades. Turkey has also demanded the extradition of Fethullah Gulen, a Turkish cleric accused of orchestrating a bloody coup attempt against Erdogan's government in 2016. Gulen lives in the U.S. and denies involvement.

Erdogan and Biden spoke on the phone Friday for the first time since the U.S. elections.

Ibrahim Kalin, the spokesman to the president, tweeted Sunday: "President Erdogan opened Turkey's

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national archives & called for a joint historical committee to investigate the events of 1915, to which Armenia never responded. It is a pity @POTUS has ignored, among others, this simple fact and taken an irresponsible and unprincipled position."

Pope ordains 9 priests, saying: stay humble, compassionate

By FRANCES D'EMILIO Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Pope Francis on Sunday gave the Catholic church nine new priests, encouraging them in an ordination ceremony in St. Peter's Basilica to be humble and compassionate and to stay close to the rank-and-file faithful, whose trust in clergy has been sorely tested by decades of sex abuse scandals.

Professing obedience to the pontiff during the Mass on Sunday were six men from Italy and one each from Romania, Colombia and Brazil. The men removed their masks, part of COVID-19 safety protocols, when they knelt before Francis and he lay his hands on their head as part of the ordination ritual. At another point of the ceremony, the nine lay prostrated on a carpet in front of the basilica's central altar in a sign of obedience, humility and giving of oneself.

Shortages of locally ordained seminarians have in recent decades seen priests be transferred to predominantly Catholic countries like Italy from Asia and Africa, where seminaries are still attracting many recruits.

Sexual abuse scandals in the priesthood have eroded many Catholics' confidence in their church.

In an improvised homily, Francis instructed the nine to stay close to God, to their bishop and among themselves, but "most of all to the holy faithful people of God" from whose ranks they come. He told them to please stay away from vanity, pride and money, lest they become "businessmen priests."

"If you do that, don't be afraid, all will go well," in their new roles as priests, Francis said.

Financial scandals and instances of clergy living in posh quarters, including at the Vatican, have tainted the church's teaching that humility and poverty are virtues.

One of the newly ordained is a 40-year-old Italian who had worked as an artistic director before deciding he wanted to become a priest. Another Italian said in his biography that he loves soccer and had even tried out for Roma, one of the Italian capital's major league soccer clubs, but turned down an offer to study for the priesthood instead.

Last year, with Italy in the first wave of the pandemic, the basilica ordination by the pope was skipped. This year, at the ceremony's end, Francis, looking relaxed, after taking a group photos with the new priests still wearing their masks, asked the nine to remove their masks for another photo opportunity, and smiling, the nine eagerly complied.

India's crematoriums overwhelmed as virus 'swallows people'

By SHEIKH SAALIQ and AIJAZ HUSSAIN Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — India's crematoriums and burial grounds are being overwhelmed by the devastating new surge of infections tearing through the populous country with terrifying speed, depleting the supply of life-saving oxygen to critical levels and leaving patients to die while waiting in line to see doctors.

For the fourth straight day, India on Sunday set a global daily record for new infections, spurred by an insidious, new variant that emerged here, undermining the government's premature claims of victory over the pandemic.

The 349,691 confirmed cases over the past day brought India's total to more than 16.9 million, behind only the United States. The Health Ministry reported another 2,767 deaths in the past 24 hours, pushing India's COVID-19 fatalities to 192,311.

Experts say that toll could be a huge undercount, as suspected cases are not included, and many deaths from the infection are being attributed to underlying conditions.

The crisis unfolding in India is most visceral in its graveyards and crematoriums, and in heartbreaking images of gasping patients dying on their way to hospitals due to lack of oxygen.

Burial grounds in the Indian capital New Delhi are running out of space and bright, glowing funeral pyres light up the night sky in other badly hit cities.

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In central Bhopal city, some crematoriums have increased their capacity from dozens of pyres to more than 50. Yet officials say there are still hours-long waits.

At the city's Bhadbhada Vishram Ghat crematorium, workers said they cremated more than 110 people on Saturday, even as government figures in the entire city of 1.8 million put the total number of virus deaths at just 10.

"The virus is swallowing our city's people like a monster," said Mamtesh Sharma, an official at the site.

The unprecedented rush of bodies has forced the crematorium to skip individual ceremonies and exhaustive rituals that Hindus believe release the soul from the cycle of rebirth.

"We are just burning bodies as they arrive," said Sharma. "It is as if we are in the middle of a war."

The head gravedigger at New Delhi's largest Muslim cemetery, where 1,000 people have been buried during the pandemic, said more bodies are arriving now than last year. "I fear we will run out of space very soon," said Mohammad Shameem.

The situation is equally grim at unbearably full hospitals, where desperate people are dying in line, sometimes on the roads outside, waiting to see doctors.

Health officials are scrambling to expand critical care units and stock up on dwindling supplies of oxygen. Hospitals and patients alike are struggling to procure scarce medical equipment that is being sold at an exponential markup.

The crisis is in direct contrast with government claims that "nobody in the country was left without oxygen," in a statement made Saturday by India's Solicitor General Tushar Mehta before Delhi High Court.

The breakdown is a stark failure for a country whose prime minister only in January had declared victory over COVID-19, and which boasted of being the "world's pharmacy," a global producer of vaccines and a model for other developing nations.

Caught off-guard by the latest deadly spike, the federal government has asked industrialists to increase the production of oxygen and other life-saving drugs in short supply. But health experts say India had an entire year to prepare for the inevitable — and it didn't.

Dr. Krutika Kuppalli, assistant professor of medicine in the division of infectious diseases at the Medical University of South Carolina, said the Indian government has been "very reactive to this situation rather than being proactive."

She said the government should have used the last year, when the virus was more under control, to develop plans to address a surge and "stockpiled medications and developed public-private partnerships to help with manufacturing essential resources in the event of a situation like this."

"Most importantly, they should have looked at what was going on in other parts of the world and understood that it was a matter of time before they would be in a similar situation," Kuppalli said.

Kuppalli called the government's premature declarations of victory over the pandemic a "false narrative," which encouraged people to relax health measures when they should have continued strict adherence to physical distancing, wearing masks and avoiding large crowds.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is facing mounting criticism for allowing Hindu festivals and attending mammoth election rallies that experts suspect accelerated the spread of infections.

In one such election rally two weeks ago, Modi barely managed to hide his delight when he declared to his supporters in West Bengal state: "I have never seen such huge crowds." At that time, the virus had already started to rear its head again and experts were warning a deadly surge was inevitable.

With the death toll mounting, Modi's Hindu nationalist government is trying to quell critical voices.

On Saturday, Twitter complied with the government's request and prevented people in India from viewing more than 50 tweets that appeared to criticize the administration's handling of the pandemic. The targeted posts include tweets from opposition ministers critical of Modi, journalists and ordinary Indians.

A Twitter spokesperson said it had powers to "withhold access to the content in India only" if the company determined the content to be "illegal in a particular jurisdiction." The company said it had responded to an order by the government and notified people whose tweets were withheld.

India's Information Technology Ministry did not respond to a request for comment.

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Even with the targeted blocks, horrific scenes of overwhelmed hospitals and cremation grounds spread on Twitter and drew appeals of help.

White House National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan on Sunday said the United States is "deeply concerned" by the severe COVID-19 outbreak in India. "We are working around the clock to deploy more supplies and support to our friends and partners in India as they bravely battle this pandemic," Sullivan tweeted.

Help and support also appeared to arrive from archrival Pakistan, with politicians, journalists and citizens in the neighboring country expressing support for people in India. Pakistan's Foreign Affairs Ministry said it offered to provide relief support including ventilators, oxygen supply kits, digital X-ray machines, PPE and related items.

"Humanitarian issues require responses beyond political consideration," Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi said.

The Indian government did not immediately respond to Qureshi's statement.

At least 6 killed in fiery van crash on Georgia interstate

SUWANEE, Ga. (AP) — At least six people died and several others were hurt in an interstate crash in Georgia that left a passenger van engulfed in flames and rolled on its side, police said.

Passersby stopped to pull people from the burning vehicle Saturday evening along I-85 near the I-985 split, Gwinnett County police Sgt. Michele Pihera said in a news release. The area is about 35 miles (56 kilometers) northeast of downtown Atlanta.

Six people were pronounced dead at the scene and several others were taken to Atlanta-area hospitals for treatment. One bystander suffered a minor injury but declined to be transported, police said.

It was unclear how many people were inside the van but police believe all were adults. The news release said details about the people in the van would be announced in the coming days.

Investigators were working to determine the cause of the crash. Information at the scene led police to believe another vehicle may have been involved. Witnesses were asked to call the police department's accident investigation tip line with any information.

35 years on, Chernobyl warns and inspires

By YURAS KARMANAU Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — The vast and empty Chernobyl Exclusion Zone around the site of the world's worst nuclear accident is a baleful monument to human mistakes. Yet 35 years after a power plant reactor exploded, Ukrainians also look to it for inspiration, solace and income.

Reactor No. 4 at the power plant 110 kilometers (65 miles) north of the capital Kyiv exploded and caught fire deep in the night on April 26, 1986, shattering the building and spewing radioactive material high into the sky.

Soviet authorities made the catastrophe even worse by failing to tell the public what had happened — although the nearby plant workers' town of Pripyat was evacuated the next day, the 2 million residents of Kyiv weren't informed despite the fallout danger. The world learned of the disaster only after heightened radiation was detected in Sweden.

Eventually, more than 100,000 people were evacuated from the vicinity and a 2,600-square-kilometer (1,000-square-mile) exclusion zone was established where the only activity was workers disposing of waste and tending to a hastily built sarcophagus covering the reactor.

Radiation continued to leak from the reactor building until 2019, when the entire building was covered by an enormous arch-shaped shelter. As robots inside the shelter began dismantling the reactor, officials felt new optimism about the zone.

"This is a place of tragedy and memory, but it is also a place where you can see how a person can overcome the consequences of a global catastrophe," said Bohdan Borukhovskiy, Ukraine's deputy environment minister.

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"We want a new narrative to appear — it was not a zone of exclusion, but a zone of development and revival," he said.

For him, that narrative includes encouraging tourism.

"Our tourism is unique, it is not a classic concept of tourism," he said. "This is an area of meditation and reflection, an area where you can see the impact of human error, but you can also see the human heroism that corrects it."

The Chernobyl zone saw its tourism increase twofold after the lauded television miniseries of 2019 and officials hope that level of interest will continue, or grow, once the global pandemic has receded.

One of the prime draws for tourists is to see the ruins of Pripyat, the once-modern town of 50,000 now being taken over by decay and vegetation. Work is underway to build paths to make it easier for visitors to navigate the ruins.

The Chernobyl plant is out of service, but there is still much work to be done at the decommissioned plant. Borukhovskiy said all four of its reactors are to be dismantled only by 2064.

Ukraine also has decided to use the deserted zone as the site for its centralized storage facility for the spent fuel from the country's four remaining nuclear power plants, and that is to open this year. Until recently, the fuel was disposed of in Russia.

Storing the spent fuel at home will save the country an estimated \$200 million a year.

"We are doing everything possible so that this territory, where it is now impossible for people to live, is used with benefit and gives the country a profit," said Serhiy Kostyuk, head of the agency that manages the exclusion zone.

Although the radiation level in the zone is low enough that tourists can visit and workers can carry out their jobs, permanent residence is banned. However, more than 100 people still live in the zone that extends 30 kilometers (18 miles) around the nuclear power plant, despite orders to leave the site.

Among them is 85-year-old former teacher Yevgeny Markevich, who said "It's a great happiness to live at home, but it's sad that it's not as it used to be.

Today, he grows potatoes and cucumbers on his garden plot, which he takes for tests "in order to partially protect myself."

Long-term effects on human health remain the subject of intense scientific debate. Immediately after the accident, 30 plant workers and firefighters died from acute radiation sickness. Later, thousands of people died from radiation-related illnesses such as cancer.

To the surprise of many who expected the area might be a dead zone for centuries, wildlife is thriving: Bears, bison, wolves, lynx, wild horses and dozens of bird species live in the people-free territory.

According to scientists, the animals were much more resistant to radiation than expected, and were able to quickly adapt to strong radiation. Ukrainian scientists are researching this phenomenon together with colleagues from Japan and Germany.

"This is a gigantic territory ... in which we keep a chronicle of nature," said biologist Denis Vishnevskiy, 43, who has been observing nature in the reserve for the past 20 years. "The exclusion zone is not a curse, but our resource"

The Ukrainian authorities are calling for the exclusion zone to be included in the UNESCO World Heritage List, since the object is a unique place "of interest to all mankind". The Ministry of Culture of Ukraine has already taken steps to recognize the zone as a monument, which will attract more funding and tourists.

"Chernobyl should not become a wild playground for adventure hunters," said Ukrainian Culture Minister Oleksandr Tkachenko. "People should leave the exclusion zone with the awareness of the historical memory of this place and its importance for all mankind."

In the spirit of preserving the memories, some enthusiasts have created the Chornobyl App, which includes declassified documents about the disaster and allows users to explore augmented-reality view of the zone and structures.

"Sixty percent of Ukrainians do not know the date of the accident and we decided that there should be a resource where a lot of verified information is collected," said Valeriy Korshunov, one of the free app's

developers.

The Latest: Pakistan offers essential supplies to help India

By The Associated Press undefined

ISLAMABAD — India's rival Pakistan is offering to send essential medical supplies to its neighbor that's in the grip of a devastating coronavirus surge that has depleted oxygen stocks and other hospital needs.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs says that as a gesture of solidarity with the people of India, Pakistan has offered to provide relief support including ventilators, oxygen supply kits, digital X-ray machines, PPEs and related items.

It said authorities of both countries can work out modalities for a quick delivery of the items and can also explore possible ways of further cooperation to mitigate the challenges posed by the pandemic.

The offer came a day after Prime Minister Imran Khan in a tweet prayed for the "speedy recovery of the Indian people affected by the virus."

Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi says Pakistan, believing in a policy of humanity first, made the offer to India and is awaiting a response.

THE VIRUS OUTBREAK:

- Europe reopens but virus patients still overwhelm ICU teams
- India virus patients suffocate amid oxygen shortage in surge
- Merkel urges Germans to accept 'tough' virus restrictions
- Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro has suggested that the army might be called into the streets to restore order if lockdown measures against COVID-19 that he opposes lead to chaos.
- While much of the world remains hunkered down, the band Six60 has been playing to huge crowds in New Zealand, where social distancing isn't required after the nation stamped out the coronavirus.

Follow all of AP's pandemic coverage at <https://apnews.com/hub/coronavirus-pandemic> and <https://apnews.com/hub/coronavirus-vaccine>

HERE'S WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING:

BANGKOK — Thailand on Sunday reported 2,438 new cases and 11 deaths, as Bangkok braced for the closure of entertainment and sport venues as part of measures health care workers say are not enough to relieve overburdened hospitals.

The Thai capital has seen a rapid rise in infections since early April, and its governor, Aswin Kwanmuang, announced the two-week closures starting Monday.

They include gyms, public parks, zoos, exhibition and meeting centers, nurseries and boxing stadiums. Those not wearing masks in public face penalties.

Shortages of hospital beds, stemming from a regulation that everyone testing positive for COVID-19 must be treated in a hospital, are causing frustration. Media reported two people died in their homes after they were turned down by hospitals.

Some health workers are calling for a general lockdown, saying the government's hospital admission policies have exhausted the system.

The Thoracic Society of Thailand wrote an open letter demanding the government restrict the movement of people to reduce the number of new cases.

TOKYO — Japan's department stores, bars and theaters shuttered Sunday as part of emergency measures to slow a surge in infections.

The 17-day restrictions are declared for Tokyo, Kyoto, Hyogo and Osaka, ahead of the "Golden Week" holidays, when Japanese usually travel extensively.

There's doubt about the effectiveness of the effort, which focuses on eateries and theme parks staying

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closed or limiting hours. Trains and streets remain as packed as ever, and schools will stay open.

Japan has already declared three emergencies over the coronavirus. The vaccine rollout has been slow, with barely 1% of its population inoculated.

One setback is that Japan requires additional testing for vaccines approved overseas, and only the Pfizer vaccine is now in use.

Experts say the unfolding wave of infections includes more deadly variants. Japan has attributed about 10,000 deaths to COVID-19, among the worst in Asia. A domestically produced vaccine is not expected until next year or 2023.

OLYMPIA, Wash. — Gov. Jay Inslee said Saturday that inoculations with the Johnson & Johnson vaccine can begin in Washington state following a review by scientific experts in a western states work group.

The Seattle Times reports that the Western States Scientific Safety Review work group — vaccine experts from Washington, California, Oregon and Nevada — met Friday to review data about the vaccine's potential risks, after more than a dozen women nationwide developed rare blood clots.

"The benefits of the J&J vaccine outweigh the risks associated with it," Inslee said in a statement. The federal Food and Drug Administration and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on Friday called for the 11-day pause on the J&J vaccine to be lifted after federal regulators reviewed data on blood clots and assess risks associated with the vaccine.

LOS ANGELES — A panel of public health experts from California, Nevada, Oregon and Washington was meeting to discuss potentially lifting the pause on the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, a spokesman for the California Department of Public Health said Saturday.

Meanwhile, Los Angeles County public health officials went ahead with telling vaccine providers they could resume administering Johnson & Johnson doses on Saturday, if they give out an updated fact sheet about the vaccine to recipients.

Dr. Paul Simon, chief science officer for the county's Department of Public Health, said the county has been working on developing additional materials to explain the rare blood clotting issue that prompted the J&J vaccine pause on April 13.

Those will "include what we think is really important information about what to look for--the signs and symptoms if you were to have this, again, very rare reaction," he said. "And we are going to underscore that this is a very rare reaction."

RIO DE JANEIRO — Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro has suggested that the army might be called into the streets to restore order if lockdown measures against COVID-19 that he opposes lead to chaos.

In a television interview Friday night with TV Criticia in the Amazon city of Manaus, Bolsonaro repeated his frequent criticism of restrictions imposed by local governments to curb infections -- measures he claims do more harm than good.

"That lockdown policy, of quarantine, is absurd. If we have problems ... we have a plan of how to act. I am the supreme head of the armed forces," Bolsonaro said.

Health experts urged Bolsonaro this month to impose a national lockdown after the nation's daily toll of COVID-19 deaths reached new peaks. The Ministry of Health says there's been more than 386,000 confirmed coronavirus deaths in Brazil.

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras — President Joe Biden has highlighted how the United States has administered 200 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine before his first 100 days in office.

He's also signaled it's time for the U.S. to begin sharing its surplus of doses. The staggering inequality of vaccines is clear throughout the Americas, Africa and parts of Asia. China and Russia have aggressively pushed their homegrown vaccines around the world.

But the U.S. just shared its first 4 million doses last month with Canada and Mexico. Biden has said those

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countries would be targets for additional doses, and so too would countries in Central America.

Honduras has obtained only 59,000 vaccine doses for its 10 million people. Similar gaps in vaccine access are found across Africa, where just 36 million doses have been acquired for the continent's 1.3 billion people, as well as in parts of Asia.

In the U.S, more than one-fourth of the population — nearly 90 million people — has been fully vaccinated. Some states are turning down planned shipments from the federal government.

AUSTIN, Texas — State health officials say more than 1.7 million COVID-19 vaccine doses are headed to Texas next week.

The Texas Department of State Health Services say more than 708,000 first doses are headed to 928 providers in 129 Texas counties, while more than 570,000 second doses also have been ordered.

About 470,000 first and second doses have been allocated to pharmacies, federally qualified health centers and dialysis centers.

So far, more than 23.4 million doses have been distributed to Texas, and more than 36% of the state's population has received at least one dose, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. More than 24% of the population has been fully immunized.

Also, with the federal pause on the single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine now lifted, the government is expected to make doses of that vaccine available soon.

There have been more than 2.8 million confirmed coronavirus cases and 48,946 confirmed deaths in Texas since the start of the pandemic.

NEW YORK — Several states have resumed use of the one-shot Johnson & Johnson coronavirus vaccine on Saturday, after receiving the green light from federal health officials.

Arizona, New York, Virginia, Missouri, Michigan, Tennessee and Virginia were among the states ordering or recommending a resumption. Indianapolis Motor Speedway is giving free J&J vaccinations to anyone 18 or older.

Those moves came swiftly after U.S. health officials said Friday evening they were lifting an 11-day pause on vaccinations using the J&J vaccine. During the pause, scientific advisers to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention decided the vaccine's benefits outweigh a rare risk of blood clots.

There were 15 vaccine recipients who developed a highly unusual kind of blood clot out of nearly 8 million people given the J&J shot in the U.S. All were women, most under age 50. Three died and seven remain hospitalized.

Advisers to the CDC say warnings could help younger women and their doctors decide if they should use that shot or an alternative.

PARIS — France and other countries in Europe are preparing to relax coronavirus restrictions while still pouring medical, financial and technological resources into keeping thousands of COVID-19 patients alive.

Inside one of Paris' biggest hospitals, state-of-the-art artificial lungs are giving the most critical patients a last-ditch shot at survival. Outside, healthy people are planning getaways and drinks with friends as the country embarks on the perilous process of easing out of its latest lockdown.

French President Emmanuel Macron is reopening elementary schools on Monday and allowing people to move about more freely again in May.

Some frontline caregivers in hospitals see the easing as premature. Intensive care unit admissions at French hospitals remain stubbornly higher than at any point since the pandemic's first deadly surge.

In France, Greece and elsewhere, governments are using ramped-up vaccinations to bolster arguments to ease restrictions. However, just one-quarter of adults in Europe have received a first dose.

RICHMOND, Va. — Virginia health officials have told providers to immediately resume their use of the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine after federal agencies lifted a pause on the vaccine.

The decision came after the CDC and the Food and Drug Administration found the benefits of the one-

shot vaccine outweigh its risks of rare blood clots.

This month, the agencies announced an investigation into six cases of an extremely rare blood clot disorder in recipients. The one woman who died was a 45-year-old Virginia resident who received the vaccine on March 6.

The Richmond Times-Dispatch reports before the pause, Virginia had administered 184,000 J&J shots. "This extra scrutiny should instill confidence in the system that is in place to guarantee COVID-19 vaccine safety," says Dr. Danny Avula, the state's vaccine coordinator, who received a J&J shot on April 1. "As with any vaccine, we encourage individuals to educate themselves on any potential side effects and to weigh that against the possibility of hospitalization or death from COVID-19."

ASEAN leaders tell Myanmar coup general to end killings

By NINIEK KARMINI Associated Press

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — Southeast Asian leaders demanded an immediate end to killings and the release of political detainees in Myanmar in an emergency summit Saturday with its top general and coup leader who, according to Malaysia's prime minister, did not reject them outright.

The leaders of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations also told Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing during the two-hour talks in Jakarta that a dialogue between contending parties in Myanmar should immediately start, with the help of ASEAN envoys.

"The situation in Myanmar is unacceptable and should not continue. Violence must be stopped, democracy, stability and peace in Myanmar must be returned immediately," Indonesian President Joko Widodo said during the meeting. "The interests of the people of Myanmar must always be the priority."

Daily shootings by police and soldiers since the Feb. 1 coup have killed more than 700 mostly peaceful protesters and bystanders, according to several independent tallies.

The messages conveyed to Min Aung Hlaing were unusually blunt and could be seen as a breach of the conservative 10-nation bloc's bedrock principle forbidding member states from interfering in each other's affairs. But Malaysian Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin said that policy should not lead to inaction if a domestic situation "jeopardizes the peace, security, and stability of ASEAN and the wider region" and there is international clamor for resolute action.

"There is a tremendous expectation on the part of the international community on how ASEAN is addressing the Myanmar issue. The pressure is increasing," Muhyiddin said. The current ASEAN chair, Brunei Prime Minister Hassanal Bolkiah, and the bloc's secretary general should be allowed access to Myanmar to meet contending parties, encourage dialogue and come up with "an honest and unbiased observation," he said.

Such a political dialogue "can only take place with the prompt and unconditional release of political detainees," the Malaysian premier said.

A formal statement issued by ASEAN through Brunei after the summit outlined the demands made by the six heads of state and three foreign ministers in more subtle terms. It asked for the "immediate cessation of violence in Myanmar" and urged all parties to "exercise utmost restraint," but omitted the demand voiced by Widodo and other leaders for the immediate release of political detainees. It said ASEAN would provide humanitarian aid to Myanmar.

In a news conference late Saturday, Muhyiddin said that Min Aung Hlaing told ASEAN leaders that he will find a way to solve the problem and agreed that violence must stop.

"Our proposals would be accepted, the general in his response did not reject (them)," Muhyiddin said, "This is very encouraging progress."

When asked about Min Aung Hlaing's response to the demand to cease the violence, Muhyiddin said that ASEAN leaders tried not to accuse his side too much because "we don't care who's causing it, we just stressed that the violence must stop."

"For him, it's the other side that's causing the problems," said Muhyiddin. "If that's the case, we hope that he will find a way to stop it even before the ASEAN representatives go to Myanmar."

Muhyiddin also denied allegations that ASEAN has not done enough to address the crisis.

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"We are concerned about what's happening and we've taken steps and made decisions," he said. "The best thing is that there is a representative from Myanmar who says they are ready to accept our representative there."

It was the first time Min Aung Hlaing traveled out of Myanmar since the coup, which was followed by the arrests of Aung San Suu Kyi and many other political leaders.

Critics have said ASEAN's decision to meet the coup leader was unacceptable and amounted to legitimizing the overthrow and the deadly crackdown that followed. ASEAN states agreed to meet Min Aung Hlaing but did not treat or address him as Myanmar's head of state in the summit, a Southeast Asian diplomat told The Associated Press on condition of anonymity for lack of authority to discuss the issue publicly.

The divergent ties of many of ASEAN members to either China or the United States, along with a bedrock policy of non-interference in each other's affairs and deciding by consensus, has hobbled the bloc's ability to rapidly deal with crises.

Amid Western pressure, however, the group has struggled to take a more forceful position on issues but has kept to its non-confrontational approach.

The London-based rights watchdog Amnesty International urged Indonesia and other ASEAN states ahead of the summit to investigate Min Aung Hlaing over "credible allegations of responsibility for crimes against humanity in Myanmar." As a state party to a U.N. convention against torture, Indonesia has a legal obligation to prosecute or extradite a suspected perpetrator on its territory, it said.

Indonesian police dispersed dozens of protesters opposing the coup and the junta leader's visit.

The leaders of Thailand and the Philippines skipped the summit to deal with coronavirus outbreaks back home. Laos also canceled at the last minute. The face-to-face summit is the first by ASEAN leaders in more than a year.

Aside from Myanmar, the regional bloc is made up of Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

An Oscars unlike any other to get underway Sunday

By JAKE COYLE AP Film Writer

An Oscars unlike any before will get underway Sunday night, with history on the line in major categories and a telecast retooled for the pandemic.

The 93rd Academy Awards will begin at 8 p.m. EDT on ABC. There will be no host, no audience, nor face masks for nominees attending the ceremony at Los Angeles' Union Station — this year's hub for a show usually broadcast from the Dolby Theatre. In contrast with the largely virtual Golden Globes, Zoom boxes have been closed out — though numerous international hubs and satellite feeds will connect nominees unable to travel.

Show producers are hoping to return some of the traditional glamor to the Oscars, even in a pandemic year. The red carpet is back, though not the throngs; only a handful of media outlets will be allowed on site. (E! red carpet coverage starts at 3 p.m.) Casual wear is a no-no. The pre-show on ABC begins at 6:30 p.m. EDT and will include pre-taped performances of the five Oscar-nominated songs. The ceremony is available to stream on Hulu Live TV, YouTubeTV, AT&T TV, FuboTV and on ABC.com with provider authentication.

Pulling the musical interludes (though not the in memoriam segment) from the three-hour broadcast — and drastically cutting down the time it will take winners to reach the podium — will free up a lot of time in the ceremony. And producers, led by filmmaker Steven Soderbergh, are promising a reinvented telecast.

The Oscars will look more like a movie, Soderbergh has said. The show will be shot in 24 frames-per-second (as opposed to 30), appear more widescreen and the presenters — including Brad Pitt, Halle Berry, Reese Witherspoon, Harrison Ford, Rita Moreno and Zendaya — are considered "cast members." The telecast's first 90 seconds, Soderbergh has claimed, will "announce our intention immediately."

But even a great show may not be enough to save the Oscars from an expected ratings slide. Award show ratings have cratered during the pandemic, and this year's nominees — many of them smaller, lower-

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budget dramas — won't come close to the drawing power of past Oscar heavyweights like "Titanic" or "Black Panther." Last year's Oscars, when Bong Joon Ho's "Parasite" became the first non-English language film to win best picture, was watched by 23.6 million, an all-time low.

Netflix dominated this year with 36 nominations, including the lead-nominee "Mank," David Fincher's black-and-white drama about "Citizen Kane" co-writer Herman J. Mankiewicz. The streamer is still pursuing its first best-picture win; this year, its best shot may be Aaron Sorkin's "The Trial of the Chicago 7."

But the night's top prize, best picture, is widely expected to go to Chloé Zhao's "Nomadland," a contemplative character study about an itinerant woman (Frances McDormand) in the American West. Should it be victorious, it will be one of the lowest budget best-picture winners ever. Zhao's film, populated by nonprofessional actors, was made for less than \$5 million. (Her next film, Marvel's "Eternals," has a budget of at least \$200 million.)

Zhao is also the frontrunner for best director, a category that has two female filmmakers nominated for the first time. Also nominated is Emerald Fennell for the scathing revenge drama "Promising Young Woman." Zhao would be just the second woman to win best director in the academy's 93 years (following Kathryn Bigelow for "The Hurt Locker"), and the first woman of color.

History is also possible in the acting categories. If the winners from the Screen Actors Guild Awards hold — "Ma Rainey's Black Bottom's" Chadwick Boseman for best actor, Viola Davis for best actress; Yuh-Jung Youn ("Minari") for best supporting actress; and Daniel Kaluuya ("Judas and the Black Messiah") for best supporting actor — it would be the first time nonwhite actors swept the acting categories — and a dramatic reversal from recent "OscarsSoWhite" years.

Several of those awards appear to be locks, particularly for the late Boseman, who would become the third actor to ever win a posthumous Academy Award following Peter Finch and Heath Ledger. Taylor Simone Ledward, Boseman's widow, has often accepted previous honors on his behalf.

If there's one less certain category, it's best actress. Davis, who has won previously for her performance in "Fences," is up against Carey Mulligan ("Promising Young Woman") and two-time winner McDormand. Prognosticators call it a three-way toss up.

Sunday's pandemic-delayed Oscars will bring to a close the longest awards season ever — one that turned the season's industrial complex of cocktail parties and screenings virtual. Eligibility was extended into February of this year, and for the first time, a theatrical run wasn't a requirement of nominees. Some films — like "Sound of Metal" — premiered all the way back in September 2019.

The pandemic pushed several anticipated movies out of 2020, but a few bigger budget releases could still take home awards. Pixar's "Soul" appears a sure-thing for best animated film, and Christopher Nolan's "Tenet" — which last September tried to lead a moviegoing revival that fizzled when virus cases spiked and many theaters couldn't reopen — will likely win for its visual effects.

But for the first time, Hollywood's most prestigious awards will overwhelmingly belong to films that barely played on the big screen. The biggest ticket-seller of the best picture nominees is "Promising Young Woman," with \$6.3 million in box office.

Lately, with vaccinations expanding, signs of life have begun to show in movie theaters — most of which are operating at 50% capacity. Warner Bros.' "Godzilla vs. Kong" has made around \$400 million worldwide, which theater owners point to as proof that moviegoers are eager for studios to again release a regular diet of big movies. Right now, the date circled on cinema calendars is May 28, when both Paramount's "A Quiet Place Part II" and Disney's "Cruella" arrive in theaters — though "Cruella" will simultaneously stream for \$30.

But it's been a punishing year for Hollywood. Around the world, movie theater marquees replaced movie titles with pleas to wear a mask. Streaming services rushed to fill the void, redrawing the balance between studios and theaters — and likely forever ending the three-month theatrical exclusivity for new releases. Just weeks before the Oscars, one of Los Angeles' most iconic theaters, the Cinerama Dome, along with ArcLight Cinemas, went out of business.

After the pandemic, Hollywood — and the Oscars — may not ever be quite the same. Or as WarnerMe-

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dia's new chief executive Jason Kilar said when announcing plans to shift the studio's movies to streaming: "We're not in Kansas anymore."

Democrat Troy Carter wins New Orleans-based US House seat

By MELINDA DESLATTÉ Associated Press

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP) — Democrat Troy Carter won Saturday's special election for Louisiana's vacant U.S. House seat, defeating his state Senate colleague and ending an acrimonious, intraparty clash that divided politicians across New Orleans.

Carter easily defeated Karen Carter Peterson in the race for Louisiana's only Democrat-held seat in Congress, in a race seen as handing a victory to the more moderate side of the party after Peterson planted herself firmly in the progressive camp. Carter dismissed those comparisons, noting he also had progressive support.

The pair of state senators from New Orleans, who both made previous failed bids for the congressional seat, had only modest policy differences to distinguish them, and the race centered mainly on personality. Carter had the backing, however, of the seat's predecessor, Cedric Richmond.

The 2nd District seat — representing a majority-Black district centered in New Orleans and extending up the Mississippi River into Baton Rouge — was open because Richmond left the position shortly after he won last year's election to work as a special adviser to President Joe Biden.

"I will wake up every day with you on my mind, on my heart, and I will work for you tirelessly," Carter, a former New Orleans City Council member, pledged to his supporters.

He said he would focus on economic recovery from COVID-19, overhauling criminal sentencing laws, protecting LGBTQ rights and fighting for clean air in parts of the 10-parish district with higher levels of pollution.

"The work begins tomorrow," Carter said.

Peterson, the former chair of Louisiana's Democratic Party, conceded fewer than two hours after the polls closed, acknowledging she lost her latest attempt to be the state's first Black woman elected to Congress. She pledged to "keep swinging hard for the people" from the state Senate.

"I can still do a lot in the role I have," Peterson said.

Carter and Peterson reached Saturday's runoff after they emerged as the top vote-getters among 15 candidates in the March primary. Carter raised more campaign cash in the competition, but he faced attack ads from out-of-state groups supporting Peterson.

The two state senators differed more in style than substance, though Peterson positioned herself as the more liberal candidate. In one runoff debate, Peterson described herself as "bold and progressive" and willing to "shake things up to get things done."

Carter is known more for his ability and willingness to work across party lines, while Peterson is more overtly partisan in her approach. She suggested Carter cozied up to Republicans to boost his campaign, while he said Peterson's dogmatic approach damaged her ability to pass legislation.

"In order to get things done, they need to send someone to Washington who can build bridges, not walls, that can establish relationships that mean something, not kick rocks because you don't get your way, not spew lies because you're losing," Carter said in a debate.

The two candidates backed an increase in the minimum wage, the legalization of recreational marijuana and abortion rights. They supported changes in how police agencies and public safety are funded and approached, though Peterson went further saying she backed a "complete restructuring."

Both Carter and Peterson said they support the idea of "Medicare for All." But while Peterson fully embraced shifting to a government-run, single-payer plan, Carter said he'd like people to have the option of retaining employer-financed coverage.

Across the campaign, they traded accusations.

Carter hit Peterson on her many missed votes in the Louisiana Senate.

Peterson slammed campaign donations Carter received from people and entities tied to the oil and gas

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industry. She made support of "environmental justice" for poor communities facing greater health risks from pollution one of the cornerstones of her campaign.

Carter hammered Peterson for suggesting she helped establish Louisiana's Medicaid expansion program, which was started by Gov. John Bel Edwards and required no legislation. He noted that when she was head of the Democratic Party, she discouraged Edwards from running for governor.

They each touted high-profile endorsements.

Peterson had backing from voting rights advocate Stacey Abrams, progressive U.S. Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York and New Orleans Mayor LaToya Cantrell, among others.

In addition to Richmond's endorsement, Carter had backing from No. 3 House Democratic leader James Clyburn of South Carolina, New Orleans District Attorney Jason Williams and every Black member of the state Senate besides Peterson.

DMX immortalized by family and close friends at memorial

By JONATHAN LANDRUM Jr. and JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — DMX's legacy was immortalized as a man beloved by his family, honored for his strong faith and respected as one of hip-hop's greatest icons at his memorial service Saturday, with several heartfelt speeches from those who knew the rapper best.

The speakers included friends Swizz Beatz and Nas, as well as his daughter, who rapped in honor of her father.

Kanye West and Busta Rhymes were among the big names who attended the two-hour ceremony at the Barclays Center in New York. The service at the Brooklyn arena was closed to the public and restricted to close friends and family because of the coronavirus pandemic.

In a touching moment, DMX's 15 children gathered on stage to talk — and sometimes rap — about the star as a father who taught them such lessons as "always say thank you," "be kind to everyone" and that being afraid can sometimes show a person how to be brave.

"Our father is a king. Our father is an icon," eldest son Xavier Simmons said, adding that he was honored to be his son: "This man deepened my ability to love."

Tashera Simmons, DMX's ex-wife, told the audience: "Everything he did, he did for you all. He always wanted to please you. He always wanted to give you his best show."

"What he wants you to do," she said, "is love Jesus the same way he did. Love his babies. Love his family."

West's Sunday Service Choir kicked off the ceremony with a gospel performance. The hoodie sweatshirt-wearing ensemble performed a few songs, including their arrangement of "Excellent" and Soul II Soul's "Keep On Movin'." The choir took the stage during other moments of the ceremony, performing "Ultralight Beam" and Whitney Houston's assisted vocals on the hymn "Jesus Loves Me."

Nas reminisced about having a conversation with a teary-eyed DMX while filming a scene for "Belly," a crime drama. He said DMX became emotional knowing the rapper was about to embark on a journey to become a "hip-hop icon."

"It's a sad day as well as a glorious day," said Nas, who starred with DMX in the 1998 film. "That was my brother. We did a great movie together. On that movie, he was just rising up as a star. His first album didn't even come out yet, but he knew his journey was starting."

Eve said she was still having a hard time with DMX's death, remembering him as a "man, a father, a friend." She stood on stage with the Ruff Ryders collective, which helped launch the careers of Grammy winners Eve and Swizz Beatz and relaunch The Lox, formerly signed to Bad Boy Records.

After Eve spoke, Styles P talked about a time when he and DMX were both in the same jail. He said DMX fetched him from his cell and then took him to a part of the jail where he had a band set up along with a string of MCs.

"DMX was the ghetto-est person that ever existed," Styles P said. "What he means to us is indescribable. ... He celebrated us and pushed us. He was one of the most incredible individuals, because from the beginning of his career to the end, he accomplished something no one has ever accomplished. He was

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in pain the whole way. Whenever you (saw) him, that man was in pain, but he was built out of love. He was a beast with the rhymes."

Jadakiss said DMX was the "happiest he ever been in life" during the last couple years.

Before the service, a massive black big-wheel truck with the words "LONG LIVE DMX" on a side of the vehicle carried DMX's shiny red casket for more than 15 miles from Yonkers, New York — where the rapper grew up — to the Barclays Center. A plethora of motorcycles trailed the truck during the procession before arriving at the arena, where thousands of people crowded the streets.

Thousands of motorcycle riders surrounded the monster truck, revving up their engines. Others gathered at the arena while some of DMX's biggest songs from "Where The Hood At" and "Ruff Ryders' Anthem" blared from the crowd's speakers.

Cynthia Roberts, a 57-year-old Brooklyn resident, said she has been a fan of DMX since his Ruff Ryders days. She showed up at the arena to pay homage to the rapper, saying she was struck by his rhymes, voice and musicianship.

"He was a true guy. He spoke his truth. He touched my soul," said Roberts, who was sporting a DMX T-shirt. She called the rapper's music timeless.

"I tell myself he was put here for that," she continued. "We all have a job to do, and he did his job."

DMX, whose birth name is Earl Simmons, died April 9 after suffering a "catastrophic cardiac arrest." He spent several days on life support after being rushed to a New York hospital from his home April 2.

Programs with images of DMX were handed out to the service's attendees ahead of the ceremony, which was livestreamed on the rapper's YouTube channel. The four-page booklet had different images of the rapper, including one with his arms folded with wings and another photo of him standing on stage during a performance.

The 50-year-old Grammy-nominated rapper delivered iconic hip-hop songs such as "Ruff Ryders' Anthem" and "Party Up (Up in Here)."

DMX arrived on the rap scene around the same time as Jay-Z, Ja Rule and others who dominated the charts and emerged as platinum-selling acts. They were all part of rap crews, too: DMX fronted the Ruff Ryders collective, which had success on the charts and on radio with its "Ryde or Die" compilation albums.

Along with his musical career, DMX paved his way as an actor. He starred in "Belly" and appeared in 2000's "Romeo Must Die" with Jet Li and Aaliyah. DMX and Aaliyah teamed up for "Come Back in One Piece" on the film's soundtrack.

DMX's funeral service will be held at 2:30 p.m. EDT Sunday. It will be broadcast live on BET and the network's YouTube channel.

Recordings show chaos surrounding Ma'Khia Bryant shooting

By FARNOUSH AMIRI and ANDREW WELSH-HUGGINS Report for America/Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — A chaotic 911 call. A convulsive 11 seconds of violence ending in the death of an Ohio teen. A historic verdict being broadcast in the police cruiser.

A routine day in a quiet Columbus neighborhood was shattered instantly Tuesday when a police officer fired four shots at 16-year-old Ma'Khia Bryant as she swung a knife at a young woman.

"She was just a kid!" a man shouts within a second of Bryant falling to the ground.

Less than 30 minutes before the man charged with killing George Floyd was pronounced guilty, yet another Black person was dead at the hands of police in the U.S., and a city facing immense pressure to change its law enforcement patterns was once again on the defensive.

While the events leading up to the fateful 911 call that set the shooting in motion remain unclear, hours of official police footage and bystander videos detail how one of the country's latest deadly police shootings unfolded.

At 4:32 p.m., a male dispatcher receives a call from a female caller. It remains unclear who called 911, but Bryant's family members told The Associated Press that she herself summoned law enforcement.

"We got these grown girls over here trying to fight us. Trying to stab us. Trying to put their hands on

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our grandma," the caller says as the background filled with female voices screaming and arguing. "Get here now!"

Officer Nicholas Reardon, who has been on the force since December 2019, was dispatched three minutes later. Two other officers, Eric Channel and Serge Akpalo, followed shortly behind.

"Hey, what's going on?" Reardon asks upon exiting his vehicle at 4:44 p.m. In those next 11 seconds, Bryant was seen charging at 20-year-old Shai-Onta Lana Craig-Watkins with a kitchen knife and then moving on to 22-year-old Tionna Bonner before Reardon yelled, "Get down!" and fired four consecutive shots into Bryant's chest.

The teenager collapsed to the ground.

While officers took turns rendering CPR, several neighbors filled the residential street. Others stood in their driveways and doorways, shaking their heads. Some had heard the gunfire from their backyards while others were in the middle of unloading groceries from their car.

But almost every single witness that day stopped to film the aftermath of an incident they are now all too familiar with: the killing of another Black person in America at the hands of law enforcement.

"No! You ain't shoot my (expletive) baby!" an unidentified Black man screams at the officer. "You shot my (expletive) baby!"

Reardon, who is white, responds, "She had a knife. She just went at her."

"You have no respect for life," another Black man, who lives across the street, can be heard yelling. "No, actually, you have no respect for Black life."

Another neighbor was heard on body camera footage saying, "You ever hear of de-escalating? No, you guys just shoot."

While Reardon faced recrimination at the scene, his split-second decision to shoot was commended by the national Fraternal Order of Police, which called it "an act of heroism, but one with tragic results."

Meanwhile, Akpalo, the only Black officer who responded, began to gather and separate the various witnesses and placed them in police vehicles.

Craig-Watkins, the first woman to be attacked by Bryant, was put in the backseat where dashcam footage showed her weeping for several minutes as dozens of officers from a neighboring department arrived on the scene.

An ambulance arrived at 4:52 p.m. — 20 minutes after the initial 911 call — and left seven minutes later.

Around 5:05 p.m., as Craig-Watkins remained in the backseat, waiting to be interviewed by state investigators, audio of a judge speaking interrupts the flow of dispatches from the police radio.

The exact source of the audio wasn't clear, but a live reading of the guilty verdict in the murder trial of Derek Chauvin, the Minneapolis police officer who killed Floyd, is heard streaming through the cruiser.

"Members of the jury, I am now going to ask you individually if these are your true and correct verdicts," Judge Peter Cahill is heard saying on the audio. One by one the jurors begin to say yes. "Juror number 19, are these your true and correct verdicts?"

The audio is suddenly interrupted by Akpalo, who comes in to check on the witness.

"You still doing OK?" he asks.

"Yeah," Craig-Watkins replies wearily as the officer shuts off the audio at 5:07 p.m. — with one police killing aftermath's end colliding with the beginning of another.

Hundreds show up in Nebraska for fight over name Josh

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — A fight over the name of Josh drew a crowd from around the country to a Nebraska park Saturday for a heated pool-noodle brawl.

It all started a year ago when pandemic boredom set in and Josh Swain, a 22-year-old college student from Tucson, Arizona, messaged others who shared his name on social media and challenged them to a duel.

Hundreds showed up at Air Park in Lincoln — a location chosen at random — to participate in the silliness.

The festivities started with a "grueling and righteous battle of Rock, Paper, Scissors" between the Josh

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Swain from Arizona and another Josh Swain from Omaha. KLKN-TV reports that the Arizona student won that competition, allowing him to claim the title of the true Josh Swain.

The pool-noodle competition that followed was open to anyone with the first name of Josh. The victor of that competition was a 5-year-old, who was coronated with a Burger King crown.

Swain, the organizer, said he is a little surprised about how the whole thing blew up: "I did not expect people to be as adamant about this as they are right now."

Biden recognizes atrocities against Armenians as genocide

By AAMER MADHANI, MATTHEW LEE and ZEYNEP BILGINSOY Associated Press

WILMINGTON, Del. (AP) — The systematic killing and deportation of more than a million Armenians by Ottoman Empire forces in the early 20th century was "genocide," the United States formally declared on Saturday, as President Joe Biden used that precise word after the White House had avoided it for decades for fear of alienating ally Turkey.

Turkey reacted with furor, with the foreign minister saying his country "will not be given lessons on our history from anyone." A grateful Armenia said it appreciated Biden's "principled position" as a step toward "the restoration of truth and historical justice."

Biden was following through on a campaign promise he made a year ago Saturday — the annual commemoration of Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day — to recognize that the events that began in 1915 were a deliberate effort to wipe out Armenians.

While previous presidents have offered somber reflections of the dark moment in history, they have studiously avoided using the term genocide out of concern that it would complicate relations with Turkey, a NATO ally and important power in the Middle East.

But Biden campaigned on a promise to make human rights a central guidepost of his foreign policy. He argued last year that failing to call the atrocities against the Armenian people a genocide would pave the way for future mass atrocities. An estimated 2 million Armenians were deported — 1.5 million of whom were killed in the events known as Metz Yeghern.

"The American people honor all those Armenians who perished in the genocide that began 106 years ago today," Biden said in a statement. "We affirm the history. We do this not to cast blame but to ensure that what happened is never repeated."

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said in a letter to Biden that recognition of the genocide "is important not only in terms of respecting the memory of 1.5 million innocent victims, but also in preventing the repetition of such crimes."

Turkish officials struck back immediately.

"We reject and denounce in the strongest terms the statement of the President of the US regarding the events of 1915 made under the pressure of radical Armenian circles and anti-Turkey groups," the Turkish Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu tweeted that "words cannot change history or rewrite it" and Turkey "completely rejected" Biden's statement.

Minutes before Biden's announcement, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan sent a message to the Armenian community and patriarch of the Armenian church calling for not allowing "the culture of coexistence" of the Muslim Turks and Christian Armenians to be forgotten. He said the issue has been "politicized by third parties and turned into a tool of intervention against our country."

The U.S. Embassy and consulates in Turkey issued a demonstration alert, and announced their offices would be closed for routine services on Monday and Tuesday as a "precautionary measure." They cautioned Americans to avoid areas around U.S. government buildings and exercise caution in locations where foreigners gather.

During a telephone call Friday, Biden had informed Erdogan of his plan to issue the statement, said a person familiar with the matter who was not authorized to publicly discuss the private conversation and spoke on the condition of anonymity.

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The U.S. and Turkish governments, in separate statements following Biden and Erdogan's call, made no mention of the American plan to recognize the Armenian genocide. But the White House said Biden told Erdogan he wants to improve the two countries' relationship and find "effective management of disagreements." The two also agreed to hold a bilateral meeting at the NATO summit in Brussels in June.

In Armenia on Saturday, people streamed to the hilltop complex in Yerevan, the capital, that memorializes the victims. Many laid flowers around the eternal flame, creating a wall of blooms two meters (seven feet) high.

Armenian Deputy Foreign Minister Avet Adonts, speaking at the memorial before Biden issued his statement, said a U.S. president using the term genocide would "serve as an example for the rest of the civilized world."

Biden's call with Erdogan was his first since taking office more than three months ago. The delay had become a worrying sign in Ankara; Erdogan had good rapport with former President Donald Trump and had been hoping for a reset despite past friction with Biden.

Erdogan reiterated his long-running claims that the U.S. is supporting Kurdish fighters in Syria who are affiliated with the Iraq-based Kurdistan Workers' Party, known as the PKK. The PKK has led an insurgency against Turkey for more than three decades. In recent years, Turkey has launched military operations against PKK enclaves in Turkey and in northern Iraq and against U.S.-allied Syrian Kurdish fighters. The State Department has designated the PKK a terrorist organization but has argued with Turkey over the group's ties to the Syrian Kurds.

Biden, during the campaign, drew ire from Turkish officials after an interview with The New York Times in which he spoke about supporting Turkey's opposition against "autocrat" Erdogan. In 2019, Biden accused Trump of betraying U.S. allies, following Trump's decision to withdraw troops from northern Syria, which paved the way for a Turkish military offensive against the Syrian Kurdish group. In 2014, when he was vice president, Biden apologized to Erdogan after suggesting in a speech that Turkey helped facilitate the rise of the Islamic State group by allowing foreign fighters to cross Turkey's border with Syria.

Lawmakers and Armenian American activists had lobbied Biden to make the genocide announcement on or before remembrance day. The closest that a U.S. president had come to recognizing the World War I-era atrocities as genocide was in 1981 when Ronald Reagan uttered the words "Armenian genocide" during a Holocaust Remembrance Day event. But he did not make it U.S. policy.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, a California Democrat, lamented that "the truth of these heinous crimes has too often been denied, its monstrosity minimized."

"History teaches us that if we ignore its darkest chapters, we are destined to witness the horrors of the past be repeated," she added.

Rep. Adam Schiff, also a California Democrat, praised Biden for following through on the pledge.

"For Armenian-Americans and everyone who believes in human rights and the truth, today marks an historic milestone: President Biden has defied Turkish threats and recognized the slaughter of 1.5 million Armenians for what it was — the first genocide of the 20th Century," Schiff said in a statement.

California is home to large concentrations of Armenian Americans.

Salpi Ghazarian, director of the University of Southern California's Institute of Armenian Studies, said the recognition of genocide would resonate beyond Armenia and show Biden's seriousness about respect for human rights as a central principle in his foreign policy.

"Within the United States and outside the United States, the American commitment to basic human values has been questioned now for decades," she said. "It is very important for people in the world to continue to have the hope and the faith that America's aspirational values are still relevant, and that we can in fact do several things at once. We can in fact carry on trade and other relations with countries while also calling out the fact that a government cannot get away with murdering its own citizens."

Indonesia navy declares lost sub with 53 aboard sunk

By EDNA TARIGAN and FADLAN SYAM Associated Press

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BANYUWANGI, Indonesia (AP) — Indonesia's navy on Saturday declared its missing submarine had sunk and cracked open after finding items from the vessel over the past two days, apparently ending hope of finding any of the 53 crew members alive.

Military chief Hadi Tjahjanto said the presence of an oil slick as well as debris near the site where the submarine last dove Wednesday off the island of Bali were clear proof the KRI Nanggala 402 had sunk. Indonesian officials earlier considered the vessel to be only missing, but said the submarine's oxygen supply would have run out early Saturday.

Navy Chief of Staff Adm. Yudo Margono said at a press conference in Bali, "If it's an explosion, it will be in pieces. The cracks happened gradually in some parts when it went down from 300 meters to 400 meters to 500 meters. ... If there was an explosion, it would be heard by the sonar."

The navy previously said it believes the submarine sank to a depth of 600-700 meters (2,000-2,300 feet), much deeper than its collapse depth of 200 meters (655 feet), at which point water pressure would be greater than the hull could withstand.

"With the authentic evidence we found believed to be from the submarine, we have now moved from the 'sub miss' phase to 'sub sunk,'" Margono said at the press conference, in which the found items were displayed.

The cause of the disappearance was still uncertain. The navy had previously said an electrical failure could have left the submarine unable to execute emergency procedures to resurface.

Margono said that in the past two days, searchers found parts of a torpedo straightener, a grease bottle believed to be used to oil the periscope, debris from prayer rugs and a broken piece from a coolant pipe that was refitted on the submarine in South Korea in 2012.

Margono said rescue teams from Indonesia and other countries will evaluate the findings. He said no bodies have been found so far.

An American reconnaissance plane, a P-8 Poseidon, landed early Saturday and had been set to join the search, along with 20 Indonesian ships, a sonar-equipped Australian warship and four Indonesian aircraft.

Singaporean rescue ships were also expected Saturday, while Malaysian rescue vessels were due to arrive Sunday, bolstering the underwater hunt, officials said earlier Saturday.

Family members had held out hopes for survivors but there were no sign of life from the vessel. Indonesian President Joko Widodo had ordered all-out efforts to locate the submarine and asked Indonesians to pray for the crew's safe return.

The German-built diesel-powered KRI Nanggala 402 had been in service in Indonesia since 1981 and was carrying 49 crew members and three gunners as well as its commander, the Indonesian Defense Ministry said.

Indonesia, the world's largest archipelago nation with more than 17,000 islands, has faced growing challenges to its maritime claims in recent years, including numerous incidents involving Chinese vessels near the Natuna islands.

Sheriff to seek release of body cam video of fatal shooting

By JONATHAN DREW and DENISE LAVOIE Associated Press

A North Carolina sheriff whose deputies shot and killed a Black man while serving warrants said Saturday that he will ask a court to release body camera video as soon as he's confident it won't compromise an investigation into how the shooting happened.

The statement comes as the sheriff faces sharp criticism and calls for transparency.

Pasquotank County Sheriff Tommy Wooten II said in a recorded video statement that he would ask a local judge as early as Monday to allow the release of deputy body camera footage of Wednesday's shooting death of Andrew Brown Jr. Wooten said that he would first check with the State Bureau of Investigation, which is probing the shooting, to make sure that releasing the video would not hamper their efforts.

"Only a judge can release the video. That's why I've asked the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation to confirm for me that the releasing of the video will not undermine their investigation. Once I get

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that confirmation, our county will file a motion in court, hopefully Monday, to have the footage released," he said.

Asked for comment on Wooten's remarks, SBI spokeswoman Anjanette Grube referred back to a statement earlier in the week that said "it is not the SBI's decision as to when and how body camera video is released." The statement directed questions about the footage back to the sheriff and local prosecutor.

Wooten released the statement just after a family attorney, local clergy and civil rights leaders including the Rev. William Barber II, who leads the Poor People's Campaign, held a news conference to demand that the footage be released.

Seven deputies have been placed on leave amid indications, including emergency scanner traffic and an eyewitness account, that Brown was shot in the back as he tried to drive away in an Elizabeth City neighborhood.

"America, here is the issue: a warrant is not a license to kill, even if a suspect supposedly drives away," Barber said at the news conference attended by several of Brown's children and other family members.

"A warrant is not permission to shoot someone," he added.

Under North Carolina law, a judge must generally sign off on the release of law enforcement body camera footage. Leaders of the Elizabeth City government have demanded the release of the footage, and a coalition of media filed a petition in court to make it public. The state's Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper issued a statement calling for the swift release of the footage.

During the news conference, racial justice advocates joined Brown's relatives in reiterating calls for police to release the footage.

"We're sick and tired of all these deaths happening that don't have to happen," Barber said. "Release the tapes!"

Wooten has said deputies from his department including a tactical team were attempting to serve drug-related search and arrest warrants when Brown was shot. He said multiple deputies fired shots but he disclosed few other details. Nearby Dare County had issued two arrest warrants for Brown on drug-related charges including possession with intent to sell cocaine. Brown, 42, had a criminal history dating back to the 1990s, including past drug convictions.

The shooting sparked outcry from the community, with protesters demanding the release of the body camera footage.

The big Pentagon internet mystery now partially solved

By FRANK BAJAK AP Technology Writer

BOSTON (AP) — A very strange thing happened on the internet the day President Joe Biden was sworn in. A shadowy company residing at a shared workspace above a Florida bank announced to the world's computer networks that it was now managing a colossal, previously idle chunk of the internet owned by the U.S. Department of Defense.

That real estate has since more than quadrupled to 175 million addresses — about 1/25th the size of the current internet.

"It is massive. That is the biggest thing in the history of the internet," said Doug Madory, director of internet analysis at Kentik, a network operating company. It's also more than twice the size of the internet space actually used by the Pentagon.

After weeks of wonder by the networking community, the Pentagon has now provided a very terse explanation for what it's doing. But it has not answered many basic questions, beginning with why it chose to entrust management of the address space to a company that seems not to have existed until September.

The military hopes to "assess, evaluate and prevent unauthorized use of DoD IP address space," said a statement issued Friday by Brett Goldstein, chief of the Pentagon's Defense Digital Service, which is running the project. It also hopes to "identify potential vulnerabilities" as part of efforts to defend against cyber-intrusions by global adversaries, who are consistently infiltrating U.S. networks, sometimes operating from unused internet address blocks.

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The statement did not specify whether the "pilot project" would involve outside contractors.

The Pentagon periodically contends with unauthorized squatting on its space, in part because there has been a shortage of first-generation internet addresses since 2011; they now sell at auction for upwards of \$25 each.

Madory said advertising the address space will make it easier to chase off squatters and allow the U.S. military to "collect a massive amount of background internet traffic for threat intelligence."

Some cybersecurity experts have speculated that the Pentagon may be using the newly advertised space to create "honeypots," machines set up with vulnerabilities to draw hackers. Or it could be looking to set up dedicated infrastructure — software and servers — to scour traffic for suspect activity.

"This greatly increases the space they could monitor," said Madory, who published a blog post on the matter Saturday.

What a Pentagon spokesman could not explain Saturday is why the Defense Department chose Global Resource Systems LLC, a company with no record of government contracts, to manage the address space.

"As to why the DoD would have done that I'm a little mystified, same as you," said Paul Vixie, an internet pioneer credited with designing its naming system and the CEO of Farsight Security.

The company did not return phone calls or emails from The Associated Press. It has no web presence, though it has the domain grscorp.com. Its name doesn't appear on the directory of its Plantation, Florida, domicile, and a receptionist drew a blank when an AP reporter asked for a company representative at the office earlier this month. She found its name on a tenant list and suggested trying email. Records show the company has not obtained a business license in Plantation.

Incorporated in Delaware and registered by a Beverly Hills lawyer, Global Resource Systems LLC now manages more internet space than China Telecom, AT&T or Comcast.

The only name associated with it on the Florida business registry coincides with that of a man listed as recently as 2018 in Nevada corporate records as a managing member of a cybersecurity/internet surveillance equipment company called Packet Forensics. The company had nearly \$40 million in publicly disclosed federal contracts over the past decade, with the FBI and the Pentagon's Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency among its customers.

That man, Raymond Saulino, is also listed as a principal in a company called Tidewater Laskin Associates, which was incorporated in 2018 and obtained an FCC license in April 2020. It shares the same Virginia Beach, Virginia, address — a UPS store — in corporate records as Packet Forensics. The two have different mailbox numbers. Calls to the number listed on the Tidewater Laskin FCC filing are answered by an automated service that offers four different options but doesn't connect callers with a single one, recycling all calls to the initial voice recording.

Saulino did not return phone calls seeking comment, and a longtime colleague at Packet Forensics, Rodney Joffe, said he believed Saulino was retired. Joffe, a cybersecurity luminary, declined further comment. Joffe is chief technical officer at Neustar Inc., which provides internet intelligence and services for major industries, including telecommunications and defense.

In 2011, Packet Forensics and Saulino, its spokesman, were featured in a Wired story because the company was selling an appliance to government agencies and law enforcement that let them spy on people's web browsing using forged security certificates.

The company continues to sell "lawful intercept" equipment, according to its website. One of its current contracts with the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency is for "harnessing autonomy for countering cyber-adversary systems." A contract description says it is investigating "technologies for conducting safe, nondisruptive, and effective active defense operations in cyberspace." Contract language from 2019 says the program would "investigate the feasibility of creating safe and reliable autonomous software agencies that can effectively counter malicious botnet implants and similar large-scale malware."

Deepening the mystery is Global Resource Systems' name. It is identical to that of a firm that independent internet fraud researcher Ron Guilmette says was sending out email spam using the very same internet routing identifier. It shut down more than a decade ago. All that differs is the type of company. This one's a limited liability corporation. The other was a corporation. Both used the same street address

in Plantation, a suburb of Fort Lauderdale.

"It's deeply suspicious," said Guilmette, who unsuccessfully sued the previous incarnation of Global Resource Systems in 2006 for unfair business practices. Guilmette considers such masquerading, known as slip-streaming, a ham-handed tactic in this situation. "If they wanted to be more serious about hiding this they could have not used Ray Saulino and this suspicious name."

Guilmette and Madory were alerted to the mystery when network operators began inquiring about it on an email list in mid-March. But almost everyone involved didn't want to talk about it. Mike Leber, who owns Hurricane Electric, the internet backbone company handling the address blocks' traffic, didn't return emails or phone messages.

Despite an internet address crunch, the Pentagon — which created the internet — has shown no interest in selling any of its address space, and a Defense Department spokesman, Russell Goemaere, told the AP on Saturday that none of the newly announced space has been sold.

With OK from experts, some states resume use of J&J vaccine

By DAVID CRARY AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — With a green light from federal health officials, many states resumed use of the one-shot Johnson & Johnson coronavirus vaccine on Saturday. Among the venues where it was being deployed: the Indianapolis Motor Speedway.

Among the other states ordering or recommending a resumption, along with Indiana, were Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, Nevada, New York, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia.

Those moves came swiftly after U.S. health officials said Friday evening that they were lifting an 11-day pause on vaccinations using the J&J vaccine. During the pause, scientific advisers decided the vaccine's benefits outweigh a rare risk of blood clot.

"The state of New York will resume administration of this vaccine at all of our state-run sites effective immediately," Gov. Andrew Cuomo said in a statement Saturday morning.

"The vaccine is the weapon that will win the war against COVID and allow everyone to resume normalcy, and we have three proven vaccines at our disposal," Cuomo said, urging New York residents to take whichever one is available to them first.

"The sooner we all get vaccinated, the sooner we can put the long COVID nightmare behind us once and for all," he said.

The Indiana Department of Health announced resumption of a free COVID-19 mass vaccination clinic Saturday at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, offering the J&J vaccine to anyone 18 or older. The clinic will be operating at least through April 30, when there will be a family vaccination day at which 16- and 17-year-olds also can be vaccinated.

"I can't think of a better way to welcome the month of May in Indiana than getting your vaccine this week at the Yard of Bricks," said Dr. Chris Weaver, chief clinical officer for Indiana University Health, which is partnering with the state in running the speedway clinic.

By early afternoon, 1,415 doses had been administered at the speedway, the Indiana Health Department said.

Virginia health officials also told providers to immediately resume their use of the J&J vaccine.

"This extra scrutiny should instill confidence in the system that is in place to guarantee COVID-19 vaccine safety," said Dr. Danny Avula, the state's vaccine coordinator. "As with any vaccine, we encourage individuals to educate themselves on any potential side effects and to weigh that against the possibility of hospitalization or death from COVID-19."

Avula received the J&J vaccine himself on April 1.

Missouri officials made a similar announcement, saying providers with J&J vaccine in stock can immediately begin administering it and that shipments from the federal government will resume next week.

Just over 105,000 doses of J&J had been administered in Missouri before the pause.

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In Michigan, where local health departments have a key role in vaccination decision-making, the state's chief medical executive, Dr. Joneigh Khaldun, recommended resuming use of the J&J vaccine.

In Los Angeles County, the nation's most populous county, public health officials told vaccine providers they could resume administering J&J doses on Saturday, as long as they provided an updated fact sheet to recipients.

Dr. Paul Simon, chief science officer for the county's Department of Public Health, said the county has been working on developing additional materials to explain the clotting issue that prompted the pause.

Those will "include what we think is really important information about what to look for — the signs and symptoms if you were to have this, again, very rare reaction," he said. "And we are going to underscore that this is a very rare reaction."

The federal government uncovered 15 vaccine recipients who developed a highly unusual kind of blood clot out of nearly 8 million people given the J&J shot. All were women, most under age 50. Three died, and seven remain hospitalized.

But ultimately, federal health officials decided that J&J's one-and-done vaccine is critical to fight the pandemic — and that the small clot risk could be handled with warnings to help younger women decide if they should use that shot or an alternative.

Embattled producer Scott Rudin resigns from Broadway League

NEW YORK (AP) — Film and theater producer Scott Rudin is resigning from the powerful Broadway League as he faces allegations of decades of abusive and violent behavior.

"I know apologizing is not, by any means, enough," Rudin, whose credits include "To Kill a Mockingbird," "The Book of Mormon" and a revival of "West Side Story," wrote this week in an email to The New York Times. "In stepping back, I intend to work on my issues and do so fully aware that many will feel that this is too little and too late."

The Broadway League is the trade association for theater owners and producers.

His decisions follow a cover story in The Hollywood Reporter earlier this month containing accounts, which he has not denied, of throwing objects at employees and engaging in ongoing verbal abuse.

Rudin, 62, has previously said he would be "stepping back" from his stage productions.

Most of Rudin's collaborators have been quiet following the article, but several prominent labor unions earlier responded. The Actors' Equity Association, which represents more than 51,000 professional actors and stage managers in live theater, called on Rudin to release former employees from nondisclosure agreements signed during employment with him.

Hundreds of theater workers marched down Broadway on Thursday, rallying to demand more inclusion in the industry and calling for Rudin to be removed from the Broadway League.

"Hey, hey, ho ho. Scott Rudin has got to go!" the crowd chanted.

Bitcoin millionaire puts money on Greens in German election

By FRANK JORDANS Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — A German software developer who made a fortune from bitcoin has given the environmentalist Green Party one of the biggest political donations in the country's history in hopes it will win this year's national election — and consider banning the digital currency.

Moritz Schmidt's donation of 1 million euros (\$1.2 million) to the Greens made headlines this month, as the party traditionally receives only small sums. Such a large gift is rare in German politics. Parties in the country receive most of their funding from members' dues and state aid linked to election results.

"I have benefitted immensely from the bitcoin bubble. It's been a wild ride, and the proceeds are unearned riches really," Schmidt told The Associated Press in an email interview this week. "I've been sort of waiting for the right opportunity to donate a larger sum."

The 39-year-old from the northeastern town of Greifswald, who hadn't previously featured on any lists of major political donors, said he bought "a couple thousand euros" worth of bitcoin in 2011, shortly before

it crashed, wiping 90% off the value of his holdings. Since then, bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies have repeatedly surged and slumped on investors hoping to turn a quick profit.

The value of a single bitcoin has dropped from over \$64,000 to about \$50,000 in the past ten days.

Schmidt, who made about 2 million euros (\$2.4 million) by gradually selling his bitcoin over the years, said he learned in 2017 that the virtual currency consumes a vast amount of electricity. While the details are hotly debated by bitcoin fans and critics, experts say the power required to generate and trade cryptocurrencies is considerable.

"Being an energy hog is built into the bitcoin system," said Schmidt.

The Greens advocate strong environmental policies to curb greenhouse gas emissions and fend off the threat of climate change.

Schmidt, who is cautious about the Greens' prospects of winning the election outright despite their current high poll ratings, says he decided to help fund their campaign rather than donate toward an environmental project because "giving it to a political party that has environmentalism as its core value will have a much bigger impact."

The Greens nominated 40-year-old lawmaker Annalena Baerbock as their candidate Monday to succeed long-time conservative leader Angela Merkel as chancellor in the Sept. 26 election. While the party doesn't mention bitcoin's environmental footprint in its program, it does want such currencies to be "traceable" — making bitcoin less attractive to many of its fans.

"I don't think regulation will do anything unless it crashes the price down to levels that make bitcoin uninteresting as an asset and unusable as a global currency," said Schmidt. "I believe that, in effect, bitcoin will need to be banned."

Schmidt dismissed comments that suggested he might be trying to redeem himself for having traded in the cryptocurrency.

"Had I looked for absolution, I'd have turned to the Catholic Church," he said.

1 verdict, then 6 police killings across America in 24 hours

By ALANNA DURKIN RICHER and LINDSAY WHITEHURST Associated Press

Even as the Derek Chauvin case was fresh in memory — the reading of the verdict in a Minneapolis courtroom, the shackling of the former police officer, the jubilation at what many saw as justice in the death of George Floyd — even then, blood flowed on America's streets.

And even then, some of that blood was shed at the hands of law enforcement.

At least six people were fatally shot by officers across the United States in the 24 hours after jurors reached a verdict in the murder case against Chauvin on Tuesday. The roll call of the dead is distressing:

A 16-year-old girl in Columbus, Ohio.

An oft-arrested man in Escondido, California.

A 42-year-old man in eastern North Carolina.

The deaths, in some cases, sparked new cries for justice. Some said they reflect an urgent need for radical changes to American policing — a need that the Chauvin verdict cannot paper over. For others, the shootings are a tragic reminder of the difficult and dangerous decisions law enforcement face daily.

An unidentified man in San Antonio.

Another man, killed in the same city within hours of the first.

A 31-year-old man in central Massachusetts.

The circumstances surrounding each death differ widely. Some happened while officers investigated serious crimes. Police say some of the people were armed with a gun, knife or a metal pole. One man claimed to have a bomb that he threatened to detonate. In several cases, little is known about the lives of those killed and what happened in their final moments.

The deadly encounters are only a small snapshot of the thousands of interactions between American police officers and civilians every day, most of which end safely. Uneventful encounters between the police and the populace, however, are not an issue.

It's a very different story when a weapon is drawn and a life is ended.

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As the nation watched the judge read the verdict against Chauvin on Tuesday afternoon, an officer hundreds of miles away was listening over his patrol car radio in a neighborhood in Columbus, Ohio. Minutes earlier, a colleague fatally shot a teenage girl.

Police had been called to the house after someone called 911 and reported being physically threatened. Body camera footage shows an officer approaching a group of people in the driveway as the teenager, Ma'Khia Bryant, swings a knife wildly. Moments later, the girl charges at a young woman pinned against a car.

The officer fires four shots before Bryant slumps to the ground. A black-handled blade, similar to a kitchen or steak knife, lies on the sidewalk next to her.

"You didn't have to shoot her! She's just a kid, man!" a man shouted at the officer.

The officer responds, "She had a knife. She just went at her."

Later, an anguished neighbor yells at officers: "Do you see why Black lives matter? Do you get it now?"

Bryant, who was in foster care at the time, was a shy, quiet girl who liked making hair and dance videos on TikTok, her grandmother, Debra Wilcox, told The Associated Press. Her family says her actions that day were out of character.

"I don't know what happened there unless she was fearful for her life," Wilcox said.

Though officials have said Bryant's death was a tragedy, they point to laws allowing police to use deadly force to protect themselves and others.

The officer's actions were "an act of heroism" with tragic results, said the National Fraternal Order of Police president, "yet another demonstration of the impossible situations" police face.

About the same time the radio brought the news of Chauvin's verdict to Columbus, two officers in San Antonio were confronting a man on a bus. Exactly how the encounter started remains unclear, but police say the unidentified man was armed. It ended with officers firing fatal shots.

Later that evening in the same city, authorities say a man killed a person working in a shed outside his home. As officers arrived, the suspect started shooting at police. They returned fired, killing him. Officials have not released his name.

As the nation digested the news from Minneapolis, the day wore on and daily life unspooled. In Worcester, Massachusetts, the night was punctuated by a standoff with police that ended in gunfire.

Phet Gouvong, 31, called 911 and claimed to have a bomb he threatened to set off, police said. Officers found him on the street. They said he was wearing body armor and had a backpack and what appeared to be a rifle.

A police SWAT team joined negotiators. One reached Gouvong by phone to try to calm him, officials say.

Around midnight, officials say, Gouvong moved toward police, and an officer opened fire.

Gouvong was pronounced dead at the scene. Police have not said whether he actually had an explosive device.

Gouvong had run-ins with police over the years, including a conviction for assault and battery with a dangerous weapon, but an aunt said he turned his life around, the Telegram & Gazette newspaper reported.

On Thursday, his mother crumpled onto the street in tears where flowers had been laid at the site of his killing. Marie Gonzalez told the newspaper she had called police Tuesday night to try to connect with her son but they wouldn't put her through. She believed she could have prevented it.

"They had no right taking my son's life," she said. "They had no right."

The next morning, as people in Minneapolis awakened to a city boarded up for unrest that never materialized, a 42-year-old Black man in eastern North Carolina was shot and killed when deputy sheriffs tried to serve drug-related search and arrest warrants.

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An eyewitness has said Andrew Brown Jr. was shot dead in his car in Elizabeth City as he tried to drive away. A car authorities removed from the scene appeared to have multiple bullet holes and a shattered back window.

His slaying sparked an outcry as hundreds demanded the release of body camera footage. Seven deputies have been placed on leave.

Relatives described Brown as a doting father who always had a joke to tell. He also had a difficult life. His mother was killed when he was young, he was partially paralyzed on his right side by an accidental shooting and lost an eye in a stabbing, according to an aunt, Glenda Brown Thomas.

He also had troubles with the law, including a misdemeanor drug possession conviction and some pending felony drug charges. The day before he was killed, two arrest warrants were issued for him on drug-related charges including possession with intent to sell cocaine, court records show.

Officers have so far said little about why they fired, but his family is determined to get answers.

"The police didn't have to shoot my baby," said another aunt, Martha McCullen.

That same morning, police in Southern California got a call about someone hitting cars with a metal pole. The man ran off when police arrived, but another officer spotted him carrying a 2-foot metal pole in the street.

The white man charged at the officer, who ordered him to drop the pole before opening fire, police said.

Police in Escondido, near San Diego, have not released the man's name, but did say he had been arrested nearly 200 times over the past two decades for violent assaults on police and the public, drug charges and other crimes. Efforts to get him help from mental health professionals hadn't worked, the police chief said.

Whether any officers will face charges in these shootings remains to be seen.

Chauvin was largely convicted based on video that showed him pressing his knee into Floyd's neck for more than nine minutes. Police shootings in a heated moment are notoriously difficult to prosecute. Juries have generally been reluctant to second-guess officers when they claim to have acted in life-or-death situations.

In the aftermath of Tuesday's verdict, prosecutors on opposite coasts announced opposite decisions on whether to advance charges against law enforcement who killed.

A Florida prosecutor announced Wednesday he would not pursue charges against a Brevard County Sheriff's deputy who shot and killed two Black teenagers; a California prosecutor announced manslaughter and assault charges against a deputy in the eastern San Francisco Bay area in the shooting of an unarmed Filipino man.

None of these cases has focused attention like the trial that came to a conclusion Tuesday. Some people hold out hope that the Chauvin verdict might be a crucial juncture in the national conversation about race, policing and the use of force.

"We are in a moment of reckoning," said Rachael Rollins, district attorney for Boston and surrounding communities and the first woman of color to serve as a top county prosecutor in Massachusetts.

"If we can be strategic and come together," she said, "we can make profound changes, profound."

Europe reopens but virus patients still overwhelm ICU teams

By JOHN LEICESTER Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — Cradling the head of the deeply sedated COVID-19 patient like a precious jewel in his hands, Dr. Alexy Tran Dinh steered his intensive-care nurses through the delicate process of rolling the woman off her stomach and onto her back, guiding the team like a dance instructor.

They moved only on Tran Dinh's count, in unison and with extreme care, because the unconscious patient could die within minutes should they inadvertently rip the breathing tube from her mouth.

"One, two and three — onto the side," the doctor instructed.

His next order quickly followed: "Onto the back."

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"Perfect," he concluded when the move was done.

Pulling in three nurses and a burly care worker from another section of the Paris hospital, the series of coordinated movements was just one of thousands of medical interventions — big and small, human, mechanical and pharmaceutical — that were maintaining the 64-year-old retired waitress on the threshold of life, while she fought to heal her diseased lungs.

And she was just one of nearly 6,000 critically ill patients still in French intensive care units this week as the country embarked on the perilous process of gingerly easing out of its latest lockdown — too prematurely for some frontline workers in hospitals.

French President Emmanuel Macron's decision to reopen elementary schools on Monday and allow people to move about more freely again in May — even though ICU numbers have remained stubbornly higher than at any point since the pandemic's catastrophic first surge — marks a shift away from prioritizing hospitals that is taking place in multiple European capitals.

In France, Greece and elsewhere, the cursor is moving toward other economic, social and educational imperatives. Governments are using ramped-up vaccinations to bolster arguments to ease restrictions, although just one-quarter of adults in Europe have received a first dose.

With record-high numbers of COVID-19 patients in critical care, Greece announced the reopening of its tourism industry from mid-May. Spain's prime minister says the state of emergency that allowed for curfews and travel bans won't be extended when it expires May 9, in part because vaccinations are allowing for a safe de-escalation of restrictions. This despite more than 2,200 critically ill COVID-19 patients still occupying one-fifth of Spain's ICU beds.

Beginning Monday, in low-risk zones, Italy's schools can reopen for full-time, in-person learning, and restaurants and bars can offer sit-down, outdoor service. The Netherlands is ending a night curfew and reopening the outdoor terraces of bars and cafes for the first time since mid-October, even as hospitals scale back non-urgent care to increase ICU beds for COVID-19 patients.

In France, Prime Minister Jean Castex said the latest infection surge that pushed the country's COVID-19-related death toll beyond 100,000 people has begun a slow retreat, allowing for all schools to reopen and day-time travel restrictions to end starting May 3. Castex also raised the prospect that stores and outdoor service at restaurants and cafes closed since October could reopen in mid-May.

"The peak of the third wave appears to be behind us, and the epidemic's pressure is lifting," Castex said Thursday.

That's not how it feels to Nadia Boudra, a critical care nurse at Bichat Hospital in Paris. Her 12-hour shift Thursday started with the unpleasant job of sealing the corpse of a 69-year-old man who died overnight with COVID-19 in a body bag, just hours before his daughter flew in from Canada hoping to see him alive.

"We have our noses in it. We see what's happening, we see that people are dying — a lot," she said. For her, reopened schools and, possibly, outdoor eating and drinking in May are "too soon" — a misleading message that "things are getting better."

"Clearly," she said, "that is not the case."

After sending the man's body to the hospital morgue, Boudra tended to the critically sick retired waitress, now the solitary occupant of the makeshift ICU set up for COVID-19 patients in what had been an operating room. The tender care, expertise and technology poured into keeping this one woman alive offered a micro-level look at the momentous national efforts — human, medical, financial — that France and other countries are still expending in ICUs as healthy people now plan May getaways and drinks with friends.

As the woman lay unconscious, 5,980 other gravely ill patients were also being kept alive with round-the-clock human and mechanical devotion in other critical care units across France. Automated drips supplied sedatives, painkillers and drugs to prevent deadly blood clots and leaks from the woman's veins. Enriched oxygen, first bubbled through water to warm and humidify it, pumped mechanically into her lungs. The ICU team also took a call from the woman's daughter, who telephones morning and night for news. It was bad on Thursday morning: Tran Dinh told the daughter her mother's breathing had deteriorated.

"If you took away the machines, she would die in a few minutes, perhaps less," the doctor said. "There

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is no room for error.”

Yet this patient wasn't even the most fragile. An artificial lung, a last resort for patients with lungs ravaged by the disease, was keeping a 53-year-old man alive. Costly and resource-intensive, the state-of-the-art treatment is reserved for patients thought strong enough to have a chance of surviving. About 50% still die, said Dr. Philippe Montravers, who heads the surgical ICU department at Bichat, run by Paris' hospital authority, AP-HP.

His unit has four of the ECMO machines — all of them used for COVID-19 patients. The man has been hooked up to his for over a month but “is not improving at all,” Montravers said.

“This machine only buys time,” he said. “It's a life buoy, nothing more.”

Nurse Lea Jourdan said tending to someone so fragile is physically and mentally wearing.

“You have to be careful about everything, all the tubes, not ripping anything out when you turn him over,” she said. “It's tough to see the positive and say to oneself, ‘He will survive.’”

Out of the cave: French isolation study ends after 40 days

By RENATA BRITO Associated Press

LOMBRIVES CAVE, France (AP) — Ever wonder what it would feel like to unplug from a hyperconnected world and hide away in a dark cave for 40 days?

Fifteen people in France did just that, emerging Saturday from a scientific experiment to say that time seemed to pass more slowly in their cavernous underground abode in southwestern France, where they were deprived of clocks and light.

With big smiles on their pale faces, the 15 left their voluntary isolation in the Lombrives cave to a round of applause and basked in the light while wearing special glasses to protect their eyes after so long in the dark.

“It was like pressing pause,” said 33-year-old Marina Lançon, one of the seven female members in the experiment, adding she didn't feel there was a rush to do anything.

Although she wished she could have stayed in the cave a few days longer, she said she was happy to feel the wind blowing on her face again and hear the birds sing in the trees of the French Pyrénées. And she doesn't plan to open her smartphone for a few more days, hoping to avoid a “too brutal” return to real life.

For 40 days and 40 nights, the group lived in and explored the cave as part of the Deep Time project. There was no sunlight inside, the temperature was 10 degrees Celsius (50 F) and the relative humidity stood at 100%. The cave dwellers had no contact with the outside world, no updates on the pandemic nor any communications with friends or family.

Scientists at the Human Adaption Institute leading the 1.2 million-euro (\$1.5 million) “Deep Time” project say the experiment will help them better understand how people adapt to drastic changes in living conditions and environments.

As expected, those in the cave lost their sense of time.

“And here we are! We just left after 40 days ... For us it was a real surprise,” said project director Christian Clot, adding for most participants, “in our heads, we had walked into the cave 30 days ago.”

At least one team member estimated the time underground at 23 days.

Johan Francois, 37, a math teacher and sailing instructor, ran 10-kilometer circles in the cave to stay fit. He sometimes had “visceral urges” to leave.

With no daily obligations and no children around, the challenge was “to profit from the present moment without ever thinking about what will happen in one hour, in two hours,” he said.

In partnership with labs in France and Switzerland, scientists monitored the 15 member's sleep patterns, social interactions and behavioral reactions via sensors. One sensor was a tiny thermometer inside a capsule that participants swallowed like a pill. It measured body temperatures and transmitted data to a computer until it was expelled naturally.

The team members followed their biological clocks to know when to wake up, go to sleep and eat. They counted their days not in hours but in sleep cycles.

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On Friday, scientists monitoring the participants entered the cave to let the research subjects know they would be coming out soon.

"It's really interesting to observe how this group synchronizes themselves," Clot said earlier in a recording from inside the cave. Working together on projects and organizing tasks without being able to set a time to meet was especially challenging, he said.

Although the participants looked visibly tired Saturday, two-thirds expressed a desire to remain underground a bit longer in order to finish group projects started during the expedition, Benoit Mauvieux, a chronobiologist involved in the research, told The AP.

"Our future as humans on this planet will evolve," Clot said after emerging. "We must learn to better understand how our brains are capable of finding new solutions, whatever the situation."

The world isolates. A New Zealand band plays to 50,000 fans

By NICK PERRY Associated Press

AUCKLAND, New Zealand (AP) — Singer Matiu Walters grinned as he gazed out over 50,000 damp but delirious fans and said those magic words: "So, what's up Eden Park?"

While much of the world remains hunkered down, the band Six60 has been playing to huge crowds in New Zealand, where social distancing isn't required after the nation stamped out the coronavirus. The band's tour finale on Saturday night was billed as the largest concert in the world since the pandemic began.

Equally momentous for a band which met while playing rugby at university was getting to play the first concert ever held at the storied Eden Park rugby stadium. And finding themselves at the apex of world music came as a twist for Six60, which has enjoyed unparalleled success in New Zealand but whose forays abroad have ended without the breakthroughs they sought.

Saturday's set by the five-piece band included powerful cameos by military musicians ahead of the nation honoring its war dead on Sunday, and Maori performers who stretched across the stage while the band switched to singing in the Indigenous language.

One fan, Lucy Clumpas, found it a surreal experience to be surrounded by so many people after she spent last year living through endless lockdowns in Britain.

"It's very important for us as humans to be able to get together and sing the same songs together," she said. "It makes us feel like we're part of something,"

Walters, the lead singer, said they desperately want their musician friends around the world to be able to play live shows again.

"We know what it's like to be in lockdown. It sucked. And we didn't know if we'd be able to play gigs again," he said in an interview before the show. "But we are fortunate, for a few reasons, here in New Zealand."

Guitarist Ji Fraser said the reception they received while on the road for their summer tour had been incredible.

"It was amazing to see how fanatical people were, and excited about being out and seeing live music, and seeing something to drag them out of a long, brutal year," he said. "It was very special."

Walters said they did worry that something could have gone wrong — that their gigs could have turned into super-spreader events. But he said there was not much to do other than play by the rules and follow the government guidelines.

The band formed thirteen years ago after they started jamming in their rugby changing rooms, making their concert at the hallowed ground of the nation's All Blacks rugby team feel like completing a circle.

The band had pushed for changes to civic rules to allow concerts at Eden Park, but not all the neighbors were happy.

One who objected was former Prime Minister Helen Clark, who said at the time that the concerts would represent a "home invasion" of noise.

"But the people wanted it. And the people spoke," Walters said. The singer added that Clark would have been welcomed at the concert. "Six60 is for everyone. And maybe if she came and enjoyed herself, she'd

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have a change of heart.”

Promoter Brent Eccles said they got permission to use the venue only at the last moment.

“And we thought to ourselves, well, how crazy are we?” he said. “And the answer was, well, pretty crazy. So let’s do it.”

It’s been a heady rise for a group which began as a hard-partying student covers band. Their style has evolved and remains difficult to define, blending elements of reggae, pop, rock and soul.

Bass guitarist Chris Mac said their fans now span rich and poor, young and old.

“We’re pretty lucky to have become the soundtrack of people’s lives. Weddings, funerals, birthdays, engagements,” he said, before breaking into laughter. “You know, gender-reveal parties, which are all the rage.”

As the band’s popularity grew in New Zealand, it became a kind of sport for critics to knock them for being too bland. Walters said criticism of success remains a problem in New Zealand, and was something that annoyed him at the time. But he said it also energized the band.

“We are very serious about the music,” he said. “It’s important for us to express an emotion and tell a story, and for our songs to be healing and magnetic for people. Because, it’s not a fluke that we’re playing to 50,000 people.”

The band has been trying to get more recognition abroad, although six months spent in Germany and a U.S. record deal both ended in disaster, as recounted in a behind-the-scenes documentary about the band “Six60: Till The Lights Go Out.”

But the band is ready to give it another shot, with a tour of Europe and the U.K. planned for November. They hope that by then, there will be many more places around the world where huge crowds can gather in song.

Awaiting census count, California ponders slow growth future

By KATHLEEN RONAYNE Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — In 1962, when California’s population of more than 17 million surpassed New York’s, Gov. Pat Brown celebrated by declaring a state holiday. In the coming days, when the U.S. Census Bureau is expected to release the state’s latest head count, there probably will be no celebrations.

Over the past decade, California’s average annual population growth rate slipped to 0.06% — lower than at any time since at least 1900. The state is facing the prospect of losing a U.S. House seat for the first time in its history, while political rivals Texas and Florida add more residents and political clout.

Californians have long rolled their eyes at stories about the state’s coming demise, and experts say the slow growth isn’t unexpected. Still, there’s little doubt the new census numbers mark a moment for a state that has long lived in the American imagination as the land of boundless opportunity. It leaves policymakers and leaders grappling with what a California that’s barely growing looks like and whether that’s even a problem to be solved.

“You can say that California is a state, but it’s also a state of mind, it’s a collection of ideas and images and, frankly, some unrealistic dreams, too,” said D.J. Waldie, a cultural historian who has written books about life in Southern California. “So this moment, this 2020 census moment, puts in relief our need to talk about California realistically.”

The reality behind the slowed growth isn’t complicated. Experts point to three major factors: declining birth rates; a long-standing trend of fewer people moving in from other states than leaving; and a drop in international immigration, particularly from Asia, which has made up for people moving to other states.

The immigration decline has been particularly fast in the past half decade as President Donald Trump’s administration sharply reduced the number of people legally entering the United States.

But deciphering the meaning behind the slowdown is contentious. Although several factors are beyond the state’s control, critics of the Democrats’ decadelong reign in Sacramento often point to stagnant growth as a result of liberal policies.

“How could it not, at some level, be an indictment of what the Democratic Party has done over these

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last many years?" said Lanhee Chen, a fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution who has worked on Republican presidential campaigns. "The situation we're looking at cannot be divorced from the decisions that have been made."

California is in the throes of a yearslong housing crisis as building fails to keep up with demand, forcing more people onto the streets and making home ownership unattainable for many. The state has the nation's highest poverty rate when housing is taken into account. Its water resources are consistently taxed, and the state has spent more than half of the past decade in drought. Freeways are jammed as more people move to the suburbs, and worsening wildfires are destroying homes and communities.

"We're pushing up against limits," said former Democratic Gov. Jerry Brown, who said the state's population is stretching the available resources. "Not saying they couldn't be transcended, but it would take a pretty different arrangement."

But the younger Brown, whose governor-father celebrated the 1960s boom, is among those who see the new census as almost a coming-of-age moment for the state. Growth is not sustainable forever, he noted, getting philosophical, and the state is learning to manage its population.

"Growth is not endless, just like our lives are not endless, there's always a scale," he said.

"Homeostasis is a good thing. Not stagnation, not paralysis, not death. But a dynamic living, where the variables are kept in some kind of equilibrium, that's healthy," he added.

It is possible California may hold steady at 53 U.S. House seats, as it did after the 2010 census. If it does, that's probably because state leaders spent nearly \$200 million on census outreach, trying to get residents counted and ensure the state gets its due of federal money allotted based on the tally. Even with 52 seats, it would have more seats than any other state by far, and it remains the nation's most populous state by significant measure, with nearly 40 million people compared with Texas' almost 30 million.

If California loses a seat, it would join the ranks of states with population power centers such as Illinois and New York but also smaller ones, including Rhode Island and West Virginia.

Arizona, Colorado and Florida are among the states also expected to gain seats. Texas is expected to gain as many as three, an irksome fact for some California policymakers.

Texas has long sought to woo California residents and businesses and saw some high-profile wins last year when tech giant Oracle was among those announcing it was leaving Silicon Valley for Austin.

"If anybody works to denigrate the image of California as the Golden State, it's going to be Texas. It has been Texas," said Sherry Bebitch Jeffe, a professor of public policy communication at the University of Southern California. "And now they can point and say, 'See,'"

Competition aside, the loss of a House seat should be a time "to have an honest assessment of the state," said Camille Suarez, an assistant professor of history at California State University-Los Angeles.

From the days of the Gold Rush in the mid-19th century, the idea of a "California dream" has been accessible only to certain people and may feel even further away for many, she said. Doubling down on renewable energy, creating clean technology and finding climate-friendly ways to sustain California's population could lay the groundwork for another boom, she said.

"California has a lot of brilliant people that can sort of think us out of this," she said.

Whether California loses a seat or not, it's certain that the period of slow growth marks a new chapter in the state's story. While many are likely to project their political views about the state onto the numbers, Waldie, the cultural historian, said California's reality has always been more complicated than its defenders and detractors say.

"California was never as golden as the dreamers made it out and it's never been as dystopic as those who complain about California make it out."

Key moments in closing arguments of Chauvin trial

By AMY FORLITI, STEPHEN GROVES and TAMMY WEBBER Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — After nearly three weeks of testimony including heart-wrenching bystander statements and technical medical information, attorneys in Derek Chauvin's murder trial presented their

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closing arguments.

Prosecutors played to emotion as they sketched moments from George Floyd's life and described his struggle under Chauvin's knee. Defense attorney Eric Nelson tried to raise doubts about Floyd's cause of death, and to portray Chauvin as a "reasonable officer."

Jurors deliberated for little more than a day before proclaiming Chauvin guilty of second-degree murder, third-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter.

Here are some highlights from the closing arguments.

"HIS NAME WAS GEORGE PERRY FLOYD, JR."

That opening line by prosecutor Steve Schleicher set the stage for his sometimes emotional closing argument, reminding jurors who Floyd was, that others cared for him, and that he died surrounded by strangers, writhing on the ground and repeating "I can't breathe."

To Mary Moriarty, former chief public defender for Hennepin County, that opening line was key because "that brought everyone back to why we are all there."

"BELIEVE YOUR EYES"

Schleicher repeatedly told jurors to trust that they saw the life squeezed out of Floyd on bystander video.

"This case is exactly what you thought when you saw it first ... You can believe your eyes. ... It's what you felt in your gut. It's what you now know in your heart. This wasn't policing. This was murder," Schleicher said.

But Nelson argued it was not that simple. He used the pandemic-altered courtroom as a prop, describing how cameras and plastic barriers had at times obscured his view of witnesses and jurors.

"Things block your perspective. Things can affect your perspective," he said. "But your perception is how you interpret what it is you see."

He said the perspective and perception of each witness was different, depending on when they arrived at the scene, their vantage point and their own life experiences. And he reminded jurors that Chauvin's actions had to be analyzed from the perspective of a reasonable police officer who had all the information.

CRITICAL MOMENT OF FLOYD'S DEATH

Nelson tried to turn around one of the most riveting moments of the trial — when a prosecution witness pinpointed what he said was Floyd's moment of death.

Dr. Martin Tobin, a lung and critical care specialist, testified that Floyd died about five minutes after he was pinned facedown on the pavement with his hands cuffed behind his back and Chauvin's knee on his neck.

"You can see his eyes. He's conscious, and then you see that he isn't," Tobin said. "That's the moment the life goes out of his body."

Nelson tried to convince jurors that there was more to that moment, saying "at the very precise moment that Mr. Floyd takes his last breath" three things happened: Floyd took his last breath, Chauvin reacted to frantic onlookers by pulling out his Mace and shaking it, and an off-duty fire firefighter who has emergency medical training walked up from behind and startled Chauvin.

The firefighter testified that she wanted to provide medical help or tell officers how to do it.

"All of these facts and circumstances simultaneously occur at a critical moment. And that changed Officer Chauvin's perception of what was happening," Nelson said.

CAUSE OF FLOYD'S DEATH

Despite numerous prosecution witnesses who said Floyd died from a lack of oxygen due to the restraint, Nelson told jurors that Floyd's death was consistent with a sudden heart rhythm problem, and he hammered on his key arguments from trial — that drug use and Floyd's medical issues played a role.

Schleicher said jurors didn't have to accept the "amazing coincidence" that Floyd died from heart disease while he was being restrained. Nelson said to "poo poo" all of the other factors was "just really a preposterous notion."

Nelson misstated the law when he said the state had to convince jurors that the other factors played no role in Floyd's death. On rebuttal, prosecutor Jerry Blackwell told jurors that the law says prosecutors had to prove only that Chauvin's actions were a substantial causal factor in his death, not the biggest factor,

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and that contributing causes do not relieve Chauvin of criminal liability.

Moriarty said she was surprised the state didn't object to Nelson's comment, or that Judge Peter Cahill didn't interrupt and reread the jury instructions.

Blackwell left jurors with these final words: "You were told ... that Mr. Floyd died because his heart was too big. ... The truth of the matter is that the reason George Floyd is dead is because Mr. Chauvin's heart was too small."

USE OF VIDEO

It was no surprise that prosecutors played videos during their closing argument to burn into jurors' minds the image of Chauvin kneeling on Floyd's neck.

But Nelson also played clips from the bystander video that he said showed Chauvin's actions were reasonable and from officers' body camera footage, including an angle that gave jurors Chauvin's perspective as he arrived on the scene.

Nelson played clips that emphasized Floyd's size and strength and showed the struggle with officers. At one point, he played a video from a camera across the street, pointing out that the squad car was rocking "back and forth, back and forth" under the force of officers wrestling with Floyd.

Moriarty was surprised that Nelson played so much video. "It was very painful because then people had to hear all over again George Floyd begging for his life," she said.

9:29 vs 16:59

Schleicher used the phrase "9 minutes, and 29 seconds" like a drumbeat in his closing to remind jurors of how long Chauvin had his knee on Floyd. He highlighted Floyd's desperate struggle — using his knuckles, his shoulder, and even his face — to lift himself to draw a breath.

Nelson pointed jurors in a different direction, saying what really mattered was what happened before then. "Nine minutes and 29 seconds — it's not the proper analysis because the nine minutes and 29 seconds ignores the previous sixteen minutes and 59 seconds," Nelson said, adding that a reasonable police officer would consider everything that happened.

DEFENSE: CHAUVIN WAS A "REASONABLE POLICE OFFICER"

During an argument that stretched nearly three hours, Nelson returned to the mantra of "reasonable police officer" dozens of times.

Nelson described how Chauvin would have sized Floyd up, recognized that two "rookie officers" were struggling to get him into a squad car, realized that more force was needed and guessed that Floyd was under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

"A reasonable officer wants to keep his fellow officers safe," Nelson said. "A reasonable police officer takes into consideration the safety of civilians. ... A reasonable police officer takes into account the safety of the person that they are arresting."

The phrase was a key element at trial because Chauvin was authorized to use force as long as that force would be considered reasonable by an objective officer in the same situation. Jurors were told to examine the evidence from that view rather than from their own perspective, and they couldn't use hindsight as a factor.

In the end, jurors didn't buy it.

A 9-YEAR-OLD-GIRL WOULD KNOW BETTER

Prosecutors said Chauvin's actions were so wrong that even a 9-year-old girl knew better.

Schleicher and Blackwell both mentioned the girl — the younger cousin of the teenager who shot the bystander video that touched off weeks of protests — at every opportunity.

"He knew that kneeling on somebody's neck, in addition to the positional asphyxia, just the pressure is dangerous," Schleicher said of Chauvin. "Anyone can tell you that, a 9-year-old can tell you that, did tell you that."

Blackwell showed jurors an image of the girl wearing a shirt that said "Love" as she watched the fatal encounter.

"You don't need a Ph.D., you don't need an M.D. to understand how fundamental breathing is to life," Blackwell said.

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BLAMING THE BYSTANDERS

Nelson suggested that Chauvin and other officers thought the bystanders were a threat, describing how "this crowd grew more and more upset."

"You never underestimate a crowd's potential because a reasonable police officer has to be aware and alert to his surroundings," Nelson told jurors.

About 15 onlookers are seen on bystander and police body camera video standing on the sidewalk, shouting at Chauvin to get off of Floyd. Several testified about the trauma of watching Floyd die and the guilt of feeling powerless to intervene.

Blackwell told jurors that the bystanders, whom he called "a bouquet of humanity," all saw that Floyd was suffering and they wanted to intervene. He said they were torn "between the sanctity of life and wanting to intervene, and their respect for authority and police officers."

"If those bystanders did not respect this badge, they could very easily have taken the law into their own hands and simply have removed Mr. Chauvin. ... But none of them did that. None of them did that because they respected this badge even if it tore them up inside," Blackwell said.

"Instead, they call the police on the police. Instead, they picked up their phones to memorialize what they were seeing so that it could not be forgotten and so that it could not be misrepresented. Instead, they waited for their day to come in and ... talk with you, not, ladies and gentlemen, to tell their story, but to tell the truth about what they experienced."

COMMON SENSE AS THE 46TH WITNESS

Jurors heard dueling definitions of what common sense should tell them about the case.

Nelson said the prosecutors' expert medical witnesses ignored Floyd's health problems in declaring that Chauvin's force killed Floyd, saying that doing so "defies medical science and it defies common sense and reason."

Blackwell told jurors to trust their common sense as they sifted through the evidence and testimonies of 45 witnesses, urging them to make it the 46th witness.

"Common sense will continue talking with you all the while, because while you've heard hours and hours and hours of discussions here in the closing, ultimately, it really isn't that complicated," Blackwell told jurors.

The case is "so simple that a child can understand it," Blackwell said. "In fact, a child did understand it, when the 9-year-old girl said, 'get off of him.' That's how simple it was. Get off of him. Common sense."

Indiana prosecutor facing criticism after FedEx shooting

By CASEY SMITH Associated Press/Report for America

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — An Indiana prosecutor is facing mounting criticism for declining to pursue court hearings that could have prevented a man from accessing the guns used to shoot and kill eight people at a FedEx facility in Indianapolis.

The leader of the Indianapolis police union said Marion County Prosecutor Ryan Mears "failed to do his part" when he chose not to bring Brandon Scott Hole before a judge for a hearing under Indiana's "red flag" law, even after his mother called police last year to say her son might pursue "suicide by cop."

"Unfortunately, the lack of action by the Marion County prosecutor prevented a court hearing, which could have ... prohibited the suspect from owning ... any other firearms," Indianapolis Fraternal Order of Police President Rick Snyder said. "Why didn't the prosecutor seek the hearing that the statute requires? Why didn't the prosecutor use all the legal tools available? Why didn't the prosecutor try?"

The law allows police to confiscate guns from a person deemed dangerous to themselves or others. Prosecutors can then decide whether to ask a court to ban that person from buying any other firearms.

The law came under scrutiny following the assault after Mears criticized it for having too many "loop-holes." Despite calls from Democratic lawmakers' to review and strengthen the red flag provisions, those actions were put on hold. The 2021 legislative session ended Thursday.

Police seized a pump-action shotgun from Hole, then 18, in March 2020 after they received the call from his mother. Mears said Monday that prosecutors did not seek a "red flag" hearing to try to prevent Hole

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from possessing a gun because they did not have enough time under the law to definitively demonstrate his propensity for suicidal thoughts.

Mears specifically pointed to a 2019 change in the law that requires courts to make a "good-faith effort" to hold a hearing within 14 days. An additional amendment requires authorities to file an affidavit with the court within 48 hours.

"This individual was taken and treated by medical professionals and he was cut loose," and was not even prescribed any medication, Mears said. "The risk is, if we move forward with that (red flag) process and lose, we have to give that firearm back to that person. That's not something we were willing to do."

Indianapolis police previously said that they never returned that shotgun to Hole. Authorities have said he used two "assault-style" rifles to gun down eight people, four of them from the city's Sikh community, at the FedEx facility on April 15 before he killed himself.

Members and leaders of the Sikh community have demanded that law enforcement conduct a "thorough" and "transparent" investigation, including a probe into the possibility of bias as Hole's motivation, said Satjeet Kaur, Executive Director of the Sikh Coalition. Those calls have so far avoided direct criticism of Mears, however.

"If it is determined that there was a failure in this law that could have prevented this tragedy from happening, the law should be fixed," Kaur said. "If the law was incorrectly implemented as written, the parties responsible must be held accountable."

Republican state Sen. Erin Houchin, who sponsored the 2019 changes to Indiana's red flag law, said it "could have worked just as it should" in the Hole case.

"I think that had the prosecutor followed the red flag procedure in this case, then this 19-year-old might have not been able to purchase a second firearm after the family did voluntarily turn over that weapon," Houchin said.

Mears did not return messages Friday seeking additional comment.

Indiana law does not mandate prosecutors to pursue court hearings in red flag law cases. Houchin said she would consider amending language to "firm up" that process, but only after more facts surrounding the shooting come to light.

Snyder said the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department has made at least 45 red flag referrals to the prosecutor's office so far this year. Mears said Monday that his office had filed eight red flag petitions since January. All are still awaiting rulings.

"The prosecutor appears to have raised the suggestion that the system failed, but I would point out that in this instance, the system didn't fail," Snyder said. "A loophole did not thwart this opportunity, instead the process was sidestepped."

India virus patients suffocate amid oxygen shortage in surge

By AIJAZ HUSSAIN Associated Press

SRINAGAR, India (AP) — Indian authorities scrambled Saturday to get oxygen tanks to hospitals where COVID-19 patients were suffocating amid the world's worst coronavirus surge, as the government came under increasing criticism for what doctors said was its negligence in the face of a foreseeable public health disaster.

For the third day in a row, India set a global daily record of new infections. The 346,786 confirmed cases over the past day brought India's total to more than 16 million, behind only the United States. The Health Ministry reported another 2,624 deaths in the past 24 hours, pushing India's COVID-19 fatalities to 189,544. Experts say even those figures are likely an undercount.

The government ramped up its efforts to get medical oxygen to hospitals using special Oxygen Express trains, air force planes and trucks to transport tankers, and took measures to exempt critical oxygen supplies from customs taxes. But the crisis in the country of nearly 1.4 billion people was only deepening as overburdened hospitals shut admissions and ran out of beds and oxygen supplies.

"Every hospital is running out (of oxygen). We are running out," Dr. Sudhanshu Bankata, executive direc-

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tor of Batra Hospital, a leading hospital in the capital, told New Delhi Television channel.

In a sign of the desperation unfolding over the shortages, a high court in Delhi warned Saturday it would "hang" anyone who tries to obstruct the delivery of emergency oxygen supplies, amid evidence that some local authorities were diverting tanks to hospitals in their areas. The court, which was hearing submissions by a group of hospitals over the oxygen shortages, termed the devastating rise in infections a "tsunami."

At least 20 COVID-19 patients at the critical care unit of New Delhi's Jaipur Golden Hospital died overnight as "oxygen pressure was low," the Indian Express newspaper reported.

"Our supply was delayed by seven-eight hours on Friday night and the stock we received last night is only 40% of the required supply," the newspaper quoted the hospital's medical superintendent, Dr. D.K. Baluja, as saying.

On Thursday, 25 COVID-19 patients died at the capital's Sir Ganga Ram Hospital amid suggestions that low oxygen supplies were to blame.

India's infection surge, blamed on a highly contagious variant first detected here, came after Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared victory over the coronavirus in January, telling the virtual gathering of the World Economic Forum that India's success couldn't be compared with anywhere else.

"In a country which is home to 18% of the world population, that country has saved humanity from a big disaster by containing corona effectively," Modi said.

But health experts and critics say a downward trend in infections late last year lulled authorities into complacency, as they failed to plug the holes in the ailing health care system that had become evident during the first wave. They also blame politicians and government authorities for allowing super-spreader events, including religious festivals and election rallies, to take place as recently as this month.

"It's not the virus variants and mutations which are a key cause of the current rise in infections," Dr. Anant Bhan, a bioethics and global health expert, tweeted this week. "It's the variants of ineptitude and abdication of public health thinking by our decision makers."

Dr. Vineeta Bal, who studies immune systems at the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research in Pune city, said that at the heart of India's "paralyzing" oxygen shortage was the sense of complacency that took hold as cases declined.

When the virus first erupted in India last year, Modi imposed a harsh, nationwide lockdown for months to keep hospitals from being overwhelmed. But the government relaxed restrictions in the face of widespread financial hardship and Modi has refrained from ordering a new lockdown.

But a pandemic doesn't just end, Bal noted. Summing up the authorities' response, she said: "Failure of governance, failure of anticipation, failure of planning, compounded by this sense that we've conquered (the virus)."

Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah as well as opposition politicians this month took part in mass election rallies in five populous states with tens of thousands of supporters who were not wearing masks or social distancing.

In addition, religious leaders and hundreds of thousands of devout Hindus descended on the banks of the Ganges River in the northern Indian city of Haridwar last month for a major Kumbh festival. Experts have described these as super-spreader events.

"Political and religious leaders have been exemplary on television for not following the restriction that they're saying ordinary people should follow," Bal said.

Last week, the Supreme Court told Modi's government to produce a national plan for the supply of oxygen and essential drugs for the treatment of coronavirus patients.

The government said Saturday it would exempt vaccines, oxygen and other oxygen-related equipment from customs duty for three months, in a bid to boost availability.

In addition, Modi's emergency assistance fund, dubbed PM CARES, in January allocated some \$27 million for setting up 162 oxygen generation plants inside public health facilities in the country. Three months on, only 33 have been created, according to the federal Health Ministry.

But the Defense Ministry is set to fly 23 mobile oxygen generating plants within a week from Germany to be deployed at army-run hospitals catering to COVID patients. Each plant will be able to produce 2,400 liters of oxygen per hour, a government statement said Friday.

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That's coming too late for hospitals in the capital and hard-hit states such as Maharashtra, which have turned to social media to plead with authorities to replenish their oxygen supplies. Early Saturday, Bankata's Batra hospital reported severe shortage of oxygen for its 190 admitted patients.

When the news anchor asked Bankata what happens when a hospital issues an SOS call as his had done, Bankata replied: "Nothing. It's over. It's over."

Hours later, the hospital received supplies to run for few hours.

Fortis Healthcare, a chain of hospitals across India, said Saturday that one of its hospitals in New Delhi "is running out of oxygen" and was suspending admissions. In a tweet, it said it had been waiting for fresh supplies since the morning.

As the oxygen scarcity deepened, local officials in several states disrupted movement of tankers and diverted supplies to their areas.

On Friday, the Press Trust of India news agency reported that a tanker-truck carrying oxygen supplies in Delhi's neighboring state of Haryana went missing. Days before, the news agency reported, a minister in Haryana blamed Delhi authorities for looting an oxygen tanker when it was crossing their territory.

"Unfortunately, many such incidents have occurred and have dire effect on hospitals in need of oxygen supplies," said Saket Tiku, president of the All India Industrial Gases Manufacturers Association.

India is a major vaccine producer, but even after halting large exports of vaccines in March to divert them to domestic use, there are still questions of whether manufactures can produce them fast enough to bring down infections in time in the world's second most populous country.

India said this week it would soon expand its vaccination program from people aged 45 to include all adults, some 900 million people — well more than the entire population of the entire European Union and United States combined.

From scarcity to abundance: US faces calls to share vaccines

By MARLON GONZÁLEZ and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras (AP) — Victor Guevara knows people his age have been vaccinated against COVID-19 in many countries. His own relatives in Houston have been inoculated.

But the 72-year-old Honduran lawyer, like so many others in his country, is still waiting. And increasingly, he is wondering why the United States is not doing more to help, particularly as the American vaccine supply begins to outpace demand and doses that have been approved for use elsewhere in the world, but not in the U.S., sit idle.

"We live in a state of defenselessness on every level," Guevara said of the situation in his Central American homeland.

Honduras has obtained a paltry 59,000 vaccine doses for its 10 million people. Similar gaps in vaccine access are found across Africa, where just 36 million doses have been acquired for the continent's 1.3 billion people, as well as in parts of Asia.

In the United States, more than one-fourth of the population — nearly 90 million people — has been fully vaccinated and supplies are so robust that some states are turning down planned shipments from the federal government.

This stark access gap is prompting increased calls across the world for the U.S. to start shipping vaccine supplies to poorer countries. That's creating an early test for President Joe Biden, who has pledged to restore American leadership on the world stage and prove to wary nations that the U.S. is a reliable partner after years of retrenchment during the Trump administration.

J. Stephen Morrison, senior vice president and director of the Global Health Policy Center at the Center for Strategic & International Studies in Washington, said that as the U.S. moves from vaccine scarcity to abundance, it has an opportunity to "shape the outcomes dramatically in this next phase because of the assets we have."

Biden, who took office in January as the virus was raging in the U.S., has responded cautiously to calls for help from abroad.

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He has focused the bulk of his administration's vaccination efforts at home. He kept in place an agreement struck by the Trump administration requiring drugmakers that got U.S. aid in developing or expanding vaccine manufacturing to sell their first doses produced in the country to the U.S. government. The U.S. has also used the Defense Production Act to secure vital supplies for the production of vaccine, a move that has blocked the export of some supplies outside the country.

White House aides have argued that Biden's cautious approach to promises around vaccine supply and delivery was validated in the wake of manufacturing issues with the Johnson & Johnson vaccine and the subsequent safety "pause" to investigate a handful of reported blood clots. In addition, officials say they need to maintain reserves in the U.S. to vaccinate teenagers and younger children once safety studies for those age groups are completed and if booster shots should be required later.

The White House is aware that the rest of the world is watching. Last month, the U.S. shared 4 million vaccine doses with neighboring Canada and Mexico, and this past week, Biden said those countries would be targets for additional supplies. He also said countries in Central America could receive U.S. vaccination help, though officials have not detailed any specific plans.

The lack of U.S. vaccine assistance around the world has created an opportunity for China and Russia, which have promised millions of doses of domestically produced shots to other countries, though there have been production delays that have hampered the delivery of some supplies. China's foreign minister Wang Yi said this month that China opposes "vaccine nationalism" and that vaccines should become a global public good.

Professor Willem Hanekom, director of the Africa Health Research Institute and a vaccinologist, said wealthy countries have a stake in the success of vaccination efforts in other corners of the world.

"Beyond the moral obligation, the problem is that if there is not going to be control of the epidemic globally, this may ultimately backfire for these rich countries, if in areas where vaccines are not available variants emerge against which the vaccines might not work," Hanekom said.

The U.S. has also faced criticism that it is not only hoarding its own stockpiles, but also blocking other countries from accessing vaccines, including through its use of the law that gives Washington broad authority to direct private companies to meet the needs of the national defense.

Adar Poonawalla, chief executive of the Serum Institute of India, the world's largest maker of vaccines and a critical supplier of the U.N.-backed COVAX facility, asked Biden on Twitter on April 16 to lift the U.S. embargo on exporting raw materials needed to make the jabs.

India is battling the world's fastest pace of spreading infections. Its government has blocked vaccine exports for several months to better meet needs at home, exacerbating the difficulty of poor countries to access vaccine.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' 2020 annual report also raised eyebrows for a section titled "Combatting malign influences in the Americas," which said the U.S. had convinced Brazil to not buy the Russian shot.

The U.S. Embassy denied exerting any pressure regarding vaccines approved by Brazil's health regulator, which has not yet signed off on Sputnik V. Since March 13, Brazil has been trying to negotiate supply of U.S. surplus vaccines for itself, according to the foreign ministry.

There are also concerns that the U.S. might link vaccine sharing to other diplomatic efforts. Washington's loan of 2.7 million doses of AstraZeneca's shots to Mexico last month came on the same day Mexico announced it was restricting crossings at its southern border, an effort that could help decrease the number of migrants seeking entry into the United States.

Those sort of parallel tracks of diplomacy will be closely watched as the Biden administration decides with whom to share its surplus vaccine, particularly in Central America, home to many countries where migrant families and unaccompanied children are trying to make their way to the U.S.

"What we would hope to avoid is any perception that increased access to lifesaving vaccines in Central America is in exchange for increased tightening of border security," said Maureen Meyer, vice president for programs at the Washington Office on Latin America.

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As the wait for vaccines continues in Honduras, desperation is growing.

Last week, a private business group announced it would try to buy 1.5 million vaccine doses to help government efforts, though it was unclear how it might obtain them. In March, authorities in Mexico seized 5,700 doses of purported Russian vaccines found in false bottoms of ice chests aboard a private plane bound for Honduras. The company owner who chartered the plane said he was trying to obtain vaccines for his employees and their families. The vaccine's Russian distributor said the vaccines were fake.

Lilian Tilbeth Hernández Banegas, 46, was infected with COVID-19 in late November and spent 13 days in a Tegucigalpa hospital. The first days she struggled to breathe and thought she would die.

The experience has made the mother of three more anxious about the virus and more diligent about avoiding it. The pandemic rocked her family's finances. Her husband sells used cars, but hasn't made a sale in more than four months.

"I want to vaccinate myself, my family to be vaccinated, because my husband and my children go out to work, but it's frustrating that the vaccines don't arrive," Hernández said.

There's plenty of blame to go around, said Marco Tulio Medina, coordinator of the COVID-19 committee at the National Autonomous University of Honduras, noting his own government's lackadaisical approach and the ferocity of the vaccine marketplace. But the wealthy can do more.

"There's a lack of humanism on the part of the rich countries," he said. "They're acting in an egotistical way, thinking of themselves and not of the world."

Stephen Curry, Warriors welcome back fans and beat Nuggets

By JANIE McCAULEY AP Sports Writer

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Stephen Curry's pregame warmup had a little added flair with so many more people watching again. He loved seeing all the familiar ushers as he drove up to the arena three hours early. He thanked the fans before tipoff for being patient and persistent through a pandemic.

Curry scored 32 points, Draymond Green added 19 assists and 12 rebounds, and the Golden State Warriors welcomed back fans for the first time since the pandemic began by beating the Denver Nuggets 118-97 on Friday night.

"Just a little bit different of a buzz inside and outside the arena," Curry said. "I know you got to take it slow and obviously keep everybody safe but ramp up how many people can get in the building and slowly but surely get back to a full, packed house where that energy is second to none. Us on the floor, we live off of that. You try to bring it when it's an empty arena, you do your best but it makes such a difference with fans."

Nikola Jokic scored 19 points for Denver in a matchup of MVP candidates with Curry, who received a rare technical with 33.7 seconds left in the third when he wanted a foul call. Michael Porter Jr. led the Nuggets with 26 points, hitting seven 3-pointers.

Denver forward Will Barton went down 59 seconds into the game with a strained right hamstring and didn't return. He hit the floor awkwardly on the baseline beneath the Nuggets basket.

"Our guys regrouped," Nuggets coach Michael Malone said. "Will went down. He went down early and then we had to find other guys to step in and play. But I think all of you guys are fishing for we lost this game because of Will's injury. Don't make that excuse for us. Will Barton went down, he's hurt and we feel for him. But we all get paid on the first and 15th, do your job. We didn't do our job tonight — I didn't, the players didn't, and it's unacceptable."

Fans chanted "M-V-P! M-V-P!" for Curry, who shot 11 for 18 with four 3s and also grabbed eight rebounds in his 12th 30-point performance over the past 13 games and 29th of the season.

"I'm not surprised. I think it's a no-brainer," Mychal Mulder said.

Jordan Poole knocked down a corner 3-pointer to beat the buzzer ending the third as Golden State got another big boost from its bench to win a third straight home game. Poole finished with 15 points and Kelly Oubre Jr. 23 in his new reserve role.

"It's a new role for Kelly but you can see how he's embraced it, how he's handled it," coach Steve Kerr

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said.

The Warriors began a stretch with nine of their final 13 games at home — where they hadn't played with fans in the building for 409 days. Attendance was 1,935, with the team having hoped for about 2,000 people.

Fans were greeted with a special video board message — welcome home — limited number of player family members and guests had been the only ones in attendance.

The depleted Warriors welcomed back Juan Toscano-Anderson from the concussion protocol after he took a dangerous fall and cut his head at Boston last week. He entered at the 6:08 mark of the first quarter to loud cheers and contributed nine points and eight rebounds.

"Having fans is always fun, especially after playing in empty gyms," Toscano-Anderson said. "I appreciate all the fans. Shoutout to all the essential workers who have made this possible."

Golden State shot 53.6% and had 39 assists.

"You have to find a way to get stops and we were just unwilling to do that tonight," said a disgusted Malone, whose Denver team shot 38.6%.

CURRY THE ENTERTAINER

Curry clearly loved having fans to entertain again, going through a dazzling warmup in which he kicked basketballs high toward the enormous video scoreboard and had fun — waving to a cheering group above the tunnel once done with his pregame work.

The two-time MVP took a moment before tipoff to thank the fans for their patience during this "unprecedented situation."

"There was such a great energy in the building tonight and a reminder of what we've missed," Kerr said. "Only I guess a couple thousand but it felt like a lot more. Just such a welcome sight."

FIRST FAN

Anthony Calvo, 27, of San Ramon, was honored as the first fan back at Chase Center. New Warriors COO Brandon Schneider greeted him at the door about 4:50 p.m. after Calvo arrived to take his COVID test at 10:30 a.m.

An employee of the City of Redwood City who helps secure school supplies for teens in need, he planned to connect after the game with wife Kerissa for their planned Big Sur weekend getaway.

He received a No. 1 First Fan Back uniform and signed gear from the team.

TIP-INS

Nuggets: Barton was injured on Golden State's home floor after Jamal Murray tore the ACL in his left knee late in the game here against the Warriors on April 12 and needed surgery. ... Denver had won its previous two on the road.

Warriors: F Damion Lee and G Kent Bazemore are both in the league's COVID-19 health and safety protocols. ... The Warriors didn't practice Thursday or hold a shootaround Friday and Kerr expects limited practices down the stretch to keep his team fresh. "The players need rest more than they need work at this point," he said.

UP NEXT

Nuggets: Host Houston on Saturday in a road-home back-to-back looking to sweep the three matchups this season with the Rockets.

Warriors: Host Sacramento on Sunday having lost four of five to the Kings.

Chocolate chip diplomacy: Biden courts Congress with gusto

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — The pictures always make it look so presidential: Joe Biden sitting in a tall-back chair, surrounded by the arrayed members of Congress invited for a meeting at the White House.

But inside the Oval Office, lawmakers tell a different story, of a president so warm, so engaged, so animated — standing up, sitting down, calling on lawmakers by name, swapping stories about their hometowns — and so determined to make them get to work and get things done.

On their way out the door, they are offered a chocolate chip cookie, that most American of snacks, a

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to-go boost for the potential partnership between this White House and the Congress.

"It was the day that you will remember, not so much because you were in the Oval Office, but because of the attention the president gave to us — the personal attention, the commitment, the authenticity and the seriousness of caring about people, and especially people who have been marginalized," said Rep. Joyce Beatty, D-Ohio, the chair of the Congressional Black Caucus.

"Very presidential with a personal flair," she said.

The outreach to Capitol Hill is nothing out of the ordinary. New presidents typically check the box of inviting lawmakers to the White House at the start of an administration to set the stage for the legislating to come.

Donald Trump held impromptu White House sessions on a range of topics in freewheeling, often televised gatherings unlike many the country had ever seen. Barack Obama took a more measured approach, even though he, too, sweetened the White House visits with M&Ms candies to go.

Biden has hosted more than 100 lawmakers for a visit during his first 100 days, from powerful committee chairs to influential caucus leaders, Republicans and Democrats alike. Part get-to-know-you sessions, part strategy building, the private meetings are often seen as a bit of political theater for all sides to at least appear to be putting their best selves forward.

But unlike his immediate predecessors, Biden is a veteran of Capitol Hill, who not only knows many of the lawmakers personally, but also understands the rhythms of their workdays in Congress. Digging deep into the roster of lawmakers, he is bringing in the subcommittee chairs handling infrastructure, the former small-town mayors with executive office know-how and those who, despite years on Capitol Hill, have never seen the inner sanctum of the Oval Office.

The invitations convey his understanding of the value of sharing power, assigning prominence and tapping into the pent-up desire of even the most partisan legislators to legislate.

Sending them off with pockets full of cookies wrapped with the golden seal of the presidency doesn't hurt, either, a little chocolate chip cookie diplomacy to carry back to the Hill.

"President Biden has always believed in engaging Congress as a co-equal branch of government," said Rep. Joe Neguse, D-Colo., a rising member of party leadership, who shared his cookies with his staff. "And the proof is in the results — his agenda has moved through Congress very swiftly."

As the president rounds the 100-day milestone, the proceeds of his many hours of outreach will be put to the test as Congress considers the administration's priorities, particularly Biden's \$2.3 trillion infrastructure package.

The president was able to quickly usher passage of the massive \$1.9 trillion COVID-19 rescue, signed into law last month, but the next bills to revamp election laws, gun control and immigration will be more difficult in the narrowly divided House and Senate, with slim Democratic majorities and the need for some Republican bipartisanship.

Sen. Jon Tester, D-Mont., the chair of the Veterans Affairs Committee, was among an early group visiting the White House at the start of the administration to discuss virus aid.

The senator had never attended an Oval Office meeting, and as the group went around the room, the president "did mostly listening," Tester said.

But when it was done, "The instructions were: Get the damn thing passed."

Still, for all the overtures, the White House quickly rebuffed a group of 10 Republican senators who ventured to the White House with an alternative virus aid package the administration dismissed as insufficient.

"It's very disappointing," said Sen. Rob Portman, R-Ohio.

As the Republicans made their opening offer that day, Sen. Mitt Romney, R-Utah, even showing charts with his ideas and assessments, Portman said the president told them staff would follow up. But it turns out staffers were shaking their heads silently no, signaling the go-it-alone strategy to come.

Republican Sen. Todd Young of Indiana said the atmosphere "was friendly, it was accommodating, there was a whole lot of listening, and back-and-forth exchange. But we never heard back." He said, "That's very troubling."

The next day, the Senate Democratic leader, Chuck Schumer, announced they would move forward un-

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der the so-called budget reconciliation procedure, and the coronavirus bill was eventually approved on a straight party-line vote, all Republicans opposed.

Conspicuously absent from the invite list have been some of the top Republican leaders.

The White House considered the COVID-19 relief an emergency package, which needed to be approved swiftly, unlike the infrastructure bill that is expected to take months to bring to passage as the president reaches for bipartisanship.

Over the course of a week, Biden met with the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus and the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, and his 30-minute session with the Congressional Black Caucus stretched for two hours.

The president "knows that all politics is personal," said White House deputy press secretary Andrew Bates. "He enjoys hosting members of both parties and looks forward to holding more bipartisan meetings to find common ground."

At Monday's meeting with the former mayors and governors about his infrastructure plan, Biden opened with a direct approach about the importance of investing in the United States, particularly as the country competes with China.

"The president very much stressed that he wants to work with Republicans on this, but we are serious," said Rep. Norma Torres, D-Calif., a former mayor.

As the Republicans suggested alternatives, balking at Biden's proposal to raise the corporate tax rate from 21% to 28% to pay for it, the president gave them an assignment.

"I will wait to hear from you," Biden told the group, as Torres recalled. But he also put them on a quick timeline and said he wanted "a reasonable compromise."

And then there are the meetings that sometimes go without notice.

At the end of a Rose Garden ceremony over gun violence, as the crowd of lawmakers and families of those killed in mass shootings began to disperse, Biden quietly did a U-turn and gathered some of them inside the Oval Office, discussing gun control legislation in Congress.

"Joe Biden is nothing if not gracious, and generous with his time," said Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., who was among those in the room that afternoon, and had a cookie.

"We've known him for a lot of years. He's Joe, even though he's Mr. President."

Dispute over Russian pipeline tests Biden's Europe outreach

By MATTHEW LEE AP Diplomatic Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Pressure is growing on President Joe Biden to take action to prevent the completion of a Russian gas pipeline to Europe that many fear will give the Kremlin significant leverage over U.S. partners and allies. Yet such action could provoke an enormous rift in trans-Atlantic relations, notably with Germany, at a time when Biden has made restoring good ties with Europe a priority.

As the Nord Stream 2 pipeline nears completion, U.S. lawmakers from both parties have stepped up demands on a reluctant White House to impose new sanctions on Russian and European companies to halt the project. But prospects of that happening would seem slim: Germany continues to support the project as it steps up consumption of natural gas, and the pipeline is roughly 95% finished.

Biden has said he opposes the pipeline, which is owned by Russian state company Gazprom, with investment from several European companies. He has been keen to portray himself as tough on Russian President Vladimir Putin while being a strong supporter of Eastern European countries like Poland and Ukraine that are dead set against it as it bypasses both.

Of potentially greater concern to the U.S., the Russia-to-Germany pipeline would increase Western Europe's already heavy dependence on Russian energy while U.S.-Russian tensions are soaring over a number of issues, including Ukraine, election interference, cyber intrusions and the crackdown on opposition figure Alexei Navalny and his supporters.

At the same time, the administration is seeking broad European support, especially from Germany, the continent's economic powerhouse, for its planned withdrawal from Afghanistan, climate change measures

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and efforts to counter China's increasingly global assertiveness. It's not clear if sanctions targeting businesses from Germany and elsewhere would undermine efforts to advance those goals and repair relations that were frayed during Donald Trump's presidency.

On Wednesday, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee unanimously signed off on legislation that would require the administration to either impose sanctions on 20 companies involved in the pipeline's financing and construction or explain why they deserve exemptions. In January, the Trump administration hit several Russian firms and ships with penalties for their involvement, but Biden has not expanded the list.

The legislation was sponsored by vocal administration critic Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas. But it also won support from some of Biden's strongest Democratic foreign policy supporters in the Senate, like committee chair Bob Menendez of New Jersey, Chris Coons of Delaware and Jeanne Shaheen of New Hampshire.

"I think, right now, as we see Putin trying to eliminate his biggest opposition leader, Navalny, in prison, the best shot we can make is to stop the Nord Stream 2 pipeline, if we are going to get his attention," Shaheen said.

Democrats agreed to support the sanctions after Republicans promised to drop opposition to two of Biden's top State Department nominees. The bipartisan support suggests the administration will be hard-pressed to ignore it. Biden was already stung by criticism in February for not expanding on the Trump administration's sanctions.

"We share an overall attitude towards Nord Stream 2 with many on Capitol Hill, and that is the position that it is a bad deal," State Department spokesperson Ned Price said Thursday. "We will continue to do everything we can, including consistent with legislation that's already on the books, to oppose its construction and finalization."

But the administration has yet to take a position on the new legislation, which congressional aides on both sides of the aisle believe has a good chance of passing. It would give Biden 15 days from the date of passage to make a determination on whether to hit the 20 companies and vessels with sanctions.

The sanctions — which would apply to German, Russian, Polish and Austrian entities — would freeze their assets, make it difficult for them to do any international business and possibly affect their executives.

Even if Biden vetoes the legislation, he will face another deadline for action in mid-May when the State Department must submit to Congress an update on the administration's compliance with previous laws aimed at protecting European energy security that require sanctions on unspecified companies involved in the construction of the pipeline that bypasses both Poland and Ukraine.

On Tuesday, Chancellor Angela Merkel defended Germany's cooperation with Russia on Nord Stream 2. She noted that Russian gas already flows freely into Europe along other routes, including the existing Nord Stream 1 pipeline under the Baltic Sea to Germany.

"I would like to point out that the gas delivered through Nord Stream 2, which isn't yet flowing, is no worse than the gas from Nord Stream 1, that which flows through Ukraine, and that which comes across Turkey from Russia," Merkel said.

Summit shows Biden's big vision on fighting climate change

By MATTHEW DALY and CHRISTINA LARSON Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — What did the world learn at Joe Biden's global summit about his vision of the battle to save the world's climate?

For two days, Biden and his team of climate experts pressed his case that tackling global warming not only can avert an existential threat, but also benefit the U.S. economy — and the world's as well.

The virtual summit, based at the White House and featuring more than 40 world leaders whose views were beamed to a global online audience, offered fresh details on how the U.S. might hope to supercharge its efforts on climate while leveraging international action to spur new technologies to help save the planet.

Biden opened the conference by announcing a goal to cut up to 52% of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 — double the target set by President Barack Obama in the 2015 Paris climate accord. The 2030 goal vaults the U.S. into the top tier of countries on climate ambition.

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"This goal is eyebrow-raising, but it has to be," said Marshall Shepherd, a climate expert at the University of Georgia. "To move the needle on the climate crisis, we need bold actions like this rather than individual or incremental actions only."

While new targets from the U.S. and others got mostly positive reviews, they still fall a bit short of what some scientists say is necessary to avoid a potentially disastrous 1.5 degree Celsius rise in global temperatures.

Bill Hare, director of Climate Analytics, a climate science think tank in Berlin, said his team's calculations showed the U.S. needs to reduce emissions 57% by 2030 to stay on a 1.5 degree Celsius pathway. He calls the new target "really a major improvement," but also "not quite enough."

Still, the U.S. goal is ambitious, and reflects lessons learned, not only by Biden — Obama's vice president — but by his team of battle-tested aides, including climate envoy John Kerry and White House adviser Gina McCarthy. Both served in the Obama administration.

Biden and his team "absorbed the lessons of the Obama years," including watching the "stumbles" in climate foreign policy at a disappointing 2009 Copenhagen summit, said Hare. "What shocked me is just how fast this moved," less than 100 days after Biden took office.

The 78-year-old Biden, known as a cautious, mainstream politician during four decades in public life, as president has shown a willingness to take aggressive action on issues from virus relief to immigration.

"In so many areas, he is much bolder than Obama, right out of the gate, and that's certainly true on climate," said Nathaniel Keohane, a former Obama White House adviser who now is a senior vice president of the Environmental Defense Fund.

The message from the White House is clear, Keohane added: "The United States is ready to go all-in to beat the climate crisis."

As the conference wrapped up Friday, Biden said he has come to see the economic opportunities of the climate fight as the silver lining in a cloud that threatens the world's very future.

"My mother would always say when something very bad would happen in our family, 'Out of everything bad, Joe, something good will come,'" said Biden, whose life has repeatedly been touched by tragedy.

On climate, the good that Biden hopes will emerge is the chance to remake the global economy and produce millions of jobs in clean energy and technology that will be needed to slow global warming.

"Is there anything else you can think of that could create as many good jobs going into the middle of the 21st century?" he asked.

The climate crisis also has provided an opportunity for the U.S. to work with longtime rivals such as Russia and China. While Biden has often disagreed with Russian President Vladimir Putin, the Russian leader now is "talking about how you capture carbon from space," Biden said.

Despite their differences, "two big nations can cooperate to get something done ... that benefits everybody," Biden said.

Biden's re-entry into the Paris agreement and his decision to host the summit were welcomed by world leaders.

"I'm delighted to see that the United States is back ... in climate politics. Because there can be no doubt about the world needing your contribution if we really want to fulfill our ambitious goals," Germany Chancellor Angela Merkel told Biden.

"We are all so delighted to have the United States back" in the climate game, added South Africa's President Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa.

Even after four years of inaction on climate change under President Donald Trump, "the United States still has cachet," said Alice Hill, a senior fellow for energy and environment at the Council on Foreign Relations in Washington. She pointed to the attendance of world leaders on both friendly and otherwise chilly terms with the U.S., including China, Russia, Germany and Brazil.

Kerry, who has worked on climate issues in a long career as a senator and former secretary of state, said the next 10 years are crucial to slow global warming and "avoid the worst consequences" of the climate crisis.

"This has to be the decade of decision," Kerry said.

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But even as Biden opts to go big on climate, his plan faces obstacles, including continued resistance from congressional Republicans and the reality that businesses are struggling to create needed technology on an affordable scale.

Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell has dismissed Biden's plans, including a \$2.3 trillion infrastructure package, as costly and ineffective.

The infrastructure bill includes up to \$1 trillion in spending on clean energy and climate change, including 500,000 charging stations for electric vehicles, expansion of solar and wind power and technology to capture and store carbon pollution from coal-fired power plants. About \$174 billion would go to help put school children, commuters and truckers into electric vehicles and buses, \$50 billion to make infrastructure more resilient against volatile weather linked to climate change, and \$100 billion to update the power grid.

The administration has pitched the bill as the "American Jobs Plan," and Moody's Analytics estimates gains of about 2.7 million jobs.

Failure to adopt the package could doom Biden's commitments to cut carbon emissions in half, although officials say substantial progress can be made through administrative regulations by the Environmental Protection Agency, Transportation Department and other agencies.

The White House says officials will continue to reach out to Republicans and will remind them that the proposal's ideas are widely popular with a wide swath of Americans.

Nets back atop East after beating Celtics 109-104

By BRIAN MAHONEY AP Basketball Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — After Kyrie Irving piled up the points in two previous games against Boston, his shot wasn't there Friday night.

He made up for it with every other aspect of his game.

Irving just missed a triple-double despite an awful shooting night, Joe Harris scored 20 points and the Brooklyn Nets regained first place in the Eastern Conference with a 109-104 victory over the Celtics on Friday night.

"We know that we're not going to have it right away some games, so we've just got to battle through," Irving said.

He had torched his former team for 77 points in 67 minutes in a pair of victories this season, but this time shot just 4 for 19 and missed all six of his 3-pointers.

But he scored 15 points, including the finishing free throws with 1.6 seconds left, and added 11 assists, nine rebounds and four steals as the Nets finished a season sweep of the Celtics, just the third in their franchise history.

"He didn't have his typical scoring night, but it's few and far between that he doesn't score the ball at a prolific rate," Nets coach Steve Nash said. "He didn't, but he definitely disrupted the basketball defensively and overall he draws a lot of attention, so I thought he was great in a lot of different ways than we're accustomed to."

Jayson Tatum had 38 points and 10 rebounds but was doing it mostly alone in the first half, when he had 25 of the Celtics' 51 points.

Payton Pritchard (22 points) and Marcus Smart (19) got it going after halftime, but the Celtics couldn't overcome 19 turnovers that gave Brooklyn a whopping 32-0 advantage in fast-break points.

"Any time you turn the ball over a lot and you give a team like Brooklyn opportunities to get out in transition, get easy shots and stuff like that, it's going to be tough to win games," Pritchard said.

Both teams were without two of their three best players. Kevin Durant missed a third straight game with a bruised left thigh, remaining sidelined along with James Harden (right hamstring).

Jaylen Brown missed his second straight game with left shoulder bursitis, while Kemba Walker rested his left knee on the second night of Boston's back-to-back after beating Phoenix on Thursday.

Boston cut Brooklyn's 17-point lead to 98-95 with about 3 1/2 minutes left after consecutive 3-pointers by Pritchard and Tatum. But Harris answered with a 3-pointer and Irving passed ahead to Jeff Green for

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a dunk to quickly push the lead back to eight.

Green had 19 points for Brooklyn, which won for only the third time in six games. But that's good enough to move back ahead of idle Philadelphia, which has dropped three in a row.

Brooklyn piled up a 17-0 advantage in fast-break points in the first half and threatened to blow it open but couldn't contain Tatum, whose 3-pointer with 3.4 seconds left capped his 16-point second quarter and cut it to 60-51 at halftime.

The Nets got their running game going again, with Harris making consecutive 3-pointers off passes from Irving to cap a 10-0 spurt that pushed the lead to 86-70 in the final minute of the third.

TIP-INS

Celtics: Evan Fournier returned after missing nine straight games because of health and safety protocol reasons but missed all seven shots. ... Brown's injury isn't severe but he doesn't have full range of motion, coach Brad Stevens said, adding the guard would be day to day.

Nets: Mike James scored eight points after signing a 10-day contract Friday. The nine-year pro has played mostly in Europe and spent the last two seasons with CSKA Moscow and averaged 17.8 points in 41 games this season. ... Nash said it was possible but probably not likely that Tyler Johnson (right knee soreness) could return Sunday.

NO REST — OR MAYBE SOME — FOR THE WEARY

With Durant and Harden injured, Irving had played more than 37 minutes in three straight games, including on back-to-back nights Tuesday and Wednesday.

"I'm not comfortable with it, but I don't know what choice we have," Nash said. "We're limited on our bodies, we're limited on our ballhandlers. So we're in that difficult position right now."

The Celtics are in a similar spot with Tatum, but Stevens said he will get a day of rest in the near future.

SEASON SWEEPS

The Nets' other sweeps of Boston came in 1993-94 and 1996-97. They went 4-0 in both seasons.

UP NEXT

Celtics: At Charlotte on Sunday.

Nets: Host Phoenix on Sunday.

7 deputies on leave after fatal shooting of Black man

By ALLEN G. BREED and JONATHAN DREW Associated Press

ELIZABETH CITY, N.C. (AP) — Seven North Carolina deputies have been placed on leave in the aftermath of a Black man being shot and killed by members of their department serving drug-related search and arrest warrants, authorities said Friday.

The disclosure comes as calls increase for the release of deputy body camera footage amid signs, including emergency scanner traffic, that Andrew Brown Jr. was shot in the back and killed as he was trying to drive away.

Pasquotank County Sheriff's Office Maj. Aaron Wallio confirmed the number of deputies on leave due to the shooting in an email Friday. Sheriff Tommy Wooten II has previously said that multiple deputies fired shots and were placed on leave after Brown was killed Wednesday morning.

Wallio's email also said that another three deputies have recently resigned, but he later clarified that the resignations were unrelated to the shooting. He said the department has about 55 total sworn deputies.

Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper joined calls for the swift release of the body camera footage, saying that initial reports of what happened "are tragic and extremely concerning."

"The body camera footage should be made public as quickly as possible," he said in a tweet Friday night.

Earlier in the day, the City Council in Elizabeth City unanimously voted to send a letter to the sheriff, local prosecutor and State Bureau of Investigation demanding release of body camera footage. The measure also directed city staff to petition a local court to release the footage if the sheriff denies the council's request. Wooten has confirmed that at least one deputy was wearing an active body camera but hasn't given a timetable for releasing it.

"Doing nothing is not an option," said Councilman Michael Brooks.

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The council's measure isn't binding on the Pasquotank County Sheriff's Office, which is a separate entity from city government. In North Carolina, a judge must generally sign off on release of body camera footage, but the law says anyone can file a petition in court seeking its release. A coalition of news outlets including The Associated Press also filed a petition Friday asking a local judge to release the footage.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki said Friday that President Joe Biden is aware of Brown's death, but that Biden would likely leave decisions over the timetable for releasing body camera footage to local authorities.

"Obviously, the loss of life is a tragedy and obviously we're thinking of the family members and the community," Psaki said at her daily briefing.

Wooten has said deputies from his department including a tactical team were attempting to serve drug-related search and arrest warrants when Brown was shot, but he has offered few other details. Nearby Dare County had issued two arrest warrants for Brown on drug-related charges including possession with intent to sell cocaine. Brown, 42, had a criminal history dating back to the 1990s, including past drug convictions.

Recordings of scanner traffic compiled by broadcastify.com from the morning of the shooting include emergency personnel indicating that Brown was shot in the back. An eyewitness has said that deputies fired shots at Brown as he tried to drive away, and a car authorities removed from the scene appeared to have multiple bullet holes and a shattered back window.

"We are responding. Law enforcement on scene advises shots fired, need EMS," says one woman, who refers to the address where the warrant was served.

"EMS has got one male 42 years of age, gunshot to the back. We do have viable pulse at this time," said a male voice. Someone then said that first responders were trying to resuscitate the man.

The sheriff, district attorney and state medical examiner didn't immediately respond to emails Friday asking for comment on the scanner traffic. The State Bureau of Investigation, which is looking into the shooting, declined to comment.

WAVY-TV first reported on Friday the number of deputies who were on leave or had resigned.

During demonstrations Thursday night, protesters questioned why deputies opened fire in a residential area down the street from an elementary school. Brown's car came to rest in front of a house near yellow road signs marking the approach to the school.

"That means they fired a shot in a school zone," Quentin Jackson, regional director for the National Black Caucus of Local Elected Officials, said while addressing a group of fellow demonstrators.

People in the crowd nodded and shouted, "Yeah." One man yelled, "And they fired into a moving vehicle."

"When does this stop?" Jackson asked. "When does it stop?"

On Wednesday night, hours after the shooting, Mike Gordon, who lives in the house where Brown's car hit a tree and came to a stop, showed a reporter a bullet hole next to his front door that went through an antique wall clock and all the way into his kitchen.

"I'm happy and thankful to the Lord that my wife and I wasn't home," he said.

Still, Gordon, a former military police officer, said he's thankful for the work law enforcement does, and he hoped people would reserve judgment until the facts come out.

"You never know what had happened or what went wrong," he said. "But it doesn't matter now. The young man is gone."

In court, Ghislaine Maxwell pleads not guilty to new charges

By LARRY NEUMEISTER and TOM HAYS Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Ghislaine Maxwell faced her trial judge in person for the first time Friday as lawyers squabbled over exactly when she should be tried on sex trafficking charges that allege that she procured teenage girls for Jeffrey Epstein to sexually abuse at his posh residences.

Maxwell, a British socialite and one-time girlfriend of the financier, pleaded not guilty to sex trafficking conspiracy and an additional sex trafficking charge that were added in a rewritten indictment released last month by a Manhattan federal court grand jury. The new indictment stretched the timespan of the

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charges from three years to a decade.

Wearing a prison blue short-sleeved smock, Maxwell sat with her lawyers before U.S. District Judge Alison J. Nathan took the bench in a courtroom where everyone wore masks and sat apart from one another to protect against the coronavirus. Members of the media were in the jury box.

Maxwell answered "Yes, your honor" when she was asked if she had seen the indictment and "I have, your honor" when asked if she had ample opportunity to review it.

Her lawyers maintain they need months of additional preparation because of the new charges, making it impossible to keep a July 12 trial date. Prosecutors have said the new charges should not require substantial additional work because they add a single victim to the three already described in the indictment.

The judge didn't make an immediate decision on a possible new date for the trial, but told lawyers she wants to avoid a long delay.

As Maxwell was led out of court by deputy marshals, she kissed two of her lawyers on the cheek through her mask and waved to two spectators, including her sister.

Epstein and Maxwell accuser Danielle Bensky, a client of high-profile attorney David Boies, sat among several spectators directly behind the black-haired Maxwell. Her view of the defendant was partially obscured by a man whose black jacket was emblazoned with "US Marshal."

"I think it's incredibly vindicating to see her sit there," Bensky said outside court. "I do think that it's hard to do and it's painful, but it's good too."

The Associated Press does not name victims of sexual assault unless they come forward publicly, as Bensky has. Her accusations are not part of the indictment.

Outside court, Boies said he hoped to have at least one of over a dozen Epstein accusers he represents at every court hearing involving Maxwell prior to her trial. One of his clients is among the four women whose claims are outlined in the indictment.

"I think it's important they have access to what's going on and that the court knows this case is important to them," he said.

Epstein took his own life at a Manhattan federal jail in August 2019 while awaiting a sex-trafficking trial.

Maxwell, 59, has been in custody at a federal lockup in Brooklyn since her arrest last July at a \$1 million New Hampshire estate where her lawyers say she went to live to avoid the spotlight of media attention and to remain safe from threats. Prosecutors, though, say she took steps to hide her whereabouts and movements.

Outside court, Maxwell attorney David Markus called his client "courageous and tough."

He said it was difficult for Maxwell's sister, Isabel, to be in court as well.

The lawyer said two of Maxwell's brothers wanted to be there, too, but were unable to come from England because of COVID-19 restrictions.

"But they are behind their sister 1,000%," he said.

Maxwell has failed three times in her bid to be granted bail, despite offering a \$28.5 million package and agreeing to live with electronic monitoring and armed guards who would ensure she does not leave a New York City residence. The U.S. citizen also has offered to give up citizenship in the United Kingdom and France. A bail appeal hearing is scheduled next week before the 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

In court documents, prosecutors say Maxwell recruited at least three teenage girls, including a 14-year-old, between 1994 and 1997 for Epstein to sexually abuse. The superseding indictment says another teenage girl was recruited in the early 2000s, when she was 14. The indictment alleges Maxwell sometimes joined in the abuse.

A lawyer for Maxwell requested the in-person arraignment Friday, citing "media coverage" and a "debacle" that occurred during a remote hearing in a related civil case before another judge, when members of the public clogged up a line provided by the court for people outside the courthouse to listen in.

No sign of Indonesian sub as air dwindles, search resumes

By EDNA TARIGAN and NINIEK KARMINI Associated Press

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JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — The oxygen supply for the 53 crew members of an Indonesian submarine missing in waters off Bali is believed to have run out early Saturday with no sign of the vessel while the search resumed, bolstered by the arrival of a sonar-equipped Australian warship.

The KRI Nanggala 402 went missing after its last reported dive Wednesday off the resort island, and concern is mounting it may have sunk too deep to reach or recover in time. The navy chief said the submarine was expected to run out of oxygen early Saturday morning.

"We will maximize the effort today, until the time limit tomorrow at 3 a.m.," military spokesperson Maj. Gen. Achmad Riad told reporters Friday. A news conference was scheduled for later Saturday morning.

There have been no signs of life from the submarine, but family members held out hope that the massive search effort would find the vessel in time.

"The family is in a good condition and keeps praying," said Ratih Wardhani, the sister of 49-year-old crewman Wisnu Subiyantoro. "We are optimistic that the Nanggala can be rescued with all the crew."

Twenty-four Indonesian ships and a patrol plane were mobilized for the search, focusing on the area where an oil slick was found after the submarine disappeared during an exercise. Rescuers made similar massive searches in the previous two days.

An American reconnaissance plane, P-8 Poseidon, was expected to join the search Saturday and a second Australian ship was due soon.

"These two Australian ships will help expand the search area and extend the duration of the search effort," Australian Navy Rear Adm. Mark Hammond said.

Singaporean and Malaysian rescue ships were also expected in the coming days.

Indonesian President Joko Widodo canceled a visit to Banyuwangi port, where some rescue ships left earlier, to prepare for a weekend regional summit in Jakarta, officials said. He asked Indonesians to pray for the crew's safe return, while ordering all-out efforts to locate the submarine.

"Our main priority is the safety of the 53 crew members," Widodo said in a televised address on Thursday. "To the family of the crew members, I can understand your feelings and we are doing our best to save all crew members on board."

There's been no conclusive evidence the oil slick was from the sub. Navy Chief of Staff Adm. Yudo Margono said oil could have spilled from a crack in the submarine's fuel tank or the crew could have released fuel and fluids to reduce the vessel's weight so it could surface.

Margono said an unidentified object exhibiting high magnetism was located at a depth of 50 to 100 meters (165 to 330 feet) and officials held out hope it is the submarine.

The navy said it believes, however, that the submarine sank to a depth of 600-700 meters (2,000-2,300 feet), much deeper than its collapse depth, at which water pressure would be greater than the hull could withstand. The vessel's collapse depth was estimated at 200 meters (655 feet) by a South Korean company that refitted the vessel in 2009-2012.

The cause of the disappearance is still uncertain. The navy has said an electrical failure could have left the submarine unable to execute emergency procedures to resurface.

Submarine accidents are often disastrous.

In 2000, the Russian nuclear submarine Kursk suffered internal explosions and sank during maneuvers in the Barents Sea. Most of its 118 crew died instantly, but 23 men fled to a rear compartment before they later died, mainly of suffocation. In November 2017, an Argentine submarine went missing with 44 crew members in the South Atlantic, almost a year before its wreckage was found at a depth of 800 meters (2,625 feet).

But in 2005, seven men aboard a Russian mini-sub were rescued nearly three days after their vessel was snagged by fishing nets and cables in the Pacific Ocean. They had only six hours of oxygen left before reaching the surface.

The German-built diesel-powered KRI Nanggala 402 has been in service in Indonesia since 1981 and was carrying 49 crew members and three gunners as well as its commander, the Indonesian Defense Ministry said.

Indonesia, the world's largest archipelago nation with more than 17,000 islands, has faced growing chal-

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allenges to its maritime claims in recent years, including numerous incidents involving Chinese vessels near the Natuna islands.

Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Sunday, April 25, the 115th day of 2021. There are 250 days left in the year.

Today's Highlights in History:

On April 25, 1507, a world map produced by German cartographer Martin Waldseemüller contained the first recorded use of the term "America," in honor of Italian navigator Amerigo Vespucci (veh-SPOO'-chee).

On this date:

In 1859, ground was broken for the Suez Canal.

In 1862, during the Civil War, a Union fleet commanded by Flag Officer David G. Farragut captured the city of New Orleans.

In 1898, the United States Congress declared war on Spain; the 10-week conflict resulted in an American victory.

In 1915, during World War I, Allied soldiers invaded the Gallipoli (guh-LIH'-puh-lee) Peninsula in an unsuccessful attempt to take the Ottoman Empire out of the war.

In 1917, legendary jazz singer Ella Fitzgerald was born in Newport News, Virginia.

In 1944, the United Negro College Fund was founded.

In 1945, during World War II, U.S. and Soviet forces linked up on the Elbe (EL'-beh) River, a meeting that dramatized the collapse of Nazi Germany's defenses. Delegates from some 50 countries gathered in San Francisco to organize the United Nations.

In 1959, the St. Lawrence Seaway opened to shipping.

In 1990, the Hubble Space Telescope was deployed in orbit from the space shuttle Discovery. (It was later discovered that the telescope's primary mirror was flawed, requiring the installation of corrective components to achieve optimal focus.)

In 1992, Islamic forces in Afghanistan took control of most of the capital of Kabul following the collapse of the Communist government.

In 2002, Lisa "Left Eye" Lopes of the Grammy-winning trio TLC died in an SUV crash in Honduras; she was 30.

In 2019, former Vice President Joe Biden entered the Democratic presidential race, declaring the fight against Donald Trump to be a "battle for the soul of this nation."

Ten years ago: President Bashar Assad of Syria sent the military into the southern city of Daraa, where an anti-government uprising had begun the previous month.

Five years ago: The city of Cleveland reached a \$6 million settlement in a lawsuit over the death of Tamir Rice, a 12-year-old Black boy shot by a white police officer while playing with a pellet gun outside a recreation center. A panel of the 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Manhattan ruled 2-to-1 that New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady had to serve a four-game "Deflategate" suspension imposed by the NFL, overturning a lower judge and siding with the league in a battle with the players union. (Brady ended up serving the suspension.)

One year ago: As the global death toll from the coronavirus surpassed 200,000, countries took cautious steps toward easing lockdowns. The U.K. became the fifth country in the world to report 20,000 virus-related deaths.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Al Pacino is 81. Ballroom dance judge Len Goodman (TV: "Dancing with the Stars") is 77. Rock musician Stu Cook (Creedence Clearwater Revival) is 76. Singer Bjorn Ulvaeus (BYORN ul-VAY'-us) (ABBA) is 76. Actor Talia Shire is 76. Actor Jeffrey DeMunn is 74. Rock musician Steve Ferrone (Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers) is 71. Country singer-songwriter Rob Crosby is 67. Actor Hank Azaria is 57. Rock singer Andy Bell (Erasure) is 57. Rock musician Eric Avery is 56. Country musician Rory Feek (Joey

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+ Rory) is 56. TV personality Jane Clayson is 54. Actor Renee Zellweger is 52. Actor Gina Torres is 52. Actor Jason Lee is 51. Actor Jason Wiles is 51. Actor Emily Bergl is 46. Actor Jonathan Angel is 44. Actor Marguerite Moreau is 44. Singer Jacob Underwood is 41. Actor Melonie Diaz is 37. Actor Sara Paxton is 33. Actor/producer Allisyn Snyder is 25. Actor Jayden Rey is 12.