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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.



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, May 9, 2021

Conde Worship 9:00 AM
Groton Worship with special music by Sunday School 11:00 AM

Monday, May 10, 2021

PEO - outside group 7:30 PM

Tuesday, May 11, 2021

Bible Study 10:00 AM

Sunday, May 16, 2021

Ascension Sunday
Newsletter Items Due
Conde Worship 9:00 AM
Groton Worship 11:00 AM

Emmanuel Lutheran Church

Groton

Sunday, May 9

9am Worship/Senior milestones/Faith Forever
Scholarship awards
Happy Mother's Day!!

Monday, May 10

6:30 a.m.: Bible Study

Tuesday, May 11

7 p.m.: Council Meeting

Wednesday, May 12

6 p.m.: Final Confirmation Class

Saturday, May 15

10 a.m.: Worship at Rosewood Court

Sunday, May 16

9 a.m.: Worship with Communion

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, May 9, 2021

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

Sunday, May 16, 2021

Bible Study, 8 a.m.
Worship with Holy Communion
St. John's Worship, 9 a.m.
Zion Lutheran Worship 11 a.m.

Heaven Bound Ministries

Pierpont

Buffalo Lake Lutheran

Rural Eden

Sunday, May 9: Worship at Buffalo Lake 10:30 a.m.

Saturday, May 15: Worship at Pierpont, 5:30 p.m.

Sunday, May 16: 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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Saving a life
from a potential catastrophe
EVERY 10 MINUTES!

I live
alone

but I'm never alone.
I have **Life Alert**®.

One press of a button
sends help fast, 24/7,
even when you
can't reach a phone.



Life Alert®



AS SEEN ON
TV

For a **FREE** brochure call:

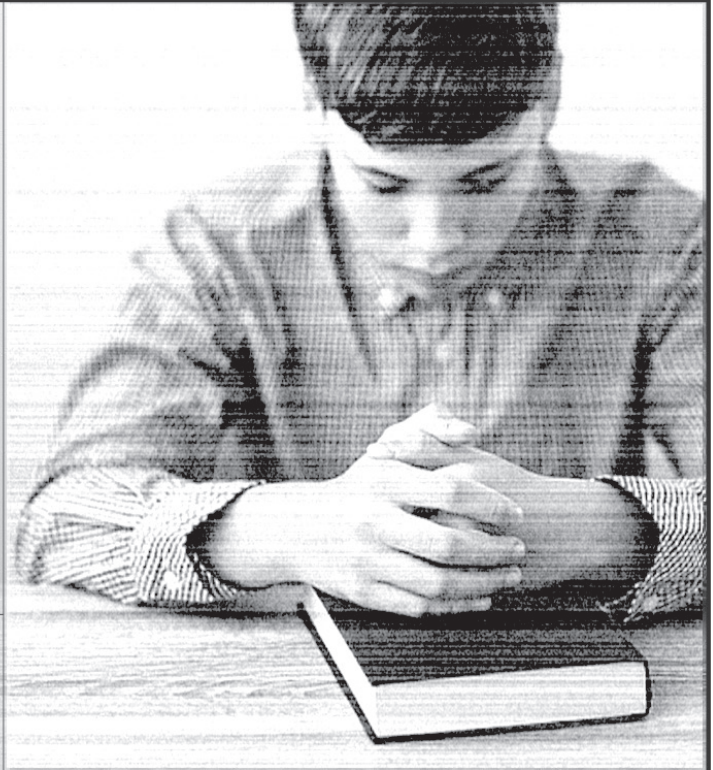
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THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

...From childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

2 TIMOTHY 3:15



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BIBLE TRIVIA

by Wilson Casey

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

2. What businesswoman from Thyatira opened her home to Paul and saints after her conversion? *Rachel, Keturah, Lydia, Shiphrah*

3. Jesus said, "For where your treasure is, there will your ___ be also"? *Love, Heart, Faith, Friends*

4. From 2 Samuel 18, whose hair became tangled in a terebinth tree? *Samson, Herod, Absalom, Joab*

5. On the outskirts of what city did Jesus meet Zacchaeus? *Smyrna, Tarsus, Jericho, Antioch*

6. From 2 Samuel 14, what was the name of Absalom's daughter? *Ruth, Tamar, Miriam, Sarah*

ANSWERS: 1) Neither; 2) Lydia; 3) Heart (Matthew 6:21, Luke 12:34); 4) Absalom; 5) Jericho; 6) Tamar

Comments? More Trivia? Gift ideas? Visit www.TriviaGuy.com

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New Orleans Bread Pudding

2 (4-serving) packages sugar-free vanilla cook-and-serve pudding mix

4 cups skim milk

1 teaspoon coconut extract

1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg

8 slices reduced-calorie French or white bread, torn into pieces

1/2 cup raisins

2 tablespoons flaked coconut

2 tablespoons chopped pecans

1 teaspoon rum extract

2 teaspoons reduced-calorie margarine

1. Preheat oven to 360 F. Spray an 8-by-8-inch baking dish with butter-flavored cooking spray.

2. In a large skillet, combine 1 package dry pudding mix and 2 1/2 cups skim milk. Cook over medium heat until mixture starts to boil, stirring constantly with a wire whisk. Remove from heat. Stir in coconut extract and nutmeg. Add bread pieces, raisins, coconut and pecans. Mix gently to combine.

3. Pour mixture into prepared baking dish. Bake for 30 to 35 minutes. Place baking dish on a wire rack while preparing sauce.

4. In a medium saucepan, combine remaining package of dry pudding mix and remaining 1 1/2 cups skim milk. Cook over medium heat until mixture thickens and starts to boil, stirring constantly with a wire whisk. Remove from heat. Stir in rum extract and margarine.

5. Cut bread pudding into 6 pieces. For each serving, place a serving of bread pudding on a dessert plate and spoon about 1/4 cup warm rum sauce over top.

* Each serving equals: 211 calories, 3g fat, 10g protein, 36g carb., 652mg sodium, 1g fiber; Diabetic Exchanges: 1 Starch, 1 Skim Milk, 1 Fruit, 1/2 Fat.

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DR. HANS ZARKOV

ONE OF THE MOST BRILLIANT SCIENTISTS THE WORLD HAS EVER KNOWN... AN INVALUABLE ALLY IN THE FIGHT AGAINST MING.

ZASK!

FLASH GORDON

5-2
By JIM KEEFE

ARRIVING AT THE ARBORIAN SHIP'S LAST RECORDED POSITION.

CHOMOMATHA...

WHA...?

CHOMOMATHA.

IT MEANS "GODDESS OF THE SKY".

IT IS MY PEOPLE'S NAME FOR THIS MOUNTAIN.

FLASH...

I'M READING A FAINT SIGNAL, BUT VISIBILITY IS LOW. NO SIGHTING YET.

OPEN THE PAYLOAD BAY DOORS. I'LL TAKE MY MEN AND START CANVASSING THE AREA.

I DON'T KNOW IF THAT'S A WISE IDEA, VULTAN. THE ARBORIAN CRAFT REPORTED BEING SURROUNDED BEFORE GOING DOWN.

THERE COULD BE ENEMY SHIPS OUT THERE GUNNING FOR US.

HAH... LET THEM TRY! THERE'S NOT A SHIP MADE THAT CAN OUTMANEUVER A HAWKMAN IN THIS TERRAIN!

TO BE CONT'D~

Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS

IT'S TRUE THAT YOU'LL ONLY PLAY GOLF AS WELL AS YOU GRIP THE CLUB.

TOP PRIORITY IS "MARRYING" YOUR HANDS SO THAT THEY WORK AS A SINGLE UNIT DURING THE ACTION.

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I ACHIEVE THAT BY INTERLOCKING, AS SHOWN HERE. THE MORE POPULAR OVERLAPPING TECHNIQUE ACHIEVES THE SAME GOAL.

USE ONE OR THE OTHER TO TIE YOUR HANDS TOGETHER.

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There's No Such Thing as 'Cure' for Autism

DEAR DR. ROACH: A friend took her autistic son to a clinic in Mexico where he was fed a bleach solution that was supposed to cure his autism, but instead it made him very sick. He was deeply distressed and regressed in his behavior, and there was nothing my friend could do because in Mexico these kinds of clinics are allowed to operate with impunity. Isn't there some way to stop this kind of thing? -- P.P.L.

ANSWER: Before I get into why this story makes me both sad and angry, I want to address autism. Autism is an increasingly diagnosed condition that includes difficulty with social interactions, stereotyped repetitive movements

and delayed language skills, although there is a subset of people with autism with no language delay. It's absolutely critical to recognize that autism is a spectrum condition, ranging from people with profound disabilities to those who are so mildly affected that the diagnosis is very subtle. Correct diagnosis is complicated, even for an expert. Intellectual abilities in autism range from severe cognitive impairment to far above-normal intelligence. As such, the proper medical care of a person with autism depends on his or her unique situation.

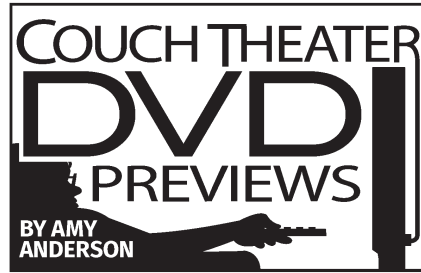
Although most people on the autism spectrum need some extra empathy and understanding in order to have the best possible life, people with autism do not need to be "cured." There is no "cure" for autism, so when you hear a professed "cure," you should be deeply suspicious.

In the case of the bleach solution, it is sadly not just in Mexico where this happens. The Food and Drug Administration had to warn consumers against the use of a product called "miracle mineral solution," "chlorine dioxide" and other names. It is hard for me to believe the FDA has to warn people not to drink (or make your child drink) a powerful bleaching agent, but there are increasing reports of its use. It causes damage to the intestines, as you correctly note, but may also cause liver failure, nausea and vomiting, and dehydration. There is no evidence that this "treatment" is effective for any condition, even though it is marketed for cancer and HIV as well as autism. This is what makes me angry: I cannot imagine a crime much worse than profiting off of a treatment known to be both dangerous and ineffective.

What makes me sad is that I can empathize with parents who have a child with autism who want their child to be more like other children, more "normal." It takes time to come to grips with the fact that your child is not like others, but that he or she is a unique person who should be loved and accepted for who he or she is. That means finding creative ways to really help your child. There is a wide range of appropriate treatments for people with autism, preferably considered as early as possible, which is why it is so important to make the correct diagnosis quickly in a child with autism.

DR. ROACH WRITES: After my recent column on mercury, a toxicologist wrote to remind me that metallic mercury can be absorbed through the skin and thus mercury, such as from a broken thermometer, should never be played with and should be properly disposed of.

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.



We've just finished up Mother's Day, the annual celebration of those wonderful souls we call Mom — the givers of warm hugs, whose kisses cure ouchies and who are always there with love, a shoulder to cry on and maybe a sandwich. Ain't she grand? Well, not always.

Just because a woman gives birth, it doesn't mean she gives anything else. This is what got me thinking about Anne Ramsey, the unforgettable actress who starred as TWO terrible mothers: Mrs. Lift, the Momma in **Throw Momma From the Train**, where Danny DeVito and Billy Crystal play two men who strike a Hitchcockian deal to murder one another's antagonists. The other role? The iconic Mama Fratelli in "The Goonies." Here are eight more actresses and the decidedly nonmaternal characters they played:

Rhea Perlman in **Matilda**: A precocious child with telekinetic powers? You'd think mom would be thrilled, but Zinnia Wormword, Matilda's mother, is obsessed with television, bingo and not understanding the special qualities of her daughter.

Faye Dunaway in **Mommie Dearest** — Based on autobiographical account from Christina Crawford, we are treated to all the emotionally scarring behavior doled out by a mentally ill Joan Crawford, including a beating for the use of wire hangers to hang pricey dresses.

Kathleen Turner in **Serial Mom** — Speaking of rigid expectations, how about a woman who, despite coming off as the perfect housewife and moth-

er, exacts the worst of consequences for what she deems bad behavior: She'll kill ya.

Angela Lansbury in **The Manchurian Candidate** — Some mothers are bossy, but Eleanor Iselin uses her brainwashed son as an assassin to further her own diabolical plan to have her husband nominated for the presidency.

Mo'Nique in **Precious** — The ways in which Mary are cruel know no bounds — her abuse is physical, emotional, mental, raw, and it's a miracle that Precious survives it.

Jennifer Coolidge in **American Pie** — Best known as Stifler's mom, this buxom beauty makes a man out of one of her son's friends, who have made a pledge to lose their virginity by the prom.



Paramount Pictures

Faye Dunaway in "Mommie Dearest"

Anne Bancroft in **The Graduate** — What to do when your mom has better lingerie and won't share her lover who is more age-appropriate for you? This is the dilemma of Elaine, whose mother seduces a new college grad to distract from her loveless marriage.

Shirley MacLaine in **Postcards from the Edge** — A drug-addicted actress finishes up rehab and must live with a responsible adult in order to avoid further consequences. Too bad Mom is competitive, loud and sucks all the air out of the room. Based on a semi-autobiographic screenplay by actress Carrie Fisher about her relationship with Debbie Reynolds.

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1. Who released "Gypsys, Tramps & Thieves"?
2. Which group had a hit with "Ain't No Woman (Like the One I've Got)"?
3. Who wrote and released "Superfly"?
4. Two versions of "Shambala" were released just one week apart in 1973. Who did them?
5. Name the song that contains this lyric: "Love is what it does and ours is doing nothing, But all the time we spent, It must be good for something."

Answers

1. Cher, in 1971. The original title was "Gypsys, Tramps and White Trash" until cooler heads prevailed.
2. The Four Tops, in 1973. It had been previously released in 1972 by Hamilton, Joe Frank & Reynolds, best known for "Don't Pull Your Love."

3. Curtis Mayfield, on his soundtrack album for the film of the same name. Despite the movie tie-in, the song only reached No. 8 on the Billboard chart.

4. B.W. ("Buckwheat") Stevenson and Three Dog Night. Shambala is many things: a mythical Himalayan kingdom, a roller coaster, a Tanzanian language and a music festival.

5. "Wait for Me," by Hall and Oates, 1979. Daryl Hall says he wrote the song to try to hold on to someone at the end of a relationship. It worked.

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Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps



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GRIN and BEAR IT ^{by Wagner}

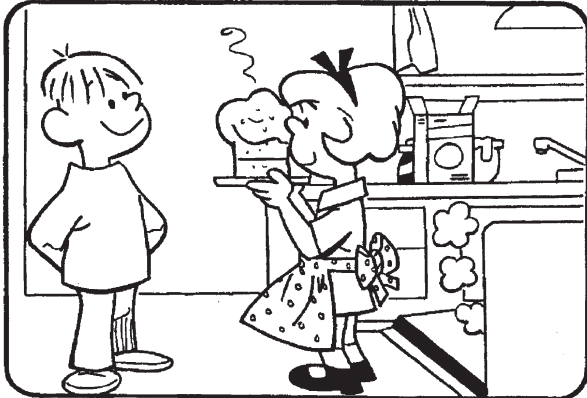


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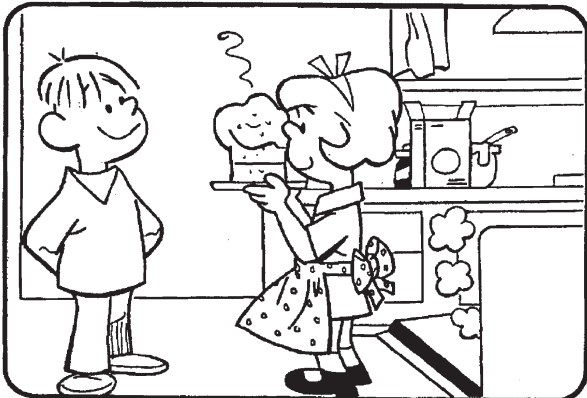
"I believe our batting averages are ample proof that we use no performance enhancement drugs!"

HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



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Differences: 1. Spoon handle is added. 2. Curtain is wider. 3. Box design is different. 4. Faucet is missing. 5. Bow is different. 6. V-neck is added.



- C.S.R. in Florida sends this reminder: Pull out the plugs on toasters, microwaves, etc. Appliances still draw a bit of power when not in use but plugged in.

- Fasten buttons, zippers and other closures before laundering a garment. This is especially important for any item that includes a hook-and-loop closure. The hooks will catch on other garments, and best case will be filled with lint. Worst case: They can tear at the threads of other items of clothing.

- If you have a bunch of your family's historical documents, make sure you scan them and preserve them for future generations. It's always nice to forward copies to relatives — you never know when someone will get involved in genealogy and really want to see those birth records, baptism cer-

tificates and baby photos.

- You can sharpen knitting needles with a pencil sharpener. You also can use an emery board. Sharp needles work best!

- “If you have two pairs of similar slacks — one navy and one black — you can put a safety pin through the tag on one of them so you can tell them apart. I have a pin in the navy slacks. They really do look similar until you're out in the light.” — *T.L. in Virginia*

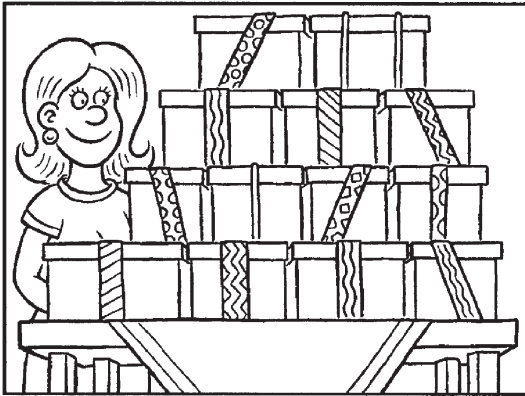
- Make chopping walnuts easier: Put some in a bowl, and nest another bowl into it, then rock the top bowl back and forth to crush the walnuts.

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

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SPOT THE BOXES! The mother pictured here has received a table full of presents. Can you spot which two boxes are exactly alike?
Bottom row, third from left and second row from top on the left.

RHYMING RIDDLE! What am I? Try to figure out the answer to this classic stumper:
The beginning of eternity, The end of time and space, The beginning of every end,
The end of every place. The letter "E."

A BLOCK PARTY FOR MOM! The stack of blocks pictured here spells out eight words. Seven of the words have letters missing. These letters are either "M" or "O." Below are hints to help you complete the spelling of these words.

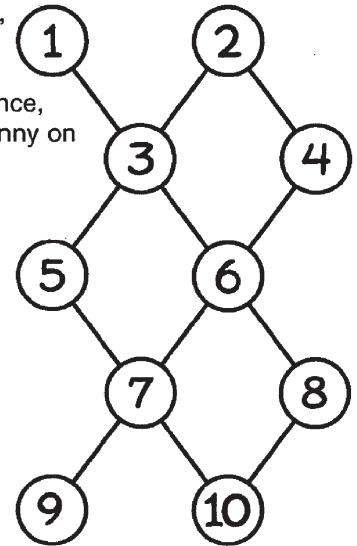
1. Today's her day.
2. A Spanish friend.
3. A jazz band.
4. Short notes.
5. Tall grass.
6. Separators.
7. Not rare.
8. Rainy season.

1. Mom. 2. Amigo. 3. Combo. 4. Memos. 5. Bamboo. 6. Commas. 7. Common. 8. Monsoon.

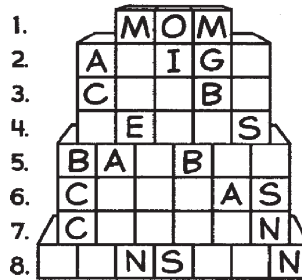
Junior Whirl

by Charles Barry Townsend

A SWITCH IN TIME! Place two pennies on circles 1 and 2 and two dimes on circles 9 and 10. Your job is to make them change places in no more than 18 moves. The coins can be moved, one at a time, along the lines that connect the circles. As an example, you could move the penny on circle 1 to circle 3, 6 or 8 during one move. At no time can a penny and a dime be on the same line at the same time. For instance, after a move you could not have a penny on circle 1 and a dime on circle 8.



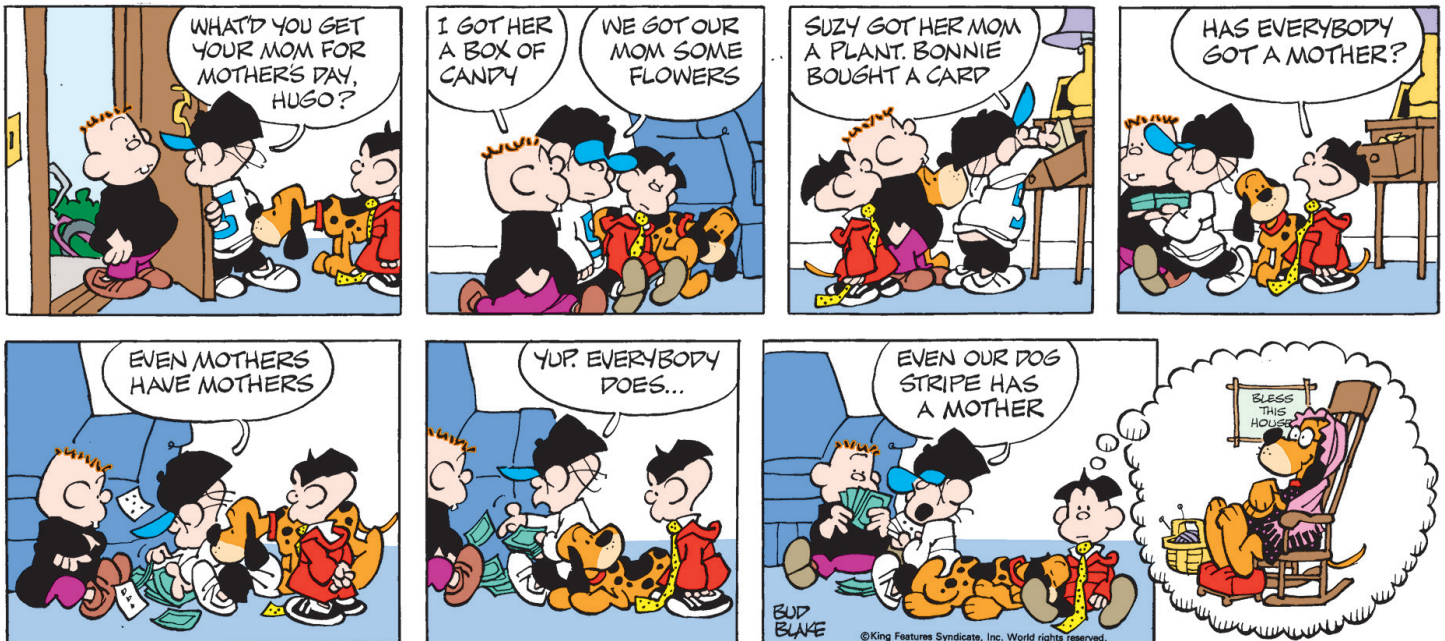
Move 2-3, 9-4, 10-7, 3-8, 4-2, 7-5, 8-6, 5-10, 6-9, 2-5, 1-6, 6-4, 5-3, 10-8, 4-7, 3-2, 8-1, 7-10.



Illustrated by David Coulson

TIGER

by BUD BLAKE



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King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Borscht veggie
- 5 Nourished
- 8 Great Lakes fish
- 12 Choir voice
- 13 "— been real"
- 14 Plane-related
- 15 Pear variety
- 17 Fury
- 18 Away from WSW
- 19 Mine yield
- 20 Say
- 21 Snoop
- 22 Upscale auto
- 23 Golf great Sam
- 26 Husband of Eurydice
- 30 Level

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			

- 31 Genetic letters
- 32 Sicilian peak
- 33 New Mexico's capital
- 35 Director DeMille
- 36 "Nasty!"
- 37 Cowboy's sweetie
- 38 Brag
- 41 Gaiety
- 42 Mauna —
- 45 Pac-12 sch.
- 46 Cocktails garnished with olives
- 48 Avoid
- 49 Ostrich's kin
- 50 Sultry Horne
- 51 Male turkeys
- 52 — Moines
- 53 Retain
- 8 Sideways somersault
- 9 Miami team
- 10 Desire
- 11 Afrikaner
- 16 Byron or Tennyson
- 20 Strike caller
- 21 Devoted supporters
- 22 Bikini top
- 23 Rds.
- 24 Actress Long
- 25 Still, in verse
- 26 Small bill
- 27 List-ending abbr.
- 28 Half of bi-
- 29 Bando of baseball
- 31 "Bobby" subj.
- 34 Do something
- 35 Quitter's word
- 37 Mentors
- 38 Small statue
- 39 Twice cuatro
- 40 Grad
- 41 Notoriety
- 42 Leg joint
- 43 Aachen article
- 44 Now, on a memo
- 46 Club —
- 47 Sort

DOWN

- 1 Innocent one
- 2 Flair
- 3 French 101 verb
- 4 Preschooler
- 5 Red-hot
- 6 Diminutive suffix
- 7 "Spring ahead" hrs.

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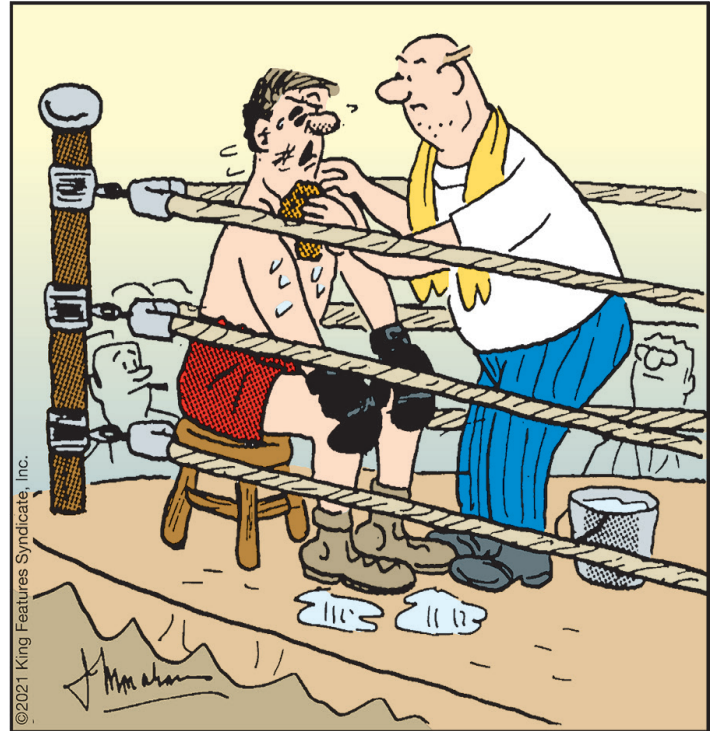
— King Crossword —

Answers

Solution time: 23 mins.

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

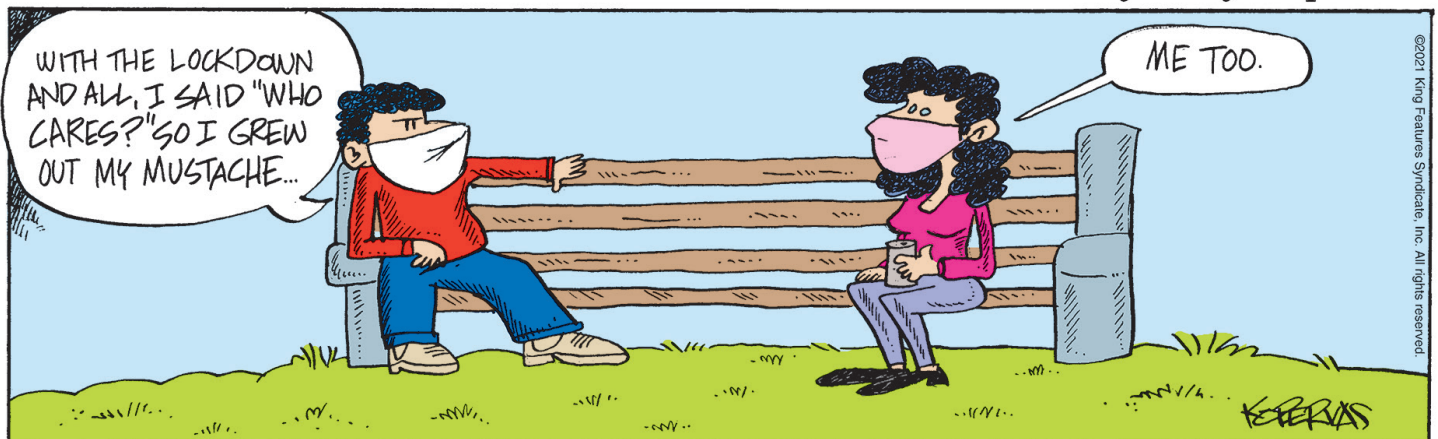
LAFF - A - DAY



"Stop telling me to hit him back — that's what's making him mad!"

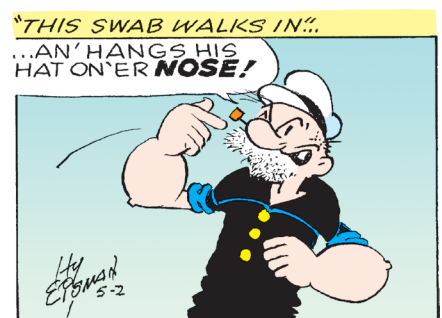
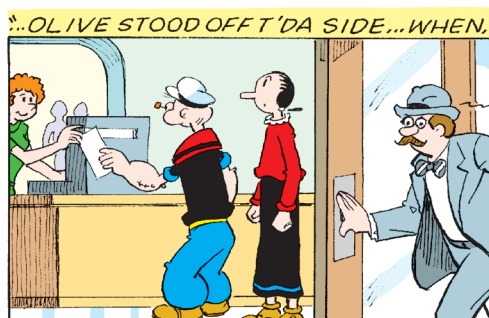
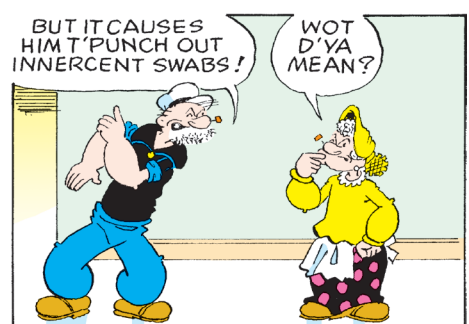
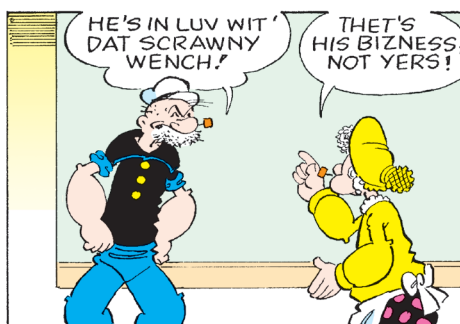
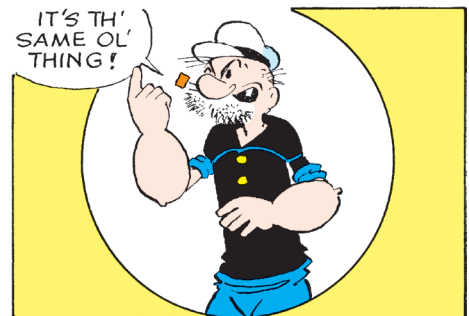
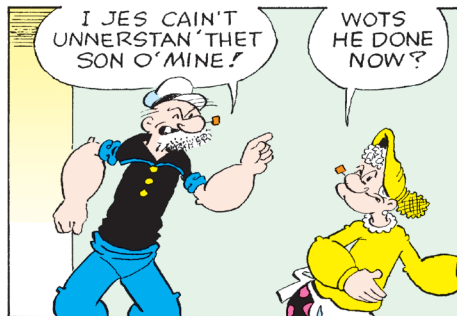
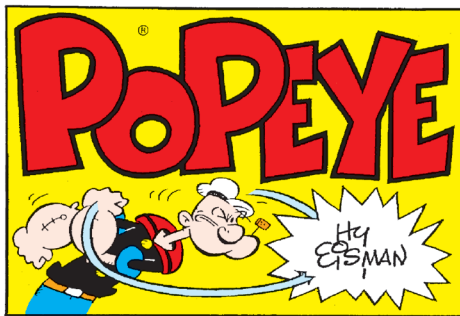
Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



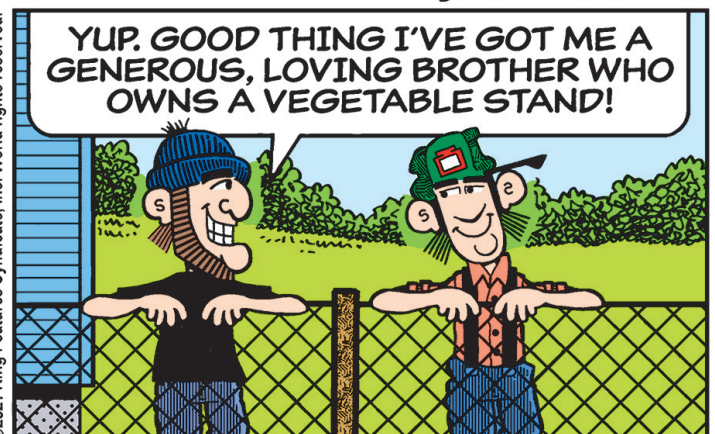
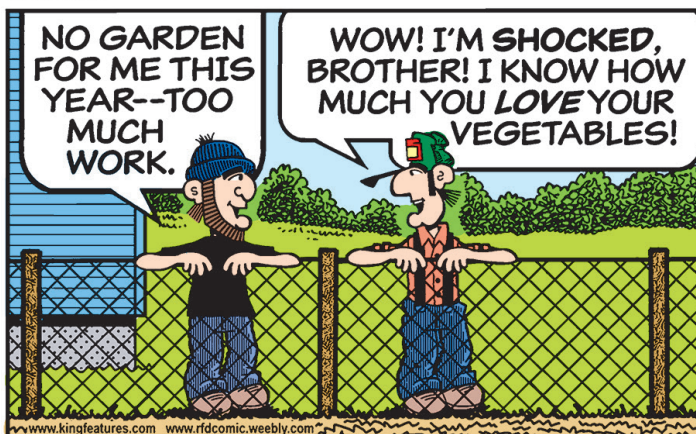
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R.F.D.

by Mike Marland

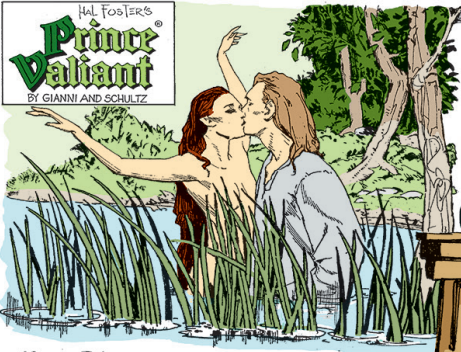


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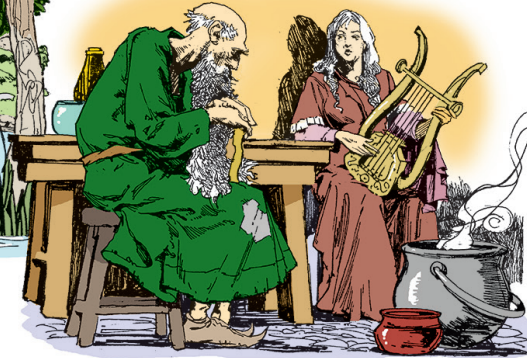
Hal Foster's
Prince Valiant
BY GIANNI AND SCHULTZ



Our Story:

MERLIN CONTINUES HIS TALE - "THE SEA SPIRIT WHO BEGAN AS MY STUDENT CAME TO MASTER MY HEART..."

"... AND EVENTUALLY DREW ME AWAY FROM CAMELOT. WORLD-WEARY, I WAS HAPPY TO BECOME A KEPT MAN. WE GREW OLD TOGETHER..."



"... AND, IN THE END, HER LOVE FOR ME WAS AS GREAT AS HER MAGICKS. WITH HER DYING BREATH, SHE MADE ME IMMORTAL. HER NAME WAS NIMUE..."

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"... AND SHE BORE ME THIS DAUGHTER, MORE SPIRIT THAN HUMAN, WHO GUIDES ME AS I ROAM THE UNDERWORLD. NOW, MY YOUNG NIMUE TELLS ME IT IS TIME TO GO."



VAL SEEKS TO STAY THE MAGE, BUT A STRANGE LETHARGY POSSESSES HIM. "PLEASE," HE CROAKS FEEBLY, "WHAT OF SIR TROLLENBERG?"

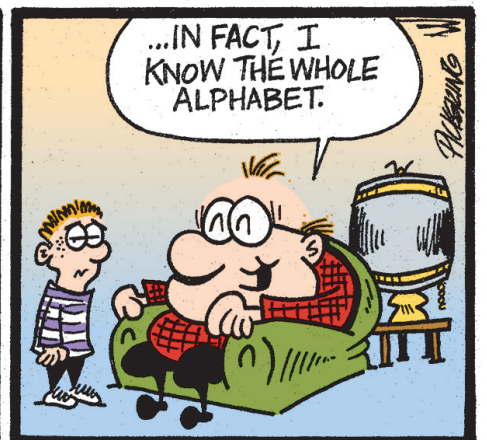
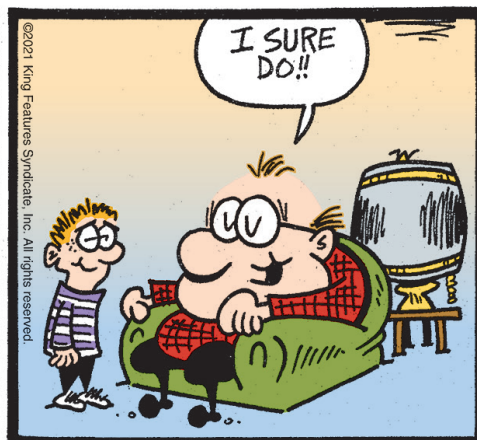
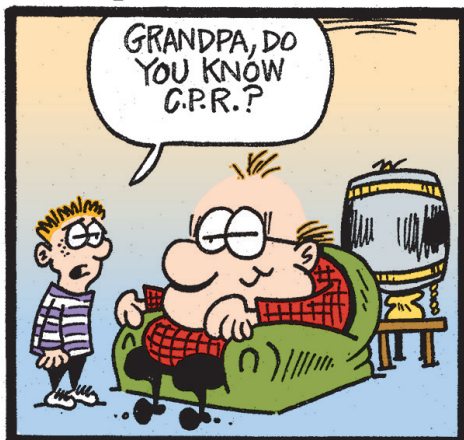


"ALAS," REPLIES MERLIN, AS HE DISAPPEARS BENEATH THE SURFACE, "HE NEVER TOUCHED WATER. NIMUE COULD NOT HELP HIM. FAREWELL!"

NEXT
Prudent
advice

The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



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Pickering

SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

What Will We Do With Our Time?

What did we really accomplish this past year? We've had time, certainly, with all these lockdown days, weeks and months, to do any number of things.

After reviewing my year of COVID, I realize that I could have done so much more, had I only known just how long "flattening the curve" was actually going to take.

By my calculations, I could have accomplished the following:

- Painted every room of the house three times. Yet here I sit with color swatches still taped to the wall where I put them last spring when I thought that interior painting would be a good summer project.
- Written 1.25 novels, judging by how long it took to produce the others I never started. Too many other things to do, too many fun events coming up, I thought. Had I known just how much free, quiet and solitary time there was going to be, I would have started on Day One.
- Become fluent in French with

Duolingo free online lessons.

I misjudged the coronavirus, seriously misjudged just how long it would be with us. I was certain that it would be gone by June. Then by September. And here we are, 15 months later, still wearing masks and staying home.

I'm determined not to let another year go by with so little to show for it. I've picked an interior paint color. Now I'll order the paint and go collect it curbside at the hardware store. The first file of a new novel is ready, with "Chapter 1" and a first paragraph. It's a start. My Duolingo account is still there, holding my place where I left off long ago.

It's possible that in a year, we'll be right where we are now. What will you do with the time?

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1. Name the rookie pitcher who won his first four starts — including a no-hitter on May 5, 1962 — for the Los Angeles Angels.

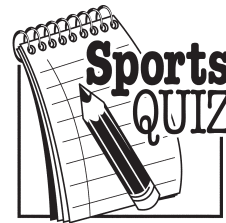
2. Evonne Goolagong, a seven-time women's singles Grand Slam tennis tournament winner from 1971-80, hailed from what country?

3. What Austrian driver posthumously won the 1970 Formula One championship after perishing in a crash during practice at the Italian Grand Prix?

4. Opening in 1900, The Hawthorns stadium has been home to what English Premier League football club?

5. What Tanzanian basketball star played for the University of Connecticut Huskies and was picked No. 2 overall by the Memphis Grizzlies in the 2009 NBA Draft?

6. Gino Cappelletti, American Football League MVP in 1964, had his No.



by Ryan A. Berenz

20 jersey retired by what NFL team?

7. Who founded a company that began manufacturing ice-resurfacing machines for skating rinks in Paramount, California, in 1949?

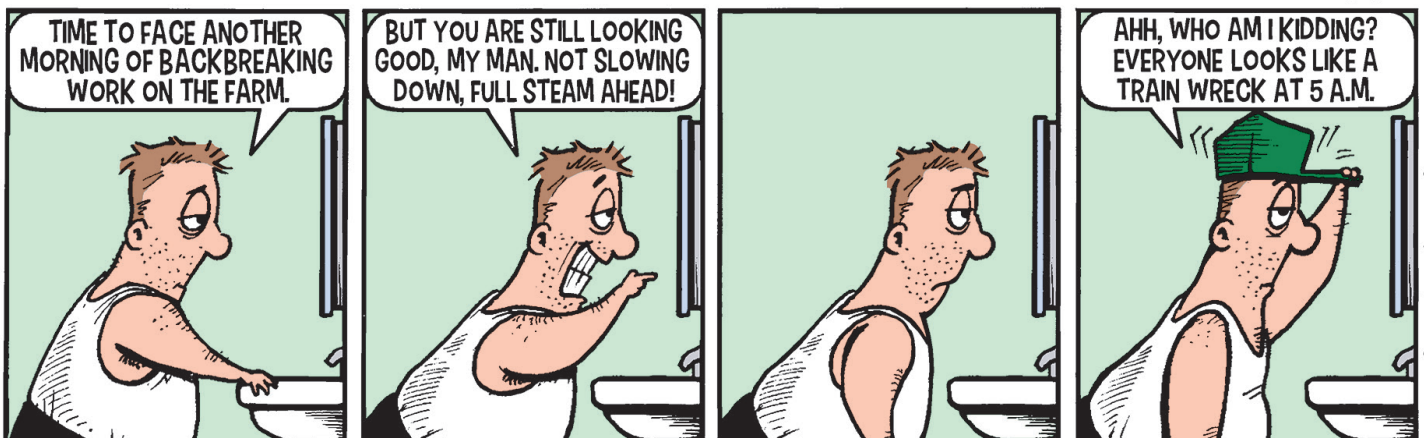
Answers

1. Bo Belinsky.
2. Australia.
3. Jochen Rindt.
4. West Bromwich Albion F.C.
5. Hasheem Thabeet.
6. The New England Patriots.
7. Frank J. Zamboni.

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Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps





Owner: My Dog's Poop Not My Responsibility

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: I see no reason to pick up my dog's poop, and I'm tired of being told that it's my responsibility. I'm a taxpayer, and part of those taxes go toward cleaning the streets. If my dog poops on the curb or the sidewalk, the city should clean it up. That's what I pay for. I also don't see why my neighbor gets so upset when my dog poops on her front lawn. It's all fertilizer. It's time for big government to do its job and stop making us pick up after our dogs. — *Bill in Burlington*

DEAR BILL: Well, that's a poopy attitude. Here's the simple fact: You are responsible for your dog. Not the city, not your neighbor. Where your dog's actions impact other people, animals or the environment, it's your responsibility to minimize or prevent that impact.

Dog poop left on the sidewalk, curb or street eventually breaks down, right? Wrong. It gets stepped on by other animals or people, who track fecal bacteria all over the place. It washes into the wastewater system and introduces new bacteria into natural waterways, sickening wildlife.

The neighbor's yard is a no-go zone because it's their yard, plain and simple. Dog poop or urine can discolor or even burn their grass. Your dog is trespassing. And if you think that letting your dog poop in a park is OK, think again. Would you want a little kid running barefoot in the park to step in that poop?

All those problems are minimized when you take along a little baggie (preferably a compostable one), pick up that poop and dispose of it properly. There's no need to debate this. Pick it up.

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

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Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

* The rarest shape for a human nose is the bulbous type, exemplified by former U.S. President Bill Clinton.

* Smuggling a cat out of ancient Egypt was punishable by death.

* A variety of corn grown in Peru has kernels so large that they're eaten individually.

* After impressionist painter Claude Monet developed cataracts, he agreed to have surgery on his right eye only. It is believed that afterwards he

could see and paint a wide spectrum of colors usually not seen by the human eye.

* Dinosaurs often swallowed large rocks, which stayed in their stomachs and helped them grind up food.

* One in 23 million people have an allergy to water.

* In 1631, royal printers Robert Barker and Martin Lucas published a Bible containing the typo "Thou Shalt Commit Adultery." As if that weren't embarrassing enough, another misprint, in Deuteronomy, substituted the word "greatness" with "great-asse." Barker and Lucas were fined 300 pounds and lost their printing license. Less than a dozen copies of what came to be known as the "Wicked," "Sinful" and "Adulterous" Bible are known to exist today and are highly prized by collectors.

* On average, a person's eyes make 15 to 30 gallons of tears a year.

* A rainbow's arc is relative to the position of the person observing it, so it is impossible for two people to actually see the exact same one.

* The air around a lightning bolt is five times hotter than the surface of the sun.

* While rare, there have been enough reported cases of strokes triggered by spa massage treatments that the medical community has nicknamed the phenomenon "beauty parlor stroke syndrome."

* Altocalciphilia is a fetish for high heels.

Thought for the Day: "Ambition is the path to success. Persistence is the vehicle you arrive in." -- Bill Bradley

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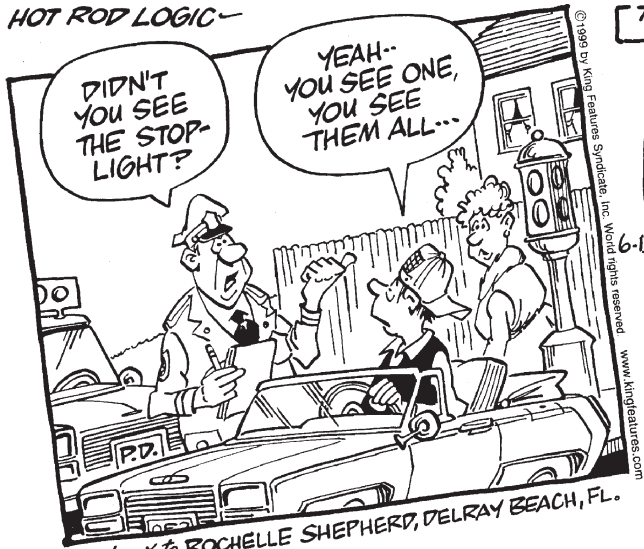
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THEY'LL DO IT EVERY TIME

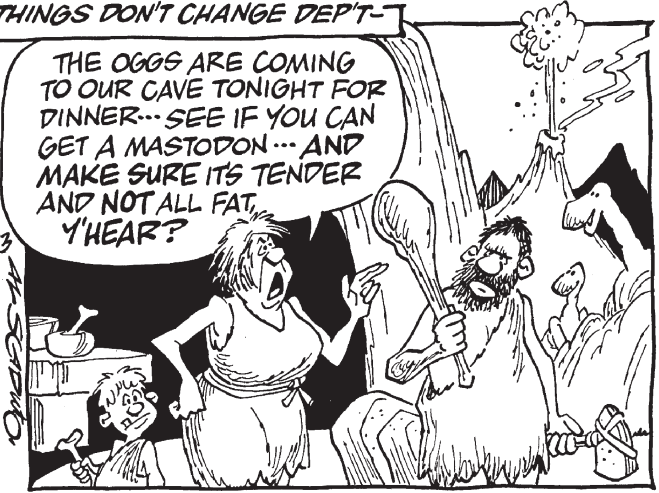
BY AL SCADUTO

HOT ROD LOGIC—

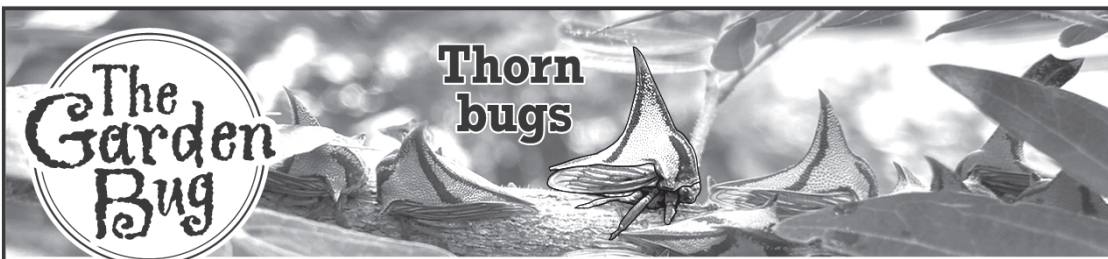
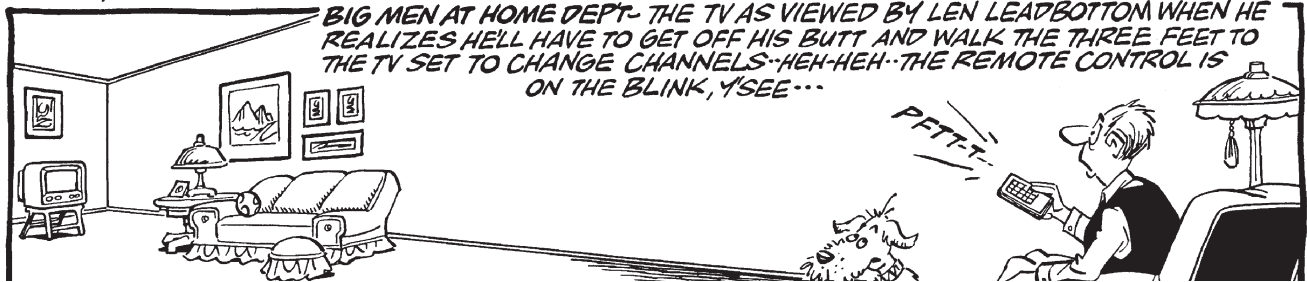


—Thank to ROCHELLE SHEPHERD, DELRAY BEACH, FL.

THINGS DON'T CHANGE DEPT—



—Thank to R. WEISFELD, HOUSTON, TEXAS



This insect can usually be found throughout South and Central America, Mexico, and southern Florida, but is sometimes found in more northern locations where its host plants have done well. It causes damage by piercing the plant tissue and sucking the sap. The females lay a single clutch of eggs in the tender bark of twigs, and the eggs hatch about 20 days later. The female actively tends her brood, and can pass a chemical to her nymphs to make them distasteful to potential predators. — Brenda Weaver

Source: entnemdept.ufl.edu

VETERANS ★ POST ★

by Freddy Groves

VA Vaccine Clinic Gets a Thumbs-Up

I wasn't the only one walking down the street toward the Department of Veterans Affairs pop-up vaccine clinic. In fact, there were about six guys who were doing the same thing I was: scoping out the situation before actually getting in the drive-up line for the vaccine.

I'll say it right off the top here: The VA did this right. They did a good job on the logistics and execution. Here in town, they'd selected a location with lots of space outside. There was an army of volunteers of all kinds, laying out a traffic cone grid in the parking lot, directing cars along the rows, nurses with tablets taking information, VA medical staff giving shots through car windows. There was even an observation area where cars would park afterward (with medical staff there) in case a veteran had a bad reaction.

"Looks pretty good," said one guy as we hovered on the sidewalk and watched. A few others chimed in, agreeing. One muttered something about an expected SNAFU, but there was none of that to be seen. We stopped a couple of cars with veterans leaving after getting their shots and queried them about how it had gone. SITREP: It was great.

Now that everyone age 16 and up is eligible for the vaccine, and now that SAVE (Strengthening and Amplifying Vaccination Efforts) has opened up a long list of veteran-related people who are eligible, if you want to get the vaccine, make an appointment now. If you wait too long, the demand for vaccines will eventually slack off, and these nearby pop-up clinics will be gone.

Keep an eye on the news for VA pop-up clinics in your area. Judging by how this drive-thru clinic was run, I have confidence that the VA is doing just as well in other areas where they're giving vaccines: medical centers, community clinics, outreach centers, mobile units — and even rural parking lots.

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



Dedicated to Service

Each year congressional offices across the country interview potential candidates for our nation's military and service academies.

It's one of the best parts of my job. South Dakota is home to some of the best and brightest students, many of them hoping they'll go on to serve our country at one of our nation's esteemed military institutions.

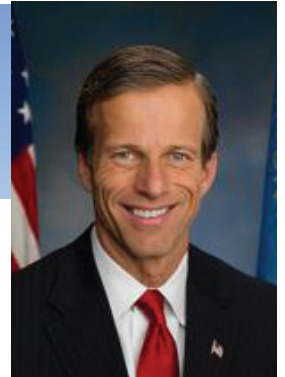
By the age of eighteen, many of these students have dedicated more time serving their communities than most adults. Mitchell Walker who will be attending West Point started his own business in middle school, moving lawns and taking care of neighborhood pets, all while running varsity track, playing varsity football, and serving in JROTC. Grace Blote who will be attending the Naval Academy volunteers at a local medical clinic, Health Concepts, in Rapid City.

The process to apply and be accepted to any one of the five academies is rigorous – four of the five academies require a congressional nomination – just to apply. When my office asked Garrett Gallaher why he wanted to attend a service academy, he said, "my decision to attend the Air Force Academy stems from my goal of becoming a pilot in the Air Force, a strong first step toward my goal of becoming a NASA astronaut after my military career. The U.S. Air Force Academy will present challenges that I have not encountered before, but I look forward to the camaraderie I will form with my fellow cadets in tackling these challenges together."

These students are exceptional and their willingness to dedicate their lives to defending America's freedom is honorable. If you see Mitchell Walker, Adelaide Crow, Robert O'Brien, Grace Blote, Camden Johnson, Lauren Letner, Caden Tegethoff, or Garrett Gallaher around town, be sure to commend them on their appointment.

Rapid City native Lauren Letner said it best: "I have always wanted a job that makes a difference in people's lives, to do meaningful work." I'm confident students like Lauren will continue to make a difference in the lives of many. These students will all represent our state well at their respective institutions – and as they prepare for their new journey outside of South Dakota – we'll be waiting to welcome them back home!

John Thune
U.S. SENATOR - SOUTH DAKOTA



A Season of Celebration and Hope for the Future

Spring in South Dakota may be one of my favorite seasons. While South Dakotans understand the unpredictability of our spring weather, the month of May always brings back great memories. It makes me think back to watching my daughters Brittany and Larissa compete at the Howard Wood Relays and state track meets – events that continue to be on my "can't miss list" each year – celebrating my wife, Kimberley, and daughters every Mother's Day, and attending high school and college graduations, a symbol of change and growth.

There's no doubt this past year has been tough, especially for students, teachers, and administrators who faced unique challenges. My parents were both educators. My mother was our school librarian, and my father was a teacher, coach, athletic director, and drove the school bus. Growing up, I saw firsthand the long hours and dedication they gave to their students. Because of this, I have an immense appreciation for our educators. I am extra appreciative in a year where, despite the adversities faced, South Dakota's teachers and educators rose to the occasion and did everything they could to ensure students continued to get the quality education they deserve. It certainly wasn't easy, but our schools not only managed these challenges, they exceeded expectations. I couldn't be more proud.

I know our students have also felt the challenges of the past year and a half. It could not have been easy to see traditions slip by uncelebrated while schools took necessary health precautions. I'm glad to see that the most cherished tradition of all – graduation – is happening this year across our state.

Whenever I speak to young South Dakotans, whether at graduations, sporting events, or in the U.S. Capitol, I often encourage them to live a life of purpose and be difference-makers. Growing up in the small town of Murdo, I could have never expected that I would one day represent South Dakota in the U.S. Senate. But I was blessed to have doors open in my life and am grateful to have had parents and mentors who encouraged me to push them open to see what was on the other side. I'll give the same advice to the class of 2021: If an opportunity comes along, don't be afraid to go for it. You never know where it might lead you.

The second thing I always tell young South Dakotans is to pursue excellence. I don't mean to tell them that they have to be the best player on their basketball team, get straight As in their classes, or get into their dream college. Of course, it's wonderful to achieve excellence, but what I encourage is that they pursue excellence – pursue excellence by trying that sport or talent that is difficult, pursue excellence by taking that course that might challenge them, pursue excellence by being kind to all the people in their lives – in person and online. Do your best every day. Don't do a job half way. Don't just go through the motions. Commit to whatever you are doing.

When thinking back to this time last year, graduations in many towns looked different. Virtual learning had temporarily replaced in-classroom learning, and adjustments were made to the typical graduation formats. What a difference a year can make. With the rollout of the vaccine and increased knowledge of COVID-19, ceremonies throughout the state will look much closer to normal. Graduates have proven their ability to overcome the adversity of the last year and will be able to celebrate their accomplishments with family and friends safely. I'm hopeful for the future of the graduates of 2021. I know they will do great things.

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South Dakota Governor

Kristi Noem



South Dakota: *Under God, the People Rule*

Strengthening South Dakota's Workforce

South Dakota's jobs market is booming. Our unemployment rate is the lowest in America. Businesses are moving to our state in large numbers. But we're always looking for ways to continue to the state's workforce. We want businesses to be able to hire the right talent to fill the openings that they have available. Both through targeted recruitment campaigns and investments in higher education, South Dakota is working to capitalize on our strong economic position and set our state up for even more success far into the future.

I recently announced a partnership between the Department of Tourism and the Department of Labor and Regulation to match tourism businesses with potential employees. Tourism is our state's second largest industry, but the seasonal nature of some tourism jobs can make hiring difficult. The success of this industry is a major factor in South Dakota's economic health going forward. By matching tourism businesses with quality individuals, we can allow them to focus on taking care of visitors to our beautiful state.

Similarly, we're working to relaunch our law enforcement recruitment campaign. Over the past year, law enforcement has been attacked and demeaned in other communities across the country, so we're letting them know that we'd love to have them in South Dakota. We respect law enforcement officers for everything that they do to keep our state safe. This campaign had tremendous success when we first launched it last year, so we will continue to build off of that.

Our efforts to strengthen South Dakota's workforce go far beyond recruitment. Some of the most important workforce training happens in higher education. And this year, I worked with the legislature and industry partners to make targeted investments in the future of higher education in our state. For instance, we paid down debt at our technical colleges, freeing up money that can be reinvested into preparing our students for their career after graduation.

We made a historic investment in the South Dakota Freedom Scholarship, which will help set low-income South Dakota students up for a lifetime of success. With the scholarship's requirement that students live and work in our state for three years after graduation, it will help bolster the state's workforce as well. The legislature funded \$50 million to help create an endowment for this scholarship. Industry and community partners have stepped up to the tune of \$125 million as well, which gets the endowment near its goal of \$200 million.

We also reinvested in the Build Dakota Scholarship, which matches students at our tech colleges with high-demand career opportunities. Together with industry partners, we'll put \$40 million into this scholarship over the next five years. This scholarship has the same requirements that students live and work in South Dakota for three years after graduation as well.

South Dakota's economy may be strong, but there are opportunities to continue to grow our workforce. I hope to see apprenticeship programs continue to grow and develop. And there is still a gap to close to fully fund the Freedom Scholarship endowment. I promise to continue addressing workforce needs across the state.

South Dakota has the strongest economy in America, but now is not the time to settle. We have a tremendous opportunity to propel South Dakota forward into the future. Let's work together to get it done.

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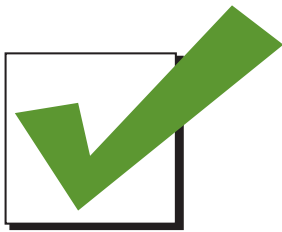
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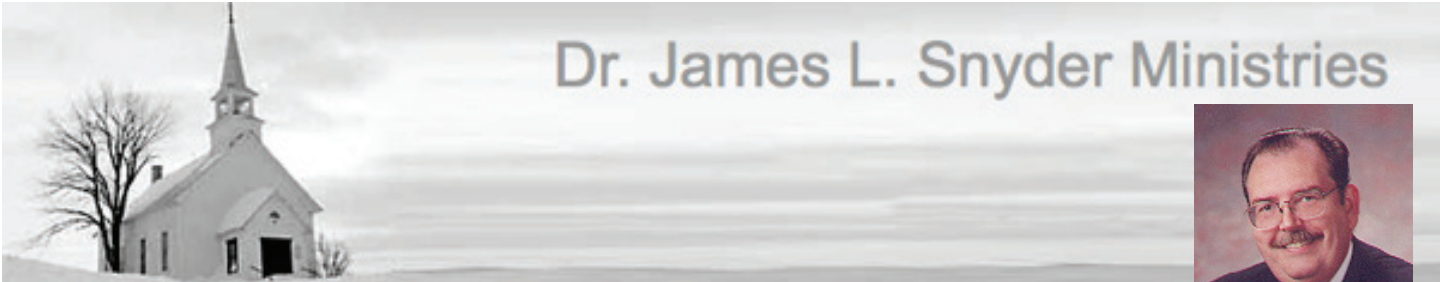
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Who Doesn't Like A Girl Scout Cookie?

This week the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage made a little slip. To her, it was a little slip, but to me, it was a big mistake.

It is not always that she makes mistakes that I can profit on. I don't make this public, especially within her earshot, but there are times that she makes a mistake, and I'm always on the lookout for those times.

When it comes to me, I'm always making mistakes. I'm not sure that I can make a little slip because mine are much bigger. And the problem with this is, the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage always catches them, and sometimes, I don't know how she does it, she catches them before I actually do them.

She calls it "woman's intuition," but I call it "man's trouble."

This past week, for instance, I had an appointment with my eye doctor. I was to pick up my new glasses, and I was anxious about that. I told my wife that the doctor's appointment was on Wednesday. She countered that and said, "No, I believe it's on Thursday."

"It's my appointment," I said, both hands on my hips, "and I'll go when I want to."

She looked at me, snickered, and then went back to what she was doing. I think I heard her mumbling something like, "He's 13 again."

I got to the eye doctor's office, walked in as I was putting on my mask (I'm not too fond of these masks), walked up to the counter, and signed in. Then I went to sit and wait to be called.

In a few minutes, a nurse came up to me and said, "Mr. Snyder, what are you doing here today?"

"I'm here to pick up my glasses."

"I'm sorry, your appointment isn't until tomorrow."

I looked at her with one of my stunned looks and then said, "Could I camp here until tomorrow?"

I had to go home and tell my wife that I was wrong, and she was right. If I had a nickel for every time I admitted that I was wrong, I would be a very wealthy person.

But this week, my wife made her mistake, and I was able to cash in on it.

She returned home from shopping at Publix, and I think without even thinking, she said as she was coming into the kitchen, "The Girl Scouts are selling cookies at Publix today."

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There are many things she says that I cannot hear. I'm not sure if it's my ears or what. For some reason, I picked up on this phrase about the Girl Scout cookies.

I tried to remain quiet and calm. I knew if I stirred up any excitement, she would catch on to what she said to me. According to her, I am very limited as to the cookies I'm allowed to eat. Her preference would be that I eat no cookies while I've got breath in my nostrils.

I remember when she told me, "You cannot eat no cookies!"

I smiled because she did not know what she said. A double negative equals a positive. Most people don't get that.

The next step was to figure out how to leave the house and go to Publix without somebody in the house finding out.

I did not know how I would do this. I thought about it and tried to come up with the perfect plan.

Then, an opportunity opened up that I could never have anticipated.

"I forgot something at Publix," my wife said, "would you have time to run over to Publix and pick this up for me?"

I find it very hard to subdue hilarious laughter under circumstances like this. I worked hard and solemnly said, "Oh, my dear. I can go right now, and there's no problem at all."

Like magic, I disappeared from the house and started the car before I even got in it and headed for Publix. All I could think about was those wonderfully delicious Girl Scout cookies. After all, when I buy Girl Scout cookies, I'm helping to support some young ladies who need it. That's my story, and I'm sticking to it.

Walking up to the girls at Publix, I almost forgot what I had come to pick up.

I looked at them and said, "I'll be back after I go do some shopping."

I'm always as good as my word, and I came back, and since I could not make up my mind as to what cookies I wanted to purchase, I did the gentlemanly thing and bought one of each cookie they had for sale. How much it cost has no relativity to my desire for these cookies.

As I put the bag on the kitchen table, my wife happened to look at it and said to me, "Those are not Girl Scout cookies, are they?"

"Isn't that what you wanted me to buy?"

She just stared at me, but all I could think about was eating that first cookie.

As I delighted in eating that first cookie, I was reminded of what David said in one of his Psalms, "Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart" (Psalms 37:4).

As much as I delight in these cookies, my greater delight is in the Lord. As I delight in the Lord, I enjoy all the delicacies of that relationship.

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- **Medicare benefits** many retirees may not be aware of

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We are not connected with, nor endorsed by, the U.S. Government or the Federal Medicare Program. I understand I have no obligation. This is a solicitation of insurance. A licensed agent/producer may contact you. Policy form number L030, L035, L036, L037, L038, F001, F002 (OK: L030OK, L035OK, L036OK, L037OK, L038OK; TN: L030TN, L035TN, L036TN, L037TN, L038TN, F001TN, F002TN)
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EARTHTALK ™

From the Editors of E - The Environmental Magazine

Dear EarthTalk: What is a "pollinator lawn" and how can I make one in my backyard?

W., Westbrook, CT

Bees and other pollinators are essential for growing a great deal of nature's finest foods. These include coffee, chocolate, beans, many fruits including apples, avocados, blueberries, cherries and peaches, nuts like almonds and cashews, and vegetables such as cauliflower, broccoli and Brussel's sprouts, just to name a few. More than 100 U.S.-grown crops rely on pollinators. Small birds and animals also depend on a variety of pollinated wild fruits and seeds to survive.

Unfortunately, the populations of bees and other pollinators, including hummingbirds, butterflies, moths and flies, have been drastically declining due in part to exposure to insecticides, but also to loss of natural habitat including grasslands, meadows and woodlands lost to human development.

Turning your own lawn into a pollinator or "bee" lawn can help restore the kinds of natural habitat no longer available to pollinators. Typical manicured lawns, which require a great deal of water, gas for mowing and weed-killer, are also a virtual desert environment for bees and other pollinators. In contrast, "bee" lawns consist of a mix of grasses and shorter flowers that can provide vital nutrition to pollinators. Fine fescues grass, for example, has thin blades that give flowers the best chance to grow, and shorter perennial flowers such as Dutch White Clover, Creeping Thyme and Self-Heal cater to a variety of bees with diverse pollen and nectar needs. Dutch White Clover flowers also take nitrogen from the air and add it back into soil, reducing the need for fertilizer. It's recommended that bee lawns be kept at least three inches tall to provide a shaded, moist environment for flowers to bloom and seeds to form.

Furthermore, incorporating a very simple bee water garden into a bee lawn can provide pollinators with a shallow water source that can be otherwise difficult to find. Because bees are small and can easily drown, bee water gardens consist of wide, shallow bowls of water that have rocks rising above the water surface for bees to stand on. And for anyone worried about being stung on their bee lawn, it's good to know that wild bees do not sting when foraging for flower nectar or pollen—in fact, you can safely get within inches of bees visiting flowers and not get stung. People usually tend to get stung only when bees are harassed at their nest, stepped on or entangled in pieces of clothing.

Thankfully, the importance of bee lawns has been gaining momentum, so much so that, in 2019 Minnesota launched the \$900,000 Lawns to Legumes project to help homeowners across the state make their lawns bee-friendly. The program particularly emphasizes hope for providing protection for the at-risk rusty patched bumblebee, Minnesota's state bee. At one time abundant, the rusty patched bumblebee has suffered an 87 percent decline in population in the last 20 years and was formally listed as federally endangered in March 2017, marking the first bee in the continental U.S. to make the endangered species list.

EarthTalk® is produced by Roddy Scheer & Doug Moss for the 501(c)3 nonprofit EarthTalk. See more at <https://emagazine.com>. To donate, visit <https://earthtalk.org>. Send questions to: question@earthtalk.org.



-- Jane

Planting different types of tiny flowering plants among grass stalks is a great way to attract bees and other pollinators that help keep our farms productive and our produce aisles well-stocked.

Credit: Simon, FlickrCC.

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County	Total Cases	Recovered Cases	Negative Persons	Deceased Among Cases	Community Spread	% PCR Test Positivity Rate (Weekly)
Aurora	471	454	943	15	Minimal	21.4%
Beadle	2952	2885	6490	40	Moderate	8.1%
Bennett	391	380	1248	9	Minimal	2.0%
Bon Homme	1544	1508	2300	27	Moderate	6.1%
Brookings	4205	4109	13637	37	Substantial	3.8%
Brown	5553	5380	13921	92	Substantial	10.4%
Brule	716	698	2044	9	Moderate	11.1%
Buffalo	425	412	924	13	Minimal	0.0%
Butte	1051	1012	3514	20	Substantial	6.1%
Campbell	130	126	280	4	None	0.0%
Charles Mix	1376	1343	4348	22	Moderate	0.8%
Clark	460	445	1046	5	Moderate	4.5%
Clay	1920	1896	5984	15	Moderate	4.7%
Codington	4627	4460	10635	81	Substantial	15.4%
Corson	478	465	1113	12	None	0.0%
Custer	845	817	2932	12	Moderate	10.0%
Davison	3227	3136	7354	66	Moderate	7.4%
Day	706	670	1960	29	Moderate	18.8%
Deuel	527	513	1285	9	Minimal	4.5%
Dewey	1472	1443	4110	28	Substantial	1.3%
Douglas	454	445	1020	9	None	0.0%
Edmunds	510	494	1155	13	Minimal	14.3%
Fall River	592	573	2895	15	Moderate	3.3%
Faulk	369	355	749	13	Minimal	11.1%
Grant	1046	989	2473	42	Moderate	10.4%
Gregory	579	547	1416	30	Minimal	0.0%
Haakon	263	252	582	10	Minimal	0.0%
Hamlin	796	753	2000	39	Minimal	3.2%
Hand	362	356	925	6	Minimal	0.0%
Hanson	387	381	794	4	Minimal	25.0%
Harding	97	95	203	1	Minimal	33.3%
Hughes	2490	2425	7311	39	Moderate	2.9%
Hutchinson	915	873	2661	27	Substantial	13.0%

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Hyde	141	140	455	1	None	0.0%
Jackson	289	275	972	14	None	0.0%
Jerauld	274	257	608	16	Minimal	16.7%
Jones	93	93	261	0	None	0.0%
Kingsbury	817	790	1859	18	Moderate	17.5%
Lake	1363	1332	3821	20	Moderate	1.5%
Lawrence	2970	2892	9019	47	Moderate	7.2%
Lincoln	8652	8494	22649	77	Substantial	7.4%
Lyman	649	632	2039	11	Moderate	2.5%
Marshall	372	362	1346	6	Minimal	1.6%
McCook	806	776	1858	25	Minimal	5.4%
McPherson	246	240	622	4	Minimal	8.3%
Meade	2758	2710	8369	30	Moderate	4.3%
Mellette	260	256	809	2	Minimal	0.0%
Miner	304	290	640	9	Minimal	25.0%
Minnehaha	31515	30776	87972	355	Substantial	7.0%
Moody	653	627	1914	18	Moderate	7.0%
Oglala Lakota	2111	2055	7141	49	Moderate	3.7%
Pennington	13684	13346	42602	192	Moderate	8.6%
Perkins	358	340	869	14	Minimal	9.1%
Potter	390	385	912	4	Minimal	0.0%
Roberts	1358	1314	4560	39	Moderate	2.0%
Sanborn	343	338	758	3	Minimal	11.8%
Spink	842	812	2289	26	Minimal	4.5%
Stanley	348	343	1061	2	Minimal	0.0%
Sully	142	138	338	3	Minimal	0.0%
Todd	1225	1193	4452	30	Minimal	5.2%
Tripp	755	734	1623	17	Minimal	5.9%
Turner	1172	1109	2998	56	Moderate	8.3%
Union	2216	2159	6964	43	Moderate	2.8%
Walworth	767	749	1954	16	Minimal	1.7%
Yankton	3080	3020	10348	31	Substantial	6.3%
Ziebach	344	335	939	9	Minimal	5.0%
Unassigned	0	0	1783	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	5348	0
10-19 years	14534	0
20-29 years	21773	8
30-39 years	20350	20
40-49 years	17617	41
50-59 years	17219	117
60-69 years	13919	272
70-79 years	7241	453
80+ years	5232	1069

RACE/ETHNICITY OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Race/Ethnicity	# of Cases	% of Cases
White	92541	75%
Native American	14174	12%
Unknown	5604	5%
Hispanic	4636	4%
Black	2819	2%
Other	1769	1%
Asian / Pacific Islander	1690	1%

VARIANT CASES OF COVID-19 IN SOUTH DAKOTA

COVID-19 Variant	# of Cases
B.1.1.7	97
B.1.429	13
B.1.351	2
P.1	2
B.1.427	1

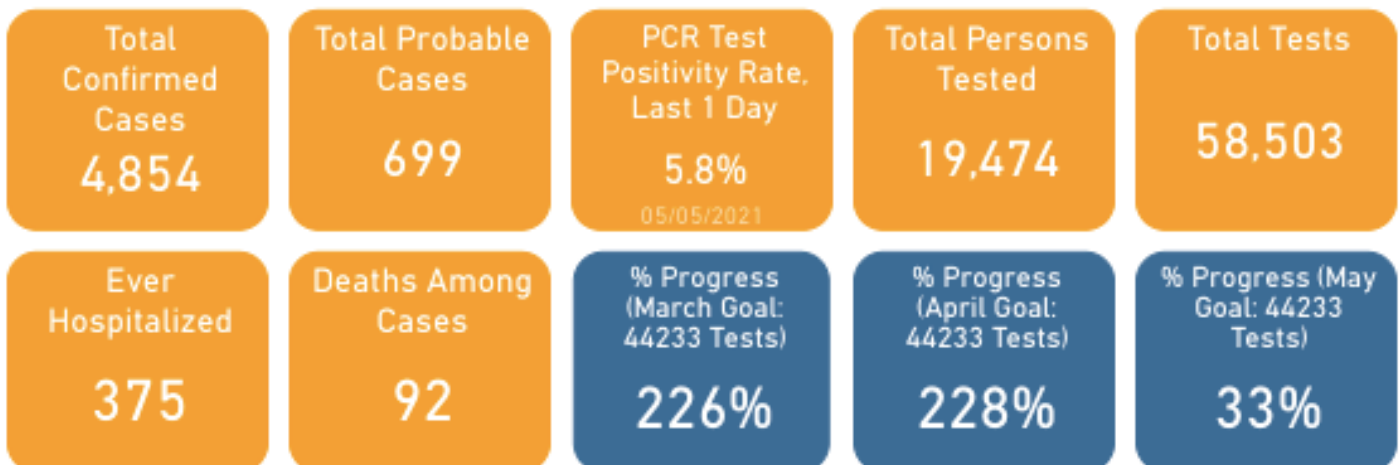
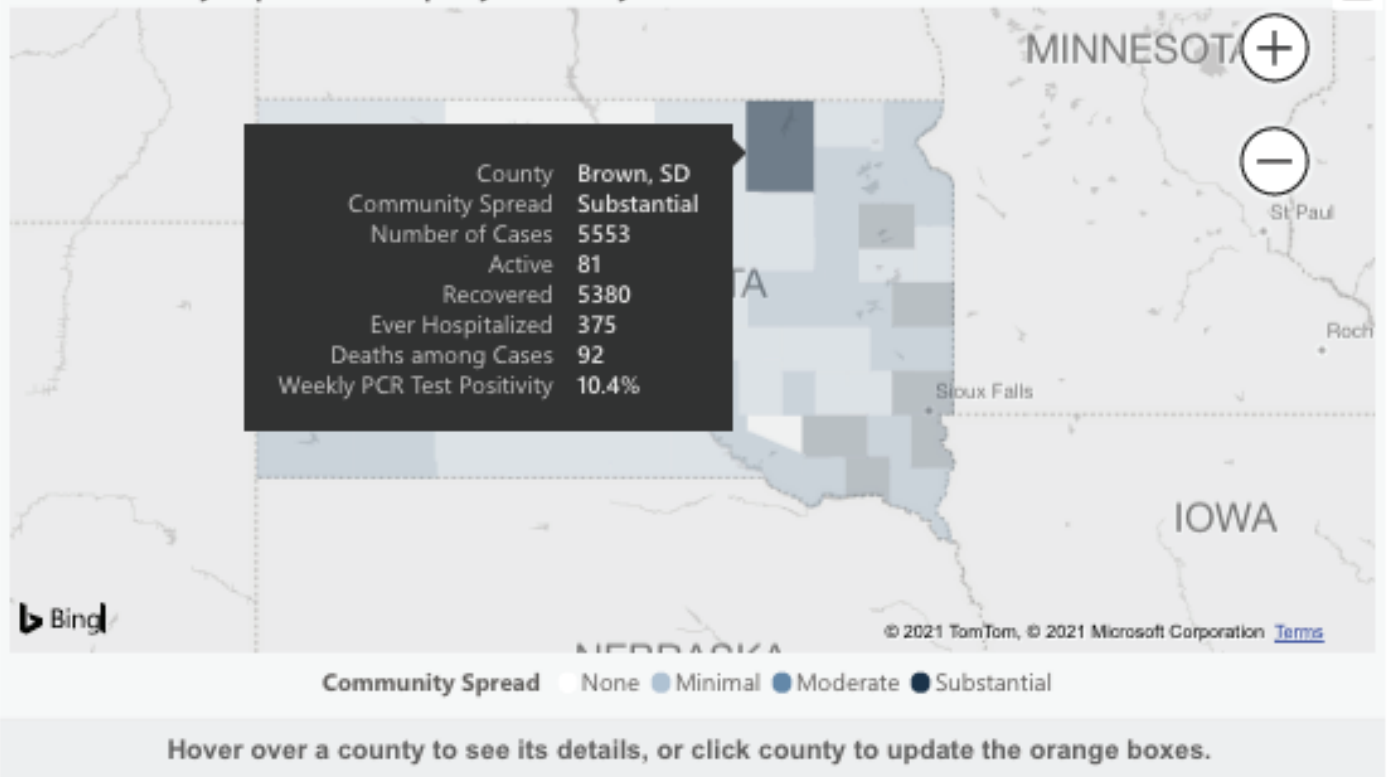
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Brown County



Community Spread Map by County of Residence



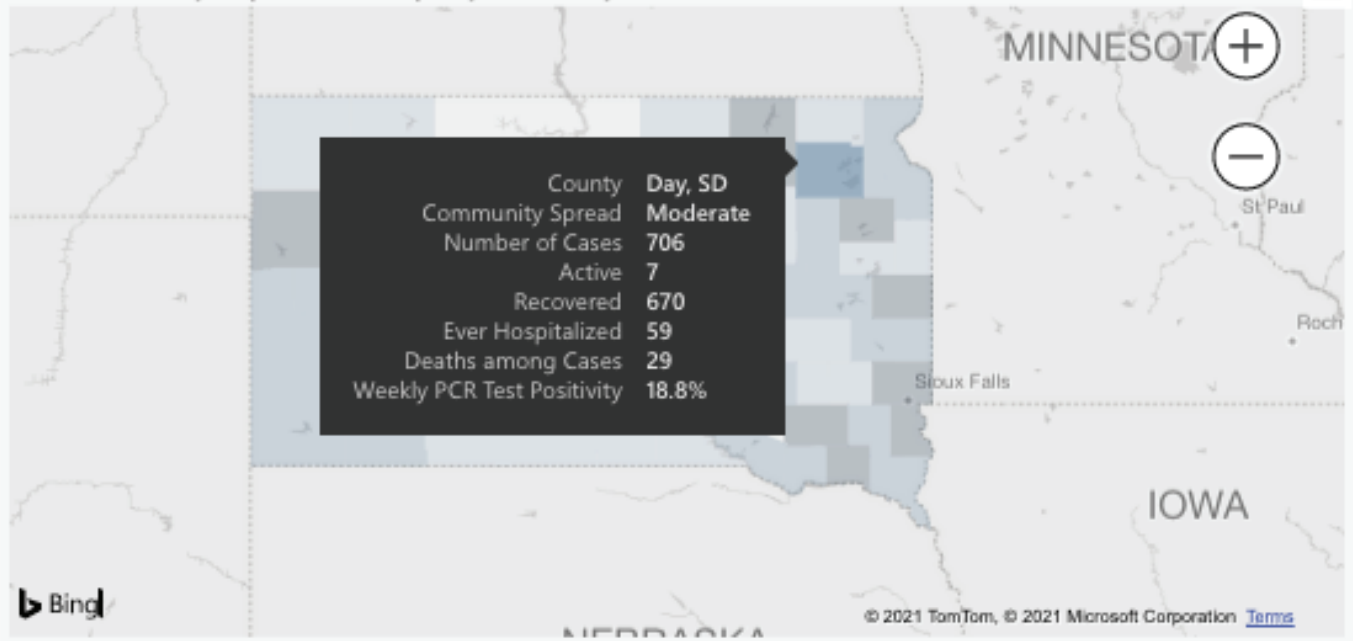
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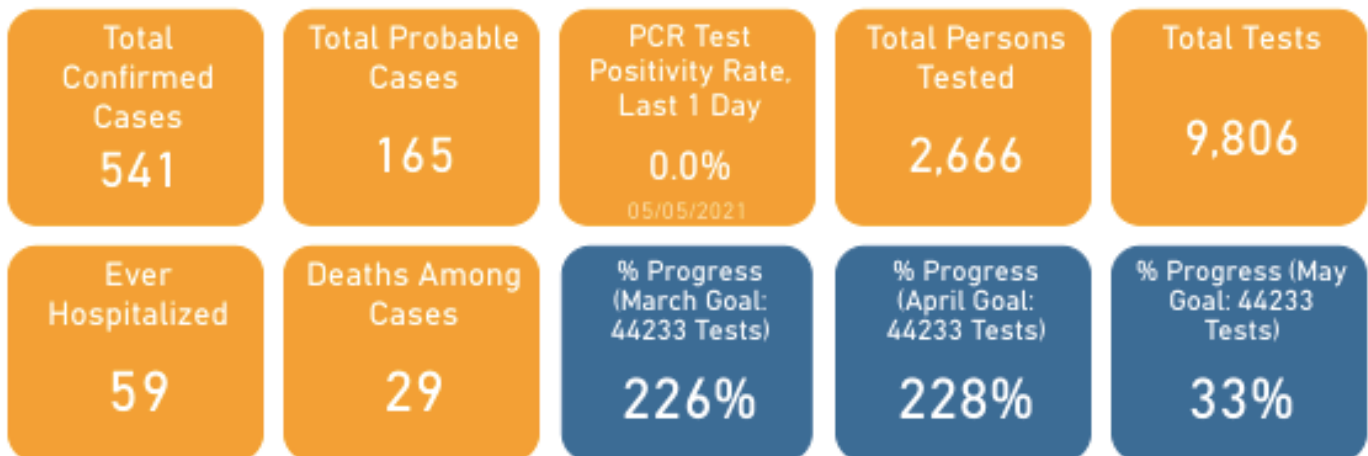
Day County



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*

612,495

Total Persons Administered a Vaccine*

333,447

Percent of State Population with at least 1 Dose**

55%

Manufacturer	# of Doses
Janssen	17,649
Moderna	271,560
Pfizer	323,286

Doses	# of Recipients
Janssen - Series Complete	17,647
Moderna - 1 dose	19,193
Moderna - Series Complete	126,182
Pfizer - 1 dose	17,600
Pfizer - Series Complete	152,842

Doses	% of Pop.
1 dose	55.47%
Series Complete	48.87%

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

County	# Doses	# Persons (1 dose)	# Persons (2 doses)	Total # Persons
Aurora	1,989	121	934	1,055
Beadle	12,789	1,150	5,819	6,969
Bennett*	742	106	318	424
Bon Homme*	5,754	356	2,699	3,055
Brookings	23,564	3,507	10,028	13,535
Brown	30,259	1,870	14,194	16,064
Brule*	2,891	337	1,277	1,614
Buffalo*	185	81	52	133
Butte	4,375	625	1,875	2,500
Campbell	1,608	122	743	865
Charles Mix*	5,285	667	2,309	2,976
Clark	2,544	450	1,047	1,497
Clay	10,534	1,420	4,556	5,976
Codington*	20,229	1,979	9,125	11,104
Corson*	452	48	202	250
Custer*	5,330	670	2,330	3,000
Davison	15,944	1,221	7,361	8,582
Day*	4,640	404	2,118	2,522
Deuel	2,822	306	1,258	1,564
Dewey*	520	68	226	294
Douglas*	2,122	128	997	1,125
Edmunds	2,619	133	1,243	1,376
Fall River*	4,432	380	2,026	2,406
Faulk	1,925	87	919	1,006
Grant*	5,480	353	2,563	2,916
Gregory*	2,900	180	1,360	1,540

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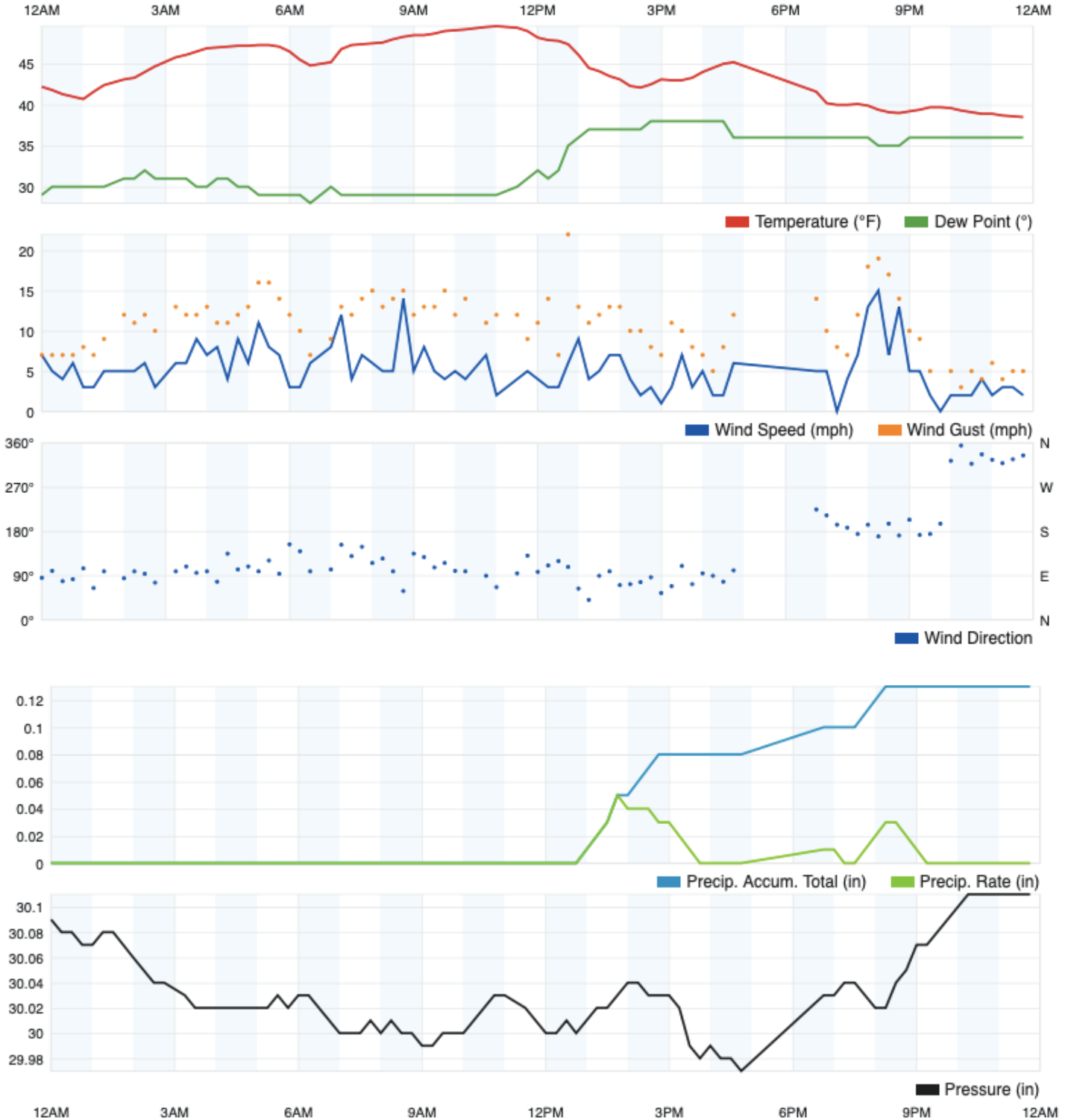
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Haakon*	856	58	399	457
Hamlin	3,500	492	1,504	1,996
Hand	2,652	138	1,257	1,395
Hanson	1,133	91	521	612
Harding	265	47	109	156
Hughes*	15,784	930	7,427	8,357
Hutchinson*	6,463	410	3,026	3,436
Hyde*	886	54	416	470
Jackson*	657	67	295	362
Jerauld	1,592	82	755	837
Jones*	1,069	57	506	563
Kingsbury	4,753	435	2,159	2,594
Lake	8,929	1,075	3,927	5,002
Lawrence	16,513	1,813	7,350	9,163
Lincoln	49,519	3,055	23,230	26,285
Lyman*	1,435	195	620	815
Marshall*	3,647	295	1,676	1,971
McCook	4,090	526	1,782	2,308
McPherson	512	46	233	279
Meade*	11,878	1,296	5,291	6,587
Mellette*	81	5	38	43
Miner	1,567	245	661	906
Minnehaha*	161,731	12,273	74,723	86,996
Moody*	3,439	241	1,599	1,840
Oglala Lakota*	319	73	123	196
Pennington*	65,041	6,347	29,347	35,694
Perkins*	1,179	101	539	640
Potter	1,829	121	854	975
Roberts*	6,737	631	3,053	3,684
Sanborn	1,957	145	906	1,051
Spink	5,227	281	2,473	2,754
Stanley*	2,345	139	1,103	1,242
Sully	804	50	377	427
Todd*	279	47	116	163
Tripp*	3,235	209	1,513	1,722
Turner	6,138	472	2,833	3,305
Union	7,081	701	3,190	3,891
Walworth*	2,967	357	1,305	1,662
Yankton	19,177	1,427	8,875	10,302
Ziebach*	93	17	38	55
Other	13,202	2,610	5,296	7,906

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today



Mostly Cloudy

High: 58 °F

Tonight



Gradual Clearing

Low: 32 °F

Monday



Sunny

High: 59 °F

Monday Night



Mostly Clear

Low: 32 °F

Tuesday

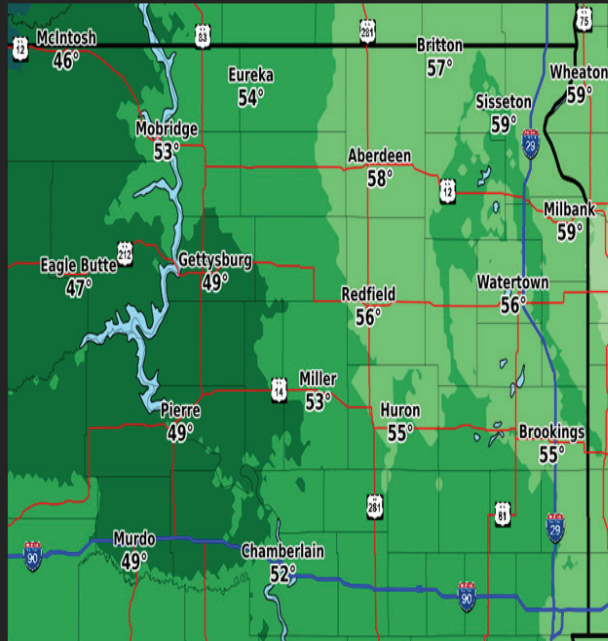


Sunny

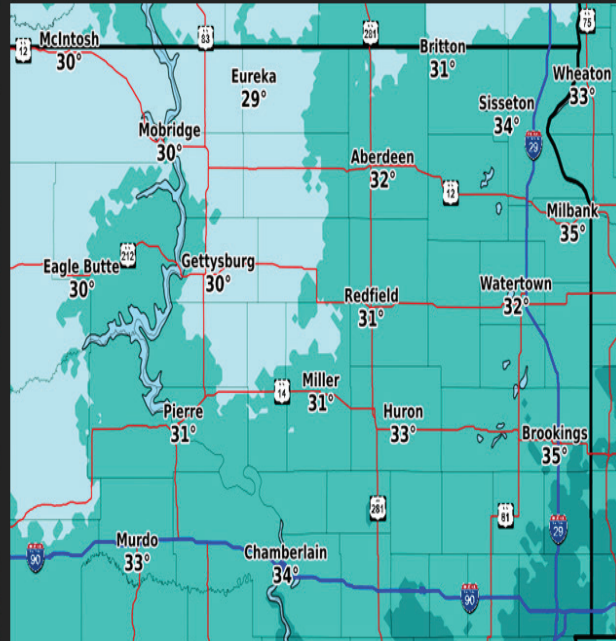
High: 63 °F

Showers Waning Today - Chilly

Temperatures Today



Temperatures Tonight



National Weather Service Aberdeen, South Dakota

Updated: 5/9/2021 3:46 AM Central

Clouds and light showers across the area today will result in readings some 10 to 20 degrees below normal. Clearing tonight will also lead to some very cold morning temperatures.

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Today in Weather History

May 9, 1999: Torrential rains of two to five inches fell in Lyman County during the late evening hours which caused flash flooding on Medicine Creek. The KOA Campgrounds near Kennebec were flooded including the main facility. Several roads were also flooded and damaged along Medicine Creek. Storm total rainfall in Kennebec was 3.40 inches. Also, a weak F0 tornado touched down briefly three miles south of Reliance with no damage reported. Winds gusting to 70 mph knocked over a 4000-bushel holding bin near Revillo.

1918: An F4 tornado moved across Floyd, Chickasaw, and Winneshiek Counties in northeast Iowa from two miles north of Pearl Rock to Calmar. Two people died east of Calmar when the tornado was a mile wide. Losses in and near Calmar totaled \$250,000. Overall, this tornado killed seven people and injured 15 others.

1933: An estimated F4 tornado moved through Monroe, Cumberland, and Russell Counties in Kentucky along a 60-mile path. The town of Tompkinsville, KY was the hardest hit with 18 people killed. Overall, 36 people lost their lives.

1966: Record snows fell in the northeastern Ohio and western Pennsylvania, including 3.1 inches at Pittsburgh and 5.4 inches at Youngstown Ohio. Snow also extended across parts of New York State with eight inches reported in the southern Adirondacks.

1990: The 1990 Machilipatnam Cyclone was the worst disaster to affect Southern India since the 1977 Andhra Pradesh cyclone. This category four on the Saffir-Simpson scale had a severe impact on India, with over 967 people reported having been killed. Over 100,000 animals also died in the cyclone with the total cost of damages to crops estimated at over \$600 million (1990 USD).

1995: An F3 tornado produced \$10 million in damages along its 40-mile path across central Illinois. The tornado caused significant damage in Cantrall where three homes were destroyed, 10 had significant damage, and 11 had minor damage. The roof and interior of a grade school suffered extensive damage. The tornado passed about 2 miles southeast of the new NWS Office in Lincoln, Illinois.

1977 - A late season snowstorm hit parts of Pennsylvania, New York State, and southern and central New England. Heavier snowfall totals included 27 inches at Slide Mountain NY and 20 inches at Norwalk CT. At Boston it was the first May snow in 107 years of records. The heavy wet snow caused extensive damage to trees and power lines. The homes of half a million persons were without power following the storm. (9th-10th) (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1985 - Lightning struck some trees about 150 yards away from a home in Alabama, and followed the driveway to the home. The charge went through the house and burned all the electrical outlets, ruined appliances, and blasted a hole in the concrete floor of the basement. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Unseasonably warm weather spread from the Pacific Northwest to the Upper Mississippi Valley. Fifteen cities reported record high temperatures for the date. It was the fourth day of record warmth for Eugene OR and Salem OR. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - A massive cyclone in the central U.S. produced severe thunderstorms from eastern Texas to the Upper Ohio Valley. A strong (F-3) tornado ripped through Middleboro KY causing more than 22 million dollars damage. Thunderstorms in east central Texas produced hail three and a half inches in diameter at Groesbeck, and near Fairfield. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Thunderstorms developing ahead of a cold front in the south central U.S. produced golf ball size hail and wind gusts to 62 mph at Mira LA, and during the morning hours drenched Stuttgart AR with five inches of rain. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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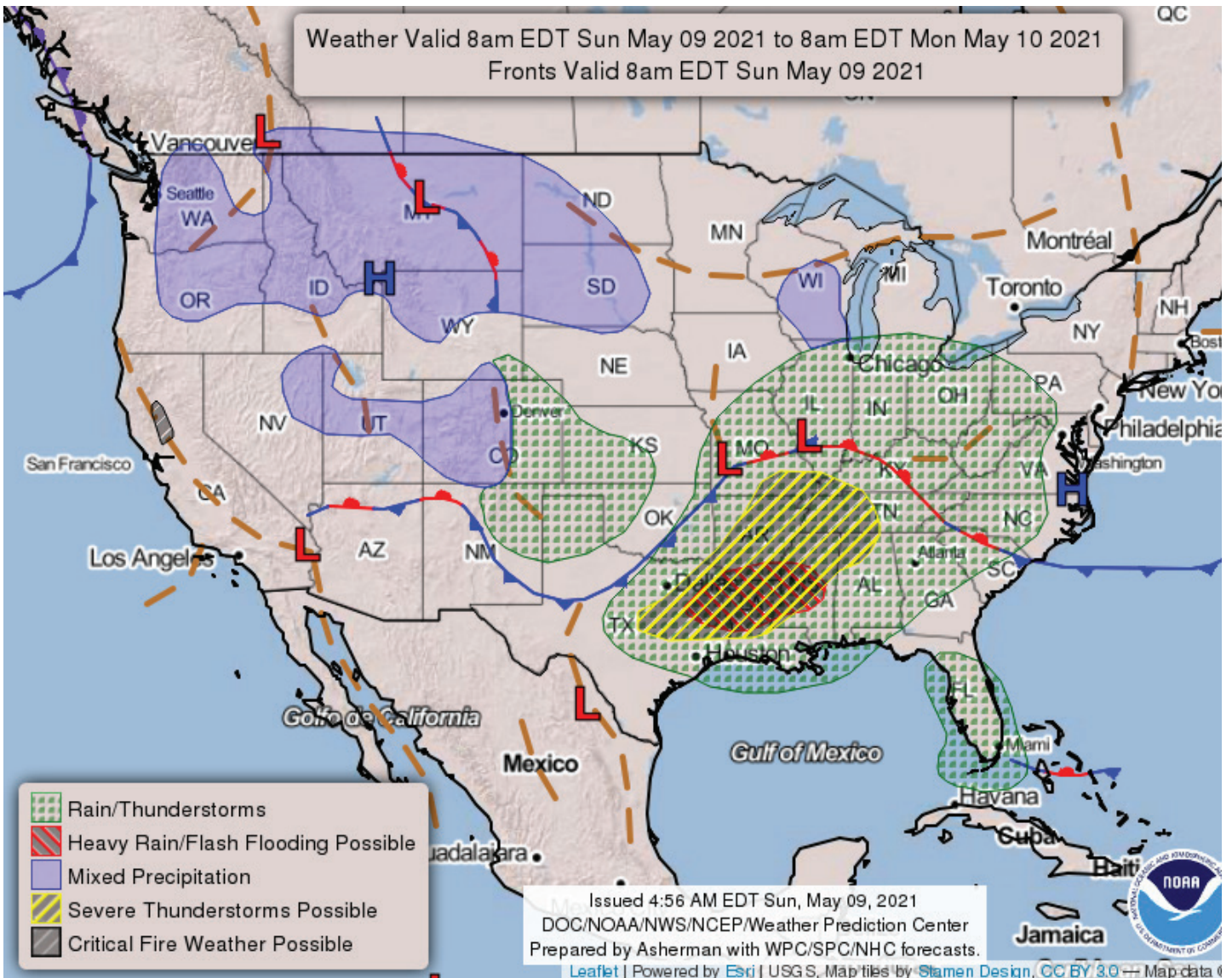
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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 49.6 °F at 11:00 AM
Low Temp: 38.5 °F at 11:45 PM
Wind: 22 mph at 12:45 PM
Precip: .13

Today's Info

Record High: 93° in 1992
Record Low: 21° in 1966
Average High: 68°F
Average Low: 41°F
Average Precip in May.: 0.87
Precip to date in May.: 0.25
Average Precip to date: 5.84
Precip Year to Date: 3.02
Sunset Tonight: 8:51 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:09 a.m.



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WISDOM AND UNDERSTANDING

"You are not prepared to live," said the professor to his philosophy class, "until you are ready to die." Few, if any, live with that thought in mind.

When he was twenty years old, David was diagnosed with cancer. After a careful examination, the attending physician said to him, "I'm sorry, but you have only a short time to live. At the most, two years." David took the news without flinching. He had accepted Christ as his Savior six months before he was given the news. He was well prepared.

As the disease progressed and his health deteriorated, his faith continued to grow. And as his faith grew so did his willingness to witness, and he gained a boldness about sharing God's grace. On one occasion he said, "Cancer brought me to my knees, and I realized I had no control over my life – only my mind."

During a visit with one of his physicians, he was asked, "Do you want to live a short time for God or a long time for nothing?" He responded by saying, "Whether I live a short time or a long time, it will be for God. My life is in His hands."

Shortly before his death his mother would walk into his room and ask, "David, are you still here?" Each time he would answer, "Yes, Mother. I'm still here."

On the last day of his life she went into his room and asked, "David are you still here?" His reply that day was, "Yes, Mother, but not for much longer. I'm going home." He looked around the room and said, "Mother, faith is a lighted room."

Where does a faith like David's come from? "God will redeem my life from the grave," said the Psalmist, "he will surely take me to Himself." Faith like his comes from faith in Christ.

David lived his life knowing he was ready to die. Are you?

Prayer: We are grateful, Lord, for the confidence we have in Your Son, knowing that we can have eternal life through Him. May we accept His salvation. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: But God will free my soul from the power of the grave. For He will take me to

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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
Cancelled 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 **AP** Associated Press

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

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

Dakota Cash

07-16-19-27-29

(seven, sixteen, nineteen, twenty-seven, twenty-nine)

Estimated jackpot: \$20,000

Lotto America

04-32-34-41-44, Star Ball: 2, ASB: 2

(four, thirty-two, thirty-four, forty-one, forty-four; Star Ball: two; ASB: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$5.78 million

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$396 million

Powerball

12-17-20-21-26, Powerball: 8, Power Play: 3

(twelve, seventeen, twenty, twenty-one, twenty-six; Powerball: eight; Power Play: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$157 million

South Dakota St advances to 1st FCS championship game

BROOKINGS, S.D. (AP) — Mark Gronowski passed for two touchdowns and caught a 24-yard TD pass from Pierre Strong Jr. to help top-seeded South Dakota State beat Delaware 33-3 in the semifinals of the FCS playoffs on Saturday.

South Dakota State, in its ninth consecutive FCS playoffs appearance, advanced to the championship game for the first time in program history. The Jackrabbits (8-1) will face Sam Houston State in the championship game on May 16 in Frisco, Texas.

Gronowski had 115 of his 162 yards passing, 23 of his 27 yards rushing and all of his 24 yards receiving in the first half to help South Dakota State build a 27-3 lead.

Strong ran 14 times for 73 yards and a touchdown and Isaiah Davis added 70 yards rushing on nine carries. Jaxon Janke caught three passes for 64 yards and a touchdown and returned a punt 55 yards in the second quarter.

The Blue Hens (7-1) took a 3-0 lead on Ryan Coe's field goal with 3:44 left in the first quarter. South Dakota State needed only 7 minutes, 26 seconds time of possession to score TDs on its next four drives.

Nolan Henderson completed 18 of 21 passes for 142 yards for Delaware. The Blue Hens won six national championships between 1946 and 2003. Since advancing to the FCS championship game in 2007 and 2010, the program had appeared in the playoffs just once, in 2018, before this season.

The Jackrabbits defense had seven sacks and held the Blue Hens to 68 yards rushing on 45 carries.

Police: Sioux Falls man shot in the face during dispute

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Authorities say a 29-year-old Sioux Falls man was hospitalized with non life-threatening injuries after he was shot in the face.

The Argus Leader reports police were called to the area of Eighth Street and Cleveland Avenue in eastern Sioux Falls for a report of gunshots around 9 p.m. Thursday.

Police say a 20-year-old suspect turned himself into police at the law enforcement center at 10:15 p.m. He has been charged with aggravated assault.

Police say the victim was driving his car in the area when he made a U-turn to park. The suspect was

in the backseat of another vehicle that parked in front of the victim's vehicle.

Police say the men got out of their cars, and the suspect pointed a gun at the victim, who got back into his vehicle. Police say the suspect fired 11 shots at the car, striking the victim once in the face.

Police say the two men knew each other and that the victim also had a gun but that police do not know if it was fired.

South Dakota men turn Flyover Country into budding brand

By MAKENZIE HUBER Sioux Falls Argus Leader

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Vaney Hariri already knew what people would say when they found out where he was from:

"What's in South Dakota?"

"What is there to do?"

"Why would you live there?"

"That's flyover country."

South Dakota and the Midwest is more than a filler state, though. It's filled with people who are making a difference in their communities, pursuing their passions and calling this "flyover country" home, he said.

So, he decided to take ownership in the insult.

Hariri, co-owner in Think3D solutions, started the Flyover Country apparel line in June 2020 alongside Joshua Novak, who founded Main St. Media House.

And the business is growing quickly. The two are renting space in downtown to store their products, and Hariri said they might consider a storefront at some point in the journey.

While there are plenty of state pride shirts already, the two didn't find something that united the entire area.

"I love repping this state, but I'm not going to wear a pheasant," Hariri said. "This is not an anti-coast thing. This is a pro-us thing. This is loving where you're from and investing in your community."

They settled on a simple airplane design, displayed on T-shirts, sweatshirts, masks and other apparel pieces. But it's not just a piece of clothing: it's a message, the Sioux Falls Argus Leader reported.

"People can buy stuff from whoever, but for us it's about having a real connection and teaching each other about each other," Hariri said.

To accompany their products, the two create video series interviewing people in Sioux Falls about why they live in South Dakota and what difference they're making while living here. Eventually, the two want to expand to interview people across the region.

Scott Heckel, co-owner and head brewer at Severance Brewing Co., shared his story with Flyover Country to inspire others who grew up in the Midwest and "thought they had to move out to accomplish something."

"We could have tried to start a brewery anywhere," the Aberdeen native said. "But we saw the potential in Sioux Falls and thought it was a good opportunity to celebrate what my wife and I believe in and stick to our Midwest roots."

"Every winter when the temperature drops, you ask why you live here, and you reflect on those things that make you want to stay," he added.

Heckel partnered with Flyover Country to launch a collaboration beer called "Why you're here" beer, which is brewed with local ingredients from flyover country. The beer includes grain from Two Track Malt-ing in Bismarck, North Dakota and hops from Herds to Hops in western Sioux Falls.

The launch party for the beer will also release Flyover Country's latest limited release shirt, which features the Sioux Falls flag inside its logo. Hariri believes the limited edition T-shirts will sell out quickly, so they'll have pre-order sales on their website through the end of May.

"Be here on purpose. Be here because you want to help make this community one to be proud of," Hariri said. "For so long we would lose a lot of our youth because they sought out more diversity, culture and opportunities outside their home. Now we're starting to witness people coming home and staying home. The better option is always staying here and making it better."

After court nixes eviction ban, race is on for federal help

By MICHAEL CASEY Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — The recent court ruling striking down a national eviction moratorium has heightened concerns that tenants won't receive tens of billions of dollars in promised federal aid in time to avoid getting kicked out of their homes.

A federal judge on Wednesday found the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention exceeded its authority when it imposed the moratorium last year. Housing advocates believe the ban saved lives and not only should continue, but be extended past its initial June 30 deadline.

For now, the moratorium remains: A judge stayed the court's order following an appeal from the Justice Department.

Without the moratorium, advocates say, the only thing standing between many tenants and eviction is the nearly \$50 billion allocated by Congress for rental assistance. Advocates say very few tenants have received any of the money — which is up to individual states to distribute — and they fear it won't get to the neediest people in time if the moratorium is scrapped.

"Unfortunately, rental assistance funds are not reaching struggling families nearly as quickly as is needed," said Oren Sellstrom, litigation director for the Lawyers for Civil Rights in Boston. "Here in Massachusetts, tenants report that submitting a rental assistance application is like sending it into a black hole."

The government didn't do much better last year, when several states failed to spend the federal coronavirus relief monies they had set aside for rental assistance, the advocates said. Among them were New York, Pennsylvania, Louisiana, Mississippi and Kansas.

Diane Yentel, CEO of the National Low Income Housing Coalition, said some of the same problems are being seen now, namely landlords refusing to participate, programs refusing to give money directly to tenants and cumbersome application processes.

"The CDC moratorium is essential to our efforts to prevent people from getting evicted before they can get rental assistance," said Caitlin Cedfeldt, a staff attorney at Legal Aid of Nebraska.

Landlords, many of whom have challenged the moratorium, say the court's decision increases pressure on the federal and state governments to speed up rental assistance distribution.

"Instead of propping up legally-questionable policies, government at every level needs to cut the red tape and focus on distributing the \$46 billion in rental assistance efficiently," Bob Pinnegar, president & CEO of the National Apartment Association, said in an email interview. "Getting rental assistance funds into the hands of those renters and rental housing providers who need it most is the only way to prevent irrevocable harm to our nation's housing supply."

President Joe Biden's administration on Friday announced changes aimed at doing just that. Government agencies implementing the rental relief program will be required to offer assistance directly to renters if landlords choose not to participate, said Gene Sperling. Sperling is the White House coordinator of Biden's American Rescue Plan, a sweeping, \$1.9 trillion pandemic relief package Congress passed to help the country defeat the coronavirus and nurse the economy back to health. Also, the waiting time for delivering the assistance to renters is cut in half if landlords aren't involved, Sperling said.

"We need to make sure that as we implement these emergency funds that we are nimble enough to address growing needs," he said.

The eviction ban was put in place last year to prevent families from losing their homes and moving into shelters or sharing crowded conditions with relatives or friends, conditions health officials said could exacerbate the spread of the highly contagious coronavirus.

Proponents of the moratorium argue it is necessary since the pandemic is still a threat and so many people are at risk of eviction or foreclosure. Nearly 4 million people in the U.S. said they faced eviction or foreclosure in the next two months, according to the Census Bureau's biweekly Household Pulse Survey.

"In the short term, Congress and the Biden administration have the power to strengthen the moratorium across the country and halt all evictions for the remainder of the pandemic," Dawn Phillips, executive

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director of Right To The City Alliance, a national coalition of 90 housing-justice organizations, said in an email interview.

A handful of states are picking up the slack themselves. The state of Connecticut and the city of Philadelphia both have their own eviction moratoriums in place.

"While we're ahead of the curve in working to get our rental relief money out compared to our peers, we still have a long way to go," said Democratic Connecticut Gov. Ned Lamont, who indicated that his state's moratorium would probably remain in place for another month. "... We're trying to work with tenants and landlords to put together something that allows people to stay in their homes a lot longer."

In Philadelphia, lawmakers credit a local moratorium with helping to reduce evictions from about 20,000 a year to only 5,000 last year. On top of that, a program started in September requires landlords to apply for rental assistance prior to going to court to evict tenants. The so-called diversion program has been credited with preventing thousands of evictions.

"We had to create alternatives to eviction," said Philadelphia City Council member Helen Gym, who helped put the program in place.

US Navy seizes weapons in Arabian Sea likely bound for Yemen

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — The U.S. Navy announced Sunday it seized an arms shipment of thousands of assault weapons, machine guns and sniper rifles hidden aboard a ship in the Arabian Sea, apparently bound for Yemen to support the country's Houthi rebels.

An American defense official told The Associated Press that the Navy's initial investigation found the vessel came from Iran, again tying the Islamic Republic to arming the Houthis despite a United Nations arms embargo. Iran's mission to the U.N. did not immediately respond to a request for comment, though Tehran has denied in the past giving the rebels weapons.

The seizure, one of several amid the yearslong war in Yemen, comes as the U.S. and others try to end a conflict that spawned one of the world's worst humanitarian disasters. The arms shipment, described as sizeable, shows that the war may still have far to run.

The guided-missile cruiser USS Monterey discovered the weapons aboard what the Navy described as a stateless dhow, a traditional Mideast sailing ship, in an operation that began Thursday in the northern reaches of the Arabian Sea off Oman and Pakistan. Sailors boarded the vessel and found the weapons, most wrapped in green plastic, below deck.

When laid out on the deck of the Monterey, the scale of the find came into focus. Sailors found nearly 3,000 Chinese Type 56 assault rifles, a variant of the Kalashnikov. They recovered hundreds of other heavy machine guns and sniper rifles, as well as dozens of advanced, Russian-made anti-tank guided missiles. The shipments also included several hundred rocket-propelled grenade launchers and optical sights for weapons.

The Navy's Mideast-based 5th Fleet did not identify where the weapons originated, nor where they were going. However, an American defense official said the weapons resembled those of other shipments interdicted bounded for the Houthis.

Based on interviews with the crew and material investigated on board, the sailors determined the vessel came from Iran, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the ongoing investigation.

"After all illicit cargo was removed, the dhow was assessed for seaworthiness, and after questioning, its crew was provided food and water before being released," the 5th Fleet said in a statement.

The seizure marks just the latest in the Arabian Sea or Gulf of Aden involving weapons likely bound to Yemen. The seizures began in 2016 and have continued intermittently throughout the war, which has seen the Houthis fire ballistic missiles and use drones later linked to Iran. Yemen is awash with small arms that have been smuggled into poorly controlled ports over years of conflict.

This recent seizure appeared to be among the biggest. Tim Michetti, an investigative researcher who studies the illicit weapon trade, also said the shipment bore similarities to the others.

"The unique blend of materiel recovered by the USS Monterey appears to be consistent with the materiel from previous interdictions, which have been linked to Iran," he said.

Yemen's war began in September 2014, when the Houthis seized Sanaa and began a march south to try to seize the entire country. Saudi Arabia, along with the United Arab Emirates and other countries, entered the war alongside Yemen's internationally recognized government in March 2015. Iran backed the Houthis, who harass Saudi Arabia with missile fire and drone attacks.

The war has killed some 130,000 people, including over 13,000 civilians slain in targeted attacks, according to the Armed Conflict Location & Event Project.

The war has seen atrocities from all sides. Saudi airstrikes using American-made bombs killed school children and civilians. The UAE paid off local al-Qaida fighters to avoid fighting and controlled prisons where torture and sexual abuse was rampant. The Houthis employ child soldiers and indiscriminately lay landmines.

Since 2015, the U.N. Security Council has imposed an arms embargo on the Houthis. Despite that, U.N. experts warn "an increasing body of evidence suggests that individuals or entities in the Islamic Republic of Iran supply significant volumes of weapons and components to the Houthis."

Ransomware gangs get more aggressive against law enforcement

By ALAN SUDERMAN Associated Press

RICHMOND, Va., (AP) — Police Chief Will Cunningham came to work four years ago to find that his six-officer department was the victim of a crime.

Hackers had taken advantage of a weak password to break in and encrypt the files of the department in Roxana, a small town in Illinois near St. Louis, and were demanding \$6,000 of bitcoin.

"I was shocked, I was surprised, frustrated," Cunningham said.

Police departments big and small have been plagued for years by foreign hackers breaking into networks and causing varying level of mischief, from disabling email systems to more serious problems with 911 centers temporarily knocked offline. In some cases important case files have gone missing.

But things have taken a dark turn recently. Criminal hackers are increasingly using brazen methods to increase pressure on law enforcement agencies to pay ransoms, including leaking or threatening to leak highly sensitive and potentially life-threatening information.

The threat of ransomware has risen to a level that's impossible to ignore, with hardly a day going by without news of a hospital, private business or government agency being victimized. On Saturday, the operator of a major pipeline system that transports fuel across the East Coast said it had been victimized by a ransomware attack and had halted all pipeline operations to deal with the threat.

The increasingly defiant attacks on law enforcement agencies underscore how little ransomware gangs fear repercussions.

In Washington, D.C., a Russian-speaking ransomware syndicate called Babuk hacked into the network of the city's police department and threatened to leak the identities of confidential informants unless an unspecified ransom was paid.

A day after the initial threat was posted in late April, the gang tried to spur payment by leaking personal information of some police officers taken from background checks, including details of officers' past drug use, finances and — in at least one incident — of past sexual abuse.

Similar threats were made recently against a small police force in Maine. The police department in Dade City, a small town in Florida, currently has many of its files posted on the dark web by the ransomware gang Avaddon after the city decided not to pay the \$450,000 worth of bitcoin that was demanded. Leaked files show pictures of a dead body from a crime scene.

Ransomware gangs have been leaking sensitive data from victims for well over a year, but experts said they've not seen such aggressive new tactics used before against police departments.

"It should be a wake-up call to government that it finally needs to take strong and decisive action," said Brett Callow, a threat analyst at the security firm Emsisoft.

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Making the ransomware attacks potentially more damaging, police are now able to collect and store more personal information than ever before through advances in surveillance equipment and technologies such as artificial intelligence and facial recognition software.

April Doss, the executive director of the Institute for Technology Law & Policy at Georgetown University Law School, said laws and regulations about how police collect, retain and secure that data are largely unsettled.

"Where that leaves us is with police departments getting to use a great deal of their own discretion in terms of what technologies they adopt and how they use them," said Doss, who previously worked at the National Security Agency and recently wrote a book on cyberprivacy.

Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas has called ransomware a "threat to national security" and said the issue is a top priority of the White House. Congress is exploring giving state and local governments grant money to boost their response to ransomware.

Because ransomware is so lucrative for its perpetrators, who operate out of Western law enforcement's reach in Russia and other safe havens, experts say the most important tools for battling it are elementary cybersecurity measures.

Statistics of how many police departments have been hit by ransomware attacks are hard to come by, as is information on whether departments ever pay a ransom. There's no official count and not every incident is made public.

Callow, the threat analyst, said he's counted at least 11 law enforcement agencies affected by ransomware since the beginning of 2020. Officers have been locked out of their computer systems and forced to resort to paper records. Prosecutors in Stuart, Florida, told local media last year they had to drop a case against suspected drug dealers after a local police department's files were encrypted by a ransomware gang.

In the nation's capital, the final outcome is uncertain. The Babuk gang's threats to release more information have so far not come to pass and the files that were posted have been taken down.

The city's lower income areas are struggling with increased violence. Longtime community activist Philip Pannell said police already have a hard time getting witnesses to come forward, and having hackers threaten to release information about confidential informants would make it even harder. If the names of confidential informants are released, Pannell said it would put them in real danger.

"Why would someone want to do something like that? They just want to foment chaos," he said.

Gregg Pemberton, chairman of the D.C. Police Union, said officers are extremely concerned about such private information being in the hands of foreign hackers.

"The fact that data of such a sensitive nature was able to be accessed by hackers says a lot about the quality of service elected officials provide this city. What is ironic is that in an era where police officers are targeted by their leaders for alleged misfeasance, it's really their leaders that are truly unable to perform to standards," he said.

The department said in a statement it's still trying to determine the size and scope of the breach and has urged officers to obtain a free copy of their credit reports. The FBI is assisting with the investigation.

Law enforcement agencies require thorough and intrusive background checks that gather a wealth of information about a person's history and character. It's perfect blackmail material for hackers, whether they are criminal gangs or foreign governments. Six years ago Chinese hackers stole millions of background check files of federal government employees from the Office of Personnel Management.

Randy Pargman, who worked for the FBI for 15 years, said police departments need to do some "soul searching" about how they currently protect sensitive data such as background check files. He said many departments don't have the budget or staffing for sophisticated cybersecurity measures, but could still transfer sensitive files to external hard drives kept offline and used only when needed.

"Every police department needs to think about their threat model and that they will probably be a target at some point," said Pargman, vice president of threat hunting and counterintelligence at the private firm Binary Defense.

Back in Roxana, the police chief said he didn't have to pay the hackers because the files were backed

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up and the department bought new computer equipment for roughly the same amount as the ransom demand. Cunningham reported the hackers to the FBI, but as far as he's heard they were never caught. The whole experience, Cunningham said, was a real eye-opener.

"It's amazing how much opportunity is out there for these computer crimes," he said.

Trump's 'Big Lie' imperils Republicans who don't embrace it

By CALVIN WOODWARD Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Allegiance to a lie has become a test of loyalty to Donald Trump and a means of self-preservation for Republicans.

Trump's discredited allegations about a stolen election did nothing to save his presidency when courtrooms high and low, state governments and ultimately Congress — meeting in the chaos of an insurrection powered by his grievances — affirmed the legitimacy of his defeat and the honesty of the process that led to it.

Now those "Big Lie" allegations, no closer to true than before, are getting a second, howling wind.

Republicans are expected to believe the falsehoods, pretend they do or at bare minimum not let it be known that they don't. State Republican leaders from Georgia to Arizona have been flamed by Trump or his followers for standing against the lies.

Only a select few Republicans in Washington are defying him, for they, too, know that doing so comes with a cost.

Liz Cheney, lifelong conservative and daughter of a vice president once loved by the Republican right while earning the nickname Darth Vader, was willing to pay it.

"History is watching," the Wyoming congresswoman wrote as House Republicans prepared to strip her of her No. 3 leadership position this coming week over her confrontation with Trump. "Republicans need to stand for genuinely conservative principles, and steer away from the dangerous and anti-democratic Trump cult of personality."

Everyone enmeshed in Trump's relentless election claims agrees a "Big Lie" is at the heart of the matter. President Joe Biden says so. Cheney said so. Dominion Voting Systems alleges in a massive lawsuit that Trump lawyer Rudy Giuliani "manufactured and disseminated the 'Big Lie.'"

Trump tried to appropriate the phrase by turning it against his accusers, a pattern from his presidency when he railed against "fake news" after having his own called out.

"The Fraudulent Presidential Election of 2020 will be, from this day forth, known as THE BIG LIE!" he said in a statement last week, delivered as if by force of proclamation.

Trump led his party in an election that cost Republicans the presidency and their Senate majority while leaving them short of taking over in the House. For all that, the party's brute-force Trump faction is ascendant as Republicans place their bets on the energy and passions of his core supporters in the approach to the midterm elections next year.

That bet requires a suspension of disbelief when Trump makes his fantastical claims about a rigged election.

"This message is working," said former Republican Rep. Denver Riggleman, driven from Congress by a Trump-aligned opponent in the party's nomination race in his Virginia district last year. Riggleman pointed to strong local fund-raising success and poll numbers for Trump loyalists.

"If you've got to say things you don't believe in, as long as that leads to a win, that's what's most important," he told MSNBC. "If you think you can win by fanning these flames of disinformation, why wouldn't you do that?" He added: "If you have no integrity."

In the running to replace Cheney in the House GOP leadership, Rep. Elise Stefanik of New York in recent days endorsed Trump's false claims of voting fraud and of a ballot recount being conducted in Arizona's Maricopa County by a company whose leader has shared unfounded conspiracy theories about the election.

Artifice unfolded in Florida as Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis staged a fake signing ceremony Thursday on Fox News for a bill he actually signed elsewhere. The bill imposes new voting restrictions to fix problems

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state officials acknowledged haven't really been found, but might be in the future.

Republicans are pushing voting curbs in multiple states as well as the federal level even as state leaders have pronounced Trump's case baseless.

"They can't change the 2020 election but they can use it as a predicate for new restrictive voting laws," election law scholar Richard Hasen of University of California, Irvine, said of the Trump loyalists.

"It's extremely troubling for American democracy and undermines voter confidence in the integrity of the election process. Very dangerous."

Trump has been busy resurfacing election claims he's aired countless times before. They've been systematically debunked.

In a statement Friday, Trump asserted: "At 6:31 in the morning on November 4th, a dump of 149,772 votes came in to the State of Michigan. Biden received 96% of those votes and the State miraculously went to him."

No vote dump happened. The morning after November's election, Trump allies shared a map of Michigan that appeared to show Biden getting a huge spike of votes in an update. But the online news organization that was tracking results and published that map confirmed the same day it had made a data error and corrected it.

Trump went on: "Likewise, at 3:42 in the morning, a dump of 143,379 votes came in to the state of Wisconsin, also miraculously, given to Biden. Where did these 'votes' come from?"

Nothing nefarious here, either. Biden's early-morning comeback was simply the result of absentee and early votes being counted in Wisconsin's largest city and reported at once. Milwaukee counts absentee ballots in one centralized location and reports the results in a batch.

Election officials finished counting the city's roughly 169,000 absentee ballots and uploaded the results about 3 a.m. after Election Day. Milwaukee police then escorted the city's elections director to the county courthouse to deliver thumb drives with the data.

The outstanding ballots at that point overwhelmingly broke for Biden. A Democrat winning in a big city surprises no one.

In Utah a week ago, Sen. Mitt Romney was roundly booed by members of his party, while prevailing in a censure vote, for criticisms of Trump that hecklers called treasonous. Romney voted in both of Trump's impeachment trials to convict him; Cheney split her decision in the two House impeachments.

For four years Mike Pence epitomized the loyal vice president. But his pro forma certification of Biden's victory Jan. 6 put him on the outs with Trump and clouded his political future, though he had no authority under the Constitution, congressional rules, the law or custom to stand in Biden's way.

In one of his broadsides last week, Trump assailed Cheney, Pence and labeled Sen. Mitch McConnell "gutless and clueless" in one go. McConnell, the Senate Republican leader, voted for Trump's acquittal but pronounced him "practically and morally responsible" for provoking the Jan. 6 insurrection, drawing the ex-president's enduring enmity.

Since then, McConnell and Pence have turned the other cheek. Darth Vader's daughter didn't. But at the moment, the force seems to be with Trump.

Johnson calls for UK talks after Scottish Nationalists win

By SYLVIA HUI Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — British Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Sunday invited the leaders of the U.K.'s devolved nations for crisis talks on the union after Scotland's pro-independence party won its fourth straight parliamentary election.

Nicola Sturgeon, leader of the Scottish National Party, said the election results proved that a second independence vote for Scotland was "the will of the country" and that any London politician who stood in the way would be "picking a fight with the democratic wishes of the Scottish people."

The United Kingdom is made up of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, with devolved governments in the latter three.

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Johnson congratulated Sturgeon on her re-election, but told the leaders of the devolved governments in a letter that the U.K. was "best served when we work together." The letter invited the leaders to a summit to discuss plans to recover from the coronavirus pandemic and work out how the four nations can work together to overcome "shared challenges."

Final results of Thursday's local elections showed that the SNP won 64 of the 129 seats in the Edinburgh-based Scottish Parliament. Although it fell one seat short of securing an overall majority, the parliament still had a pro-independence majority with the help of eight members of the Scottish Greens.

Sturgeon said her immediate priority would be steering Scotland through the pandemic. But she said an independence referendum was "now a matter of fundamental democratic principle," and did not rule out legislation paving the way for a vote at the start of next year.

Johnson has the ultimate authority whether or not to permit another referendum on Scotland gaining independence. He wrote in Saturday's Daily Telegraph that another referendum on Scotland would be "irresponsible and reckless" as Britain emerges from the pandemic. He has consistently argued that the issue was settled in a 2014 referendum where 55% of Scottish voters favored remaining part of the U.K.

But proponents of another vote say the situation has changed fundamentally because of the U.K.'s Brexit divorce from the European Union. They charge that Scotland was taken out of the EU against its will. In the 2016 Brexit referendum, 52% of U.K. voters backed leaving the EU but 62% of Scots voted to remain.

When asked about the prospect of Johnson agreeing to a second Scottish referendum, Cabinet Office minister Michael Gove said Sunday "it's not an issue for the moment" and stressed that the national priority is on recovering from the coronavirus pandemic.

Gove argued that the SNP's failure to secure a majority in the Scottish Parliament was in marked contrast to the party's heights of power in 2011, when it won a 69-seat majority.

"It is not the case now — as we see — that the people of Scotland are agitating for a referendum," he told the BBC.

The Scotland results have been the main focus of Thursday's local elections across Britain. In Wales, the opposition Labour Party did better than expected, extending its 22 years at the helm of the Welsh government despite falling one seat short of a majority.

Labour's support also held up in some big cities. In London, Mayor Sadiq Khan handily won a second term. Other winning Labour mayoral candidates included Steve Rotherham in the Liverpool City Region, Andy Burnham in Greater Manchester and Dan Norris in the West of England region, which includes Bristol.

China says most rocket debris burned up during reentry

BEIJING (AP) — China's space agency said a core segment of its biggest rocket reentered Earth's atmosphere above the Maldives in the Indian Ocean and that most of it burned up early Sunday.

Harvard astrophysicist Jonathan McDowell, who tracked the tumbling rocket part, said on Twitter, "An ocean reentry was always statistically the most likely. It appears China won its gamble... But it was still reckless."

People in Jordan, Oman and Saudi Arabia reported sightings of the Chinese rocket debris on social media, with scores of users posting footage of the debris piercing the early dawn skies over the Middle East.

Usually, discarded rocket stages reenter the atmosphere soon after liftoff, normally over water, and don't go into orbit.

China's official Xinhua News Agency later clarified that reentry occurred Sunday at 10:24 a.m. Beijing time. "The vast majority of items were burned beyond recognition during the reentry process," the report said.

Despite that, NASA Administrator Sen. Bill Nelson issued a statement saying: "It is clear that China is failing to meet responsible standards regarding their space debris."

The roughly 30-meter (100-foot) long rocket stage is among the biggest space debris to fall to Earth. China's space program, with its close military links, hasn't said why it put the main component of the rocket into space rather than allowing it to fall back to earth soon after discharging its payload, as is

usual in such operations.

The Long March 5B rocket carried the main module of China's first permanent space station — Tianhe, or Heavenly Harmony — into orbit on April 29. China plans 10 more launches to carry additional parts of the space station into orbit.

An 18-ton rocket that fell last May was the heaviest debris to fall uncontrolled since the former Soviet space station Salyut 7 in 1991.

China's first-ever space station, Tiangong-1, crashed into the Pacific Ocean in 2016 after Beijing confirmed it had lost control. In 2019, the space agency controlled the demolition of its second station, Tiangong-2, in the atmosphere. Both had been briefly occupied by Chinese astronauts as precursors to China's permanent station, now under construction.

In March, debris from a Falcon 9 rocket launched by U.S. aeronautics company SpaceX fell to Earth in Washington and on the Oregon coast.

China was heavily criticized after sending a missile to destroy a defunct weather satellite in January 2007, creating a large field of hazardous debris imperiling satellites and other spacecraft.

Death toll soars to 50 in school bombing in Afghan capital

By RAHIM FAIEZ Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — Grieving families buried their dead Sunday following a horrific bombing at a girls' school in the Afghan capital that killed 50 people, many of them pupils between 11 and 15 years old.

The number of wounded in Saturday's attack climbed to more than 100, said Interior Ministry spokesman Tariq Arian. In the western neighborhood of Dasht-e-Barchi, families buried their dead amid angry recriminations at a government they said has failed to protect them from repeated attacks in the mostly Shiite Muslim neighborhood.

"The government reacts after the incident, it doesn't do anything before the incident," said Mohammad Baqir, Alizada, 41, who had gathered to bury his niece, Latifa, a Grade 11 student the Syed Al-Shahda school.

Three explosions outside the school entrance struck as students were leaving for the day, said Arian. The blasts targeted Afghanistan's ethnic Hazaras who dominate the Dasht-e-Barchi neighborhood, where the bombings occurred. Most Hazaras are Shiite Muslims. The Taliban denied responsibility, condemning the attack and the many deaths.

The first explosion came from a vehicle packed with explosives, followed by two others, said Arian, adding that the casualty figures could still rise.

In the capital rattled by relentless bombings, Saturday's attack was among the worst. Criticism has mounted over lack of security and growing fears of even more violence as the U.S. and NATO complete their final military withdrawal from Afghanistan.

The Dasht-e-Barchi area has been hit by several incidents of violence targeting minority Shiites and most often claimed by the Islamic State affiliate operating in the country. No one has yet claimed Saturday's bombings.

In this same neighborhood in 2018, a school bombing killed 34 people, mostly students. In September 2018 a wrestling club was attacked killing 24 people and in May 2020 a maternity hospital was brutally attacked killing 24 people, including pregnant women and infants. And in October 2020, the Kawsar-e-Danish tutoring center was attacked, killing 30 people.

Most of the attacks were claimed by the Islamic State affiliate operating in Afghanistan.

The radical Sunni Muslim group has declared war on Afghanistan's Shiites. Washington blamed IS for a vicious attack last year in a maternity hospital in the same area that killed pregnant women and newborn babies.

Soon after the bombing, angry crowds attacked ambulances and even beat health workers as they tried to evacuate the wounded, Health Ministry spokesman Ghulam Dastigar Nazari said. He had implored residents to cooperate and allow ambulances free access to the site.

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Arian, the Interior Ministry spokesman, blamed the attack on the Taliban despite their denials.

Bloodied backpacks and school books lay strewn outside the Syed Al-Shahda school. In the morning, boys attend classes in the sprawling school compound and in the afternoon, it's girls' turn.

On Sunday, Hazara leaders from Dasht-e- Barchi met to express their frustration with the government failure to protect ethnic Hazaras, deciding to cobble together a protection force of their own from among the Hazara community.

The force would be deployed outside schools, mosques and public facilities and would cooperate with government security forces. The intention is to supplement the local forces, said Parliamentarian Ghulam Hussein Naseri.

The meeting participants decided that "there is not any other way, except for people themselves to provide their own security alongside of the security forces," said Naseri, who added that the government should provide local Hazaras with weapons.

Naseri said Hazaras have been attacked in their schools, in their mosques and "it is their right to be upset. How many more families lose their loved ones? How many more attacks against this minority has to occur in this part of the city before something is done?"

One of the students fleeing the school recalled the attack, the girls' screams of the girls, the blood.

"I was with my classmate, we were leaving the school, when suddenly an explosion happened," said 15-year-old Zahra, whose arm had been broken by a piece of shrapnel.

"Ten minutes later there was another explosion and just a couple of minutes later another explosion," she said. "Everyone was yelling and there was blood everywhere, and I couldn't see anything clearly." Her friend died.

Most of the dozens of injured brought to the EMERGENCY Hospital for war wounded in the Afghan capital, "almost all girls and young women between 12 and 20 years old," said Marco Puntin, the hospital's programme coordinator in Afghanistan.

In a statement following the attack, the hospital, which has operated in Kabul since 2000 said the first three months of this year has seen a 21 per cent increase in war-wounded.

Even as the IS has been degraded in Afghanistan, according to government and US officials, it has stepped-up its attacks particularly against Shiite Muslims and women workers.

The attack comes days after the remaining 2,500 to 3,500 American troops officially began leaving the country. They will be out by Sept. 11 at the latest. The pullout comes amid a resurgent Taliban, who control or hold sway over half of Afghanistan.

The top U.S. military officer said Sunday that Afghan government forces face an uncertain future and possibly some "bad possible outcomes" against Taliban insurgents as the withdrawal accelerates in the coming weeks.

The Latest: India's double whammy: Rising cases, few shots

By The Associated Press undefined

NEW DELHI — India opened vaccinations to all adults this month, hoping to tame a disastrous coronavirus surge sweeping the country, but since then the pace of administering the shots has only dropped, with states saying they only have limited stock.

New infections are still rising at record pace in the world's second-most populous nation. Alongside a slowdown in vaccinations, states have gone to court over oxygen shortages as hospitals struggle to treat a running line of COVID-19 patients.

On Sunday, India reported 403,738 confirmed cases, including 4,092 deaths. Overall, India has over 22 million confirmed infections and 240,000 deaths. Experts say both figures are significant undercounts.

India's Supreme Court said Saturday it would set up a national task force consisting of top experts and doctors to conduct an "oxygen audit" to determine whether supplies from the federal government were reaching states.

Complaints of oxygen shortages have dominated the top court recently, which just stepped in to make

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sure the federal government provided more medical oxygen to hospitals in the capital, New Delhi.

THE VIRUS OUTBREAK:

- India's vaccination campaign falters due to a lack of vaccines even as new infections, deaths soar
- Party-goers across Spain rejoice as nation's state of emergency is lifted
- Some US states scale back vaccine orders as interest wanes
- EU says US patent waiver proposal isn't a magic bullet
- As US reopens, campuses tighten restrictions for virus

Follow more 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:

BARCELONA, Spain — Impromptu street celebrations erupted across Spain as the clock struck midnight on Saturday, when a six-month-long national state of emergency to contain the spread of coronavirus ended and many nighttime curfews were lifted.

In Madrid, police had to usher revelers out of the central Puerta del Sol square, where the scenes of unmasked dancing and group singing resembled pre-pandemic nightlife.

Teenagers and young adults also poured into central squares and beaches of Barcelona to mark the relaxation of restrictions.

"Freedom!" said Juan Cadavid, who was reconnecting with friends. The 25-year-old Barcelona resident was also rejoicing at the prospect of going back to work at a Michelin-star restaurant that has been closed for the past seven months due to pandemic-related restrictions.

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan — Pakistan is struggling with a third surge of coronavirus cases, despite a complete closure of all business and transport that began this weekend and continues until May 16, the end of the Eid holidays.

Pakistan reported 118 more deaths and 3,785 new cases of COVID-19 in a single day Sunday. It has now seen nearly 19,000 deaths in the pandemic.

All businesses are now closed except for essential food stores, pharmacies and fuel stations. Public transport in major cities and town is either at halt or allowed only with 50% capacity while intercity passenger transport is completely shut. Federal authorities also extended school closures to May 21

After receiving the first consignment of 1.2 million doses of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine on Saturday, the government is trying to ramp up inoculations.

DUBAI — Dubai's long-haul carrier Emirates will begin shipping aid from the World Health Organization and other groups into India for free to help fight a crushing outbreak of the coronavirus, the airline said Sunday.

The offer by Emirates, which has 95 flights weekly to nine cities in India, initially involves aid already in Dubai but may expand across the carrier's network as time goes on. That could mean major savings for aid groups as airfreight costs have skyrocketed amid the pandemic. Demand for flown cargo stands at record levels worldwide.

Emirates made the announcement at Dubai's International Humanitarian City, already home to a WHO warehouse that's been crucial to the distribution of medical gear worldwide.

A WHO worker on a forklift moved boxes of tents made in Pakistan and rolls of net shades from South Korea preparing for the initial flight planned for next Thursday. That will be used to construct field hospitals for India's overwhelmed health care system.

ROME — The Italian Health Ministry has set out guidelines for visiting people in nursing homes in the

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latest sign of reopening in the onetime epicenter of COVID-19 in Europe.

Health Minister Roberto Speranza signed a decree Saturday setting out a plan that, among other things, requires visitors to either be fully vaccinated, have proof of having had COVID-19 and recovered, or a negative test result in the past 48 hours.

As in other countries, Italian nursing homes and long-term residential facilities were devastated by the pandemic, especially during the first wave of infections in the spring of 2020. The total nursing home death toll isn't known, since so many COVID-19-suspected deaths were not counted because residents were not tested.

Italy has largely reopened after its wintertime lockdown, even though it is continuing to add around 10,000 confirmed infections and around 250-300 deaths per day. The 224 deaths reported Saturday brought Italy's confirmed toll to 122,694, second only to Britain in Europe.

MADISON, Wisc. — U.S. states asked the federal government this week to withhold staggering amounts of COVID-19 vaccine amid plummeting demand for the shots, contributing to a growing U.S. stockpile of doses.

From South Carolina to Washington, states are requesting the Biden administration send them only a fraction of what's been allocated to them. The turned-down vaccines amount to hundreds of thousands of doses this week alone, providing a stark illustration of the problem of vaccine hesitancy in the U.S.

More than 150 million Americans — about 57% of the adult population — have received at least one dose of vaccine, but government leaders are doing everything they can to persuade the rest of the country to get inoculated.

The Biden administration announced this week that if states don't order all the vaccine they've been allotted, the administration will shift the surplus to meet demand in other states.

ISTANBUL — Produce markets were allowed to open Saturday across Turkey as the country's strictest lockdown continues amid an economic downturn with double-digit inflation.

The markets, or "bazaars," are integral to Turkish food culture. Producers bring their fruits and vegetables to nearly every neighborhood on set days of the week.

The full lockdown that began in late April and is set to last until May 17 has curtailed this tradition and limited it to Saturdays in designated marketplaces.

Idris Taka, a vendor selling vegetables at an open-air market in Istanbul on Saturday, says he has taken a financial hit. "We could work four to five days a week and now we can work one day out of 17 days," he said.

Critics have said the Turkish government's measures to fight a surge in cases have been inconsistent and impractical. Residents have been ordered to stay at home, but millions of people are exempt from the lockdown and continue to work in factories, hospitals, agriculture and tourism, among other sectors. Foreign tourists are also exempt.

Prices continued climbing in April with year-to-year inflation hovering above 17%.

STOCKHOLM — The Swedish military says 200 conscripts have been sent home from a major military exercise involving thousands of soldiers in southern and central Sweden due to a suspected outbreak of coronavirus infections.

The "Sydfront 21" drill with over 3,500 participants from 13 different units of the Swedish Armed Forces is the first major military exercise in the Scandinavian nation since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Exercise leader Maj. Ake Palm told Swedish broadcaster TV4 that the military made the decision to send some soldiers home after several conscripts with cold-like symptoms either tested positive or were suspected to have been infected.

Alf Johansson, head of the exercise's communications, told the Swedish news agency TT that the affected unit had 200 soldiers and 8 positive coronavirus so far. He defended holding the drill in the middle

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of the pandemic.

"This is a very important exercise for the army to train together so that we can maintain our ability to defend Sweden," Johansson told TT.

Sweden, a nation of 10 million, has recorded just over 1 million coronavirus cases, with 14,173 deaths by Friday.

HARTFORD, Conn. — Of the more than 1.4 million Connecticut residents who are now fully vaccinated, 242 later became infected with COVID-19, according to data released Friday from the state Department of Public Health.

Among the 242 so-called "vaccine breakthrough cases," 109 people had no symptoms of the disease. DPH reported three deaths among vaccinated individuals who were confirmed to have had underlying medical conditions.

Nationally, there have been 132 vaccine-breakthrough deaths, DPH said.

"The main takeaway is that COVID-19 vaccines are highly effective and cases of infection after a person is fully vaccinated are very rare," said. Dr. Deidre Gifford, the state's acting public health commissioner

HELENA, Mont. -- Montana Gov. Greg Gianforte and Alberta Premier Jason Kenney announced that Montana will share COVID-19 vaccines with Canadian truck drivers from neighboring Alberta.

According to a memorandum of understanding signed Friday about 2,000 truck drivers from Alberta who transport goods from Canada to the U.S. will be eligible to be vaccinated at a highway rest stop near Conrad.

The vaccines will be available between May 10 and May 23. A similar program to vaccinate truck drivers from Canada began in North Dakota last month.

The Blackfeet tribe in northern Montana has given around 1,000 vaccines to their relatives and neighbors across the border.

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — The owner of a Northern California bar was arrested on suspicion of selling made-to-order fake COVID-19 vaccination cards to several undercover state agents for \$20 each.

The plainclothes agents from California's Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control were told to write their names and birthdates on Post-it notes. They say bar employees cut the cards, filled out the identifying information and bogus vaccination dates, then laminated the finished product.

Vaccination cards are being used in some places as a pass for people to attend large gatherings. The European Union is considering allowing in tourists who can prove they have been vaccinated.

Long-haul carrier Emirates to ship aid for free into India

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Dubai's long-haul carrier Emirates will begin shipping aid from the World Health Organization and other groups into India for free to help fight a crushing outbreak of the coronavirus, the airline said Sunday.

The offer by Emirates, which has some 95 flights weekly to nine cities in India, initially involves aid already in Dubai but may expand across the carrier's network as time goes on. That could mean major savings for aid groups as airfreight costs have skyrocketed amid the pandemic. Demand for flown cargo stands at record levels worldwide.

Emirates made the announcement at Dubai's International Humanitarian City, already home to a WHO warehouse that's been crucial to the distribution of medical gear worldwide. A WHO worker on a forklift moved boxes of tents made in Pakistan and rolls of net shades from South Korea preparing for the initial flight planned for Thursday. That will be used to construct field hospitals for India's overwhelmed health care system.

Nabil Sultan, the divisional senior vice president for Emirates SkyCargo, said the initial priority would be

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shipping aid out of Dubai, rather than elsewhere from its network. While airfreight costs stand at record prices, Sultan said offering free shipping for aid to India now was important for an airline that has flown to the South Asian country since the carrier's founding in 1985.

"Our relationship with India in particular goes a long way and at times like this, I think it's absolutely essential that we make sure that essential commodities get to India and to the Indian people," Sultan told The Associated Press. "This is the time for us to give back."

As India has grown into an economic power, so has Emirates and its base of Dubai International Airport, the world's busiest for international travel. The airline serves as a key link in East-West travel.

Passenger numbers from India for Emirates, just under 3 million in 2008, grew to 5.5 million a decade later. That's some 10% of Emirates overall annual passenger load, with more coming from the surrounding countries on the subcontinent. Millions of Indians also live in the United Arab Emirates and comprise a key part of its labor force.

Then came the pandemic and the fierce outbreak now burning through India. Infections have surged there since February, fueled by variants and the government's permission for massive crowds to attend religious festivals and political rallies. On Saturday alone, India reported over 400,000 new cases and more than 4,000 deaths. Since the pandemic began, India has reported 21.8 million cases and nearly 240,000 deaths, though experts say even those figures likely are undercounts.

The UAE banned in-bound passenger flights from India in late April, though cargo flights continued and passenger planes return with their seats now empty. Emirates already had been shipping in masks, gloves and other protective gear, as well as diffusers as oxygen remains in short supply for those gasping to breath in the throes of the virus, Sultan said.

As the Indian diaspora tries to send in more aid, Sultan said the airline would evaluate whether to expand the program to include shipments coming from outside of Dubai as well. Operating with groups already in Dubai ensure that they have the right paperwork and contacts to make sure the most vital aid reaches there first, he said.

"As a phase two and three, we will be looking at a range of opportunities for people to sort of donate if they wish, where we can provide capacity to those sort of donations and move them to India," Sultan said.

All this comes as air cargo has reached record levels after flights around the world halted when the pandemic first took hold. The International Air Transport Association, an aviation trade organization, said in March it saw the highest levels of demand ever as the world's economy slowly began to pick up.

Per pound, costs for airfreight worldwide are up by some 75%, according to data provider WorldACM. That's as airlines like Emirates still have jumbo jets sitting on tarmacs, waiting for demand and international restrictions to lift to restart routes. Dozens of Emirates' double-decker Airbus A380s stood parked at the nearby Dubai World Central's Al Maktoum International Airport.

Robert Blanchard, who oversees the emergency operation in Dubai for the WHO, praised Emirates for offering the free cargo flights. His warehouse continues to juggle aid for the coronavirus while shipping out gear for cholera and Ebola outbreaks with just eight staffers. He warned that while countries in the West and in the UAE enjoyed quicker access to vaccines, what India faces serves a warning to the rest of the world.

"There's a long way to go before we get back to normal," Blanchard said. "And although the vaccines offer a lot of promise, what we're seeing is that the quantities that are available and the rate of distribution is simply not enough to handle the pandemic."

As cases grow, India's vaccination campaign falters

By KRUTIKA PATHI Associated Press

BENGALURU, India (AP) — Since India opened vaccinations to all adults this month, hoping to tame a disastrous coronavirus surge sweeping across the country, the pace of administering the shots has dropped with states saying they only have limited stock to give out.

Cases meanwhile are still rising at record pace in the world's second-most populous nation. Alongside a

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slowdown in vaccinations, states have gone to court over oxygen shortages as hospitals struggle to treat a running line of COVID-19 patients.

On Sunday, India reported 403,738 confirmed cases, including 4,092 deaths. Overall, India has over 22 million confirmed infections and 240,000 deaths. Experts say both figures are undercounts.

India's Supreme Court said Saturday it would set up a national task force consisting of top experts and doctors to conduct an "oxygen audit" to determine whether supplies from the federal government were reaching states.

Complaints of oxygen shortages have dominated the top court recently, which stepped in earlier this week to make sure the federal government provided more medical oxygen to hospitals in the capital, New Delhi.

The country's massive vaccination drive kicked off sluggishly in January when cases were low and exports of vaccines were high, with 64 million doses going overseas. But as infections started to rise in March and April, India's exports drastically slowed down so doses went to its own population. So far, around 10% of India's population have received one shot while just under 2.5% have got both.

At its peak in early April, India was administering a record high of 3.5 million shots a day on average. But this number has consistently shrunk since, reaching an average of 1.3 million shots a day over the past week. Between April 6 and May 6, daily doses have dropped by 38%, even as cases have tripled and deaths have jumped sixfold, according to Bhramar Mukherjee, a biostatistician at the University of Michigan who has been tracking India's epidemic.

One reason for the drop in shots is that there are just not enough available, experts say. Currently, India's two vaccine makers produce an estimated 70 million doses each month of the two approved shots — AstraZeneca, made by the Serum Institute of India, and another by Bharat Biotech.

Vaccine supply has remained nearly the same since the drive began in January, but the target population eligible has increased by threefold, said Chandrakant Lahariya, a health policy expert. "In the beginning, India had far more assured supply available than the demand, but now the situation has reversed," he added.

In Kerala state, the drive to inoculate all adults is crawling along because "our single biggest problem is the very slow arrival of supplies," said the state's COVID-19 officer, Amar Fette.

In New Delhi, many are waiting for hours outside vaccination centers — but only after they've been able to book a slot.

For Gurmukh Singh, a marketing professional in the city, this has been impossible. "It gets really frustrating, having so many hospitals and vaccine centers around but not being able to get access because they are all pre-booked," he said.

Experts also point to a new policy change by the government, which has upended how doses are being distributed.

Previously, all of the stock was bought by the federal government and then administered to the population through both public and private health facilities.

But from May 1, all available stock has been divided in two, with 50% purchased by the government going to public health centers to inoculate those above 45. The remaining half is being purchased by states and the private sector directly from manufacturers at set prices to give adults below 45.

This has led to lags as states and private hospitals, still adjusting to new rules, struggle to procure supplies on their own.

"You have now taken it out of a fairly efficient system where every dose was still centrally-controlled," said Jacob John, a professor of community medicine at Christian Medical College, Vellore. "But with market forces at play and unprepared states burdened with such a daunting task, the efficiency of the system has fallen."

Things could change in the coming months, as the government last month gave an advance to the Serum Institute of India and Bharat Biotech, which could help boost manufacturing. And last week, India received its first batch of Sputnik V vaccines. Russia has signed a deal with an Indian pharmaceutical

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company to distribute 125 million doses.

But with vaccines currently in short supply, there are worries that those most in need are missing out. The goal should be to prioritize preventing deaths, which means fully vaccinating the elderly and vulnerable first, said Dr. Gagandeep Kang, a microbiologist at Christian Medical College, Vellore.

"You need to give it (earlier) to people who are more likely to die first," Kang said.

Putin tells Red Square parade that Nazi ideas persist

MOSCOW (AP) — Russian President Vladimir Putin marked the anniversary of the end of World War II in Europe with a speech warning that Nazi beliefs remain strong.

Speaking to the annual military parade on Moscow's Red Square, Putin on Sunday decried "attempts to rewrite history, to justify traitors and criminals, on whose hands lies the blood of hundreds of thousands of peaceful people."

"Unfortunately, many of the ideologies of the Nazis, those who were obsessed with the delusional theory of their exclusiveness, are again trying to be put into service," he said, without citing specifics.

The parade, whose format varies little from year to year, included more than 190 military vehicles traversing the square, ranging from the renowned WWII-era T-34 tank to the hulking eight-axle Yars mobile ICBM launchers.

The anniversary of Nazi Germany's defeat, which Russia calls Victory Day, is the country's most significant secular holiday, commemorating the Red Army's military feats and the vast suffering of civilians. About 27 million Soviet soldiers and civilians are estimated to have died in the war.

Street parties celebrate end of Spain's state of emergency

By RENATA BRITO and ARITZ PARRA Associated Press

BARCELONA, Spain (AP) — Impromptu street celebrations erupted across Spain as the clock struck midnight on Saturday, when a six-month-long national state of emergency to contain the spread of coronavirus ended and many nighttime curfews were lifted.

In Madrid, police had to usher revelers out of the central Puerta del Sol square, where the scenes of unmasked dancing and group singing resembled pre-pandemic nightlife.

Teenagers and young adults also poured into central squares and beaches of Barcelona to mark the relaxation of restrictions.

"Freedom!" said Juan Cadavid, who was reconnecting with friends. "(It's) a bit scary, you know, because of COVID, but I want to feel like this around a lot of people."

The 25-year-old Barcelona resident was also rejoicing at the prospect of going back to work at a Michelin-star restaurant that has been closed for the past seven months due to pandemic-related restrictions.

Local restaurants will be able to serve dinner again beginning Sunday and can stay open until 11 p.m. But a limit of four people per table remains and indoor dining is limited to 30% of capacity.

With the end of the state of emergency, bans on traveling across Spain's regions have also been lifted and many curbs on social gatherings were relaxed. Only four of the country's 19 regions and autonomous cities are keeping curfews in place.

In spite of criticism from some regional chiefs and opposition figures, Spain's center-left ruling coalition refused to extend the state of emergency, which provided a legal umbrella to enact sweeping anti-COVID-19 measures restricting fundamental freedoms.

Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez has said existing regulations should be enough to respond to outbreaks at the regional level as the rollout of vaccines is speeding up.

Spain's number of new coronavirus infections in the past 14 days fell Friday to 198 new cases per 100,000 residents, although the central Madrid and the northern Basque regions have more than twice that rate. Hospital occupation levels remain high, however, with more than 1 in 5 intensive-care beds in the country treating COVID-19 patients.

Vaccine deserts: Some countries have no COVID-19 jabs at all

By KRISTA LARSON Associated Press

N'DJAMENA, Chad (AP) — At the small hospital where Dr. Oumaima Djarma works in Chad's capital, there are no debates over which coronavirus vaccine is the best.

There are simply no vaccines at all.

Not even for the doctors and nurses like her, who care for COVID-19 patients in Chad, one of the least-developed nations in the world where about one third of the country is engulfed by the Sahara desert.

"I find it unfair and unjust, and it is something that saddens me," the 33-year-old infectious diseases doctor says. "I don't even have that choice. The first vaccine that comes along that has authorization, I will take it."

While wealthier nations have stockpiled vaccines for their citizens, many poorer countries are still scrambling to secure doses. A few, like Chad, have yet to receive any.

The World Health Organization says nearly a dozen countries — many of them in Africa — are still waiting to get vaccines. Those last in line on the continent along with Chad are Burkina Faso, Burundi, Eritrea and Tanzania.

"Delays and shortages of vaccine supplies are driving African countries to slip further behind the rest of the world in the COVID-19 vaccine rollout and the continent now accounts for only 1% of the vaccines administered worldwide," WHO warned Thursday.

And in places where there are no vaccines, there's also the chance that new and concerning variants could emerge, said Gian Gandhi, UNICEF's COVAX coordinator for Supply Division.

"So we should all be concerned about any lack of coverage anywhere in the world," Gandhi said, urging higher-income countries to donate doses to the nations that are still waiting.

While the total of confirmed COVID-19 cases among them is relatively low compared with the world's hot spots, health officials say that figure is likely a vast undercount: The countries in Africa still waiting for vaccines are among those least equipped to track infections because of their fragile health care systems.

Chad has confirmed only 170 deaths since the pandemic began, but efforts to stop the virus entirely here have been elusive. Although the capital's international airport was closed briefly last year, its first case came via someone who crossed one of Chad's porous land borders illegally.

Regular flights from Paris and elsewhere have resumed, heightening the chance of increasing the 4,835 already confirmed cases.

The Farcha provincial hospital in N'Djamena is a gleaming new campus in an outlying neighborhood, where camels nibble from acacia trees nearby. Doctors Without Borders has helped supply oxygen for COVID-19 patients, and the hospital has 13 ventilators. The physicians also have plenty of Chinese-made KN95 masks and hand sanitizer. Still, not a single employee has been vaccinated and none has been told when that might be possible.

That was easier to accept at the beginning of the pandemic, Djarma said, because doctors all around the world lacked vaccines. That has changed dramatically after the development of shots in the West and by China and Russia that have gone to other poor African countries.

"When I hear, for example, in some countries that they've finished with medical staff and the elderly and are now moving on to other categories, honestly, it saddens me," Djarma said. "I ask them if they can provide us with these vaccines to at least protect the health workers.

"Everyone dies from this disease, rich or poor," she says. "Everyone must have the opportunity, the chance to be vaccinated, especially those who are most exposed."

COVAX, the U.N.-backed program to ship COVID-19 vaccines worldwide, is aimed at helping low- and middle-income countries get access. A few of the countries, though, including Chad, have expressed concerns about receiving the AstraZeneca vaccine through COVAX for fear it might not protect as well against a variant first seen in South Africa.

Chad is expected to get some Pfizer doses next month if it can put in place the cold storage facilities needed to keep that vaccine safe in a country where temperatures soar each day to 43.5 degrees Celsius

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(110 degrees Fahrenheit).

Some of the last countries also took more time to meet the requirements for receiving doses, including signing indemnity waivers with manufacturers and having distribution plans in place.

Those delays, though, now mean an even longer wait for places like Burkina Faso, since a key vaccine manufacturer in India scaled back its global supply because of the catastrophic virus surge there.

"Now with global vaccine supply shortages, stemming in particular from the surge of cases in India and subsequently the Indian government's sequestration of doses from manufacturers there, Burkina Faso risks even longer delays in receiving the doses it was slated to get," said Donald Brooks, CEO of a U.S. aid group engaged in the COVID-19 response there known as Initiative: Eau.

Front-line health workers in Burkina Faso say they're not sure why the government hasn't secured vaccines.

"We would have liked to have had it like other colleagues around the world," says Chivanot Afavi, a supervising nurse who worked on the front lines of the response until recently. "No one really knows what this disease will do to us in the future."

In Haiti, not a single vaccine has been administered to the more than 11 million people who live in the most impoverished country of the Western hemisphere.

Haiti was slated to receive 756,000 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine via COVAX, but government officials said they didn't have the infrastructure needed to conserve them and worried about having to throw them away. Haitian officials also expressed concerns over potential side effects and said they preferred a single-dose vaccine.

Several small island nations in the Pacific also have yet to receive any vaccine, although the lack of outbreaks in some of those places has meant there is less urgency with inoculation campaigns. Vanuatu, with a population of 300,000, is waiting to receive its first doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine later this month, but it has recorded only three cases of coronavirus, all of them in quarantine.

At the Farcha hospital in Chad, nine health care workers have gotten the virus, including Dr. Mahamat Yaya Kichine, a cardiologist. The hospital now has set up pods of health care worker teams to minimize the risk of exposure for the entire staff.

"It took almost 14 days for me to be cured," Kichine says. "There were a lot of caregivers that were infected, so I think that if there is a possibility to make a vaccine available, it will really ease us in our work."

Eyeing reelection bid, Macron looks to repair French economy

By SYLVIE CORBET Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — President Emmanuel Macron's plans for bringing France out of the pandemic aren't just about resuscitating long-closed restaurants, boutiques and museums. They are also about preparing his possible campaign for a second term.

A year before the next presidential election, Macron is focusing on saving jobs and reviving the pandemic-battered French economy as his country inches out of its third partial lockdown.

The centrist president's ability to meet the challenge will be significant for his political future and for France — which is among the world's worst-hit nations with the fourth-highest number of reported COVID-19 cases and the eighth-highest death toll at more than 106,000.

While he has not officially declared his candidacy, Macron has made comments suggesting he intends to seek reelection. And he has pushed recent legislation on issues that potential rivals on the right and the left hold dear, from security to climate change.

Pollsters suggest Macron, who four years ago became the youngest president in French history, has a good chance of winning the presidency again in 2022 despite his government's oft-criticized management of the pandemic and earlier challenges to his policies, from activists protesting what they see as social and economic injustice to unions angry over retirement reforms.

The coronavirus reopening strategy Macron unveiled this month calls for most restrictions on public life to be lifted June 30, when half of France's population is expected to have received at least one vaccine

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shot. With up to 3 million people in France getting vaccinated each week, the government plans to allow outdoor areas of restaurants and cafes, as well as museums and nonessential shops, to resume operating on May 19.

In an interview with French media, Macron said he would visit France's regions over the summer "to feel the pulse of the country" and to engage with people in a mass consultation aimed at "turning the page of that moment in the nation's life."

"No individual destiny is worthwhile without a collective project," he said, giving the latest hint about a potential reelection bid.

At the moment, all opinion polls show Macron and Marine Le Pen, the far-right leader he beat in a presidential runoff election in 2017, again reaching the runoff next year. The polls also forecast that Macron would defeat National Rally leader Le Pen again, though by a smaller margin.

Macron, 43, a former economy minister under his predecessor, Socialist President Francois Hollande, has characterized his policies as transcending traditional left-right divides. He was elected on a promise to make the French economy more competitive while preserving the country's welfare system.

Macron's government includes major figures previously belonging to conservative party The Republicans, including his prime minister and the finance and interior ministers.

French politics expert Luc Rouban, a senior researcher at the National Center for Scientific Research, said the president's immediate goal "is to show he is still able to continue implementing his project, which has more or less been stopped by the health crisis."

Macron's recent priorities demonstrate he also is trying to attract voters from the moderate right and the moderate left, the same ones who helped him win the first time, Rouban said.

Macron is "undermining the field of The Republicans by strengthening security laws, taking measures to protect the French against terrorism, reinforcing security also in urban areas, increasing police and justice staff," he said.

At the same time, Macron needs to show he is addressing inequality, economic mobility and other social justice issues that are important to France's left wing, Rouban said.

Last month, the president decided to do away with France's elite graduate school for future leaders, the Ecole Nationale d'Administration. He said his alma mater would be replaced with a more egalitarian institution.

In the French newspapers interview, Macron also praised the country's benefits for low-income workers, who since 2019 have received up to 100 additional euros (\$120) per month.

Macron's public image appears to have partially recovered from drubbing it took at the height of the "yellow vest" movement, which started in late 2018 to oppose a fuel tax and grew into a weekly anti-government protest targeting alleged social and economic injustice. At the time, critics angry over Macron eliminating a wealth tax labeled him the "president of the rich."

But Macron's popularity in recent months has remained relatively stable, with an approval rating between 30% and 46%, higher than his predecessors Hollande and Nicolas Sarkozy had after four years in office.

Frédéric Dabi, deputy director-general of the polling organization IFOP, said Macron's support appears "very solid." Polls show his policies are satisfying most of his 2017 supporters, and 30% to 50% of voters from the traditional right- and left-wing parties.

During the virus crisis, Macron applied a "whatever it takes" strategy based on state intervention to save jobs and businesses, including a massive partial unemployment program and subsidized child care leave. The government also approved a two-year 100 billion-euro (\$120 billion) rescue plan to revive the economy.

Macron promised there would be no tax increases to repay the debt, which soared last year to 115.7% of gross domestic product.

Despite strong opposition from unions about planned changes to the pension system and unemployment benefits, he has pledged to keep reforming "until the last quarter of hour" of his five-year term, which runs out in May 2022.

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Recent polls show no strong rival emerging so far from mainstream French parties amid divisions on both the right and the left. But at this stage, the field remains wide open.

As Macron himself proved in 2017, when he shot from a wild-card candidate to the presidency in less than four months, anything could happen in the next year.

Elon Musk shows humility and hubris as 'SNL' host

By ANDREW DALTON AP Entertainment Writer

Elon Musk showed a combination of humility and hubris as he opened his highly anticipated hosting gig on "Saturday Night Live."

The 49-year-old Tesla CEO, SpaceX founder and one of the world's richest men opened his monologue by mocking his monotonal speaking style, saying no one can tell when he's joking.

"It's great to be hosting 'Saturday Night Live,' and I really mean it," said Musk standing on the stage in a black suit with a black T-shirt. "Sometimes after I say something, I have to say that I mean it."

He added, in explanation, that he is the first person with Asperger's syndrome to host the show. "Or at least the first person to admit it," he said.

It may have been the first time Musk has publicly said he has the mild form of autism.

Musk also joked about his Twitter account, which has more than 50 million followers, and the tweets that led some critics to object to his being invited to host the show.

"Look, I know I sometimes say or post strange things, but that's just how my brain works," he said.

Then Musk added a boast that got his biggest laugh of the night, and an applause break from the studio audience.

"To anyone who's been offended, I just want to say I reinvented electric cars, and I'm sending people to Mars in a rocket ship," Musk said. "Did you think I was also going to be a chill, normal dude?"

Musk didn't appear in the show's unconventional and heart-warming cold open, in which cast members and their moms did brief bits for Mother's Day as musical guest Miley Cyrus sang her godmother Dolly Parton's inspirational "Light of a Clear Blue Morning."

But Musk brought his own mother, model Maye Musk, on stage to talk about what he was like when he was 12.

The casting choice brought criticism from those who felt the show was celebrating a man for his exorbitant wealth in a time of great inequality and a man who spread misinformation to his huge Twitter following as he downplayed the severity of the coronavirus pandemic.

Playing on Musk's reputation as an innovator, NBC live-streamed the episode globally on YouTube, the first time "Saturday Night Live" has ever been viewable simultaneously around the world.

Musk took his first stiff stab at acting in the show's first sketch, a mock soap called "Gen Z Hospital," playing a doctor in a fake beard who delivered bad news to a group of youths in their own lingo.

"You all might want to sit down, what I'm going to say might be a little cringe," Musk said. "Your bestie took a major L."

He had small roles in subsequent sketches. He played one of a party full of people out for the first time after quarantine, and he did a German-ish accent in a bleached, spiked wig as the director of an Icelandic talk show.

And on "Weekend Update" he played a character close to himself, donning a bow tie and glasses as a financial analyst named Lloyd Ostertag, throwing an extended plug for Musk's favored cryptocurrency dogecoin.

After "Update" anchor Michael Che struggled to understand, Musk as Ostertag admitted, "Yeah, it's a hustle."

While Musk is likely the wealthiest host of the show ever -- Forbes Magazine puts his fortune at \$177 billion -- several other business leaders, politicians and other non-entertainers have hosted the sketch comedy institution in its more than four decades on the air.

Steve Forbes, a publishing executive from a wealthy family and a longshot presidential candidate, hosted

in 1996.

Donald Trump hosted twice, in 2004 as businessman and host of "The Apprentice" and in 2015 as a presidential candidate. The show's sketches began making him their primary target the following year, but the choice to team with him has brought harsh criticism in the years since.

Beefed-up Israel police clash with Palestinians in Jerusalem

By JOSEF FEDERMAN and FARES AKRAM Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israeli police on Saturday clashed with Palestinian protesters outside Jerusalem's Old City during the holiest night of Ramadan in a show of force that threatened to deepen the holy city's worst religious unrest in several years. Earlier, police blocked busloads of pilgrims headed to Jerusalem for prayer at Islam's third holiest site.

Police defended their actions as security moves, but these were seen as provocations by Muslims who accuse Israel of threatening their freedom of worship. Competing claims to east Jerusalem, home to major shrines of Judaism, Islam and Christianity, lie at the heart of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and have triggered serious violence in the past.

The unrest came a day after violence in which Palestinian medics said more than 200 Palestinians were wounded in clashes at the Al-Aqsa mosque compound and elsewhere in Jerusalem. Friday's violence drew condemnations from Israel's Arab allies and calls for calm from the United States and Europe and the United Nations. The Arab League scheduled an emergency meeting on Monday.

Early Sunday, the Israeli military said Palestinian militants in the Gaza Strip fired a rocket at the country's south that fell in an open area. In response, aircraft struck a military post for Hamas, the militant group ruling the territory. There were no reports of casualties in either attack.

Police chief Koby Shabtai said he had deployed more police in Jerusalem following Friday night's clashes, which left 18 police officers wounded. After weeks of nightly violence, Israelis and Palestinians were bracing for more conflict in the coming days.

"The right to demonstrate will be respected but public disturbances will be met with force and zero tolerance. I call on everyone to act responsibly and with restraint," Shabtai said.

Saturday night was "Laylat al-Qadr" or the "Night of Destiny," the most sacred in the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. Islamic authorities estimated 90,000 people gathered for nighttime prayers at Al-Aqsa, the third-holiest site in Islam.

A large crowd of protesters chanted "God is great" outside the Old City's Damascus Gate, and some pelted police with rocks and water bottles. Police patrols fired stun grenades as they moved through the area, and a police truck periodically fired a water cannon.

Palestinian medics said 64 Palestinians were wounded, mostly by rubber bullets, stun grenades or beatings, among them a woman whose face was bloodied. Eleven people were hospitalized, medics said.

One man with a small boy yelled at the police as they marched by. "You should be ashamed!" he said.

Earlier, police reported clashes in the Old City, near Al-Aqsa, and in the nearby east Jerusalem neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah, where dozens of Palestinians are fighting attempts by Israeli settlers to evict them from their homes. Police reported several arrests, and said one officer was struck in the face with a rock.

Earlier Saturday, police stopped a convoy of buses that were filled with Arab citizens on the main highway heading to Jerusalem for Ramadan prayers. Israel's public broadcaster Kan said police stopped the buses for a security check.

Muslims fast from dawn to dusk during Ramadan, and travelers, upset that they were stopped without explanation on a hot day, exited the buses and blocked the highway in protest. Kan showed footage of the protesters praying, chanting slogans and marching along the highway toward Jerusalem. The road was reopened several hours later.

Ibtasam Maraana, an Arab member of parliament, accused police of a "terrible attack" on freedom of religion. "Police: Remember that they are citizens, not enemies," she wrote on Twitter.

The current wave of protests broke out at the beginning of Ramadan three weeks ago when Israel re-

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stricted gatherings at a popular meeting spot outside Jerusalem's Old City. Israel removed the restrictions, briefly calming the situation, but protests have reignited in recent days over the threatened evictions in east Jerusalem, which is claimed by both sides in their decades-old conflict.

Other recent developments also contributed to the tense atmosphere, including the postponement of Palestinian elections, deadly violence in which a Palestinian teenager, two Palestinian gunmen and a young Israeli man were killed in separate incidents in the West Bank, and the election to Israel's parliament of a far-right Jewish nationalist party.

One right-wing lawmaker, Itamar Ben-Gvir, briefly set up an outdoor "office" in Sheikh Jarrah, near the homes of residents facing eviction.

On Sunday evening, Jewish Israelis begin marking "Jerusalem Day," a national holiday in which Israel celebrates its annexation of east Jerusalem and religious nationalists hold parades and other celebrations in the city. On Monday, an Israeli court is expected to issue a verdict on the planned evictions in Sheikh Jarrah.

Israel captured east Jerusalem, along with the West Bank and Gaza — territories the Palestinians want for their future state — in the 1967 Mideast war.

Israel annexed east Jerusalem in a move not recognized internationally, and views the entire city as its capital. The Palestinians view east Jerusalem — which includes major holy sites for Jews, Christians and Muslims — as their capital, and its fate is one of the most sensitive issues in the conflict.

The Al-Aqsa mosque compound is the third holiest site in Islam. It is also the holiest site for Jews, who refer to it as the Temple Mount because it was the location of the biblical temples. It has long been a flashpoint in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

In recent days, protests have grown over Israel's threatened eviction in Sheikh Jarrah of dozens of Palestinians embroiled in a long legal battle with Israeli settlers trying to acquire property in the neighborhood.

The United States said it was "deeply concerned" about both the violence and the threatened evictions. The so-called Quartet of Mideast peace makers, which includes the U.S., European Union, Russia and United Nations, also expressed concern.

Egypt and Jordan, which made peace with Israel decades ago, condemned Israel's actions, as did the Gulf countries of Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates, two of the four Arab countries that signed U.S.-brokered normalization agreements with Israel last year. The UAE expressed "strong condemnation" of Israel's storming of Al-Aqsa.

In a call to Palestine TV late Friday, President Mahmoud Abbas praised the "courageous stand" of the protesters and said Israel bore full responsibility for the violence. Abbas last week postponed planned parliamentary elections, citing Israeli restrictions in east Jerusalem for the delay.

Israel's Foreign Ministry had earlier accused the Palestinians of seizing on the threatened evictions, which it described as a "real-estate dispute between private parties," in order to incite violence.

Hamas, which rules the Gaza Strip and opposes Israel's existence, has called for a new intifada, or uprising.

Late Saturday, several dozen protesters gathered along Gaza's volatile frontier with Israel, burning tires and throwing small explosives. Israeli forces fired tear gas at the crowd. No injuries were immediately reported.

In an interview with a Hamas-run TV station, the group's top leader Ismail Haniyeh warned Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu not to "play with fire" in Jerusalem.

"Neither you, nor your army and police, can win this battle," he said.

Major US pipeline halts operations after ransomware attack

By ALAN SUDERMAN and ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The federal government is working with the Georgia-based company that shut down a major pipeline transporting fuel across the East Coast after a ransomware attack, the White House says.

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The government is planning for various scenarios and working with state and local authorities on measures to mitigate any potential supply issues, officials said Saturday. The attack is unlikely to affect gasoline supply and prices unless it leads to a prolonged shutdown, experts said.

Colonial Pipeline did not say what was demanded or who made the demand. Ransomware attacks are typically carried out by criminal hackers who scramble data, paralyzing victim networks, and demand a large payment to decrypt it.

Colonial Pipeline did not say what was demanded or who made the demand. Ransomware attacks are typically carried out by criminal hackers who scramble data, paralyzing victim networks, and demand a large payment to decrypt it.

The attack on the company, which says it delivers roughly 45% of fuel consumed on the East Coast, underscores again the vulnerabilities of critical infrastructure to damaging cyberattacks that threaten to impede operations. It presents a new challenge for an administration still dealing with its response to major hacks from months ago, including a massive breach of government agencies and corporations for which the U.S. sanctioned Russia last month.

In this case, Colonial Pipeline said the ransomware attack Friday affected some of its information technology systems and that the company moved "proactively" to take certain systems offline, halting pipeline operations. In an earlier statement, it said it was "taking steps to understand and resolve this issue" with an eye toward returning to normal operations.

The Alpharetta, Georgia-based company transports gasoline, diesel, jet fuel and home heating oil from refineries located on the Gulf Coast through pipelines running from Texas to New Jersey. Its pipeline system spans more than 5,500 miles, transporting more than 100 million gallons a day.

The private cybersecurity firm FireEye said it's been hired to manage the incident response investigation.

Oil analyst Andy Lipow said the impact of the attack on fuel supplies and prices depends on how long the pipeline is down. An outage of one day or two would be minimal, he said, but an outage of five or six days could cause shortages and price hikes, particularly in an area stretching from central Alabama to the Washington, D.C., region.

Lipow said a key concern about a lengthy delay would be the supply of jet fuel needed to keep major airports operating, like those in Atlanta and Charlotte, North Carolina.

A leading expert in industrial control systems, Dragos CEO Robert Lee, said systems such as those that directly manage the pipeline's operation have been increasingly connected to computer networks in the past decade.

But critical infrastructure companies in the energy and electricity industries also tend to have invested more in cybersecurity than other sectors. If Colonial's shutdown was mostly precautionary — and it detected the ransomware attack early and was well-prepared — the impact may not be great, Lee said.

While there have long been fears about U.S. adversaries disrupting American energy suppliers, ransomware attacks by criminal syndicates are much more common and have been soaring lately. The Justice Department has a new task force dedicated to countering ransomware attacks.

The attack "underscores the threat that ransomware poses to organizations regardless of size or sector," said Eric Goldstein, executive assistant director of the cybersecurity division at the federal Cybersecurity Infrastructure and Security Agency.

"We encourage every organization to take action to strengthen their cybersecurity posture to reduce their exposure to these types of threats," Goldstein said in a statement.

Ransomware scrambles a victim organization's data with encryption. The criminals leave instructions on infected computers for how to negotiate ransom payments and, once paid, provide software decryption keys.

The attacks, mostly by criminal syndicates operating out of Russia and other safe havens, reached epidemic proportions last year, costing hospitals, medical researchers private businesses, state and local governments and schools tens of billions of dollars. Biden administration officials are warning of a national security threat, especially after criminals began stealing data before scrambling victim networks and saying they will expose it online unless a ransom is paid.

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Average ransoms paid in the United States jumped nearly threefold to more than \$310,000 last year. The average downtime for victims of ransomware attacks is 21 days, according to the firm Coveware, which helps victims respond.

U.S. law enforcement officials say some of these criminals have worked with Russia's security services and that the Kremlin benefits by damaging adversaries' economies. These operations also potentially provide cover for intelligence-gathering.

"Ransomware is the most common disruptive event that organizations are seeing right now that would cause them to shut down to prevent the spread," said Dave White, president of cybersecurity firm Axio.

Mike Chapple, teaching professor of IT, analytics and operations at the University of Notre Dame's Mendoza College of Business and a former computer scientist with the National Security Agency, said systems that control pipelines should not be connected to the internet and vulnerable to cyber intrusions.

"The attacks were extremely sophisticated and they were able to defeat some pretty sophisticated security controls, or the right degree of security controls weren't in place," Chapple said.

Brian Bethune, a professor of applied economics at Boston College, also said the impact on consumer prices should be short-lived as long as the shutdown does not last for more than a week or two. "But it is an indication of how vulnerable our infrastructure is to these kinds of cyberattacks," he said.

Bethune noted the shutdown is occurring at a time when energy prices have already been rising as the economy reopens further as pandemic restrictions are lifted. According to the AAA auto club, the national average for a gallon of regular gasoline has increased by 4 cents since Monday to \$2.94.

Anne Neuberger, the Biden administration's deputy national security adviser for cybersecurity and emerging technology, said in an interview with The Associated Press in April that the government was undertaking a new effort to help electric utilities, water districts and other critical industries protect against potentially damaging cyberattacks. She said the goal was to ensure that control systems serving 50,000 or more Americans have the core technology to detect and block malicious cyber activity.

Since then, the White House has announced a 100-day initiative aimed at protecting the country's electricity system from cyberattacks by encouraging owners and operators of power plants and electric utilities to improve their capabilities for identifying cyber threats to their networks. It includes concrete milestones for them to put technologies into use so they can spot and respond to intrusions in real time.

Westbrook ties Robertson's record, Wizards beat Pacers

By MICHAEL MAROT AP Sports Writer

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — When the final buzzer sounded Saturday night, Russell Westbrook grabbed the ball, jogged to the baseline and waved to the crowd. A few moments after joining Oscar Robertson as the NBA's career triple-doubles leader with 181, he celebrated the milestone with his teammates and his opponents.

It was quite a show.

Westbrook finished with 33 points, 19 rebounds and 15 assists, and made two free throws with a second left to give Washington a 133-132 overtime victory over Indiana. Heck, he even blocked the Pacers' final shot before grabbing the ball.

"I love his spirit, his determination," coach Scott Brooks said. "He's really, really helped us become a better team and that's vintage, you know — rebound, making a clutch shot, blocking a shot. Those are all great things and those are all team things. That's what Russell's about, he's always been that way."

Westbrook's performance overshadowed everything else on the court.

Bradley Beal scored 50 points to help the Wizards move into the No. 9 spot in the Eastern Conference, a half-game ahead of Indiana but sat out the overtime period after hurting his hamstring and ankle.

Domantas Sabonis had his own triple-double for the Pacers with 30 points, 13 rebounds and 13 assists. Caris LeVert flirted with his own triple-double — 35 points, 14 rebounds and eight assists — for the Pacers.

But even in a game with a physical, playoff atmosphere all eyes were on Westbrook and the record that stood for nearly a half-century. Westbrook now has a league-high 35 triple-doubles this season, 19 in his last 24 games.

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"Every time I step on the floor, I try to leave everything on the floor," Westbrook said. "And when I'm all done, I can look back and no one can say I didn't compete at the highest level or that I cheated the game."

While the Pacers made a better effort against the Wizards than they did Monday, when they yielded a franchise-record 154 points in a non-overtime game, the game followed a familiar script. Indiana led most of the second half, only to lose the lead in the waning minutes of regulation and again in overtime.

Westbrook and Beal were the biggest reasons.

"They're good and we're good," Indiana coach Nate Bjorkgren said. "West and Beal are hard to handle and they've got very, very good players all around them. But I liked the way we played. We played basketball the right way."

Washington went on a 9-2 spurt to take a 120-119 lead on Beal's layup with 1:28 left in regulation. LeVert's ensuing 3-pointer gave Indiana the lead and after Daniel Gafford tied it at 122 with two free throws with 48 seconds left, Westbrook's layup with 21.4 seconds left gave Washington the lead.

LeVert tied it again with a layup with 13.4 seconds to go and Westbrook's 18-footer at the buzzer came up short.

TIP-INS

Wizards: Westbrook extended his streak of double-doubles to 32 games. ... Beal has scored at least 25 points in 71 of his last 82 games and has eight games this season with 40 or more points. ... Alex Len had 10 rebounds and eight points. ... Washington snapped a three-game losing streak in Indy and swept the Pacers for the first time since 2006-07. ... The Wizards have won 15 of their last 19 games. ... Washington scored 419 points against Indiana this season.

Pacers: Edmond Sumner and Doug McDermott each scored 13 points. ... Sabonis also had three steals and recorded his eighth triple-double this season. ... LeVert's rebounding total was a career best and came two days after he posted his first double-double of the season with Indiana. ... The Pacers are 12-21 at home this season. ... Indiana is 5-2 in overtime this season and is 8-10 in games decided by five or fewer points.

BEAL'S DEAL

Brooks was uncertain how serious Beal's injury is, and that it might not be known for a couple of days. But he held him out in overtime as a precaution. "He tweaked his hamstring," Brooks said. "Actually, he tweaked his ankle and we didn't want to push it at the end. He wanted to but our guys told him not to push it. Hopefully, it's not too serious."

UP NEXT

Wizards: Make the fourth stop on a five-game road trip Monday at Atlanta.

Pacers: Begin the final week of the regular season at Cleveland on Monday.

Stefanik's political evolution mirrors story of today's GOP

By STEVE PEOPLES AP National Political Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — There was a time, not long ago, when Elise Stefanik would not say Donald Trump's name.

He was simply "my party's presidential nominee," she would say. The pragmatic New York congresswoman was far more focused on welcoming a new generation of voters to what she hoped would be a more inclusive Republican Party.

Today, Stefanik is one of Trump's fiercest defenders in the House of Representatives, where her loyalty to the former president — and the support he returned — has carried the 36-year-old to the brink of becoming one of the most powerful women in Congress. She is widely expected to become the third-ranking House Republican in the coming days once Rep. Liz Cheney, R-Wyo., is stripped of her leadership post because of her vocal criticism of Trump.

Stefanik's rise is linked to her commitment to bringing more Republican women to Congress, an effort that helped make the House GOP's 2021 first-term class one of the most diverse in history. But those

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close to Stefanik suggest there is one moment above all that solidified her political transformation and rise in Republican politics — and that moment had little to do with diversity.

It was a Thursday night in November 2019, and Trump's first impeachment inquiry was raging on Capitol Hill. Stefanik had emerged as a leading Trump defender in committee hearings, but on that night, she brought her message to Fox News' Sean Hannity for the first time.

After attacking the Democrats' case for impeachment, she asked Fox viewers to send money to a website designed to protect her from a growing wave of political attacks.

Within 15 minutes, she had raised \$250,000, aides later tweeted. Several hundred thousand more flowed into her campaign by the next morning. Her team had never seen anything like it, according to people with direct knowledge of her operation who spoke on condition of anonymity to disclose private discussions.

The snowball grew the next day when Trump went on "Fox and Friends" and praised Stefanik. It grew still more weeks later when Trump singled her out during a White House event as he crowed about beating impeachment.

In total, Stefanik raised more than \$13 million over that cycle, almost twice as much as the combined fundraising totals from her previous three elections. She raised an additional \$2 million for Republican candidates and assembled what her office now describes as one of the five strongest donor email lists among 212 House Republicans.

She never wavered in supporting Trump again.

Even as staff privately encouraged her to moderate her message in the following weeks, Stefanik leaned harder into Trumpism. Her team began regularly insulting critics and reporters on social media. Her transformation was complete when Stefanik, a former White House aide under President George W. Bush and admirer of former House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., voted against certifying the 2020 election results even after a violent mob stormed the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6.

Stefanik's evolution is the story of the modern Republican Party, which has come to believe that the path to power and fundraising success runs through Trump, whether party members like him or not. A few Republicans have resisted his influence, including Cheney, but the vast majority has fallen in line even as Trump continues to spread the same disinformation about the 2020 election that inspired the Jan. 6 insurrection.

Trump "has been our strongest supporter of any president when it comes to standing up for the Constitution," Stefanik said this past week on former Trump aide Steve Bannon's "War Room" podcast.

In the same interview, she again cast doubt about the integrity of the 2020 election, even though allegations about widespread voter fraud have been discredited by senior Trump administration officials and dozens of judges across the country.

Those who have worked closely with Stefanik describe her as a hardworking, smart and disciplined messenger, tenacious in her pursuit of energizing Republican voters and framing the terms of the debate.

She became a policy aide in the Bush White House after graduating from Harvard University in 2006. By the time the 2012 presidential election arrived, she was a well-regarded political operative with strong ties to the Republican establishment. She joined former Minnesota Gov. Tim Pawlenty's short-lived presidential campaign before going to work for Mitt Romney, the party's presidential nominee against the Democratic incumbent, Barack Obama.

After the election, Stefanik moved from Washington to her parents' home in upstate New York with an eye on the U.S. House seat left open by Democrat Bill Owens' retirement. In what was widely considered a swing district, the 30-year-old Stefanik won the race and became the youngest woman, at that time, ever elected to Congress.

She found success with a moderate message focused on bringing a new generation of voters to the Republican Party.

Jeff Graham, the former mayor of Watertown, New York, remembers meeting the fresh-faced Stefanik a year before the election. He quickly became a supporter.

"At first I said, 'Who the hell is she?' I went on Google, couldn't find a lot about her," he said. "Even

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though she was young, she had a rich background -- being in the Bush White House and being pals with Paul Ryan."

In her early years in Congress, Stefanik earned a reputation as a studious moderate who stayed close to her district, a massive rural expanse of upstate New York bordered by Vermont to the east and Canada to the north. She paid especially close attention to Fort Drum.

"She put politics aside," said Carl Zeilman, chairman of the Saratoga County Republican Committee. "She knows how to roll up her sleeves and get things done."

Facing her first reelection test in 2016, she was reluctant to embrace Trump. She initially backed Ohio Gov. John Kasich's presidential bid.

The decision to support the Ohio moderate was in line with her voting record. Stefanik has a lifetime rating of 48% from the conservative Heritage Action for America and 35% from Club for Growth, among the lowest grades for House Republicans.

In the late spring of 2016, when Trump emerged as the GOP's presumed presidential nominee, local press noted that she refused to say Trump's name, promising only to "support my party's nominee in the fall."

Stefanik became a more vocal Trump supporter as the election approached, but she regularly reminded voters that she disagreed with him at times. She described his remarks captured on video about sexually assaulting women as "offensive" and "just wrong."

She warmed to Trump further after he took office. She also started a political action committee, Elevate PAC, designed to bring more Republican women to Congress. She was widely praised for the effort last fall, when 18 of the 30 women she endorsed won.

One was Rep. Ashley Hinson, an Iowa Republican who says she was in constant communication with Stefanik throughout her election. Beyond offering strategic guidance and moral support, Stefanik helped connect Hinson with her network of donors and political contacts in Washington.

"It was an important and very pivotal year for the GOP in terms of telling the story that we were a party of women, minorities and veterans," Hinson said. "And Elise had a great hand in that."

Trump was impressed, too.

While Cheney's conservative ratings are far superior to Stefanik's, Trump this past week called Cheney "a warmongering fool who has no business in Republican Party Leadership."

"Elise Stefanik is a far superior choice, and she has my COMPLETE and TOTAL Endorsement for GOP Conference Chair," he said in a written statement. "Elise is a tough and smart communicator!"

Back in upstate New York, longtime supporters have noticed Stefanik's evolution.

Graham, the former Watertown mayor, acknowledged that Stefanik has become more "Trumpian," but like many other Republicans in the rural district, he's generally pleased with the trajectory of her career.

"Our members of Congress up here have not had much time on the national stage," Graham said. "We're proud of most of it."

Police: 3 hurt in Florida mall shooting as shoppers scatter

By ADRIANA GOMEZ LICON The Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — A shooting at a South Florida shopping mall that was sparked by a fight between two groups of people sent panicked shoppers fleeing and left three persons injured Saturday afternoon, police and witnesses said.

Live aerial television news footage showed people scattering outside the Aventura Mall after the initial reports of gunfire. Law enforcement vehicles could be seen converging at the complex and blocking roads.

Aventura Police said two groups of people had begun fighting before it escalated to gunfire.

One individual in one of the groups produced a gun, and an individual in the other group also drew a gun and fired that weapon, said an Aventura police spokesman, Michael Bentolila, in briefing reporters on live television.

Police said the three wounded were taken to hospitals but their injuries were not life-threatening.

Aventura Police later tweeted that authorities had "several suspects" in custody who were being ques-

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tioned by detectives. Police had no immediate report on what touched off the incident and did not immediately release the identities of those in custody or injured.

After the shooting, mall patrons and employees were led out of the shopping complex and officials announced the mall would not reopen until Sunday.

Oscar Alvarado, a worker at the mall, said the complex was bustling with a strong Mother's Day weekend crowd when the chaos erupted. He said it wasn't the first shooting at the mall that he's experienced.

"This time I do have to say I could hear the screams from so far away. I could clearly hear the people were really, really worried and concerned," he said. "They were yelling 'shooter, shooter.'"

Alvarado recorded video of two police officers moving down the mall walkway after the shooting with their guns drawn. And he described waiting for about an hour with coworkers before they could evacuate.

"There was a lot of commotion outside, a lot of people crying and stressed," he said of the scene outdoors.

Videos shared on social media community forums show officers who appeared to be taking a man in custody outside the mall. Other footage showed shoppers running out of stores or seeking cover.

Luke Lockart, 22, said he was in Armani Exchange, checking out, when he heard screaming and things falling over because people were running into the store and knocking over mannequins.

"They were trying to hide anywhere they could because no one knew what was going on," said Lockart, who works in real estate.

The staff at the store eventually locked the doors and asked people to go into a back room, he said. Police and first responders were running through a nearby hallway within minutes. "They were on top of it," Lockart said.

He followed updates on social media, saying "it was a very uneasy feeling" as he spent more than an hour in the store before police escorted everyone out.

Aventura City Manager Ron Wasson told The Miami Herald that authorities were sweeping the complex afterward in case someone dropped a firearm.

"They just want to make sure if someone might have dumped a weapon, we don't miss it," he told the newspaper.

Aventura Mall bills itself on its online site as a premier shopping destination in the Miami area and South Florida.

In May 2020, two people were wounded and taken to a hospital after an argument led to a shooting inside the same mall. Police said that shooting also followed an argument.

String of satellites baffles residents, bugs astronomers

By CLAUDIA LAUER undefined

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — A string of lights that lobbed across the night sky in parts of the U.S. on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday had some people wondering if a fleet of UFOs was coming, but it had others—mostly amateur stargazers and professional astronomers—lamenting the industrialization of space.

The train of lights was actually a series of relatively low-flying satellites launched by Elon Musk's SpaceX as part of its Starlink internet service earlier this week. Callers swamped TV stations from Texas to Wisconsin reporting the lights and musing about UFOs.

An email to a spokesman for SpaceX was not returned Saturday, but astronomy experts said the number of lights in quick succession and their distance from Earth made them easily identifiable as Starlink satellites for those who are used to seeing them.

"The way you can tell they are Starlink satellites is they are like a string of pearls, these lights traveling in the same basic orbit, one right after the other," said Dr. Richard Fienberg, press officer for the American Astronomical Society.

Fienberg said the satellites that are being launched in large groups called constellations string together when they orbit, especially right after launching. The strings get smaller as time goes on.

This month, SpaceX has already launched dozens of satellites. It is all part of a plan to bridge the digital

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divide and bring internet access to underserved areas of the world, with SpaceX tentatively scheduled to launch another 120 satellites later in the month. Overall, the company has sent about 1,500 satellites into orbit and has asked for permission to launch thousands more.

But prior to recent years, there were maybe a few hundred satellites total orbiting Earth, mostly visible as individual lights moving across the sky, Fienberg said. The other handful of companies that are planning to or have launched the satellite constellations have not launched recently and largely pushed them into orbit at a farther distance from Earth, he said.

Fienberg's group as well as others that represent both professional and amateur stargazers don't love the proliferation of satellites that can obscure scientific data and ruin a clear night of watching the universe. The International Astronomical Union issued a statement in July 2019 noting concern about the multiple satellite launches.

"The organisation, in general, embraces the principle of a dark and radio-quiet sky as not only essential to advancing our understanding of the Universe of which we are a part, but also as a resource for all humanity and for the protection of nocturnal wildlife," the union's representatives wrote. They noted that light reflection can interfere with astronomical research, but the radio-waves can also cause problems for specialized research equipment such as those that captured the first images of a black hole.

Fienberg said there is no real regulation of light pollution from satellites, but SpaceX has voluntarily worked to mitigate that by creating visors that dampen the satellites' reflection of sunlight. They've made significant progress in just two years, he said, but many hope that the satellites will some day be at such a low magnitude that they will not be visible to the naked eye even at dusk or dawn.

Fienberg noted a massive telescope being built in Chile, costing millions of dollars and a decade of planning. The telescope will capture a huge swath of the sky in the Southern hemisphere and take continual pictures to record a sort of movie that will show the universe changing. Because of its size, nearly eight meters across, the massive telescope could also lead to the discovery of dimmer objects in the night sky, he said.

The plan is for the telescope to start recording in 2023. And with plans for thousands of satellites, Fienberg said it's hard to imagine that they won't cause issues with the data since there's no way to correct for their lights and know what amount of light should be emitted from any dimmer objects behind the path of the satellites, which could also create ghost images in the data.

"We're talking with companies now and hoping to continue to make progress, and potentially by the time it goes into operation, have tools and techniques to correct for the lights and perhaps fainter satellites," Fienberg said. "We can't say this is wrong and you have to stop because the point is to provide internet access to the whole globe. It's an admirable goal, that we would support, if it didn't mean giving up something else... the night sky."

Major US pipeline halts operations after ransomware attack

By ALAN SUDERMAN and ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The operator of a major pipeline system that transports fuel across the East Coast said Saturday it had been victimized by a ransomware attack and had halted all pipeline operations to deal with the threat. The attack is unlikely to affect gasoline supply and prices unless it leads to a prolonged shutdown of the pipeline, experts said.

Colonial Pipeline did not say what was demanded or who made the demand. Ransomware attacks are typically carried out by criminal hackers who scramble data, paralyzing victim networks, and demand a large payment to decrypt it.

The attack on the company, which says it delivers roughly 45% of fuel consumed on the East Coast, underscores again the vulnerabilities of critical infrastructure to damaging cyberattacks that threaten to impede operations. It presents a new challenge for an administration still dealing with its response to major hacks from months ago, including a massive breach of government agencies and corporations for which the U.S. sanctioned Russia last month.

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In this case, Colonial Pipeline said the ransomware attack Friday affected some of its information technology systems and that the company moved "proactively" to take certain systems offline, halting pipeline operations. In an earlier statement, it said it was "taking steps to understand and resolve this issue" with an eye toward returning to normal operations.

The Alpharetta, Georgia-based company transports gasoline, diesel, jet fuel and home heating oil from refineries located on the Gulf Coast through pipelines running from Texas to New Jersey. Its pipeline system spans more than 5,500 miles, transporting more than 100 million gallons a day.

The White House said President Joe Biden was briefed Saturday morning and the federal government was working with the company to assess the implications of the attack, restore operations and avoid disruptions to the supply. The government is planning for various scenarios and working with state and local authorities on measures to mitigate any potential supply issues.

The private cybersecurity firm FireEye said it's been hired to manage the incident response investigation.

Oil analyst Andy Lipow said the impact of the attack on fuel supplies and prices depends on how long the pipeline is down. An outage of one day or two would be minimal, he said, but an outage of five or six days could cause shortages and price hikes, particularly in an area stretching from central Alabama to the Washington, D.C., region.

Lipow said a key concern about a lengthy delay would be the supply of jet fuel needed to keep major airports operating, like those in Atlanta and Charlotte, North Carolina.

A leading expert in industrial control systems, Dragos CEO Robert Lee, said systems such as those that directly manage the pipeline's operation have been increasingly connected to computer networks in the past decade.

But critical infrastructure companies in the energy and electricity industries also tend to have invested more in cybersecurity than other sectors. If Colonial's shutdown was mostly precautionary — and it detected the ransomware attack early and was well-prepared — the impact may not be great, Lee said.

While there have long been fears about U.S. adversaries disrupting American energy suppliers, ransomware attacks by criminal syndicates are much more common and have been soaring lately. The Justice Department has a new task force dedicated to countering ransomware attacks.

The attack "underscores the threat that ransomware poses to organizations regardless of size or sector," said Eric Goldstein, executive assistant director of the cybersecurity division at the federal Cybersecurity Infrastructure and Security Agency.

"We encourage every organization to take action to strengthen their cybersecurity posture to reduce their exposure to these types of threats," Goldstein said in a statement.

Ransomware scrambles a victim organization's data with encryption. The criminals leave instructions on infected computers for how to negotiate ransom payments and, once paid, provide software decryption keys.

The attacks, mostly by criminal syndicates operating out of Russia and other safe havens, reached epidemic proportions last year, costing hospitals, medical researchers private businesses, state and local governments and schools tens of billions of dollars. Biden administration officials are warning of a national security threat, especially after criminals began stealing data before scrambling victim networks and saying they will expose it online unless a ransom is paid.

Average ransoms paid in the United States jumped nearly threefold to more than \$310,000 last year. The average downtime for victims of ransomware attacks is 21 days, according to the firm Coveware, which helps victims respond.

U.S. law enforcement officials say some of these criminals have worked with Russia's security services and that the Kremlin benefits by damaging adversaries' economies. These operations also potentially provide cover for intelligence-gathering.

"Ransomware is the most common disruptive event that organizations are seeing right now that would cause them to shut down to prevent the spread," said Dave White, president of cybersecurity firm Axio.

Mike Chapple, teaching professor of IT, analytics and operations at the University of Notre Dame's

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Mendoza College of Business and a former computer scientist with the National Security Agency, said systems that control pipelines should not be connected to the internet and vulnerable to cyber intrusions.

"The attacks were extremely sophisticated and they were able to defeat some pretty sophisticated security controls, or the right degree of security controls weren't in place," Chapple said.

Brian Bethune, a professor of applied economics at Boston College, also said the impact on consumer prices should be short-lived as long as the shutdown does not last for more than a week or two. "But it is an indication of how vulnerable our infrastructure is to these kinds of cyberattacks," he said.

Bethune noted the shutdown is occurring at a time when energy prices have already been rising as the economy reopens further as pandemic restrictions are lifted. According to the AAA auto club, the national average for a gallon of regular gasoline has increased by 4 cents since Monday to \$2.94.

Anne Neuberger, the Biden administration's deputy national security adviser for cybersecurity and emerging technology, said in an interview with The Associated Press in April that the government was undertaking a new effort to help electric utilities, water districts and other critical industries protect against potentially damaging cyberattacks. She said the goal was to ensure that control systems serving 50,000 or more Americans have the core technology to detect and block malicious cyber activity.

Since then, the White House has announced a 100-day initiative aimed at protecting the country's electricity system from cyberattacks by encouraging owners and operators of power plants and electric utilities to improve their capabilities for identifying cyber threats to their networks. It includes concrete milestones for them to put technologies into use so they can spot and respond to intrusions in real time.

Tawny Kitaen, star of '80s rock music videos, dies at 59

By DAISY NGUYEN Associated Press

NEWPORT BEACH, Calif. (AP) — Tawny Kitaen, the sultry red-haired actress who appeared in rock music videos during the heyday of MTV and starred opposite Tom Hanks in the 1984 comedy "Bachelor Party," has died. She was 59.

The Orange County coroner's office said she died at her home in Newport Beach on Friday. The cause of death was not immediately released.

Her daughters, Wynter and Raine, confirmed their mother's death on Kitaen's Instagram account.

"We just want to say thank you for all of you, her fans and her friends, for always showing her such support and love. You gave her life everyday," their statement said.

Kitaen became the rock world's "video vixen" after appearing on the cover of two albums from the heavy metal band Ratt and starring in several music videos for Whitesnake, including the 1987 smash song "Here I Go Again." The video, played repeatedly on the burgeoning music television network, featured Kitaen performing cartwheels on the hood of a Jaguar.

She also starred as the fiancée to Tom Hanks' character in the comedy "Bachelor Party," and as Jerry Seinfeld's girlfriend in a 1991 episode of "Seinfeld." Other TV credits included a stint as co-host of "America's Funniest People" and on the reality shows "The Surreal Life" and "Celebrity Rehab with Dr. Drew," in which she revealed her struggle with substance abuse.

Kitaen had a tumultuous personal life, which included a brief marriage to Whitesnake's lead singer, David Coverdale, and a rocky marriage to baseball pitcher Chuck Finley, with whom she had two daughters.

"My sincere condolences to her children, her family, friends & fans," Coverdale tweeted on Saturday.

Lloyd Price, singer and early rock influence, dies at 88

By HILLEL ITALIE and ANDREW DALTON Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Singer-songwriter Lloyd Price, an early rock 'n roll star and enduring maverick whose hits included such up-tempo favorites as "Lawdy Miss Clawdy," "Personality" and the semi-forbidden "Stagger Lee," has died. He was 88.

Price died Monday at a long-term care facility in New Rochelle, New York, of complications from diabetes, his wife, Jacqueline Price, told The Associated Press on Saturday.

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Lloyd Price, inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1998, was among the last survivors of a post-World War II scene in New Orleans that anticipated the shifts in popular music and culture leading to the rise of rock in the mid-1950s. Along with Fats Domino and David Bartholomew among others, Price fashioned a deep, exuberant sound around the brass and swing of New Orleans jazz and blues that placed high on R&B charts and eventually crossed over to white audiences.

"Very important part of Rock history. He was BEFORE Little Richard!" rock singer and E Street Band member Steven Van Zandt said Saturday on Twitter. "Lawdy Miss Clawdy of 1952 has a legit claim as the first Rock hit.... Righteous cat. Enormous talent."

Price's nickname was "Mr. Personality," fitting for a performer with a warm smile and a tenor voice to match. But he was far more than an engaging entertainer. He was unusually independent for his time, running his own record label even before such stars as Frank Sinatra did the same, holding on to his publishing rights, and serving as his own agent and manager. He would often speak of the racial injustices he endured, calling his memoir "sumdumhonkey" and writing on his Facebook page during the 2020 Black Lives Matter protests that behind his "affable exterior" was "a man who is seething."

Born in Kenner, Louisiana, one of 11 siblings, Price had been singing in church and playing piano since childhood. He was in his late teens when a local DJ's favorite catchphrase, "Lawdy Miss Clawdy," helped inspire him to write his boundary-breaking first hit, which he worked on in his mother's fried fish restaurant.

Featuring Domino's trademark piano trills, "Lawdy Miss Clawdy" hit No. 1 on the R&B charts in 1952, sold more than 1 million copies and became a rock standard, covered by Elvis Presley and Little Richard among others. But Price would have mixed feelings about the song's broad appeal, later remembering how local officials in the Jim Crow South resisted letting both blacks and whites attend his shows.

Price was drafted and spent the mid-1950s in military service in Korea. He began a career restart with the 1957 ballad "Just Because," and hit the top with the brassy, pop-oriented "Stagger Lee," one of the catchiest, most celebratory songs ever recorded about a barroom murder.

Written by Price, "Stagger Lee" was based on a 19th century fight between two Black men — Lee Shelton, sometimes known as Stag Lee, and Billy Lyons — that ended with Shelton shooting and killing his rival. Their ever-changing legend was appearing in songs by the 1920s, and has inspired artists ranging from Woody Guthrie and Duke Ellington to Bob Dylan and the Clash.

Price's version opened with a few spoken words that had the understated tension of a crime novel: "The night was clear, the moon was yellow, and the leaves came tumbling ... down." The band jumps in and Price shouts out the story of Stagger Lee and Billy fighting over a game of dice, concluding with a bullet from Stagger Lee's 44 passing through Billy and breaking the bartender's glass. "Go Stagger Lee!" a chorus chants throughout.

The song reached No. 1 on the Billboard pop chart early in 1959, but not everyone was entertained. "American Bandstand" host Dick Clark worried the song was too violent for his teen-centered show and pressed Price to revise it: For "Bandstand" watchers and some future listeners, Stagger Lee and Billy peacefully resolve their dispute.

"I had to go make up some lyrics about Stagger Lee and Billy being in some kind of squabble about a girl," Price told Billboard in 2013. "It didn't make any sense at all. It was ridiculous."

Price followed with the top 10 hits "Personality" and "I'm Going To Get Married" and the top 20 songs "Lady Luck" and "Question." He fared no better than many of his contemporaries once the Beatles arrived in the U.S. in 1964, but he found his way into other professions through a wide range of friends and acquaintances. He lived for a time in the same Philadelphia apartment complex as Wilt Chamberlain and Joe Frazier and, along with boxing promoter Don King, helped stage the 1973 "Thrilla in Manila" between Frazier and Muhammad Ali and the 1974 "Rumble in the Jungle" championship fight between Ali and George Foreman. He was also a home builder, a booking agent, an excellent bowler and the creator of a line of food products.

His career in music continued, sporadically. He and his business partner Harold Logan started a label in the early 1960s, Double L Records, that gave an early break to Wilson Pickett, and they also ran a New

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York nightclub. But after Logan was murdered, in 1969, Price became so disheartened he eventually moved to Nigeria and didn't return until the 1980s. He would become a favorite on oldies tours, performing with Little Richard and Jerry Lee Lewis among others.

He settled in New York with his wife, but was not forgotten back home. A street in Kenner was renamed Lloyd Price Avenue and for years Kenner has celebrated an annual Lloyd Price Day.

Price would credit clean living and steady focus for his endurance.

"I never drank, smoked, used drugs or had bad habits," he told interviewer Larry Katz in 1998. "I'd drive a taxi cab to get me the food I need to live. I never was starstruck. I had 23 hit records and I never looked for the next record to hit. I never had that need that they had to be somebody. I just wanted to be."

Obama dog Bo, once a White House celebrity, dies from cancer

By ALEXANDRA JAFFE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Former President Barack Obama's dog Bo died Saturday after a battle with cancer, the Obamas said on social media.

News of Bo's passing was shared by Obama and his wife Michelle on Instagram, where both expressed sorrow at the passing of a dog the former president described as a "true friend and loyal companion."

"He tolerated all the fuss that came with being in the White House, had a big bark but no bite, loved to jump in the pool in the summer, was unflappable with children, lived for scraps around the dinner table, and had great hair," Barack Obama wrote.

Bo, a Portuguese water dog, was a gift to the Obamas from the late Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, D-Mass., a key supporter of Obama's 2008 presidential campaign who became close to the family. Bo helped Obama keep a promise to daughters Malia and Sasha that they could get a dog after the election.

A companion dog, Sunny, joined the family in August 2013.

Both were constant presences around the White House and popular among visitors there, often joining the Obamas for public events. The dogs entertained crowds at the annual Easter Egg Roll and Bo occasionally joined Mrs. Obama to welcome tourists. The dogs also cheered wounded service members, as well as hospitalized children the first lady would visit each year just before Christmas.

In a post featuring a slideshow of images of Bo — including one of him sitting behind the president's Resolute Desk in the Oval Office — Mrs. Obama recounted his years bringing some levity to the White House.

"He was there when Barack and I needed a break, sauntering into one of our offices like he owned the place, a ball clamped firmly in his teeth. He was there when we flew on Air Force One, when tens of thousands flocked to the South Lawn for the Easter Egg Roll, and when the Pope came to visit," she wrote.

Mrs. Obama wrote that she was grateful for the time the family got to spend with him due to the pandemic, and said that over the past year, "no one was happier than Bo."

"All his people were under one roof again," she wrote.

With civil rights charges, Justice Dept. signals priorities

By MICHAEL BALSAMO and AMY FORLITI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Justice Department is sending a strong message about its priorities these days.

In just over the past two weeks, it has opened investigations of police in Louisville, Kentucky, and Minneapolis. Federal prosecutors have charged four former Minneapolis police officers with civil rights violations in George Floyd's death, and accused three men of hate crimes in the death of Ahmaud Arbery in Georgia. In both criminal cases, authorities moved forward with federal charges before most of the defendants have gone to state trial.

Attorney General Merrick Garland is making good on his confirmation promise to refocus the department around civil rights after four years of tumult during the Trump administration, when such investigations waned and the focus was on curbing immigration and the Russia probe.

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"What we couldn't get them to do in the case of Eric Garner, Michael Brown in Ferguson, and countless others, we are finally seeing them do," the Rev. Al Sharpton said Friday after the charges were announced in Floyd's death.

Former Minneapolis officer Derek Chauvin has already been convicted of murder and manslaughter charges in state court and is scheduled to be sentenced June 25. The federal case could be insurance against a successful state appeal or a lenient sentence.

Separately, federal officials accused Chauvin in a 2017 case involving Chauvin's arrest of a 14-year-old boy. Chauvin hit the boy, who is Black, with a flashlight and pinned him to the ground, putting his knee on the boy's neck and back.

Chauvin's lawyer, Eric Nelson, has filed a request for a new trial in Floyd's death, citing a host of reasons, including publicity that was "so pervasive and so prejudicial ... that it amounted to a structural defect in the proceedings."

He also argued that the trial judge, Peter Cahill, abused his discretion when he denied earlier requests to move the trial. Cahill has not said when he would rule on Nelson's request for a new trial.

Nelson had no comment on the federal charges.

The three other officers brought up on civil rights charges, Thomas Lane, J. Kueng and Tou Thao, haven't been tried yet in state court on charges of aiding and abetting both second-degree murder and manslaughter in the Floyd case.

Usually, federal prosecutors hold off on any charges until local investigations are completed. But when they do, it's often seen a safety net against the difficulty of prosecuting law enforcement locally.

According to a person familiar with the investigation, that happened during the case against former officer Michael Slager in South Carolina. In 2015, Slager shot to death Walter Scott, an unarmed Black man who ran from a traffic stop.

Local prosecutors worried they could not win a conviction, this person said, so federal prosecutors stepped in and brought charges, working out a plea deal to resolve both the federal and state cases. Slager was sentenced to 20 years in federal prison.

The person was not authorized to publicly discuss those internal deliberations and spoke on condition of anonymity.

The federal charge is limited in its scope and has been rarely used. According to Syracuse University's Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse, or TRAC, federal prosecutors have used it an average of 41 times a year between 1990 and 2019.

In the 1960s, federal authorities successfully prosecuted eight men involved in the 1964 disappearances and murders of civil rights workers Andrew Goodman, James Chaney and Michael Schwerner in Neshoba County, Mississippi, after local authorities said they did not have enough evidence to prosecute anyone.

One of the most high profile uses of the federal statutes came in the 1992 Rodney King case in Los Angeles. Federal authorities charged four law enforcement officers with violating King's constitutional rights in his videotaped beating. That decision came after a jury in Simi Valley acquitted the officers in the state case, prompting several days of riots in Los Angeles.

It's not clear whether Garland was stepping in to aid local prosecutors in Minneapolis with the three officers, but it's likely they are communicating about the cases. And the same in Georgia, where federal hate crime charges were announced against Travis McMichael and his father, Gregory, and a third man, William "Roddie" Bryan, in the death of 25-year-old Ahmaud Arbery. The three are jailed on state murder charges and are due in court next week. Jury selection is scheduled to start Oct. 18.

Arbery was killed on Feb. 23, 2020 by three close-range shotgun blasts after the McMichaels pursued him in a pickup truck. Arbery was dead more than two months when a cellphone video of the shooting was leaked online, leading to a national outcry. The Georgia Bureau of Investigation took over the case and arrested the men.

Federal officials have also revived pattern or practice investigations, which were rarely used under the Trump administration. They weren't banned under President Donald Trump, but his attorney general,

William Barr, suggested they may have been previously overused.

Jeff Sessions was Trump's first attorney general, and when he resigned in November 2018, he signed a memo that sharply curtailed the use of consent decrees, which are often used during major policing changes in a city. The policy made their use more difficult to enact and required top Justice Department officials to approve the deals. It was quickly rescinded under Garland.

Federal officials have initiated broad reviews that will investigate Louisville police tactics following the death of Breonna Taylor in Louisville last year. A similar investigation into Minneapolis policing was announced the day after Chauvin was found guilty.

Those public announcements led to hope that the Garland Justice Department will take a fresh look at some closed investigations. The family of 12-year-old Tamir Rice, who was shot to death by a Cleveland police officer in 2014 while the boy was playing with a toy gun, wrote a letter to Garland asking the investigation be reopened into the officer.

"The election of President Biden, your appointment, and your commitment to the rule of law, racial justice, and police reform give Tamir's family hope that the chance for accountability is not lost forever," the family said in the letter.

South Africa's royal scandal: New Zulu king's claim disputed

By GERALD IMRAY Associated Press

CAPE TOWN, South Africa (AP) — A new Zulu king was named in South Africa amid scenes of chaos after members of the royal family questioned Prince Misuzulu Zulu's claim to the title following his father's death, and bodyguards suddenly whisked him away from the public announcement at a palace.

The controversy over the next king, a largely ceremonial role but one with great significance for South Africa and its 12 million Zulu people, has arisen after the death in March of King Goodwill Zwelithini, who had reigned since 1968.

Zwelithini apparently named one of his six wives, Queen Mantfombi Shiyiwe Dlamini Zulu, as the "regent of the Zulu kingdom" in his will, but she died after holding the title for only a month, throwing the royal succession into turmoil.

The commotion broke out Friday night at the reading of Queen Mantfombi's will and hours after a memorial service for her. The queen's will named 46-year-old Prince Misuzulu, her eldest son with King Zwelithini, as the heir and next king.

But another prince objected and interrupted the announcement at the KwaKhangalamankengane Royal Palace in South Africa's KwaZulu-Natal province. Two princesses also have questioned whether the late king's will gave Queen Mantfombi the right to nominate a successor upon her death.

King Zwelithini reportedly had 28 children with his different wives, and Queen Mantfombi was not his first wife. A dispute over succession had been brewing since the late king's death, fascinating many South Africans with their very own royal scandal.

Significant to the dispute is the fate of the king's assets and the vast amounts of land traditionally owned by the Zulu people and now held in a trust. Estimates say the trust controls nearly 30% of the land in KwaZulu-Natal province, or around 28,000 square kilometers (10,810 square miles). The king is the sole trustee.

Earlier on Friday, Prince Misuzulu, who wore a traditional leopard-skin headband reserved for royalty and chiefs, called for unity among the Zulu royals at his mother's memorial service.

"We have no doubt we will unite as a family," he said in a message read out by his younger sister, Princess Ntandoyesizwe Zulu. "Let us emulate the king by being peaceful."

The Zulu king has no political or even constitutional position, but his traditional authority is recognized in KwaZulu-Natal, where he is said to "reign but not rule." More than that, the king holds an important role in bridging the gap between traditional customs and modern democracy in South Africa, where Zulus are the largest ethnic group among the country's 60 million people.

Forbes put King Zwelithini's net worth at nearly \$20 million, while the Zulu royal household is given an

annual budget of around \$5 million by the South African government.

King Zwelithini, who had diabetes, reportedly died from a COVID-19-related illness at the age of 72.

Rhode Island investigating death of man handcuffed by police

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (AP) — Rhode Island authorities are investigating the case of a man who died after being handcuffed by police in Providence.

Officers were called at around 12:30 a.m. Friday on a report of a man who was screaming in the street and possibly under the influence of narcotics, according to an account by Providence police. They found him groaning unintelligibly as he rolled on the ground next to a ballfield.

The officers called for an ambulance from the Providence Fire Department and spent more than 10 minutes trying to talk to the man and calm him down, but he did not answer questions or follow commands. Then the officers had what police described as a "minor struggle" with the man as they handcuffed him to protect rescue workers.

Body cam video released by Providence police shows that the officers eventually held the man down on his stomach for about 90 seconds while cuffing his hands behind his back. An emergency responder joined them, and then he suddenly stopped yelling and appeared to stop moving.

The camera recorded someone telling him to breathe while another officer said "get him off his stomach, man." He did not appear to move as he was placed on a stretcher moments later.

He was identified as Joseph Ventre, 34. Police said he was taken to Rhode Island Hospital, where he was pronounced dead at 1:41 a.m.

The death is being investigated by Providence police, Rhode Island state police and the Rhode Island attorney general, which investigates deaths that occur under police custody.

Bomb kills at least 30 near girls' school in Afghan capital

By RAHIM FAIEZ Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — A bomb exploded near a girls' school in a majority Shiite district of west Kabul on Saturday, killing at least 30 people, many of them young pupils between 11 and 15 years old. The Taliban condemned the attack and denied any responsibility.

Ambulances evacuated the wounded as relatives and residents screamed at authorities near the scene of the blast at Syed Al-Shahda school, in the Dasht-e-Barchi neighborhood, Interior Ministry spokesman Tariq Arian said. The death toll was expected to rise further.

The bombing, apparently aimed to cause maximum civilian carnage, adds to fears that violence in the war-wrecked country could escalate as the U.S. and NATO end nearly 20 years of military engagement.

Residents in the area said the explosion was deafening. One, Naser Rahimi, told The Associated Press he heard three separate explosions, although there was no official confirmation of multiple blasts. Rahimi also said he believed that the sheer power of the explosion meant the death toll would almost certainly climb.

Rahimi said the explosion went off as the girls were streaming out of the school at around 4:30 p.m. local time. Authorities were investigating the attack but have yet to confirm any details.

One of the students fleeing the school recalled the attack. the screaming of the girls, the blood.

"I was with my classmate, we were leaving the school, when suddenly an explosion happened, " said 15-year-old Zahra, whose arm had been broken by a piece of shrapnel.

"Ten minutes later there was another explosion and just a couple of minutes later another explosion," she said. "Everyone was yelling and there was blood everywhere, and I couldn't see anything clearly." Her friend died.

While no one has claimed responsibility for the bombing, the Afghan Islamic State affiliate has targeted the Shiite neighborhood before.

The radical Sunni Muslim group has declared war on Afghanistan's minority Shiite Muslims. Washington blamed IS for a vicious attack last year in a maternity hospital in the same area that killed pregnant women and newborn babies.

In Dasht-e-Barchi, angry crowds attacked the ambulances and even beat health workers as they tried

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to evacuate the wounded, Health Ministry spokesman Ghulam Dastigar Nazari said. He implored residents to cooperate and allow ambulances free access to the site.

Images circulating on social media purportedly showed bloodied school backpacks and books strewn across the street in front of the school, and smoke rising above the neighborhood.

At one nearby hospital, Associated Press journalists saw at least 20 dead bodies lined up in hallways and rooms, with dozens of wounded people and families of victims pressing through the facility.

Outside the Muhammad Ali Jinnah Hospital, dozens of people lined up to donate blood, while family members checked casualty posted lists on the walls.

Both Arian and Nazari said that at least 50 people were also wounded, and that the casualty toll could rise. The attack occurred just as the fasting day came to an end.

No one immediately claimed responsibility for the attack, and Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid told reporters in a message that only the Islamic State group could be responsible for such a heinous crime. Mujahid also accused Afghanistan's intelligence agency of being complicit with IS, although he offered no evidence.

The Taliban and the Afghan government have traded accusations over a series of targeted killings of civil society workers, journalists and Afghan professionals. While IS has taken responsibility for some of those killings, many have gone unclaimed.

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani issued a statement condemning the attack, blaming the Taliban even as they denied it. He offered no proof.

IS has previously claimed attacks against minority Shiites in the same area, last year claiming two brutal attacks on education facilities that killed 50 people, most of them students.

Even as the IS has been degraded in Afghanistan, according to government and US officials, it has stepped-up its attacks particularly against Shiite Muslims and women workers.

Earlier the group took responsibility for the targeted killing of three women media personnel in eastern Afghanistan.

The attack comes days after the remaining 2,500 to 3,500 American troops officially began leaving the country. They will be out by Sept. 11 at the latest. The pullout comes amid a resurgent Taliban, who control or hold sway over half of Afghanistan.

The top U.S. military officer said Sunday that Afghan government forces face an uncertain future and possibly some "bad possible outcomes" against Taliban insurgents as the withdrawal accelerates in the coming weeks.

EU agrees potential 1.8 billion-dose purchase of Pfizer jab

By RAF CASERT and BARRY HATTON Associated Press

PORTO, Portugal (AP) — The European Union cemented its support for Pfizer-BioNTech and its novel COVID-19 vaccine technology Saturday by agreeing to a massive contract extension for a potential 1.8 billion doses through 2023.

EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said her office has approved a contract for a guaranteed 900 million doses with the same amount of doses as a future option.

The new contract, which has the unanimous backing of the 27 EU member nations, will entail not only the production of the vaccines but also making sure that all the essential components are sourced from the EU.

The European Commission currently has a portfolio of 2.6 billion doses from half a dozen companies. Pfizer-BioNTech had an initial contract of 600 million doses with the EU.

Saturday's announcement also underscores the confidence the EU has shown in the technology behind the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, which is different from how the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine works.

"But of course, we will also explore other contracts, for example, based on other technologies like the protein-based technologies. The key point is to keep our options open," von der Leyen said at an EU summit in Portugal.

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The active ingredient in the Pfizer-BioNTech shot is messenger RNA, or mRNA, which contains the instructions for human cells to construct a harmless piece of the coronavirus called the spike protein. The human immune system recognizes the spike protein as foreign, allowing it to mount a response against the virus upon infection.

The announcement of the huge contract extension comes as the EU is looking for ways to meet the challenges of providing the necessary booster shots to people who have already receive a vaccine dose, expanding vaccination drives to include children and teenagers, and the emergence of possible new virus variants.

The size of the contract - 1.8 billion doses for a bloc of 450 million residents - will provide for a lot of options, von der Leyen said.

"That includes the possibility for the member states to donate or resell doses" at a lower price to help nations in the immediate neighborhood or beyond, she said..

America's Pfizer and Germany's BioNTech have already said that they would provide the EU with an extra 50 million doses in the 2nd quarter of this year, making up for faltering deliveries of AstraZeneca.

In contrast to the oft-criticized Anglo-Swedish AstraZeneca, von der Leyen has said that Pfizer-BioNTech is a reliable partner that delivers on its commitments.

Two weeks ago, the EU launched legal proceedings against AstraZeneca for failing to respect the terms of its contract with the 27-nation bloc.

The AstraZeneca vaccine had been central to Europe's immunization campaign, and a linchpin in the global strategy to get vaccines to poorer countries. But the slow pace of deliveries has frustrated the Europeans and they have held the company responsible for partly delaying their vaccine rollout.

So far, von der Leyen said, the EU has made some 200 million doses available to its 450 million residents while almost as many have been exported from the bloc.

Pandemic gives boost as more states move to digital IDs

By SOPHIA EPPOLITO Associated Press/Report for America

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — The card that millions of people use to prove their identity to everyone from police officers to liquor store owners may soon be a thing of the past as a growing number of states develop digital driver's licenses.

With the advent of digital wallets and boarding passes, people are relying more on their phones to prove their identity. At least five states have implemented a mobile driver's license program. Three others — Utah, Iowa and Florida — intend to launch programs by next year, with more expected to follow suit.

Mobile licenses will give people more privacy by allowing them to decide what personal information they share, state officials say. The licenses offer privacy control options that allow people to verify their age when purchasing alcohol or renting a car, while hiding other personal information like their address.

Having a mobile driver's license will allow people to update their license information remotely without having to go to a state's Department of Motor Vehicles or waiting for a new card in the mail, said Lee Howell, state relations manager at the American Automobile Association.

While most states with these programs recommend that users still carry their physical driver's license as a backup, some industry experts estimate that the coronavirus pandemic has sped up the widespread adoption of contactless identification methods by at least a decade.

"Most people want some kind of a hard token for their identity, but I don't know how long that will last," said Pam Dixon, executive director of the World Privacy Forum. "I would imagine that at some point, maybe in a generation, maybe less, that people will accept a fully digital system."

In most states, people's data will be stored on their phone and with the DMV. People will only be able to access a mobile ID app with a passcode or using a smartphone's fingerprint or facial recognition scan.

Industry leaders say safeguards will prevent anyone's information from being stolen, but some critics argue that having so much personal data on a phone is too risky.

"When you have a physical thing in your hand, no one can hack that unless you lose it," said Shelia

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Dunn Joneleit, a spokesperson for the National Motorists Association.

Joneleit noted that the new systems aren't accessible to all Americans because not everyone can afford a smartphone. She said that could eventually produce equity issues because some states require residents to show their driver's license to vote.

She also said she doesn't believe drivers should be handing their phones over to police, potentially violating people's Fourth Amendment rights against unreasonable searches and seizures.

State officials and industry leaders say that moving away from physical IDs that could potentially be fraudulent to cryptographic verification will make it easier to confirm someone's identity.

"The majority of the way that people verify your identity in person today is by visual inspection of the identity document," said Matt Thompson, senior vice president of IDEMIA, a technology company working on several states' mobile ID apps. "As we move to cryptographic verification, it's a lot easier to verify the authenticity of a document through digital means."

IDEMIA has launched mobile ID apps in three states this year and expects to launch an additional seven before 2021 ends, said Angie Hamblen, the company's senior marketing manager.

Oklahoma's mobile ID app got underway in 2019 but relaunched with IDEMIA in January with new functions, including the ability to pre-enroll for the federally mandated REAL ID security standards. Both Delaware and Arizona launched their own mobile ID apps in March.

In Utah, over 100 people have a pilot version of the state's mobile ID, and that number is expected to grow to 10,000 by year's end. Widespread production is expected to begin at the start of 2022, said Chris Caras, director of Utah's Driver License Division. The app is being produced by another company, GET Group North America.

Caras said the state is following industry standards for digital IDs that were released late last year because Utah wanted to ensure people could use their mobile credentials anywhere in the U.S.

"Our goal is that anywhere that you're currently using your hard card, you could use your mobile credential," Caras said.

Colorado and Louisiana were two of the first states that developed digital identification apps, but they don't follow the newly released standards and aren't accepted in other states. Louisiana's digital ID launched in 2018.

Colorado, along with Idaho, Maryland, Wyoming and Washington, D.C., received a grant to test mobile driver's licenses in 2016. Colorado Gov. Jared Polis issued an executive order in 2019 authorizing businesses and state agencies to begin accepting the digital ID. Colorado State Patrol started accepting them last November.

In a small New Hampshire town, the 2020 election still rages

By MICHAEL CASEY Associated Press

WINDHAM, N.H. (AP) — Meetings of the Windham Board of Selectmen are usually as sleepy as they sound — a handful of residents from the New Hampshire town, a discussion of ambulance fees, maybe a drainage study.

So when a crowd of about 500 people showed up last week, some waving American flags, carrying bullhorns and lifting signs questioning the presidential election, Bruce Breton knew things were about to change.

"I've never seen anything like this before," said Breton, who has served on the board for 18 years. "The groundswell from the public is unbelievable."

The crowd at the Monday meeting had been fired up by conservative media, which in recent weeks has seized on the town's election results for four seats in the state House as suspect. The attention, fanned by a Donald Trump adviser who happens to be a Windham resident, has helped a routine recount spiral, ultimately engulfing the town in a false theory that the national election was stolen from Trump.

It doesn't seem to matter that Republicans won all four state House seats in question.

The dust-up shows just how far Trump's election lies — and the search for evidence to support them —

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have burrowed into American politics, even the most local. Like House Republicans in Washington fighting over what some call the "Big Lie" and lawmakers in Arizona conducting a partisan "recount," this bedroom community is still wrestling with the aftermath of 2020.

The trouble started when Kristi St. Laurent, a Democratic candidate for the state House, requested a recount after falling 24 votes short in the November election. Instead of gaining a few votes in her House race as she expected, the 53-year-old physical therapist learned that the recount showed that four of the Republicans each received an additional 300 votes. Laurent lost 99 votes.

"You expect everybody to go up a little bit so these results were pretty alarming. ... These were just crazy results," she said.

The discrepancy inspired the legislature to take up the matter. Lawmakers overwhelmingly passed a bill authorizing an audit of the town's ballot counting machines and hand tabulations. Republican Gov. Chris Sununu signed the bill and insisted that "New Hampshire elections are safe, secure, and reliable."

Conservative media outlets and Trump supporters saw things differently. They viewed the results in Windham, a town of 16,000 near the Massachusetts border, as a chance to prove that something more nefarious was amiss. If things were suspicious in Windham, maybe they were across the state and beyond. They just needed evidence.

On Thursday, Trump joined the fray, congratulating "the great Patriots" in Windham "for their incredible fight to seek out the truth" about fraud that he alleged, without evidence, had affected the New Hampshire races and his own reelection contest. Trump had been to Windham in the past and is not shy about suggesting that voter fraud is rampant in the Granite State. In 2017, he claimed that he and former Republican Sen. Kelly Ayotte would have won in New Hampshire the previous year if not for voters bused in from out of state. There is no evidence to support that claim.

Corey Lewandowski, a current Trump adviser who calls Windham home and said he talked to Trump about the states races on Monday, said the large turnout at the board meeting showed that voters are "gravely concerned that the election system is not properly secured and that there is the potential at least for results that don't align with what voters want."

Lewandowski said the results in Windham suggested a statewide audit was necessary to check other vote counting machines. "Unless a recount was done in these other communities, we don't know if the machine tallies are accurate," he said. "The larger concerns is this: if people don't believe that there is integrity in the voting process, they won't participate. That is the real issue."

Sununu pushed back on Trump's comments, calling New Hampshire a model for how to do things right.

"A discrepancy of 300 votes out of over 800,000 cast does not define massive voter fraud by any means. We passed a bill, we're going to do an audit in Windham. If anything, I think the fact that we focus on 300 votes goes to the integrity of our system," he said. "We have the best system in the country, a system where will do any audit even if it's over a couple hundred votes. And it's not for President Trump or Chris Sununu or Joe Biden, it's about the citizens who cast the vote. That's why we do the audit, to make sure every vote is counted."

The latest controversy is over which auditors will be chosen to examine the results.

The law calls for three auditors: one chosen by the state, one by Windham and a third by those two picks. The selectmen in Windham voted 3-1 last month to pick Mark Lindeman with Verified Voting, rejecting demands from Trump supporters to choose Jovan Hutton Pulitzer. The town received thousands of emails from around the country demanding it pick Pulitzer, who, according to media reports, claims to have invented technology that can detect fraudulent ballots.

That prompted the crowd to turn up at Monday's board meeting; some carried posters supporting of Pulitzer. The crowd was so large that the meeting was moved to the high school.

"That was angry mob if I have ever seen one," said St. Laurent, who attended the meeting.

The crowd had hoped the board would reconsider its pick. It did not and now the auditors have until May 27 by law to complete their work. They will do an audit, which includes another hand count, at the Edward Cross Training Center in Pembroke. Some outside observers, including at least 18 from Windham,

will be allowed to monitor. It will also be livestreamed.

In Windham, some residents simply want to find out what happened in their election. Was it the aging counting machines? A human error in the recount? Maybe a bunch of extra votes slipped into the count?

But for others, the voter discrepancy has led them to ask larger questions about Trump's loss in November.

"I am not going to speculate on anything until I get the answers to the Windham thing, now that there are doubts about what is going on. I just want to know what happened in Windham," said Breton, a Trump supporter and the only board member to lobby for Pulitzer.

"I would think you would have to question voting among the whole state. Windham is just a microcosm of what is going on," he said. "If you can't answer the question of what happens to those votes, you might have questions about what happened to other votes in the state."

St. Laurent dismisses the idea that Windham's results should cast doubt on the larger process.

Recounts are not unusual in New Hampshire, which elects 424 lawmakers every two years and allows candidates to request recounts if the difference in votes is less than 20% of the total ballots cast. There have been at least 15 recounts after each of the past four election cycles, with only a handful of outcomes changed.

The audit, she said, should help determine what went wrong. But for outsiders who see a wider campaign of voter fraud, it won't matter all that much.

"When there is nothing shown, they are just going to go to the next place," she said. "I am hoping we can return back to just being our own little town."

Election officials face fines, charges in GOP voting laws

By ANTHONY IZAGUIRRE Associated Press

In 2020, election officials tried to make voting easier and safer amid a global pandemic. Next time, they might get fined or face criminal charges.

Republicans are creating a new slate of punishments for the county officials who run elections, arguing they overstepped their authority when they expanded voter access during the coronavirus pandemic.

The new penalties, part of a nationwide Republican campaign to roll back access to the ballot, already have become law in Iowa, Georgia and Florida, and are making their way through statehouses in Texas and elsewhere. The GOP push comes after a presidential contest that saw record turnout and no widespread problems.

Election officials have responded with warnings of a chilling effect on those responsible for administering the vote and counting ballots, raising fears they could be penalized for minor mistakes, get caught up in partisan fights or even leave their jobs.

In Iowa, Republican Gov. Kim Reynolds drew heavy criticism for signing a broad voting bill in March that shortens hours at polling places, narrows the early voting period and imposes new restrictions on mail and absentee ballots. The law also bans sending unsolicited absentee ballot applications to voters, as some officials did before the 2020 election.

One provision is especially worrisome to Linn County Auditor Joel Miller: a fine of up to \$10,000 for a "technical infraction" of election rules. Miller says the penalty could be imposed for unintentional mistakes like opening a polling place a few minutes late, and raises concerns about partisan enforcement.

"It's a lot of moving parts and a lot of variables and people make mistakes, and now I'm liable for all those mistakes," he told The Associated Press. "The process could be likewise corrupted by the secretary of state arbitrarily administering the law in a very uneven manner, depending on whether you're a Democratic county or a Republican county."

Looming fines also could dissuade people from taking jobs as election workers or make staffers hesitant to help voters, especially in smaller counties that can't afford to risk the costly penalties, said Travis Weipert, Democratic auditor of Johnson County, Iowa.

"It's literally becoming, when you look at the laws, the haves and the have-nots," he said. "The counties that can pay to still continue what they do are going to do it, and the counties that can't are going to be

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restricting voting.”

A similar bill signed into law Thursday by Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, a Republican, could lead to \$25,000 fines for election supervisors if a ballot drop box is accessible outside of early voting hours or is left unsupervised.

There have been more than 350 restrictive voting bills filed in 47 states this year, according to the Brennan Center for Justice, a public policy group that advocates for voter access. Many seek to place new rules around mail and early voting, methods used without issue in 2020, with some tacking on new penalties for election administrators.

There is universal agreement among experts that there was no widespread fraud or problems that compromised the results of the 2020 election. Still, it's not unusual for lawmakers to reassess voting regulations after an election. The GOP push this year, based on President Donald Trump's unfounded claims of a stolen election, has garnered intense scrutiny, including from big names in the business community who argue the legislation is discriminatory.

In 2020, election officials in Harris County, Texas, which includes the Democratic stronghold of Houston and is one of the most racially diverse in the nation, went further than anywhere else in the state to create new ways to vote. They opened 24-hour polling places and implemented drive-thru voting. They also tried to mail all voters unsolicited absentee ballot applications but were blocked by the Texas Supreme Court.

The county, where nearly half of the 5 million residents are Latino and 20% are Black, saw a record 1.7 million votes last year. Between 10,000 and 15,000 people cast ballots at 24-hour centers during times when polling places are normally closed. More than half of the roughly 127,000 people who voted at drive-thru centers were Black, Latino or Asian.

In response, Republicans in the GOP-controlled Legislature have pushed proposals to ban 24-hour and drive-thru voting centers, and make it a crime to send voters unsolicited absentee ballot materials.

“If you got rid of every election administrator you don't like in your state, the desire for drive-thru voting, for mail ballot voting, for expanded hours is still there. We already made it happen,” said Isabel Longoria, the election administrator of Harris County. “So you can either get with the times and proudly support these modern initiatives or you can be the person who stood in the way.”

Georgia also has been in the spotlight over voting restrictions passed by the GOP-dominated Legislature and signed into law by Republican Gov. Brian Kemp in March.

The law includes limits on where ballot drop boxes can be placed and accessed. It also allows the Legislature to select the chair of the state election board, who has the power to intervene in county election offices and install a temporary superintendent, as well as hire and fire personnel, including election directors and poll officers.

Fulton County, which includes most of the Democratic stronghold of Atlanta, is one potential target, given frequent Republican criticism over long voting lines, problems processing absentee ballots and other issues. Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger, a Republican, has said the county has been “failing its voters for at least 25 years.”

In response, Fulton County Chairman Robb Pitts issued a statement that said the county “has been unfairly targeted by those with a grudge against us.”

“While Fulton County is the clear target, all 159 of Georgia's counties will be impacted, and I urge those counties' leaders to examine the bill, stand up and speak out — because tomorrow it could be them,” he said.

The new penalties have at least some election officials talking about getting into different lines of work. Miller, the Linn County auditor, said some have been joking about switching career paths.

“Well, there's been a couple of county treasurer jobs that became open recently,” Miller said with a laugh, “and my peers were openly discussing whether or not they should apply to be appointed as treasurers because, you know, treasurers never get in trouble.”

As US reopens, campuses tighten restrictions for virus

By LISA RATHKE and CAROLYN THOMPSON Associated Press

BURLINGTON, Vt. (AP) — About a year into mask mandates, nasal swabs and remote classes, the atmosphere turned tense at the University of Vermont as the school cracked down on rules for social distancing and face coverings amid a spike in student COVID-19 cases.

Students were handed hundreds of citations for violations like standing in another student's doorway or walking maskless to a hallway restroom, igniting a student-led petition that blasted "strict and inhumane living conditions."

"You start to feel suffocated like I'm afraid to leave my room," freshman Patrick Welsh said in an interview on campus.

Even as restrictions relax across much of the United States, colleges and universities have taken new steps to police campus life as the virus spreads through students who are among the last adults to get access to vaccines. Administrators say they've needed to act urgently to avoid risking an early end to the semester or sending infected students home and spreading COVID-19.

In recent weeks, the University of Michigan punished hundreds of students for missing mandatory virus testing by deactivating their access cards to nonresidential buildings, and Cornell University announced that students would lose access to campus Wi-Fi, course materials and facilities for missing virus tests. The University of Chicago locked down residence halls for seven days and shifted classes online after finding more than 50 cases in a matter of days.

The measures come as administrators assess whether in-person commencement ceremonies are feasible, how to get students vaccinated and whether to make the shots a requirement. The onset of warm weather and eased restrictions outside campus gates pose additional challenges.

After recording 200 cases in the first two weeks of April, North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University eliminated in-person dining and banned visitors from campus housing. While the state's governor has lifted an outdoor mask mandate and doubled mass gathering limits to allow 100 people indoors and 200 people outdoors, the university has worked with law enforcement to try to shut down off-campus events billed as "Aggie-Fest" celebrations that target students, said Todd Simmons, associate vice chancellor for university relations.

"What we're trying to prevail on students is two things. First, let's not get commencement canceled with some sort of last-minute major surge in COVID infections, and secondly do not take a chance on taking a COVID infection home," Simmons said.

The historically Black university also has been pushing students to get vaccinated on campus, he said, bringing in speakers to address vaccine hesitancy.

At the University of Vermont, just under 100 students tested positive for the virus during the fall semester. But the numbers surged in the spring, with more than 680 students infected so far this semester. Gary Derr, vice president for operations and public safety, said the fall semester got off to a smoother start because it was warm enough for students to socialize outside.

"We came back in the spring and we were stuck indoors," he said. Like many campuses, there was no spring break to look forward to; the university didn't want students bringing the virus back with them.

UVM students agree to a pledge that they will abide by school rules for preventing the spread of the coronavirus and violations can lead to fines, probation or suspension for repeated offenses. This spring, six students have been suspended and 23, some of whom had faced full suspension, are banished from campus, allowed only to join classes remotely, after the school agreed to review the cases.

As tulips and daffodils bloom on campus, signs tell students to keep up the practices like social distancing and mask wearing. At the COVID-19 testing center, where students are tested twice a week, banners say, "IT'S UP TO US" and "THANKS FOR DOING YOUR PART."

The warmer weather has made it easier to see friends and classmates on campus, students said, but fears of being penalized have taken a toll.

"If I go anywhere on campus and I mess up, like I'm sitting too close to someone or my mask is below

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my nose, I could get fined or I could get suspended. It makes you afraid and it's terrible for mental health," said Welsh, of Hopkinton, Massachusetts. "And I think the UVM administration is not really recognizing that; they're just trying to look good."

When hundreds of young people crowded onto a Burlington beach the second weekend in April, student Gary Sinclair of St. Johnsbury, Vermont, saw it as a kind of revolt against the crackdown.

"We were working really hard to make sure the school stays open so that those guys can make money," Sinclair said, "but I think North Beach was a huge, almost a statement to the UVM administration that, 'You know what? If you're going to try to intimidate us with fear and fines, kicking us out, stuff like that, then we're all going to go to the beach and you're not going to kick all of us out.'"

In late April, Derr announced infection rates at UVM had fallen enough to allow multihousehold gatherings of UVM students living on- and off-campus.

Nicole Hardy said students haven't lost sight of the virus but have become desensitized as time has passed.

"I still see people going into quarantine every week, and I still know there are people that are getting sick. ... So it's like there's still a lingering concern," she said. "But I would say overwhelmingly people are prioritizing socializing right now."

States scale back vaccine orders as interest in shots wanes

By HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH and TODD RICHMOND Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — States asked the federal government this week to withhold staggering amounts of COVID-19 vaccine amid plummeting demand for the shots, contributing to a growing U.S. stockpile of doses.

From South Carolina to Washington, states are requesting the Biden administration send them only a fraction of what's been allocated to them. The turned-down vaccines amount to hundreds of thousands of doses this week alone, providing a stark illustration of the problem of vaccine hesitancy in the U.S.

More than 150 million Americans — about 57% of the adult population — have received at least one dose of vaccine, but government leaders from the Biden administration down to the city and county level are doing everything they can to persuade the rest of the country to get inoculated.

U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy said Friday that the federal government has dedicated \$250 million for community organizations to promote vaccinations, make appointments and provide transportation.

He cited examples such as holding conversations with small groups of people in minority communities in St. Louis and asking Rhode Island churches to contact community members and offer them rides to vaccination sites. He also noted that a global Hindu American organization has turned temples into vaccination centers, making it easier for elderly members to get shots in a familiar setting. The Indianapolis Motor Speedway has added a vaccination site in which people can get their shots in a Formula 1 garage near the race tunnels.

The Biden administration announced this week that if states don't order all the vaccine they've been allotted, the administration will shift the surplus to meet demand in other states.

In another sign of the burgeoning national surplus, Biden announced last week that his administration would share the nation's entire stock of AstraZeneca doses with the world once it clears safety reviews.

The huge supply and dwindling demand has highlighted the vast inequalities during the pandemic, with countries like India buckling under a disastrous surge of the virus and other nations having no doses at all. At the same time, wealthy countries like the U.S. are awash in vaccine, and seeing cases and deaths plunge as a result.

The federal government allocates vaccines to each state based on their population size, and then it's up to the states to decide how many doses they want to order every week. Early on, states routinely asked for the full allocation — and were clamoring for more shots — but now they are scaling back requests.

Wisconsin officials have asked for just 8% of the 162,680 doses the federal government had set aside for the state next week. Julie Willems Van Dijk, the state health department's deputy secretary, acknowledged earlier that demand is softening and vaccinators are drawing down existing inventories before

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ordering more doses.

In Iowa, officials have asked the federal government for 29% of that state's allocated doses next week. Kansas officials asked for less than 9% of their 162,000-dose allotment this past week. Counties have been turning down doses as demand plummets, leaving the state with a stockpile of almost 647,000 doses.

Melaney Arnold, a spokeswoman for the Illinois Department of Public Health, said the state has five weeks' worth of doses on hand. Last week, state officials for the first time requested fewer doses than allotted because of declining demand. The state plans to request just 9% of its allotted doses for everywhere but Chicago for next week.

Connecticut has requested 26% of its allotment for next week. South Carolina plans to order 21% of its doses.

North Carolina has scaled back its request for the past week by 40%. Washington state also cut its order by about 40% this week, the first time the state's order has been smaller than its allocation.

Not everyone is dialing back. Maryland and Colorado are still ordering their full amount. So is New York City. The average number of daily shots in the nation's largest city has dropped about 40% since peaking at more than 95,000 in mid-April, but city officials want a steady supply of doses to create more shots at doctor's offices, neighborhood pharmacies and other small providers, hoping to appeal to people who have skipped mass vaccination sites.

"We've got the demand to keep using our supply effectively," Mayor Bill de Blasio said.

Health experts have generally said about 70% of the nation's population would need to be vaccinated to reach herd immunity. The Biden administration wants to get 70% of adult Americans vaccinated by July 4, but has acknowledged the downward trend in vaccinations and the challenge to win over people who doubt the vaccine's effectiveness or simply don't want to get shots.

The president announced Tuesday that federal officials will expand smaller and mobile vaccination clinics for hard-to-reach communities and push education campaigns. He also has touted incentive programs, such as discounts for shoppers who get vaccinated at grocery stores.

North Carolina health officials are considering paying younger people to get shots. West Virginia has announced people between the ages of 16 and 35 will be eligible for a \$100 savings bond if they get the vaccine or have gotten it. Detroit officials started a program Monday to pay people \$50 for every city resident they sign up for a first dose and bring in for an appointment.

Dr. Joshua Sharfstein, vice dean for public health practice and community engagement at Johns Hopkins University, said he wasn't "despairing" over the slowing of demand.

"Herd immunity is not necessarily a moment when the music plays and the sun shines," he said. "It is about how easy it is for the virus to pass around in a community, and I think there is a lot more progress to be made. People who think, 'Well, we are done with the large stadiums, so that is it, we are not going to vaccinate any more people' are wrong. You can vaccinate a lot of people if you make it convenient for them, if you get it to their doctor's offices, if you answer their questions. But it is going to take a different type of effort to do it."

Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Sunday, May 9, the 129th day of 2021. There are 236 days left in the year. This is Mother's Day.

Today's Highlight in History:

On May 9, 1994, South Africa's newly elected parliament chose Nelson Mandela to be the country's first Black president.

On this date:

In 1712, the Carolina Colony was officially divided into two entities: North Carolina and South Carolina.

In 1914, President Woodrow Wilson, acting on a joint congressional resolution, signed a proclamation designating the second Sunday in May as Mother's Day.

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In 1926, Americans Richard Byrd and Floyd Bennett supposedly became the first men to fly over the North Pole. (However, U.S. scholars announced in 1996 that their examination of Byrd's flight diary suggested he had turned back 150 miles short of his goal.)

In 1945, with World War II in Europe at an end, Soviet forces liberated Czechoslovakia from Nazi occupation. U.S. officials announced that a midnight entertainment curfew was being lifted immediately.

In 1951, the U.S. conducted its first thermonuclear experiment as part of Operation Greenhouse by detonating a 225-kiloton device on Enewetak Atoll in the Pacific nicknamed "George."

In 1961, in a speech to the National Association of Broadcasters, Federal Communications Commission Chairman Newton N. Minow decried the majority of television programming as a "vast wasteland."

In 1962, scientists at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology succeeded in reflecting a laser beam off the surface of the moon.

In 1970, President Richard Nixon made a surprise and impromptu pre-dawn visit to the Lincoln Memorial, where he chatted with a group of protesters who'd been resting on the Memorial steps after protests against the Vietnam War and the Kent State shootings.

In 1974, the House Judiciary Committee opened public hearings on whether to recommend the impeachment of President Richard Nixon. (The committee ended up adopting three articles of impeachment against the president, who resigned before the full House took up any of them.)

In 1980, 35 people were killed when a freighter rammed the Sunshine Skyway Bridge over Tampa Bay in Florida, causing a 1,400-foot section of the southbound span to collapse.

In 2012, President Barack Obama declared his unequivocal support for same-sex marriage in a historic announcement that came three days after Vice President Joe Biden spoke in favor of such unions on NBC's "Meet the Press."

In 2019, Pope Francis issued a groundbreaking new church law requiring all Catholic priests and nuns to report clergy sexual abuse and cover-ups by their superiors to church authorities.

Ten years ago: Former House Speaker Newt Gingrich announced on social networking websites that he was running for the Republican presidential nomination. Dallas Wiens, the nation's first full face transplant recipient, joined surgeons at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston in his first public appearance since the 15-hour procedure in March 2011. Belgian cyclist Wouter Weylandt lost control of his bike and tumbled down a mountain pass to his death during the third stage of the Giro d'Italia.

Five years ago: Filipinos went to the polls to elect Rodrigo Duterte, the controversial, tough-talking mayor of Davao city, to be their country's next president.

One year ago: The Food and Drug Administration approved a coronavirus antigen test that could quickly detect virus proteins from swabs that were swiped inside the nasal cavity. Rock 'n' roll pioneer Little Richard, known for his piercing wail, pounding piano and towering pompadour, died in Tennessee at the age of 87 after battling bone cancer; he had helped shatter the color line on the music charts while introducing Black R&B to white America.

Today's Birthdays: Actor-writer Alan Bennett is 87. Actor and politician Glenda Jackson is 85. Producer-director James L. Brooks is 84. Musician Sonny Curtis (Buddy Holly and the Crickets) is 84. Singer Tommy Roe is 79. Singer-musician Richie Furay (Buffalo Springfield and Poco) is 77. Actor Candice Bergen is 75. Pop singer Clint Holmes is 75. Actor Anthony Higgins is 74. Singer Billy Joel is 72. Blues singer-musician Bob Margolin is 72. Rock singer-musician Tom Petersson (Cheap Trick) is 71. Actor Alley Mills is 70. Actor Amy Hill is 68. Actor Wendy Crewson is 65. Actor John Corbett is 60. Singer Dave Gahan (GAHN) (Depeche Mode) is 59. Actor Sonja Sohn is 57. Rapper Ghostface Killah is 51. Actor Chris Diamantopoulos (dy-uh-MAN'toh-POO'leh) is 46. R&B singer Tamia (tuh-MEE'ah) is 46. Actor Daniel Franzese is 43. Rock singer Pierre Bouvier (Simple Plan) is 42. Actor Rosario Dawson is 42. Rock singer Andrew W.K. is 42. Actor Rachel Boston is 39. TV personality Audrina Patridge is 36. Actor Grace Gummer is 35.