

Groton Daily Independent

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Volga Post 114 Runs Away With Early Lead In Victory

Groton Legion Post #39 watched the game slip away early and couldn't recover in a 13-4 loss to Volga Post 114 on Saturday. Volga Post 114 took the lead on a single in the first inning.

The Groton Legion Post #39 struggled to put runs on the board and had a tough time defensively containing Volga Post 114, giving up 13 runs.

In the first inning, Volga Post 114 got their offense started when Conner L singled on a 2-1 count, scoring one run.

Groton Legion Post #39 tallied three runs in the third inning. Groton Legion Post #39's big bats in the inning were led by a single by Jackson Cogley and a double by Peyton Johnson.

Volga Post 114 scored five runs in the third inning. Volga Post 114 batters contributing to the big inning included Carson C, Parker P, Conner, and Ashton B, all driving in runs in the inning.

Trey S was the winning pitcher for Volga Post 114. Trey allowed four hits and three runs over two and two-thirds innings, striking out one. Conner G threw two and a third innings in relief out of the bullpen.

Cogley took the loss for Groton Legion Post #39. Cogley went one and one-third innings, allowing six runs on six hits and walking one.

Darien Shabazz led Groton Legion Post #39 with two hits in three at bats.

Volga Post 114 had ten hits in the game. Avry M and Parker all had multiple hits for Volga Post 114.

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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, June 6, 2021

Communion in Worship (white)

Conde Worship 9:00 AM

Groton Worship 11:00 AM

Tuesday, June 8, 2021

Bible Study 10:00 AM

Wednesday, June 9, 2021

Community Coffee Hour 9:30 AM

Friday, June 11, 2021

Dakotas Annual Conf - Sioux Falls

Saturday, June 12, 2021

Dakotas Annual Conf - Sioux Falls

Sunday, June 13, 2021

Conde Worship 9:00 AM

Groton Worship 11:00 AM

Emmanuel Lutheran Church

Groton

Sunday, June 6, 2021

9 a.m.: Worship with Communion

Monday, June 7, 2021

6:30am: Bible Study

Tuesday, June 8, 2021

7 p.m.: Council Meeting

Sunday, June 13, 2021

9 a.m.: Worship

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, June 6, 2021

8 a.m.: Bible Study

Worship with Communion

9 a.m.: St. John's Worship

11 a.m.: Zion's Worship

Sunday, June 13, 2021

8 a.m.: Bible Study

9 a.m.: St. John's Worship

11 a.m.: Zion's Worship

Heaven Bound Ministries

Pierpont

Buffalo Lake Lutheran

Rural Eden

Sunday, June 7: Worship with communion at Buffalo Lake 10:30 a.m.

Saturday, June 12: Worship with Communion at Pierpont, 5:30 p.m.

Sunday, June 7: Worship at Buffalo Lake 10:30 a.m.

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

Brown County Fatal Crash

What: Two-Vehicle Fatal Crash

Where: Intersection of 129th Street and 387th Avenue
Two miles north of Aberdeen, S.D.

When: 11:05 p.m., Friday, June 4, 2021

Driver No 1: Male, 27, Fatal Injuries

Vehicle No. 1: 2020 Harley Davidson FLHTCSE2 Motorcycle

Driver No 2: Male, 19, No Injuries

Vehicle No. 2: 2013 Dodge Ram Pickup

ABERDEEN, S.D. – One person died late Friday night in a motorcycle-pickup crash north of Aberdeen.

Names of the two people involved are not yet being released pending notification of family members.

Preliminary crash information indicates that a 2020 Harley Davidson FLHTCSE2 motorcycle was south-bound on 387th Avenue. A 2013 Dodge Ram pickup, going north on 387th Avenue, attempted to make a left turn onto 129th Street in front of the motorcycle. The two vehicles collided.

The 27-year-old male driver of the motorcycle was later pronounced dead at an Aberdeen hospital. He was not wearing a helmet.

Charges are pending against the 19-year-old male driver of the pickup.

South Dakota's Highway Patrol is investigating the crash. All information released so far is only preliminary.

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

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THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

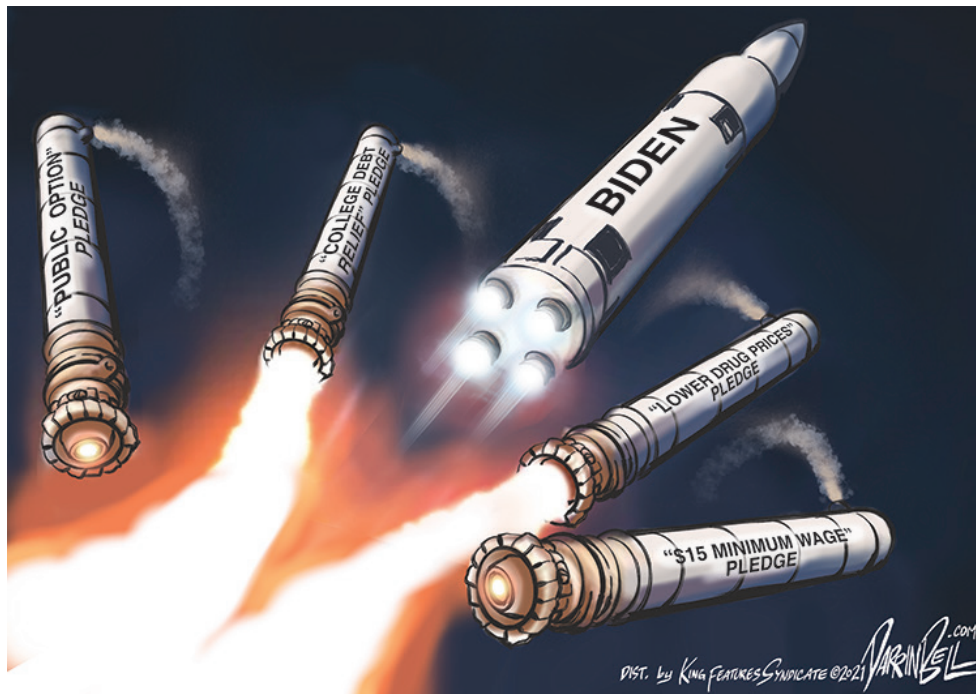
To keep you from the evil woman, from the flattering tongue of a seductress. Do not lust after her beauty in your heart, nor let her allure you with her eyelids.

PROVERBS 6: 24,25

“Mädchen” by Alexej von Jawlensky (1912)

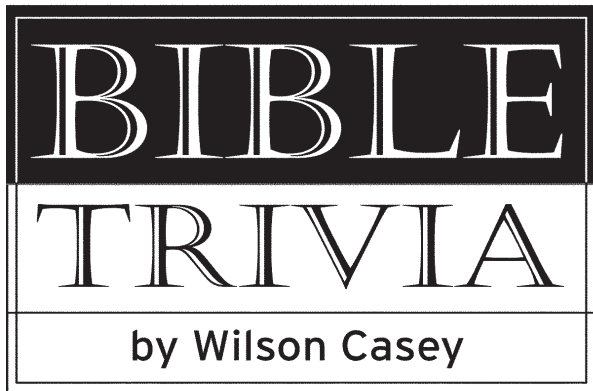


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1. Is the book of Balaam in the Old or New Testament or neither?

2. How did the paralyzed man's friends present him through the crowds to get to Jesus? *Donkey-pulled cart, Lowered through roof, Pulled up stairs, Trumpets blaring*

3. From Genesis 8, what was the first thing Noah did after leaving the ark? *Burned it, Built an altar, Performed a marriage, Hiked to mountains*

4. What group did John the Baptist exhort to be content with their pay? *Priests, Zealots, Judges, Soldiers*

5. Which king of Israel had a reputation as a wild chariot driver? *Jehoa-haz, Jehoash, Jehu, Jehoram*

6. Whose biblical name means "eagle"? *Nehemiah, Timothy, Aquila, Miriam*

ANSWERS: 1) Neither; 2) Lowered through roof; 3) Built an altar; 4) Soldiers; 5) Jehu; 6) Aquila

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

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pudding Treats for Dad

You can let the kids put together these Black-Bottom Crunch Pudding Treats for Father's Day. It's easy for them and you, and great-tasting for Dad.

- 8 sugar-free fudge-dipped wafers
- 2 tablespoons chopped pecans
- 1 (4-serving) package sugar-free instant cheese-cake pudding mix
- 2/3 cup nonfat dry milk powder
- 1 1/2 cups water
- 1/2 cup fat-free whipped topping

1. Coarsely crush wafers. Reserve 2 teaspoons wafer crumbs.

2. In a small bowl, combine remaining wafer crumbs and pecans. Evenly spoon mixture into 4 dessert dishes.

3. In a medium bowl, combine dry pudding mix, dry milk powder and water. Mix well using a wire whisk. Blend in whipped topping. Evenly spoon pudding mixture into dessert dishes.

4. Top each with 1/2 teaspoon reserved wafer crumbs. Refrigerate for at least 15 minutes. Serves 4.

* Each serving equals: 178 calories, 6g fat, 5g protein, 26g carbs, 395mg sodium, 152mg calcium, 1g fiber; Diabetic Exchanges: 1 1/2 Starch/Carbs, 1 Fat, 1/2 Fat-Free Milk; Carb Choices: 2.

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FLASH GORDON

By JIM KEEFE
5-30

DESPITE AN OMINOUS WARNING, FLASH PREPARES TO LEAD A SEARCH PARTY FOR A DOWNED CRAFT STRANDED HIGH ON CHOMOMATHA.

REMEMBER, BOOST YOUR COMMUNICATION SIGNAL SO IT DOESN'T BREAK UP.

GOT IT, DOC.

AND TRY TO KEEP A BRISK PACE. THE RADAR IS TRACKING A COLD FRONT HEADED OUR WAY THAT COULD TURN UGLY.

UNDERSTOOD, DALE.

MY KING, THE HAWKMEN ARE PACKED AND READY.

THANK YOU, TENGSI. AND THANK YOU FOR STILL BEING PART OF OUR TEAM...

...EVEN THOUGH YOU MAY HAVE RESERVATIONS.

YOU ARE THE RIGHTFUL RULER OF MY PEOPLE.

WHEREVER YOU GO I WILL FOLLOW.

THEN LET'S GET STARTED.

KEEP IN FORMATION AND KEEP CLOSE TO THE SURFACE. NO NEED TO ATTRACT THE ATTENTION OF ANY MORE OF THOSE WINGED DEMONS.

AS THE TASK FORCE ASCENDS, THE CLIMATE BECOMES MORE AND MORE TREACHEROUS.

THE WIND... TOO STRONG!

FLYING IS TOO RISKY... GROUND YOURSELF AND FOLLOW TENGSI'S LEAD.

UNTIL FINALLY...

THE DISTRESS SIGNAL IS COMING FROM RIGHT OVER THAT RIDGE. ANY SIGN OF IT?

I SEE IT...

...OR AT LEAST, WHAT'S LEFT OF IT...

TO BE CONT'D ~

Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS

WHEN PUTTING ON COARSE GRASSES LIKE BERMUDA, OR SLOW SOFT-GRASSED GREENS, TRY TO CATCH THE BALL SLIGHTLY ON THE UPSTROKE INSTEAD OF RIGHT AT THE BOTTOM OF THE SWING ARC.

THIS REDUCES YOUR CHANCE OF CATCHING THE GRASS BEFORE THE BALL, WHICH DECELERATES AND TWISTS THE PUTTER HEAD, ALSO MAKING CONTACT SLIGHTLY ON THE UPSTROKE GETS THE BALL ROLLING END-OVER-END FASTER AND MORE TRULY.

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Commercial Lab Tests vs Genetic Counseling

DEAR DR. ROACH: I have a daughter (almost 31 years) who is concerned about Charcot-Marie-Tooth syndrome. Her maternal grandmother has been diagnosed with that condition. She is interested in seeking out a genetic test for the condition to learn if she is susceptible. She was referred to a commercial, direct-to-consumer laboratory for the test.

How likely is it that a lab test for this specific condition would be accurate? Should she be doing all of this through either a particular type of genetics counselor or her private physician (internist) rather than an independent effort? -- R.C.

ANSWER: Charcot-Marie-Tooth disease is the eponym given to a family of hereditary motor sensory neuropathies: diseases that affect the nerves that carry the impulses necessary for movement and sensation. The initial symptoms are most commonly weakness and atrophy in the feet, followed by similar problems in the hands and sensory changes.

The diagnosis may be made by EMG testing (electromyography, a needle study of the electrical activity of the muscles), but genetic testing is another way of making the diagnosis. If her grandmother has a known mutation, then genetic testing is likely to give her confirmation of her own status.

Commercial genetic testing is certainly available, and probably accurate. However, I would still recommend a visit to a genetic counselor. This may require a referral from her primary-care doctor. The correct test to order, and its interpretation, depends on the exact diagnosis of her grandmother's condition, since there are many genetic variations of Charcot-Marie-Tooth. It is likely that your daughter will have questions after the test results, and the benefit of having an experienced clinician there to answer them would be invaluable.

DEAR DR. ROACH: I'm an 81-year-old man. About two years ago, I began to realize that my testicles were shrinking, and they are now about the size of a marble. I have asked my primary care doctor and urologist about this, and the reply is that nothing can be done about it.

I have read that boxer shorts are recommended to keep the testicles cooler and healthier. I am wondering whether my extensive time sitting at a desk and reading could be related to my shrinking testicles. Or is it related to erectile dysfunction, which is caused by decreased blood flow? I have ED. My last testosterone result was about 500. Is there nothing that can be done, not even any exercises? -- L.D.

ANSWER: The medical term for what's happening to you is "testicular atrophy," and it has several possible causes. Age alone is one: At age 81, many men have noticed some shrinkage in testicular size, but yours is beyond the norm. You are right that cooler temperatures are healthier for the testicles, but again, I am a little surprised by the severity of your description.

Among the other common causes are a history of trauma or infection. However, any underlying cause can also affect the ability of the testicles to make testosterone. Your blood testosterone level is surprisingly normal for your age (400-500 is the average for a man in his 80s). A low testosterone is a common cause of erectile dysfunction (poor blood flow is only one cause of ED).

After two years, it is very unlikely that any treatments will affect the testicles now, unfortunately.

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.



I'm a certified believer in movie soundtracks. Music can not only trigger a great movie memory, but from where I sit, it just makes sense to have a playlist curated by an expert. Maybe it's my age — I'm firmly Gen X, and movie soundtracks are the precursors to today's Spotify playlists. The Recording Industry Association of America ranks songs, albums, etc., and the top 20 list agrees: The majority of bestselling soundtracks are movies in the 1980s and '90s. Here are some gems from the top 20, by decade.

John Travolta starts us out with the phenomenon that was 1977's "Saturday Night Fever." Tony Manzano (Travolta) and friends live for the weekend disco, and the Bee Gees became the score of the late '70s with the title track, "More Than a Woman," "Night Fever," etc. Travolta follows it up alongside Olivia Newton-John with 1978's "Grease." The decade feels close with Neil Diamond's soundtrack to "The Jazz Singer," where Diamond plays a young musician wrestling himself from a traditional upbringing on a path to musical success.

The 1980s feature some absolute iconic soundtracks that trigger instant recognition. Think about the biggies from this decade: "Flashdance," "Footloose," "The Big Chill," "Top Gun." But in the No. 3 spot of all time sits the soundtrack for "Purple Rain," pitting The Kid (Prince, who performs with his band, The Revolution) in all his earnestness climbing the Minneapolis club scene, against a rival band, Morris Day and The Time. Another chart-topper features music from the 1950s, '60s and '80s, but all highly associated with Patrick Swayze and Jennifer Grey in 1987's "Dirty Dancing." Then in 1989, a Disney's "The Little Mermaid" bub-

bled up from the bottom of the ocean to soundtrack success.

While the 1990s gave us tracks like "Don't Cry for Me, Argentina," in which Madonna sang her way to the No. 18 spot for the Andrew Lloyd Weber musical "Evita," you have absolutely "nothing, nothing, NOTHING," if you don't have the soundtrack to "The Bodyguard." This masterpiece by Whitney Houston — where she plays an incredibly popular and talented singer who brings on a gruff bodyguard (Kevin Costner) and falls in love — sits as the queen of soundtracks, going platinum 18 times. Other jams from the



Warner Bros.

Whitney Houston in "The Bodyguard"

1990s: George Strait's "Pure Country" soundtrack, as well as albums for "The Lion King," "Forrest Gump," "Space Jam," "City of Angels" and "Titanic" (carried almost exclusively by Celine Dion's ubiquitous "My Heart Will Go On"). Rounding out the decade is 1995's "Waiting to Exhale," also populated by Whitney Houston songs.

All that's left on our journey through the top 20 selling movie soundtracks? 2000's unexpected romp through rural 1937 Mississippi, with its bluegrass and Great Depression themes in the Coen Brothers' "O Brother, Where Art Thou?"

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1. Who released "I'd Lie for You (And That's the Truth)"?
2. Which artist wrote and released "Blame It on the Boogie"?
3. Who released "Heat of the Moment" in 1982?
4. Which duo wrote and released "Maneater"?
5. Name the song that contains this lyric: "If he brings you happiness, then I wish you both the best, It's your happiness that matters most of all."

Answers

1. Meat Loaf, in 1995. The song climbed charts all over the world, including in Iceland, Hungary and Belgium, as well as multiple charts in the U.S.

2. Mick Jackson, in 1978. It was written with the hope that it would be recorded by Stevie Wonder.

3. Asia, on their debut album. The song was used in a "South Park" episode with Cartman singing in front of the House of Representatives.

4. Hall & Oates in 1982. Contrary to legend, the song isn't about a female. It's about New York City and greed.

5. "Before the Next Teardrop Falls," by Freddy Fender, in 1974. The song had been recorded numerous times, but it wasn't until Fender's half English-half Spanish version that the song caught on. It not only shot to No. 1, but launched Fender's career.

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Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps



GRIN and BEAR IT



"OH, YEAH? Well, my interpretations of ink blots are weirder than yours!"

HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Plate is missing. 2. Elbow patch is added. 3. Tree limb is shorter. 4. Car is moved. 5. Pants are different. 6. Belt is missing.

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- Want bananas to last a little longer? Do not separate your bunch, and wrap the tip in foil.

- “Instead of baking soda, I use three or four charcoal briquettes in a bowl to control odor and moisture in my refrigerator. I place the briquettes in a shallow dish, then cover the top of the bowl with a small piece of cheesecloth and secure it with a fat rubber band. The best thing is that I can still use these briquettes on the grill. In the summer, they get changed very regularly.” — *M.L. in Virginia*

- To ripen a green tomato, wrap it in a sheet of newspaper or place it in a paper bag. It can then be left on the counter for several days to ripen.

- “After a hard day’s work in the

garden, I soak in a rosemary bath. It’s a natural anti-inflammatory, and it smells wonderful. I just add a few sprigs from my plant out back to very hot water, and then let the water sit for a while until it’s just warm. Then I get in. Heaven!” — *U.A. in Ohio*

- Keep laundry baskets in your automobile’s trunk for easier organization. You could even add a small cooler to hold cold items if you need to make a stop somewhere on the way home from the grocery store.

- “Here’s my tip: Use a muffin pan to make big ice cubes for drinks.” — *A.L. in Missouri*

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

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A STICKY JOB! A few lines are needed to complete this do-it-yourself disaster scene. Add them quickly from dot to dot.

NAIL POLISH! Hiram Ballpeene has laid out 12 nails in the form of an equation using Roman numerals. The equation is wrong. Can you correct it by moving just one nail to a new location?

$$VI - IV = IX$$

One way: Move the single nail from "IX" and place it over the minus sign to make a plus sign. You now have "VI + IV = X" (6 + 4 = 10).



DISPLAY PROBLEM! At right we see one of Sam Bolt's fastener display boards. The compartments contain nails (N), screws (S), washers (W) and bolts (B). Sam wants to move the items so that the compartments in each row, column and both diagonals contain nails, screws, washers and bolts. How would you rearrange the fasteners? Each compartment must contain only one type of fastener.



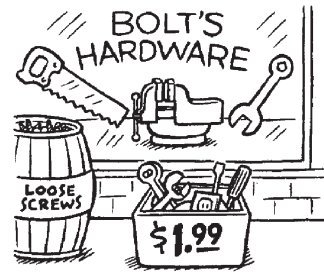
1.	N	N	N	N
2.	S	S	S	S
3.	W	W	W	W
4.	B	B	B	B

One answer: Row 1--N,S,W,B. Row 2--W,B,N,S. Row 3--B,W,S,N. Row 4--S,N,B,W.

Illustrated by David Coulson

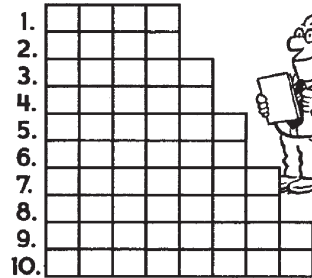
Junior Whirl

by Charles Barry Townsend



INVENTORY PROBLEM!

Sam Bolt is trying to take inventory of his stock, but everything got scrambled up in his warehouse. Can you help him figure out what these hardware items are? Just unscramble the letters.

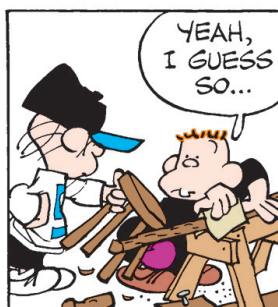
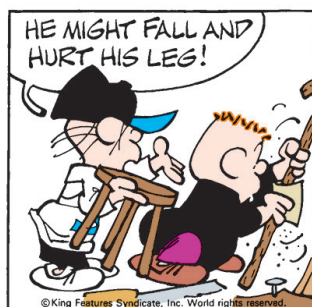
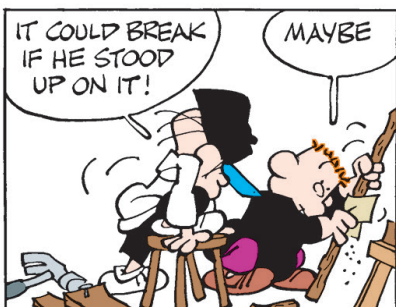
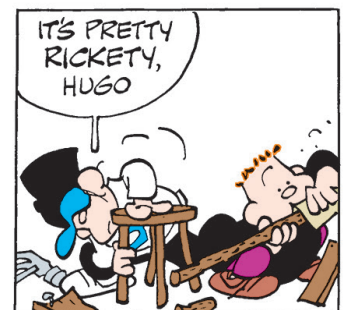
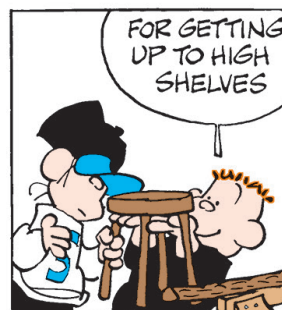
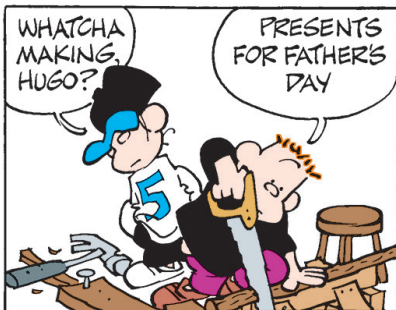


1. LUGE
2. EWRI
3. ASREK
4. NSIAL
5. ERHSSA
6. RSLDIL
7. HVSAIRN
8. SEHLOSV
9. DRNIGESR
10. CHRWESNE

1. Glue, 2. Wire, 3. Rakes, 4. Nails, 5. Shears, 6. Drills, 7. Varnish, 8. Shovels, 9. Grinders, 10. Wrenches.

TIGER

by BUD BLAKE



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King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Lingo
- 6 Slopes regular
- 12 Tenant
- 13 Sheathe
- 14 Schedules
- 15 Pumpkin relatives
- 16 Appointment
- 17 Spring melt-down
- 19 Cooking fuel
- 20 Libertine
- 22 Poseidon's home
- 24 Satisfied sigh
- 27 La Scala solo
- 29 Fine spray
- 32 Fruity rum cocktail
- 35 Author Wiesel
- 36 Eve's third son

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

- 37 That girl
- 38 "Awesome, dude!"
- 40 Pop
- 42 Trojans' sch.
- 44 Org.
- 46 Forget-me- (flowers)
- 50 Paris art museum
- 52 Athlete's woe
- 54 Tempt
- 55 Point maker
- 56 Op-ed pieces
- 57 Dwelling

DOWN

- 1 Actress Ward
- 2 Aspiring atty.'s exam
- 3 Fall bloom
- 4 Formerly called
- 5 Hand signals
- 6 Video game giant
- 7 Recognizes
- 8 Hosp. section
- 9 Haggles
- 10 Fed. food inspector
- 11 GI dining hall
- 12 Leary's drug
- 18 Patty Hearst, for one
- 21 Feed-bag morsel
- 23 Outback bird
- 24 Mimic
- 25 100 percent
- 26 Barber's offerings
- 28 Flabbergast
- 30 Learning ctr.
- 31 Common title start
- 33 Museum-funding org.
- 34 Prof's degree
- 39 "Pride and

- Prejudice" suitor
- 41 Pear variety
- 42 Peter Fonda's beekeeper role
- 43 Male deliveries?
- 45 Beholds
- 47 Partially mine
- 48 Genealogy chart
- 49 Neighbor of Leb.
- 51 By way of
- 53 Sgt., e.g.

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— King Crossword —

Answers

Solution time: 21 mins.

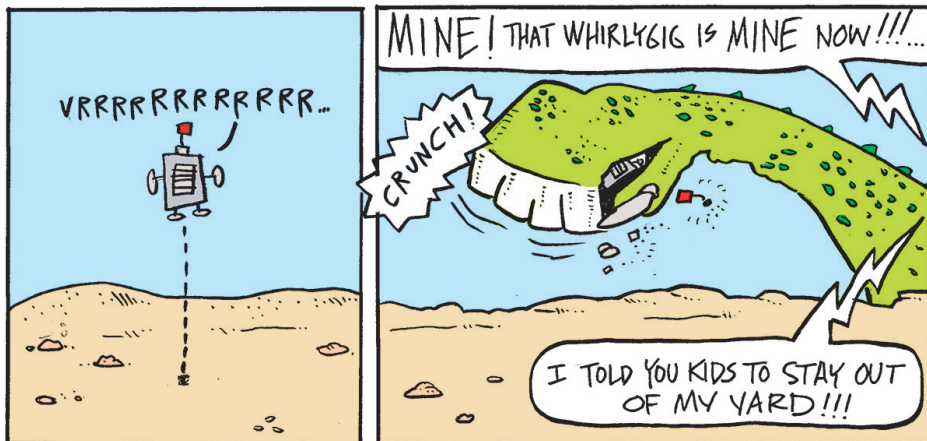
	S	L	A	N	G		S	K	I	B	U	M	
L	E	S	S	E	E		E	N	C	A	S	E	
S	L	A	T	E	S		G	O	U	R	D	S	
D	A	T	E			T	H	A	W		G	A	S
			R	O	U	E		S	E	A			
A	A	H		A	R	I	A		M	I	S	T	
P	L	A	N	T	E	R	S	P	U	N	C	H	
E	L	I	E		S	E	T	H		S	H	E	
		R	A	D		S	O	D	A				
U	S	C		A	S	S	N		N	O	T	S	
L	O	U	V	R	E		I	N	J	U	R	Y	
E	N	T	I	C	E		S	C	O	R	E	R	
E	S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

LAFF - A - DAY



"In view of the increased cost of living, I'm now charging twenty dollars for any opinion I give on anything."

Out on a Limb

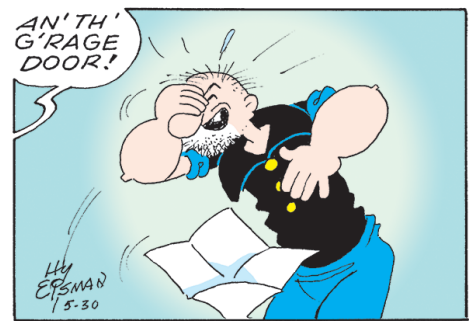
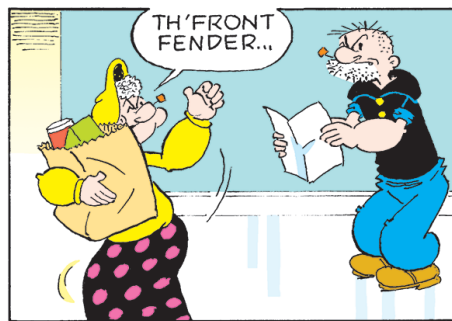
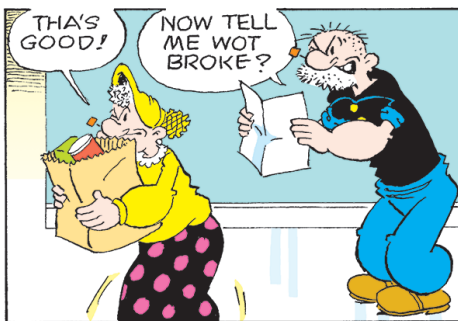
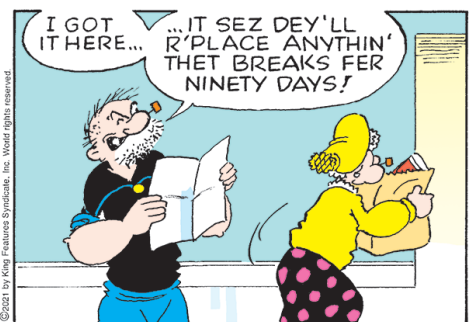
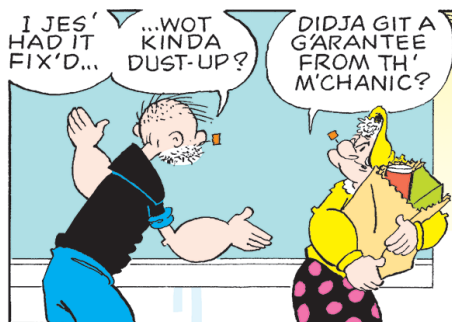
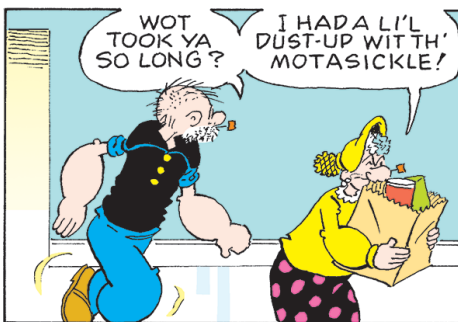
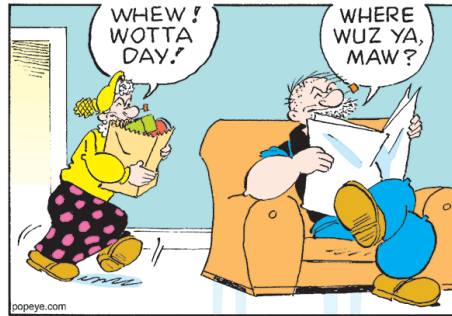
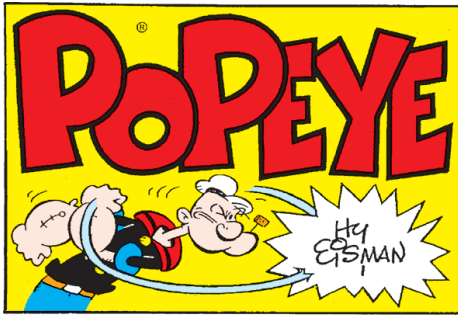


by Gary Kopervas

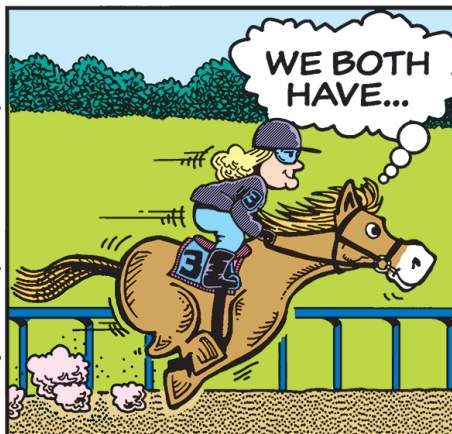
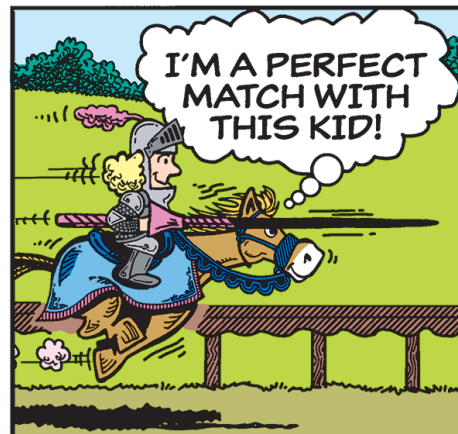


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R.F.D.



by Mike Marland

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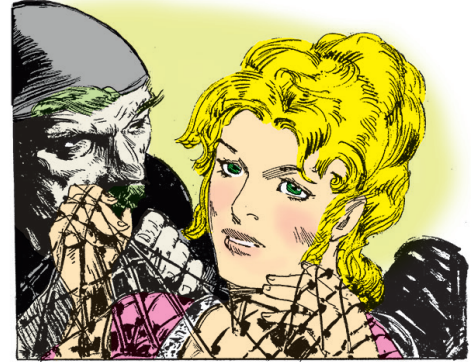
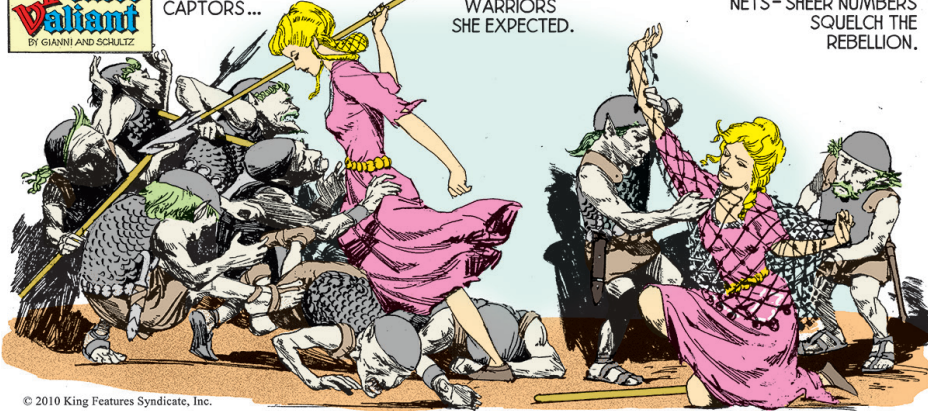
Hal Foster's
**Prince
Valiant**
BY GIANNI AND SCHULTZ

ALETA'S IN A ROYAL RAGE,
AND TURNS ON HER
CAPTORS...

... WHO ARE
NOT THE FIERCE
WARRIORS
SHE EXPECTED.

FINALLY THEIR DEFENSE
GIVES WAY TO THROWN
NETS - SHEER NUMBERS
SQUELCH THE
REBELLION.

"WE HAVE LEARNED SOMETHING USEFUL, BOANN,"
ALETA GRINS TO HER TERRIFIED HANDMAIDEN.
"WHEREVER WE ARE GOING, WE ARE MEANT
TO ARRIVE THERE ALIVE."



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BUT BOANN IS PRACTICAL, "COULD IT BE WE ARE
SO FAR BEYOND RESCUE, THAT THEY CARE NOT
IF YOU LEAVE A TRAIL?"

...WHERE, MERE HOURS LATER, FOUR BEDRAGGLED
FIGURES EMERGE TO A WELCOME LEDGE. VAL SPIES
SOMETHING FLUTTERING OUT OF AN OPENING IN THE WALL...

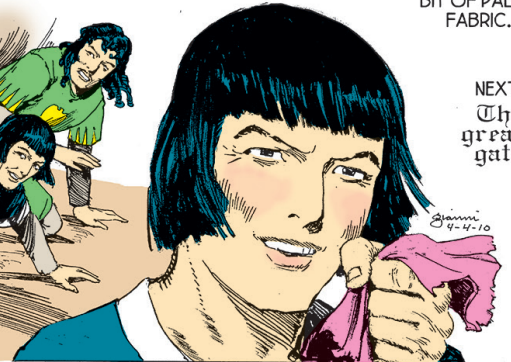
...IT IS A MIRACULOUS
BIT OF PALE
FABRIC...



THEY TRUDGE PAST A WINDY GULF...



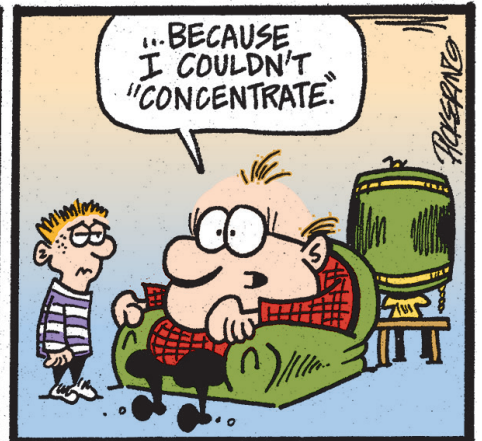
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NEXT:
The
great
gate

The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



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SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

Fighting Back Against Rising Food Prices

This week I scored a grocery discount of \$5.21, plus over \$6 in free groceries by using the store coupons. Added to that was \$12 in free items I took to the local food bank. All of this is because I signed up for another grocery store's customer loyalty card.

It took a few weeks, but eventually the store's computer figured out my favorite brands and items I routinely purchased, and turned those into discount coupons. It included free items to get me to sample different brands.

And then there's the food bank donation. It feels good, when you're only a short step from needing that service yourself, to be able to give to those who have even less. The free items offered by the grocery store coupons can help beef up the supplies they have at the food bank, and in some cases might even be treats for those who can't afford them. I thought about that when I grabbed the mega oversize candy bar offered with a free coupon: Somebody's kids might not have had

sweets in a very long time.

And then there are our own pantries. For so long stores couldn't get certain items. Once those were in stock again, some of us grabbed several extra, just in case. Now some of those items are once again not in stock, but for the most part they are. And now we have extra in our kitchen cabinets. It's time to look at expiration dates and consider the reality: Will we really use up four boxes of pasta in the next month before they expire? If not, perhaps they could be donated to the food bank.

If grocery prices are going to keep rising and rising, this is one way to fight back.

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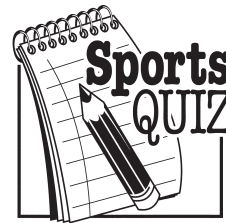
1. At the 2012 London Summer Olympics, what American female gymnast became an internet sensation after being photographed on the medal podium with a “not impressed” expression on her face?

2. In the “Seinfeld” season 3 episode “The Letter,” Elaine (Julia Louis-Dreyfus) is ejected from the owner’s box at Yankee Stadium for refusing to remove her baseball cap with what team’s logo?

3. A multipurpose sports stadium named in honor of soccer star Rommel Fernandez Gutierrez is located in what Central American country?

4. Name the German model who appeared on the cover of Sports Illustrated’s inaugural swimsuit issue in January 1964?

5. What Los Angeles Dodgers and San Diego Padres great holds the National League record for consecu-



by Ryan A. Berenz

tive games played with 1,207?

6. Name the boxer who, following a 1926 upset loss to Gene Tunney, told his wife, “Honey, I forgot to duck.”

7. What team selected troubled Ohio State Buckeyes running back Maurice Clarett in the third round of the 2005 NFL Draft?

Answers

1. McKayla Maroney.
2. The Baltimore Orioles.
3. Panama.
4. Babette March.
5. Steve Garvey.
6. Jack Dempsey.

Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps





Fight Dander Allergies on Multiple Fronts

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: I love my two fluffy cats, “Jake” and “Manny,” even though I am allergic to the dander in their fur. Antihistamines help, but not completely. Would an air purifier help keep the air clear? — *Jemma G. in Kansas City, Missouri*

DEAR JEMMA: An allergy to pet dander can be tough to keep under control — so much so that some pet owners give up their pets. I’m so glad you’ve kept your family together.

Pet dander is generally underneath a dog or cat’s coat, near the skin. They shed fluffy bits of fur almost constantly, and dander is carried off with that fluff. Because dander can be tiny — 75 microns or smaller, which isn’t visible to the naked eye — it’s hard to isolate and get rid of.

An air purifier may help, but only if it’s the right one to trap dander. Get an air purifier with a HEPA filter — one that can be changed easily. HEPA (high efficiency particulate air) filters trap particles as small as 0.5 microns. Avoid “ionizing” air purifiers as these don’t trap as many dander particles; plus they can be expensive. The size depends on how much of your home you’d like the air purifier to work in; for example, desktop-sized units have a range of less than 200 square feet, which makes them ideal for desks or next to your bed.

No single strategy will reduce dander or other allergens. Tackle the issue from multiple angles. Dusting and vacuuming the house frequently can reduce dander, and brushing your cats’ hair daily will reduce extra shedding. If these activities trigger allergies, consider wearing a filter mask and goggles to hopefully reduce the reaction.

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

Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

* Want to test how ripe your cranberries are? Drop them on the ground! Cranberries are nature's bouncy ball -- farmers even use this technique to see if the fruit is ready for shipment.

* In Las Vegas, it's against the law to pawn your dentures.

* Near the end of World War I, the French built a "fake Paris" designed to throw off German bombers and fighter pilots, complete with a replica of the Champs-Elysees and Gard Du Nord. It even included a fake railway that lit up at certain points,

creating the illusion from the sky of a train moving along the tracks.

* Allergy sufferers, take note: One ragweed plant can release as many as 1 billion grains of pollen.

* Adolf Hitler helped design (with Ferdinand Porsche) the Volkswagen Beetle, as part of an initiative to create "the people's car" -- an affordable, practical vehicle that everyone could own.

* Tablecloths were originally designed for use as one big, communal napkin.

* Each of the suits on a deck of cards represents the four major pillars of the economy in the Middle Ages: hearts for the Church, spades for the military, clubs for agriculture and diamonds for the merchant class.

* A person who plays the bongo drums is known as a "bongosero."

* According to research done by MIT, the number 17 is the most common randomly chosen number between one and 20.

* Henry Ford produced the Model T only in black because the black paint available at the time was the fastest to dry.

Thought for the Day: "Good communication is just as stimulating as black coffee, and just as hard to sleep after." -- Anne Morrow Lindbergh

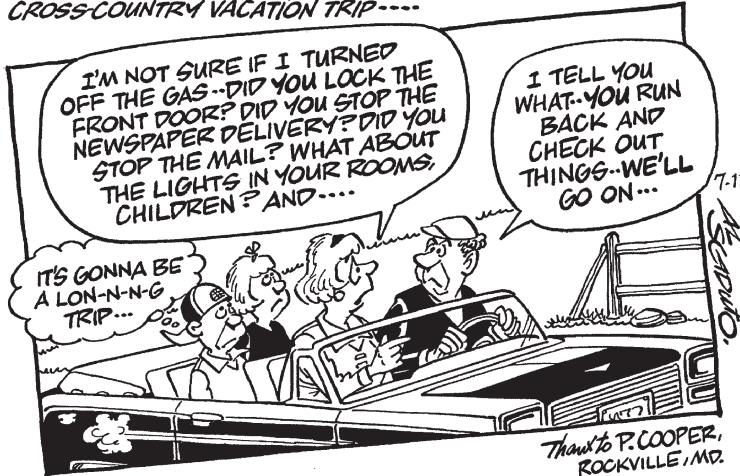
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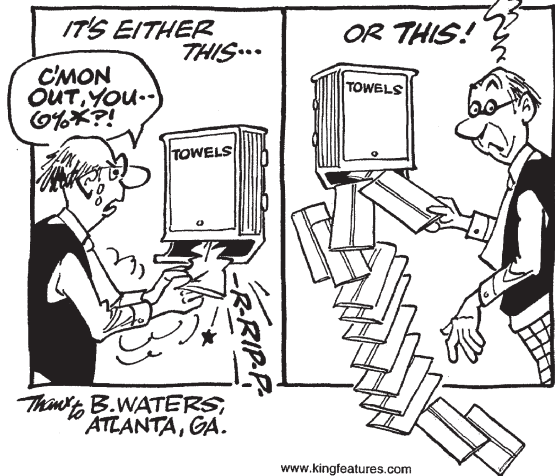
THEY'LL DO IT EVERY TIME

THE START OF THAT NICE, RELAXING, CROSS-COUNTRY VACATION TRIP....



BY AL SCADUTO

THOSE PAPER TOWEL DISPENSERS-- J'EVER NOTICE?



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NEWS ITEM:
SITTING AROUND WATCHING TV MAKES YOU FAT...

Thank to
AIMEE DOLAN,
ORMOND BEACH,
FL.



The Garden Bug

Artists' gardens

Artist Robert Irwin is quoted as saying,

"There's no palette as rich as a garden." He and other artists often designed their own gardens, and many can be visited today, such as Jacques Majorelle's "Jardin Majorelle" in Marrakech; Frida Kahlo's "Casa Azul" in Mexico City; Sol LeWitt's "Lines in Four Directions in Flowers" in Philadelphia's Fairmount Park; Claude Monet's garden in Giverny, Normandy; Georgia O'Keeffe's garden at Abiquiu, New Mexico; and Adam Purple's "Garden of Eden" in New York. - Brenda Weaver



GEORGIA O'KEEFFE'S
ABIQUIU GARDEN

Sources: www.artsy.net
www.cultivatingplace.com



by Freddy Groves

Volunteering at the VA

The Department of Veterans Affairs just celebrated its 75th year of using volunteers to run programs for veterans. In that time they've toted up 1 billion hours of volunteer time. Last year alone, 46,000 volunteers worked 4.4 million service hours and gave \$108 million worth of gifts and donations.

That's huge, and it's a credit to all those volunteers that they found ways to support veterans despite COVID and all the restrictions it brought to our lives.

We can make this year even better.

Go to Voluntary Services at www.volunteer.va.gov and see how you can help. On the left side look at Volunteer or Donate Now. Pick your state and the facility you want to support.

If you want to donate money, you can do that online with a credit card. Be sure to identify the facility you'd like the money to go to.

If you want to volunteer in person,

select the facility and check the list for slots that need filled. It might be parking-lot shuttle driver, mealtime companion, maintenance help or any other type of service. If the facility has a hospice unit, look at the list and consider the families that are staying there.

If you're a member of a service organization such as the American Legion and want to make a group donation, look at the list of wish items they need. Right now at my medical facility, they're looking for store gift cards, sneakers, underwear, canteen coupon books and gas cards. Other facility lists are more specific, down to the actual size of pants and shoes that are needed or the type of paperback books that are preferred.

If there is a large homeless population in your area, facilities often try to put together care packages for those veterans or apartment start-up kits for those moving into housing.

Call the Voluntary Services department at a facility near you and ask how you can help.

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



Lactose Tolerant

June is National Dairy Month, and in South Dakota we have a lot to celebrate.

Over the last three years, milk production has grown 35% in South Dakota. Despite the challenges of COVID-19, total cheese production in South Dakota increased 16% in a year when many states were not as fortunate.

During my first term in Congress, I advocated for and rallied support from many of my colleagues across the aisle to pass the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement which provided necessary improvements to increase dairy market access for South Dakota producers. Canada needs to live up to their end of the USMCA bargain, and that's why I urged the administration to ensure Canada is allowing producers to meet the tariff quotas set in place under USMCA – I'm glad they are taking action.

Despite these successes, dairy farmers in South Dakota are still facing hardships because of the pandemic, and they need our support now more than ever.

That is why I cosponsored the DAIRY PRIDE Act, a bill that would require manufacturers of plant-based foods and beverages to stop mislabeling their products as dairy products. Many non-dairy items have the words "milk," "yogurt," and "cheese" on their labels, when in reality they do not meet the FDA's definition of dairy and do not possess the specific nutritional values found in real dairy products.

The DAIRY PRIDE Act benefits both dairy producers and confused consumers across the United States by simply requiring the FDA to follow their own rules. After a year of braving extreme demand disruptions and plummeting market prices, this is the boost our dairy producers deserve.

Dairy products provide important health benefits to millions of Americans, and I am proud of our South Dakota dairy farmers who work hard every day to feed our nation and fill our cereal bowls.

The pandemic has proven just how resilient our dairy producers are, and National Dairy Month is the perfect time to recognize their efforts. Make sure to thank and support your local dairy farmers in June!

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South Dakota Governor

Kristi Noem



South Dakota: *Under God, the People Rule*

Arbitrary and Unlawful

There is no better place than Mount Rushmore to celebrate America's birthday. Independence Day is the celebration of our nation and our founding principles of freedom, equality, and opportunity. Thomas Jefferson wrote the beautiful document that declared the United States of America free and independent. George Washington's leadership in the American Revolution ensured that our independence was established and protected.

Unfortunately, the Biden Administration does not share South Dakota's desire to celebrate America's birthday at our Shrine of Democracy. They arbitrarily and unlawfully denied our permit to hold the event this year, violating a memorandum of agreement that the State of South Dakota had with the Department of Interior.

A federal district court judge recently sided with the Biden Administration and denied our request to honor our agreement with federal authorities and hold fireworks at Mount Rushmore this year. But this fight is not over. My legal team is appealing the court's ruling so that we can celebrate America's independence at Mount Rushmore next year and into the future.

Unfortunately, by cancelling our fireworks celebration, the Biden Administration is caving to the radical elements of the modern Democrat party. They wish to cancel the great men on that mountain who accomplished so much to make America the most special nation in history. It's but their latest attack on American history and our founding principles. It falls in line with recent promotion of critical race theory and revisionist history like the 1619 Project.

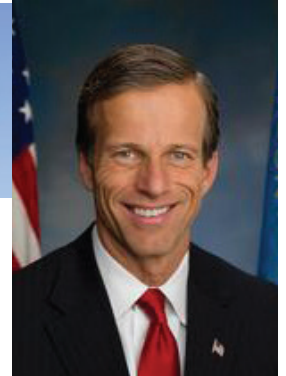
In the radical left's view, America has become one of the villains of history. That's why they promote kneeling for our national anthem. That's why they tear down statues honoring our nation's heroes. And that's why last year there were calls to tear down Mount Rushmore itself.

We know the truth. We know that America is the greatest nation that the world has ever known. While America has fallen short of our founding ideals at times, our nation's greatest triumphs are in the moments when we've made progress towards realizing those ideals.

Independence Day is about celebrating those ideals and the tremendous history that makes them possible. It's about celebrating the things that make America exceptional, including the exceptional men on Mount Rushmore. They were flawed men – every single one of us has our own flaws. But they led our country through challenging times, and we are stronger for that leadership.

A fireworks celebration at Mount Rushmore is the best possible way to celebrate not only those men, but also, and more importantly, the ideals that they dedicated their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor to achieve. Despite the Biden Administration's arbitrary and unlawful decision, we will continue fighting to once again return fireworks to Mount Rushmore.

John Thune
U.S. SENATOR - SOUTH DAKOTA



A Tale of Two Pipelines

The recent Colonial Pipeline hack was a stark reminder of the importance of American energy independence and security. Americans should never have to question whether they will have reliable and affordable access to energy and fuel, but lines at gas pumps across the northeast hearkened back to the 1970s, when conflict in the Middle East resulted in serious shortages in the United States.

Over the last several decades, Republicans have prioritized efforts to ensure that our country can rely almost entirely on North American energy sources instead of imports from overseas – and we’ve made great strides. But for America to maintain its competitive energy posture, we cannot hamstring industries that have helped reduce our dependency on foreign energy. Unfortunately, President Biden has already begun to do just that, starting when he halted construction of the job-creating Keystone XL pipeline on the first day of his presidency.

The pipeline, which was already under construction, would have run through nine counties in South Dakota and brought economic growth to small towns like Philip and Murdo. Its cancellation will rob 11,000 Americans of good-paying jobs – all because of exaggerated concerns over the environmental impact and an unrealistic and costly agenda to end the use of fossil fuels.

Pipelines are the most environmentally responsible way of transporting oil, and even the Obama administration agreed that Keystone XL was the most environmentally sensitive approach compared to using rail or trucks. The project’s emissions would also be entirely offset with a \$1.7 billion investment in renewable energy. President Biden’s decision to cancel this infrastructure project was shortsighted and entirely counterproductive. The oil in question needs to be transported whether Keystone XL is built or not, especially as consumer demand for fuel rebounds.

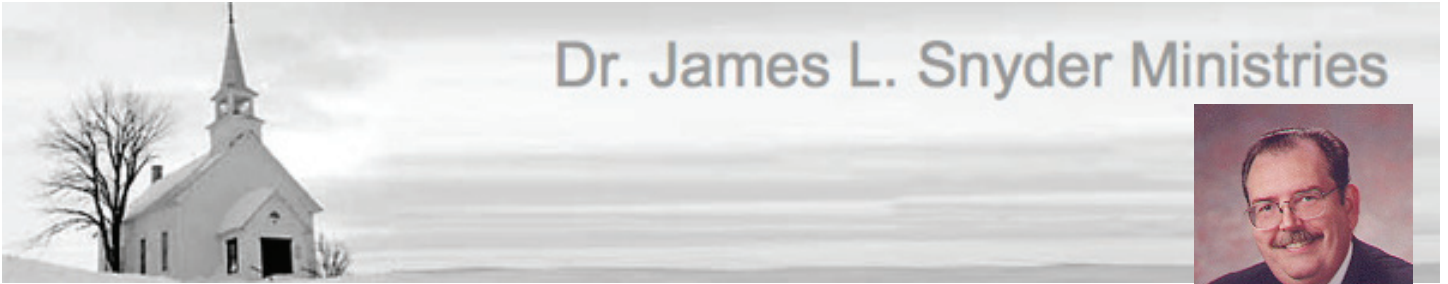
Given President Biden’s firm position on the Keystone XL pipeline, I find it particularly troubling that he took a notably different position on a pipeline being built from Russia to Germany – the Nord Stream 2 pipeline. His administration recently decided not to sanction the builders of the Russian pipeline because, as the president said, “It’s almost completely finished.” Allowing the successful construction of Nord Stream 2 will make our European allies more dependent on Russia’s energy monopoly for their energy supplies and serve an economic blow to Ukraine as it fends off Russian aggression. The president has talked aggressively about countering Russian President Vladimir Putin and his destabilizing agenda, but now, with a chance to do something about halting construction of the pipeline, President Biden is taking the pressure off.

It’s a tale of two pipelines: our president has decided to allow the construction of Nord Stream 2, a Russian pipeline that will leave our European allies more vulnerable to Russia, and halted construction of Keystone XL, a pipeline that would create 11,000 American jobs and transport Canadian and American crude oil in the most environmentally safe way. Unfortunately, it feels like the president is picking Russia’s energy monopoly, to the detriment of America and South Dakota’s energy independence, and putting politics over practicality.

It’s not just President Biden who is pushing these kinds of left-wing energy policies. I’ve spoken out against the Democrats’ \$259 billion “Clean Energy for America Act” because of its expansive wish list of new government spending. I’ve argued that if we want to make meaningful, fiscally responsible investments in American energy, it will require a real “all-the-above” approach.

Since being elected to Congress, I have promoted the use of home-grown biofuels to help reduce carbon emissions from transportation, and many people may be surprised to learn that due to robust hydroelectric and wind energy, approximately 70 percent of South Dakota’s energy production is renewable. Still, President Biden and Democrats are wrong to increasingly minimize the critical role oil and natural gas play in ensuring affordable and reliable energy for all Americans.

While I’m a longtime advocate of clean energy and clean fuels, the fact of the matter is that our economy is still going to need traditional sources of energy – namely oil and natural gas – for a long time to come. I hope Democrats change course and work with Republicans on delivering affordable and reliable energy to consumers, creating and expanding good-paying jobs for American workers, and securing American energy independence – all while lowering our emissions.



Dr. James L. Snyder Ministries



Will We Be Served Coffee in Heaven?

The last several weeks have truly been hectic in every sense of the word. Trying to catch up can be a never-ending job. When I think I'm caught up, I see another thing I need to do.

I have learned that kicking the can down the street only hurts your big toe.

With so much to do lately, it's hard to prioritize what should come first. The one thought rattling through my brain is, will anybody know if I don't do this job?

It doesn't have to rattle too long before I come to the answer to that inquiry.

If I don't do a certain job, the one who will know would be the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage. When it comes to activities, she is the queen of priority and completion.

I don't have that kind of initiative, but I certainly try.

I have discovered that one day a certain activity will have priority; the next day, something else will have priority. Life can be very confusing, especially to someone like me trying to sort out priorities every day.

This week I reached a three-week milestone. I was delighted.

That milestone was, I had accomplished every job that I needed to do. I don't have to tell you that that doesn't happen very often; in fact, this may be the first time it has ever happened to me.

Reaching this milestone, I was utterly exhausted. I came home and sat in my easy chair, hoping I'll never have to get up again.

As I got comfortable, the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage asked, "Would you like a cup of coffee?"

I can't think of any time or place I would say no to that offer.

She got herself a cup of coffee and joined me in the living room to sit back and relax after all of this work.

Nothing calms my mind more than a delicious cup of coffee. My wife makes coffee in the morning and then fills a thermos to make coffee available all day.

As I'm sipping that first sip, I just feel the weight of the world lifting off my shoulders. What would my life be without coffee?

As we were sitting there, she asked a question, "Do you think they will serve us coffee in heaven?"

I was not in the mood for any serious thinking because my brain was somewhat wavering in sobriety. Why did she have to ask me a question at this time? Especially one as serious as this?

However, I couldn't get this question out of my mind.

All the good my coffee does for me would cause me to hope there is coffee in heaven.

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No matter what my day is like or how stressed I am, a nice hot cup of coffee takes my focus off of the problems I'm having.

I have no idea who invented coffee, but I like to meet him sometime and shake his hand. No other invention in the world has as much value to me as coffee.

Some people don't like coffee, and that's okay with me. They'll have to have something else to calm them down. Some people want decaffeinated coffee, and that's okay with me, but that's not what I'm going to drink.

I want my coffee strong. It doesn't have to be hot necessarily, but it does have to be strong. It has to be the kind of coffee that could take my attention away from the outside world. And, nobody makes my coffee better than the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage.

Quite often, when I'm out doing things, I try to find a little place where they serve coffee so that I can sit down and relax.

In one little café I visit, I have a strict rule, "Refill my coffee every five minutes." That takes care of my anxiety.

Back to my wife's question, "Do you think they will serve us coffee in heaven?"

For one, there is no stress in heaven like we have in our world today. Just when you think our world can't get any more stressful, surprise! It does.

Just when you think you have seen the worst, surprise! You haven't.

Without stress in heaven, it would not be necessary to have coffee. However, I would be delighted to sit down somewhere with the apostle Paul and have a cup of coffee together. You learn things over a cup of coffee that you can't learn anywhere else.

There's a whole list of people I would like to sit down with and have coffee in heaven.

The coffee there would not be for taking care of stress but rather enjoying fellowship together. That is another aspect of a hot cup of coffee.

Imagine if you would, a bunch of us in heaven sitting around the table enjoying a cup of coffee when at the head of the table is none other than Jesus Christ.

Drinking coffee with friends releases a spirit of fellowship like none other.

"That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ" (1 John 1:3).

I'm not sure about the coffee in heaven, but I do know we will have a stress-free time of fellowship with other believers as well as with Christ himself. I'm looking forward to that.

Widvey, O'Neill Win Preliminary Awards at Miss South Dakota Pageant



Kaitlin O'Neill, preliminary onstage interview competition winner, and Hunter Widvey, talent winner. (Courtesy Photo)

June 5, 2021, Brookings, SD – Miss Missouri Valley, Hunter Widvey of Rapid City, and Miss Dakota Plains, Kaitlin O'Neill of Groton, won preliminary awards at the Miss South Dakota Pageant Friday night.

Widvey took home the talent scholarship of \$1,000 singing "I Go Up to the Mountain," a gospel song by Patty Griffin. Widvey recently graduated from Augustana University with majors in government and biology, and has been accepted to medical school.

O'Neill wrapped up the preliminary Onstage Interview/Social Impact award, a \$500 scholarship, after pitching her social impact initiative, "Bloom - Healthy Mind, Healthy Body, Healthy You." She then faced onstage questions about what her previous experiences competing at Miss South Dakota have taught her, and how her dance training has helped her in life. O'Neill graduated from Minnesota State University-Mankato, with majors in dance and marketing.

O'Neill, O'Bryan Win Preliminary Awards at Miss South Dakota Pageant



Miss Dakota Plains, Kaitlin O'Neill, preliminary talent competition winner, and Miranda O'Bryan, Social Impact Pitch/Onstage Interview winner. (Courtesy Photo)

June 4, 2021, Brookings, SD – Miss Dakota Plains, Kaitlin O'Neill of Groton, and Miss Rolling Plains, Miranda O'Bryan of Martin, took home preliminary awards at the Miss South Dakota Pageant Thursday night.

O'Neill won the preliminary talent competition with a contemporary ballet to Bad Guy by Eklipse. The talent award is a \$1,000 scholarship. O'Neill graduated from Minnesota State University-Mankato, with majors in dance and marketing.

O'Bryan took the Onstage Interview/Social Impact award, a \$500 scholarship, after pitching her social impact initiative, "Page Turners: Fall in Love with Reading," and facing an onstage question about whether the public should trust the media. O'Bryan graduated from South Dakota State University with degrees in journalism and history and is a reporter/anchor for KOTA News in Rapid City.

EARTHTALK

From the Editors of E - The Environmental Magazine

Dear EarthTalk: How has all the wildfire smoke in the West over the last few summers impacted human health? And what can we do to stay safe amidst the smoke? -- B.K., Philadelphia, PA

Blanketing the atmosphere with thick veils of black smoke and turning skies a hazy orange hue, wildfires have ravaged the Western U.S. as long as anyone can remember. Though wildfires are natural and a critical component of a healthy forest ecosystem, unusually large and lengthy fires have now become the norm across much of the American West.

The year 2020 was record-breaking for wildfires in the U.S. The August Complex fire in Northern California alone torched more than a million acres of land—making it the state's first ever "gigafire." And Californians are bracing for more. With temperatures rising around the globe due to climate change, wildfires have only expanded in size and hazard, raising widespread concerns over the impacts of the smoke and how to mitigate the negative health effects.

Wildfire-released pollutants pose many ecological threats, which in turn have both short- and long-term health hazards for nearby communities. Most troublesome may be the PM 2.5 particulate, given that it is small enough to enter the lungs as well as the bloodstream, potentially impacting both the cardiovascular and respiratory systems. In the short-term, these pollutants can lead to eye and nasal irritation, heart attacks and strokes, while longer term exposure can cause permanent damage to the heart and lungs.

While efforts in recent decades to reduce pollution from factories and automobiles have reduced the particulate pollution burden on Americans significantly, wildfires are bringing PM 2.5 levels back up into hazardous territory for many across the West, at least during wildfire season. Wildfire smoke also contains many other hazardous pollutants, like carbon monoxide and toxic ash, as well as carbon dioxide that contributes to global warming.

The more we know about the potential health impacts of wildfire smoke, the better we can protect ourselves and our loved ones. Wildfire pollution can circulate in the atmosphere for weeks. During the warmer months, consistently check local air-quality reports and read visibility guides before heading outdoors. If you have to go outside in smoky summer weather, wear an N95 mask, which filters most PM 2.5 particulates. However, health-sensitive groups are always at a risk, even with N95 masks. If the surrounding air quality is rated hazardous, everyone should avoid the outdoors as much as possible and take preventive steps like installing an air filter indoors.

If you live in the West (or anywhere arid) and are hoping for a reprieve from smoky skies this summer, don't hold your breath. According to scientists at San Jose State University, 2021 is looking to be an even worse year for wildfires than last year's record breaker due to excessively low levels of winter moisture across much of the West. The upshot seems to be that we better just get used to it.



The smoke from Western wildfires can carry for thousands of miles and affect communities far from the burning.

Credit: Pixabay.

Groton Transit

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Britton



Help Wanted at Groton Area

The Groton Area School District is seeking qualified and motivated individuals for the following position for the 2021-2022 school year.

Transportation Director. The Groton Area School District has an opening for the position of Transportation Director. This position is full-time year round with a comprehensive benefits package and salary dependent on education and experience. Criminal background check and pre-employment drug test required. Applicant must hold valid South Dakota Commercial Driver License with School Bus and Passengers endorsements and clean driving record. Interested parties should complete and submit the auxiliary staff application form. Open until filled.

Elementary Special Education Paraprofessional. The Groton Area School District is seeking applicants for the position of Special Education Paraprofessional. Starting salary is \$12.10/hour and position includes comprehensive benefits package. Criminal background check required. Interested parties should complete and submit the auxiliary staff application form. Open until filled.

MS/HS Special Education Paraprofessional. The Groton Area School District is seeking applicants for the position of Special Education Paraprofessional. Starting salary is \$12.10/hour and position includes comprehensive benefits package. Criminal background check required. Interested parties should complete and submit the auxiliary staff application form. Open until filled.

Applications are available at www.grotonarea.com or at the district office – 502 N 2nd Street, Groton.

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County	Total Cases	Recovered Cases	Negative Persons	Deceased Among Cases	Community Spread	% PCR Test Positivity Rate (Weekly)
Aurora	475	460	974	15	Minimal	8.3%
Beadle	2965	2920	6684	40	Moderate	8.6%
Bennett	391	382	1280	9	None	0.0%
Bon Homme	1554	1526	2358	28	Minimal	7.3%
Brookings	4231	4190	14014	37	Moderate	3.7%
Brown	5633	5519	14296	95	Moderate	8.7%
Brule	718	707	2123	10	Minimal	3.6%
Buffalo	426	413	930	13	None	0.0%
Butte	1082	1049	3645	20	Moderate	16.4%
Campbell	131	127	290	4	Minimal	0.0%
Charles Mix	1383	1355	4452	22	Minimal	4.3%
Clark	463	458	1072	5	Minimal	0.0%
Clay	1933	1916	6110	15	Moderate	6.3%
Codington	4648	4566	10996	82	Minimal	0.9%
Corson	481	469	1159	12	None	0.0%
Custer	875	856	3030	12	Moderate	5.4%
Davison	3245	3173	7582	66	Moderate	3.1%
Day	709	680	2002	29	Minimal	0.0%
Deuel	531	521	1346	9	Minimal	5.9%
Dewey	1475	1446	4174	29	None	0.0%
Douglas	455	446	1051	9	None	0.0%
Edmunds	513	499	1189	14	None	0.0%
Fall River	603	582	2992	16	Minimal	11.4%
Faulk	372	359	766	13	Minimal	0.0%
Grant	1057	1012	2530	42	Minimal	7.4%
Gregory	586	551	1456	30	Minimal	20.0%
Haakon	266	256	597	10	Minimal	0.0%
Hamlin	799	759	2066	39	Minimal	0.0%
Hand	364	358	954	6	Minimal	0.0%
Hanson	389	385	815	4	None	0.0%
Harding	97	96	214	1	None	0.0%
Hughes	2522	2474	7568	41	Moderate	2.4%
Hutchinson	918	887	2742	28	Minimal	0.0%

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Hyde	141	140	468	1	None	0.0%
Jackson	291	277	998	14	Minimal	5.9%
Jerauld	281	263	632	16	Minimal	25.0%
Jones	94	94	269	0	None	0.0%
Kingsbury	819	801	1916	18	Minimal	0.0%
Lake	1387	1359	3971	20	Moderate	6.9%
Lawrence	3007	2948	9254	47	Moderate	1.6%
Lincoln	8716	8624	23288	78	Moderate	2.9%
Lyman	658	646	2079	11	Minimal	3.0%
Marshall	375	368	1394	6	Minimal	4.5%
McCook	810	784	1924	25	Minimal	0.0%
McPherson	247	242	631	4	Minimal	50.0%
Meade	2788	2748	8669	31	Moderate	3.3%
Mellette	261	259	840	2	None	0.0%
Miner	307	296	658	10	Minimal	25.0%
Minnehaha	31716	31302	90888	363	Moderate	2.7%
Moody	666	644	1975	20	Minimal	4.2%
Oglala Lakota	2119	2068	7391	49	Moderate	2.8%
Pennington	13849	13598	43862	201	Moderate	6.3%
Perkins	359	345	892	14	None	0.0%
Potter	391	386	934	4	Minimal	11.1%
Roberts	1377	1335	4703	41	Moderate	4.3%
Sanborn	345	341	776	3	Minimal	0.0%
Spink	845	816	2345	26	Minimal	5.4%
Stanley	354	349	1097	2	Minimal	0.0%
Sully	145	142	349	3	Minimal	0.0%
Todd	1235	1199	4590	33	Minimal	4.5%
Tripp	755	738	1674	17	None	0.0%
Turner	1181	1121	3073	57	Minimal	5.6%
Union	2227	2184	7151	43	Minimal	3.1%
Walworth	771	755	2015	15	Minimal	0.0%
Yankton	3110	3069	10620	34	Moderate	5.3%
Ziebach	344	335	953	9	None	0.0%
Unassigned	0	0	1761	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	5429	0
10-19 years	14695	0
20-29 years	21956	8
30-39 years	20521	21
40-49 years	17767	43
50-59 years	17340	120
60-69 years	14008	282
70-79 years	7297	467
80+ years	5248	1081

VARIANT CASES OF COVID-19 IN SOUTH DAKOTA

COVID-19 Variant	# of Cases
B.1.1.7	168
B.1.429	15
P.1	3
B.1.351	2
B.1.427	1

RACE/ETHNICITY OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Race/Ethnicity	# of Cases	% of Cases
White	93322	75%
Native American	14282	11%
Unknown	5621	5%
Hispanic	4727	4%
Black	2854	2%
Other	1755	1%
Asian / Pacific Islander	1700	1%

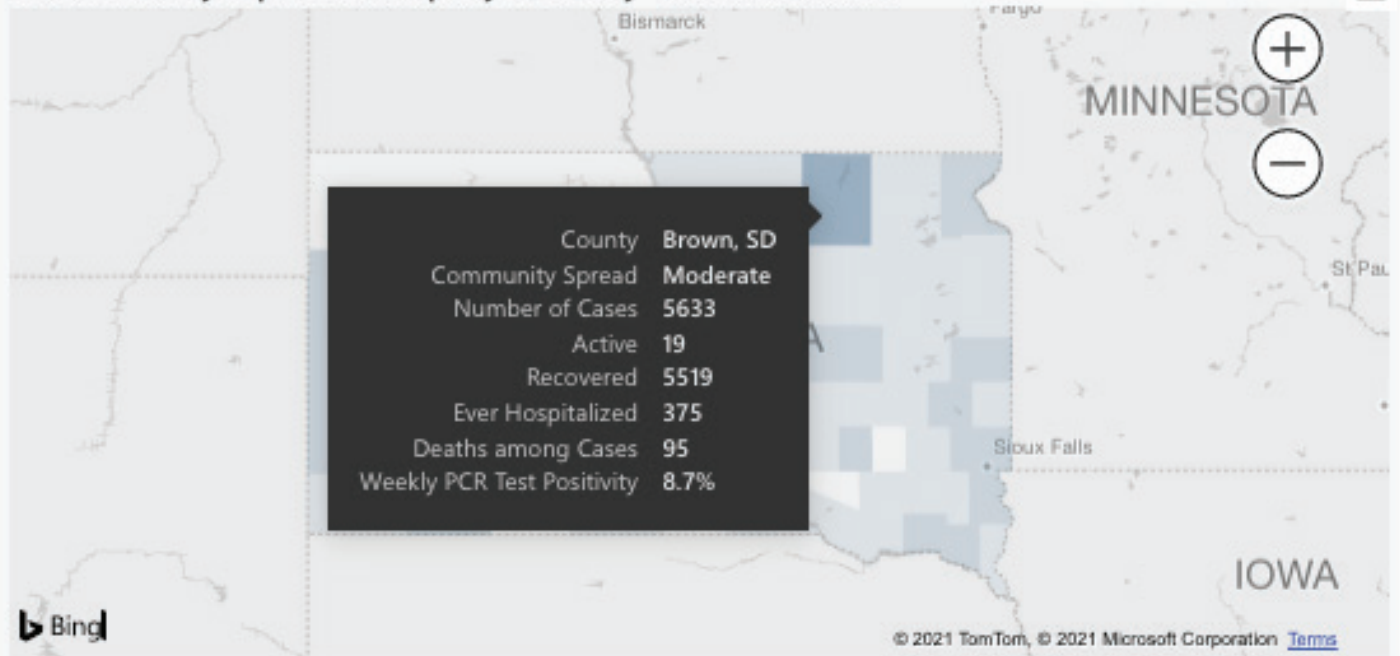
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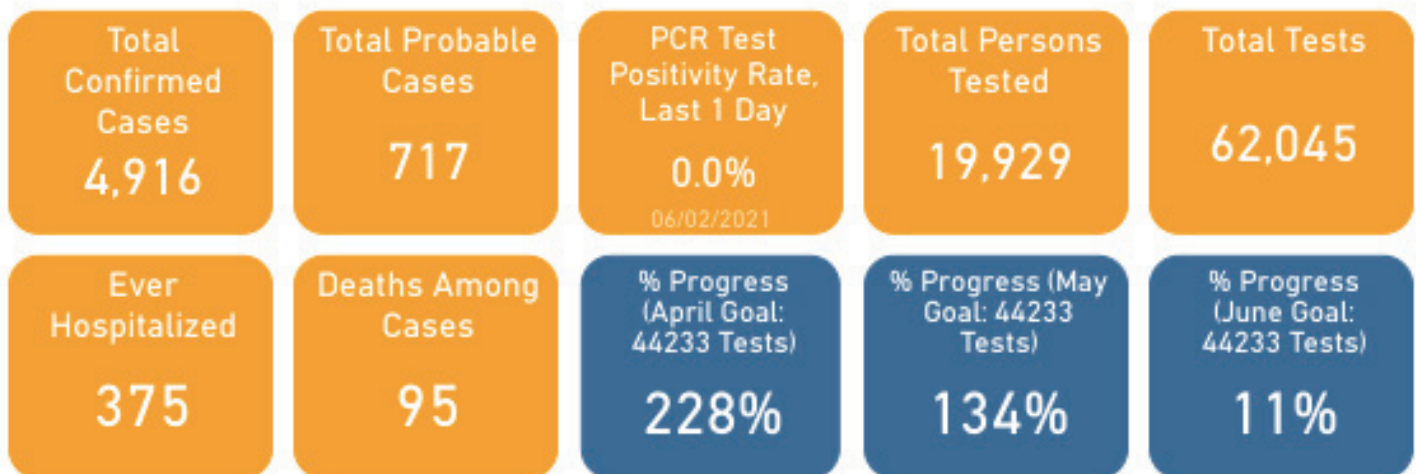
Brown County



Community Spread Map by County of Residence



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



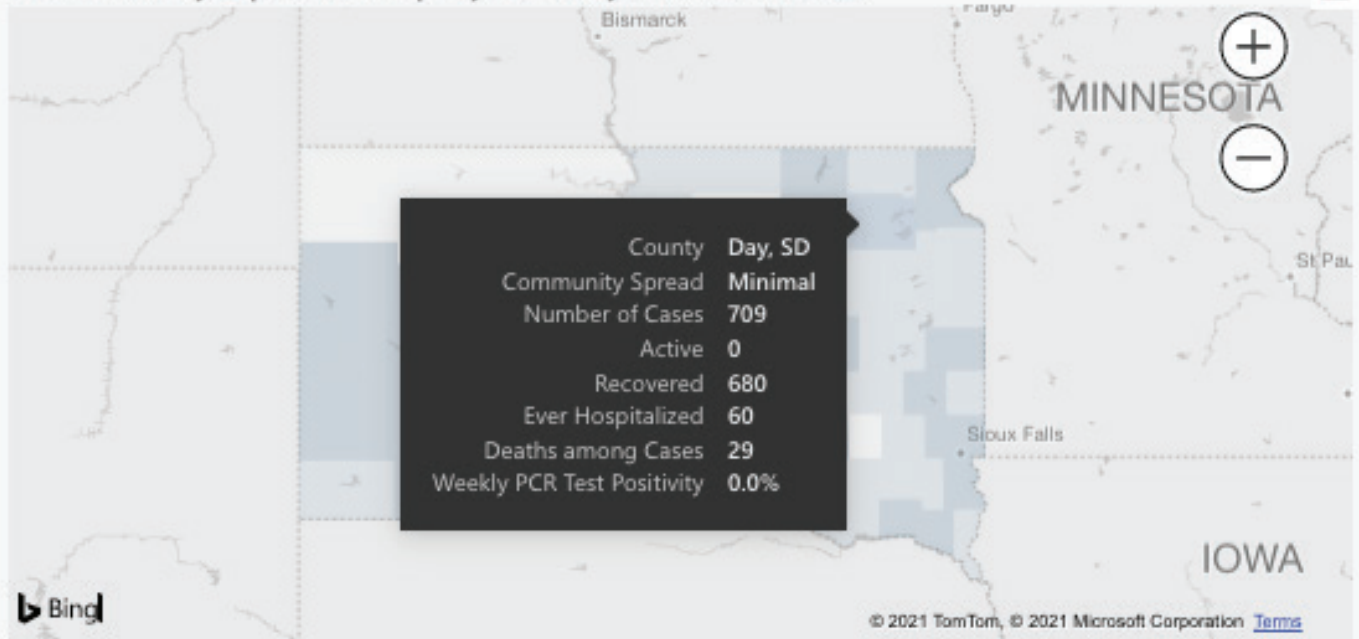
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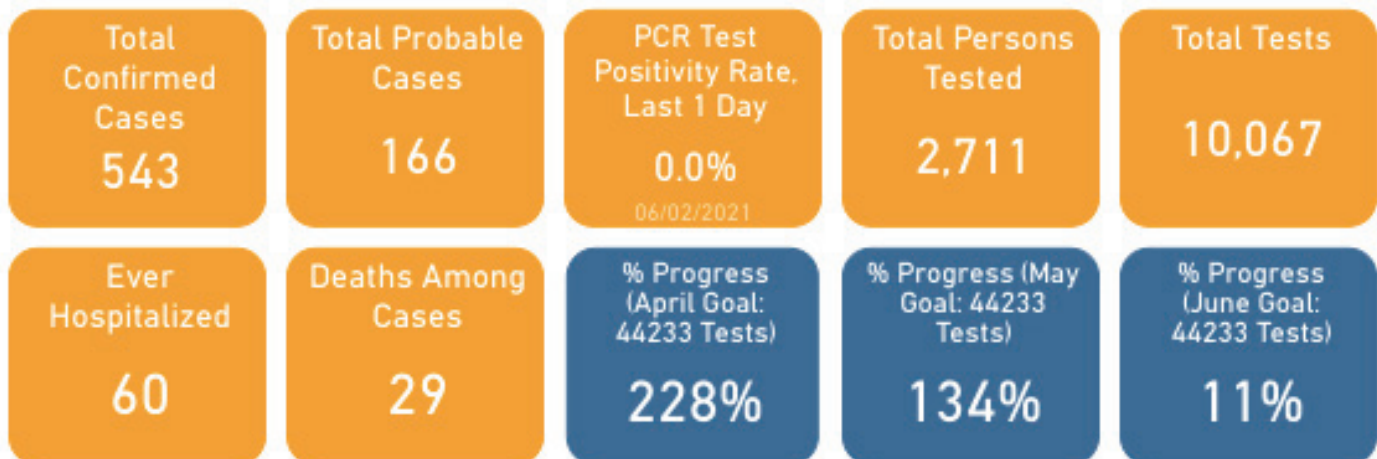
Day County



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*

658,304

Total Persons Administered a Vaccine*

353,878

Percent of State Population with at least 1 Dose**

55%

Manufacturer	# of Doses
Janssen	20,524
Moderna	289,553
Pfizer	348,227

Doses	# of Recipients
Janssen - Series Complete	20,523
Moderna - 1 dose	10,629
Moderna - Series Complete	139,462
Pfizer - 1 dose	18,319
Pfizer - Series Complete	164,954

Doses	% of Pop.
1 dose	55.00%
Series Complete	49.80%

Based on 2019 Census Estimate for those aged 12+ years.

County	# Doses	# Persons (1 dose)	# Persons (2 doses)	Total # Persons
Aurora	2,112	96	1,008	1,104
Beadle	13,683	1,010	6,336	7,346
Bennett*	795	111	342	453
Bon Homme*	6,076	232	2,922	3,154
Brookings	26,496	2,486	12,005	14,491
Brown	32,249	1,829	15,210	17,039
Brule*	3,188	300	1,444	1,744
Buffalo*	239	107	66	173
Butte	4,863	517	2,173	2,690
Campbell	1,704	52	826	878
Charles Mix*	5,622	604	2,509	3,113
Clark	2,766	302	1,232	1,534
Clay	11,337	1,245	5,046	6,291
Codington*	21,956	1,350	10,303	11,653
Corson*	490	54	218	272
Custer*	5,845	515	2,665	3,180
Davison	17,048	1,036	8,006	9,042
Day*	4,924	346	2,289	2,635
Deuel	3,003	227	1,388	1,615
Dewey*	560	66	247	313
Douglas*	2,207	99	1,054	1,153
Edmunds	2,777	117	1,330	1,447
Fall River*	4,666	326	2,170	2,496
Faulk	2,007	73	967	1,040
Grant*	5,811	235	2,788	3,023
Gregory*	3,012	184	1,414	1,598

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Haakon*	902	42	430	472
Hamlin	3,836	338	1,749	2,087
Hand	2,773	81	1,346	1,427
Hanson	1,195	67	564	631
Harding	295	29	133	162
Hughes*	16,838	945	7,946	8,891
Hutchinson*	6,858	251	3,303	3,554
Hyde*	937	47	445	492
Jackson*	701	53	324	377
Jerauld	1,646	58	794	852
Jones*	1,139	67	536	603
Kingsbury	5,028	380	2,324	2,704
Lake	9,496	1,028	4,234	5,262
Lawrence	17,902	1,440	8,231	9,671
Lincoln	52,713	3,236	24,738	27,974
Lyman*	1,928	266	831	1,097
Marshall*	3,832	220	1,806	2,026
McCook	4,351	471	1,940	2,411
McPherson	555	19	268	287
Meade*	12,969	1,029	5,970	6,999
Mellette*	85	1	42	43
Miner	1,655	247	704	951
Minnehaha*	173,299	12,191	80,551	92,742
Moody*	3,700	202	1,749	1,951
Oglala Lakota*	392	84	154	238
Pennington*	69,933	6,451	31,741	38,192
Perkins*	1,259	77	591	668
Potter	1,965	79	943	1,022
Roberts*	7,249	629	3,310	3,939
Sanborn	2,032	134	949	1,083
Spink	5,494	228	2,633	2,861
Stanley*	2,520	110	1,205	1,315
Sully	857	33	412	445
Todd*	322	66	128	194
Tripp*	3,425	173	1,626	1,799
Turner	6,436	388	3,024	3,412
Union	7,526	566	3,480	4,046
Walworth*	3,186	300	1,443	1,743
Yankton	20,487	1,111	9,688	10,799
Ziebach*	103	19	42	61
Other	15,049	2,787	6,131	8,918

#443 in a series Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller

Our trajectory looks great and has for a while now. Our 14-day average daily new cases are below 15,000—first time since March 29, 2020. Yes, that's over 14 months ago, way back in the earliest days of this horror. Hospitalizations are below 24,000 for the first time since last April 3, nearly as long ago. And deaths are just over 400. We got close to that in early July, but haven't been here since late March either. Because my memory is not too short to remember our post-holiday pattern over the past 16 months, I will wait until we're a couple of weeks out from Memorial Day before I get super-excited about all of this.

Still, everything except vaccinations is going in the right direction. We have no states in the category called "unchecked transmission" and haven't had for just over 3 weeks. In that same time, we've gone from 32 states in the category called "escalating transmission" to 2. While there are pockets of low vaccination and high transmission here and there, no state as a whole is in trouble. I'm hoping we don't get a whole bunch of these pockets turning into hot spots that we can't bring under control, but I am concerned it could happen. This pandemic has sort of knocked some of the natural optimism out of me, so I am not yet sanguine.

On June 2, 2020, I made my 100th Update: One hundred seemed like a lot at the time, and now the whole wow-a-hundred! thing seems like the very dim, dark past. On June 5, 2020, one year ago today, we had 1,911,400 cases and 109,299 deaths in the US; we'd passed 1000 daily deaths. We had new evidence from the first randomized clinical trial of hydroxychloroquine for prophylaxis, and it didn't look any better here than for therapeutic use. We discussed swimming safety, transmission, and disinfection. We were getting indications that a relative few cases were responsible for most of the spread. And we were talking about the "three Cs," closed spaces, crowds, and close contacts. Our view of those influences haven't changed much in the past year. We were now expecting at least one vaccine by year's end. Our dreams that this virus might be seasonal, meaning we'd get a break over the upcoming summer, were fading. Churches were continuing to act as the focus of superspreader events. We were gathering evidence that masks and distancing can reduce case rates. There was growing evidence of the contribution of obesity to risk for severe disease at all ages.

The US government had placed bets on five vaccine companies, funding production of vaccines before approval so that they would be ready to go if the approval was forthcoming. We discussed monoclonal antibodies and basics of the process by which they are produced because the first of these were about to go into clinical trials. If you missed that back then and are curious, there's a fairly thorough rundown on using these lab-made antibodies in my Update #100 posted June 2, 2020, at <https://www.facebook.com/marie.schwabmiller/posts/3646911585325221>.

Worldwide, there had been 6.6 million cases and over 390,000 deaths. Latin American was blowing up. The top countries for total cases were the US, Brazil, Russia, the UK, Spain, and Italy.

A few days ago, the last time we talked, one of the topics of discussion was the continuing pandemic among the unvaccinated. I've read an article since then that seems to pretty well illustrate just that. In this local story from Colorado, the author points out that in the state, there are about 500 Covid-19 patients and the thing almost all of those have in common is that they are unvaccinated. Some of these hospitalized patients are dying, and none of the dying so far have been vaccinated individuals. Pretty stark.

We've been having a spike in hospitalizations among adolescents (ages 12 to 17), which have doubled since about mid-March. In one study, nearly a third of the kids who were hospitalized with the infection

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were being admitted to intensive care units, and five percent were requiring mechanical ventilation. Even though there were no deaths in this study, this isn't great. A third of those hospitalized had no underlying condition, so it is clear even healthy adolescents are also at risk for severe disease. Looks like the increase in the age group may be related to the rise of new variants and the reduction in precautions taken across the population—mask-wearing, distancing, and the like. We've been saying for a while that these new highly-transmissible variants require even greater precautions in order to create the same outcomes as before; relaxing precautions has led to a pretty predictable result. Cumulative hospitalization rates for adolescents are running 2.5 to 3.0 times higher than we've seen for the three most recent flu seasons, and flu only rarely causes the long-term symptoms and organ damage that are associated with Covid-19; so this is problematic on a couple of fronts. Dr. Rochelle Walensky, director of the CDC, characterized these data as "troubling." Solution? Vaccine. But you knew that.

On Wednesday, the WHO approved the Chinese vaccine CoronaVac for emergency use. This will make the vaccine available through COVAX the vaccine-sharing program. CoronaVac is a two-dose (two to four weeks apart) inactivated virus vaccine which has a claimed 50 percent efficacy rate, although full data on clinical trials have not yet been made publicly available. The vaccine is easier to store than many of those currently on the market which should make it more available to those in low-resource places. Having another vaccine available will boost the potentially available supply across the world, an urgent need.

With respect to vaccine manufacture, it looks as though AstraZeneca, whose manufacture of vaccine had to be pulled out of an Emergent BioSolutions plant near Baltimore after the plant contaminated 15 million doses of Janssen/Johnson & Johnson vaccine, has a deal with a company called Catalent to produce the vaccine doses the company is contracted to supply to the US government at the rate of 25 million to 35 million doses per month. Those doses will likely be exported given the Oxford/AstraZeneca candidate has not yet received (or even been submitted for) emergency use authorization (EUA) from the FDA. Those doses would help to supply the 173 other countries where it is being deployed. This is a good thing; as I've said dozens of times before, more vaccines is better. Additionally, regulators who shut down the Emergent plant in Baltimore have plans to visit tomorrow. With some luck maybe Janssen/Johnson & Johnson production can get started there again too.

A small number (potentially 275 cases out of more than five million persons vaccinated) of myocarditis (heart inflammation) have turned up in Israel between December and May, primarily in young men, following a second dose of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine. More than 95 percent of the cases were characterized as mild. It is not clear at this time whether these cases are associated with the vaccine: While a study authorized by the Israeli Ministry of Health concluded there is a "probable link," a CDC advisory group believes further study is warranted. Data from the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS) shows a higher than expected number of cases in the US, but data from the Vaccine Safety Datalink (VSD) shows no increased incidence here. We had a talk about VAERS and the unprocessed nature of its data a few weeks ago (Update #437 posted on May 10, 2021, at <https://www.facebook.com/marie.schwabmiller/posts/4704667976216238>, if you need a refresher), so we know it's not a great idea to get all excited by something that seems to show up in VAERS without further analysis. It is especially important to get this right when we factor in the incidence of myocarditis and the risk of multisystem inflammatory syndrome (MIS) in young people with Covid-19; we shouldn't be too eager to abandon a proven preventive given those risks. The European Medicines Agency (EMA), the EU's counterpart to our FDA, said last week they see no cause for concern; their data say the incidence of myocarditis in vaccinated persons is not higher than the background rate in the population. Their statement also noted that young men are overrepresented among those with myocarditis in the population as well. This will bear watching, but it's too soon to freak out over it.

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Something I hear a lot from people who are reluctant to be vaccinated is that these vaccines were developed too fast, that corners must have been cut, and that the science happened too quickly to be solid. After all, the fastest any vaccine was ever developed prior to these Covid-19 vaccines was in the four years needed to put mumps vaccine on the market back in 1967. In response to these concerns, it might be instructive to take a look at the development process for the mRNA Covid-19 vaccines because it turns out there are some things you're likely missing. You see, people have been trying to develop mRNA vaccines for more than 30 years with many fits and starts: vaccines against influenza, HIV, genital herpes, hepatitis C, dengue fever, rabies, malaria, tuberculosis, various cancers, and the coronavirus infection MERS. So while the technology is cutting-edge, it certainly isn't new.

The basic principle here—something we've discussed many times—is that we inject mRNA that codes for the virus's spike (S) protein into the patient. That mRNA is taken up by host cells and gets translated—that is, protein corresponding to the encoding on the mRNA gets made, in this case that S protein which is responsible for the virus binding to and entering our cells. After translation, the cell expresses the protein on its surface so that our immune system notices this foreign protein and has an immune response to it. That initial response (and the booster response that follows when a second dose is given later) has immunological memory, which means when you encounter the virus with its S protein later, you have the tools to fight it off and prevent infection.

We've been hearing a lot about the advantages of the mRNA platform in the past year or so, primary among them its adaptability. We can use it to encode whatever proteins we want, and we can tweak it to get particular effects that are desirable in a given situation. We can set it up to control how much protein is made in the vaccinated person and how long it is made. The vaccines are relatively quick to make and to modify because there's no waiting around for virus to grow in embryonated chicken eggs or tissue cultures; we can construct the necessary mRNA sequences in the lab as we need them. We're targeting S protein with our vaccines against Covid-19; we want our cells to make that protein so we can produce an immune response to it which will disable the virus.

Here's the thing: mRNA vaccine was first conceptualized in 1990. At that time, we saw that it was possible for injected mRNA to be translated into the encoded proteins. That was proof of concept, but it was rather quickly recognized there were formidable obstacles to be surmounted before you could make such a vaccine work. For example, injected unmodified RNA causes a lot of inflammation—too much inflammation, enough to prevent our cells from making enough viral protein. So the first problem was to figure out how to reduce that inflammatory response. Over about a decade, scientists discovered they could accomplish this by building their mRNA molecule out of slightly modified versions of the nucleic acid building blocks called nucleosides and by using highly-purified mRNA. While they were working this out, they also managed to increase the amount of protein that gets translated. These methods, painstakingly developed over years, happened to be pretty much ready to go by the time we needed to design the current Covid-19 vaccines; without that history, we'd still be a long way from a vaccine.

Another big problem is that naked mRNA injected into tissue is almost immediately degraded by enzymes called ribonucleases that float around in the fluid surrounding cells (right where the mRNA gets injected). The result is that it doesn't remain intact long enough to have any effect at all. Over a period of years, researchers working on anti-cancer vaccines figured out how to package the mRNA inside ionizable lipid (fat) nanoparticles that protect it from the nucleases and also help to set off antigen-specific responses, which are just what we want. The upshot of all of this is that these obstacles were already history before SARS-CoV-2 ever showed up on the scene.

There is another big issue specific to coronavirus infections though; it turned up at the time of the MERS (Middle East Respiratory Syndrome) outbreak in 2012 and gave researchers their best practice run at what

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would turn out to be Covid-19. The MERS virus, MERS-CoV, a coronavirus relative of SARS-CoV-2, is far more deadly, killing over a third of infected people. When MERS appeared on the scene, researchers at the University of Texas under Jason McLellan who'd been working on other vaccines tackled the problem. They worked out the structure of the spike (S) protein preparatory to producing a vaccine, but they ran into early trouble with this problem, something we discussed at some length in my Update #409 posted April 7 at <https://www.facebook.com/marie.schwabmiller/posts/4599653083384395>.

In brief, the problem is that this spike protein is unstable—it changes shape as it binds to the host cell in a process called fusion. That means there are two forms, the prefusion protein and the postfusion protein, and since antibodies respond to the shape of a protein, antibodies to postfusion S are useless against prefusion S. Since our goal is to prevent viral fusion, we need antibodies to the prefusion spike that can tie it up before it can invade our cells; what we don't want is production of this unstable protein that's going to change shape and stimulate the wrong kind of antibodies. So the UT team spent several years tinkering with this S protein until they figured out how to modify it in a way that locks in the prefusion shape. Thing is by the time they got all this worked out, MERS had slowed down to only a few hundred cases a year worldwide and so there wasn't much interest in MERS vaccine development any more. (Sadly, this sort of thing happens in research more often than you'd think.) The project languished until the current emergency. When this new virus showed up with its highly similar S protein and its same shape-shifting characteristics which responded to the same tinkering the MERS S protein did, the UT lab was back in business.

So let's consider all of the preliminary work that was already done with the mRNA platform and with coronavirus S protein over a period of three decades by the time Covid-19 showed up on the scene back in late 2019. The teams who developed the current crop of mRNA vaccines, not to mention the adenovirus-vectored DNA vaccines and the protein subunit vaccines—all focused, one way or the other, on S protein, had the benefit of this 30 years' research when they developed their vaccines in "record time." This is sort of like the "overnight success" of some singer who's been toiling away for decades, singing in small clubs and building a following, and then has a sudden big hit. The overnight nature of the success might look evident to the world, but that's not really how these things generally work. Likewise, these vaccines took a lot longer to develop than appears to the naked eye. This was no hasty, corner-cutting, you-can't-trust-it overnight success either, but the result of years and years of dogged, careful scientific groundlaying. Next time someone complains to you that this all happened too fast and therefore can't be trusted, feel free to set the record straight.

Back in February, the FDA granted an Investigational New Drug (IND) permit for a drug with potential as a therapeutic for cases of Covid-19. The drug is called TEMPOL, and it degrades iron-sulfur clusters, chemical aggregates in cells required as structural support in the virus's RNA replicase nsp12 subunit. This replicase is a viral enzyme essential to viral replication, so if we can disrupt the enzyme structurally by making these iron-sulfur clusters unavailable, then the virus cannot make copies of itself. Theoretically, impairing the enzyme early in infection will reduce the severity of the disease. NIH researchers have now shown that in cell cultures the drug does inhibit viral replication and that the drug concentrations needed to effect this result can most likely be achieved in the relevant tissues of the salivary glands and lungs. The drug also has a good safety profile thus far. What's left to do is demonstrate efficacy inside an actual patient. Animal studies will ensue, and the company has announced it is "on track" to begin enrolling patients in a phase 2/3 clinical trial as well. If this works, we should know relatively soon, which would be a very good thing.

I'm going to close tonight with the words I used to close a year ago tonight. Even though we've come a long way since then, I think the sentiment holds. So here you go:

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"We had a wild storm rage through our area last night. A broad swath across the area lost electrical power as lines went down in ferocious winds; in fact, I typed much of last night's update by the light of a battery-powered lantern, squinting at my figures on the page (old fashioned—still look at printout) as I worked. When the storm had passed, we went out to survey the damage and were relieved to see that, other than a few tree branches, not much was hurt—although my garden suffered something of a setback from the wind and hail. We said to one another, "Well, it could have been worse." Turns out it was worse—much worse—for some of our neighbors, and yet one of them took the time to make a call to this old couple to make sure we were OK. This was a neighbor who was dealing with the loss of two buildings on their place, so really did have better things to do. I am heartened by the goodness of people, even when they're amidst their own problems.

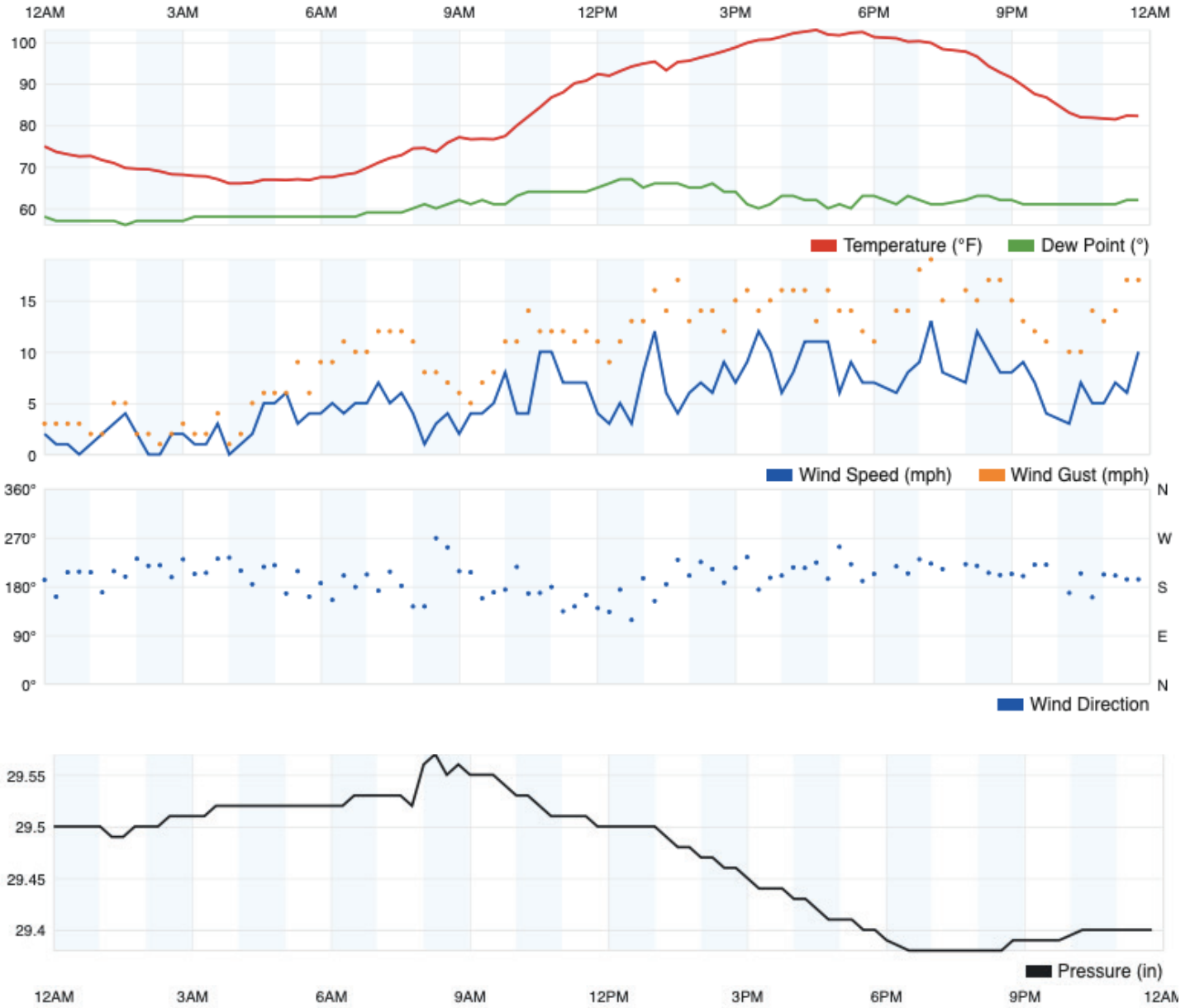
"Tonight, that is what I wish for you, that someone takes time away from their own troubles to offer a little kindness to you, and that you will then pause in contemplation of your problems to pass the kindness on. This stuff is contagious, and that's the kind of epidemic we all need right now. Please be a superspreader; it will make the world a better place just when it matters most."

Take care. I'll be back in a few days.

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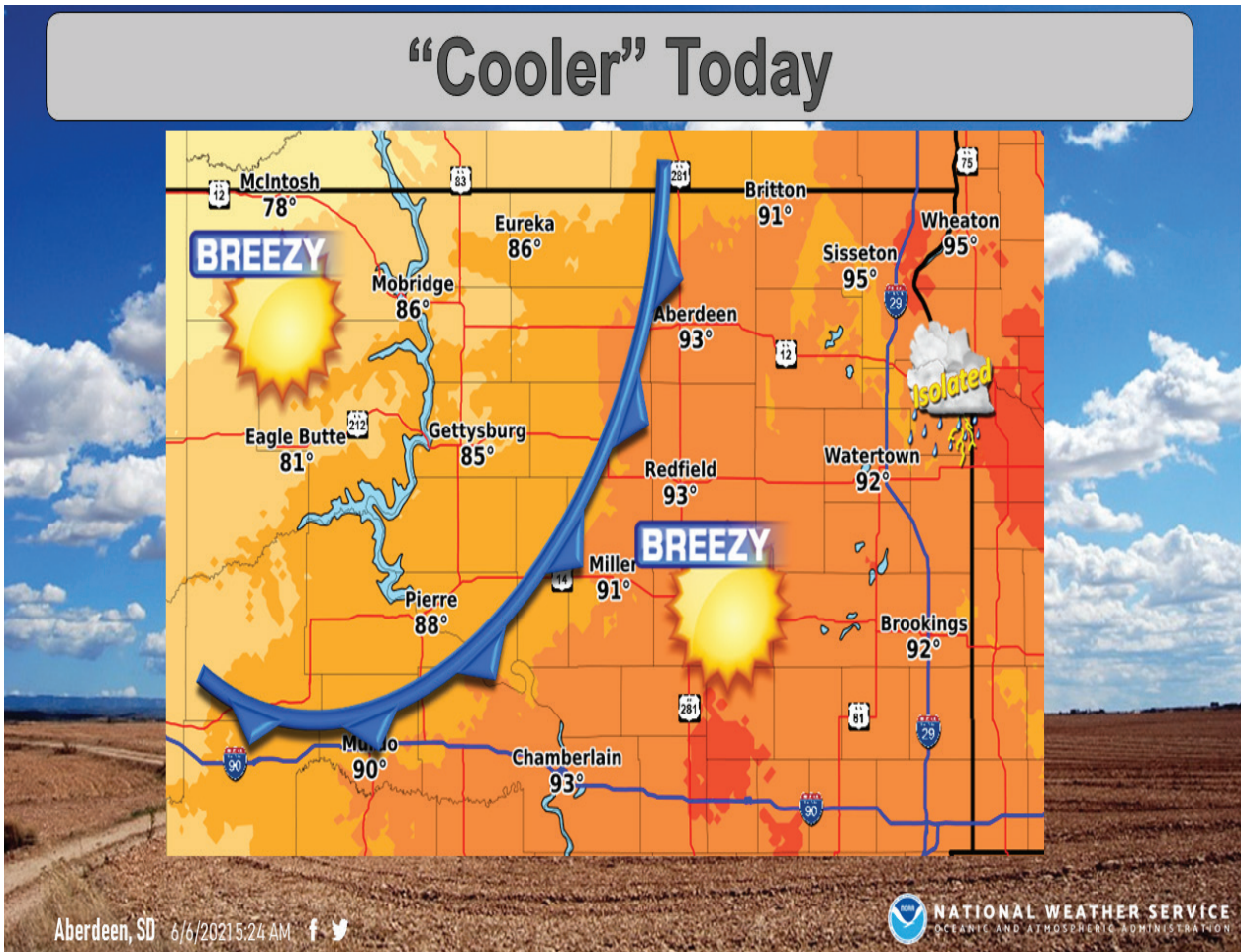
Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today	Tonight	Monday	Monday Night	Tuesday
				
Sunny and Breezy then Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny then Slight Chance T-storms and Breezy	Chance T-storms	Hot
High: 92 °F	Low: 56 °F	High: 96 °F	Low: 67 °F	High: 95 °F



A cold front sliding across the area today will bring cooler temperatures, especially along and west of the Missouri River. Eastern South Dakota and western Minnesota will still be hot, with highs reaching the 90s. Isolated thunderstorms are possible late this afternoon over far eastern South Dakota and western Minnesota.

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Today in Weather History

June 6, 1895: An estimated F2 tornado moved northeast from 6 miles west of Summit, passing 3 miles northwest of Summit. Buildings were damaged on eight farms.

June 6, 1897: Light to heavy frost, and in some localities, killing frost occurred on the 6th and 7th. These cold temperatures along with last season frost in May and wet conditions several hampered the planting season. Luckily growing conditions changed towards the middle and end of the month. Some low temperatures on the 6th include 26 degrees in Castlewood and Watertown, 29 in Mellette, 30 in Aberdeen and Milbank, and 32 in Highmore. Some low temperatures on the 7th include; 24 degrees in Castlewood, 25 in Watertown, and 30 degrees in Milbank.

June 6, 1999: Heavy rains of 2 to 4 inches caused flash flooding on a creek feeding into the Grand River. At a ranch southwest of Bullhead, a bunkhouse wall moved off the foundation by a wall of water coming down the creek. All of the contents in the bunkhouse were destroyed. A machine shop was washed away along with several pieces of equipment and many tools. Some tools and equipment were found more than a mile down the creek. A pump house and a grain bin were also destroyed. A pickup was washed down the stream, and a propane tank near home was rolled over. A colt was picked up by the water but managed to escape. The powerful flow of water took out several dead trees and washed them downstream. Finally, a road and a culvert were washed out by the flash flood.

1816: The temperature reached 92 degrees at Salem, Massachusetts during an early heat wave, but then plunged 49 degrees in 24 hours to commence the famous "year without a summer." Snow fell near Quebec City, Quebec Canada from the 6th through the 10th and accumulated up to a foot with "drifts reaching the axle trees of carriages."

1894: One of the greatest floods in U.S. history occurred as the Willamette River overflowed to inundate half of the business district of Portland, Oregon. The river crested at 33.5 feet, the worst flood ever recorded in the city.

1975 - A tornado, reportedly spinning backwards (spinning clockwise), was sighted near Alva, OK. (The Weather Channel)

1977 - Severe thunderstorms with large hail and winds to 100 mph caused one million dollars damage around Norfolk, VA. A forty-two foot fishing boat capsized near the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel drowning 13 of the 27 persons on board. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Thunderstorms in southern California produced one inch hail at Mount Pinos, and marble size hail at Palmdale. Thunderstorms in southeastern Arizona produced heavy rain leaving some washes under four feet of water. Six cities in the north central U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date as readings soared into the upper 90s. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Seventeen cities in the north central U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date, including Williston ND with a reading of 104 degrees. Thunderstorms in Florida produced wind gusts to 65 mph which damaged two mobile homes northwest of Melbourne injuring six people. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Thunderstorms developing during the late morning hours produced severe weather through the afternoon and night. Thunderstorms spawned 13 tornadoes, and there were 154 reports of large hail and damaging winds. A strong (F-3) tornado injured six persons at Lorenzo, TX, and thunderstorm winds gusting to 100 mph killed one person at Glasscock City, TX. Softball size hail was reported at Lipscomb and Glen Cove TX. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

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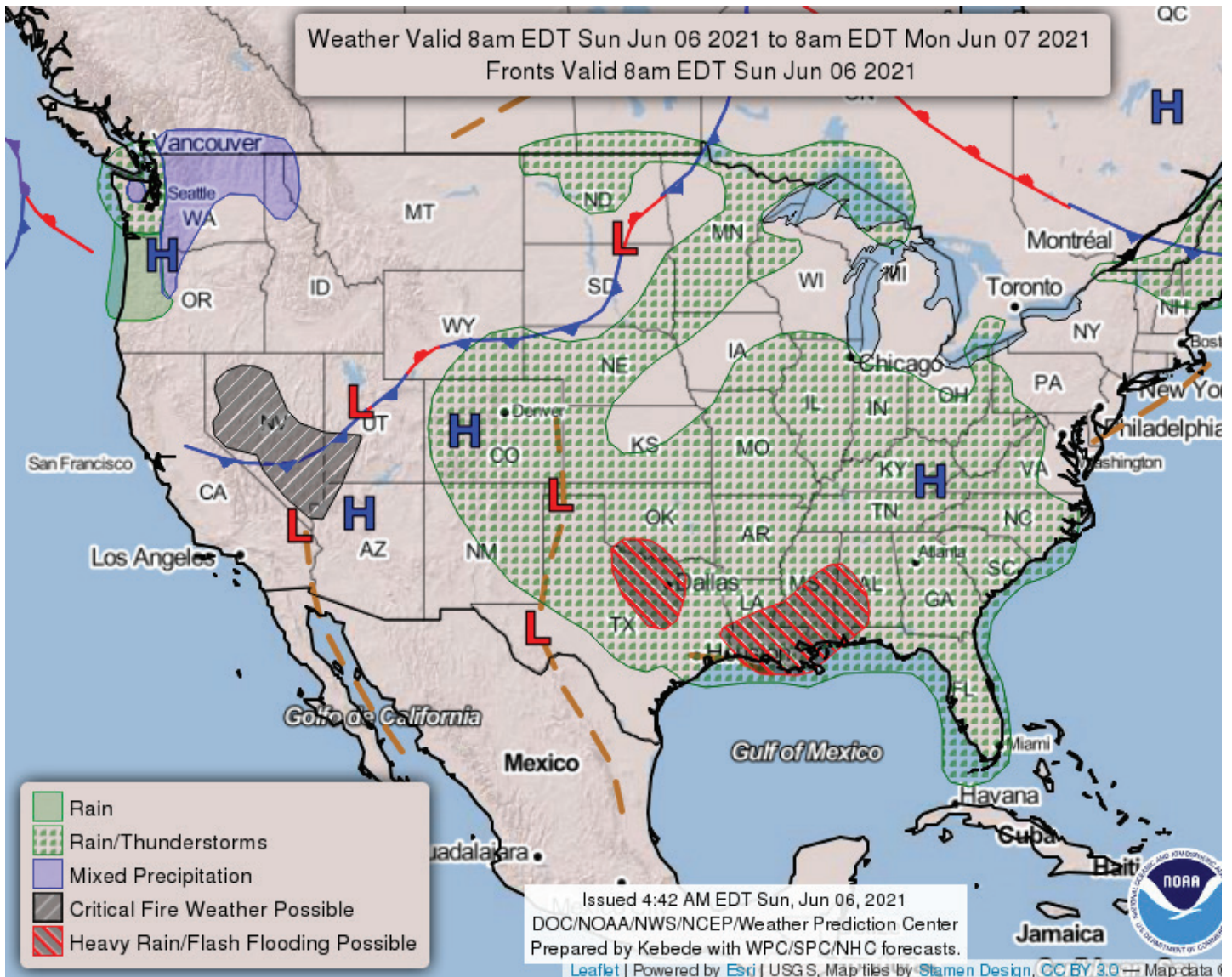
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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 103 °F at 4:44 PM
Low Temp: 66 °F at 4:01 AM
Wind: 19 mph at 7:10 PM
Precip: .00

Today's Info

Record High: 99° in 1950
Record Low: 30° in 1897
Average High: 78°F
Average Low: 53°F
Average Precip in June.: 0.55
Precip to date in June.: 0.00
Average Precip to date: 7.80
Precip Year to Date: 3.97
Sunset Tonight: 9:19 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:46 a.m.



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WILLING TO WAIT

A pastor decided to change the order of service. He convinced himself that his congregation was bored and disinterested in his messages because they had been following the same format for several years.

For years the ushers would take up the offering, the choir would sing and then he would preach. To "mix" things up he decided that he would have the choir sing, then he would preach and the ushers would take up the offering at the close of the service.

Little Janie sat quietly through a particularly boring message. Finally, realizing that something was different, she whispered to her Mom, "Do you think if we paid him now he would quit?"

Waiting is often difficult. We pray from a deep reservoir of faith believing that God is anxiously waiting to hear and answer our prayers. Sometimes the answers come quickly. Other times we do not understand the delay and lose heart and hope. We may even wonder if God is deaf to our requests.

Sometimes physicians give us a prescription with a bit of advice: "Now I assure you that this medication will work. But you are going to have to wait a few days before you are relieved of all of your symptoms. Be patient."

"Find rest, O my soul, in God alone; my hope comes from Him," said David. He was able to rest in God because of God's faithfulness to him in the past. He had been deeply disappointed by many others but never by his Lord who always protected and defended him. When we recall God's faithfulness in the past, it will give us courage and hope.

Prayer: Help us, Father, to be patient as we wait on You to answer our prayers. May our faith exceed our problems and our patience grow daily. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Find rest, O my soul, in God alone; my hope comes from Him. Psalm 62:5

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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
06/17/2021 Groton Transit Fundraiser, 4-7 p.m.
06/18/2021 SDSU Alumni & Friends Golf Tournament at Olive Grove
06/19/2021 U8 Baseball Tournament
06/19/2021 Lions Crazy Golf Fest at Olive Grove Golf Course, Noon
06/26/2021 U10 Baseball Tournament
06/27/2021 U12 Baseball Tournament
07/04/2021 Firecracker Golf Tournament at Olive Grove
07/11/2021 Lions Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 10am-4pm (Sunday Mid-July)
07/22/2021 Pro-Am Golf Tournament at Olive Grove Golf Course
07/30/2021-08/03/2021 State "B" American Legion Baseball Tournament in Groton
08/06/2021 Wine on Nine at Olive Grove Golf Course
09/11/2021 Lions Club Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales 8am-3pm (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
09/12/2021 Sunflower Classic Golf Tournament at Olive Grove
09/18-19 Groton Fly-In/Drive-In, Groton Municipal Airport
10/08/2021 Lake Region Marching Band Festival (2nd Friday in October)
10/09/2021 Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm (Saturday before Columbus Day)
10/29/2021 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm
10/31/2021 Groton United Methodist Trunk or Treat (Halloween)
11/13/2021 Legion Post #39 Turkey Party (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)
11/25/2021 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm (Thanksgiving)
12/11/2021 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services 9am-Noon

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News from the **AP** Associated Press

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

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

Dakota Cash

04-21-26-28-35

(four, twenty-one, twenty-six, twenty-eight, thirty-five)

Estimated jackpot: \$41,000

Lotto America

13-16-19-39-44, Star Ball: 5, ASB: 2

(thirteen, sixteen, nineteen, thirty-nine, forty-four; Star Ball: five; ASB: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$6.85 million

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$56 million

Powerball

44-52-54-64-69, Powerball: 26, Power Play: 3

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

Estimated jackpot: \$286 million

No damage reported from earthquake in southern South Dakota

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Officials say an earthquake occurred in southern South Dakota, though no damage was reported.

The United States Geological Survey said the 3.7 magnitude quake happened at 10:25 a.m. Friday just north of the South Dakota border with Nebraska. The center of the earthquake was about 11 miles south-east of Fairfax.

The USGS said the earthquake occurred in a relatively sparsely populated region. About 12,000 people were exposed to "light shaking," the agency said.

The Argus Leader reports it's the third earthquake reported this year in South Dakota. The first was a 3.1 magnitude quake in Tyndall on Jan. 4 and the second was a 3.4 magnitude earthquake near Edgemont on March 26. Last year, the state experienced two earthquakes, according to the USGS.

The largest earthquake recorded in South Dakota was a 4.5 magnitude south of Huron in 1911.

Inmate on the lam since November arrested in Rapid City

RAPID CITY, N.D. (AP) — Authorities in South Dakota say an inmate who escaped from a minimum-security prison in Rapid City in November is back in custody.

The Rapid City Journal reports Keith Apple was arrested Tuesday in Rapid City. Authorities say he left the Rapid City Community Work Center without authorization on Nov. 7. Apple is serving three years for unauthorized ingestion of a controlled substance from Pennington County.

Apple is being held in the Pennington County Jail.

Apple faces charges of second-degree escape, punishable by up to five years in prison, authorities said.

Israel arrests Jerusalem activist as reporter recovers

By JOSEF FEDERMAN and LAURIE KELLMAN Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israeli police arrested a Palestinian protest leader in the contested Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood of Jerusalem on Sunday, a day after forcefully detaining a prominent Al Jazeera journalist covering the campaign by Jewish settlers to evict dozens of Palestinian families from the area.

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The arrest Sunday of Muna al-Kurd, confirmed by phone by her father, Nabil, was the latest move by Israeli police to quell several days of tension in one of the most sensitive neighborhoods in Jerusalem.

It came as Givara Budeiri, a veteran correspondent for the Al Jazeera satellite channel who regularly covers the story, was released from a hospital with a broken hand that her boss said she sustained on Saturday.

Nabil al-Kurd said Israeli police early Sunday "stormed the house in large numbers and in a barbaric manner," saying they wanted to arrest Muna, 23, and her 22-year-old brother.

"I was sleeping and I found them in my bedroom," Nabil al-Kurd said in a telephone interview. While his son was not home, police searched the house and arrested Muna, one of the most widely-known activists resisting the Israeli eviction drive. Video posted on social media, confirmed by Nabil, showed Muna being taken from the home in handcuffs.

"The reason for the arrest is that we say that we will not leave our homes, and they do not want anyone to express his opinion, they do not want anyone to tell the truth," he said. "They want to silence us."

Police did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The weekend's tensions began Saturday as Budeiri, wearing body armor marked "press," covered a sit-in among activists. Witnesses and the satellite channel said that after the protest was over, Israeli police asked her for press identification. Budeiri offered to call her driver to retrieve it. Police instead surrounded her, pushed her and handcuffed her before leading her to a border police vehicle with darkened windows.

Budeiri was held for four hours before she was hospitalized with a broken hand, said Walid Omary, the Jerusalem bureau chief for Al Jazeera. Budeiri had been reporting regularly from Sheikh Jarrah, Omary said.

In video footage posted online, Budeiri can be seen handcuffed and surrounded by border police. Clutching her notebook, she is heard shouting, "Don't touch, enough, enough."

Israeli police said Budeiri was detained after she was asked for identification, refused — and pushed a police officer. But witnesses say Budeiri, who holds an Israeli press card, was not allowed to return to her car to get the document. Al Jazeera said her cameraman's video camera was also heavily damaged by police.

Oren Ziv, a cameraman on the scene, said the incident took only a few seconds. The officers did not wait for Budeiri to get her identification, he said. They took her to a waiting police vehicle with darkened windows, where she was put in the back seat with female officers.

Al Jazeera's acting director general, Mostefa Souag, condemned the police actions. "The systematic targeting of our journalists is in total violation of all international conventions," he said.

"They are attacking the journalists in east Jerusalem because they don't want them to continue covering what's happening inside Sheikh Jarrah," Omary said.

The tension in Sheikh Jarrah has fueled weeks of unrest and helped spark an Israel-Hamas war after the Islamic militant group fired several rockets toward Jerusalem on May 10, positioning itself as a defender of Palestinian rights in the holy city.

The war, in which 254 people were killed in Gaza and 13 in Israel, ended May 21. In all, Gaza militants fired more than 4,000 rockets toward Israel, while Israel bombed hundreds of Gaza targets it said were linked to militants.

The most imminent Jerusalem evictions are on hold, following the intervention by Israel's attorney general, but the settlers' campaign continues.

Rights groups fear the evictions could still be carried out in the coming months as international attention wanes, potentially igniting another round of bloodshed. The Israeli watchdog Ir Amim, which closely follows the various court cases, estimates that at least 150 households in two neighborhoods are threatened with eviction.

Souag accused Israel of attempting to silence journalists in a systematic fashion. He noted that Budeiri's detention came after Israel's May 15 war-time destruction of a Gaza high-rise that housed the local office of Al Jazeera. The tower also housed the Gaza office of The Associated Press.

Israel has alleged that Hamas military intelligence was operating from the building. The AP has said it has no indication of a purported Hamas presence in the building. It has called for an independent investigation.

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The Latest: Zidasek is 1st Slovenian woman into a major QF

PARIS (AP) — The Latest on the French Open (all times local):

12:40 p.m.

Tamara Zidasek has become the first Slovenian woman to reach the quarterfinals of a major tournament. She did so by winning 7-6 (4), 6-1 against Romanian Sorana Cirstea, who was also unseeded here.

Zidasek dropped to her knees and held her head in her hands after winning on her first match point with a forehand winner.

Prior to the tournament the 23-year-old Zidasek had never even beaten a top 10-ranked player.

Her previous best at a major was the second round at the Australian Open and Wimbledon. She'd twice lost in the first round at Roland Garros.

The previous best by a Slovenian woman was when Katarina Srebotnik reached the fourth round at the French Open and the U.S. Open.

11:15 a.m.

Serena Williams continues her quest for a record-tying 24th Grand Slam title, and the 39-year-old American is playing in the fourth round at a major for the 64th time.

The seventh-seeded Williams takes on 21st-seeded Elena Rybakina. She has never been in the fourth round before at a major and faces three-time French Open winner Williams for the first time.

In men's play, No. 2 Daniil Medvedev continues his new-found fondness for clay.

The two-time losing Grand Slam finalist was 0-4 at Roland Garros before this tournament. The big-hitting Russian plays No. 22 Cristian Garin for a place in the quarterfinals.

No. 5 Stefanos Tsitsipas and No. 6 Alexander Zverev are also in action.

Afghan official: 11 killed in roadside bombing in north

By TAMEEM AKHGAR Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — A minivan carrying civilian passengers in northwest Afghanistan was hit by a roadside bomb, leaving at least 11 passengers dead, including three children, an Afghan official said Sunday.

The minivan fell into a valley with the shock of the explosion Saturday, said Badghis provincial Gov. Hesamuddin Shams, adding that rescuers were still searching for bodies in the valley.

No one immediately claimed responsibility for the attack but the provincial government accuses the Taliban of placing the bomb to target security forces. There was no immediate response from the Taliban.

Large swathes of war-ravaged Afghanistan are littered with bombs and land mines. Many were planted by insurgents to target government military convoys, but they often kill civilians instead.

The United Nations has repeatedly demanded both government forces and the Taliban take more precautions to protect civilians. In the first three months of this year, the U.N. mission in Afghanistan said that 1,783 civilians had been killed or wounded in Afghanistan, an increase of 29% over the same period last year.

The violence comes as U.S. peace envoy to Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad and a delegation from the National Security Council and Department of Defense traveled to the region to start a new series of talks between the Taliban and the government. They were to meet in Kabul and Doha in Qatar to urge the sides to reach a political settlement.

Negotiations between the Taliban and Afghan representatives began last September in Doha and continued earlier this year. But the Taliban announced on April 13 that it would not take part in any conference intended to decide the future of Afghanistan until all foreign troops were gone.

President Joe Biden had announced a day earlier that all U.S. troops would leave Afghanistan by Sept. 11.

In northern Faryab province, provincial officials said Sunday the district of Qaisar had fallen to Taliban fighters after a weeks-long fight between the two sides.

Provincial council chief Mohammad Tahir Rahmani told The Associated Press that provincial police chief

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Saifulrahman was killed in the fighting along with seven other police officers. Like many Afghans, Saifulrahman went by one name.

According to Rahmani, the district had already fallen but police officers at police headquarters were resisting. He said the Taliban took 37 police hostage.

A provincial police officer who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to media, said that besides police headquarters, the main market and municipality office fell to the Taliban.

The Taliban immediately did not comment on taking control of Qaisar district but both the Taliban and Afghan government defense and security forces have increased their operations against each other.

Also on Sunday, Kabul police spokesman Ferdaws Faramarz said a roadside bomb explosion in eastern Kabul targeted a civilian car wounding three people.

Normandy commemorates D-Day with small crowds, but big heart

By SYLVIE CORBET Associated Press

COLLEVILLE-SUR-MER, France (AP) — When the sun rises over Omaha Beach, revealing vast stretches of wet sand extending toward distant cliffs, one starts to grasp the immensity of the task faced by Allied soldiers on June 6, 1944, landing on the Nazi-occupied Normandy shore.

Several ceremonies are scheduled Sunday to commemorate the 77th anniversary of the decisive assault that led to the liberation of France and western Europe from Nazi control, and honor those who fell.

On D-Day, more than 150,000 Allied troops landed on the beaches code-named Omaha, Utah, Juno, Sword and Gold, carried by 7,000 boats. This year on June 6, the beaches stood vast and empty as the sun rose, exactly 77 years since the dawn invasion.

For the second year in a row, anniversary commemorations are marked by virus travel restrictions that have prevented veterans or families of fallen soldiers from the U.S., Britain, Canada and other Allied countries making the trip to France. Only a few officials were allowed exceptions.

Most public events have been canceled, and the official ceremonies are limited to a small number of selected guests and dignitaries.

Denis van den Brink, a WWII expert working for the town of Carentan, site of a strategic battle near Utah Beach, acknowledged the "big loss, the big absence is all the veterans who couldn't travel."

"That really hurts us very much because they are all around 95, 100 years old, and we hope they're going to last forever. But, you know..." he said.

"At least we remain in a certain spirit of commemoration, which is the most important," he told The Associated Press.

Over the anniversary weekend, many local residents have come out to visit the monuments marking the key moments of the fight and show their gratitude to the soldiers. Dozens of French World War II history enthusiasts, and a few travelers from neighboring European countries, could also be seen in jeeps and military vehicles on the small roads of Normandy.

Some reenactors came to Omaha Beach in the early hours of the day to pay tribute to those who fell that day, bringing flowers and American flags.

On D-Day, 4,414 Allied troops lost their lives, 2,501 of them Americans. More than 5,000 were wounded. On the German side, several thousand were killed or wounded.

A few kilometers (miles) away from Omaha Beach, the British Normandy Memorial is to be inaugurated on Sunday outside the village of Ver-sur-Mer. Visitors stand in awe at the solemnity and serenity of the place providing a spectacular view over Gold Beach and the English Channel.

The monument, built under a project launched in 2016, pays tribute to those under British command who died on D-Day and during the Battle of Normandy. The names of more than 22,000 men and women, mostly British soldiers, are written on its stone columns.

Later on Sunday, another ceremony will take place at the American cemetery in Colleville-sur-Mer, on a bluff overseeing Omaha Beach. Charles Shay, 96, a Penobscot Native American who now lives in Normandy, is expected to be the only veteran present in person.

Some other veterans, and families of soldiers, will be able to watch the broadcast on social media. The cemetery contains 9,380 graves, most of them for servicemen who lost their lives in the D-Day landings and ensuing operations. Another 1,557 names are inscribed on the Walls of the Missing. Normandy has more than 20 military cemeteries holding mostly Americans, Germans, French, British, Canadians and Polish troops who took part in the historic battle.

US senators promise vaccines for Taiwan amid China row

By TAIJING WU and ZEN SOO Associated Press

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP) — The U.S. will give Taiwan 750,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccine, part of President Joe Biden's move to share tens of millions of jabs globally, three American senators said Sunday, after the self-ruled island complained that China is hindering its efforts to secure vaccines as it battles an outbreak.

Democratic Sen. Tammy Duckworth of Illinois, who made a three-hour stop in Taiwan with fellow Democrat Christopher Coons of Delaware and Republican Dan Sullivan of Alaska, said their visit underscores bipartisan U.S. support for the democratic island that Beijing claims as its own renegade territory. Taiwan faces a severe vaccine shortage and has geopolitical significance as a flashpoint in U.S.-China relations.

"I'm here to tell you that the United States will not let you stand alone," Duckworth said at the airport after landing on a U.S. military transport plane. "We will be by your side to make sure the people of Taiwan have what they need to get to the other side of the pandemic and beyond."

Taiwan was included on a long list of places announced last week that would receive 25 million doses from the United States in what the Biden administration says is the first tranche of at least 80 million doses to be distributed globally. Most of the first tranche, including Taiwan's, will be sent through COVAX, a U.N.-backed program to distribute vaccines to low and middle-income countries.

The island of 24 million people, which lies 160 kilometers (100 miles) off China's east coast, is desperate for vaccines after a sudden outbreak that started in late April caught authorities by surprise. Japan shipped 1.2 million doses to Taiwan on Friday, opting to skip the COVAX process in the interest of speed. It was unclear when the 750,000 American doses would arrive.

Taiwan has accused China of blocking its efforts to reach a deal with BioNTech to import the vaccine co-developed by the German company and Pfizer. Beijing has said it is willing to supply vaccines to Taiwan, including BioNTech, through Chinese partner Fosun, and that the island's government is to blame for putting politics above the lives of its people. Taiwanese law bans the import of Chinese-made medicines.

Foreign Minister Joseph Wu, welcoming the senators at the airport, said that Taiwan is fortunate to have like-minded countries showing support, which he said is about sustaining freedom and democracy in the face of autocracy.

"Taiwan is facing unique challenges in combating the virus," he said. "While we are doing our best to import vaccines, we must overcome obstacles to ensure that these life-saving medicine are delivered free from troubles of Beijing."

He said China is trying to block Taiwan's international assistance and prevent it from participating in the World Health Organization. "We are no strangers to that kind of obstructionism," he said.

Taiwan and China split amid civil war in 1949, and most Taiwanese favor maintaining the current state of de facto independence while engaging in robust economic exchanges with the mainland.

China's ruling Communist Party says Taiwan must come under its control, and has in recent months increased pressure on the island, including flying warplanes near Taiwan. The increasing activity and vast improvements in China's military capabilities have raised concern in the U.S., which is bound by its own laws to ensure Taiwan is capable of defending itself and to regard all threats to the island's security as matters of "grave concern."

Taiwan, which had weathered the pandemic virtually unscathed until the recent outbreak, is now facing its most serious flare-up with more than 10,000 new cases since late April.

President Tsai Ing-wen, meeting with the senators, expressed gratitude to the Biden administration for including Taiwan in the first group to receive vaccines and said the doses will arrive at a critical time for

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the island.

"I hope that through cooperation with the United States, Japan and other countries, Taiwan will be able to overcome the immediate challenges and ... and move towards recovery," she said.

Both Duckworth, who was born in Thailand, and Sullivan said the American donation also reflects gratitude for Taiwan's support for the U.S., as Taiwan donated millions of masks and other supplies to the U.S. in the early days of the pandemic.

"This is love from America in return," Sullivan said, wearing a mask that he noted had "Love from Taiwan" written on it.

The three senators arrived at 7:30 a.m. from South Korea, where they met senior officials including the foreign and defense ministers on Friday and Saturday to discuss COVID-19 cooperation, the U.S.-South Korea military alliance and North Korea. They departed Taiwan at 10.30 a.m. the same morning, according to Taiwan's foreign ministry.

Trump to GOP: Support candidates who 'stand for our values'

By STEVE PEOPLES AP National Political Writer

Donald Trump on Saturday pushed Republicans to support candidates who are loyal to him in next year's midterm elections as the former president launched a new more active phase of his post presidency.

Trump, 74, teased the prospect of another presidential bid of his own in 2024, but vowed first to be an active presence on the campaign trail for those who share his values in next year's fight for control of Congress.

"The survival of America depends on our ability to elect Republicans at every level starting with the midterms next year," Trump charged early in a rambling speech that spanned nearly an hour and a half.

Trump's speech to hundreds of Republican officials and activists gathered for the North Carolina GOP convention was the opening appearance in what is expected to be a new phase of rallies and public events. Out of office for more than four months and banned from his preferred social media accounts, the former president hopes to use such events to elevate his diminished voice ahead of another potential presidential run.

His advisers are already eyeing subsequent appearances in Ohio, Florida, Alabama and Georgia to help bolster midterm candidates and energize voters.

Some party leaders worry that a rise of pro-Trump candidates in the coming months could jeopardize the GOP's fight for control of Congress in 2022. While Trump remains a dominant force within his party, he is deeply unpopular among key segments of the broader electorate. He lost the last election by 7 million votes after alienating Republican-leaning suburban voters across the country.

In contrast to the mega rallies that filled sports arenas when Trump was president, he faced a crowd that organizers estimated at 1,200 seated at dinner tables inside the Greenville convention center Saturday night. Tens of thousands more followed along on internet streams.

Invited to the stage briefly during his remarks, Trump daughter-in-law and North Carolina native Lara Trump announced she would not run for the Senate because of family obligations.

"I am saying no for now, not no forever," Lara Trump said.

Minutes later, Trump announced his endorsement of loyalist Rep. Ted Budd in the crowded Republican primary, adding a slap at former Gov. Pat McCrory, who has been critical of Trump's falsehoods about the 2020 election.

"You can't pick people who have already lost two races and do not stand for our values," Trump said.

McCrory served as the North Carolina governor from 2013 to 2017, but lost elections before and after his term.

The former president waited more than an hour to advance falsehoods about the 2020 election, which he described as "the crime of the century."

Since leaving the White House, Trump has regularly made baseless claims that the last presidential election was stolen. The claims have triggered a wave of Republican-backed voting restrictions in state

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legislatures across the country, even though Trump's cries of voting fraud have been refuted by dozens of judges, Republican governors and senior officials from his own administration.

Trump focused his early remarks on President Joe Biden, which he called "the most radical left-wing administration in history."

"As we gather tonight our country is being destroyed before our very eyes," he said.

Democratic National Committee spokesman Ammar Moussa took a shot at Trump in a statement released ahead of his speech.

"More than 400,000 dead Americans, millions of jobs lost, and recklessly dangerous rhetoric is apparently not enough for Republicans to break with a loser president who cost them the White House, Senate, and House," Moussa said.

Peruvian voters face choice between 2 polarizing populists

By REGINA GARCIA CANO and FRANKLIN BRICENO Associated Press

LIMA, Peru (AP) — Peruvian voters will choose between two polarizing populist candidates Sunday in a presidential runoff held as the coronavirus pandemic continues to batter the Andean country and festering anger has led to fears of more political stability.

Political novice Pedro Castillo and Keiko Fujimori, making her third run for the presidency, have both promised COVID-19 vaccines for all and other strategies to alleviate the health emergency that has killed more than 180,000 people and pushed millions into poverty. The election follows a statistical revision from Peru's government that more than doubled the death toll previously acknowledged by officials.

The pandemic not only has collapsed Peru's medical and cemetery infrastructure, left millions unemployed and highlighted longstanding inequalities in the country, it has also deepened people's mistrust of government as it mismanaged the COVID-19 response and a secret vaccination drive for the well-connected erupted into a national scandal.

Amid protests and corruption allegations, the South American country cycled through three presidents in November. Now, analysts warn this election could be another tipping point for people's simmering frustrations and bring more political instability.

"I think in both situations the risk of social unrest is high. It's a time bomb," said Claudia Navas, an analyst with the global firm Control Risks. "I think if Castillo wins, people who support Fujimori or support the continuation to some extent of the economic model may protest."

But Navas said "a more complex scenario will evolve if Fujimori wins because Castillo has been able to create a discourse that has played well in some rural communities with regards to the social divide and saying that political and economic elites have orchestrated things to remain in power and maintain the social inequalities."

Polls have shown the candidates virtually tied heading into Sunday's runoff. In the first round of voting, featuring 18 candidates, neither received more than 20% support and both are strongly opposed by sectors of Peruvian society.

Fujimori, a conservative former congresswoman, has promised various bonuses to people, including a \$2,500 one-time payment to each family with at least one COVID-19 victim. She has also proposed distributing 40% of a tax for the extraction of minerals, oil or gas among families who live near those areas.

Her supporters include the wealthy, several players of the national soccer team and Mario Vargas Llosa, Peru's foremost author and the winner of a Nobel Prize in Literature. Vargas, who lost a presidential election three decades ago to the candidate's father, Alberto Fujimori, has moved from calling her the "daughter of the dictator" in 2016 to considering her to be the representative of "freedom and progress."

Keiko Fujimori herself has been imprisoned as part of a graft investigation though she was later released. Her father governed between 1990 and 2000 and is serving a 25-year sentence for corruption and the killings of 25 people. She has promised to free him should she win.

Castillo until recently was a rural schoolteacher in the country's third-poorest district, deep in the Andes. The son of illiterate peasants entered politics by leading a teachers' strike. While his stance on national-

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izing key sectors of the economy has softened, he remains committed to rewriting the constitution that was approved under the regime of Fujimori's father.

Among Castillo's supporters are former Bolivia President Evo Morales and former Uruguay President José Mujica, who in a conversation via Facebook told Castillo on Thursday to "not fall into authoritarianism."

Peru is the second largest copper exporter in the world and mining accounts for almost 10% of its GDP and 60% of its exports, so Castillo's initial proposal to nationalize the nation's mining industry set off alarm bells among business leaders. But regardless of who gets picked to succeed President Francisco Sagasti on July 28, investors will remain skittish.

"A victory for left-wing populist Pedro Castillo in Peru's presidential election on Sunday would probably send local financial markets into a tailspin, but we doubt that investors would have much to cheer about even if his rival Keiko Fujimori wins," Nikhil Sanghani, emerging markets economist with Capital Econom-ics, wrote in an investors note Friday.

"Fujimori is a controversial figure who is under investigation for corruption charges. Given Peru's recent history, it's not hard to imagine that this could spark impeachment proceedings," he said.

Mexico votes on López Obrador's "transformation" at mid-term

By CHRISTOPHER SHERMAN Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Mexicans on Sunday were electing the entire lower house of Congress, almost half the country's governors and most mayors in a vote that will determine whether President Andrés Manuel López Obrador's Morena party gets the legislative majority it needs to continue his "Fourth Transformation" of Mexico.

His critics have depicted the elections as a chance to stop the still-popular López Obrador from concentrating more power and weakening checks and balances. The president says the opposition is dominated by conservatives who oppose his campaign against corruption and wasteful spending.

López Obrador has complained about courts and independent regulatory agencies that have blocked some of his tougher proposals to empower state-owned industries. Opponents fear that if he wins a majority, he may try to subjugate courts and regulatory agencies created during Mexico's decades-long transition to full democracy.

Fifteen of the country's 32 state governorships are at stake, and all 500 seats in the lower house of Congress. Almost 20,000 local posts including mayors and town council seats are being decided in 30 states, and those have often been the most violence-scarred races. About three dozen local candidates have been gunned down.

Experts say criminal gangs have sought to influence the elections, while the government ascribes most of the killings to other questions and said they weren't necessarily related to elections.

But the country's electoral authority said the elections will be among the most thoroughly monitored in history, with over 19,000 registered observers, and violence at polling places themselves is relatively rare.

López Obrador has raised minimum wages and strengthened government aid programs like supplementary payments to the elderly, students and training programs for youths. He has also created a quasi-military National Guard and given the army a huge role in building his pet projects, which include trains, an oil refinery and airports.

But he has not hewed to a traditional leftist line. He has maintained friendly if sometimes tension-fraught relations with the United States and willingly helped keep tens of thousands of Central American migrants from reaching the U.S. border. He abhors government debt or waste.

Opponents depict him as intolerant of criticism and obsessed with a nostalgic 1960s vision of Mexico, when oil was king and state-owned companies dominated many sectors of the economy. Socially conservative and a professed Christian "in the broadest sense," he has angered feminists with his policies, but has pleased many Mexicans by living austerely.

The elections represent the first mass public events since the coronavirus pandemic hit the country over a year ago, though case numbers have fallen and Mexico has vaccinated about a quarter of adults. The

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estimated 350,000 fatalities in the pandemic — about 230,000 of them test-confirmed — do not appear to have played a major role in the campaigns, but may weigh on voters' minds.

Mattie Parker is next Fort Worth mayor in win for GOP

FORT WORTH, Texas (AP) — Mattie Parker declared victory Saturday as the next mayor of Fort Worth, Texas, keeping it one of America's biggest cities with a GOP mayor.

The 37-year-old Parker was in a runoff with Deborah Peoples, a former Democratic county chairwoman who would have been the city's first Black mayor. Peoples conceded defeat as Parker had more than 53% of the vote with ballots still being counted.

Parker will succeed her former boss, outgoing Fort Worth Mayor Betsy Price, a Republican who is retiring after 10 years and was the longest-serving mayor of the booming city that is closing in on 1 million residents.

Although the election was officially nonpartisan, it resembled a Texas battleground race: Republican Gov. Greg Abbott endorsed Parker and county GOP officials brought in activists from around the state to stop Democrats who craved a high-profile win in Texas after a letdown in 2020.

Parker is a former chief of staff to Price and founder of an educational coalition. She did not commit in her campaign to backing a police civilian review board in a city where police shootings and the 2016 arrest of a Black woman who called 911 have elevated tensions and led to protests.

In August, a white former Fort Worth police officer is scheduled to stand trial on murder charges in the shooting death of Atatiana Jefferson, a Black woman who was fatally shot through a window in 2019.

Durant, Irving carry Nets in opener after Harden hurt

By BRIAN MAHONEY AP Basketball Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Kevin Durant knew something was wrong when the Brooklyn Nets were trying to run a play and James Harden wasn't in the right spot.

Moments later, Harden wasn't even in the game, forced to leave with a right hamstring injury less than a minute into the Eastern Conference semifinals.

"That was tough," Nets coach Steve Nash said.

Durant and Kyrie Irving made sure it wasn't a knockout blow.

Durant scored 29 points, Irving had 25 and the two superstars carried Brooklyn to a 115-107 victory over the Milwaukee Bucks on Saturday night in Game 1.

Harden's injury is the same one that forced him to miss two losses to the Bucks in May.

But the Nets beat Milwaukee when it mattered most without him, getting 19 points from Joe Harris and 18 points and 14 rebounds from Blake Griffin.

"We try not to be too emotional out there, but losing one of your leaders like that on the first play of the game, we had to regroup for a couple of minutes and figure out what was next, but I think the coaches, the coaching staff did a great job of moving forward," Durant said. "Guys came in and just tried to play extremely hard. We didn't care about anything else but playing and executing the game plan and just leaving it all out there."

And they got a solid defensive effort despite giving up plenty of size, limiting the Bucks to 13 points below their NBA-leading average.

Durant grabbed 10 rebounds and Irving had eight assists, throwing some spectacular passes as the Nets moved the ball around quickly and had the Bucks a step or more behind all night.

"We've got to guard defensively together, especially against this team," Bucks star Giannis Antetokounmpo said.

Game 2 is Monday night.

"Our guys got to execute defensively regardless of who's on the court, execute offensively regardless of who's on the court," Bucks coach Mike Budenholzer said. "We've got to be better. We'll be better Monday."

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Antetokounmpo had 34 points and 11 rebounds, but the Bucks were just 6 for 30 from 3-point range and lost for the first time in the playoffs after storming past Miami in a first-round sweep.

Brook Lopez scored 19 points for the Bucks and Jrue Holiday had 17 points and nine rebounds. Khris Middleton finished with 13 points and 13 rebounds but was 6 for 23, missing all five 3-pointers.

A series that had talent all over the rosters started on a down note when Harden had to come out of the game after just 43 seconds, walking to the back after the Nets called timeout before they had even scored. He had appeared to grab at the back of his right leg after a drive toward the basket on Brooklyn's first possession before.

"When you prepare for a game and he's such a big part of the game plan that can throw you off. But I was proud of the guys that they didn't get rattled, they hung in there and got the win," Nash said, adding that he had no update on Harden's status.

Harden predicted a day earlier this series would be a showdown.

His show might already be over.

The Bucks led 32-30 after one but the Nets sprinted past them with an 8-0 run for a 47-42 lead. Another run of eight in a row pushed it to 59-48 on Irving's layup with 3:22 left in the half, but Milwaukee closed well to get within 63-61 at the break.

The NBA's two highest-scoring teams played at a dizzying pace, where look down after a basket and they might already be shooting at the other end by the time you looked up.

The pace favored the Nets, who pulled away for good in the third quarter.

Durant picked up his fourth foul with 1:36 left in the period, quickly waving his hands toward Nash that he didn't want to come out of the game. Lopez made the two free throws to cut it to nine, but Durant then scored seven straight points, with his 3-pointer pushing it to 98-82 with 5.1 seconds remaining.

TIP-INS

Bucks: Milwaukee gave P.J. Tucker his first start of the playoffs. He had seven points. ... Milwaukee was 4 for 19 on 3s in the first half. Bryn Forbes missed all four of his attempts before making one late in the game.

Nets: Brooklyn remained without F Jeff Green for a fourth straight game because of a left foot injury. Nash said Friday he would be considered day to day after Game 1. ... The Nets announced a sellout of 15,750 — featuring Beyonce and Jay-Z — with 98% fully vaccinated. ... Mike James had 12 points after playing less than 10 minutes in the first round against Boston.

HURTING HARDEN

The right hamstring forced Harden to miss 18 straight and 20 of 21 games late in the season. He missed games on April 1 and 4 with what was called tightness, then returned April 5 but made it through just four minutes before leaving again, with that injury termed a strain. He didn't play again until May 12.

Protest erupts again over man killed by Minnesota deputies

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Protesters faced off with officers in Minneapolis early Saturday over the shooting death of a Black man by members of a U.S. Marshals task force.

Photos from the scene following a vigil for Winston Boogie Smith Jr., 32, showed dumpster fires in the street and a line of officers standing guard. It was the second night of protests in response to the fatal shooting Thursday in Minneapolis' Uptown neighborhood.

Police said 27 people were arrested in the protest, with 26 accused of rioting and one facing a weapons charge. No injuries were reported. Some businesses sustained damage, police said.

Authorities said Friday that Smith was wanted on a weapons violation and fired a gun before two deputies shot him while he was inside a parked vehicle. Members of the U.S. Marshals Fugitive Task Force were trying to arrest him on a warrant for allegedly being a felon in possession of a gun.

Family and friends described Smith as a father of three who was often harassed by police. They are demanding transparency in the investigation and have asked that anyone who might have video footage to come forward.

Police said some people vandalized buildings and stole from businesses after the shooting Thursday. Nine people were arrested on possible charges including suspicion of riot, assault, arson and damage to property.

The fatal shooting comes as Minneapolis has been on edge since the death of George Floyd just over a year ago, and the fatal shooting of Daunte Wright by an officer in nearby Brooklyn Center in April.

Brad Cox-trained Essential Quality wins Belmont Stakes

By STEPHEN WHYNO AP Sports Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Brad Cox insisted he wasn't sitting around waiting or worrying about whether a disqualification of Bob Baffert's Kentucky Derby winner would give him his first victory in a Triple Crown race.

Essential Quality captured the Belmont Stakes on Saturday to make sure Cox wouldn't need to wait a second longer to be a Triple Crown race-winning trainer.

The striking gray colt who was bet down 6-5 as the favorite passed early leader Hot Rod Charlie around the final turn and charged ahead to the wire to win the 1 1/2-mile \$1 million race in front of 11,238 mostly maskless fans at Belmont Park.

Cox could be a Derby champion with Mandaloun if Baffert-trained Medina Spirit is disqualified for failing a postrace drug test. Two samples have confirmed the presence of the steroid betamethasone, though Kentucky officials have not yet announced the horse's disqualification — a move that would elevate Mandaloun to the top spot.

But Cox was able to enjoy this one with Essential Quality beating Hot Rod Charlie by 1 1/4 lengths. Essential Quality did so in 2:27.11, taking advantage of an unexpected hot pace set by Hot Rod Charlie.

"I thought it benefitted our horse," Cox said. "Hot Rod Charlie ran a tremendous race and I thought (with) the hot pace we were in a good spot where they would come back."

Essential Quality, who opened as the 2-1 favorite, paid \$4.60 to win, \$3 to place and \$2.60 to show. Preakness winner Rombauer was third and Known Agenda fourth.

"That was a long way around there a mile a half, but it was exciting," Cox said. "It looked like the horse on the inside, he still had run left. I knew it was going to be a battle down the lane."

Essential Quality finished fourth as a beaten favorite in the Kentucky Derby because of a rough trip. Essential Quality showed in the Belmont why he has long been considered one of the top 3-year-olds in the country.

"He has never run a bad race in his life, and I think he showed today he met the test of a champion," said Jimmy Bell, president of Godolphin Stable that owns Essential Quality. "To do what he did as a 2-year-old and come through these races as a 3-year-old with the mile-and-a-half classic, it's a great tribute to him."

Backdooring his way to becoming the first Louisville-born trainer to win the Kentucky Derby wouldn't allow Cox the same joy of victory as the Belmont, which the up-and-coming star will likely remember as his first true Triple Crown triumph.

And Cox saw this coming. He predicted last summer that Essential Quality would be his horse for the Belmont, and that proved true in beating a tough field of seven other horses.

"Luis did a fantastic job of getting him in position turning for home and he was able to really show his stamina late," Cox said.

It was something of redemption for Saez, who thought he had his first Triple Crown win finishing first in the 2019 Derby with Maximum Security. But Maximum Security was disqualified for impeding other horses.

There was no DQ this time.

"This is my second home," said Saez, who dedicated the race to the memory of his younger brother Juan who was killed in a riding accident in 2014. "This was the race I wanted to win."

But the victory also comes with a shadow hanging over the Dubai ruler Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, who runs the Godolphin. Sheikh Mohammed faces scrutiny of human rights issues after a judge in England ruled that he orchestrated the abductions of two of his adult daughters.

Talking only about his ownership and not the situation in Dubai, Cox made it a point to mention Sheikh

Mohammed moments after the Belmont.

"Sheikh Mohammed, he's been supporting us the last two years and this is a tremendous organization, world-class organization and we wouldn't be here obviously without this horse and his support, so I just wanted to really thank him," Cox said.

The race was run without a horse trained by Baffert, who was banned by the New York Racing Association after Medina Spirit tested positive and ran third in the Preakness. Churchill Downs suspended Baffert for two years after a second sample from the Derby came back positive for betamethasone, which is prohibited at any level on race day in Kentucky, Maryland and New York.

Cox was confused why he kept getting asked about the pending Derby DQ.

"I don't wait at all," Cox said this week. "I can't control the outcome of that, so it's something I give very, very little thought to."

Normalcy returned to the Belmont after a topsy-turvy 2020 that featured the race leading off the Triple Crown at a nontraditional 1 1/8-mile distance at an empty racetrack. The race was back in its traditional spot as the third leg of the Triple Crown five weeks after the Derby and three after the Preakness, was back to its "test of the champion" distance with fans roaring for horses at the top of the stretch.

GOP aims to revive Fauci attacks after email trove released

By JILL COLVIN and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Dr. Anthony Fauci has been a political lightning rod since the early days of the pandemic, lionized by the left and villainized by the right.

But with the release of a trove of Fauci's emails this past week, Republicans' political attacks on the nation's top government infectious-diseases expert have gone into overdrive.

On conservative news channels, President Joe Biden's pandemic adviser has been baselessly pilloried as a liar who misled the American people about the origins of COVID-19 to protect the Chinese government. There's no evidence of wrongdoing, but Republican calls for his resignation have grown louder, as have demands for new investigations into the origins of the virus.

"Given what we know now, I don't know how anyone can have confidence that he should remain in a position of public trust and authority," said Republican Sen. Josh Hawley of Missouri, a potential presidential hopeful who is calling for Fauci's resignation and a full congressional inquiry.

The political moves by Republicans represent a new effort to find a reliable foil in the first few months of the Biden administration, as they have struggled to turn public sentiment against the new president. So far, Biden has enjoyed widespread job approval, buoyed by the public's broad backing of his handling of the pandemic, which 71% of Americans support, according to a recent Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research poll.

Fauci, who has a security detail because of ongoing threats and who did not respond to a request for comment for this story, has repeatedly defended his work, saying he received thousands of emails and has never ruled out any theory.

"I still believe the most likely origin is from an animal species to a human, but I keep an absolutely open mind that if there may be other origins of that, there may be another reason, it could have been a lab leak," Fauci said Thursday on CNN.

The doctor's newly released emails, which span the early days of the pandemic and were obtained by BuzzFeed News and The Washington Post, show no evidence of any kind of coverup about the origin of the virus. Indeed, many of the discussions reflect the science at the time. But Republicans, including former President Donald Trump, have seized on the emails as proof of a conspiracy to obscure the source of the virus.

In one email, from Feb. 1 of last year, Kristian Andersen, a researcher at the Scripps Research Institute, wrote to Fauci, the longtime director of the U.S. National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, about ongoing efforts to decipher the origin of the novel coronavirus.

At the time, the lab leak hypothesis was largely dismissed by experts. It has recently gained traction,

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though the origins of the virus remain unknown.

"The unusual features of the virus make up a really small part of the genome (0.1%) so one has to look really closely at all the sequences to see that some of the features (potentially) look engineered," Andersen wrote. He said he and his colleagues "all find the genome inconsistent with expectations from evolutionary theory. But," he added, "we have to look at this much more closely and there are still further analyses to be done, so those opinions could still change."

By the next month, it turned out, they had. He and his colleagues published an article in Nature Medicine in which they concluded that it was "improbable that SARS-CoV-2 emerged through laboratory manipulation of a related SARS-CoV-like coronavirus."

In another email, Fauci was thanked by the head of a nonprofit that helped fund research at China's Wuhan Institute of Virology, "for publicly standing up and stating that the scientific evidence supports a natural origin," which he said "will help dispel the myths being spun around the virus' origins."

Andersen, the scientist who wrote the "engineered" email, has tried to offer further explanation.

"As I have said many times, we seriously considered a lab leak a possibility. However, significant new data, extensive analyses, and many discussions led to the conclusions in our paper. What the email shows, is a clear example of the scientific process," he tweeted amid the backlash.

"It's just science," he later added. "Boring, I know, but it's quite a helpful thing to have in times of uncertainty."

The former president disagrees. While in office, Trump, who disdained the scientist's popularity, frequently flouted Fauci's recommendations on battling COVID-19 by playing down the severity of the pandemic and often touting unproven scientific remedies, including a malaria drug and even injecting disinfectant. And he frequently tried to undermine Fauci's credibility by refusing to acknowledge the evolution in scientists' understanding of the virus and how it spread, which informed guidance about policies like masking.

Trump went after Fauci again on Saturday night when he returned to the public stage in a speech in North Carolina. He sees the emails as further vindication that he was right about the doctor, according to an adviser who spoke on condition of anonymity to describe private conversations.

"He's a great promoter," Trump said about Fauci. "Not a great doctor, but he's a hell of a promoter. He likes television more than any politician in this room. ... But he's been wrong on almost every issue."

House Republican Whip Rep. Steve Scalise said on Fox Business Network on Thursday that Fauci "needs to be brought in under oath to answer questions" about the emails, while Elise Stefanik, R-N.Y., now the No. 3 Republican in the House, blasted out a fundraising email with the subject line "FIRE FAUCI."

"Anthony Fauci's recently released emails and investigative reporting about #COVID19 origins are shocking. The time has come for Fauci to resign and for a full congressional investigation into the origins of #COVID19 — and into any and all efforts to prevent a full accounting," Hawley tweeted after recently voting along with Scalise and Stefanik to block a full congressional investigation into the origins of the Jan. 6 insurrection.

But the White House has made clear that it is standing with Fauci, despite the onslaught of criticism.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki this week praised Fauci as "an undeniable asset in our country's pandemic response," and Biden felt compelled to poke his head back into a room full of reporters he'd departed Friday to say that he was, indeed, "very confident in Dr. Fauci." In a sign of support, Fauci will join first lady Jill Biden for a visit Sunday to a vaccination clinic in New York.

Biden administration officials and allies point to polling showing that Fauci is still one of the country's most trusted public health communicators. Privately, they see the GOP's focus on Fauci as a ploy to energize their base that likely will not resonate with moderate voters. And they are happy to compare Fauci's record on public health with Trump's.

"A note to Fauci critics," tweeted Andy Slavitt, Biden's outgoing senior COVID-19 adviser. "For years, he has been working tirelessly on the development of the mRNA vaccine in anticipation of a potential major viral outbreak. And on Jan 11, 2020, his team downloaded the gene sequence & on the 13th began work on the vaccine."

"So keep it down," he wrote.

Nicaragua detains yet another opposition politician

MANAGUA, Nicaragua (AP) — Police in Nicaragua detained another leading opposition politician and potential presidential candidate Saturday, the latest in a series of moves by President Daniel Ortega that prevent candidates from running against him in his third consecutive re-election bid.

Police said they arrested Arturo Cruz Sequeira, a former ambassador to the United States, under a controversial 'treason' law passed in December. Cruz Sequeira was considered a contender for the nomination of the opposition Citizens for Liberty party in the Nov. 7 elections.

His arrest follows the detention earlier this week of opposition figure Cristiana Chamorro, who is being held incommunicado at her home on money laundering charges. The United States has called for the release of both opposition figures.

Cruz Sequeira, who served as Nicaragua's U.S. Ambassador from 2007-2009, was detained at the Managua airport after he arrived on a flight from Washington D.C., his aides said.

The law passed in December drew international protests because it gives Ortega's government the power to unilaterally declare citizens "terrorists" or coup-mongers, classify them as "traitors to the homeland" and ban them from running for election.

Given that Ortega has already applied those terms to virtually the entire opposition and the leaders of massive 2018 protests against his regime, the law appears aimed at sweeping aside the last roadblock to Ortega's continuing his longstanding rule over the Central American nation.

The law bans candidates "who lead or finance a coup ... encourage foreign interference, ask for military intervention ... propose or plan economic blockades, applaud and champion the imposition of sanctions against Nicaragua or its citizens."

So far, the United States has imposed sanctions on about 27 people close to Ortega and his wife, Vice President Rosario Murillo, including Murillo herself and three of her children with Ortega. The sanctions are aimed at bringing about free elections.

The law says people designated by Ortega "will be traitors to the homeland, and for that reason may not run for public office." Treason is punishable by prison terms of up to 15 years.

On Friday, the U.S. State Department called on Nicaragua to free Chamorro, who is being held incommunicado at her home after her laptops and cellphones were taken away.

Chamorro is a potential presidential candidate and the daughter of former President Violeta Barrios de Chamorro.

On Tuesday, the government charged Chamorro with money laundering involving alleged financial irregularities related to the Violeta Barrios de Chamorro Foundation for Reconciliation and Democracy, which she headed. The nongovernmental group is named after her mother. The State Department called for the release not just of Chamorro, but of two foundation employees as well.

"Their detention on trumped up charges is an abuse of their rights, and it represents an assault on democratic values as well as a clear attempt to thwart free and fair elections," according to the U.S. statement.

"Ms. Chamorro's arrest comes amid unrelenting attacks on pro-democracy presidential candidates and independent media. The Ortega regime has pledged to bar Ms. Chamorro from participating in November elections and, in May, baselessly canceled the legal status of two opposition political parties," it said.

On Wednesday, police raided the home and placed Chamorro under a form of house arrest, and a court granted a request from prosecutors to bar Chamorro from running in the Nov. 7 elections or holding public office, citing the charges against her.

She was expected to challenge Ortega for the presidency.

Chamorro has said the allegations were trumped up to keep her out of the race.

In January, she stepped down from her role at the foundation. A month later, it closed its operations in Nicaragua after passage of a "foreign agents" law designed to track foreign funding of organizations operating in the country.

In May, Nicaragua's Supreme Electoral Council cancelled the legal status of the Democratic Restoration Party, which was expected to potentially be a vehicle for an opposition coalition bid against Ortega.

Cristiana Chamorro's mother beat Ortega to win the presidency in 1990 and served until 1997. Her husband, Pedro Joaquin Chamorro, had run his family newspaper La Prensa and was jailed and forced into exile multiple times by the dictatorship of Anastasio Somoza. He was eventually assassinated in 1978. Cristiana Chamorro is the vice president of La Prensa.

Wisconsin priest digs in to refuse bishop's demand to resign

By TODD RICHMOND and DAVID CRARY Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — The Rev. James Altman calls himself "a lowly priest" serving a blue-collar city in western Wisconsin. But when his bishop demanded his resignation — after a series of divisive remarks about politics and the pandemic — Altman refused to oblige and has since raised more than \$640,000 from his conservative supporters to defend himself.

While not unprecedented, a Catholic priest's refusal to abide by a bishop's call to resign is certainly rare. Altman's case, which has garnered national attention and made him a celebrity of sorts among conservative Catholics, has further fueled the divide between them and those urging a more progressive, inclusive church.

Altman, pastor of St. James the Less Roman Catholic Church in La Crosse, first came into prominence before the 2020 election with a fiery video on YouTube.

"You cannot be Catholic and be a Democrat," said Altman, admonishing people to "repent of your support of that party and its platform or face the fires of hell."

He reiterated that sentiment recently while also criticizing vaccination efforts and restrictions on church gatherings related to COVID-19.

On May 23, Altman announced during a homily that the Diocese of La Crosse's bishop, William Patrick Callahan, had asked for his resignation as pastor of St. James.

"They want my head now for speaking that truth," Altman told the congregation. "I, a lowly priest, apparently have created enemies among some of the hierarchies."

The diocese issued a statement the next day confirming Callahan's request and Altman's refusal to step away, and said it would begin the process to remove him according to Catholic law.

Altman said he would fight the process but needed money to hire lawyers. His supporters across the U.S. responded swiftly.

LifeFunder, a crowdfunding site for conservative Christians, set out to raise \$100,000 for Altman; by Thursday it had raised more than \$322,000. GiveSendGo, another Christian crowdfunding site, has raised more than \$326,000.

"As we all know, Fr. Altman has been subject to diabolical persecution just for doing his job as a shepherd to his flock," says a message on GiveSendGo.

Altman didn't respond to a message The Associated Press left at the church office. Videos posted by LifeFunder feature him railing against the Catholic hierarchy, calling bishops who don't support him "cowards" and a "brood of vipers," and labeling liberals "left-wing fascist Nazis."

As for the fundraising, he said: "I never think of myself as great, but what it does tell me is the people are saying that they need to hear the truth spoken."

Most of Callahan's fellow bishops across the U.S. have not commented publicly about the case, though one of them — Bishop Joseph Strickland of Tyler, Texas — has tweeted support for Altman.

Altman "is in trouble for speaking the truth," Strickland tweeted. "He inspires many to keep the faith during these dark days. Let us pray for him."

Conversely, Faithful America, which describes itself as an online community of Christians, launched a petition urging Altman's removal from the ministry due to his remarks about the pandemic.

"Fr. Altman is endangering not only his own parishioners but every essential worker they meet, and should be removed ... before he can risk even one more life," the petition said.

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David Cloutier, an assistant professor of moral theology at the Catholic University of America, said via email that Altman "is clearly far out of bounds in the extent to which he is no longer articulating specific Catholic teaching."

"He has instead become a conservative commentator on cultural issues on which there is either no specifically 'Catholic' position or where the priest might well be at odds with Catholic principles," Cloutier added.

La Crosse is a city of 50,000 on the Mississippi River about 125 miles (200 kilometers) southeast of Minneapolis. Altman's church was built in 1901; its red brick walls and towering dome are a local landmark.

Its congregation has been divided over Altman.

Carol Patterson attended Mass at St. James for 50 years until Altman's style and sermons drove her to another church last year. Though she was deeply involved in church activities, she said he never bothered to learn her name.

Leaving was a tough decision; Patterson and her daughter were both married in St. James and her late husband was buried under its aegis.

"I just didn't agree with the things he (Altman) was doing," Patterson said. "The Democrats go to hell, encouraging people not to get masks, not to get the shots. ... I loved St. James, but I just couldn't do it anymore. It was raising my blood pressure."

Monica Mohan, has made the 80-mile drive from her home in Fall Creek to La Crosse twice to attend Mass with Altman. She said he is true to Catholic principles and now faces pressure from a church hierarchy that has been trying to "water down" the faith.

"I have never seen a priest so joyful when he's distributing Holy Communion," she said. "This parish is his family. To rip a father away from his family when he has not taught anything contrary to the faith is inconceivable. It's despicable."

If Altman persists in his defiance, the legal procedures — dictated by the Catholic church's Code of Canon Law — could be lengthy.

According to William Daniel, a professor of canon law at Catholic University, a priest asked by his bishop to resign has the option of submitting a defense. The bishop then consults with two other pastors and issues a decree removing the priest if he determines that step is still warranted.

If the priest thinks the bishop's decision is unfair, Daniel said, he can bring the case to the Vatican's Congregation for the Clergy, which can uphold or change the bishop's decision. A further Vatican review is possible if the priest or the bishop disagrees with the Congregation's decision,

While requests for the resignation of a priest are not uncommon, it's rare that they lead to a high-profile refusal to resign, Daniel said.

One of the few such cases in the U.S. came in 2002, when a priest in the Archdiocese of Boston refused to step down over an accusation that he sexually abused a child three decades earlier. The Rev. D. George Spagnolia took his case to the Vatican but was unable to overturn his suspension. He died in 2008.

More recently, the Rev. Frank Pavone, an anti-abortion activist who heads Priests for Life, appealed to the Vatican over restrictions placed on his ministry in 2011 by his bishop in Amarillo, Texas. Pavone succeeded in getting the restrictions eased, relocated away from Texas and remains active with Priests for Life.

Pavone strongly supports Altman's right to resist the resignation request.

"Bishops err, and sadly, some -- as in my case -- badly abuse their authority," Pavone said via email. "We need to be able to defend ourselves."

Judge overturns California's 32-year ban on assault weapons

By DON THOMPSON Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — A federal judge has overturned California's three-decade-old ban on assault weapons, calling it a "failed experiment" that violates people's constitutional right to bear arms.

U.S. District Judge Roger Benitez of San Diego ruled on Friday that the state's definition of illegal military-style rifles unlawfully deprives law-abiding Californians of weapons commonly allowed in most other states and by the U.S. Supreme Court.

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"Under no level of heightened scrutiny can the law survive," Benitez said. He issued a permanent injunction against enforcement of the law but stayed it for 30 days to give state Attorney General Rob Bonta time to appeal.

Gov. Gavin Newsom condemned the decision, calling it "a direct threat to public safety and the lives of innocent Californians, period."

In his 94-page ruling, the judge spoke favorably of modern weapons and said they were overwhelmingly used for legal reasons.

"Like the Swiss Army knife, the popular AR-15 rifle is a perfect combination of home defense weapon and homeland defense equipment. Good for both home and battle," the judge said in his ruling's introduction.

That comparison "completely undermines the credibility of this decision and is a slap in the face to the families who've lost loved ones to this weapon," Newsom said in a statement. "We're not backing down from this fight, and we'll continue pushing for common sense gun laws that will save lives."

Bonta called the ruling flawed and said it will be appealed.

California first restricted assault weapons in 1989, with multiple updates to the law since then.

Assault weapons as defined by the law are more dangerous than other firearms and are disproportionately used in crimes, mass shootings and against law enforcement, with more resulting casualties, the state attorney general's office argued, and barring them "further the state's important public safety interests."

A surge in sales of more than 1.16 million other types of pistols, rifles and shotguns in the last year — more than a third of them to likely first-time buyers — show that the assault weapons ban "has not prevented law-abiding citizens in the state from acquiring a range of firearms for lawful purposes, including self-defense," the state contended in a court filing in March.

Similar assault weapon restrictions have previously been upheld by six other federal district and appeals courts, the state argued. Overturning the ban would allow not only assault rifles, but things like assault shotguns and assault pistols, state officials said.

But Benitez disagreed.

"This case is not about extraordinary weapons lying at the outer limits of Second Amendment protection. The banned 'assault weapons' are not bazookas, howitzers, or machine guns. Those arms are dangerous and solely useful for military purposes," his ruling said. "Instead, the firearms deemed 'assault weapons' are fairly ordinary, popular, modern."

The judge said despite California's ban, there currently are an estimated 185,569 assault weapons registered with the state.

They were grandfathered in before California's evolving definition of an assault weapon.

"This is an average case about average guns used in average ways for average purposes," the ruling said. "One is to be forgiven if one is persuaded by news media and others that the nation is awash with murderous AR-15 assault rifles. The facts, however, do not support this hyperbole, and facts matter."

"In California, murder by knife occurs seven times more often than murder by rifle," he added.

He also called the ban "a continuing failed experiment which does not achieve its objectives of preventing mass shootings or attacks on law enforcement officers."

In a preliminary ruling in September, Benitez said California's complicated legal definition of assault weapons can ensnare otherwise law-abiding gun owners with criminal penalties that among other things can strip them of their Second Amendment right to own firearms.

"The burden on the core Second Amendment right, if any, is minimal," the state argued, because the weapons can still be used — just not with the modifications that turn them into assault weapons. Modifications like a shorter barrel or collapsible stock make them more concealable, state officials said, while things like a pistol grip or thumbhole grip make them more lethal by improving their accuracy as they are fired rapidly.

The lawsuit filed by the San Diego County Gun Owners Political Action Committee, California Gun Rights Foundation, Second Amendment Foundation and Firearms Policy Coalition is among several by gun advocacy groups challenging California's firearms laws, which are among the strictest in the nation.

It was filed on behalf of gun owners who want to use high-capacity magazines in their legal rifles or

pistols, but said they can't because doing so would turn them into illegal assault weapons under California law. Unlike military weapons, the semi-automatic rifles fire one bullet each time the trigger is pulled, and the plaintiffs say they are legal in 41 states.

The lawsuit said California is "one of only a small handful of states to ban many of the most popular semi-automatic firearms in the nation because they possess one or more common characteristics, such as pistol grips and threaded barrels," frequently but not exclusively along with detachable ammunition magazines.

Brandon Combs, the president of the Firearms Policy Coalition, said in a statement that the ruling "held what millions of Americans already know to be true: Bans on so-called 'assault weapons' are unconstitutional and cannot stand."

A gun control advocacy group called the judge's ruling alarming and "especially insulting" because it was handed down on National Gun Violence Awareness Day.

"Too many families across the nation have lost loved ones in shootings carried out with assault weapons. They can attest to the reality that these weapons are not like 'Swiss Army knives' nor are mass shootings only a 'very small' problem," said Robyn Thomas, executive director of the Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence, a group led by Gabrielle Giffords, the former congresswoman from Arizona who was shot and wounded in a mass shooting 10 years ago.

The state is appealing Benitez's 2017 ruling against the state's nearly two-decade-old ban on the sales and purchases of magazines holding more than 10 bullets. That decision triggered a weeklong buying spree before the judge halted sales during the appeal. It was upheld in August by a three-judge appellate panel, but the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals said in March that an 11-member panel will rehear the case.

The state also is appealing Benitez's decision in April 2020 blocking a 2019 California law requiring background checks for anyone buying ammunition.

Both of those measures were championed by Newsom when he was lieutenant governor, and they were backed by voters in a 2016 ballot measure.

The Latest: Hawaii emails reveal strain over contact tracing

By The Associated Press undefined

HONOLULU -- A review of Hawaii Gov. David Ige's emails shows the state epidemiologist spent key weeks in the early days of the coronavirus pandemic resisting suggestions and requests that she boost contact tracing to control the spread of COVID-19.

They also showed Dr. Sarah Park repeatedly telling her superiors that the state's failure to adequately fund the division she headed was preventing her from quickly expanding their work to respond to the crisis.

The Associated Press obtained the emails last month in response to a May 2020 request submitted under Hawaii's open records law.

Contact tracing was especially difficult for many states. The effort aims to alert people who may have been exposed to someone with the coronavirus and prevent them from spreading it to others. Health experts say it's key to containing the virus.

The governor's records show that University of Hawaii President David Lassner emailed administration officials on April 16, 2020, to say university researchers had written a report about the need to boost contact tracing and other steps to control COVID-19.

Park didn't outright reject more contact tracing but replied: "I am increasingly disturbed that people seem to think contact tracing is somehow easily accomplished as a simple task when it is a part of the practice of applied epidemiology."

MORE ON THE PANDEMIC:

- New England's success against COVID-19 could be a model
- Amid brutal case surge, Afghanistan hit by vaccine delays
- Pilgrims return to Spain's 'El Camino' paths after pandemic
- Heart reaction probed as possible rare vaccine effect in teens

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— Experts see strides on AIDS, but COVID-19 halted progress

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:

PHILADELPHIA — Philadelphia bike riders won't need shirts, pants, skirts or underwear — just a mask. Organizers of the Philly Naked Bike Ride say this year's event will take place Aug. 28 and will require masks, based on the city's earlier coronavirus restrictions.

The city lifted most of those restrictions this week, citing increased vaccinations and decreased cases. But ride organizers say they haven't chatted since the city's guidelines changed so for now, they're sticking with their initial mask guidance.

Ride participants usually gather in a park to undress before carefully hopping on their bikes to promote body positivity and cycling safety and protest fossil fuel dependency.

Organizers canceled the 2020 event, saying it was "the most responsible thing to do."

BANGKOK — Trade ministers from the Pacific Rim were discussing ways to build back better from the pandemic in an online meeting Saturday hosted by New Zealand.

The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum has long focused on dismantling trade barriers. The meeting of its trade ministers was convened virtually, given travel restrictions in the region as coronavirus outbreaks flare in many countries still struggling to obtain and deploy enough COVID-19 vaccines.

On the agenda was a statement on aiding the movement of essential goods needed to fight the pandemic, in line with global trade rules that have been strained in recent years, especially during the administration of President Donald Trump who favored striking trade deals with individual countries.

The trade ministers conferred with business leaders on Friday on ways to better manage the health and economic crisis brought on by the pandemic.

"We must ensure that trade plays a role in combatting the worst, continuing effects of COVID-19 through open and unrestricted trade in vaccines, essential medical supplies and associated products," said Rachel Taulelei, chair of the APEC Business Advisory Council.

In many countries in the Asia-Pacific region, the share of people vaccinated so far is in the low single digits. That includes places like Thailand and Taiwan that initially managed to avoid initial massive outbreaks but now are contending with their worst flare-ups.

UNITED NATIONS -- The United Nations chief is welcoming the Biden administration's announcement that it will be donating millions of doses of COVID-19 vaccine to the U.N.-backed COVAX facility as well as to individual countries and U.N. front-line personnel in challenging and dangerous locations.

U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric says Secretary-General Antonio Guterres is also "extremely grateful" to the U.S. government for including U.N. personnel and diplomats and staff of the 193 U.N. member nations in the U.S. vaccination program.

Biden announced Thursday the U.S. will swiftly donate an initial allotment of 25 million doses of surplus vaccine overseas through the COVAX program, which to date has shared just 76 million doses with needy countries. Overall, the White House has announced plans to share 80 million doses globally by the end of June, most through COVAX.

Dujarric said the donation to U.N. frontline personnel will allow staff members "to stay and deliver critical services to vulnerable people around the world in a safe and effective manner."

Guterres renews his call for countries to share vaccines, particularly with countries struggling with new surges and variants, Dujarric said.

"There is an urgent need for increased global solidarity to ensure that vaccines are available to everyone, everywhere," he said.

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MEXICO CITY -- Mexican officials said Friday they will use 1 million U.S. doses of the Johnson & Johnson coronavirus vaccine to inoculate people along the border.

President Andrés Manuel López Obrador says the vaccinations along Mexico's northern border with the United States is part of an effort to fully reopen border crossings, which are currently restricted to essential travel.

"There is going to be a special vaccination plan in the border communities of our country on the northern border, with the aim of getting border transportation back to normal," López Obrador said.

Mexican officials say they will have to obtain another 2 million doses of the one-shot vaccine — which they might purchase from Johnson & Johnson — to vaccinate 3 million border residents between 18 and 40 years old.

Presumably, those older than 40 will be covered by Mexico's regular nationwide campaign, which does not use Johnson & Johnson, although the shot has been approved for use in Mexico.

On Thursday, an official said some doses might also be used at coastal resorts frequented by Americans, but that possibility was not included in the plan announced Friday.

The announcement came on the same day that Mexico City announced the gradual lifting of a partial coronavirus lockdown that began more than a year ago.

SACRAMENTO, Calif. -- California Gov. Gavin Newsom says he will not lift the coronavirus state of emergency on June 15.

Newsom has said he will lift most of the virus restrictions on that date. But Friday, Newsom said he will not lift the state of emergency that gives him broad authority to issue alter or suspend state laws and regulations.

California has been under a state of emergency since March 4, 2020. Since then, according to a resolution authored by Republican state senators, Newsom has authorized billions of dollars in emergency spending and issued at least 47 executive orders to alter or suspend 200 state laws and regulations because of the virus.

Newsom, a Democrat, said he won't end the state of emergency because the virus "is not taking the summer months off."

Republicans in the state Senate have tried repeatedly to pass a concurrent resolution to end the state of emergency. But Democrats in the majority have always blocked their efforts.

Justice Dept. says it'll no longer seize reporters' records

By ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Justice Department said Saturday that it no longer will secretly obtain reporters' records during leak investigations, a policy shift that abandons a practice decried by news organizations and press freedom groups.

The reversal follows a pledge last month by President Joe Biden, who said it was "simply, simply wrong" to seize journalists' records and that he would not permit the Justice Department to continue the practice. Though Biden's comments in an interview were not immediately accompanied by any change in policy, a pair of statements from the White House and Justice Department on Saturday signaled an official turn-about from an investigative tactic that has persisted for years.

Democratic and Republican administrations alike have used subpoenas and court orders to obtain journalists' records in an effort to identify sources who have revealed classified information. But the practice had received renewed scrutiny over the past month as Justice Department officials alerted reporters at three news organizations — The Washington Post, CNN and The New York Times — that their phone records had been obtained in the final year of the Trump administration.

The latest revelation came Friday night when the Times reported the existence of a gag order that had barred the newspaper from revealing a secret court fight over efforts to obtain the email records of four

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reporters. That tussle had begun during the Trump administration but had persisted under the Biden Justice Department, which ultimately moved to withdraw the gag order.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki said in a statement Saturday that no one at the White House was aware of the gag order until Friday night, but that more broadly, "the issuing of subpoenas for the records of reporters in leak investigations is not consistent with the President's policy direction to the Department."

In a separate statement, Justice Department spokesman Anthony Coley said that "in a change to its longstanding practice," the department "will not seek compulsory legal process in leak investigations to obtain source information from members of the news media doing their jobs."

He added: "The department strongly values a free press, protecting First Amendment values, and is committed to taking all appropriate steps to ensure the independence of journalists."

In ruling out "compulsory legal process" for reporters in leak investigations, the department also appeared to say that it would not force journalists to reveal in court the identity of their sources.

Bruce D. Brown, executive director of the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, said he welcomed the Justice Department's policy change but that serious unanswered questions remain about what happened in each of these cases.

"To ensure it does not happen again, we look forward to pursuing additional policy reforms with the Biden administration to further safeguard these essential rights," he said in a statement.

The two newspapers whose reporters' phone records had been secretly obtained also said more needed to be done.

"This is a welcome step to protecting the ability of the press to provide the public with essential information about what their government is doing," New York Times publisher A.G. Sulzberger said in a statement. "However, there is significantly more that needs to be done and we are still awaiting an explanation on why the Department of Justice moved so aggressively to seize journalists' records."

Washington Post executive editor Sally Buzbee said the newspaper was calling on the Biden administration and Justice Department "to provide a full accounting of the chain of events in both administrations and to implement enduring protections to prevent any future recurrence."

The Justice Department statement did not say whether it would still conduct aggressive leak investigations without obtaining reporters' records. It also did not define who exactly would be counted as a member of the media for the purposes of the policy and how broadly the protection would apply.

Even so, it marked a startling reversal concerning a practice that has persisted across multiple presidential administrations. The Obama Justice Department, under then-Attorney General Eric Holder, alerted The Associated Press in 2013 that it had secretly obtained two months of phone records of reporters and editors in what the news cooperative's top executive called a "massive and unprecedented intrusion" into newsgathering activities.

After blowback, Holder announced a revised set of guidelines for leak investigations, including requiring the authorization of the highest levels of the department before subpoenas for news media records could be issued.

But the department preserved its prerogative to seize journalists' records, and the recent disclosures to the news media organizations show that the practice continued in the Trump Justice Department as part of multiple investigations.

Separately on Saturday, the Justice Department said it was withdrawing its subpoena that demanded USA Today provide information to identify readers of a story about a suspect in a child pornography case who fatally shot two FBI agents in February.

The subpoena was issued in April but came to light this past week when USA Today and its parent company Gannett filed documents in federal court asking a judge to quash it. The subpoena sought the IP addresses and mobile phone identification information of readers who clicked on the article for a period of about 35 minutes on the day after the shooting.

The government hadn't provided details about the case or why it was specifically interested in the readers who clicked on the USA Today story during that brief period. Officials had only said the subpoena was connected to an ongoing federal criminal investigation.

But a federal prosecutor notified lawyers for USA Today on Saturday that the FBI was withdrawing its subpoena because authorities had been able to identify the subject of their investigation — described in an email as a “child sexual exploitation offender” — by “other means.” The prosecutor’s email was included in a court filing by Gannett.

Burkina Faso says at least 100 civilians killed in attack

By SAM MEDNICK Associated Press

NIAMEY, Niger (AP) — Gunmen killed at least 100 people in a northern Burkina Faso village, the government said Saturday, in what was the country’s deadliest attack in years.

The attack took place Friday evening in Solhan village, in the Sahel’s Yagha province, government spokesman Ousseni Tamboura said in a statement blaming jihadists. The local market and several homes were also burned down in the area toward the border of Niger, he said.

President Roch Marc Christian Kabore called the attack “barbaric.”

This is the deadliest attack recorded in Burkina Faso since the West African country was overrun by jihadists linked to al-Qaida and the Islamic State about five years ago, said Heni Nsaibia, senior researcher at the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project.

“It is clear that militant groups have shifted up gears to aggravate the situation in Burkina Faso, and moved their efforts to areas outside the immediate reach of the French-led counter-terrorism coalition fighting them in the tri-state border region,” he said.

No group has claimed responsibility for the attack.

Despite the presence of more than 5,000 French troops in the Sahel, jihadist violence is increasing. In one week in April, more than 50 people were killed in Burkina Faso, including two Spanish journalists and an Irish conservationist. More than 1 million people in the country have been internally displaced.

A local who did not want to be named, fearing for his safety, was visiting relatives in a medical clinic in Sebba town, approximately 12 kilometers from where the attacks occurred. He said he saw many wounded people enter the clinic.

“I saw 12 people in one room and about 10 in another. There were many relatives caring for the wounded. There were also many people running from Solhan to enter Sebba....People are very afraid and worried,” he told the Associated Press by phone.

The government has declared 72 hours of mourning.

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres was outraged by the killings and offered the world body’s full support to authorities in their efforts to overcome the threats to the peace and stability in Burkina Faso according to his spokesman, Stephane Dujarric.

“He strongly condemns the heinous attack and underscores the urgent need for the international community to redouble support to Member States in the fight against violent extremism and its unacceptable human toll,” Dujarric said in a statement.

Islamic extremists have been increasingly staging assaults in Burkina Faso, especially in the region that borders Niger and Mali.

Last month, gunmen killed at least 30 people in eastern Burkina Faso near the border with Niger.

Burkina Faso’s ill-equipped army has been struggling to contain the spread of jihadists. The government enlisted the help of volunteer fighters last year to help the army, but the volunteers have incurred retaliation by extremists who target them and the communities they help.

Mali also is experiencing a political crisis that has led to the suspension of international support. France has said it is ceasing joint military operations with Malian forces until the West African nation’s junta complies with international demands to restore civilian rule.

Police: 3 fatally shot in unrelated attacks in Minneapolis

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Three people were killed in separate shootings in Minneapolis early Saturday, authorities said, though none of the shootings were related to protests in the city over the fatal shooting

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of a Black man by sheriff's deputies earlier in the week.

Police were called at 1:37 a.m. to North Memorial Health Hospital in Robbinsdale, where a woman died of upon arrival after being shot in a hail of bullets along the 2200 block of N. 2nd Street in Minneapolis, department spokesman John Elder said in a news release. Investigators don't think she was the intended target. No arrests were made.

Eleven minutes later, police were called to an area of East Lake Street under a bridge about a man who had been shot. They found the wounded man and performed CPR until paramedics arrived. He was taken to Hennepin County Medical Center, where he died, Elder said.

Witnesses told police the man was struck by a stray bullet fired by people who had been street racing and then got into a shootout, Elder said. The victim had pulled over to watch the racing and was standing beside his car when he was struck. No arrests were made.

Just after 2 a.m., Metro Transit police officers in the area of Hennepin Avenue and S. Fifth Street encountered a scene in which one man fatally shot another. One of the officers pursued the suspect and shot him in the leg, wounding him, police said. The Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension is investigating the shooting involving the Metro Transit officer.

The man shot by the suspect was taken to HCMC, where he died. The man who was shot by the Metro Transit officer was also treated there before he was taken to the Hennepin County jail.

The shootings happened during a night of protests over the killing Thursday of 32-year-old Winston Boogie Smith Jr. by deputies serving on a U.S. Marshals task force.

New England's success against COVID-19 could be a model

By PHILIP MARCELO Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — For Dr. Jeremy Faust, the moment he realized the pandemic no longer dominated his workday came over Memorial Day weekend, when he didn't see a single coronavirus case over two shifts in the emergency room at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston.

Kerry LaBarbera, an ER nurse a few miles away at Boston Medical Center, had a similar realization that same weekend, when just two patients with COVID-19 came through her unit, one of the busiest in New England.

"The past year and a half has been like going through a tornado or something terrible," she said. "You're holding on for dear life, and then you get past it and it's like, 'What just happened?'"

Massachusetts and the rest of New England — the most heavily vaccinated region in the U.S. — are giving the rest of the country a possible glimpse of the future if more Americans get their shots.

COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations and deaths in the region have been steadily dropping as more than 60% of residents in all six states have received at least one dose of the vaccine.

The Deep South states of Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi, in comparison, are the least vaccinated at around 35%, and new cases relative to the population are generally running higher there than in most of New England. Nationally, about 50% of Americans have received at least one shot.

In Massachusetts, health officials this past week determined that none of the state's cities and towns are at high risk for the spread of COVID-19 for the first time since they started issuing weekly assessments last August.

In Rhode Island, coronavirus hospitalizations have hit their lowest levels in about eight months. New Hampshire is averaging about a death a week after peaking at about 12 a day during the virus's winter surge. And Vermont, the most heavily vaccinated state in the U.S. at more than 70%, went more than two weeks without a single reported coronavirus death.

"It's an incredible change over such a short period of time," said Dr. Tim Lahey, an infectious disease physician at the University of Vermont Medical Center in Burlington.

Public health experts say the rest of the country could take some cues from New England as President Joe Biden pushes to get at least one vaccine dose into 70% of American adults by July 4, dangling the promise of free beer and other goodies.

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One thing the region appears to have done right: It was generally slower than other parts of the country to expand vaccine eligibility and instead concentrated more on reaching vulnerable groups of people, said Dr. Thomas Frieden, a former Centers for Disease Control and Prevention director under President Barack Obama.

New England leaders for the most part also embraced the recommendations of public health experts over economic priorities throughout the pandemic, said Dr. Albert Ko, who chairs the epidemiology department at the Yale School of Public Health in New Haven, Connecticut.

That parts of the region were among the hardest hit in the early days of the outbreak also played a significant role.

"We really went through it in those early moments," Ko said. "That's left a big imprint on the population generally."

To be sure, some of the improvements in COVID-19 numbers can be attributed to warmer weather that is allowing New Englanders to socially distance outdoors more, experts say.

States such as California and Nebraska are also doing as well as if not better than some New England states when it comes to new cases relative to population. And racial disparities in vaccinations persist in the region, as they do in many other corners of the country.

In a series of tweets last weekend, Dr. Ashish Jha, dean of Brown University's School of Public Health in Providence, Rhode Island, contrasted the relatively low vaccination rates in Springfield, Massachusetts, one of the region's largest, poorest and most racially diverse cities, with the near-complete vaccination of Newton, an affluent, largely white Boston suburb.

"So if you are in a high vaccination state, your job is not done," Jha wrote. "Because across America, there are too many people and communities for whom vaccines still remain out of reach."

Nationwide, new coronavirus cases are down to about 15,000 per day on average, while deaths have plummeted to around 430 a day — levels not seen since late March 2020, during the very early stages of the crisis. The overall U.S. death toll is just short of 600,000.

Even with cases down dramatically, New England hospitals are in many ways busier than ever, as patients return in droves after postponing medical care for more than a year.

Dr. Katherine Gergen Barnett, head of the family medicine department at Boston Medical Center, said it has been "energizing" to reconnect with regular patients but also taxing, as many have a year's worth of mental trauma to work through, on top of their neglected physical ailments.

"There's definitely a little bit of exhale happening," she said. "We ran that marathon, but now there's this other long race ahead of us in terms of getting people back to healthy."

Paul Murphy, an emergency department nurse at Brigham and Women's, said some of his colleagues are feeling tired and burned out as frustrated patients can face wait times lasting hours these days. A hospital spokesperson stressed the median wait time is an hour or less.

Still, the 54-year-old Warwick, Rhode Island, resident said it has been refreshing to step away from the work grind as the region comes back to life. Gone are the 50-hour-plus workweeks of the pandemic, with time now for his children's sports practices and other commitments, Murphy said.

Faust, the emergency physician at Brigham, said he clocked in nearly an entire day of guilt-free sleep recently, something he couldn't have dreamed of during the throes of the pandemic.

But like other health experts, he worries that the slowing pace of vaccinations could leave the nation vulnerable to newer, stronger virus mutations.

"We're playing roulette if we continue to let the virus infect so many people," Faust said. "That's what keeps me up at night now."

Turkey's leader vows to cure Marmara of 'sea snot' flare-ups

ISTANBUL (AP) — Turkey's president promised Saturday to rescue the Marmara Sea from an outbreak of "sea snot" that is alarming marine biologists and environmentalists.

A huge mass of marine mucilage, a thick, slimy substance made up of compounds released by marine organisms, has bloomed in Turkey's Marmara, as well as in the adjoining Black and Aegean Seas.

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Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said untreated waste dumped into the Marmara Sea and climate change had caused the sea snout bloom. Istanbul, Turkey's largest city with some 16 million residents, and five other provinces, factories and industrial hubs border the sea.

Marine mucilage has reached unprecedented levels this year in Turkey. It is visible above the water as a slimy gray sheet along the shores of Istanbul and neighboring provinces. Underwater videos showed suffocated coral covered with sea snout.

Erdogan said he instructed the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization to coordinate with relevant institutions, municipalities and universities. Teams are inspecting waste water and solid waste facilities, along with other potential sources of pollution, he said.

"We will save our seas from this mucilage calamity, leading with the Marmara Sea," Erdogan said. "We must take this step without delay."

Marine experts say that human waste and industrial pollution is choking Turkey's seas. They say the rise in water temperatures from climate change is contributing to the problem.

G-7 back steps to deter tax dodging by multinational firms

By KELVIN CHAN and DAVID McHUGH AP Business Writers

LONDON (AP) — The Group of Seven wealthy democracies agreed Saturday to support a global minimum corporate tax of at least 15% to deter multinational companies from avoiding taxes by stashing profits in low-rate countries.

G-7 finance ministers meeting in London also endorsed proposals to make the world's biggest companies - including U.S.-based tech giants - pay taxes in countries where they have lots of sales but no physical headquarters.

British Treasury chief Rishi Sunak, the host, said the deal would "reform the global tax system to make it fit for the global digital age and crucially to make sure that it's fair, so that the right companies pay the right tax in the right places."

U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said the agreement "provides tremendous momentum" for reaching a global deal that "would end the race-to-the-bottom in corporate taxation and ensure fairness for the middle class and working people in the U.S. and around the world."

Nations have been grappling for years with the question of how to deter companies from legally avoiding paying taxes by using accounting and legal schemes to assign their profits to subsidiaries in tax havens - typically small countries that entice companies with low or zero taxes, even though the firms do little actual business there. International discussions on tax issues gained momentum after U.S. President Joe Biden backed the idea of a global minimum of at least 15% — and possibly higher — on corporate profits.

The meeting of finance ministers came ahead of an annual summit of G-7 leaders scheduled for June 11-13 in Cornwall, England. The endorsement from the G-7 could help build momentum for a deal in wider talks among more than 135 countries being held in Paris as well as a Group of 20 finance ministers meeting in Venice in July.

Manal Corwin, a tax principal at professional services firm KPMG and a former Treasury Department official, said the meeting had clarified where important countries stood on several key issues, including the 15% minimum.

"Signaling that there is consensus around some of the key features of what's being discussed globally was really, really important so they have the momentum to go to the next phase of this with the G-20," she said.

The tax proposals endorsed Saturday have two main parts. The first part lets countries tax a share of the profits earned by companies that have no physical presence but have substantial sales, for instance through selling digital advertising.

France had launched debate over the issue by imposing its own digital services tax on revenues it deemed to have been earned in France by companies such as Google, Amazon and Facebook. Other countries have followed suit. The U.S. considers those national taxes to be unfair trade measures that improperly single out American firms.

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Part of the agreement Saturday is that other countries would repeal their unilateral digital taxes in favor of a global agreement.

Facebook's vice-president for global affairs, Nick Clegg, said the deal is a big step toward increasing business certainty and raising public confidence in the global tax system but acknowledged it could cost the company.

"We want the international tax reform process to succeed and recognize this could mean Facebook paying more tax, and in different places," Clegg said on Twitter.

The G-7 statement echoes a U.S. proposal to let countries tax part of the earnings of the "largest and most profitable multinational enterprises — digital or not — if they are doing business within their borders. It supported awarding countries the right to tax 20% or more of local profits exceeding a 10% profit margin.

Yellen, asked if she had given her European counterparts assurances that large U.S. tech firms would be included, said the agreement "will include large profitable firms, and I believe those firms will qualify by almost any definition."

The other main part of the proposal is for countries to tax their home companies' overseas profits at a rate of at least 15%. That would deter the practice of using accounting schemes to shift profits to a few very low-tax countries because earnings untaxed overseas would face a top-up tax in the headquarters country.

At home, Biden is proposing a 21% U.S. tax rate on companies' overseas earnings, an increase from the 10.5%-13.125% enacted under former President Donald Trump. Even if the U.S. rate winds up higher than the global minimum, the difference would be small enough to eliminate most room for tax avoidance. Biden's proposal requires congressional approval.

KPMG's Corwin said the final statement was silent on several key points, including exactly which of the "largest and most profitable" multinationals would be covered by the proposal and how companies would be protected from double-billing if countries disagree on who has the right to tax them. Those complexities are fodder for the G-20 talks and the ongoing Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development talks in Paris.

"The devil is in the details," Corwin said.

The Group of 7 is an informal forum among Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the UK and the United States. European Union representatives also attend. Its decisions are not legally binding, but leaders can use the forum to exert political influence.

Microsoft says "tank man" image blocking due to human error

By ZEN SOO and FRANK BAJAK Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — Microsoft Corp. blamed "accidental human error" for its Bing search engine briefly not showing image results for the search term "tank man" on the anniversary of the bloody military crackdown in Beijing's Tiananmen Square in 1989.

Users in different parts of the world, including the U.S., said Friday that no image results were returned when they searched for the term "tank man."

"Tank man" refers to the iconic image of a standoff between an unidentified civilian and a line of military tanks leaving Beijing's Tiananmen Square after a brutal crackdown on pro-democracy protesters. The photo has become a symbol of defiance around the world.

After being alerted by reporters, Microsoft said in a statement that the issue was "due to an accidental human error and has been resolved." Hours later, images of "tank man" photographs were returned by the search engine.

The company did not elaborate on what the human error was or how it had happened. Nor did it say how much of its Bing development team is China-based. The company's largest research and development center outside the United States is in China, and it posted a job in January for a China-based senior software engineer to lead a team that develops the technology powering Bing image search.

Chinese authorities require search engines, websites and social media platforms operating within the

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country to censor keywords and results deemed politically sensitive or critical of the Chinese government. References to the Tiananmen Square crackdown in 1989 are blocked in China, as are images relating to the event, such as "tank man."

Microsoft's Bing is one of the few international search engines that operate in China, where it abides by local censorship laws and competes with larger Chinese search engines such as Baidu and Sogou.

Bing has a 2.5% market share in China, according to data site Statcounter.

Rival Google exited the Chinese market in 2010 after four years of operation, following disputes over censorship and a major hacking attack that Google believes originated in China.

Virginia Dems to decide: Return McAuliffe or chart new path?

By SARAH RANKIN Associated Press

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — Former Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe's signature exuberance was on full display as he campaigned on Memorial Day weekend in downtown Petersburg, cracking jokes in a beauty salon, leading a rousing rendition of "Happy Birthday," and breaking into a dance on a sidewalk.

"I want everybody to know we are back here in Virginia, and we're going to be stronger than we've ever been. We are going to lead the nation out of this COVID crisis," he told a crowd of supporters and spectators that began chanting his name.

In his quest for a second term, McAuliffe heads into Tuesday's five-way Democratic primary with an undeniable lead in public polling, name recognition, endorsements and money. But the question facing voters in the primary election is whether the political veteran with decades of experience is the right man for the moment in a state and nation deeply divided and in the throes of unsettling change.

In Virginia, Democrats assumed full control of state government in 2020, two years after McAuliffe left office, and pushed through sweeping change, from gun control to police reform to marijuana legalization to an increase in the minimum wage, transforming what was once a reliably red state into an outlier in the South.

McAuliffe is an old-school politician who cut his teeth working on President Jimmy Carter's re-election campaign and later led the Democratic National Committee. If he wins the nomination he'll face a tough GOP challenger from Northern Virginia who has the endorsement of former President Donald Trump and vast personal wealth to boost his campaign.

That's not a matchup in tune with the times or that bodes well for Democrats, say McAuliffe's two leading primary opponents — a well-respected veteran state senator and an energetic former state delegate both looking for a shot to become the nation's first Black woman governor.

Virginians deserve better than two "millionaire out-of-touch politicians" at the top of the ticket, Jennifer Carroll Foy, who stepped down last year from her state House seat to focus on her run for governor, said in an interview.

On the campaign trail earlier this week in Hampton Roads, she doubled down on that line of attack.

"The wealthy and well-connected have a lot of representation in Richmond. But what about us in our community?" said the 39-year-old Carroll Foy, as she appeared with the father of a young Black man killed by police in Virginia Beach in March. "We need someone who's gone to church and worshipped where we worship, gone to our schools, breathed our air and drank our water, who understands the struggles that we face because she's lived them."

State Sen. Jennifer McClellan called out McAuliffe in a recent debate, saying the Democrats need a nominee who will "excite and expand" the base.

McClellan, an attorney who has served in the legislature since 2006, has worked diligently over the years to help craft and deliver much of the reform legislation that now defines Virginia. She said her campaign has spoken to over 100,000 voters, interactions that leave her confident Virginians are ready for change.

"This is not a conventional wisdom moment, and we need someone who is not a conventional wisdom candidate," McClellan, 48, said in an interview.

The field of five Democrats also includes Lt. Gov. Justin Fairfax and Del. Lee Carter, a self-described

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socialist, who embraces a move away from establishment politics and even more sweeping social change such as statewide universal health care and reparations for Black and indigenous Virginians.

McAuliffe's opponents like to point out that he lost the Democratic primary during his first run in 2009 and won the general election in 2013 by just two points. They say he puts the party at risk in a rare off-year election that will be closely scrutinized as a bellwether for the national mid-term elections.

Voters like Richard Averitt, an independent-voting "never Trumper," say so, too. He is a landowner along the path of the now-scuttled Atlantic Coast Pipeline, which McAuliffe backed during his first term. He has donated to and volunteered for Carroll Foy, saying he was impressed by her track record, "grit" and early promise not to take money from lobbying powerhouse Dominion Energy.

"I truly believe she will vote to represent the people and not the corporations," said Averitt, who predicted McAuliffe would lose the general if tapped as the nominee.

McAuliffe, 64, has promised if elected again to create the nation's best economy and education system, and he's attracted a broad swath of endorsements from community leaders and 350 elected officials, including Gov. Ralph Northam and nearly half the legislative Black caucus.

There's also a sense of immense gratitude for his role in 2019 in helping Democrats retake control of the House majority, which positioned them to enact the transformative policy changes unimaginable during his own term.

"There is nobody that worked harder," House Speaker Eileen Filler-Corn said.

In an interview outside a Petersburg soul food restaurant, the former governor made the case that beating the GOP's nominee, Glenn Youngkin, who has the ability to self-fund a substantial portion of his campaign, will take someone with fundraising prowess and the ability to build a broad coalition.

"I'm the one who's proven in the campaign that I can do it," he said.

That's a message that resonates with voters like George C.W. Lyons, a pastor in Petersburg, who said he was impressed with this year's broad field of Democratic candidates. But Lyons said McAuliffe was his pick because of the "experience, the track record of somebody who's been in it before."

Lyons said voters will get their say Tuesday on whether McAuliffe is trying to stand in the way of others offering a fresher perspective. But for him personally?

"I want him to win by a landslide," he said.

D-Day spirit of remembrance lives on, despite the pandemic

By SYLVIE CORBET Associated Press

CARENTAN, France (AP) — In a small Normandy town where paratroopers landed in the early hours of D-Day, applause broke the silence to honor Charles Shay. He was the only veteran attending a ceremony in Carentan commemorating the 77th anniversary of the assault that helped bring an end to World War II.

Amid the coronavirus pandemic, this year's D-Day commemorations are taking place with travel restrictions that have prevented veterans or families of fallen soldiers from the U.S., Britain and other allied countries from making the trip to France. Only a few officials were allowed exceptions.

Shay, who now lives in Normandy, was a 19-year-old U.S. Army medic when he landed on Omaha Beach on June 6, 1944. Today, he recalls the "many good friends" he lost on the battlefield.

Under a bright sun, the 96-year-old Penobscot Native American from Indian Island, Maine, stood steadily while the hymns of the Allied countries were played Friday in front of the monument commemorating the assault in Carentan that allowed the Allies to establish a continuous front joining nearby Utah Beach to Omaha Beach.

Shay regretted that the pandemic "is interrupting everything." He is expected to be the only veteran at Sunday's anniversary day ceremony at the Normandy American Cemetery of Colleville-sur-Mer.

"We have no visitors coming to France this year for two years now. And I hope it will be over soon," he told The Associated Press in Carentan.

Shay's lone presence is all the more poignant as the number of survivors of the epochal battle dwindles. Only one veteran now remains from the French commando unit that joined U.S., British, Canadian and

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other allied troops in storming Normandy's code-named beaches.

While France is planning to open up to vaccinated visitors starting next week, that comes too late for the D-Day anniversary. So for the second year in a row, most public commemoration events have been cancelled. A few solemn ceremonies have been maintained, with dignitaries and a few guests only.

Local residents, however, are coming in greater numbers than last year, as France started lifting its internal virus restrictions last month.

Some French and a few other World War II history enthusiasts from neighboring European countries gathered in Normandy.

Driving restored jeeps, dressed in old uniforms or joyfully eating at the newly reopened terraces of restaurants, they're contributing to revive the commemorations' special atmosphere — and keeping alive the memory of June 6, 1944.

"In France, people who remember these men, they kept them close to their heart," Shay said. "And they remember what they did for them. And I don't think the French people will ever forget."

On Saturday morning, people in dozens of World War II vehicles, from motorcycles to jeeps and trucks, gathered in a field in Colleville-Montgomery to parade down the nearby roads along Sword Beach to the sounds of a pipe band. Residents, some waving French and American flags, came to watch.

Sitting in an old sidecar, Audrey Ergas, dressed in a vintage uniform including an aviator hat and glasses, said she used to come every year from the southern city of Marseille, except for last year due to virus travel restrictions.

"We absolutely wanted to come ... it's great pleasure, we needed it!" she said. "We were afraid that we might feel a bit alone, but in the end we were happy to do even small gatherings."

Pascal Leclerc, a member of the Remember Omaha Beach 44 group, shared the same joy.

"We missed it a lot. That's just fun, happiness, and also being able to pay tribute to all the veterans. That's the main goal," he said.

Henri-Jean Renaud, 86, remembers D-Day like it was yesterday. He was a young boy and was hidden in his family home in Sainte-Mere-Eglise when more than 800 planes bringing U.S. paratroopers flew over the town while German soldiers fired at them with machine guns.

Describing an "incredible noise" followed by silence, he remembers crossing the town's central square in the morning of June 6. He especially recalls seeing one dead U.S. paratrooper stuck in a big tree that is still standing by the town's church.

"I came here hundreds of times. The first thing I do is look at that tree," he said. "That's always to that young guy that I'm thinking of. He was told: 'You're going to jump in the middle of the night in a country you don't know'... He died and his feet never touched (French) soil, and that is very moving to me."

More than 12,000 soldiers were buried temporarily in Sainte-Mere-Eglise during and after the Battle of Normandy, before being moved to their final resting place.

In the years following the war, local people were allowed to go to the cemeteries. "Often, people had adopted a grave because they had seen a name they liked ... They were a bit like friends," Renaud said.

"Some, especially at the beginning when there were no coffins yet, had been buried in the ground. They had become the Normandy soil," he added, in a voice filled by emotion.

On D-Day itself, more than 150,000 Allied troops landed on beaches code-named Omaha, Utah, Juno, Sword and Gold, carried by 7,000 boats. The Battle of Normandy hastened Germany's defeat, which came less than a year later.

Still, that single day cost the lives of 4,414 Allied troops, 2,501 of them Americans. More than 5,000 were injured. On the German side, several thousand were killed or wounded.

This year, Col. Kevin Sharp came with a delegation of three other U.S. military officers from the 101st Airborne Division, based in Kentucky, to attend Friday's commemorations in Carentan — the same division that took part in the D-Day operations there. His delegation received special, last-minute permission to come to France despite virus restrictions.

The U.S. military "really values the legacy of the soldiers and the paratroopers who came before us," he

told the AP. "It was important enough to send a small representation here to ensure that our appreciation for their sacrifices is made known."

Mine-sniffing rat Magawa ends years of hard work in Cambodia

By SOPHENG CHEANG Associated Press

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia (AP) — After five years of sniffing out land mines and unexploded ordnance in Cambodia, Magawa is retiring.

The African giant pouched rat has been the most successful rodent trained and overseen by a Belgian nonprofit, APOPO, to find land mines and alert his human handlers so the explosives can be safely removed. Last year, Magawa won a British charity's top civilian award for animal bravery — an honor so far exclusively reserved for dogs.

"Although still in good health, he has reached a retirement age and is clearly starting to slow down," APOPO said. "It is time."

Magawa has cleared more than 141,000 square meters (1.5 million square feet) of land, the equivalent of some 20 soccer fields, sniffing out 71 land mines and 38 items of unexploded ordnance, according to APOPO.

While many rodents can be trained to detect scents and will work at repetitive tasks for food rewards, APOPO decided that African giant pouched rats were best suited to land mine clearance because their size allows them to walk across mine fields without triggering the explosives — and do it much more quickly than people. They also live up to eight years.

Magawa is part of a cohort of rats bred for this purpose. He was born in Tanzania in 2014, and in 2016, moved to Cambodia's northwestern city of Siem Reap, home of the famed Angkor temples, to begin his bomb-sniffing career.

In retirement, Magawa will live in his same cage as before and follow the same daily routine, but won't be going out to the minefields anymore, said Lily Shallom, an APOPO spokeswoman, contacted by phone at the organization's operational headquarters in Tanzania.

He'll be fed the same food, have playtime every day and get regular exercise and health checks. He eats mostly fresh fruit and vegetables, said Shallom, supplemented with small sun-dried fish for protein and imported pellets for vitamins and fiber. For 20-30 minutes a day, he is released into a larger cage with facilities such as a sandbox and a running wheel.

APOPO also works with programs in Angola, Zimbabwe and Mozambique to clear millions of mines left behind from wars and conflicts.

More than 60 million people in 59 countries continue to be threatened by land mines and unexploded ordnance. In 2018, landmines and other remnants of war killed or injured 6,897 people, the group said.

US economy: Plenty of growth, not enough workers or supplies

By PAUL WISEMAN AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. economy is sparking confusion and whiplash almost as fast as it's adding jobs.

Barely more than a year after the coronavirus caused the steepest economic fall and job losses on record, the speed of the rebound has been so unexpectedly swift that many companies can't fill jobs or acquire enough supplies to meet a pent-up burst of customer demand.

"Things exploded — it was like a light switch," said Kirby Mallon, president of Elmer Schultz Services, a family-owned Philadelphia firm that repairs and maintains kitchen equipment for restaurants and other clients. "The labor market is just out of control. We literally cannot hire technicians ... We ramped up so quickly, the supply chain wasn't ready for it."

Economic forecasters, with little historical precedent to guide them through the aftermath of a global pandemic, are pondering questions they can't answer with any confidence:

Does robust consumer spending reflect economic strength and resiliency? Or has it been temporarily

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propped up by federal stimulus checks?

Was an April run-up in consumer prices a temporary blip? Or an ominous sign of accelerating inflation? Are two months of middling job growth the result of too much of a good thing — employers want to hire more than they can? Or a hint that the labor market isn't as strong as economists think?

In many ways, the news has been cause to cheer: The economy grew from January through March at a red-hot 6.4% annual pace. And in the current quarter, that pace is thought to be accelerating to nearly double-digits.

Yet the full portrait of the U.S. economy is a rather more nuanced one. Here is a closer look at five vital signs:

JOBS

Employers last month added 559,000 jobs on top of 278,000 in April. Those would ordinarily be seen as quite healthy numbers. Yet against the backdrop of record-high job openings and free-spending consumers, forecasters had expected much more hiring. Some economists had envisioned the recovery from the pandemic recession driving monthly job growth of 800,000, 900,000, even 1 million or more.

What explains the shortfall?

Economists point mainly to what they call a short-term mismatch: Companies are posting job openings faster than applicants can respond. After all, many Americans are contending with considerable tumult at home — health issues related to COVID-19, child-care problems with schools slow to reopen, career uncertainty after many jobs permanently vanished over the past 15 months. And some people, earning more from federal and state jobless aid than they did when they worked, are taking their time before pursuing another job.

Some say the labor shortage is nothing that can't be solved the old-fashioned way: By raising pay and offering more generous benefits and working conditions. In fact, that process appears to have begun: Average hourly wages rose solidly in April and May.

Consider Gina Schaefer, who owns 13 Ace hardware stores in Maryland, Virginia and Washington, D.C., and who has been rapidly staffing up for the spring and summer, when her sales typically hit highs.

Schaefer has hired nearly 120 people since March, both seasonal workers and long-delayed replacements for people who left last year when COVID ravaged the economy. Her company pays a minimum of \$15.50 an hour, to compete with larger chains that now pay \$15, and provides health insurance, paid vacation, sick leave and a 401(k) plan after employees have been on the job for about six months.

"We firmly believe that better workplaces do not have a problem finding employees," she said.

CONSUMERS

After months cooped up at home, millions of consumers have rushed back out again, in buoyant spirits and eager to spend, their finances bolstered by \$1,400 federal stimulus payments earlier this year. Among the affluent, sharp gains in home and stock market equity have further emboldened their impulse to spend.

Consumer confidence is high. And Americans stepped up their spending again in April after a powerful gain in March fueled by \$1,400 stimulus checks to most individuals.

That said, Rubeela Farooqi, chief U.S. economist at High Frequency Economics, sees cautionary signs. Confidence and spending, though still healthy, have trended lower. And retail sales were flat in April after having surged in March, suggesting that the positive effect of the stimulus checks might have faded. Similar trends occurred late last year after the effects of earlier federal stimulus money began to wear off.

In addition, a monthly survey of consumer confidence by the Conference Board found that expectations for the next six months actually fell in May.

"I'm not sure how this is going to pan out," Farooqi says.

INFLATION

Financial markets endured an unwelcome jolt last month when the Labor Department reported that

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consumer prices had jumped 0.8% from March to April and 4.2% from 12 months earlier — the largest year-over-year increase since 2008.

Some leading critics, including former Treasury Secretary Larry Summers, have been warning that President Joe Biden's trillions of dollars in federal stimulus money risk igniting inflation and forcing the Federal Reserve to resort to interest rate hikes, which could derail the economic recovery.

But Fed Chair Jerome Powell and many economists say they think the inflation surge will prove short-lived. They say it reflects mainly temporary supply-chain bottlenecks that have forced up prices but that should ease over time. For now, though, shortages of lumber, computer chips and other materials have contributed to inflation pressures.

Mallon at Elmer Schultz Services in Philadelphia said supply shortages are so severe in his industry that members of the the Commercial Food Service Equipment Association trade group are sharing inventory.

"I can go to a friend if he has a part in stock," he said. "In my 30 years in the business, no, I've never seen anything like it."

HOUSING

The housing market has served as a source of economic strength and resilience during the pandemic, supported by ultra-low mortgage rates and the desire of many locked-down families to move to more spacious digs to accommodate work-from-home needs.

But with prices having risen beyond the reach of many and with the supply of homes for sale severely limited, the housing boom has lately shown signs of fatigue. Home construction tumbled 9.5% in April — a drop that economists attributed, at least in part, to builders postponing projects because of accelerating costs for lumber and other supplies that have contributed to swelling home prices.

In April, sales of new homes dropped nearly 6%, and purchases of existing homes fell 2.7%. Many would-be buyers will remain on the outside looking in as long as a shortage of available homes keeps sale prices elevated.

MANUFACTURING

U.S. factories are thriving despite the clogged supply chains and the shortage of workers. The Institute for Supply Management's manufacturing index rose to 61.2 last month. Any reading above 50 signals growth, and manufacturers have been on a 12-month winning streak.

Half the purchasing managers surveyed by the trade association said they had had trouble finding workers. Given the supply problems, it's unclear whether factories can sustain their steady output: The ISM found that deliveries from suppliers were coming in at their slowest rate since 1974. Sixteen of 18 industries reported slower deliveries.

Transgender Salvadoran killed despite long search for safety

By MARCOS ALEMAN Associated Press

SAN MIGUEL, El Salvador (AP) — Rejected by her family, Zashy Zuley del Cid Velásquez fled her coastal village in 2014, the first of a series of forced displacements across El Salvador. She had hoped that in the larger city of San Miguel she could live as a transgender woman without discrimination and violence, but there she was threatened by a gang.

She moved away from San Miguel then back again in a series of forced moves until the 27-year-old was shot dead on April 25, sending shockwaves through the close-knit LGBTQ community in San Miguel, the largest city in eastern El Salvador.

"Zashy was desperate; her family didn't want her because of her sexual preference and the gangsters had threatened her," said Venus Nolasco, director of the San Miguel LGBTQ collective "Pearls of the East." "She knew they were going to kill her. She wanted to flee the country, go to the United States, but they killed her with a shot through her lung."

One day after Del Cid's murder, U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris identified anti-LGBTQ violence in Central

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America as one of the root causes of migration in the region during a virtual meeting with the president of neighboring Guatemala, Alejandro Giammattei. She is scheduled to visit Guatemala and Mexico this week.

Transgender migrants were present in the Central American caravans that attempted to reach the United States border in recent years, fleeing harassment, gang extortion, murder and police indifference to crimes against them. Even in those large migrant movements say they faced harassment.

Things had been rough during Del Cid's first stint in San Miguel. She and Nolasco had been living in a neighborhood where, as in many parts of the country, the MS-13 gang was the ultimate local authority. Gang members began to harass her, then brutally beat her, breaking her arm in 2015, Nolasco said.

"They warned her to leave, but she didn't listen," Nolasco said.

Instead of leaving, Del Cid moved in with Nolasco in the same neighborhood. One day, the gang grabbed Del Cid again.

"They took her, they wanted to kill her," Nolasco said. "I begged them not to kill her, to let her go and she would leave the neighborhood."

Del Cid moved back to her hometown, but her family rejected her again. She tried to please them, but she couldn't, Nolasco said. Del Cid joined a church, got a girlfriend, had a baby girl, but could not maintain that life, she said.

She returned to San Miguel, where initially things seemed to go better. In 2020, Del Cid received humanitarian and housing support from COMCAVIS TRANS, a national LGBTQ rights organization, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Del Cid rented a home and opened a beauty salon there. She hired another woman to help her and was participating in a entrepreneurship program. She was preparing a business proposal to move the salon out of her home into its own space.

But Del Cid was shot in the back walking alone at night down the street. Passersby tried to help her and took her to a local hospital where she died. So far, police have made no arrests and Nolasco believes that like other hate crimes in the country, "it will be forgotten; they're not interested in what happens to us."

Laura Almirall, UNHCR representative in El Salvador, said Del Cid's killing frightened her community and saddened everyone who knew her.

"She was excited about her new plans and her new life. And unfortunately and tragically, everything came to an end," she said.

Nolasco said that in San Miguel, some 90 miles (150 kilometers) east of the capital, the transgender community endures constant harassment from intolerant residents and gangs. They have rocks thrown at them, are beaten and extorted. If they go to police to make a report, they are insulted and demeaned. "Don't come here to claim rights, because there are no rights for you," police tell them, Nolasco said.

The "Pearls of the East" group has a parade squad in which Del Cid participated. It started with some 50 people, but crime and forced displacement have shrunk it to 35, Nolasco said.

"No one does anything here to protect us," Nolasco said.

Bianka Rodríguez, director of COMCAVIS TRANS, said the forced displacement of transgender people in El Salvador increases each year. Even though a law exists to protect people displaced by violence, it hasn't been effective, she said.

A report prepared by the organization found that gangs were responsible for nearly two-thirds of the violence against the LGTBQ community, while government authorities accounted for another 21%. Since 1993 in El Salvador, a country of only 6.5 million inhabitants, more than 600 LGBTQ people have been killed, according to their tally.

They registered 84 cases of internal displacement in 2019 and another eight who left the country, but were deported and needed protection.

"Regrettably, (multiple displacements) are very common not only for the LGBTI community, but thousands of people in El Salvador have been displaced because of gang violence and often we find that displacement does not occur only once, but families and individuals are displaced more than once," Almirall, the UNHCR representative, said.

Del Cid "was displaced so many times in the country and finally she managed to get a new life project and to be part of the community again and everything ended so abruptly and so tragically," Almirall said.

Global war on ransomware? Hurdles hinder the US response

By ALAN SUDERMAN Associated Press

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — Foreign keyboard criminals with scant fear of repercussions have paralyzed U.S. schools and hospitals, leaked highly sensitive police files, triggered fuel shortages and, most recently, threatened global food supply chains.

The escalating havoc caused by ransomware gangs raises an obvious question: Why has the United States, believed to have the world's greatest cyber capabilities, looked so powerless to protect its citizens from these kind of criminals operating with near impunity out of Russia and allied countries?

The answer is that there are numerous technological, legal and diplomatic hurdles to going after ransomware gangs. Until recently, it just hasn't been a high priority for the U.S. government.

That has changed as the problem has grown well beyond an economic nuisance. President Joe Biden intends to confront Russia's leader, Vladimir Putin, about Moscow's harboring of ransomware criminals when the two men meet in Europe later this month. The Biden administration has also promised to boost defenses against attacks, improve efforts to prosecute those responsible and build diplomatic alliances to pressure countries that harbor ransomware gangs.

Calls are growing for the administration to direct U.S. intelligence agencies and the military to attack ransomware gangs' technical infrastructure used for hacking, posting sensitive victim data on the dark web and storing digital currency payouts.

Fighting ransomware requires the nonlethal equivalent of the "global war on terrorism" launched after the Sept. 11 attacks, said John Riggi, a former FBI agent and senior adviser for cybersecurity and risk for the America Hospital Association. Its members have been hard hit by ransomware gangs during the coronavirus pandemic.

"It should include a combination of diplomatic, financial, law enforcement, intelligence operations, of course, and military operations," Riggi said.

A public-private task force including Microsoft and Amazon made similar suggestions in an 81-page report that called for intelligence agencies and the Pentagon's U.S. Cyber Command to work with other agencies to "prioritize ransomware disruption operations."

"Take their infrastructure away, go after their wallets, their ability to cash out," said Philip Reiner, a lead author of the report. He worked at the National Security Council during the Obama presidency and is now CEO at The Institute for Security and Technology.

But the difficulties of taking down ransomware gangs and other cybercriminals have long been clear. The FBI's list of most-wanted cyber fugitives has grown at a rapid clip and now has more than 100 entries, many of whom are not exactly hiding. Evgeniy Bogachev, indicted nearly a decade ago for what prosecutors say was a wave of cyber bank thefts, lives in a Russian resort town and "is known to enjoy boating" on the Black Sea, according to the FBI's wanted listing.

Ransomware gangs can move around, do not need much infrastructure to operate and can shield their identities. They also operate in a decentralized network. For instance, DarkSide, the group responsible for the Colonial Pipeline attack that led to fuel shortages in the South, rents out its ransomware software to partners to carry out attacks.

Katie Nickels, director of intelligence at the cybersecurity firm Red Canary, said identifying and disrupting ransomware criminals takes time and serious effort.

"A lot of people misunderstand that the government can't just willy-nilly go out and press a button and say, well, nuke that computer," she said. "Trying to attribute to a person in cyberspace is not an easy task, even for intelligence communities."

Reiner said those limits do not mean the United States cannot still make progress against defeating ransomware, comparing it with America's ability to degrade the terrorist group al-Qaida while not capturing

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its leader, Ayman al-Zawahiri, who took over after U.S. troops killed Osama bin Laden.

"We can fairly easily make the argument that al-Qaida no longer poses a threat to the homeland," Reiner said. "So short of getting al-Zawahiri, you destroy his ability to actually operate. That's what you can do to these (ransomware) guys."

The White House has been vague about whether it plans to use offensive cyber measures against ransomware gangs. Press secretary Jen Psaki said Wednesday that "we're not going to take options off the table," but she did not elaborate. Her comments followed a ransomware attack by a Russian gang that caused outages at Brazil's JBS SA, the second-largest producer of beef, pork and chicken in the United States.

Gen. Paul Nakasone, who leads U.S. Cyber Command and the National Security Agency, said at a recent symposium that he believes the U.S. will be "bringing the weight of our nation," including the Defense Department, "to take down this (ransomware) infrastructure outside the United States."

Sen. Angus King, an independent from Maine who is a legislative leader on cybersecurity issues, said the debate in Congress over how aggressive the U.S. needs to be against ransomware gangs, as well as state adversaries, will be "front and center of the next month or two."

"To be honest, it's complicated because you're talking about using government agencies, government capabilities to go after private citizens in another country," he said.

The U.S. is widely believed to have the best offensive cyber capabilities in the world, though details about such highly classified activities are scant. Documents leaked by former NSA contractor Edward Snowden show the U.S. conducted 231 offensive cyber operations in 2011. More than a decade ago a virus called Stuxnet attacked control units for centrifuges in an underground site in Iran, causing the sensitive devices to spin out of control and destroy themselves. The cyberattack was attributed to America and Israel.

U.S. policy called "persistent engagement" already authorizes cyberwarriors to engage hostile hackers in cyberspace and disrupt their operations with code. U.S. Cyber Command has launched offensive operations related to election security, including against Russian misinformation officials during U.S. midterm elections in 2018.

After the Colonial Pipeline attack, Biden promised that his administration was committed to bringing foreign cybercriminals to justice. Yet even as he was speaking from the White House, a different Russian-linked ransomware gang was leaking thousands of highly sensitive internal files — including deeply personal background checks — belonging to the police department in the nation's capital. Experts believe it's the worst ransomware attack against a U.S.-based law enforcement agency.

"We are not afraid of anyone," the hackers wrote in a follow-up post.

Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Sunday, June 6, the 157th day of 2021. There are 208 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On June 6, 1944, during World War II, Allied forces stormed the beaches of Normandy, France, on "D-Day" as they began the liberation of German-occupied Western Europe.

On this date:

In 1816, a snowstorm struck the northeastern U.S., heralding what would become known as the "Year Without a Summer."

In 1918, U.S. Marines suffered heavy casualties as they launched their eventually successful counteroffensive against German troops in the World War I Battle of Belleau Wood in France.

In 1934, the Securities and Exchange Commission was established.

In 1939, the first Little League game was played as Lundy Lumber defeated Lycoming Dairy 23-8 in Williamsport, Pennsylvania.

In 1966, Black activist James Meredith was shot and wounded as he walked along a Mississippi highway

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to encourage Black voter registration.

In 1968, Sen. Robert F. Kennedy died at Good Samaritan Hospital in Los Angeles, 25 1/2 hours after he was shot by Sirhan Bishara Sirhan.

In 1977, a sharply divided U.S. Supreme Court struck down a Louisiana law imposing an automatic death sentence on defendants convicted of the first-degree murder of a police officer.

In 1978, California voters overwhelmingly approved Proposition 13, a primary ballot initiative calling for major cuts in property taxes.

In 1982, Israeli forces invaded Lebanon to drive Palestine Liberation Organization fighters out of the country. (The Israelis withdrew in June 1985.)

In 1989, burial services were held for Iran's spiritual leader, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. Washington state Democrat Tom Foley succeeded Jim Wright as House speaker.

In 2001, Democrats formally assumed control of the U.S. Senate after the decision of Vermont Republican James Jeffords to become an independent.

In 2005, the Supreme Court ruled, 6-3, that people who smoked marijuana because their doctors recommended it to ease pain could be prosecuted for violating federal drug laws.

Ten years ago: After days of denials, New York Democratic Rep. Anthony Weiner confessed that he had tweeted a photo of his bulging underpants to a woman and admitted to "inappropriate" exchanges with six women before and after getting married; Weiner apologized for lying but said he would not resign (which he ended up doing). The Bowl Championship Series stripped Southern California of its 2004 title after the Trojans were hit with heavy NCAA sanctions for rules violations committed during the 2004 and '05 seasons.

Five years ago: A jury in Los Angeles returned a death sentence for Lonnie Franklin Jr., the serial killer known as the "Grim Sleeper" who murdered nine women and a teenage girl over several decades. Theresa Saldana, the "Raging Bull" actor who survived a stalker's brutal attack to become a crime victims' advocate and reclaimed her acting career with "The Commish" and other TV shows, died in Los Angeles at 61.

One year ago: Tens of thousands rallied in cities from Australia to Europe to honor George Floyd and voice support for the Black Lives Matter movement. Massive, peaceful protests took place nationwide to demand police reform, as services for George Floyd were held in North Carolina, near his birthplace. Thousands of people again took to the streets and parks of New York City to protest police brutality; police pulled back on enforcing an 8 p.m. curfew that had led to confrontations. Police in Seattle used flash bang devices and pepper spray to disperse a crowd of protesters on the ninth consecutive day of George Floyd protests in the city. Brazil's government stopped publishing a running total of coronavirus deaths and infections; the country's last official numbers showed that it had the third-highest number of deaths in the world. The coronavirus pandemic and its lockdowns left Omaha Beach in Normandy largely deserted for the observance of the D-Day anniversary.

Today's Birthdays: Singer-songwriter Gary "U.S." Bonds is 82. Country singer Joe Stampley is 78. Jazz musician Monty Alexander is 77. Actor Robert Englund is 74. Folk singer Holly Near is 72. Singer Dwight Twilley is 70. Sen. Marsha Blackburn, R-Tenn., is 69. Playwright-actor Harvey Fierstein (FY'-ur-steen) is 69. Comedian Sandra Bernhard is 66. International Tennis Hall of Famer Bjorn Borg is 65. Actor Amanda Pays is 62. Comedian Colin Quinn is 62. Record producer Jimmy Jam is 62. Rock musician Steve Vai is 61. Rock singer-musician Tom Araya (Slayer) is 60. Actor Jason Isaacs is 58. Actor Anthony Starke is 58. Rock musician Sean Yseult (White Zombie) is 55. Actor Max Casella is 54. Actor Paul Giamatti is 54. R&B singer Damion Hall (Guy) is 53. Rock musician James "Munky" Shaffer (Korn) is 51. TV correspondent Natalie Morales is 49. Country singer Lisa Brokop is 48. Rapper-rocker Uncle Kracker is 47. Actor Sonya Walger is 47. Actor Staci Keanan is 46. Jazz singer Somi is 45. Actor Amber Borycki is 38. Actor Aubrey Anderson-Emmons is 14.