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The Groton Area students had a chance to talk with some of the uniformed division of the United States Secret Service. Did you know the original purpose of the Secret Service was to trace down counter fitters and they had worked for the Treasury Dept.



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 20, 2021

Conde Worship 9:00 AM
Groton Worship 11:00 AM

Tuesday, June 22, 2021

Bible Study 10:00 AM

Wednesday, June 23, 2021

Community Coffee Hour 9:30 AM

Thursday, June 24, 2021

Newsletter Items Due

Sunday, June 27, 2021

Conde Worship 9:00 AM
Groton Worship 11:00 AM

Emmanuel Lutheran Church

Groton

Sunday, June 20, 2021

9 a.m.: Worship with communion

Monday, June 21, 2021

6:30am: Bible Study

Sunday, June 27, 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 20, 2021

8 a.m.: Bible Study

Worship with Communion

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

11 a.m.: Zion's Worship

Tuesday, June 22, 2021

12:30 p.m.: Quilting

Sunday, June 27, 2021

8 a.m.: Bible Study

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

11 a.m.: Zion's Worship

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

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Freshmen and sophomores from Groton Area are on the World Wide Classroom trip to Washington, D.C. They had their picture taken in front of the White House. Pictured in the back two rows, left to right, are Christian Ehresmann, Payton Mitchell, Caden McInerney, Dillon Abeln, Nick Morris, Bryce Wambach, Blake Pauli, Jackson Garstecki, Kayla Lehr, Kate Profetta, Karlie McKain, Emma Kutter, Emma Bahr, Sarah Menzia, Turner Thompson, Logan Ringgenberg, Faith Traphagen, Ava Wienk, Jeslyn Kosel and Emily Overacker; in front are Carson Herrick, Aiden Heathcoat, Faith Fliehs, Jayla Jones, Cadence Pullan, Claire Heinrichs, Ashley Johnson and way in front is Laila Roberts holding Gilbert. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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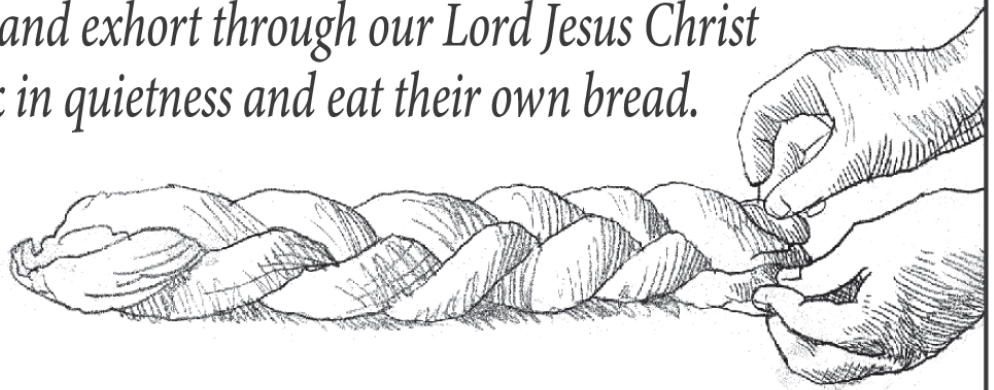
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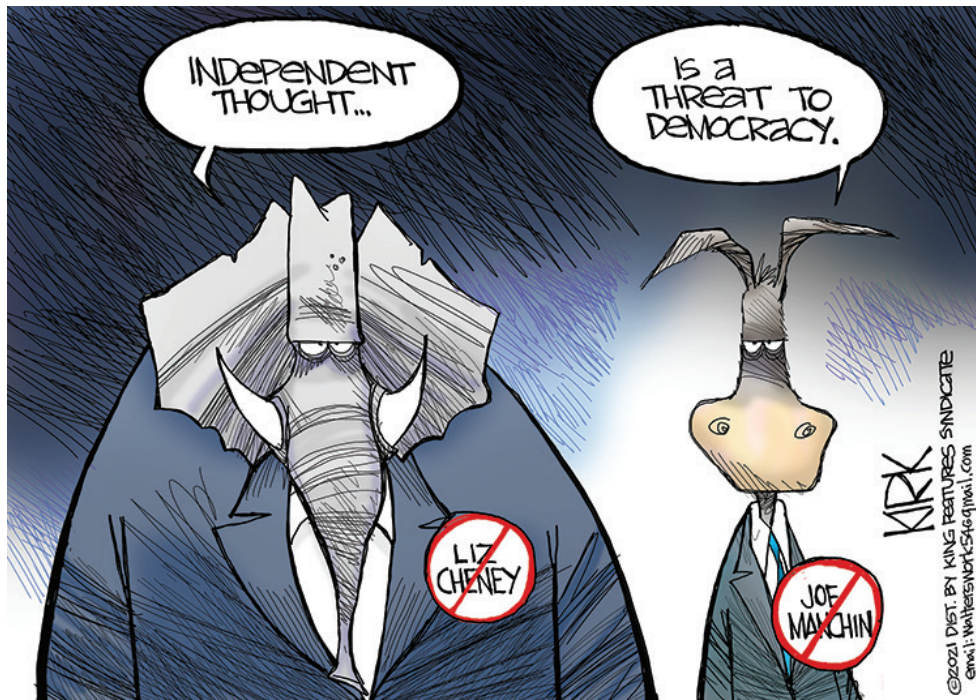
THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

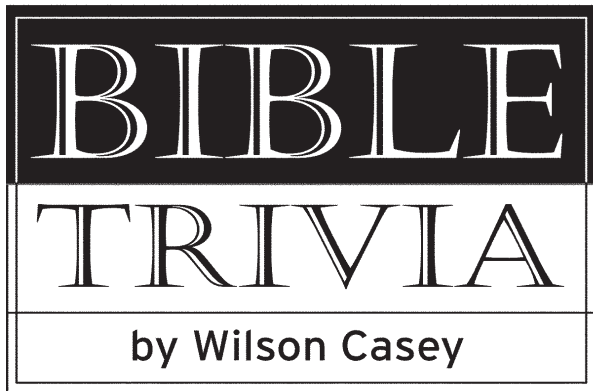
For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat. For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies. Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread.

2 THESS. 3:10-12



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

2. From Mosaic law, what would happen to the person who cursed his father or mother? *Imprisonment, Outcast, 10 lashings, Death*

3. In Daniel 2, who had a dream about a statue composed of different materials? *Jezebel, Abednego, Rezin, Nebuchadnezzar*

4. From Acts 7, who said, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge"? *Philip, Stephen, Luke, David*

5. In Genesis 14:3, what "lake" is called the Salt Sea? *Galilee, Lake Pison, Dead Sea, Euphrates*

6. Whose biblical name means "salvation"? *Jude, Ahaz, Hosea, Ruth*

ANSWERS: 1) Old; 2) Death; 3) Nebuchadnezzar; 4) Stephen; 5) Dead Sea; 6) Hosea

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

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Coconut-Strawberry Shortcakes

Hurry, don't delay one minute longer -- within just a few short weeks those perfect "homegrown" berries will be hard to find, and we'll have to wait another year before we can again proclaim "Strawberry Fields Forever"!

3/4 cup reduced-fat biscuit baking mix
Sugar substitute to equal 1/4 cup sugar, suitable for baking

4 teaspoons flaked coconut
2 tablespoons nonfat sour cream
1/4 cup fat-free milk
2 teaspoons coconut extract
1 (4-serving) package sugar-free instant vanilla pudding mix
2/3 cup nonfat dry milk powder
1 3/4 cups water
1/4 cup reduced-calorie whipped topping
4 cups sliced fresh strawberries

1. Preheat oven to 375 F. Spray a baking sheet with butter-flavored cooking spray. In a medium bowl, combine baking mix, sugar substitute and coconut. Stir in sour cream, milk and 1 teaspoon coconut extract. Drop batter onto prepared baking sheet to form 4 shortcakes. Bake for 8 to 10 minutes or until golden brown. Place shortcakes on wire rack to cool.

2. Meanwhile, in a large bowl, combine dry pudding mix, milk powder and water. Mix well using a wire whisk. Blend in whipped topping and remaining 1 teaspoon coconut extract. For each serving, place a shortcake on a dessert dish, spoon 1/2 cup pudding mixture over shortcakes, and sprinkle 1 cup strawberries over top. Serves 4.

* Each serving equals: 221 calories, 3g fat, 7g protein, 39g carb., 676mg Sodium, 6g fiber; Diabetic Exchanges: 1 Starch, 1 Fruit, 1 Fat-Free Milk.

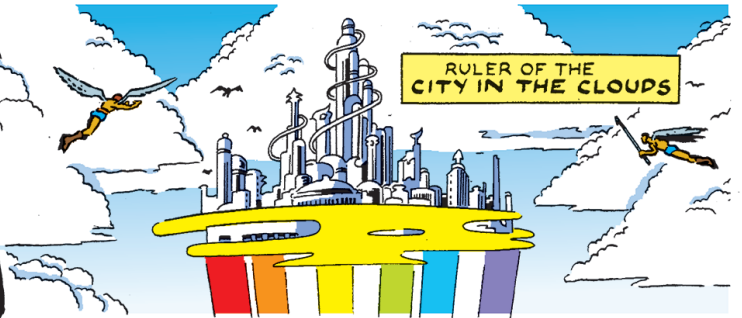
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Character Profile:
Vultan



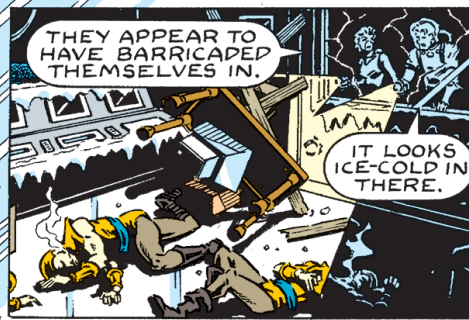
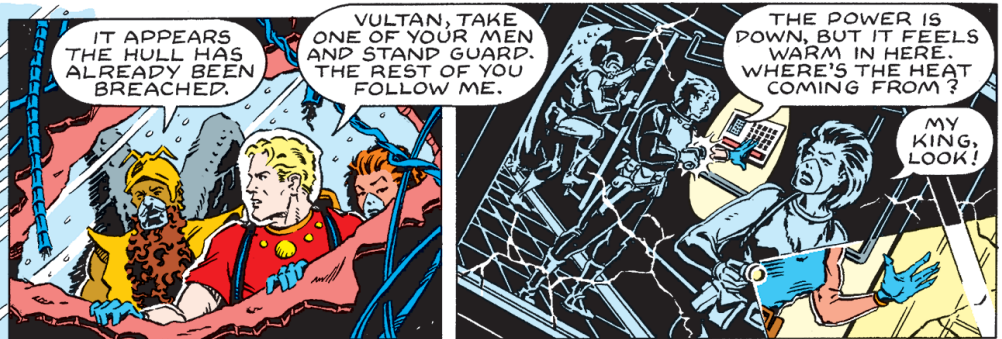
RULER OF THE
CITY IN THE CLOUDS

FLASH GORDON

By JIM KEEFE

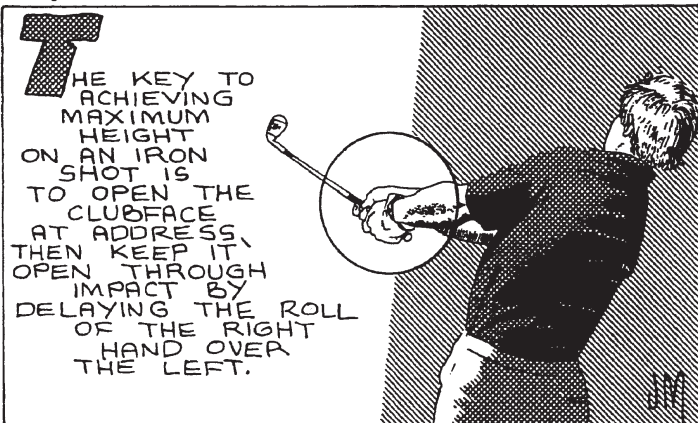
6-13
Pencils: BRIAN BILTER

BLASTING AWAY AT ICE AND SNOW, THE BURIED SECTION OF THE DOWNED CRAFT IS UNCOVERED.

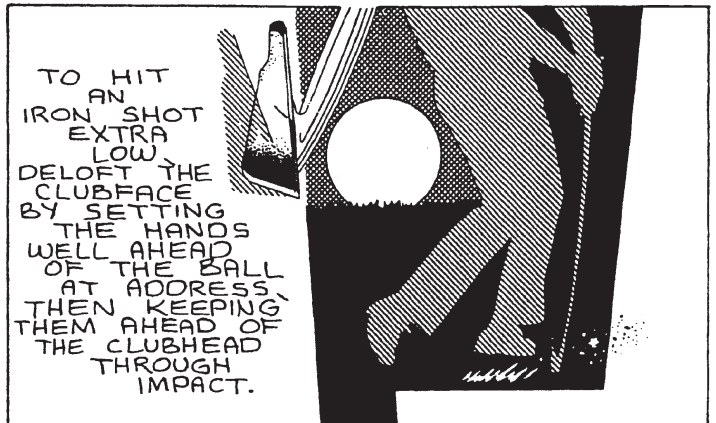


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Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS



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TO YOUR GOOD HEALTH

By Keith Roach, M.D.

C. Diff Tricky to Treat, But Rarely Terminal

DEAR DR. ROACH: In December, I developed an abscess in my jaw from food getting caught in my tooth. I went to see a local dentist who prescribed clindamycin and metronidazole. I came down with a case of C. difficile. I have since found evidence that multiple antibiotics and clindamycin are causes of C. diff.

I am getting mixed messages about my prognosis. Some medical people are telling me it's not a big deal and to just wash my hands a lot. My primary physician, however, gave me the impression that this is basically a terminal diagnosis.

She told me how sorry she was and that I had been a very healthy person but am not any longer. She told me that it will most likely recur, and every time it does it will be more difficult to treat until I become antibiotic resistant, and that people die from it. She also told me that she would set me up for the standard yearly appointment, but that I should come see her whenever I need to.

I am paranoid about what my future holds and what, if anything, I can do. I would like your opinion of this situation. Any guidance you can give me would be greatly appreciated. -- Anon.

ANSWER: Clostridium difficile ("C. diff") infections are common but can be serious. As you correctly note, many antibiotics are associated with the acquisition of symptomatic C. diff infections, and although clindamycin is the best known, other antibiotics (quinolones, amoxicillin and related penicillins) are actually more common. The antibiotics kill off large numbers of healthy bacteria, allowing the unhealthy C. diff to take over.

The cardinal symptom of C. diff is watery diarrhea, at least three loose stools in 24 hours. Abdominal pain and cramping, nausea and poor appetite are common. Fever is less common. Symptoms can start during antibiotic treatment or up to a month after completing antibiotics.

Treatment is stopping the antibiotic if possible and if still being given. Antibiotic treatment against C. diff is with the newer drug fidaxomicin or with oral vancomycin; unfortunately, fidaxomicin is ridiculously expensive -- a course of fidaxomicin is \$3,000 via goodrx.com in the U.S. at the time of writing. A course of oral vancomycin costs much less, often less than \$200 through the same website. If neither of these is available, metronidazole is a less-expensive alternative.

Fidaxomicin has the lowest risk of recurrence of the infection, and many experts will reserve it for a person who has recurred after oral vancomycin. For the unusual person who continues to recur after antibiotic treatment, fecal microbiota transplants (processed from stool of healthy donors) have been safe and effective.

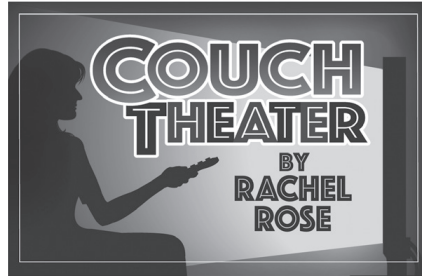
I am disturbed that you got the impression that C. diff is a terminal diagnosis. Although in rare cases, hospitalized patients can get so sick that they can die from C. diff, this would be very unusual in less severe disease, as in someone who is able to go home from the hospital.

Handwashing is necessary to reduce infection to others. Avoiding drugs like Prilosec that suppress acid can help prevent recurrences. Finally, probiotics (live healthy bacteria) may be of use in reducing infection and recurrence.

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

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Queen Bees (PG-13) — If it took you 20 years to finally get over the anxiety of high school cliques, “Queen Bees” shows that it all comes back again later in life. Ellen Burstyn plays Helen, a silver single moving into a senior living community. There she encounters all the same personality conflicts from her school days as she tries to navigate the social strata of Pine Grove. “They’re like mean girls, but with medical alert bracelets,” Helen quips. Jane Curtin, Loretta Devine and Ann-Margaret round out the cool girls’ table, with Christopher Lloyd and James Caan providing comedic support and romantic interest. (Theaters and Prime Video)

Luca (PG) — Luca and Alberto are two young boys finding adventure on the 1950s Italian Riviera, making new friends and living their best lives. The twist? They’re not actually human boys, but underwater sea creatures who become humanlike when they rise above the sea’s surface. While concealing their secret in lots of near-miss situations, the boys ride Vespa scooters and eat gelatos, practicing their Italian accents with a few choice phrases. Pixar Studios continues to amaze and delight with its visuals, once again surpassing its own levels of excellence in animation. (Disney+)

Skyfall (PG-13) — Once again delivering exquisite cinematography of exotic locales, this 2012 film is the third installment in Daniel Craig’s reign as James Bond. With 007 returning to MI6 after mission failure and subsequent personal disappearance, Bond rises like the phoenix to take on one of the creepiest villains ever, expertly portrayed by Javier Bardem. The movie’s stunning conclusion is explosive and a bit overly dramatic,

but ties together Bond’s past with his present, ushering in a shocking change to the MI6 organization. (New to Paramount+)

Bo Burnham: Inside (NR) — It is a bit of a misnomer to call this a comedy special because it’s not your typical guy-onstage-telling-jokes presentation. Performed without an audience and entirely inside comedian/musician Bo Burnham’s apartment over the full year of 2020, “Inside” is 87 minutes of devilishly original songs and commentary covering subjects from white privilege to labor exploitation and self-deprecation. Despite the heavy topics, it IS hysterically funny, and exceptionally clever. With laser lights and voice modulators, Burnham is self-admittedly a little all over the place, but the genius that emerged from his own mental struggles is well worth a watch — but definitely not for the kids. (Netflix)



Walt Disney/Pixar

Scene from “Luca”

Miss Juneteenth (NR) — When a former pageant winner sees her teenage daughter at a crossroads in life, she encourages her to enter the same scholarship pageant that she won years earlier. With a full ride to a Historically Black College as the prize for the winner of Miss Juneteenth, mom Turquoise has high hopes of daughter Kai making more of her life than she herself was able to accomplish. Nicole Beharie is wonderful as the ever-supportive but always firm mother to newcomer Alexis Chikaeze in this SXSW Film Festival award-winner. (Theaters/video on demand)

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FLASHBACK

By Mick Harper



-
1. Who wrote and released "Don't Think Twice, It's All Right"?
 2. Which artist penned and released "Little Town Flirt"?
 3. Which former Beatle had a hit with "My Sweet Lord"?
 4. Where was the Singing Nun from?
 5. Name the song that contains this lyric: "If your heartaches seem to hang around too long, And your blues keep getting bluer with each song."

Answers:

1. Bob Dylan, in 1962. The song has been covered by dozens of artists, including the Four Seasons, who recorded it under the pseudonym The Wonder Who?, one of numerous names the group used.
2. Del Shannon, in 1962. The song climbed to No. 1 in Australia and Ireland, but didn't reach the top 10 in the U.S.
3. George Harrison, in 1970. Harrison was sued for allegedly copying the melody to the 1963 "He's So Fine," but instead he claimed he followed a Christian hymn "Oh Happy Day," which was out of copyright.
4. Belgium. Jeanne-Paule Marie Deckers was famous for her song "Dominique" in 1963.
5. "Cry," by Johnnie Ray in 1951. Teen idol Ray was partially deaf, starting at age 13 when he suffered an accident at a Boy Scout camp.

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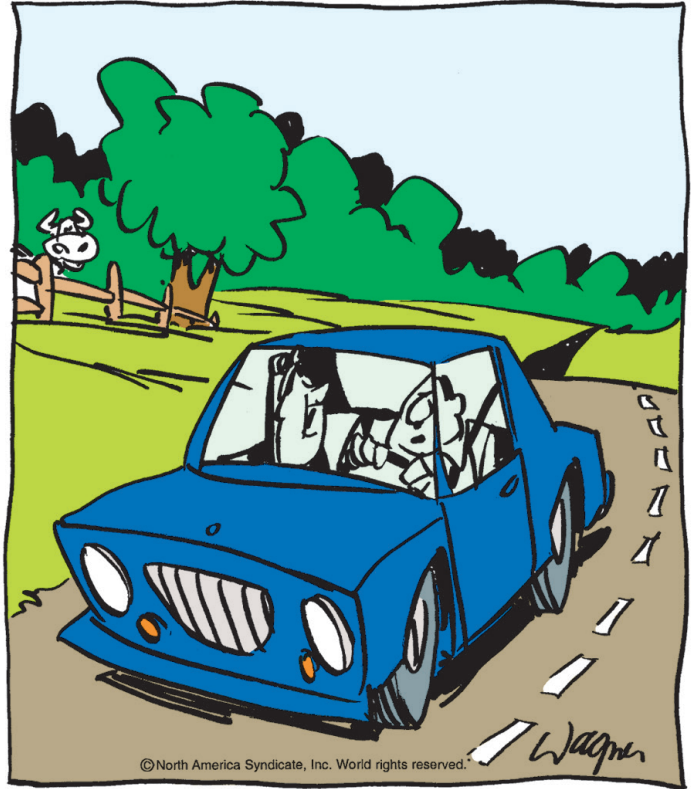
Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps



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GRIN and BEAR IT ^{by Wagner}

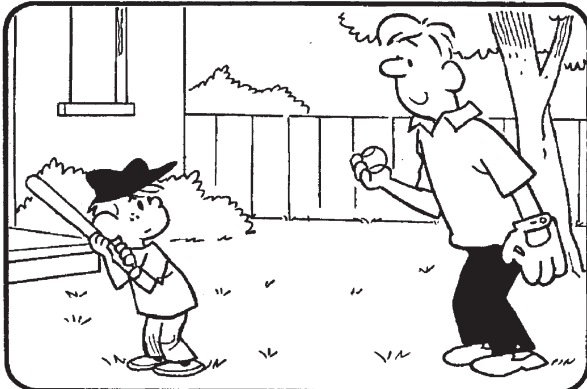


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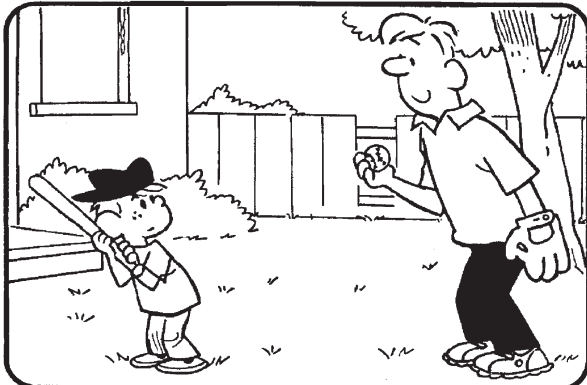
"Can't you go a little faster? We're getting bug splatters on the back windshield."

HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



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Differences: 1. Window is wider. 2. Ball is different. 3. Hedge is smaller. 4. Cap is reversed. 5. Shoes are different. 6. Fence is broken.

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- Add a cinnamon stick or softener sheet to your vacuum bag when you change it. As you clean, you will distribute the good smell throughout your home.

- There's been a lot of talk at my house about kitchen gadgets that do double duty, especially since I have made whipped cream for the first time — in my coffeemaker! I have a French press that I rarely use, until now. Add heavy whipping cream and a bit of sugar to the pot, and use the screen to whip the cream by rapidly pumping it up and down. Magic! — *JoAnn*

- “To save money on electricity costs, hang jeans and other heavy clothing to dry first. White or light towels and garments especially love the sun. When they're mostly dry, pop in the dryer to fluff.

- “I love to eat pancakes, but I don't have time to make them every morning. I make a very large batch on Sundays and reheat them through the week. In order to recreate that fresh-from-the-pan crisp (which you don't get if you microwave them), I put them in my toaster.” — *P.E. in Ohio*

- “I use an extra coffeepot to brew a pot of hot water. I use the water for both tea and instant oatmeal packets in the morning.” — *M.S. in Nevada*

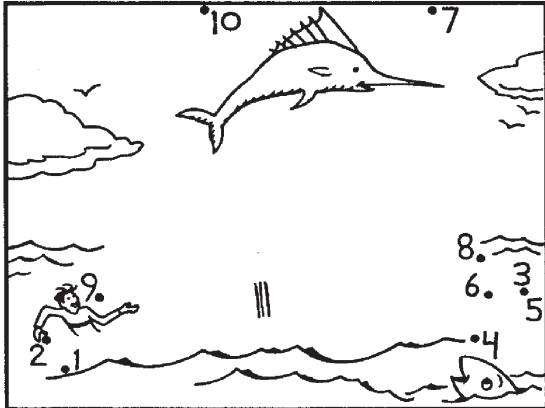
- “Before I go to the beach, I freeze an ice-cube tray full of lemonade. Then, we use the cubes in our travel cups. It keeps the lemonade cool, and as it melts (which tends to be quickly), it doesn't water down the drink.” — *K.H. in South Carolina*

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

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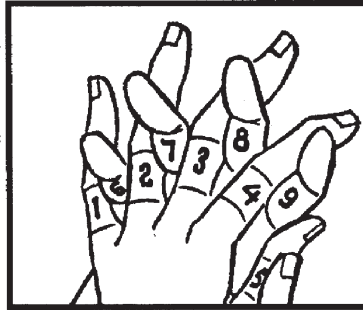
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Junior Whirl

by Charles Barry Townsend

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FINGER-TRICKIN' WITS TESTER

YES, the hand is sometimes quicker than the eye, and on occasion may be shown to outwit the brain.

For instance, simply assign numbers to someone's fingers (see left), ask the person to clasp hands, and then challenge him or her to move designated fingers as you call out numbers.

Vary this, if you wish, by assigning an assortment of numbers in random order.

As a further test, ask your friend to cross wrists, then clasp hands, turn clasped hands inward (toward body), and upward toward the chin.

Now, challenge person to move a finger either by number, or when you point to it.

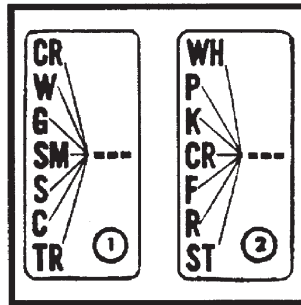
ON SAIL! Go it, sailfish, up, up and away. What can you draw to complete this picture? To find out, add lines dot to dot.

SIX PICK! There are six numbers between 1 and 100 that are spelled with six letters. Four of them are ninety, eighty, thirty and twenty. Quickly, what are the other two?
Numbers eleven and twelve.

SPELL OUT! Let's see if you can insert a three-letter word that will complete seven longer words in each of the posers presented at right. In No. 1, for instance, try AFT, and get craft, waft, but that's all. Similarly, in No. 2, try ALE. Result: Whale, pale, kale... but there the string ends.

Now that you have the idea, continue to try words until you find two that comply.

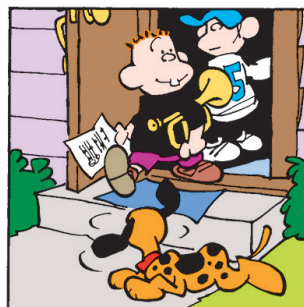
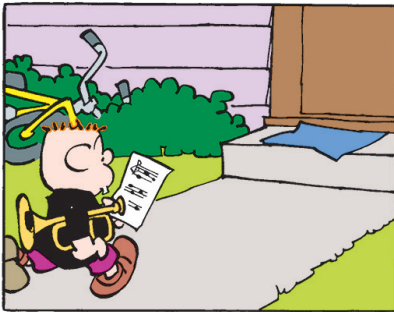
No fair peeking at answers below.



ASH and EEL, respectively, will do it.

TIGER

by BUD BLAKE



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BUD BLAKE

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King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 "Sad to say ..."
- 5 Armed conflict
- 8 Folksinger Joan
- 12 Jet speed measure
- 13 Greek mountain
- 14 Big name in scat
- 15 Docking site
- 16 Leftovers carrier
- 18 Screenwriter's creations
- 20 Reddish horses
- 21 "I'm not impressed"
- 22 Martini liquor
- 23 Skilled
- 26 Flood protection
- 30 Gun the engine
- 31 Witty one
- 32 "As I see it," to a texter
- 33 Sleazy hotel
- 36 Be nosy
- 38 Train lines (Abbr.)
- 39 Aunt, in Acapulco
- 40 Part of Hispaniola
- 43 Iced desserts
- 47 Cinched
- 49 October birth-

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

- stone
- Words to a back-stabber
- In the style of
- Alpha follower
- Couturier
- "Of course"
- Appear
- Band boosters
- Secular
- Computer brand
- Tempura choice
- Shoebox datum
- Big fusses
- Cleaning cloth
- Past
- Jessica of "Dark Angel"
- Flair
- Turns sharply
- Beam
- Favorite
- Joke
- Canine cry
- N.J. neighbor
- First lady?
- Droop
- Life story
- I love (Lat.)
- Republicans
- Existed
- Camelot king
- French cheese
- Lancelot
- Bigwigs
- Roman robes
- Wasted no time
- Con
- "Suffice — say ..."
- Shopper's delight
- Fencing sword
- London gallery
- Bridge coup
- Inlet

DOWN

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— King Crossword —

Answers

Solution time: 23 mins.

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

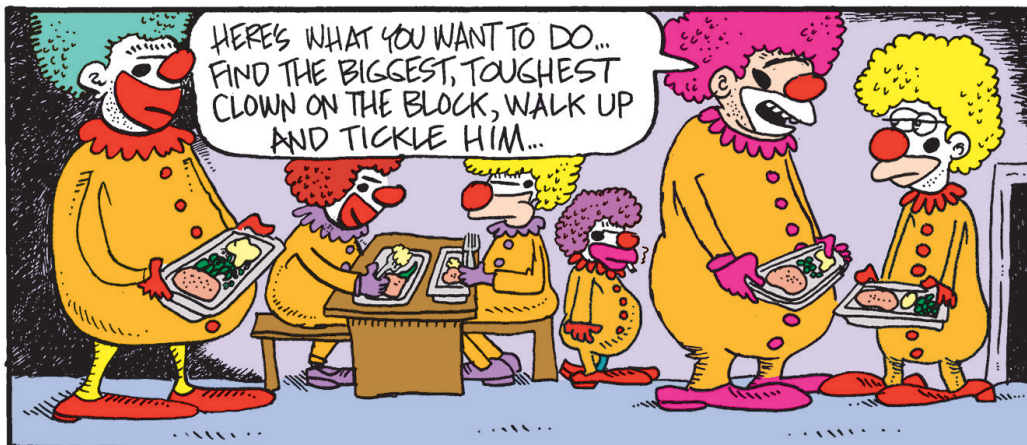
LAFF - A - DAY



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"It's always a shock to find out you're overdrawn more than you thought you were."

Out on a Limb



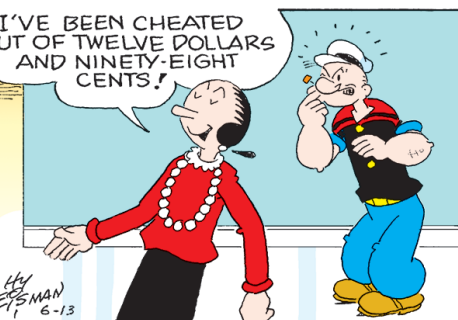
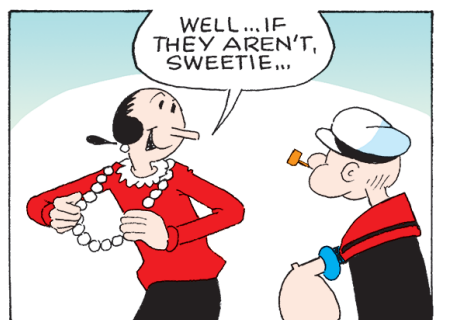
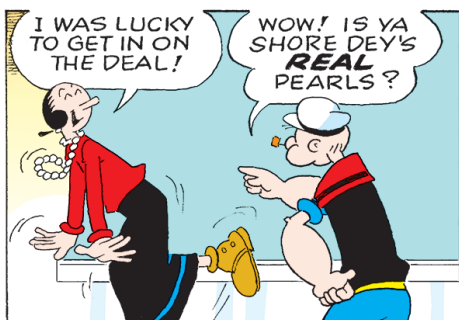
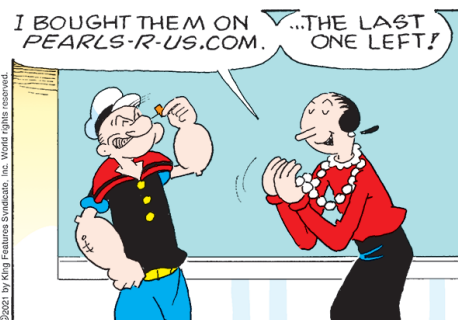
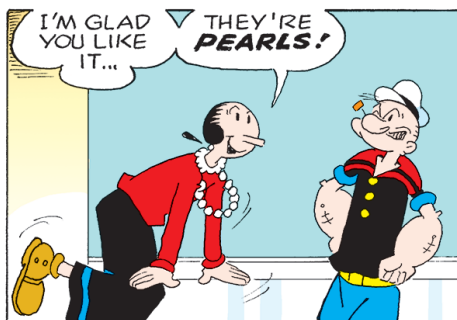
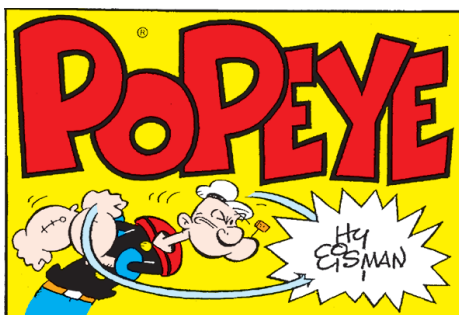
by Gary Kopervas

GOOD ADVICE FOR ANYONE'S FIRST DAY IN CLOWN PRISON

KOPERVAS

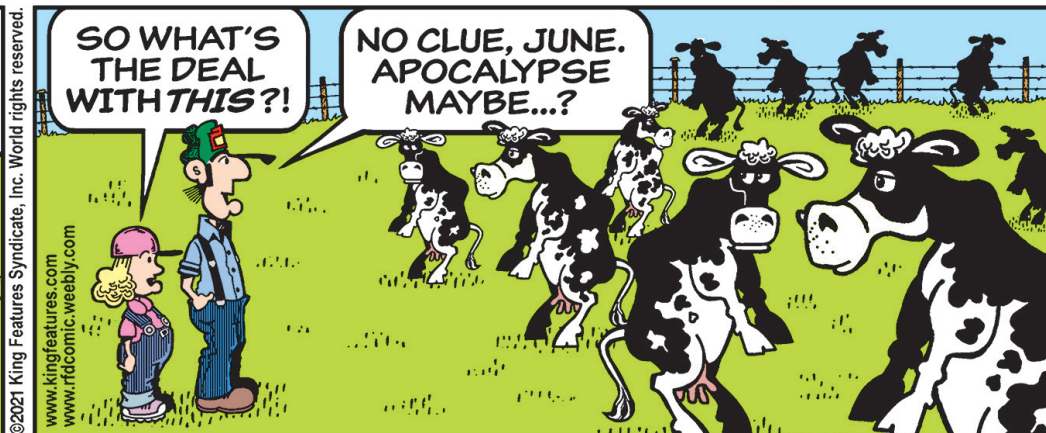
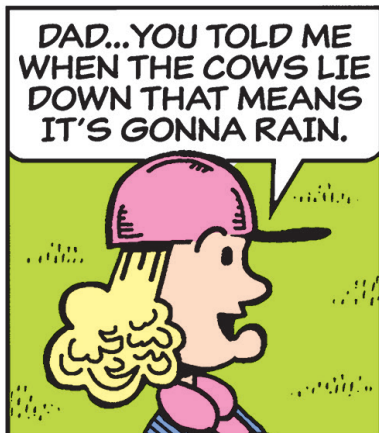
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R.F.D.

by Mike Marland



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THE DAWN PEOPLE APPROACH THEIR GREAT GATE WITH AN ODD INSTRUMENT.



THE DEVICE AT THE SHAFT SEEMS TO WORK AS A KEY...



... OPENING THE DOOR TO SOME SAFE HAVEN FOR THE CREATURES.



"ALETA AND HER HANDMAIDEN ARE IN THERE," WHISPERS VAL WITH CERTAINTY. FROM THEIR HIDDEN VANTAGE, THE FOUR PLOT STRATEGY - AND WAIT...



...UNTIL ANOTHER PARTY - CARRYING ANOTHER KEY SPEAR - COMES ALONG. "NOW!" GRINS GAWAIN.

VAL, GAWAIN AND IG ARE ALL EXPERIENCED IN WHAT, CENTURIES LATER, WILL BE CALLED GUERRILLA TACTICS.



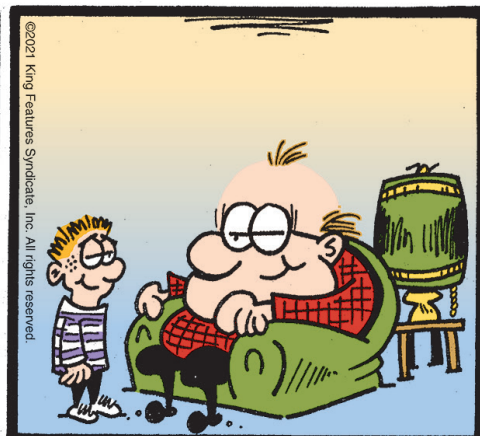
THE ENEMY IS ENGAGED WITHOUT SO MUCH AS A CRY UTTERED.

NEXT:
The hunters

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The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



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Pickering

SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

Staying Hydrated in Summer Heat

If there is any mantra we need to repeat this summer it's this one: drink more liquids.

A university study revealed that 80% of heat-related deaths were in people over the age of 60. We need to do everything we can to avoid dehydration when the weather is hot.

As we age, many of us don't have the same body temperature regulation. Poor circulation and lack of thirst can make us vulnerable to the effects of heat. Of those, lack of thirst is the easiest to address, and drinking more water doesn't need to be a chore. Find out from your doctor just how many ounces you need to drink in a day. Some medications, such as diuretics, might change how your body reacts to heat and dehydration. Ask whether you need an electrolyte-replacement drink for added potassium and sodium.

By the numbers: Buy several smaller water bottles and fill with water as many as you need each day to reach the required number of ounces. Keep

them on the kitchen counter, where you'll see them. Keep oranges, strawberries and watermelons handy, or make your own fruit popsicles.

Keep an eye on the TV news and weather. Know what temperatures and humidity are expected during the day, especially early afternoon. If you walk for exercise, try to go in the morning. Make a few calls and find out about any cooling stations near you, or air-conditioned spaces such as a mall, if you don't have air conditioning at home.

Keep the inside temperature as low as possible and close the drapes on the sunny side of the house. If you have air conditioning, keep it set at a comfortable temperature and leave it on.

Remember that you don't need to wait until you're thirsty to drink water.

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1. What former NBA player and coach served as head coach of the Utah Utes men's basketball program from 2011-21?

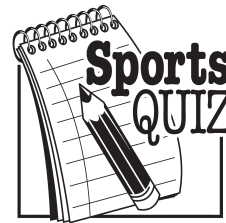
2. Traktor Chelyabinsk, Dinamo Minsk and Lokomotiv Yaroslavl are teams competing in what ice hockey league?

3. Against what boxer did Riddick Bowe win consecutive fights — both by disqualification for low blows — in 1996?

4. In 1955, driver Pierre Levegh died in a crash and 83 spectators were killed by debris at what famous motorsports endurance race?

5. What University of Miami Hurricanes running back suffered torn knee ligaments in the 2003 Fiesta Bowl and would miss his entire rookie season with the Buffalo Bills?

6. What long-distance relay running series includes races named Bourbon



by Ryan A. Berenz

Chase, Wasatch Back, Northwest Passage, Del Sol and Reach the Beach?

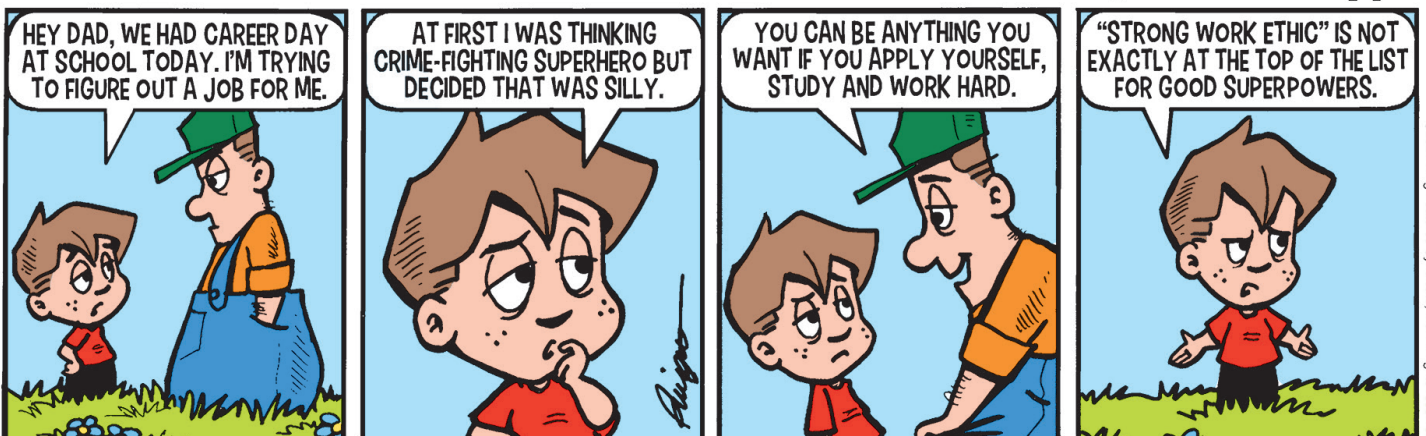
7. First awarded in 1962, the King Spud Trophy is the prize in the college basketball rivalry between what two teams?

Answers

1. Larry Krystkowiak.
2. Kontinental Hockey League (KHL).
3. Andrew Golota.
4. 24 Hours of Le Mans.
5. Willis McGahee.
6. Ragnar Relay Series.
7. The Idaho State Bengals and the

Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps





Pets Shell-Shocked by Nightly Fireworks

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: What is with the constant setting off of loud fireworks almost every night for the past year? My two dogs are so stressed out that they are sleeping with me at night. — *Larry H., via email*

DEAR LARRY: I experienced similar nightly fireworks throughout the pandemic. There are many theories as to why fireworks were so popular, but I prefer to go with the most obvious: Some people had little else to do, and no regard for their neighbors.

My pets are not too fazed by the occasional crackle of firecrackers, which still goes on here even though the pandemic restrictions are mostly lifted. But some of our neighbors had much bigger fireworks and enjoyed setting them off around midnight or later, with no warning. My pets came

flying into the bedroom when these were set off.

As a pet owner, it's frustrating to see our companions suffer from someone else's carelessness. Even worse, authorities haven't seemed interested in enforcing noise or fireworks regulations.

As we head into the Fourth of July weekend, plan ahead to make things easier for your pets.

Create a safe space for your dogs to go to when fireworks go off. Some dogs absolutely need this and can't be comforted by a hug or treats. A friend of mine created a little den in the corner of her mudroom using scrap plywood, putting bedding and old clothes inside so her giant mutt "Ollie" can hide from loud noises.

Talk to your dogs' vet as well about medication to keep them calmer through the holiday, which may help them better deal with the trauma caused by fireworks.

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

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Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

* On May 19, 1996, Kermit the Frog gave the commencement speech at Southampton College, Long Island University.

* TASER is actually an acronym for Tom A. Swift's Electric Rifle. "Tom Swift" references the book character who is not just an inventor of amazing gadgets, but a childhood favorite of the Taser's inventor, Jack Cover.

* The average high-school swimmer swims 1 million strokes per season.

* Researchers found that male bottlenose dolphins in Western Australia's Shark Bay have formed "boy bands" that harmonize their mating calls together in order to better attract females.

* While working as an extra on the set of "The X-Files," singer Michael Buble was fired for stealing a hot dog from the craft services table.

* The most common injury caused by makeup is scratching the eye with a mascara wand.

* A local folk remedy in Boho, Ireland, involved placing soil from the local church under one's pillow while sleeping to cure infections. The nature of the remedy proved more scientific than divine when, in 2018, a microbiologist found the soil contains a previously unknown strain of streptomycetes, which can be used to create antibiotics.

* Out at sea, a tsunami is only about 3 feet high, and could pass a boat without being noticed.

* At the 2011 World Scrabble Championships in Poland, a competitor demanded officials strip-search his opponent after a "G" tile went missing. The officials decided against it due to a lack of evidence of cheating.

* With every bottle of Laphroaig whisky, you're entitled to a lifetime lease on a one-square-foot plot of land on the Scottish island of Islay, as part of Laphroaig's loyalty program "Friends of Laphroaig."

Thought for the Day: "When you're good at something, you'll tell everyone. When you're great at something, they'll tell you." -- Walter Payton

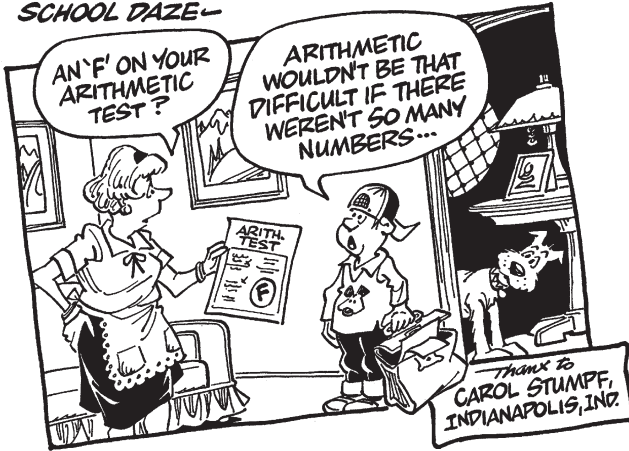
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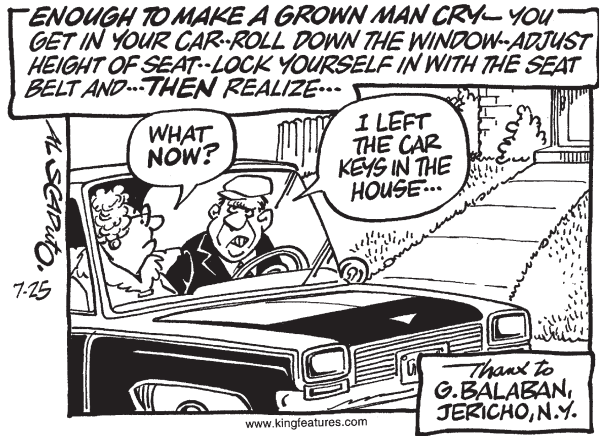
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THEY'LL DO IT EVERY TIME

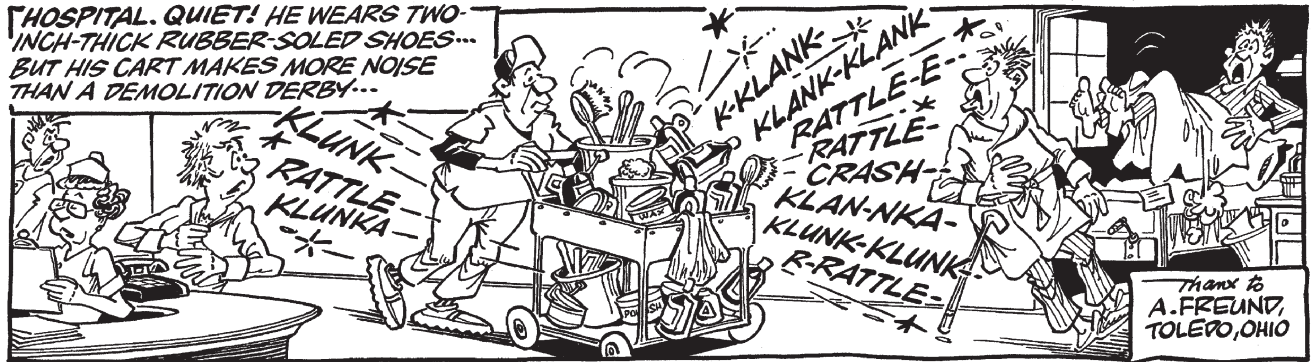
SCHOOL DAZE



BY AL SCADUTO



HOSPITAL. QUIET! HE WEARS TWO-INCH-THICK RUBBER-SOLED SHOES... BUT HIS CART MAKES MORE NOISE THAN A DEMOLITION DERBY...



Grow herbs for baking

TUSCAN

Try rosemary, basil, thyme or oregano and pair with garlic and parmesan.

PROVINCIAL

Try tarragon, savory, fennel, basil, thyme, rosemary or lavender.

GREEK

Oregano, marjoram, dill or mint and pair with lemon and peppers.

Source: davesgarden.com

- Brenda Weaver

VETERANS ★ POST ★

by Freddy Groves

Fake Dog Trainer Nailed for Scamming Veterans

I'll admit, after reading about so many Department of Veterans Affairs-related crimes over the years, this is a new one. A judge has sentenced a Texas resident to 10 years in prison for scamming the VA out of a lot of money ... for fake dog-and handler-training courses.

The scammer defrauded the VA by submitting 185 claims for courses that were supposed to train dogs and their handlers. Each course cost between \$6,500 and \$12,000.

On his application to create a training program that veterans could attend and use their education benefits, he lied. He listed the names and certifications of four real dog trainers as the instructors. Those people hadn't given their permission, and one of them was deceased. Because of that fraud, he was ineligible to collect VA dollars.

Over time, he actually placed dogs with police departments, dogs he'd

supposedly rescued from shelters and trained. Of the veterans who'd actually tried to take the course, however, 81% were dissatisfied.

The scammer was nailed for two counts of money laundering, two instances of submitting a false tax return, eight counts of wire fraud and four counts of aggravated identity theft.

Not only is he going to the slammer, he forfeited a big pile of cash and property, including multiple vehicles, a luxury motor home, jet skis, a trailer and more.

He allegedly sought a presidential pardon. He didn't get it. What he did get on multiple websites were comments from people who didn't hold back in their disgust for what he'd done.

What we'd like to know, however, is whether there was ever a question of animal abuse. It was reported that 31 dogs were found in the raid of the property, but only 26 were taken to local shelters. It was also reported that some of the dogs died due to bad health. Surely that's good for another 10 years, right?

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



Time to Get Tough on Russia

This week, President Biden met with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Geneva, Switzerland.

Stakes were high leading into the summit as U.S.-Russian relations have reached a low point.

From Moscow's crackdown on political opposition, to their military buildup along the Ukrainian border, and their recent agreement to supply Iran with advanced satellite systems, it is quite clear that Russia is not our friend.

Following the talks, President Biden said in a press conference that he told Putin his agenda "is not against Russia" but "for the American people."

Despite the promise to be for America, this Administration isn't taking a hard enough line against Putin.

Over the last two months, U.S. intelligence has attributed two major cyberattacks to Russian-based hackers.

The ransomware attack on Colonial Pipeline shutdown thousands of miles of pipeline, shooting up gas prices and causing shortages across the Mid-Atlantic and Southeastern states.

Weeks later, JBS, the world's largest meatpacker was targeted by a ransomware attack that disrupted meat production across the country.

Not only does the U.S. need to develop better cyber defense capabilities, but we need to hold Russia accountable. Unfortunately, the President simply provided Putin with a list of U.S. infrastructure that should be "off-limits" to Russian cybercriminals.

The Biden Administration also waived sanctions on the Russian company overseeing the construction of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline which will double natural gas supplies from Russia into Germany. Doing so only deepens European dependence on Russian energy and emboldens Russian influence in the region.

Meanwhile, one of President Biden's first acts in office was to halt construction of the Keystone XL Pipeline causing TC Energy to abandon the project completely. This decision is a not only a huge blow to American jobs and energy security, but also to communities across South Dakota who were depending on the pipeline for business.

Putin knows how to play his cards and is excelling in deploying tactics that undermine the United States. In response, Biden has talked a big game about standing up to Russian aggression, but his track record does not mirror his rhetoric.

Mr. President, actions speak louder than words. It is time to get tough on Russia.

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South Dakota Governor

Kristi Noem



South Dakota: *Under God, the People Rule*

Happy Father's Day to Our Founding Fathers

Father's Day is a time to celebrate all the great fathers in our lives. My kids have an awesome one in Bryon. My son-in-law Kyle will be a father any day now! And I want to wish every father in the state of South Dakota a very happy Father's Day. The holiday can also be a tough reminder of loved-ones lost. Father's Day was tough for me for many years after Dad died. But this Father's Day, I want to take some time for a little bit of a different remembrance. I want us to remember our Founding Fathers who gave us one of the greatest gifts ever: the United States of America.

We learn lessons from our fathers. My dad's lessons still resonate with me today. Our Founding Fathers taught us many such lessons. They taught us that freedom is a cause worth fighting for. "Give me liberty or give me death," Patrick Henry famously said. So many of the brave men who followed George Washington into battle died in the pursuit of that same liberty.

It's easy to forget that before America's Founding, liberty wasn't widely recognized. The rights to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" that Thomas Jefferson wrote about were a controversial idea at the time. America was the first nation to embrace these rights. If our Founding Fathers hadn't spelled them out so plainly – and then fought and died to make them a reality – the world may still not recognize these rights. In fact, our nation's success is directly tied to that transformational idea.

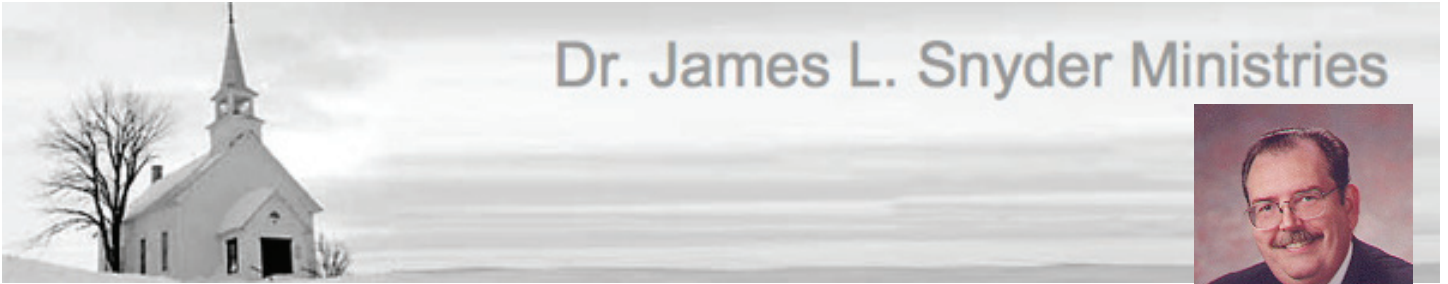
The lessons that we learn from our fathers don't become less important just because we grow older. And the ideals laid out by our Founding Fathers are no less true in a 21st Century America. As we see threats to those ideals, to American freedom, we need to fight for them with the same vigor as Patrick Henry and the same resolve as George Washington.

The lessons that our fathers teach us aren't made false, or somehow lacking, because our fathers' flaws. We could each name a few of our father's flaws. We need to keep that in perspective as we discuss our history and the men who built this country. They were flawed men – just as flawed as any of us. Yet those flaws do not make their ideals any less true, and they do not somehow taint the tremendous accomplishments of our Founding Fathers.

You may be wondering why I'm taking time on Father's Day of all days to talk about America. I want Kyle, Cassidy, Kennedy, Booker, and my granddaughter to be able to celebrate Father's Day years from now in a country that is just as free as the America that we grew up in. But that won't happen on its own. It will take all of us – including all the great fathers – teaching our kids the lessons that we can learn from our history. Those lessons should include both our triumphs and our mistakes. And they should include the stories of the Founding Fathers who risked their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor to build the nation that we know and love.

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Why Do I Have So Many Toes?

I must confess that I'm not always obvious to everything that is before me. I admit I miss a lot of things set before me. I don't do this intentionally.

For example, sometimes, when I come home from the church office, I pass the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage, and she is waving at me, but I don't see her.

When I get home, she confronts me about it. I know it happened because, well, she told me it happened. I wasn't very obvious of the situation at the time.

Some things I see, some things I don't see. And I'm not sure the difference between either one. I don't know why I miss some things and not others. But I do, and I guess that's part of my personality.

I know I have ten toes, five on each foot, and one on each foot is a big toe. I have known that since I could recognize things. I will not tell you how long that is because my calculator doesn't go up that high.

In the morning, when I get up, I stumble to the kitchen to get my morning cup of coffee. Without that cup of coffee, I have no idea what I'm doing or where I'm going. That's the reason God gave us coffee. I don't plan anything before my coffee.

Several times I have to go to the doctor to get blood work done. I have to fast before I go, and that means no coffee. I told the nurse that was extracting my blood, "Are you sure you want me here before I have my coffee?"

Looking at me, she smiled and said, "It's okay. Remember, I have the needle."

I did remember. There are times when she can extract blood without any pain whatsoever. Then there are those other times that I will not talk about right now.

Before my coffee in the morning, I'm not exactly sure what I'm doing.

Being oblivious to things around me can catch up when I least expect it.

The other day when I got up, I think my eyes were open, but I'm not sure. I stumbled out into the kitchen to get my morning coffee.

On the way there, I heard a loud scream like a Comanche on the warpath and found myself dancing, and I don't dance. After a few seconds, I felt a pain coming from several of my toes up to the top of my head.

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I had no idea what happened. I looked down and saw blood squirting out, I saw several toenails splintered, and two of my toes were black and blue.

Before I could end my screaming and dancing, the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage came into the room and asked, "What in the world did you do?"

Of course, when anything happens in our house, it's always my fault. But I wasn't in the mood at that time to debate whose fault it was. At the time, I didn't care whose fault it was; it was the pain in my toes that captured all of my attention.

I couldn't answer her. I simply pointed down to my toes and let out another Comanche scream.

Somehow in walking down to the hallway, I smashed my toes into something that resisted them completely. To this day, I don't know what in the world my toes ran into. They've never revealed that secret to me.

Fortunately, the Gracious Nurse of the Parsonage was able to take care of my toe's situation. If I can break it, she can fix it.

Up to this point, I never paid any attention to my toes. Since that time, every time I walk, my toes remind me of the incident. I try not to limp because I'm not going to give those toes any credit at all. I'm going to walk despite their aggravation.

I've had some time to think about that little incident, and I began wondering how many other things in my life have I been oblivious to? What am I not paying attention to?

I have the opinion that when something bad happens, use it as a lesson. What is the lesson here?

The lesson here is to pay attention to everything around you. That is quite a chore for me, and I'm working on it, but I'm not quite there yet.

I almost got in a traffic scrape the other day. Now when I'm out driving, I'm always looking to see if the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage is driving by waving at me.

I do have one gripe, but I don't want to make it known to everybody. But every morning when I get up and come to the kitchen for my coffee, someone who shall remain anonymous always says, "How's your toes this morning?"

Usually, I will mumble back, "Fine; they're all fine."

During this whole time, I had some serious thought about why I have to have ten toes? What is the purpose of all those toes?

I've been given a lot of thought to this, and in my devotions the other morning, this verse of Scripture was present. "Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee" (Proverbs 4:25).

I'm not sure why I have ten toes, but after this experience, I will give attention to my toes, but I'm going to give more attention to my eyes.

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EARTHTALK

From the Editors of E - The Environmental Magazine

Dear EarthTalk: What are "dark sky havens" and are there any near me? --
D. Morris, Troy, MI

A bright moon hangs over the clear, terrestrial night sky permeated by winking stars, illuminating the town below with various hues of blue. While some can only fantasize of these beautiful night settings, these nighttime skies do in fact exist—in what is commonly known as "dark sky havens."



Dark sky havens are places where nighttime light pollution is limited to non-existent and the stars can truly shine in the night sky.

In considering the necessity of these dark sky havens, we must first examine why most night skies are not all like this in the first place. In most populated, industrialized areas, artificial light from sources ranging from streetlights to factories to commercial properties cause intensive light pollution—casting a dusky yellow stain over the sky's natural glow. This excessive artificial light cannot only harm wildlife and the earth's atmosphere, but also people. For example, blue LED light can disrupt sleep rhythm and increase risk of cardiovascular disease and cancer, according to the American Medical Association. Thus, many environmental advocates have pushed for state-level legislation on limiting artificial light, particularly in places like Colorado.

In addition to local legislation to restrict light pollution, acquiring a dark sky status requires direct effort from an entire community. While local governments need to measure light levels regularly and curtail public lights, community residents must reduce their own light usage—especially for any outdoor lighting that can spread to other properties. On a wider scale, residents can implement smarter, greener lighting with LED technology, which can reduce both your electricity bill and carbon footprint by maximizing energy efficiency, which consequently lowers greenhouse gas emissions from power plants.

Reducing light pollution and creating dark sky havens can be important elements in environmental preservation, economic development and public health. In many rural areas, dark sky initiatives promote tourism for stargazing and meteor-shower watching—luring more visitors and thus more money. Even more, preserving natural nighttime darkness is a worthwhile investment for public well-being. "A view of the night sky can soothe the soul," says John Barentine, astronomer and policy director of International Dark-Sky Association. "In an era when so many people are suffering from the sensory overload of modern life, as well as what psychologists are calling 'nature deficit syndrome,' the night sky offers calm, quiet contemplation."

Though the International Dark-Sky Association's standards for managing artificial light are high and certification can take years, dark sky zone applications have expanded widely in Colorado, including the towns of Crestone, Cuchara, Paonia, Pagosa Springs, Naturita, Nucla and La Veta. In the surrounding Rocky Mountain region, towns in states like Arizona, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming have filed at least 10 applications for dark sky certification. Along with the 25 dark sky towns in the U.S. that you can visit, there are also 77 dark sky designated parks around the nation where you can lay out a blanket after sunset and bask in the nocturnal wonders of starry nights.



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and night
shift
assemblers!

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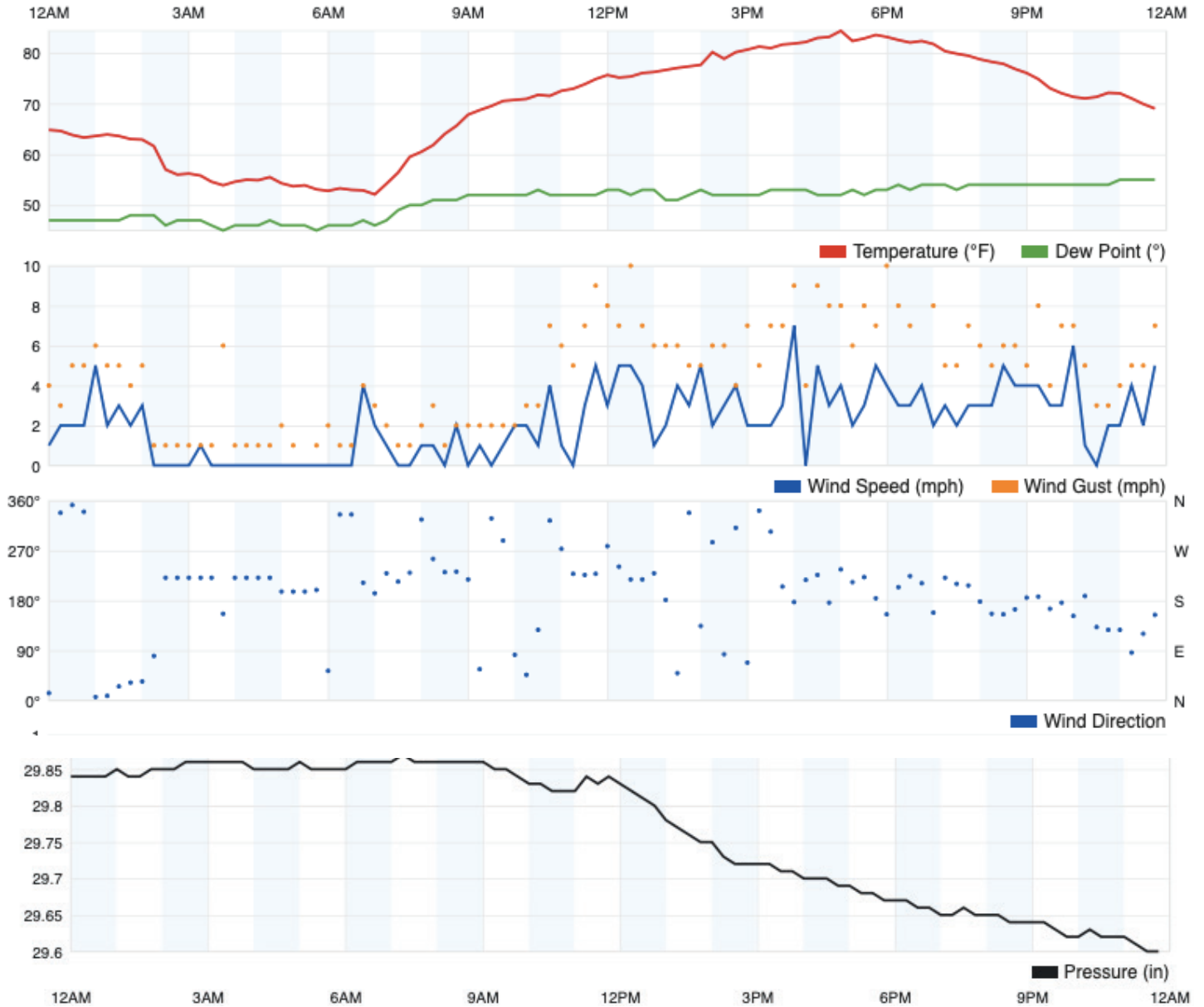
Britton



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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday	Monday Night	Tuesday
				
Chance Showers and Breezy	Partly Cloudy and Breezy then Mostly Clear	Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Sunny
High: 75 °F	Low: 45 °F	High: 73 °F	Low: 48 °F	High: 88 °F



Today

- *Showers & Thunder This Morning*
- *Light Showers This Afternoon*
- *Windy (30-40mph)*
- *Highs: Mid 70s*

Tonight

- *Clearing & Chilly*
- *Lows: 40s*

Monday

- *Breezy & Clear*
- *Highs: Mid 60s to Mid 70s*

National Weather Service Aberdeen, SD

Graphic Created 6/20/2021 4:15 AM



Weak showers and storms will fall apart through the mid to late morning hours, replaced with gusty north winds and light rain showers. Cool, dry air will dominate the forecast for the first half of the work week.

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Today in Weather History

June 20, 1957: An F2 tornado moved ENE from near Rockham to near Athol and Ashton. One person was killed as a mobile home was destroyed near the start of the path. Four barns were destroyed, and one house was unroofed.

Also on this day, an F5 tornado cut a swath through Fargo, North Dakota killing 10 and injuring at least 103 people. This tornado was the northernmost confirmed F5 tornado until the Elie, Manitoba tornado on June 22, 2007.

June 20, 1989: A meteorological "hot flash" hit Pierre. Descending air from collapsing thunderstorms caused the temperature in Pierre to warm from 86 degrees at midnight to 96 at one a.m. and to 104 at 2 a.m. Pierre's record high for the date of 105 degrees in 1974.

1970: Nesbyen, Norway reached 96 degrees on this day, becoming the warmest temperature recorded in Norway.

2001: Large hail driven by strong thunderstorm winds raked Denver International and front-range airports. Wind gusting to 54 mph along with hail as large as 2 inches in diameter punched at least 14 thousand holes and cracks in the flat roofs of several buildings at Denver International Airport. Also, 93 planes and hundreds of cars were damaged. About 100 flights had to be canceled stranding 1500 travelers. The Airport was completely shut down for about 20 minutes. The storm also damaged ground avoidance radar used to track planes on the ground to prevent collisions. Damage was estimated at 10 million dollars not counting the cost to the 93 airliners. The storm moved south and struck Watkins Colorado with hail as large as 2 1/2 inches in diameter and winds gusting to 60 mph.

1682 - A major tornado ripped through southwestern Connecticut, passing through Stratford, Milford, and New Haven, and then into Long Island Sound. (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders - 1987)

1921 - Circle, MT, received 11.5 inches of rain in 24 hours, a record for the state. The town of Circle received a total of 16.79 inches of rain that month to establish a rainfall record for any town in Montana for any month of the year. (The Weather Channel)

1928 - A farmer near Greensburg, KS, looked up into the heart of a tornado. He described its walls as rotating clouds lit with constant flashes of lightning and a strong gassy odor with a screaming, hissing sound. (The Weather Channel)

1964 - A squall line producing large hail swept through central Illinois. A second squall line moved through during the early morning hours of the 21st, and a third one moved through shortly after dawn. The series of hailstorms caused nine million dollars damage. Hailstones as large as grapefruit caused heavy damage to trees, utility lines, crops and buildings. The thunderstorms also produced as much as five inches of rain in an eight hour period. (David Ludlum)

1987 - Thunderstorms prevailed east of the Rockies, producing severe weather in the Central High Plains Region. Thunderstorms spawned four tornadoes in Colorado, and produced wind gusts to 70 mph at Goodland, KS. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Thirty-eight cities in the central U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date. Afternoon highs of 97 degrees at Flint, MI, and 104 degrees at Chicago, IL, equalled records for the month of June. Thunderstorms in North Dakota produced baseball size hail near Kief, and wind gusts to 100 mph near McGregor. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - An early morning thunderstorm produced wind gusts to 61 mph at Pierre, SD, and the hot thunderstorm winds raised the temperature from 86 degrees at midnight to 96 degrees by 1 AM, and 104 degrees by 2 AM. Butte, MT, and Yellowstone Park, WY, reported snow that afternoon. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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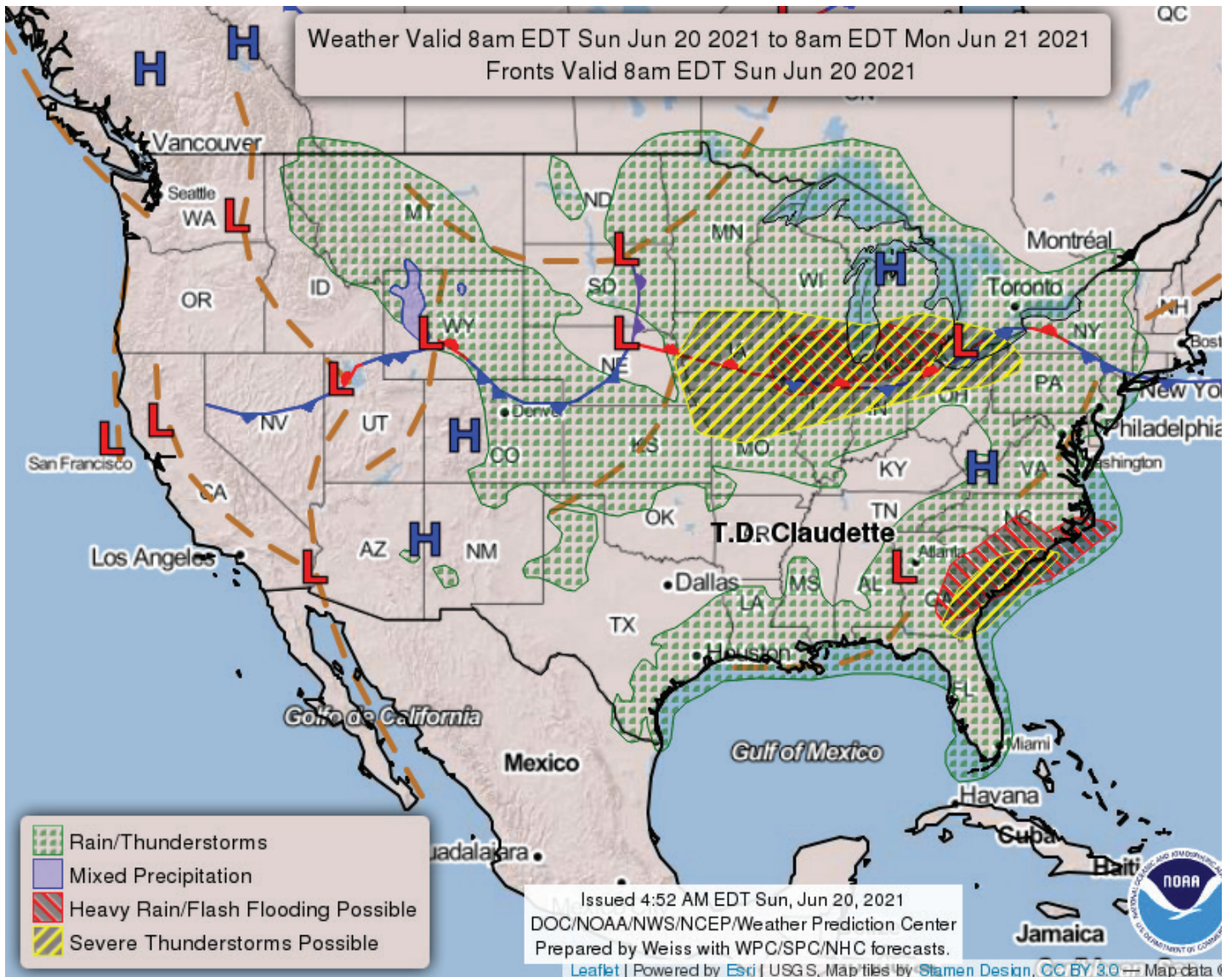
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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 84 °F at 5:00 PM
Low Temp: 52 °F at 6:53 AM
Wind: 12 mph at 3:04 PM
Precip: .04 this morning

Today's Info

Record High: 101° in 1988
Record Low: 34° in 1969
Average High: 82°F
Average Low: 56°F
Average Precip in June.: 2.29
Precip to date in June.: 0.57
Average Precip to date: 9.54
Precip Year to Date: 4.54
Sunset Tonight: 9:26 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:45 a.m.



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TRIUMPH THROUGH TRAGEDY

A fierce tornado destroyed his home. Finally, when the rains stopped and floods subsided, he returned to look at the damage. All he had once valued and worked for was destroyed. His home was gone. His belongings were washed away. There was little more than the foundation and piles of rubble.

But as he stood at the site, dazed and discouraged, he noticed something shining in the midst of a pile of debris. As he looked closely at the glimmering object, he discovered it was a large piece of gold bullion. He did his best to find the owner but to no avail. No one knew where the gold came from or who it belonged to.

After waiting for weeks for an owner to come identify the gold, he was told by his attorney and the police department to keep what he had found. What the flood destroyed and took from him also brought him wealth.

Many of us have stories that are similar to this one. What we once viewed as a tragedy turned into a triumph. What we once believed was a trial and time of testing eventually turned into a gracious gift of God's grace as He protected us from being destroyed by the Enemy.

Beethoven, the great musician, lost his hearing but became a great composer and his music still lives. John Bunyan was thrown into prison and forgotten for years. But through his adversity he glorified God by writing *Pilgrim's Progress*. Fanny Crosby lost her sight but wrote over 6,000 Christian songs that we continue to sing.

"We went through fire and water," wrote the Psalmist, "but you brought us to a place of abundance!"

Prayer: Enable us, Father, to trust in the wisdom of the plan You have designed for each of our lives. As we walk through the valleys of life, stand with us. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: We went through fire and flood, but you brought us to a place of great abundance. Psalm 66:12

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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 **Postponed to Aug. 28th:** 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
08/28/2021 Lions Club Crazy Golf Fest 9am Olive Grove Golf Course
09/11/2021 Lions Club Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales 8am-3pm (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
09/12/2021 Sunflower Classic Golf Tournament at Olive Grove
09/18-19 Groton Fly-In/Drive-In, Groton Municipal Airport
10/08/2021 Lake Region Marching Band Festival (2nd Friday in October)
10/09/2021 Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm (Saturday before Columbus Day)
10/29/2021 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm
10/31/2021 Groton United Methodist Trunk or Treat (Halloween)
11/13/2021 Legion Post #39 Turkey Party (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)
11/25/2021 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1pm (Thanksgiving)
12/11/2021 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services 9am-Noon

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News from the Associated Press

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

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

Dakota Cash

09-10-21-25-33

(nine, ten, twenty-one, twenty-five, thirty-three)

Estimated jackpot: \$59,000

Lotto America

24-35-39-42-45, Star Ball: 6, ASB: 5

(twenty-four, thirty-five, thirty-nine, forty-two, forty-five; Star Ball: six; ASB: five)

Estimated jackpot: \$7.22 million

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$40 million

Powerball

04-22-35-38-39, Powerball: 20, Power Play: 2

(four, twenty-two, thirty-five, thirty-eight, thirty-nine; Powerball: twenty; Power Play: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$52 million

Man who brought baseball back to Brandon killed in crash

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A man responsible for bringing amateur baseball back to his hometown of Brandon has been killed in a vehicle crash in Minnesota.

The Argus Leader reports 26-year-old Jacob Mulder was killed in a two-car automobile crash near Luverne, Minnesota on Thursday morning.

Mulder, 26, and Matthew A. Crawford, 44, of Slayton, Minnesota, collided head on in pickup trucks shortly before 6 a.m. on Minnesota Highway 23 in Springfield Township, the Minnesota State Patrol said. Both men were killed.

Mulder was instrumental in bringing amateur baseball back to Brandon. After the Brandon Merchants left for Sioux Falls to become the Sioux Falls Brewers in 2012, Mulder, a recent Brandon Valley High School graduate and just 19 at the time, was able to talk his older brother, Josh, into managing the team. The two collaborated and formed the Brandon Valley Rats.

Jacob Mulder played catcher for the Rats, and his twin brother, Jared, played infield.

Jacob Mulder would have celebrated his 27th birthday on June 29. He and his wife, Morgan Mulder, were married in July 2020 and were expecting their first child in November.

US sends Taiwan 2.5 million vaccine doses, tripling pledge

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP) — The U.S. sent 2.5 million doses of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine to Taiwan on Sunday, tripling an earlier pledge in a donation with both public health and geopolitical meaning.

The shipment arrived on a China Airlines cargo plane that had left Memphis the previous day. Health Minister Chen Shih-chung and Brent Christensen, the top U.S. official in Taiwan, were among those who welcomed the plane on the tarmac at the airport outside of the capital, Taipei.

Chen said that America was showing its friendship as Taiwan faces its most severe outbreak. "When I saw these vaccines coming down the plane, I was really touched," he said over the noise inside a building where the boxes of vaccines, some with U.S. flags on them, had been brought on wheeled dollies.

Taiwan, which had been relatively unscathed by the virus, has been caught off guard by a surge in new cases since May and is now scrambling to get vaccines. The COVID-19 death toll on the island of 24 million

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people has jumped to 549, from only about a dozen prior to the outbreak.

The U.S. donation also signals its support for Taiwan in the face of growing pressure from China, which claims the self-governing island off its east coast as its territory. The U.S. does not have formal diplomatic ties with Taiwan under what is known as the one-China policy, but is legally bound by its own laws to ensure that Taiwan can defend itself.

"These vaccines are proof of America's commitment to Taiwan," said Christensen, the director of the American Institute in Taiwan, the de facto U.S. Embassy. "Taiwan is a family member to the world's democratic countries."

The U.S. promised 750,000 vaccine doses for Taiwan earlier this month, sending Sen. Tammy Duckworth and two of her Senate colleagues to the island aboard a military transport plane to make the announcement. Taiwan has ordered 5.05 million doses directly from Moderna but so far received only 390,000, including a second shipment that arrived Friday.

Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen said the U.S. had decided to increase the donation through efforts on both sides over the past two weeks.

In a Facebook post, Tsai joined the U.S. in drawing attention to their shared democratic systems. China, which has been ruled single-handedly by the Communist Party since 1949, says Taiwan must eventually come under its control and reserves the right to use force if necessary.

"Whether it is for regional peace and stability or the virus that is a common human adversary, we will continue to uphold common ideas and work together," Tsai wrote in Chinese.

She has accused China of blocking Taiwan from getting the Pfizer vaccine through BioNTech, the German co-developer. Chinese officials have repeatedly denied the charge, and say China is willing to provide vaccines to Taiwan. Taiwanese law, however, bans the import of Chinese-made medicine.

The U.S. donation follows Japan's shipment of 1.24 million doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine in early June. Taiwan has ordered 10 million doses from AstraZeneca but has yet to receive most of them.

The outbreak, which has eased somewhat, has spurred the government to try to expand testing and vaccination. Health authorities on Sunday reported 107 new locally spread cases, the lowest in more than two months.

Israeli PM: World powers must 'wake up' on Iran nuke deal

By ILAN BEN ZION Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett on Sunday opened his first Cabinet meeting since swearing in his new coalition government last week with a condemnation of the new Iranian president. He said Iran's presidential election was a sign for world powers to "wake up" before returning to a nuclear agreement with Tehran.

Iran's hard-line judiciary chief, Ebrahim Raisi, was elected Saturday with 62% of the vote amid a historically low voter turnout. He is sanctioned by the U.S. in part over his involvement in the mass execution of thousands of political prisoners in 1988, at the end of the Iran-Iraq war. Raisi has not commented specifically on the event.

Bennett said at the Cabinet meeting in Jerusalem that "of all the people that (Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali) Khamenei could have chosen, he chose the hangman of Tehran, the man infamous among Iranians and across the world for leading the death committees that executed thousands of innocent Iranian citizens throughout the years."

Iran and world powers were set to resume indirect talks in Vienna on Sunday to resurrect Tehran's tattered 2015 nuclear deal, which granted Iran sanctions relief in exchange for curbs on its nuclear program.

For weeks, Iranian and American diplomats have been negotiating a return to the accord in the Austrian capital through European intermediaries.

Sunday's talks are the first since the election of Raisi, which will put hard-liners firmly in control across Iran's government.

The landmark nuclear deal between world powers and Iran, which Israel opposed, collapsed after Presi-

dent Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew the United States from the accord in 2018. That decision has seen Iran, over time, abandon every limitation on enrichment and Tehran is currently enriching uranium at its highest levels ever, though still short of weapons-grade levels.

Bennett said Raisi's election as Iranian president was "the last chance for the world powers to wake up before returning to the nuclear agreement and to understand who they're doing business with.

"These guys are murderers, mass murderers: a regime of brutal hangmen must never be allowed to have weapons of mass destruction that will enable it to not kill thousands, but millions," he said.

Israel has long stated that it opposes arch-enemy Iran's nuclear program and said it would prevent Tehran from obtaining nuclear weapons. Iran insists its nuclear program is intended for peaceful purposes.

Earlier this month, Israel's outgoing Mossad intelligence chief signaled that Israel was behind a string of recent attacks targeting the country's nuclear program.

Bennett heads a broad coalition of parties ranging from Jewish ultranationalists to liberal factions and a small Islamist party. His government convened its first Cabinet meeting since it was sworn in last week, ousting long-time prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu from office and sending him to the opposition for the first time in 12 years.

The Latest: China says 1 billion vaccine doses administered

By The Associated Press undefined

BEIJING — China has announced that more than 1 billion doses of COVID-19 vaccine had been administered in the country.

The National Health Commission did not say Sunday how many people had been vaccinated. As elsewhere, most of the vaccines in China are given in two doses.

The pace of vaccinations has accelerated in the country of 1.4 billion people after a slow start. The total number of doses given doubled from 500 million in less than a month, according to government tallies.

China has approved seven domestically developed vaccines and recently approved two of them for children as young as three years old. Regulators haven't approved any non-Chinese vaccines so far, although they appear to be moving toward doing so for the one developed by Pfizer and BioNTech.

MORE ON THE PANDEMIC:

- US sending Taiwan 2.5 million vaccine doses, tripling pledge
- Uganda Olympic team member tests positive for coronavirus
- As Brazil tops 500,000 deaths, protests against president
- Afghanistan races to ramp up oxygen supplies as infections soar
- US families angered that coronavirus restrictions still keep them from loved ones in nursing homes even as elderly vaccinations are widespread

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:

RIO DE JANEIRO — Anti-government protesters have taken to the streets in cities across Brazil as the nation's confirmed death toll from COVID-19 soared past half a million.

It's a tragedy many critics blame on President Jair Bolsonaro's attempt to minimize the disease.

Thousands gathered Saturday in Rio de Janeiro, waving flags reading "Get out Bolsonaro." Other marchers hoisted posters reading: "500 thousand deaths. It's his fault."

Similar marches took place in at least 22 or Brazil's 26 states. They were promoted by left-wing opposition parties who have been heartened by Bolsonaro's declining poll ratings with next year's presidential race looming.

Bolsonaro's supporters have taken more often to the streets over the past month, in large part because

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many agree with his dismissal of restrictions meant to stifle the coronavirus and anger that lockdown measures have hurt businesses.

Critics say such messages, as well as Bolsonaro's promotion of disproven treatments such as hydroxy-chloroquine, have contributed to the soaring death toll and a sluggish vaccine campaign that has fully inoculated less than 12% of the population. The country of some 213 million people is registering nearly 100,000 new infections and 2,000 deaths a day.

MOSCOW — Russia's national coronavirus taskforce on Saturday reported 17,906 new infections, more than double the daily tally from early June.

More than half of the new infections are in Moscow, where cases have tripled this month. The soaring case count has caused alarm among officials, who have increased measures to obstruct the spread.

Moscow, its outlying area and two other Russian regions this week ordered mandatory vaccinations for workers in retail, education and other service sectors. Moscow has closed food courts in shopping centers and restricted restaurants and bars in the capital to takeout orders from 11 p.m. to 6 a.m.

Russians are widely resistant to vaccinations and only about 12% of the population has received a shot. Nearly 5.3 million cases have been reported in the country of 146 million, with 128,911 deaths, but experts consider both numbers undercounts.

KABUL — Afghanistan's is racing to ramp up supplies of oxygen as a deadly third surge of COVID-19 worsens, a senior health official told The Associated Press in an interview Saturday.

The government is installing oxygen supply plants in 10 provinces where up to 65% of those tested in some areas are positive, health ministry spokesman Ghulam Dastagir Nazari said. By WHO recommendations, anything higher than 5% shows officials aren't testing widely enough, allowing the virus to spread unchecked.

Afghanistan carries out barely 4,000 tests a day and often much less.

Afghanistan's 24-hour infection count has also continued its upward climb from 1,500 at the end of May when the health ministry was already calling the surge "a crisis," to more than 2,300 this week.

LONDON — Thousands of heavy metal fans were camping, singing — and even moshing — on Saturday at Britain's first full music festival since the start of the coronavirus pandemic.

The three-day Download Festival, taking place at Donington Park in central England, is one of a series of test events to see whether mass gatherings can resume without triggering outbreaks of COVID-19.

About 10,000 fans, a tenth of the festival's pre-pandemic attendance, secured tickets to watch more than 40 U.K.-based bands including Frank Carter & The Rattlesnakes, Enter Shikari and Bullet for My Valentine.

Attendees all took COVID-19 tests before the event, and don't have to wear masks or follow social distancing rules during the festival.

PARIS — French police clashed with party-goers as they tried to break up an unauthorized rave in western France, authorities said Saturday. A 22-year-old man lost his hand and several others were injured amid the violence, including police.

The tensions erupted in a field near the Brittany town of Redon on Friday night, just two days before France lifts an overnight virus curfew that's been in place for more than eight months and has prompted growing frustration among young people.

Police repeatedly fired tear gas and charged clusters of violent partygoers who hurled metal balls, gas-line bombs and other projectiles at security forces, according to images shared online and comments by the top government official in the region, prefect Emmanuel Berthier. Local authorities estimated about 1,500 people took part in the event despite a local ordinance banning it.

France is lifting the overnight curfew on Sunday.

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Life-threatening flash flooding rises in Claudette's path

By KEVIN MCGILL and RUSS BYNUM Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Forecasters warned of life-threatening flash flooding in parts of the Deep South, particularly across central Alabama, as Tropical Depression Claudette traveled over coastal states early Sunday.

Heavy rain led to high water late Saturday into early Sunday in the Birmingham and Tuscaloosa metropolitan areas.

More than 20 people were rescued by boat due to flooding in Northport, Alabama, WVUA-TV reported. The Tuscaloosa County Emergency Management Agency tweeted that local Red Cross volunteers were on hand to help those who were affected.

And, Birmingham Fire and Rescue Service Capt. Bryan Harrell told news outlets that a search was underway for a man who was possibly swept away by flooding.

Village Creek in nearby Ensley rose above flood stage to 13 feet (4 meters), the National Weather Service in Birmingham tweeted.

The rapidly changing conditions came as Claudette was beginning to batter parts of Georgia and the Carolinas early Sunday.

The system was located about 85 miles (135 kilometers) west-southwest of Atlanta, with sustained winds of 30 mph (45 kph). It was moving east-northeast at 13 mph (20 kph), the National Hurricane Center said in advisory Sunday morning.

A tropical storm warning was in effect in North Carolina from the Little River Inlet to the town of Duck on the Outer Banks. A tropical storm watch was issued South Santee River, South Carolina, to the Little River Inlet, forecasters said.

Claudette was expected to cross into the Atlantic Ocean on Monday, and regain tropical storm strength over eastern North Carolina.

Claudette was declared organized enough to qualify as a named tropical storm early Saturday morning, well after the storm's center of circulation had come ashore southwest of New Orleans.

Shortly after landfall, a suspected tornado spurred by the storm demolished or badly damaged at least 50 homes in a small town in Alabama, just north of the Florida border.

Sheriff Heath Jackson in Escambia County said a suspected tornado "pretty much leveled" a mobile home park, toppled trees onto houses and ripped the roof off of a high school gym. Most of the damage was done in or near the towns of Brewton and East Brewton, about 48 miles (77 kilometers) north of Pensacola, Florida.

"It kind of affected everybody," Jackson said. "But with those mobile homes being built so close together it can take a toll on them a lot more than it can on houses that are spread apart."

There were no immediate reports of serious injuries or deaths.

Damage from the storm was also felt in north Florida, where winds — in some cases reaching 85 mph (137 kph) — caused an 18-wheeler to flip on its side.

The storm also dumped flooding rains north of Lake Pontchartrain in Louisiana and along the Mississippi coast, inundating streets and, in some areas, pushing water into homes. Later, the storm was drenching the Florida Panhandle and, well inland, a broad expanse of Alabama.

Forecasters said the system could dump 5 to 10 inches (12 to 25 centimeters) of rain in the region, with isolated accumulations of 15 inches (38 centimeters) possible.

Separately, Tropical Storm Dolores made landfall on Mexico's west coast with near-hurricane force. As of Sunday morning, it had dissipated over Mexico. Its remnants had maximum sustained winds of 25 mph (35 kph), and it was centered about 170 miles (275 kilometers) east of Mazatlan, Mexico.

Heavy rainfall totals up to 15 inches (38 centimeters) were expected across the southwest and western coastal areas of Mexico throughout the weekend. Forecasters were warning of the potential for flash flooding and mudslides.

Hard-line judiciary head wins Iran presidency in low turnout

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Iran's hard-line judiciary chief won a landslide victory in the country's presidential election, a vote that both propelled the supreme leader's protege into Tehran's highest civilian position and saw the lowest turnout in the Islamic Republic's history.

The election of Ebrahim Raisi, already sanctioned by the U.S. in part over his involvement in the mass execution of thousands of political prisoners in 1988, became more of a coronation after his strongest competition found themselves disqualified from running in Saturday's vote.

That sparked calls for a boycott and many apparently did stay home — out of over 59 million eligible voters, only 28.9 million voted. Of those voting, some 3.7 million people either accidentally or intentionally voided their ballots, far beyond the amount seen in previous elections and suggesting some wanted none of the four candidates.

Iranian state television immediately blamed challenges of the coronavirus pandemic and U.S. sanctions for the low participation. But the low turnout and voided ballots suggested a wider unhappiness with the tightly controlled election, as activists criticized Raisi's ascension.

"That Ebrahim Raisi has risen to the presidency instead of being investigated for the crimes against humanity of murder, enforced disappearance and torture is a grim reminder that impunity reigns supreme in Iran," Amnesty International's Secretary-General Agnes Callamard said.

In official results, Raisi won 17.9 million votes overall, nearly 62% of the total 28.9 million cast. Had the voided ballots gone to a candidate, that person would have come in second. Following Raisi was former hard-line Revolutionary Guard commander Mohsen Rezaei with 3.4 million votes.

Former Central Bank chief Abdolnasser Hemmati, a moderate viewed as a stand-in for outgoing President Hassan Rouhani in the election, came in third with 2.4 million votes. Amirhossein Ghazizadeh Hashemi was last with just under 1 million.

Interior Minister Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli, who gave the results, did not explain the high number of voided ballots. Elections in 2017 and 2012 saw some 1.2 million voided ballots apiece. Iran does not allow international election observers.

While Iran does not have mandatory voting, those casting ballots do receive stamps showing they voted on their birth certificates. Some worry that could affect their ability to apply for jobs and scholarships, or to hold onto their positions in the government or security forces.

Abroad, Syrian President Bashar Assad immediately congratulated Raisi's win. Iran has been instrumental in seeing Assad hold onto the presidency amid his country's decade-long grinding war.

Separate congratulations came from Dubai's ruler Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, who also serves as the vice president and prime minister of the hereditarily ruled United Arab Emirates. The UAE has been trying to de-escalate tensions with Iran since a series of attacks on shipping off its coast in 2019 that the U.S. Navy blamed on Iran.

Also congratulating Raisi was Oman, which has served as an interlocutor between Tehran and the West.

Iran's archrival Israel, however, slammed the new leader. Foreign Minister Yair Lapid called Raisi "the butcher of Tehran" and described him as responsible for the deaths of "thousands of Iranians."

Rouhani, who in 2017 dismissed Raisi as an opponent in his reelection as someone only knowing about "executions and imprisoning" people, met the cleric Saturday and congratulated him.

"I hope I can respond well to the people's confidence, vote and kindness during my term," Raisi said.

Since the 1979 Islamic Revolution overthrew the shah, Iran's theocracy has cited voter turnout as a sign of its legitimacy, beginning with its first referendum that won 98.2% support that simply asked whether or not people wanted an Islamic Republic. Some, including former hard-line President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, called for a boycott of Saturday's election.

A constitutional panel under Khamenei disqualified reformists and those backing Rouhani, whose administration reached the 2015 nuclear deal with world powers. The accord disintegrated three years later with then-President Donald Trump's unilateral withdrawal of America from the agreement.

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Raisi's election puts hard-liners firmly in control across the government as negotiations in Vienna continue to try to save a tattered deal meant to limit Iran's nuclear program, at a time when Tehran is enriching uranium at its highest levels ever, though still short of weapons-grade levels. Tensions remain high with both the U.S. and Israel, which is believed to have carried out a series of attacks targeting Iranian nuclear sites as well as assassinating the scientist who created its military atomic program decades earlier.

Raisi also has become the first serving Iranian president sanctioned by the U.S. government even before entering office over his involvement in the 1988 mass executions, as well as his time as the head of Iran's internationally criticized judiciary — one of the world's top executioners.

The State Department said it hoped to build on the Vienna talks "regardless of who is in power." However, it noted the election's lowest-ever turnout and described Iranians as being "denied their right to choose their own leaders in a free and fair electoral process."

"Iran's restrictions on free expression and association fundamentally compromise the electoral environment," the State Department said. "Hundreds of political prisoners remain jailed, and we join the international community in calling for their release."

But U.S. hopes for a longer and stronger nuclear deal from the Vienna talks may be in question.

"Raisi's ambivalence about foreign interaction will only worsen the chances that Washington could persuade Tehran to accept further limits on its nuclear program, regional influence, or missile program, at least in Joe Biden's first term in office," wrote Henry Rome, an analyst at the Eurasia Group who studies Iran.

Iranian presidents have almost all served two four-year terms. That means Raisi could be at the helm for what could be one of the most crucial moments for the country in decades — the death of the 82-year-old Khamenei. Speculation already has begun that Raisi might be a contender for the position, along with Khamenei's son, Mojtaba.

Associated Press writers Albert Aji in Damascus, Syria, and Isabel DeBre in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, contributed to this report.

Driver rams cyclists in Arizona race, critically injuring 6

SHOW LOW, Ariz. (AP) — A driver in a pickup truck plowed into bicyclists during a community road race in Arizona on Saturday, critically injuring several riders before police chased the driver and shot him outside a nearby hardware store, authorities said.

Six people were taken to a hospital in critical condition after the crash in the mountain town of Show Low, about a three-hour drive northeast of Phoenix, police said. Helmets, shoes and crumpled and broken bicycles were strewn across the street after the crash, and a tire was wedged into the grill of the truck, which had damage to its top and sides and a bullet hole in a window.

Two other people went to a hospital themselves, city spokeswoman Grace Payne said, and one of the severely injured was later flown by medical helicopter to a Phoenix-area hospital.

The suspect, a 35-year-old man, also was hospitalized in critical but stable condition.

"We don't know the motivation," Payne told The Associated Press. "We know he fled the scene."

Police said a Ford pickup truck struck the bicyclists about 7:25 a.m. in downtown Show Low during the annual 58-mile (93-kilometer) Bike the Bluff race, then fled. Officers pursued the driver and tried to stop him before he was shot, authorities said.

Tony Quinones, 55, of Santa Fe, New Mexico, told the New York Times that he had been riding for about six minutes with other cyclists ages 55 and over when a black pickup that had been driving in the opposite direction crossed over three lanes and headed toward the cyclists.

He assumed the driver was turning into a parking lot. Instead, the driver plowed directly into the cyclists who had been ahead of Quinones, he said.

"I don't know who the heck this guy is, or what his motive was," Quinones told the Times. "But he intentionally did not go left into a parking lot. He drove his truck directly and intentionally into our group, and you could hear him accelerate until he hit that telephone pole."

Quinones said he had seen bikes and bodies flying.

After the driver hit a telephone pole, cyclists ran up to the truck and started pounding on the windows, screaming at the driver to get out, he told the Times.

But rather than stop, the driver hit the accelerator and backed out, drove down the road, made a U-turn and then headed back toward the cyclists, Quinones said.

Payne said the driver did not comply when officers tried to arrest him, but the circumstances of the shooting were not immediately released. Neither were the identities of the suspect and victims.

Officials said the race had 270 participants.

"Our community is shocked at this incident and our hearts and prayers are with the injured and their families at this time," police spokeswoman Kristine Sleighter said in a statement.

The Navajo County sheriff's office and Arizona Department of Public Safety were helping investigate. U.S. 60, the main street in the town tucked in the White Mountains, was closed in the area.

Libyan guards accused of sexually assaulting minors

By SAMY MAGDY and RENATA BRITO Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — When Libyan security forces rescued her earlier this year, the young Somali woman thought it would be the end of her suffering. For more than two years, she had been imprisoned and sexually abused by human traffickers notorious for extorting, torturing and assaulting migrants like her trying to reach Europe.

Instead, the 17-year-old said, the sexual assaults against her have continued, only now by guards at the government-run center in the Libyan capital Tripoli where they are being kept.

She and four other Somali teenagers undergoing similar abuses are pleading to be released from the Shara al-Zawiya detention center. It is one of a network of centers run by Libya's Department for Combating Illegal Immigration, or DCIM, which is supported by the European Union in its campaign to build Libya into a bulwark against mainly African migrants crossing the Mediterranean Sea.

"While it is not the first time I suffer from sexual attacks, this is more painful as it was by the people who should protect us," the 17-year-old said, speaking to The Associated Press by a smuggled mobile phone.

"You have to offer something in return to go to the bathroom, to call family or to avoid beating," she said. "It's like we are being held by traffickers." The Associated Press does not identify victims of sexual assault, and the young woman also asked not to be named, fearing reprisals.

Smugglers and traffickers in Libya — many of them members of militias — have long been notorious for brutalizing migrants. But rights groups and U.N. agencies say abuse also takes place in the official DCIM-run facilities.

"Sexual violence and exploitation are rife in several detention centers (for migrants) across the country," said Tarik Lamloum, a Libyan activist working with the Belaady Organization for Human Rights.

The U.N. refugee agency has documented hundreds of cases of women raped while in either DCIM detention or traffickers' prisons, with some even being impregnated by guards and giving birth during detention, said Vincent Cochetel, the agency's special envoy for the Central Mediterranean.

The group of teens are the only migrants being kept at Shara al-Zawiya, a facility where usually migrants stay only short periods for processing. Human rights organizations say they have been trying to secure their release for weeks.

After their rescue from traffickers in February, the 17-year-old was brought along with eight other young female migrants to Shara al-Zawiya. Four of the others were later released under unclear circumstances.

One night in April, around midnight, she asked a guard to let her go the bathroom. When she finished, the guard attacked her and grabbed her breasts forcefully, she recalled.

"I was petrified and didn't know what to do," she told AP. The guard touched the rest of her body including her intimate parts, then unzipped his pants and tried to strip her clothes in an attempt to rape her, she said. He continued his assault while she cried, struggled and pleaded for him to get off her.

"He only stopped when he was done on my clothes," she said. "I was lucky that he was done quickly."

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The guard then ordered her to clean her clothes that had been covered in his semen, she recalled, breaking down in tears.

Terrified, she returned to her cell and told one of the other girls what had happened. She soon learned she wasn't the only victim. All the girls, aged 16 to 18, had experienced similar or worse abuse by guards, she said.

A 16-year-old in the same cell told the AP she started coming under sexual harassment a few days after arriving at the center. When she pleaded with a guard to call her family, he gave her a phone and let her out of her cell to call her mother. Once she hung up, he stood behind her and grabbed her breasts, she said.

She removed his hands and started to cry. The guard only stopped after realizing other employees were at the center, she said.

"Every day they do this," she said. "If you resist, you will be beaten or deprived of everything."

The Libyan government has not responded to requests for comment by the AP.

At least two of the girls attempted to kill themselves in late May following alleged beatings and attempted rapes, according to local rights group Libyan Crime Watch and U.N. agencies.

One of them, a 15-year-old, was taken to the hospital on May 28 and treated by the international aid group Doctors Without Borders only to be returned to the detention center.

Maya Abu Ata, a spokeswoman for MSF Libya, confirmed that the group's staff treated the two at its clinic. MSF is the abbreviation for the French name of the group, Medecins Sans Frontieres.

The MSF teams "advocated for their release from detention and lobbied protection actors and different interlocutors, however, these attempts were unsuccessful," she said.

The UNHCR said it was working with Libyan authorities for the release of the five young women still held at Shara al-Zawiya and their subsequent evacuation from Libya.

The case of the teens in Shara al-Zawiya also renews questions about the EU's role in the cycle of violence trapping migrants and asylum seekers in Libya. The EU trains, equips and supports the Libyan Coast Guard to intercept people trying to cross the Central Mediterranean to Europe. At least 677 people are known to have either died or gone missing taking this route on unseaworthy boats so far this year.

Nearly 13,000 men, women and children have been intercepted by the Libyan Coast Guard and returned to Libyan shores from the start of the year up to June 12, a record number. Most are then placed in DCIM-run centers.

At some of the 29 DCIM-run centers around the country, rights groups have documented a lack of basic hygiene, health care, food and water as well as beatings and torture. DCIM receives support, supplies and training, including on human rights, through the EU's 4.9 billion-euro Trust Fund for Africa.

Libya has been applauded by the West for a cease-fire reached last year and the appointment of an interim government earlier this year, prompting visits by European leaders and the reopening of some embassies. Despite seemingly growing political stability, activists and human rights organizations say their access to migrants in detention centers is becoming more restricted.

"The guns are silent, a cease-fire is in place ... but human rights violations are continuing unabated," said Suki Nagra, representative of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Libya, who is following the reports of abuse at Shara al-Zawiya.

Even when cases are documented and alleged perpetrators arrested, they are often released due to the lack of witnesses willing to testify for fear of reprisals. For example, Abdel-Rahman Milad, who was under U.N. sanctions and was arrested last year on charges of human trafficking and fuel smuggling, walked free in April without trial.

Bucks edge Nets in OT in Game 7, withstand Durant's 48

By BRIAN MAHONEY AP Basketball Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — A Game 7 thriller, the NBA's first do-or-die game to go to overtime in 15 years, came down to a matter of inches.

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If Brooklyn star Kevin Durant was just slightly farther away — or if his foot was slightly smaller — he ends the highest-scoring Game 7 ever by an NBA player with a 3-pointer to win the series.

"We got lucky his toe was on the line and they called it a 2," Milwaukee's Khris Middleton said. "But once he hits that shot, we've got to forget about it. There's still ballgame left. That wasn't the game."

And given a second chance, the Bucks cashed it in for a ticket to the Eastern Conference finals.

The Bucks withstood Durant's NBA-record 48 points in a Game 7, beating the Nets 115-111 on Saturday night.

Giannis Antetokounmpo had 40 points and 13 rebounds, and Middleton made the tiebreaking shot with 40 seconds left in OT.

"At the end of the day, I try not to get too high, not to get too low. But I almost got emotional a little bit out there because the team really tried their best," Antetokounmpo said. "We kept our composure. We were down 2-0. A lot of people didn't believe we could make it."

The Bucks held on when Durant missed two late jumpers, the last an airball with 0.3 seconds remaining.

"We got good looks there in overtime. We just didn't knock them down," Durant said. "Respect to the Milwaukee Bucks in how they prepare, how they challenged us all series and made adjustments all series. We've got nothing but respect for that ballclub."

Middleton added 23 points and 10 rebounds for the Bucks, who reached the East finals for the second time in three years. They will play either Philadelphia or Atlanta in a series that starts Wednesday night.

Durant played all 53 minutes and forced OT with a turnaround jumper that was just inches from being a 3-pointer that would have won it with a second left.

"But my big ass foot stepped on the line," he said. "I just saw how close I was to ending their season with that shot."

Durant added nine rebounds and six assists, but didn't have enough help with injured Kyrie Irving watching from the baseline and James Harden unable to locate his shot after missing most of the first four games with right hamstring tightness.

Harden had 22 points, nine rebounds and nine assists, but was 5 for 17 from the field.

"I was just going out there and trying to give everything I can and it's just frustrating," Harden said.

In a series where the teams often didn't produce the quality of play that was anticipated between the league's two highest-scoring teams, Game 7 was a thriller, the first to need extra time since Dallas beat San Antonio in the 2006 Western Conference semifinals.

The Bucks had a 109-107 lead before Middleton missed a 3, but the Bucks got the rebound. They then turned it over on a shot clock violation to give the Nets a final chance with 6 seconds left. They threw it in across the court to Durant, who hit a spinning, turnaround jumper from just inside the 3-point line — maybe even on top of it — to tie it at 109.

Bruce Brown scored on a follow shot to open overtime but neither team scored again until Antetokounmpo's basket with 1:12 to play. Brook Lopez blocked Durant's shot on the other end before Middleton broke the final tie of the series.

Durant tried to prolong it again, dribbling up the floor and running down the clock before launching a long look that came up well short.

Lopez had 19 points for the Bucks, who were knocked out in this round last year after finishing with the NBA's best record. Jrue Holiday shook off a poor shooting night to finish with 13 points, eight assists and seven rebounds.

Blake Griffin had 17 points and 11 rebounds for the Nets, who thought they had a title contender after acquiring Harden but had their three superstars on the floor together for just 43 seconds in this series. They lost for the first time at home in the postseason.

The Nets had struggled with slow starts but put together a good one in Game 7, getting 10 points from Durant to lead 28-25 after the opening quarter.

Middleton and Holiday were both 2 for 11 in the first half, combining to miss all six 3-pointers in a rehash of their shooting struggles from when the series began in Brooklyn.

The Nets capitalized on the Bucks' misfires — Antetokounmpo shot an airball on a free throw and Lopez

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and Holiday hit the side of the backboard on long jumpers during one ugly stretch — to open a 51-41 lead on Harden's three-point play with 1:59 left in the half.

Down six at halftime, the Bucks came out of the break with a 7-0 burst to grab a 54-53 edge. The Nets regrouped and were ahead 79-74 with under 2 minutes remaining, but the Bucks closed strong to take an 82-81 lead to the fourth.

TIP-INS

Bucks: Antetokounmpo had his fifth straight game with 30 points and 10 rebounds, tying Kareem Abdul-Jabbar's franchise playoff record that he set in 1974.

Nets: Durant had his third 40-point game of these playoffs. The Nets have only had three other 40-point postseason games in their NBA history. ... Brown had 14 points after playing just 4 1/2 minutes in Game 6.

No. 7 IN GAME 7s

Durant fell to 3-2 in Game 7s. though his average rose to 36.2 points. His average of 33.3 coming into the game was third among all players who had appeared in more than one Game 7, behind LeBron James (34.9 PPG in 8 games) and Michael Jordan (33.7 PPG in 3 games), according to Elias.

Driver crashes into crowd at Pride parade in Florida; 1 dead

WILTON MANORS, Fla. (AP) — A driver slammed into spectators Saturday evening at the start of a Pride parade in South Florida, killing one man and seriously injuring another, authorities said.

Some witnesses said the crash appeared to be an intentional act, but Fort Lauderdale Police Detective Ali Adamson told reporters that authorities were investigating all possibilities.

The collision happened during the Wilton Manors Stonewall Pride Parade. Wilton Manors is just north of Fort Lauderdale.

The driver and the victims were a part of the Fort Lauderdale Gay Men's Chorus family, according to a statement reported by news outlets from the group's president, Justin Knight.

"To my knowledge it was an accident. This was not an attack on the LGBTQ community," Knight said in the statement. "We anticipate more details to follow and ask for the community's love and support."

Fort Lauderdale Mayor Dean Trantalis said a driver of a pickup truck suddenly accelerated when he was told he was next in the parade, crashing into the victims, according to WSVN-TV. In the immediate aftermath of the crash, Trantalis said he believed the crash was "deliberate."

Police said the driver was taken into custody, but it was unclear whether he had been charged.

Photos and video from the scene showed Democratic U.S. Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz in tears while in a convertible at the parade.

In a statement Saturday night, Wasserman Schultz said she was safe but "deeply shaken and devastated that a life was lost."

"I am so heartbroken by what took place at this celebration," she said. "May the memory of the life lost be for a blessing."

Spectator Christina Currie told the South Florida SunSentinel that she was with her family at the start of the parade.

"All of a sudden there was a loud revving of a truck and a crash through a fence," Currie said. "It was definitely an intentional act right across the lanes of traffic."

Wilton Manors police tweeted Saturday night that the public is not in danger.

"Though authorities are still gathering information, we know two individuals marching to celebrate inclusion and equality were struck by a vehicle," Broward County Sheriff Gregory Tony said in a statement. "This tragedy took place within feet of me and my (Broward Sheriff's Office) team, and we are devastated having witnessed this horrific incident."

June is Pride Month, commemorating the June 1969 police raid targeting gay patrons at the Stonewall Inn in New York that led to an uprising of LGBTQ Americans and served as a catalyst for the gay rights movement.

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Southwest US states bake, wildfire threatens Arizona towns

By KEN RITTER Associated Press

LAS VEGAS (AP) — The Southwest U.S. continued to bake Saturday, and weather forecasters kept warnings in effect for excessive heat in Arizona, Nevada and desert areas, at least through the weekend.

High temperature marks didn't fall Saturday, but Phoenix reached a sweltering high of 115 degrees (46 C) for the day and Las Vegas hit 111 degrees (44 C). Both were 3 degrees shy of records for the date, forecasters said.

Predicted highs on Sunday of 116 degrees (46.6 C) in Phoenix and 113 degrees (45 C) in Las Vegas were expected to fall short of high marks for June 20, the National Weather Service said.

But Phoenix did set a record Saturday for consecutive 115-degree (46 C) days, meteorologist Isaac Smith said, and Sunday could extend the record to six days.

Neither city was expected to reach record highs on Sunday of 118 degrees (48 C) in Phoenix and 117 degrees (47.2 C) in Las Vegas.

In Arizona, fire officials blamed extreme heat for the spread of a wildfire that started late Wednesday and grew by Saturday to nearly 27 square miles (70 square kilometers) near Strawberry and Pine, mountain towns east of Interstate 17 between Phoenix and Flagstaff.

Evacuations were ordered Friday while aircraft and about 100 firefighters fought flames in rugged pinyon juniper, chaparral, brush and cactus. Officials reported zero containment and scheduled a virtual community meeting late Saturday on Facebook to update residents on efforts to suppress the fire.

Smith, in Phoenix, and meteorologist Andy Gorelow in Las Vegas said temperatures should ease through the coming week but could again top 110 degrees (43.3 C) in the region next weekend.

Las Vegas tied a record Saturday for the highest low daily temperature, at 88 degrees (31 C), and Phoenix notched 91 degrees (32.7 C) to eclipse its so-called high-minimum mark of 86 degrees (30 C) set in 1959.

Excessive heat warnings remained in effect until late Sunday in the region, also including nearby California and Utah desert areas.

Juneteenth, recalling end of slavery, is marked across US

By ED WHITE Associated Press

Parades, picnics and lessons in history were offered Saturday to commemorate Juneteenth in the U.S., a day that carried even more significance after Congress and President Joe Biden created a federal holiday to observe the end of slavery.

A new holiday was "really awesome. It's starting to recognize the African American experience," said Detroit artist Hubert Massey, 63. "But we still have a long way to go."

In Detroit, which is about 80% Black, students from University Prep Art & Design School dodged rain to repaint Massey's block-long message, "Power to the People," which was created last year on downtown Woodward Avenue.

The 'o' in "Power" was a red fist in memory of George Floyd and other victims of excessive force by police, Massey said.

"We did the original," said Olivia Jones, 15, leaning on a long paint roller. "It's important that we return and share that same energy."

Juneteenth commemorates June 19, 1865, when Union soldiers brought the news of freedom to enslaved Black people in Galveston, Texas, two months after the Confederacy had surrendered. It was about 2 1/2 years after the Emancipation Proclamation freed slaves in Southern states.

Biden on Thursday signed a bill creating Juneteenth National Independence Day. Since June 19 fell on a Saturday, the government observed the holiday Friday. At least nine states have designated it in law as an official paid state holiday, all but one acting after Floyd, a Black man, was killed last year in Minneapolis.

In Galveston, the birthplace of the holiday, celebrations included the dedication of a 5,000-square-foot mural titled "Absolute Equality." Opal Lee, 94, who was at Biden's side when he signed the bill, returned to Fort Worth, Texas, to lead a 2.5-mile walk symbolizing the 2 1/2 years it took for slaves in Texas to

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find out they had been freed.

Officials in Bristol, Rhode Island, unveiled a marker that describes the seaport's role in the slave trade. The marker was placed at the Linden Place Museum, a mansion built by Gen. George DeWolf, who was a slave trader. The Rhode Island Slave History Medallion organization raises public awareness about the state's role in slavery.

A street in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, was renamed Saturday for civil rights activists Harry and Harriette Moore. Harry was credited with registering more than 100,000 Black voters. They were killed on Christmas Day 1951 — their 25th wedding anniversary — when a bomb exploded under their bed.

The final scene of a movie about the couple, "The Price For Freedom," was also being shot.

"They were ordinary people who brought about extraordinary change, and we are privileged to pay tribute to them here in Broward County," county Commissioner Dale V.C. Holness said before the event.

Hundreds of people gathered for a free concert in New York's Times Square organized by The Broadway League, the trade group for the Broadway entertainment industry.

At dusk, the Empire State Building brightened the sky with red, black and green lights to mark the day as it turned to night. Lights were used in similar fashion at other New York state landmarks including the World Trade Center, Niagara Falls and the Albany International Airport Gateway.

A Juneteenth parade was held in Evanston, Illinois, a Chicago suburb that is using tax revenue from marijuana sales to offer housing grants to Black residents for past discrimination and the lingering effects of slavery.

Sacramento's Black community has organized Juneteenth festivals for 20 years, and this year's featured a parade, talent show, food fair, the reading of the Emancipation Proclamation and even a golf tournament.

"This is the first Juneteenth where it's being recognized nationally and socially, by the masses and not just within the Black community," organizer Gary Simon said. "We've seen an uptick in non-Black folks coming here for the last several years, and I'm seeing the difference in just the conversations taking place today."

New York civil rights activist the Rev. Al Sharpton offered a tough message during a speech at his National Action Network, saying Senate Republicans who voted unanimously to make Juneteenth a federal holiday should also support Democratic bills that change voting laws and make it easier to crack down on rogue police officers.

"The celebration of Juneteenth is not a party. ... The way to deal with Juneteenth now is to deal with where race is in 2021," Sharpton said.

In Portland, Maine, Joe Kings said his great-great-great-grandmother was enslaved. He has a picture of her on the wall of his auto detailing shop. As he has for years, Kings commemorated Juneteenth with barbecue for adults and activities for kids.

"It's a little bit more celebratory knowing that it's official," Kings said, referring to his annual tradition and the new holiday. "I'm not saying we were in the closet about it, but now it's more widely recognized — and more importantly understood."

As Brazil tops 500,000 deaths, protests against president

By MARCELO SILVA DE SOUSA Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP) — Anti-government protesters took to the streets in more than a score of cities across Brazil on Saturday as the nation's confirmed death toll from COVID-19 soared past half a million — a tragedy many critics blame on President Jair Bolsonaro's attempt to minimize the disease.

Thousands gathered in downtown Rio de Janeiro waving flags with slogans such as "Get out Bolsonaro. Government of hunger and unemployment."

"Brazil is experiencing a great setback. The country was an exemplary country for vaccination in the world. We have widely recognized institutions, but today we are in a sad situation", said Isabela Gouljor, a 20-year-old student who joined the protest in Rio.

Other marchers hoisted posters reading: "500 thousand deaths. It's his fault," alluding to Bolsonaro.

Similar marches took place in at least 22 of Brazil's 26 states, as well as in the Federal District, Brasilia.

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They were promoted by left-wing opposition parties who have been heartened by Bolsonaro's declining poll ratings with next year's presidential race looming.

"Get out Bolsonaro, genocidal," yelled Rio demonstrators, some of them wearing t-shirts or masks with the image of former leftist President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva — who leads Bolsonaro in some polls.

In São Paulo, protesters dropped red balloons as a tribute to the victims of the virus

Bolsonaro's supporters have taken more often to the streets over the past month, in large part because many agree with his dismissal of restrictions meant to stifle the coronavirus and anger that lockdown measures have hurt businesses.

Critics say such messages, as well as Bolsonaro's promotion of disproven treatments such as hydroxy-chloroquine, have contributed to the soaring death toll and a sluggish vaccine campaign that has fully inoculated less than 12% of the population. The country of some 213 million people is registering nearly 100,000 new infections and 2,000 deaths a day.

"For the leftists, putting their followers in the streets is a way of wearing Bolsonaro down for the election," said Leandro Consentino, a political science professor at Insper, a university in Sao Paulo. "But at the same time they are contradicting themselves and losing the discourse of maintaining health care, because they are causing the same agglomerations as Bolsonaro."

Saturday's marches came a week after Bolsonaro led a massive motorcycle parade of supporters in Sao Paulo, though his allies and foes differ dramatically on the size of that event.

"Bolsonaro needs to show that he maintains significant support to give a message of strength to those who are investigating the actions of his government in Congress", Consentino said.

'Protected them to death': Elder-care COVID rules under fire

By MICHAEL RUBINKAM Associated Press

Barbara and Christine Colucci long to remove their masks and kiss their 102-year-old mother, who has dementia and is in a nursing home in Rochester, New York. They would love to have more than two people in her room at a time so that relatives can be there too.

"We don't know how much longer she's going to be alive," Christine Colucci said, "so it's like, please, give us this last chance with her in her final months on this earth to have that interaction."

Pandemic restrictions are falling away almost everywhere — except inside many of America's nursing homes. Rules designed to protect the nation's most vulnerable from COVID-19 are still being enforced even though 75% of nursing home residents are now vaccinated and infections and deaths have plummeted.

Frustration has set in as families around the country visit their moms and, this Father's Day weekend, their dads. Hugs and kisses are still discouraged or banned in some nursing homes. Residents are dining in relative isolation and playing bingo and doing crafts at a distance. Visits are limited and must be kept short, and are cut off entirely if someone tests positive for the coronavirus.

Family members and advocates question the need for such restrictions at this stage of the pandemic, when the risk is comparatively low. They say the measures are now just prolonging older people's isolation and accelerating their mental and physical decline.

"They have protected them to death," said Denise Gracely, whose 80-year-old mother, Marian Rauenzahn, lives in a nursing home in Tipton, Pennsylvania.

Rauenzahn had COVID-19 and then lost part of a leg to gangrene, but Gracely said what she struggled with the most was enforced solitude, going from six-day-a-week visits to none at all.

Rauenzahn's daughters eventually won the right to see her once a week, and the nursing home now says it plans to relax the rules on visits for all residents in late June. But it has not been not enough, as far as Gracely is concerned.

"I believe it's progressed her dementia," Gracely said. "She's very lonely. She wants out of there so bad."

Pennsylvania's long-term care ombudsman has received hundreds of complaints about visiting rules this year. Kim Shetler, a data specialist in the ombudman's office, said some nursing homes' COVID-19 restrictions go beyond what state and federal guidelines require. Administrators have been doing what they feel

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is necessary to keep people safe, she said, but families are understandably upset.

"We've done our darndest to advocate for folks to get those visitation rights," she said. "It's their home. They should have that right to come and go and have the visitors that they choose."

A recent survey by National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care, an advocacy group, found time limits on visits remain commonplace, ranging from 15 minutes to two hours. Some facilities limit visiting hours to weekdays, making it difficult for people who work during the day, or restrict visits to once or twice a week.

Rauenzahn's Pennsylvania nursing home has been limiting most residents to a single, 30-minute visit every two weeks.

Federal authorities should "restore full visitation rights to nursing home residents without delay," Consumer Voice and several other advocacy groups said in a June 11 letter to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. Residents are "continuing to suffer from isolation and decline because of the limited visitation permitted in the current guidance," the letter said.

Advocates also take issue with federal guidance on how nursing homes deal with new COVID-19 cases. The guidance says most visits should be suspended for at least 14 days. Some family members, administrators and advocates complain that the recommendation has led to frequent lockdowns because of one or two cases.

"We've never had a real long, lengthy period of time where we're able to have visitors," said Jason Santiago, chief operating officer at The Manor at Seneca Hill in Oswego, New York. He said continued isolation is inflicting a heavy toll. "We've got to do things that make more sense for these residents, make more sense for these families."

While the federal government recently eased restrictions for vaccinated nursing home residents, New York state has not gone along. Those who eat together in communal spaces must remain socially distanced, for example, and they have to be masked and 6 feet apart during activities, no matter their vaccination status.

That makes crafts, bingo, music — "a lot of what nursing home life is about" — more difficult, said Elizabeth Weingast, vice president for clinical excellence at The New Jewish Home, which runs elder-care facilities in and around New York City.

"We prioritized vaccinating nursing home residents and that's wonderful, but they're not getting the same liberties that you or I have now," said Weingast, who recently published an opinion piece calling for a loosening of restrictions.

Her co-author, Karen Lipson of LeadingAge New York, which represents nonprofit nursing homes, said the rules "force this kind of policing of love that is really, really challenging."

With the virus infecting more than 650,000 long-term-care residents and killing more than 130,000 across the U.S., nursing homes had a duty to take precautions when COVID-19 was out of control, said Nancy Kass, a public health expert at Johns Hopkins University. But she said she is baffled by the continued heavy emphasis on safety at the expense of residents' quality of life, given "we're not in that state of affairs anymore."

In Ohio, Bob Greve was desperate for a change of scenery after being cooped up in his Cincinnati-area nursing home for most of the last year. But the administrator wouldn't permit a visit to his son's house because of COVID-19 concerns — even though both men are fully vaccinated.

The policy led Greve to a "breaking point," according to his son, Mike Greve, who said his 89-year-old father called six, eight, even 10 times a day out of boredom and frustration and talked constantly about getting out.

Mike Greve said he pressed the nursing home administrator for outside forays, only to be told: "If I let you take your father out, I have to let everybody else." Greve said the administrator was worried about residents bringing COVID-19 back with them.

The administrator did not return phone and email messages from The Associated Press. A day after AP sought comment, Greve said, the administrator called him into the office, offered to allow his father out for a visit and said the policy would be changed for everyone else, too.

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Father and son spent a glorious afternoon soaking in the sunshine at Greve's house, where his dad spotted a deer.

"He said, 'Hallelujah' I don't know how many times," Greve said. "He said, 'I don't know how you got me out, but I'm so happy I could cry.'"

The Latest: Protests decry Brazil policies as toll tops 500K

By The Associated Press undefined

RIO DE JANEIRO — Anti-government protesters have taken to the streets in cities across Brazil as the nation's confirmed death toll from COVID-19 soared past half a million.

It's a tragedy many critics blame on President Jair Bolsonaro's attempt to minimize the disease.

Thousands gathered Saturday in Rio de Janeiro, waving flags reading "Get out Bolsonaro." Other marchers hoisted posters reading: "500 thousand deaths. It's his fault."

Similar marches took place in at least 22 of Brazil's 26 states. They were promoted by left-wing opposition parties who have been heartened by Bolsonaro's declining poll ratings with next year's presidential race looming.

Bolsonaro's supporters have taken more often to the streets over the past month, in large part because many agree with his dismissal of restrictions meant to stifle the coronavirus and anger that lockdown measures have hurt businesses.

Critics say such messages, as well as Bolsonaro's promotion of disproven treatments such as hydroxychloroquine, have contributed to the soaring death toll and a sluggish vaccine campaign that has fully inoculated less than 12% of the population. The country of some 213 million people is registering nearly 100,000 new infections and 2,000 deaths a day.

MORE ON THE PANDEMIC:

- Afghanistan races to ramp up oxygen supplies as infections soar
- US families angered that coronavirus restrictions still keep them from loved ones in nursing homes even as elderly vaccinations are widespread
- 10,000 heavy metal fans enjoy UK music festival in late st COVID-19 crowd test
- Biden promotes milestone of 300M vaccine shots in 150 days

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:

RIO DE JANEIRO — Brazil said Saturday that more than 500,000 people in the country are confirmed to have died from COVID-19 since the start of the pandemic.

The nation of 210 million people has been reporting an average of more than 2,000 daily deaths in recent days. Brazil's reported death toll is second only to that of the U.S., where the number of lives lost has topped 600,000.

Health Minister Marcelo Queiroga confirmed that the official death toll had passed 500,000.

"I am working tirelessly to vaccinate all Brazilians in the shortest time possible and change this scenario that has plagued us for over a year," Queiroga tweeted.

Brazil is registering more than 70,000 confirmed coronavirus infections every day. Just 11.4% of the population has been fully vaccinated, according to the government.

Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro has downplayed the coronavirus while trying to keep the economy humming. He dismissed the scourge early on as "a little flu" and has scorned masks.

WILMINGTON, Del. — The United States is sending 2.5 million COVID-19 vaccine doses to Taiwan on Saturday, according to a senior Biden administration official, increasing its allocation to the country amid

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Chinese pressure on Taiwan.

The U.S. had originally planned to send 750,000 doses to Taiwan. The senior administration official, granted anonymity to discuss plans that had not been publicly announced, said the increase in doses reflects the importance of the U.S.-Taiwan relationship and an awareness of "unfair challenges" Taiwan has faced in acquiring vaccines.

Taiwan blamed the Chinese government when an attempt by Taiwan to purchase vaccines from Germany's BioNTech SE failed. China has also stepped up its military activities around Taiwan, which the senior administration official said was destabilizing to the area.

The delivery is part of the Biden administration's vaccine diplomacy efforts, and a portion of the 80 million U.S.-made shots President Joe Biden has pledged to distribute

ASHGABAT, Turkmenistan — The authoritarian president of Turkmenistan, who claims that his country has been free of coronavirus, is calling for heightened measures against infection.

President Gurbanguly Berdimukhamedov ordered that Turkmens returning to the country undergo a 21-day quarantine and called for strengthened controls at borders, where crossings are already tightly restricted.

His orders were reported Saturday by the government newspaper Neitralny Turkmenistan.

MOSCOW — Russia's national coronavirus taskforce on Saturday reported 17,906 new infections, more than double the daily tally from early June.

More than half of the new infections are in Moscow, where cases have tripled this month. The soaring case count has caused alarm among officials, who have increased measures to obstruct the spread.

Moscow, its outlying area and two other Russian regions this week ordered mandatory vaccinations for workers in retail, education and other service sectors. Moscow has closed food courts in shopping centers and restricted restaurants and bars in the capital to takeout orders from 11 p.m. to 6 a.m.

Russians are widely resistant to vaccinations and only about 12% of the population has received a shot. Nearly 5.3 million cases have been reported in the country of 146 million, with 128,911 deaths, but experts consider both numbers undercounts.

KABUL — Afghanistan's is racing to ramp up supplies of oxygen as a deadly third surge of COVID-19 worsens, a senior health official told The Associated Press in an interview Saturday.

The government is installing oxygen supply plants in 10 provinces where up to 65% of those tested in some areas are positive, health ministry spokesman Ghulam Dastagir Nazari said. By WHO recommendations, anything higher than 5% shows officials aren't testing widely enough, allowing the virus to spread unchecked.

Afghanistan carries out barely 4,000 tests a day and often much less.

Afghanistan's 24-hour infection count has also continued its upward climb from 1,500 at the end of May when the health ministry was already calling the surge "a crisis," to more than 2,300 this week.

LONDON — Thousands of heavy metal fans were camping, singing — and even moshing — on Saturday at Britain's first full music festival since the start of the coronavirus pandemic.

The three-day Download Festival, taking place at Donington Park in central England, is one of a series of test events to see whether mass gatherings can resume without triggering outbreaks of COVID-19.

About 10,000 fans, a tenth of the festival's pre-pandemic attendance, secured tickets to watch more than 40 U.K.-based bands including Frank Carter & The Rattlesnakes, Enter Shikari and Bullet for My Valentine.

Attendees all took COVID-19 tests before the event, and don't have to wear masks or follow social distancing rules during the festival.

PARIS — French police clashed with party-goers as they tried to break up an unauthorized rave in western France, authorities said Saturday. A 22-year-old man lost his hand and several others were injured amid

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the violence, including police.

The tensions erupted in a field near the Brittany town of Redon on Friday night, just two days before France lifts an overnight virus curfew that's been in place for more than eight months and has prompted growing frustration among young people.

Police repeatedly fired tear gas and charged clusters of violent partygoers who hurled metal balls, gas-line bombs and other projectiles at security forces, according to images shared online and comments by the top government official in the region, prefect Emmanuel Berthier. Local authorities estimated about 1,500 people took part in the event despite a local ordinance banning it.

France is lifting the overnight curfew on Sunday.

ROCHESTER, New York — Pandemic restrictions are falling away almost everywhere — except inside many of America's nursing homes. Rules designed to protect the nation's most vulnerable from COVID-19 are still being enforced even though 75% of nursing home residents are now vaccinated and infections and deaths have plummeted.

Frustration has set in as families around the country visit their moms and, this Father's Day weekend, their dads. Hugs and kisses are still discouraged or banned in some nursing homes. Residents are dining in relative isolation and playing bingo and doing crafts at a distance. Visits are limited and must be kept short, and are cut off entirely if someone tests positive.

Family members and advocates question the need for such restrictions at this stage of the pandemic, when the risk is comparatively low. They say the measures are now just prolonging older people's isolation and accelerating their mental and physical decline.

"They have protected them to death," said Denise Gracely, whose 80-year-old mother, Marian Rauenzahn, lives in a nursing home in Topton, Pennsylvania.

Rauenzahn had COVID-19 and then lost part of a leg to gangrene, but Gracely said what she struggled with the most was enforced solitude, going from six-day-a-week visits to none at all.

Rauenzahn's daughters eventually won the right to see her once a week, and the nursing home now says it plans to relax the rules on visits for all residents in late June.

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — The sultanate of Oman has lurched back into a strict nightly lockdown as it struggles to curb a major surge in severe coronavirus cases that has overwhelmed hospitals.

Mere weeks after lifting most restrictions amid its vaccination campaign, the country on Saturday announced a wide-ranging movement ban and the shutdown of all public places and nonessential businesses from 8 p.m. to 4 a.m.

Daily coronavirus infections have more than tripled in the last month in the Gulf Arab state. Doctors struggling to handle the influx of new patients have reported bed and staff shortages at major hospitals.

Officials this week detected several cases of what's known as "black fungus" in COVID-19 patients, a potentially fatal infection that also has spread quickly among virus patients in India.

Oman has recorded more than 242,700 infections and 2,600 deaths. Its inoculation campaign has lagged compared to Gulf neighbors as the government struggles to overcome vaccine skepticism.

ISTANBUL — Turkey's health minister says people 30 and above are eligible for COVID-19 vaccinations starting Sunday.

Turkey's vaccination program has gained momentum, with more than 1.5 million jabs administered Friday, as more people become eligible. More than 26.4 million people have received their first vaccine dose and 14.3 million people have received both doses.

Vaccines from the Chinese company Sinovac and Pfizer-BioNTech are being administered in the country of nearly 84 million people. Turkey has also announced it will use Russia's Sputnik V.

The 7-day average of daily infections is nearly 5,800, a significant drop from the record high of 63,000 infections a week in mid-April.

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ISLAMABAD — Pakistan on Saturday reported the lowest daily number of new COVID-19 cases and deaths in the past three months.

Federal authorities reported 27 deaths and 974 new confirmed cases. That brings the total deaths to 21,940 and more than 947,000 cases since the virus first appeared last year.

With a steady decline in cases, the worst-affected southern Sindh province announced Saturday that it was easing restrictions in the commercial hub, Karachi, other major urban centers and in rural areas. Authorities in Sindh said junior schools would reopen on Monday and all senior schools and higher educational institutions would follow shortly. Shrines, marriage halls and parks will also be allowed to open by next week.

Pakistan's top health official rejected reports about a shortage of coronavirus vaccine, saying millions of more doses of vaccines will be arriving in the country during the next 10 days.

TOKYO — Tokyo Gov. Yuriko Koike says plans to hold mass public viewings of the Olympics at six sites have been canceled, as worries grow about the coronavirus pandemic amid one of the slowest vaccine rollouts in the developed world.

"These are necessary measures to make the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics a success," she told reporters after meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga.

The sites had included Inokashira and Yoyogi parks as well as a university in Tokyo to watch livestreaming of the games, which open July 23. Koike said the sites will instead be offered as vaccination sites.

Some medical experts have expressed concern about holding the games, with tens of thousands of athletes, officials and dignitaries entering the country.

Fans from abroad were banned several months ago, and organizers are expected to announce Monday whether local fans will be allowed. The recommendation Friday from advisers headed by Dr. Shigeru Omi was that having no fans would be safer.

Only about 6% of people in Japan are fully vaccinated. Companies, like automaker Toyota Motor Corp. and technology conglomerate SoftBank, start inoculating workers and their families in a massive drive starting Monday.

KAMPALA, Uganda — Uganda is tightening its lockdown measures to try to stem a surge in coronavirus infections in the East African country that is seeing an array of variants.

The measures announced late Friday by President Yoweri Museveni include a ban on private and public transportation within and across districts, including in the capital Kampala. Only vehicles carrying cargo and those transporting the sick or essential workers are permitted to operate on the roads.

The normally crowded shops in downtown Kampala have also been ordered shut. An ongoing nighttime curfew will stay in place. The new measures will last 42 days.

Uganda is among some African countries seeing a dramatic rise in the number of infections amid a vaccine shortage. It has confirmed 68,779 infections, including 584 deaths. The actual totals are believed to be much higher.

The Africa director of the World Health Organization spoke Thursday of a "sobering trajectory of surging cases" in Africa that she said "should rouse everyone to urgent action."

Africa's 1.3 billion people account for 18% of the world's population, but the continent has received only 2% of all vaccine doses administered globally.

Editor of paper that endured newsroom shooting says goodbye

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (AP) — The editor of the Capital Gazette, which won a special Pulitzer Prize citation for its coverage and courage in the face of a massacre in its newsroom, is leaving the Maryland newspaper.

Rick Hutzell, who worked at the Annapolis paper for more than three decades, authored a farewell column that was published on the paper's website Saturday morning.

Hutzell said he took a buyout that was offered by the newspaper's parent company. The Capital Gazette

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was owned by Tribune Publishing until it was purchased last month by Hedge fund Alden Global Capital.

Hutzell was editor of the paper when five employees were shot to death in the newsroom in 2018.

"The murder of my five friends, Rob Hiaasen, Gerald Fischman, Wendi Winters, John McNamara and Rebecca Smith, changed me," he wrote on Saturday. "I always enjoyed the job. But I became consumed with the notion that it was my purpose to save the paper. A man with a shotgun tried to kill us — to kill me and the newspaper I've poured my life into for 33 years. I wasn't going to let it die."

"Of course, it wasn't my responsibility alone," he continued. "Together with a group of very talented journalists and other employees in Annapolis, Baltimore and across Tribune Publishing, we kept publishing."

The paper published on schedule and won the Pulitzer citation.

The man behind the attack, Jarrod Ramos, had a long-running grudge against the newspaper. He has pleaded guilty but not criminally responsible due to insanity. A trial to determine whether he is criminally responsible is set to begin later this month.

Hutzell said he's not sure what's next. But he said the buyout represented a chance for something new.

"I came to The Capital in October 1987, and promptly told Managing Editor Tom Marquardt I planned to stay for two years and then join the Associated Press and see the world," he wrote. "One love of my life, Chara, two kids, two houses, four dogs, two convertibles and one Pulitzer Prize later, it's clear I had no idea what I was talking about.

"I wish I could say it's all been grand, and I'm headed off to retirement. But it hasn't, and I'm not."

Bidens' older dog, Champ, has died; German shepherd was 13

By ALEXANDRA JAFFE Associated Press

WILMINGTON, Del. (AP) — President Joe Biden announced Saturday that Champ, the older of the family's two dogs, had died "peacefully at home." The German shepherd was 13.

"He was our constant, cherished companion during the last 13 years and was adored by the entire Biden family," Biden and first lady Jill Biden said in a statement posted to the president's official Twitter account. The Bidens are spending the weekend at their home in Wilmington, Delaware.

The Bidens got Champ from a breeder after Biden was elected vice president in 2008. Champ was a fixture at both the vice president's residence at the Naval Observatory and now the White House. In their statement, the Bidens said that when Champ was young, "he was happiest chasing golf balls on the front lawn of the Naval Observatory," and that more recently he enjoyed "joining us as a comforting presence in meetings or sunning himself in the White House garden."

"In our most joyful moments and in our most grief-stricken days, he was there with us, sensitive to our every unspoken feeling and emotion," the Bidens said.

Champ's passing leaves the Bidens with their younger German shepherd, Major, whom the family adopted from the Delaware Humane Society in 2018.

The Bidens could occasionally be seen walking their two dogs on the White House South Lawn, and the dogs sometimes would join the president on trips to Camp David or visits home in Delaware.

Major has drawn headlines for his bad behavior in the past. Major caused Biden to suffer a foot injury in November, after the then-president-elect tripped over the younger dog while they were playing. Major and Champ were brought home to Delaware at one point, and Major went through training after the younger dog had two separate biting incidents at the White House and an unknown dog appeared to have pooped in a White House hallway.

Champ, who showed his age in recent months in his graying fur and slower gait, was often a more tranquil presence.

The Bidens are expected to bring a cat to the White House to join the family sometime soon.

Queen beams as she returns to Ascot after COVID-19 hiatus

LONDON (AP) — Queen Elizabeth II was smiling broadly as she attended the final day of the Ascot

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aces on Saturday, where environmental protesters urged the monarch to press politicians to act faster against climate change.

The 95-year-old queen, a keen racing fan and racehorse owner, has attended Ascot almost every year of her seven-decade reign. She was absent last year, when the event was held without spectators because of the coronavirus pandemic. Her return came two months after the death of her husband, Prince Philip, at 99.

Dressed in a mint-green outfit and matching hat, the queen was applauded by the crowd as she arrived to cheer on four horses she owns that were racing on Saturday. She smiled broadly as she inspected one of her horses, Reach for the Moon, after it finished a close second.

The annual racing meeting west of London is a heady mix of horses, extravagant headwear, fancy dress, champagne and strawberries with cream.

Protesters from environmental group Extinction Rebellion unfurled a banner reading "Racing to Extinction" at the racecourse on Saturday. The group said four women glued themselves to their banner and chained themselves to the fence in a protest intended to be seen by the queen. She was not nearby at the time.

Putin names Lavrov, Shoigu to United Russia elections list

MOSCOW (AP) — Russian President Vladimir Putin on Saturday said his foreign minister and his defense minister will head the candidates' list for the dominant United Russia party in September's parliamentary election.

By placing Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu on the list, Putin aims to increase voter enthusiasm for the party whose support has been waning.

The Sept. 19 election for all 450 seats in the Duma, the lower house of parliament, is widely seen as an important part of Putin's efforts to cement his rule ahead of the 2024 presidential election. The 68-year-old leader, who has been in power for more than two decades, pushed through constitutional changes last year that would potentially allow him to hold onto power until 2036.

Both Shoigu and Lavrov have substantial popularity for their firm positions on the military and challenges to the West. Being on the party list does not oblige them to take parliament seats if elected.

Notably absent from the list announced at a party convention was Dmitry Medvedev, the former president and prime minister who is United Russia's chairman. Medvedev left the premiership in January 2020 and took the less-visible post of deputy chairman of the national security council.

Although United Russia dominates the country's politics and is Putin's power base, its support is dipping. A survey in April by the independent pollster Levada Center found only 42% of voters would vote for the party in the parliamentary election.

Ahead of the September election, Russian authorities have moved to stifle opposition, most notably by outlawing the organizations founded by imprisoned opposition leader Alexei Navalny. That prevents people associated with Navalny's Foundation for Fighting Corruption and his sprawling regional network from seeking public office. Many of Navalny's allies had hoped to run for parliamentary seats in September.

Memphis erases Confederate general from its public spaces

By ADRIAN SAINZ Associated Press

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP) — Confederate Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest's polarizing presence has hung over Memphis since he moved here in 1852 — his legacy cemented by a giant statue that loomed over all who passed his gravesite in a popular park.

Defenders considered him a hero for his Civil War exploits. Detractors called him a violent racist and noted his early leadership role in the Ku Klux Klan.

Now the former slave trader's remains are set to be moved to a new Confederate museum in Columbia, Tennessee — another milestone in the effort to remove statues, monuments, and now the remains, of Confederate leaders from public spaces.

As workers prepared to dig up his grave earlier this month, a white man waved a rebel flag, sang "Dixie" and launched an expletive-laced tirade at Shelby County Commissioner Tami Sawyer. Sawyer, who

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is Black, plucked Confederate flags off a chain-link fence surrounding the site as George Johnson paced behind her on a concrete platform.

When he cursed at her again, Sawyer replied: "It's not your property," and turned toward reporters gathered for the June 1 news conference.

Health Sciences Park, where Forrest and his wife had been buried for more than a century, was called Forrest Park until 2013, when the name was changed. The statue of the general on horseback was removed in 2017, after a campaign Sawyer helped lead.

Now, the Sons of Confederate Veterans have agreed to transport his remains to their National Confederate Museum at the historic Elm Springs estate in Columbia, 200 miles away.

The group's spokesman, Lee Millar, a distant cousin of Forrest, said the bodies of Forrest and his wife were in an undisclosed location until they can be moved to the museum.

"Memphis is not the town that Forrest grew up in," he said. "It's just deleting his history and forgetting about the past."

Gradually, Forrest's legacy has been dismantled in Memphis. Forrest traded slaves near the area where people of many races now come to eat, drink and watch ball games downtown. A short drive away is the old Lorraine Motel, where civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated on April 4, 1968.

Many in majority-Black Memphis are eager to see Forrest gone. The park where his grave was located has been the site of protests related to the Black Lives Matter movement. A music festival for Juneteenth, which marks the end of American slavery, is scheduled there this weekend.

"It's like a burden has been lifted," said Van D. Turner, a Black county commissioner who pushed for the Forrest statue removal. "It just gives us breath."

Elsewhere in Tennessee, activists and Democratic lawmakers have called for the removal of a bust of Forrest from the state Capitol in Nashville. At Republican Gov. Bill Lee's recommendation, the Tennessee Historical Commission voted to take down the bust, but GOP legislators argued another commission's vote is needed. No removal plans have been announced.

After amassing wealth in Memphis, Forrest joined the rebel cause. Wounded four times, he led lightning raids on supply lines and commanded troops at Shiloh, Chickamauga and other Civil War battles.

Jack Hurst, author of "Nathan Bedford Forrest: A Biography," says Forrest was the only soldier on either side to rise from private to lieutenant general.

In April 1864, Forrest's troops attacked Fort Pillow in northwest Tennessee and killed an estimated 200 to 300 Union soldiers, most of them Black. Forrest was later accused of massacring them as they tried to surrender.

Historians say he was an early Klan leader, though some Forrest supporters dispute that, saying he was offended by its growing penchant for violence.

The remains of Forrest and his wife were moved to the Health Sciences Park site in 1904, where his statue towered above passers-by walking to work or to the nearby University of Tennessee medical school until its 2017 removal.

"The statue was reprehensible and was offensive," said Sawyer, who says she received threats for her activism in getting it taken down. "It wasn't something I believed belonged in our city."

In December 2017, Memphis sold Forrest Park to a newly created non-profit, Memphis Greenspace, led by Commissioner Turner. The sale to a private entity circumvented a state law prohibiting the removal of historical monuments from public areas.

On the night of Dec. 20, 2017, a crane removed the statue from its pedestal. The Sons of Confederate Veterans sued, citing the state law, but a Nashville judge ruled against them.

Greenspace eventually gave the statue to the Sons of Confederate Veterans, and a judge signed an agreement approved by Forrest's relatives to send the couple's remains to the group's privately funded museum, where Civil War artifacts are displayed.

The Sons of Confederate Veterans paid for the disinterment, using contractors and volunteers, including Johnson, the man who confronted Sawyer.

A monument to Forrest at the museum likely will be installed outdoors, in a park setting, where Millar

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said the former Confederate general can rest in peace.

"There has been some vandalism, some spray paint, protests," Millar said of the park in Memphis. "The general wouldn't be happy the way things are here."

For Turner, the ouster of the Confederate monuments and Forrest's remains is "undoing an injustice" in a city still dealing with King's assassination.

"I hope that it gives life to the city," Turner said, "and it lets the city know that we don't have to allow our past to drag us down."

Amid reform movement, some GOP states give police more power

By FARNOUSH AMIRI Report for America/Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — After a year of protests over police brutality, some Republican-controlled states have ignored or blocked police-reform proposals, moving instead in the other direction by granting greater powers to officers, making it harder to discipline them and expanding their authority to crack down on demonstrations.

The sponsors of the GOP measures acted in the wake of the nationwide protests that followed George Floyd's death, and they cited the disturbances and destruction that spread last summer through major U.S. cities, including Portland, New York and Minneapolis, where Floyd died at the hands of officers.

"We have to strengthen our laws when it comes to mob violence, to make sure individuals are unequivocally dissuaded from committing violence when they're in large groups," Florida state Rep. Juan Fernandez-Barquin, a Republican, said during a hearing for an anti-riot bill that was enacted in April.

Florida is one of the few states this year to both expand police authority and pass reforms: A separate bill awaiting action by the governor would require additional use-of-force training and ensure officers intervene if another uses excessive force.

States where lawmakers pushed back against the police-reform movement included Arizona, Iowa, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Wyoming, according to an Associated Press review of legislation.

Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds signed a bill Thursday to expand qualified immunity for police officers and enhance penalties for protesters, including elevating rioting to a felony.

"This is about protecting law enforcement and giving them the tools they need to keep our communities safe and showing them that we have their back," said state Rep. Jarad Klein, a supporter of the bill.

The bill passed the GOP-controlled Legislature despite promises last summer by the Republican governor and GOP legislative leaders to try to end discriminatory police behavior and adopt other criminal-justice reforms.

Reynolds introduced measures at the start of the 2021 legislative session to ban racial profiling by police and establish a system for tracking racial data on police stops. Both ideas were recommended by a task force the governor appointed in November 2019.

Instead, Republican lawmakers left out those proposals and pushed through the new bill.

Reynolds acknowledged that she doesn't always get what she wants, even from her own party. She plans to reintroduce the measures next year, a spokesperson said.

Reform advocates found the quick reversal by Iowa Republicans disappointing.

"Would it have been too hard to do the right thing?" Democratic state Rep. Ras Smith asked during a floor debate over the bill. "You decided to make this an either-or, to trample on freedom, to show support for law enforcement in ways that they didn't even ask for."

After Floyd's death, Oklahoma Democrats tried to seize on the protest movement to pass bills that would ban the use of chokeholds, provide uniform guidance for body cameras and create a database of police use-of-force incidents. But none of those proposals even received a hearing. One GOP lawmaker called them unnecessary after the measures faced opposition from rank-and-file officers, prosecutors and county sheriffs.

Instead, the Republican-dominated Statehouse passed legislation to grant immunity to drivers whose vehicles strike and injure protesters on public streets and to prevent the "doxxing," or releasing of personal

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identifying information, of law enforcement officers if the intent is to stalk, harass or threaten the officer.

"I was a little disappointed because these were simply accountability measures" aimed at "making sure the public understands what happens when something goes wrong," said state Rep. Monroe Nichols, a Democrat whose father and uncle were police officers.

In Wyoming, Democratic state Rep. Karlee Provenza introduced a bill that would have prevented officers who are dismissed for misconduct from being hired by another law enforcement agency. Her bill passed the House but failed in the Senate, which are both controlled by Republicans.

"If the conversation is, 'This is an anti-policing bill,' rather than, 'This is an accountability bill,' it has a steeper hill to climb," Provenza said.

Byron Oedekoven, executive director of the Wyoming Association of Sheriffs and Chiefs of Police, said the measure was not needed. Law enforcement, he said, already does a good job vetting officers, including following hiring standards in state law and voluntarily reporting officers who are decertified to a national database.

While cities across the U.S. were creating or expanding civilian police oversight boards, Republican governors in Tennessee and Arizona signed into law measures that could reduce the independence of those boards. The GOP laws require board members to complete hours of police training or mandate that a majority of board positions be filled with sworn officers. Critics say such steps defeat the purpose of civilian oversight.

The review boards were intended to address concerns, especially in Black communities, that police departments have little oversight outside their own internal review systems, which often clear officers of wrongdoing in fatal shootings.

"It has all the trappings of making it look like the fox is watching the henhouse here," Arizona state Sen. Kirsten Engel, a Democrat, said of that state's measure.

Some states continue to introduce bills to protect police, including recent proposals in Ohio and Kentucky that would make taunting or filming a police officer a crime. But about half of states have embraced at least some reform measures.

Since May 2020, at least 67 police reforms have been signed into law in 25 states, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures. Those laws addressed neck restraints and chokeholds, body cameras, disciplinary and personnel records, and independent investigations, among other reforms.

At least 13 states enacted restrictions on the use of force, and at least eight have implemented laws beefing up officer reviews and investigations, according to the NCSL data.

Minnesota banned chokeholds. Colorado became the first state in the country to strip police of qualified immunity. Washington enacted a dozen police-reform laws, including restricting the use of no-knock warrants and designating an independent investigator for fatal police shootings. Even GOP-dominated Texas, where Floyd's body was laid to rest, implemented more uniform disciplinary actions for officer misconduct.

Some Democrats in Republican-controlled states have become discouraged in their quest to change the justice system.

"We just hit so many roadblocks," said South Dakota Rep. Linda Duba, a Democrat who was part of a coalition to pass reforms.

In the reckoning over Floyd's death, there seemed to be momentum to reevaluate the role of policing in minority communities, Duba said, but the issue steadily calcified along political lines.

"It's happening slowly because we live in a state where people are either not exposed to it, don't believe it happens or believe it's unpatriotic to criticize law enforcement," she said.

An architect of European unity moves ahead on sainthood path

By FRANCES D'EMILIO Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Robert Schuman, a French statesman who paved the way for the bloc that eventually evolved into European Union, has moved ahead on the Catholic church's path toward possible sainthood.

The Vatican said Pope Francis on Saturday approved a decree declaring the "heroic virtues" of Schuman, a former prime minister, finance minister and foreign minister for France after World War II. In 1950, as

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foreign minister, he developed a plan to promote European economic unity in hopes of furthering peace.

Schuman died in 1963 after serving as the first president of the forerunner of the European Parliament.

The pope's decision means Schuman can be called "venerable" by the Catholic faithful. It is one of several steps in a usually long process that can result in sainthood.

The European Commission website describes Schuman as "one of the founding fathers of European unity," hailing him as "the architect of the project of European integration."

The Vatican described Schuman as a man of Catholic faith.

"Behind the action of the public man, there was the interiority of the man who lived the sacraments, who, when he could, would take to an abbey, who would reflect on the sacred Word before finding the shape of his political words," it said.

Born in Luxembourg in 1886 to a Luxembourg mother and a French father in a area annexed by Germany, he was a German citizen at birth. After World War I, when the area was returned to France, Schuman became a French citizen.

A lawyer and a member of the French National Assembly, Schuman was arrested in 1940 by the German Gestapo after the German occupation of France, but escaped in 1942. The European Commission biography of him notes his activity in the French Resistance.

After the war, Schuman served as finance minister, prime minister, foreign minister and justice minister.

On May 9, 1950, Schuman gave a speech pitching cooperation between European nations to help converge their economic interests. Such cooperation, especially involving France and Germany, he argued, would make another war on the continent both unthinkable and impossible.

His plan helped see the realization of the 1952 European Coal and Steel Community, a forerunner of the Common Market formed in 1958.

Last year, noting the 70th anniversary of his speech, which became known as the Schuman Declaration, Francis praised the statesman's legacy. Francis said from that point on there came "a long period of stability and peace which we benefit from today."

Democrats see springboard for health care in high court win

By RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — With the Affordable Care Act now secure in the framework of the nation's health care programs, Democrats are eager to leap above and beyond.

They want to expand insurance coverage for working-age people and their families, add new benefits to Medicare for older people and reduce prescription drug costs for patients and taxpayers.

But health care is expensive, there's concern about deficits and with Democrats holding only bare majorities in Congress, a winnowing down of expectations seems likely later this year.

For now, Democrats are savoring Thursday's Supreme Court decision upholding "Obamacare" for the third time in a decade. The latest challenge to the law had been seen as a stretch by many legal experts, but a 7-2 vote from the conservative court was unexpected.

"I think Democrats once again know they have a moment in time, and they want to make the most of it," said Kathleen Sebelius, health secretary under President Barack Obama during the passage and implementation of the health law. "I think people are fired up and ready to go."

There is no shortage of proposals. Some, such as authorizing Medicare to negotiate prescription drug prices, could potentially save hundreds of billions of dollars, depending on how they are structured. But coverage and benefit expansions could cost an equal or even much greater amount.

Complex budget procedures that Democrats plan to use to pass President Joe Biden's domestic agenda by a simple majority vote in the Senate may also limit the types of proposals that can be considered.

"There is a sorting going on," said John McDonough, who was a senior Democratic aide in the Senate during the debate over the health law. "Not all of these ideas are viable, but you don't always know which ones at the start." McDonough is now a professor at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

Democrats' ideas fall under two big headings: expanding coverage and benefits through public programs such as Medicare and the Obama law, and using the power of government to rein in the price of prescrip-

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tion drugs. In theory, savings from prescription drugs can pay for program expansions without adding to the deficit or raising taxes.

"These are not proposals in the single-digit billions," said Marc Goldwein, senior policy director with the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget. "We're talking \$100 billion, \$200 billion or more — but in different directions. The more they save, the more they can spend." His group advocates for reducing federal deficits, and Goldwein adds that "it's my hope they abide by the basic rule that you pay for what you're willing to spend."

Early on, a hierarchy of proposals has started to emerge.

At the top of the list, and most likely to be included, is Biden's plan to permanently extend more generous HealthCare.gov insurance subsidies. They're now provided through the end of next year under his COVID-19 relief bill. The price tag is estimated at \$163 billion over 10 years.

Another health law issue involves figuring out how to cover more than 2 million low-income people in mainly Southern states that have not expanded their Medicaid programs. A federal fix is not just a matter of pumping more money in because of arcane legal issues involving Medicaid.

Also uncertain is the outlook for authorizing Medicare to negotiate prescription drug prices.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., passed a robust bill in the House almost two years ago, and the issue remains a priority for congressional Democrats as well as Biden. The 2019 legislation would have saved the government more than \$450 billion over 10 years through Medicare price negotiations, but Pelosi's tough approach to the politically powerful pharmaceutical industry is seen as a problem for some Senate Democrats.

The catch is that without big savings from prescription drugs, it gets harder to deliver other parts of the health care agenda. For example, adding dental, vision and hearing benefits to Medicare could cost about \$360 billion over 10 years.

Some ideas that energize progressive Democrats may have the hardest time getting through the winnowing process.

That could be the case with the proposal for a new "public option" health insurance plan to be offered alongside subsidized private coverage through HealthCare.gov. It's not clear whether such a proposal can pass muster under the budget rules that would allow the Biden agenda to clear the Senate without Republican votes.

Separately, a proposal to lower Medicare's eligibility age to 60 from 65 could prove tricky. Republicans are already pointing out that Medicare's giant trust fund is expected to be in the red in 2026. They say that letting more people into the program would only weaken it further. Democrats may not want to be pulled into a debate over Medicare's solvency.

"Health care has been a Democratic issue from the get-go," said health economist Gail Wilensky, an adviser to Republicans and former Medicare administrator. "At the moment their focus is still going to be on expansion. How they pay for that is not clear."

AP FACT CHECK: Putin's twisted tale on rival; Biden GOP jab

By HOPE YEN, CALVIN WOODWARD and FRANK BAJAK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Russian President Vladimir Putin faulted his imprisoned political rival for leaving Russia without legal permission, omitting the vital detail that the departure was, literally, an unconscious decision: Alexei Navalny was in a coma.

After meeting President Joe Biden in Geneva, Putin also weighed in on U.S. affairs in distorted ways as he tried to equate the insurrection at the U.S. Capitol with his political opposition at home and argued against the evidence that the United States is a more pernicious source of cyberattacks than his country.

Biden overstated the tribulations of his stateside political opponents. Republicans are not a "vastly diminished" party, as he contended in trying to assure the Group of Seven major industrial nations and NATO allies that his policies won't be shredded by the next election.

A look at the veracity of some statements from Biden's week of diplomacy and his return to the domestic

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POLITICS

BIDEN: "I think it's appropriate to say that the Republican Party is vastly diminished in numbers." — news conference Monday, when asked how he reassures allies that the U.S. will be a reliable partner in future years given former President Donald Trump's enduring influence over the GOP.

THE FACTS: No, the Republican Party hasn't withered. Everywhere you look — the Senate, the House, governor's offices, statehouses, the 2020 election results — it's potent.

Biden correctly pointed out fractures in the GOP leadership and ranks brought on by Trump's refusal to concede his presidential election defeat and his stoking of the mob that stormed the Capitol on Jan. 6. Biden's observation that "the Trump wing of the party is the bulk of the party" also may be true in terms of who exerts the most influence at the moment.

But the GOP is far from a spent force.

Gallup polling, for example, finds that 29% of Americans surveyed last month identified as Republican compared with 33% who said Democratic. That share is basically unchanged from a year ago.

Republicans in November narrowed Democrats' margin in the House to single digits by flipping 15 seats while winning in each of the races that had a GOP incumbent. Republicans doubled their low number of women in the House to 31, a record for the party, according to the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University, and added new ethnic minority lawmakers as well.

The Senate is evenly divided at 50-50. Republican governors lead in 27 states, Democrats in 23. In November, 74 million people voted for Trump, 81 million for Biden. Both vote counts were a record.

Elections for the House and numerous Senate seats will be held in November 2022.

RUSSIA

PUTIN, defending Navalny's imprisonment: "This person knew that he was breaching the laws effective in Russia. ... Consciously, I want to underline this, ignoring the demand of the law, this gentleman went abroad for treatment. ... He didn't register with the authorities. ... He knew that he was then being investigated and he came back deliberately." — Geneva news conference.

THE FACTS: He left the country in a coma; he did not leave Russia by choice.

Navalny was taken into custody Jan. 17 when he returned to Russia from five months in Germany where he was recovering from nerve-agent poisoning that he blames on the Kremlin.

Navalny fell severely ill on a domestic flight in August and was taken to a Siberian hospital in a coma. Two days later, after resistance from doctors, he was flown to Germany for treatment, still in a coma. Putin, however, implied that Navalny had made a conscious decision to leave the country, "ignoring the demand of the law" as he "went abroad the treatment."

Authorities later determined that Navalny's time abroad violated terms of a suspended sentence he had been handed in an embezzlement case that he says was politically motivated.

Nonetheless, he returned to Russia, knowing he faced potential prison time. Navalny is now serving 2½ years in prison for violating his suspended sentence terms.

After Putin's comments, Navalny's wife, Yulia Navalnaya, posted on Instagram a photo of a covered human form on a gurney outside an airplane. "I kept a photograph of how Alexei, deliberately ignoring the requirement to be registered at the inspection, 'went abroad for treatment,'" she wrote, mocking Putin's words.

CRIME

REP. KEVIN McCARTHY, House Republican leader: "Crime is rising in every step of the way." — Fox interview Tuesday, in which he contended "America's worse off because of Biden's weakness."

THE FACTS: No, crime isn't rising across the board.

Violent crime is up. Burglaries and drug offenses are among categories where crime is down.

The FBI recorded 25% more homicides in 2020 than in 2019, and 12% more violent assaults. More

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murders are being seen nationwide, including in some cities that increased police spending and in some cities led by Republicans.

McCarthy and other Republicans have tried to blame Democratic “defund the police efforts” for squeezing police department budgets and enabling crime to rise. But Biden opposes cutting money for policing. He favors giving police departments more money, not less, as long as they adhere to standards of decency.

The Democratic-controlled House passed a police overhaul bill in March that avoided diverting money from police departments. It would ban chokeholds and end qualified immunity from lawsuits against police officers, while creating national policing standards. The bill has stalled in the evenly divided Senate, where Republicans oppose it.

CYBERATTACKS

PUTIN: “From American sources, it follows that most of the cyberattacks in the world are carried out from the cyber realm of the United States. Second place is Canada. Then two Latin American countries. Afterward comes Great Britain. Russia is not on the list of countries from where — from the cyberspace of which — most of the various cyberattacks are carried out.” — Geneva news conference on Wednesday.

THE FACTS: This portrayal defies the record. Russian-based digital malfeasance is well established by U.S. officials and security researchers alike.

The most damaging cyberattacks on record have come either from state-backed Russian hackers or Russian-speaking ransomware criminals who operate with impunity in Russia and allied nations. In one such attack, the NotPetya virus did more than \$10 billion in economic damage in 2017, hitting shipping giant Maersk, the pharmaceutical company Merck, the food company Mondelez and more.

A global ransomware plague has caused tens of billions of dollars of damage in the past 18 months — hitting a company, hospital, school or other target about every eight minutes.

The May attack on the Colonial Pipeline, which prompted it to cut off fuel supplies to the U.S. East Coast for five days, was the first major attack on U.S. critical infrastructure by a Russia-linked criminal group.

While U.S. officials have said they don’t believe the Kremlin was directly involved, the Russian-speaking ransomware gangs behind the global scourge enjoy safe harbor in Russia and allied states and some of their members are alleged to have worked directly for Russian security services in espionage operations.

As well, Russian intelligence operatives famously interfered in the 2016 U.S. presidential election by hacking Democratic email accounts and orchestrating the release of those communications to boost Trump’s campaign.

Putin spokesman Dmitry Peskov identified LexisNexis Risk Solutions as the source of his statement that most cyberattacks came from the “cyber realm” of U.S., Canada and other countries, not Russia.

But the authors of that research said their report was actually about criminal online fraud, not attacks such as ransomware that involve penetrating corporate and government networks, so it was not relevant to the issues Biden raised with Putin in Geneva.

JAN. 6

PUTIN, on the U.S. Capitol insurrection: “People came to the U.S. Congress with political demands after the election. Over 400 people have criminal cases opened against them, they’re facing prison terms of 20, or maybe even up to 25 years. They’re being called domestic terrorists and accused of a range of other crimes. Seventy of them were immediately after these events, and only 30 of them are still under arrest, unclear on what grounds.” — Geneva news conference.

THE FACTS: His suggestion that dozens of Jan. 6 insurrectionists were arrested and quietly imprisoned for political speech with unclear legal grounds is incorrect.

More than 480 people have been arrested in connection with the attack, mostly on federal charges ranging from unlawfully entering the Capitol to conspiracy. They include more than three dozen members and associates of right-wing extremist groups such as the Proud Boys and the Oath Keepers.

Each of the suspects charged by the Justice Department was arrested based on a criminal complaint

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signed by a federal judge and requiring investigators prove they have probable cause the person committed a federal crime, or an indictment from a grand jury.

The cases have attracted media attention, prosecutors have highlighted many of the arrests with news releases and court records in the U.S. are generally public. The Justice Department also set up a website to list the cases it brought against suspects charged in the attack. It contains links to the charging documents against them.

So far, four people charged in the attack have pleaded guilty to federal charges.

BIDEN, on Putin comparing the Capitol attack to political opponents trying to undermine him in Russia: "I think that's a ridiculous comparison. It's one thing for — literally — criminals to break through a cordon, go into the Capitol, kill a police officer, and be held unaccountable than it is for people who are ... marching on a capitol saying, you're not allowing me to speak freely, you're not allowing me to do A, B or C or D." — Geneva news conference.

THE FACTS: His allegation that attackers killed a police officer is unproven. The truth about the death of Brian Sicknick, a U.S. Capitol Police officer, is more complicated.

The District of Columbia medical examiner's office ruled that Sicknick died from natural causes, though the stressful circumstances he faced in the melee a day earlier had probably contributed to his condition. Two men have been charged with assaulting and spraying a chemical irritant at Sicknick in the riot.

Sicknick had a stroke. The medical examiner's determination means that his death is not the result of any injuries.

Capitol Police accepted the medical examiner's findings but said the ruling didn't change the fact that Sicknick had died in the line of duty, "courageously defending Congress and the Capitol."

Metal fans mosh at 1st UK live music festival since pandemic

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Thousands of heavy metal fans were camping, singing — and even moshing — on Saturday at Britain's first full music festival since the start of the coronavirus pandemic.

The three-day Download Festival, taking place at Donington Park in central England, is one of a series of test events to see whether mass gatherings can resume without triggering outbreaks of COVID-19.

About 10,000 fans, a tenth of the festival's pre-pandemic attendance, secured tickets to watch more than 40 U.K.-based bands including Frank Carter & The Rattlesnakes, Enter Shikari and Bullet for My Valentine.

Attendees all took COVID-19 tests before the event, and don't have to wear masks or follow social distancing rules during the festival.

Promoter Andy Copping said there was a "real sense of euphoria" at the event, which runs through Sunday, despite the wet weather lashing much of the U.K. after several weeks of warm sunshine.

"It wouldn't be Download unless there was a bit of rain," he said.

Concertgoer Alexander Milas said rain and mud would not mar the event.

"In a way it makes it better," he said. "It is amazing how that brings people together. The sheer misery and joy of being around a lot of like-minded, really wonderful people. I feel like it is perfect because it's like 'Weather be damned, we are going to have a great time.'"

Britain has recorded almost 128,000 coronavirus deaths, the highest toll in Europe. The government has delayed the lifting of remaining social and economic restrictions for four weeks from the planned June 21 date amid a rise in cases driven by the highly contagious delta variant first identified in India.

Health officials are aiming to give everyone 18 and over in the U.K. a first dose of vaccine by July 19, and to have everyone over 50 fully vaccinated with both doses.

All mass events in Britain were canceled in March 2020 when the country entered the first of three lockdowns. Crowds are starting to return to performances and sporting events as part of the pilot program, with capacity limits being increased despite a nationwide surge in infections.

A Euro 2020 soccer semi-final and the tournament final at Wembley Stadium in July will be played in

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front of 40,000 fans, about half capacity. The government plans to allow full-capacity crowds of 15,000 to watch the women's and men's Wimbledon tennis finals on July 10 and 11.

Voting debate roils Washington but leaves many voters cold

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI Associated Press

PLANO, Texas (AP) — Brenda Martinez, a 19-year-old community college student, thinks the government should help immigrant students more. Donald Huffman is worried about turning 50 next week with no work available because the federal government is delaying the pipelines he usually helps build. Binod Neupane, who just moved to Texas to research alternative fuels, wants action on climate change.

The three Texas voters have little in common politically other than one thing — none considers voting and election reform, the issue that has dominated partisan debate this year, a top priority.

As politicians from Austin, Texas, to Washington, D.C., battle over the practical aspects of how to run elections — clashing over details such as polling booth hours and the number of ballot drop boxes per county — many voters are disconnected from the fight. A passionate base of voters and activists on both sides may be intensely dialed in on the issue, but a disengaged middle is baffled at the attention.

“Unemployment, climate change — this stuff should be on the top of the list, not the voting thing,” said Neupane, 34.

That disconnect is now the challenge before Democrats, who are trying to marshal public support for federal legislation that would thwart a series of new state laws tightening election procedures. With rallies, ads, White House events and a certain-to-fail vote in the Senate this coming week, Democrats are aiming to fire up their voters around the issue, hoping their passions hold through next year's midterms.

Republicans face their own pressures. Donald Trump's false claims of massive fraud in the 2020 election have so eroded some GOP voters' confidence that they say they won't vote again. Meanwhile, the party's push for additional restrictions runs the risk of driving away moderate voters.

That debate is still roiling in Texas, where the Legislature is due to return to a special session to consider voting legislation. That comes after Texas Republicans, following the lead of Republican-controlled legislatures in more than a dozen states, tried to muscle through a sweeping elections bill that increased the power of partisan poll watchers, limited the power of local election officials and prevented voting on Sunday mornings when Black churchgoers traditionally flock to the polls. Democrats in the Texas House walked out in the final hours of the legislative session, depriving the GOP of the quorum needed to pass the bill.

Since then, advocacy groups have stepped up organizing and outreach. Former congressman and presidential candidate Beto O'Rourke has seized on the issue, holding rallies and knocking on doors to discuss voting, as he considers launching a campaign for governor. On Wednesday, Vice President Kamala Harris, the Biden administration's point person on the voting debate, hosted the Texas Democrats at the White House.

“We have a great challenge before us and a fight, which is to fight for every American's right — meaningful right — to vote,” Harris said as she was flanked by the Texas lawmakers.

But Harris' message has yet to reach many back in the politically mixed suburbs north of Dallas, a potential battleground in next year's midterm elections. The swath of comfortable, diversifying neighborhoods was once dominated by the GOP but is now politically divided.

As a heat wave this week brought fresh warnings of blackouts reminiscent of the electrical grid's collapse during a February snowstorm, several voters were confused about why legislators are spending so much time on election issues.

“Making it difficult for people to vote, it's just ridiculous,” said Marcin Mazurek, a 50-year-old construction worker who only started following politics during the Trump era because he was so outraged by the former president.

Of more than a dozen voters interviewed, only one brought up the issue unprompted: Nathan Nowasky, a retired certified public accountant, Texas native and lifelong Republican whom Trump drove out of the party. He cited the state voting bill as one of the reasons he and his wife were “thinking about moving

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elsewhere, because Texas is a political backwater.”

A self-professed news junkie, Nowasky was familiar with the conspiracy theories and false allegations about the 2020 election. He believes the Texas voting bill is fueled by those ideas and illustrates the political extremism that pushed him out of the GOP. “There’s conservative, and then there’s this,” Nowasky said.

The major political parties for years have fought furiously in the courts over the mechanics of elections. But rarely does the fight become a central part of the parties’ pitch to voters. That changed when the COVID-19 pandemic hit, many states liberalized their voting laws to make it safer to vote and Trump seized on the changes as a source of fraud, triggering new state laws often billed as making it “hard to cheat.”

“It’s more of a live issue than it has been probably since the civil rights movement,” Anna Greenberg, a Democratic pollster, said of voting rights. Still, she noted, voting remains relatively simple for most citizens. The voters most animated by the issue are those who believe the system is rigged against them or those who see a pattern of racial discrimination in new laws.

“There are lots of people keeping it on the agenda even if, for your average swing voter, it’s not their No. 1 issue,” Greenberg said.

Kevin Bivens is one of those voters who’s paying attention to the issue. He followed the debate in the legislature carefully and was frustrated that Republicans brushed off Democrats’ attempts for a compromise. He sees the push as the latest in a long line of racial injustice.

“As African Americans, it’s nothing new to us,” said Bivens, who said he is in his 50s and has lived in Texas for decades, acutely aware that he is both a political and racial minority. “We know we have no power over what’s going on but our votes, and if you take that away from us ... ,” he said, trailing off.

In a December poll from The Associated Press-NORC, only 7% of voters listed voting laws as a top issue, though it gained disproportionate interest from Republicans, 14% of whom cited it.

Martinez, who’s studying to teach English as a second language, is one of those people who hasn’t thought much about voting. She cast her first vote for Biden in November, and neither she nor anyone else in her family had any issues or concerns. “Everything was fine,” Martinez said. Martinez thinks it would be nice to vote by mail — something Texas makes difficult for most voters — but it’s not an issue that drives her.

Voting may be a side issue for many, but it could still play a role in helping Democrats solidify the coalition they assembled last year. Barbara Van Hollenbeck is a longtime Republican who voted for Biden last year — but still voted for Republicans for the legislature and Congress. She says she wanted a counterbalance to the Democratic president. Now, Van Hollenbeck says she’s most worried about climate change and the economy, but she’s also confused and concerned about what the GOP-led legislature is doing with voting.

“Instead of punishing them, help them find a way to vote,” she said of voters.

Andy Wojtovec came at the issue from the opposite end of the political spectrum. “The last election was like communism,” said the 66-year-old Polish immigrant, who owns an air conditioning company and has cheered the lawmakers’ voting changes. He claimed that Venezuela helped hack voting machines to hand the election to Biden — a common, discredited conspiracy theory in pro-Trump circles.

Huffman, the pipeline welder, also was suspicious about the election, “like everyone I know,” he said. A Trump supporter, he is convinced the only reason the former president didn’t win in a blowout was some kind of fraud.

But as he sat in a booth in a branch of the Texas fast food chain Whataburger, Huffman was despondent. Though he has real estate assets to help him, he hasn’t worked in months. He says he doesn’t know what he’ll do now that the Biden administration has put a moratorium on new energy projects on federal land.

And, in a worrying sign for the GOP, he not only had not heard of the party’s election push, but he also wasn’t convinced there was anything politicians could do to prevent massive fraud from happening again.

“I probably won’t ever vote again,” Huffman said. “It feels like a waste of time.”

Hit by a ransomware attack? Your payment may be deductible

By ALAN SUDERMAN and MARCY GORDON Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — As ransomware attacks surge, the FBI is doubling down on its guidance to affected

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businesses: Don't pay the cybercriminals. But the U.S. government also offers a little-noticed incentive for those who do pay: The ransoms may be tax deductible.

The IRS offers no formal guidance on ransomware payments, but multiple tax experts interviewed by The Associated Press said deductions are usually allowed under law and established guidance. It's a "silver lining" to ransomware victims, as some tax lawyers and accountants put it.

But those looking to discourage payments are less sanguine. They fear the deduction is a potentially problematic incentive that could entice businesses to pay ransoms against the advice of law enforcement. At a minimum, they say, the deductibility sends a discordant message to businesses under duress.

"It seems a little incongruous to me," said New York Rep. John Katko, the top Republican on the House Committee on Homeland Security.

Deductibility is a piece of a bigger quandary stemming from the rise in ransomware attacks, in which cybercriminals scramble computer data and demand payment for unlocking the files. The government doesn't want payments that fund criminal gangs and could encourage more attacks. But failing to pay can have devastating consequences for businesses and potentially for the economy overall.

A ransomware attack on Colonial Pipeline last month led to gas shortages in parts of the United States. The company, which transports about 45% of fuel consumed on the East Coast, paid a ransom of 75 bitcoin — then valued at roughly \$4.4 million. An attack on JBS SA, the world's largest meat processing company, threatened to disrupt food supplies. The company said it had paid the equivalent of \$11 million to hackers who broke into its computer system.

Ransomware has become a multibillion-dollar business, and the average payment was more than \$310,000 last year, up 171% from 2019, according to Palo Alto Networks.

The companies that pay ransomware demands directly are well within their rights to claim a deduction, tax experts said. To be tax deductible, businesses expenses should be considered ordinary and necessary. Companies have long been able to deduct losses from more traditional crimes, such as robbery or embezzlement, and experts say ransomware payments are usually valid, too.

"I would counsel a client to take a deduction for it," says Scott Harty, a corporate tax attorney with Alston & Bird. "It fits the definition of an ordinary and necessary expense."

Don Williamson, a tax professor at the Kogod School of Business at American University, wrote a paper about the tax consequences of ransomware payments in 2017. Since then, he said, the rise of ransomware attacks has only strengthened the case for the IRS to allow ransomware payments as tax deductions.

"It's becoming more common, so therefore it becomes more ordinary," he said.

That's all the more reason, critics say, to disallow ransomware payments as tax deductions.

"The cheaper we make it to pay that ransom, then the more incentives we're creating for companies to pay, and the more incentives we're creating for companies to pay, the more incentive we're creating for criminals to continue," said Josephine Wolff, a cybersecurity policy professor at the Fletcher School of Tufts University.

For years, ransomware was more of an economic nuisance than a major national threat. But attacks launched by foreign cybergangs out of reach of U.S. law enforcement have proliferated in scale over the past year and thrust the problem of ransomware onto the front pages.

In response, top U.S. law enforcement officials have urged companies not to meet ransomware demands.

"It is our policy, it is our guidance, from the FBI, that companies should not pay the ransom for a number of reasons," FBI Director Christopher Wray testified this month before Congress. That message was echoed at another hearing this week by Eric Goldstein, a top official at the Department of Homeland Security's Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency.

Officials warn that payments lead to more ransomware attacks. "We're in this boat we're in now because over the last several years people have paid the ransom," Stephen Nix, assistant to the special agent in charge at the U.S. Secret Service, said at a recent summit on cybersecurity.

It's unclear how many companies that pay ransomware payments avail themselves of the tax deductions. When asked at a congressional hearing whether the company would pursue a tax deduction for the

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payment, Colonial CEO Joseph Blount said he was unaware that was a possibility.

"Great question. I had no idea about that. Not aware of that at all," he said.

There are limits to the deduction. If the loss to the company is covered by cyber insurance — something that also is becoming more common — the company can't take a deduction for the payment that's made by the insurer.

The number of active cyber insurance policies jumped from 2.2 million to 3.6 million from 2016 to 2019, a 60% increase, according to a new report from the Government Accountability Office, Congress' auditing arm. Linked to that was a 50% increase in insurance premiums paid, from \$2.1 billion to \$3.1 billion.

The Biden administration has pledged to make curbing ransomware a priority in the wake of a series of high-profile intrusions and said it is reviewing the U.S. government's policies related to ransomware. It has not provided any detail about what changes, if any, it may make related to the tax deductibility of ransomware.

"The IRS is aware of this and looking into it," said IRS spokesperson Robyn Walker.

Milkha Singh, India's 'Flying Sikh' ace runner, dies at 91

By SHEIKH SAALIQ Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — Milkha Singh, one of India's first sport superstars and ace sprinter who overcame a childhood tragedy to become the country's most celebrated athlete, has died. He was 91.

Singh's family said he died late Friday of complications from COVID-19 in a hospital in the northern city of Chandigarh.

Singh had first tested positive for the coronavirus on May 20. His wife Nirmal Kaur, a former volleyball captain, had died of the virus just days earlier. She was 85.

"He fought hard but God has his ways," Singh's family said in a statement.

Popularly known as "the Flying Sikh," Singh was the first Indian athlete to win a gold medal at the Commonwealth Games in the 400m division in 1958. He narrowly missed out on an Olympic medal, finishing fourth at the 400m final of the 1960 Rome Games.

Singh represented India at the Olympics in 1956, 1960 and 1964.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi led the tributes to the athlete and called him a "colossal sportsperson, who captured the nation's imagination and had a special place in the hearts of countless Indians."

"His inspiring personality endeared himself to millions," Modi said in a tweet.

Singh was born in a small village of undivided India, which is now in Pakistan. He saw his parents and siblings being killed by a mob during the Partition of British India, which left up to 1 million people dead and led to the creation of two new countries — India and Pakistan.

During the riots, Singh escaped to the jungle and then managed to find a train that brought him to New Delhi, where he later joined the army.

Singh's exploits on the track made him a national hero. His story of becoming the newly created country's first athletic champion has been passed on to generations. In 2013, his life was turned into a popular Bollywood film, "Bhaag Milkha Bhaag" (Run Milkha Run).

Singh is survived by a son — golfer Jeev Milkha Singh — and three daughters.

Women's college sports get boost in TV ratings, visibility

By CLIFF BRUNT AP Sports Writer

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — Odissi Alexander became an overnight sensation at the Women's College World Series.

James Madison's dynamic, endearingly humble pitcher was well known among die-hard softball fans, but she introduced herself to a national audience by throwing a complete game to help her unseeded squad stun tournament favorite Oklahoma in the opening game earlier this month. She threw another complete game the next day in a victory over Oklahoma State and a star was born.

As her team was being eliminated in the semifinals, Alexander drew a standing ovation when she left the

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field. Fans watching on TV and streaming devices were sorry to see her go — and so was ESPN, which has been broadcasting the WCWS since 2000.

Nick Dawson, ESPN's vice president of programming for college sports, called her emergence and her battles with Oklahoma "the overarching story of the event," and said she set the tone for a memorable week.

"It just so worked out that she, as a dominant pitcher, ended up paired against arguably the greatest offensive softball team in the history of the sport in the opening game of the Women's College World Series," Dawson said. "To me, a lot of that's luck. It just falls in your lap. The win is that we're positioned based on our commitment to the coverage of the event."

Coverage of Division I women's sports has been in a particularly bright spotlight in 2021 and the record-setting WCWS was just the latest example of growing interest — and growing demands for a more equitable playing field when compared with men's events.

ESPN's has been experimenting in recent years with showing more women's sports on its various platforms, and good numbers have led the network to become more aggressive. Television viewership was up significantly compared to 2019 in the four most popular women's college sports -- basketball, softball, gymnastics and volleyball. The network expanded its volleyball coverage this year to include every match of the championship on an ESPN platform.

The Walt Disney Co. owns ABC and ESPN, and Dawson said ESPN is pushing to get more sports programming onto Saturday afternoon spots on ABC. This year, ABC broadcast women's basketball games and a women's softball game for the first time.

The women's gymnastics final on ABC averaged 808,000 viewers, a 510% increase over the 2019 final on ESPN.

Ripples of the increased exposure are being felt. According to the Social Blade social media analytics site, Alexander gained more than 50,000 Instagram followers within a week of her win over Oklahoma. She has since signed a professional contract with the USSSA Pride.

"There were enough places where that story was told this time around that she's reached a certain critical mass," said Robert Thompson, professor of popular culture. "She's penetrated the culture. That is the important part of that story."

Alexander's story resonated on various levels. She's a Black player in a largely white sport who knocked off the eventual national champion while playing for an upstart school.

"I'm sure there have been great stories filled with all of these great narrative flourishes like hers that have been going on in women's sports for years," Thompson said, "but people who would have loved those stories never hear them because there hasn't been a lot of space given."

The average number of viewers for the three championship final games between Oklahoma and Florida State was a record 1,840,000, up 15% over 2019. The average for the 17-game WCWS was 1,203,000, up 10% over 2019 and numbers comparable to those from the men's College World Series in 2019.

"Finally, there is this recognition that if you show it, people will watch it," Thompson said. "And there's been a lot of resistance to that to women's sports, probably because a lot of the people managing the media outlets, a lot of the people managing the various sports venues and so forth just assumed they couldn't get the kinds of numbers that they wanted."

As the viewership numbers climbed, coaches used the broader platform to speak up.

Oklahoma coach Patty Gasso said changes were needed to make sure the sport makes positive strides as its popularity grows. She pointed out issues she had with the WCWS format, saying adding off days, eliminating doubleheaders and ensuring that games end at reasonable times should be among the changes considered. Though ESPN and the NCAA converse on those issues, the NCAA Division I Softball Committee oversees the format and scheduling for the event.

Ratings also were high for the women's basketball Final Four. The championship game drew 4,077,000 viewers -- the highest total since 2014 and up 9% from 2019. The semifinals averaged 2,850,000 viewers, the best numbers since 2012 and a 20% jump from 2019. The Final Four weekend numbers overall were up 14%.

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The volleyball championship match between Kentucky and Texas averaged 696,000 viewers, up 28% from 2019. Kentucky's victory was the most-viewed telecast on ESPN2 for the month of April.

The growth includes the number of sports getting exposure. ESPN added ice hockey, field hockey and cross country to the women's sports championship schedule in the spring, bringing the total number of women's championships the network broadcasts to 15.

Dawson said ESPN will remain aggressive about expanding programming opportunities for women's sports. Thompson said that makes sense.

"For women's sports, there is lots and lots and lots of room for lots and lots and lots of growth," he said. "If I were looking to invest in a genre of futures of American entertainment, women's sports would be close to the top of my list."

Virus surge claims brightest minds at Indian universities

By AIJAZ HUSSAIN and SHEIKH SAALIQ Associated Press

SRINAGAR, India (AP) — Sajad Hassan sat at his professor's hospital bedside for three nights, doing most of the talking as his friend and mentor breathed through an oxygen mask and struggled with a suspected COVID-19 infection.

Both were confident the 48-year-old academic would be heading home soon, until a coronavirus test came back positive and physicians ordered him moved to the isolation ward — known by many at the university hospital as the "dark room" because so few who entered came out alive.

"I could visibly see fear in his eyes," Hassan recalled.

Two days later Dr. Jibraeil was dead, one of nearly 50 professors and non-teaching staff at AMU, one of India's top universities, who fell victim to the coronavirus as it ripped through through the country in April and May. AMU's tragedy was repeated across India as schools suffered similar blows to their faculty, and the loss of their knowledge — and in many cases friendship and guidance — has been devastating to the academic community.

"The virus took away our brightest minds," said Shafey Kidwai, spokesman for AMU, or Aligarh Muslim University.

One of the oldest universities in India, AMU has produced generations of politicians, jurists and scholars. The university has been the seat of modern education for many Muslims in the Indian subcontinent and an intellectual cradle for the community. It was primarily founded to educate India's Muslims, who now make up about 14% of the country's population.

Over the last two months, local newspapers and the university's Facebook page were filled with the obituaries of its professors — all lost to the pandemic.

The zoologist "touched the lives of a generation of his students." The physician was "an exceptional clinician, teacher and human being, who mentored many generations." The psychologist was a "vibrant presence" and was "known for conducting high-quality research."

And Jibraeil, an assistant professor of history who went by only one name, was a "dedicated teacher, who loved his work and cared deeply about students."

At the height of the surge, Kidwai recalled seeing colleagues carried off in ambulances to the hospital; some returning later to be buried in the over century-old campus graveyard, which ran out of space and fresh graves had to be dug over old ones.

"It was deeply harrowing," he said.

There is no official count of how many professors have died during the pandemic, but many top Indian universities have reported situations similar to that at AMU. Delhi University, in India's capital, and affiliated colleges lost 35 teachers. In Jamia Millia Islamia, another university in the capital, four professors and 15 staff members fell to the virus.

The pandemic has been equally devastating for government schoolteachers in some areas. More than 1,600 died in Uttar Pradesh, one of India's 28 states, where many are thought to have become infected after being forced to staff polling stations, over their objections, for an election held during the surge.

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The academics were just a small part of the ghastly scenes that played out across India in April and May as its health system collapsed under a sudden, severe spike in cases that caught the government unprepared.

Some died in ambulances. Those who made it to hospitals were often left gasping for breath amid dramatic shortages of oxygen and ventilators. Crematoriums burned bodies day and night, at times in pyres outside their overwhelmed facilities.

More than 180,000 died in those two months, nearly half the 383,490 confirmed fatalities in India since the beginning of the pandemic.

As the surge has waned in recent weeks, AMU authorities and students have begun assessing the ledger of loss.

They say the deaths of educators have left a void and their grief has been exacerbated by pandemic-induced isolation, with memorials postponed indefinitely or held virtually.

"We want to celebrate the lives of those we lost, but the entire university is empty," said AMU's Kidwai. "Without that, I feel, students will feel a lingering sense of loss."

With universities still closed, the situation has left many students with grappling with uncertainty.

The same day Jibraeil died, AMU doctoral student Shah Mehvish learned her thesis supervisor, 63-year-old Sajid Ali Khan, had also died after being infected.

The 28-year-old, one of Khan's six Ph.D. students in her fourth year researching clinical psychology, said she cried and felt numb when she learned of his death. "His loss has left a void in my heart which is hard to fill," she said.

Now, weeks later, she is contemplating the challenge in completing her research without Khan's tutelage, which has left her "feeling anxious."

"The cooperative relationship between teacher and researcher takes a lot of time and effort," she said. "I don't know how long it would take to familiarize myself with a new guide."

For Hassan, also working toward his Ph.D., Jibraeil was more than just his former history professor.

The two had developed a close friendship since first meeting some five years ago when Hassan was an undergraduate and Jibraeil was his teacher. Over the years, the professor had gone out of his way to help Hassan, lending him books, guiding him in his research into modern Indian history, and even helped him out with a financial loan.

In ordinary times, the burial of a popular professor like Jibraeil would have brought hundreds to the graveyard just on the university's campus.

But due to the pandemic lockdown, people were forbidden from such a gathering, including Jibraeil's wife, Falak Naaz, and his two young children.

Following mandatory Muslim funeral prayers attended by several dozen friends and colleagues, all were ushered out of the cemetery before the burial.

Desperate to pay his last regards, Hassan volunteered to assist in the burial, helping to lower Jibraeil's body into his grave.

"I owed it to him," Hassan said.

Alone at the cemetery on a hot summer evening, with only the Muslim cleric who gave last rites and the three medics who had accompanied the body from the hospital morgue, Hassan said his final farewells.

"I've never seen such a silent and lonely burial," Hassan said.

Polarized by war, Armenia votes Sunday in an early election

By AVET DEMOURIAN and MSTYSLAV CHERNOV Associated Press

YEREVAN, Armenia (AP) — Armenia's leader is facing a tough challenge at the polls after a humiliating defeat for Armenian forces in last year's fighting with Azerbaijan over the separatist region of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan called the early election for Sunday, seeking to assuage public anger over the peace deal he signed in November that triggered months of protests demanding his resignation.

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The Moscow-brokered agreement ended six weeks of fighting between Armenian and Azerbaijani forces, but saw Azerbaijan reclaim control over large parts of Nagorno-Karabakh and surrounding areas that had been held by Armenian forces for more than a quarter-century.

The deal was celebrated as a major triumph in the Azerbaijani capital of Baku, but thousands of Armenians took to the streets in Yerevan and denounced it as a betrayal of their national interests.

"This is very much a referendum or an election defined by security — or more correctly, insecurity — given the unexpected and very much unprecedented loss in the war for Nagorno-Karabakh," Richard Giragosian, director of the Yerevan-based Regional Studies Center, told The Associated Press. "The attack by Azerbaijan, with Turkish military support, has redefined the political landscape in Armenia."

Nagorno-Karabakh lies within Azerbaijan but was under the control of ethnic Armenian forces backed by the government in Yerevan since a separatist war between the two Caucasus Mountains neighbors ended in 1994, leaving the region and substantial surrounding territory in Armenian hands.

Hostilities flared in late September 2020, and the Azerbaijani military pushed deep into Nagorno-Karabakh and nearby areas in six weeks of fighting involving heavy artillery and drones that killed more than 6,000 people.

Pashinyan, who came to power after leading large street protests in 2018 that ousted his predecessor, has defended the deal as a painful but necessary move that prevented Azerbaijan from overrunning the entire Nagorno-Karabakh region.

He stepped down as prime minister as required by law to hold the early vote but has remained in charge as acting prime minister.

In Sunday's election, more than 2,000 polling stations will open across Armenia, with nearly 2.6 million people eligible to vote. The ballot includes 21 political parties and four electoral blocs, but two political forces are seen as the main contenders: the ruling Civic Contract party led by Pashinyan and the Armenia alliance, led by former President Robert Kocharyan.

Both have used harsh rhetoric while campaigning. Kocharyan suggested a duel against Pashinyan "with any type of weapon" instead of debates, while Pashinyan brandished a hammer at his rallies, promising "political vendettas" and staff purges, referring to officials supporting the opposition as "rusty nails."

Recent media reports cite polls showing Pashinyan's party and Kocharyan's bloc neck and neck, and it's unclear if either will be able to win 54% of parliament seats necessary to form a government.

Pashinyan, a 46-year-old former journalist, seemingly continues to enjoy broad support despite the humiliating defeat in Nagorno-Karabakh and demonstrations demanding his resignation. When opposition protests swelled in Yerevan, he drew thousands into the streets to rally in his support.

During his final campaign rally Thursday, Pashinyan told supporters in Yerevan that he has visited "all corners" of Armenia and spoken to "tens of thousands of people."

"After eight months of hell, exhausted and followed by threats, curses and insults, we entered this election race. And the Armenian people welcomed us, as one welcomes relatives returning from captivity," Pashinyan told a crowd of about 20,000.

Kocharyan, a Nagorno-Karabakh native who was president between 1998 and 2008, ran on promises of reinforcing the country's shaken security, encouraging economic growth and reconciling a society divided by the war and the political tensions.

"We must overcome the loser complex," Kocharyan said at a campaign rally. "We're rejecting the crisis, rejecting the hatred, rejecting life on our knees!"

Alexander Iskandaryan, founding director of the Yerevan-based Caucasus Institute, believes that those who would vote for Kocharyan don't support him as much as they dislike Pashinyan. "It's not about people who love Kocharyan. Maybe there are some, but not a lot. The majority of people who would vote for Kocharyan are people who hate Pashinyan," Iskandaryan told the AP.

Voters, in the meantime, remain polarized.

Some continue to back Pashinyan and believe it is time to leave the bitter defeat behind.

"The back of our nation is broken, but we are strong. We have already seen three wars. But life goes on and we will always honor those who died," said Nelli Karapetyan, a Pashinyan supporter from the city of Sisian.

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Others say Kocharyan needs to win in order for Armenia to do well. "We want Armenia to be strong, ... and all prisoners of war to come back. I want Kocharyan to be elected and Armenia to prosper," Mariam Gevorgyan told the AP at a rally Friday.

"We came (to the rally) to free our homeland from the defeatist (Pashinyan)," added Narek Markosyan, who also attended the rally. "He can't stay, period. Just period. He can't stay in our homeland."

And some cannot get past the war with Azerbaijan.

Anahit Aleqyan, a 65-year-old from the village of Shurnkh in southern Armenia, says she will "vote for anyone who will make (Azerbaijan President Ilham) Aliyev shut up."

Her village was cut in two by a newly defined border with Azerbaijan, and she lost her house in the peace deal.

"Every day I come here to gather thyme, look at (my house) and cry," she lamented.

Fierce Capitol attacks on police in newly released videos

By ALANNA DURKIN RICHER Associated Press

Videos released under court order provide a chilling new look at the chaos at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, including body camera footage that shows a man charging at a police officer with a flagpole and tackling him to the ground.

Federal judges ordered the release of the videos after media organizations, including The Associated Press, went to court to request that the Department of Justice provide access. The videos are being presented as evidence in prosecutors' cases against three men charged with assaulting police.

The new videos show a Marine Corps veteran and former New York City police officer wielding a flagpole as he attacks police, as well as rioters crushing another officer into a door as he screams in pain. Still another video shows a New Jersey man punching an officer in the head.

The release comes at a time when Republican lawmakers in Washington increasingly try to downplay the siege, portraying the breach of the Capitol as a mostly peaceful protest despite the shocking violence that unfolded.

Supporters of former President Donald Trump fought past police lines to storm the building and interrupt the certification of President Joe Biden's election win over Trump.

The Justice Department has brought hundreds of criminal cases against the rioters. This week, a man linked to the antigovernment Three Percenters extremist movement was indicted on a new charge that he brought a semi-automatic handgun with him to the Capitol.

Body camera video released in the case against former New York City policeman Thomas Webster shows the man holding a flagpole and shouting profanities at officers standing behind a metal barricade. Webster pushes the barricade and swings toward an officer with the flagpole. There's a violent scuffle, the officer manages to take the flagpole away from the man, and Webster appears to tackle the officer to the ground.

Other images in court documents show Webster pinning the officer to the ground and grabbing at his face.

Webster's lawyer wrote in court documents seeking his release from jail while he awaits trial that his client got upset when he saw police using pepper spray on the crowd. The lawyer, James Monroe, wrote that "as a former U.S. Marine and a member of law enforcement, defendant's moral instinct was to protect the innocent."

Monroe said the officer provoked Webster by reaching across the barrier and punching him. The lawyer says Webster never actually struck the officer with the flagpole.

Other footage released in the case against Patrick McCaughey III, a Connecticut man charged with assault, show police wearing helmets and face shields gathered in a Capitol doorway as the crowd pushes aggressively forward and shouts at them.

At one point, Daniel Hodges of Washington's Metropolitan Police Department gets pinned against a door and a rioter rips off his mask. The mob shouts "heave ho" as it pushes forward. Hodges, whose mouth appears bloody, cries out as he's crushed between a riot shield and the door. McCaughey at one point points to Hodges and says "he's hurt," seemingly trying to alert the other officers. Hodges has recovered

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from his injuries.

An email seeking comment was sent to an attorney for McCaughey.

Democrats used the video of Hodges, which had been previously obtained by some media outlets, in their impeachment case against Trump accusing him of inciting the insurrection. The House impeached him — the second of his presidency — a week after the riot for telling his supporters that morning to “fight like hell” to overturn his defeat. The Senate acquitted him weeks later.

Footage released in a third case shows a man identified as Scott Fairlamb and others yelling at police as the officers walk through the crowd outside the Capitol. Fairlamb then shoves an officer and punches at his head, hitting his face shield. An email seeking comment was sent to Fairlamb’s attorney.

Court documents filed this week also show another man, Guy Reffitt of Texas, has been indicted on new charges that he brought a rifle and handgun to Washington and carried the handgun onto Capitol grounds. He was arrested in January and previously pleaded not guilty to charges including obstruction of an official proceeding.

Reffitt’s wife told authorities he’s a member of a Three Percenters group, according to court documents. Prosecutors say Reffitt led a group of rioters up the Capitol steps and was stopped only after officers used pepper balls, impact projectiles and pepper spray.

An email seeking comment was sent to Reffitt’s attorney on Friday.

More than 480 people are facing federal charges in the riot. Four have pleaded guilty so far, including a member of the Oath Keepers extremist group who has agreed to cooperate with investigators.

A 49-year-old Indiana grandmother is expected next week to become the first Jan. 6 person to be sentenced. Anna Morgan Lloyd is pleading guilty to a misdemeanor charge for entering the Capitol. Prosecutors are asking for a sentence of probation with community service and \$500 in restitution.

After the riot, Morgan Lloyd described it on Facebook as the “most exciting day of my life,” according to prosecutors. She wrote in a letter to the judge filed in court that she didn’t see any violence at the Capitol and was “shocked” when she returned to her hotel and saw the news coverage.

“At first it didn’t dawn on me, but later I realized that if every person like me, who wasn’t violent, was removed from that crowd, the ones who were violent may have lost the nerve to do what they did. For that I am sorry and take responsibility,” she wrote.

The powerful video footage was made public as Senate Republicans have blocked a bipartisan inquiry into the insurrection and as an increasing number of House Republicans have defended the rioters and played down the violence of the day.

At a House Oversight and Reform hearing Tuesday, several Republicans questioned Democrats’ efforts to examine the attack and said they should instead be focused on issues like border security or COVID-19 restrictions.

Wisconsin Rep. Glenn Grothman grilled FBI Director Christopher Wray on whether some of those who were arrested for illegally entering the Capitol were in fact innocent. Arizona Rep. Paul Gosar repeated his arguments that a Trump supporter who was shot and killed by police while breaking into the House chamber, Ashli Babbitt, was “executed.”

At a hearing last month, GOP Rep. Andrew Clyde of Georgia said one video feed of the rioters looked like they were on a “normal tourist visit.”

Also Tuesday, 21 House Republicans voted against giving congressional medals of honor to Capitol Police and Metropolitan Police to thank them for their service that day. Dozens of those officers suffered injuries, including chemical burns, brain injuries and broken bones as the rioters overran them and broke into the building.

Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Sunday, June 20, the 171st day of 2021. There are 194 days left in the year. This is Father’s

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Day. Summer begins at 11:32 p.m. EDT.

Today's Highlight in History:

On June 20, 1967, boxer Muhammad Ali was convicted in Houston of violating Selective Service laws by refusing to be drafted and was sentenced to five years in prison. (Ali's conviction was ultimately overturned by the U.S. Supreme Court).

On this date:

In 1782, Congress approved the Great Seal of the United States, featuring the emblem of the bald eagle.

In 1791, King Louis XVI of France and his family attempted to flee in the so-called "Flight to Varennes," but were caught.

In 1837, Queen Victoria acceded to the British throne following the death of her uncle, King William IV.

In 1893, a jury in New Bedford, Massachusetts, found Lizzie Borden not guilty of the ax murders of her father and stepmother.

In 1921, U.S. Rep. Alice Mary Robertson, R-Okla., became the first woman to preside over a session of the House of Representatives.

In 1943, race-related rioting erupted in Detroit; federal troops were sent in two days later to quell the violence that resulted in more than 30 deaths.

In 1944, during World War II, Japanese naval forces retreated in the Battle of the Philippine Sea after suffering heavy losses to the victorious American fleet.

In 1947, President Harry S. Truman vetoed the Taft-Hartley Act, which was designed to restrict the power of labor unions, but had his veto overridden by Congress. Gangster Benjamin "Bugsy" Siegel was shot dead at the Beverly Hills, California, home of his girlfriend, Virginia Hill, apparently at the order of mob associates.

In 1972, three days after the arrest of the Watergate burglars, President Richard Nixon met at the White House with his chief of staff, H.R. Haldeman; the secretly made tape recording of this meeting ended up with the notorious 18½-minute gap.

In 1990, South African Black nationalist Nelson Mandela and his wife, Winnie, arrived in New York City for a ticker-tape parade in their honor as they began an eight-city U.S. tour.

In 2014, the Obama administration granted an array of new benefits to same-sex couples, including those living in states where gay marriage was against the law; the new measures ranged from Social Security and veterans benefits to work leave for caring for sick spouses.

In 2019, Iran's Revolutionary Guard shot down a U.S. surveillance drone in the Strait of Hormuz; it was the first time the Islamic Republic had directly attacked the U.S. military amid tensions over the unraveling nuclear deal. A U.S. official said preparations had been made for a military strike against Iran in retaliation for the downing of the drone, but that the operation was called off with just hours to go.

Ten years ago: Syrian President Bashar Assad promised a national dialogue to consider political reforms, but his vague overtures to a pro-democracy uprising fell flat as protesters took to the streets shouting "Liar!" and demanding his ouster. "Jackass" star Ryan Dunn was killed in a fiery car crash near Philadelphia; he was 34. The erotic novel "Fifty Shades of Grey" by E.L. James was published by Vintage Books.

Five years ago: Donald Trump abruptly fired campaign manager Corey Lewandowski in a dramatic shake-up designed to calm panicked Republican leaders and end an internal power struggle plaguing Trump's White House bid. A divided U.S. Supreme Court bolstered police powers, ruling 5-3 that evidence of a crime in some cases may be used against a defendant even if the police did something wrong or illegal in obtaining it.

One year ago: At a rally in Tulsa, Oklahoma, President Donald Trump defined the election as a choice between national heritage and left-wing radicalism; there were thousands of empty seats at the rally, believed to be the largest indoor event in the nation since the start of the pandemic. (Most attendees bucked the guidance of health care experts and did not wear a mask.) Six staffers helping to set up the Trump event tested positive for the coronavirus. A federal judge ruled that former national security adviser John Bolton could move forward with his tell-all book, despite efforts by the Trump administration to block the release. A standoff between the Justice Department and Manhattan U.S. Attorney Geoffrey S. Berman ended when the prosecutor agreed to leave his job with an assurance that his investigations into

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allies of President Donald Trump would not be disturbed. In front of an empty grandstand, Tiz the Law won the Belmont Stakes in New York; the race normally marks the end of the Triple Crown series, but all three races were postponed due to the pandemic and the Belmont was run first.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Bonnie Bartlett is 92. Actor James Tolkan is 90. Movie director Stephen Frears is 80. Singer-songwriter Brian Wilson is 79. Actor John McCook is 77. Singer Anne Murray is 76. TV personality Bob Vila is 75. Musician Andre Watts is 75. Actor Candy Clark is 74. Producer Tina Sinatra is 73. R&B singer Lionel Richie is 72. Actor John Goodman is 69. Rock musician Michael Anthony is 67. Pop musician John Taylor is 61. Rock musician Mark degli Antoni (de-gee-an-toh-nee) is 59. Christian rock musician Jerome Fontamillas (Switchfoot) is 54. Actor Nicole Kidman is 54. Country/bluegrass singer-musician Dan Tyminski is 54. Movie director Robert Rodriguez is 53. Actor Peter Paige is 52. Actor Josh Lucas is 50. Rock musician Jeordie White (AKA Twiggy Ramirez) is 50. Rock singer Chino Moreno (Deftones) is 48. Country-folk singer-songwriter Amos Lee is 44. Country singer Chuck Wicks is 42. Actor Tika Sumpter is 41. Country musician Chris Thompson (The Eli Young Band) is 41. Actor-singer Alisan Porter is 40. Christian rock musician Chris Dudley (Underoath) is 38. Rock singer Grace Potter (Grace Potter & the Nocturnals) is 38. Actor Mark Saul is 36. Actor Dreama Walker is 35. Actor Chris Mintz-Plasse (plahs) is 32. Actor Maria Lark is 24.